

The Book Of Acts



Sermon Outlines

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To God Be The Glory!

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The Book Of Acts

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Note: For more sermon outlines based on Acts, check out these sermon collections:

- [Conversions In The Book Of Acts](http://executableoutlines.com/cia.htm) <http://executableoutlines.com/cia.htm>
- [Gospel Preaching In The First Century](http://executableoutlines.com/gp.htm) <http://executableoutlines.com/gp.htm>
- [A Harmony Of The Life Of Paul](http://executableoutlines.com/paul.htm) <http://executableoutlines.com/paul.htm>

Letters To Theophilus

Acts 1:1

INTRODUCTION

1. The New Testament is a collection of 27 books...
 - a. Containing gospels, history, epistles, and prophecy
 - b. Some written to people at large, others to individual Christians and churches
2. It may surprise some that over one fourth of the NT was written to one individual...
 - a. **Luke** and **Acts** contains more than 27% of the total words in the NT
 - b. Both were addressed to a man named **Theophilus** - **Lk 1:1-4**; **Ac 1:1-3**

[With much of the New Testament written to just one man, it may be of interest to further examine the relationship between the author and his recipient, and the two letters between them...]

I. THE AUTHOR OF THE LETTERS

A. THE GOSPEL OF LUKE...

1. Though unnamed, church tradition supporting Luke as the author is both early and unanimous - **ESV Study Bible**
2. Luke was a physician, thought to have been a Gentile, possibly from Antioch - **Co 4:14**; cf. **Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History, 3.4.7**

B. THE BOOK OF ACTS...

1. Also unnamed, but obviously the same author as Luke's gospel - cf. **Ac 1:1** with **Lk 2:1-4**
2. The "we" sections require a companion of Paul, and Luke is mentioned in Paul's epistles - **Col 4:14**; **2Ti 4:11**; **Phm 24**

[The "beloved physician" who often accompanied Paul in his travels had ample opportunity to collect the information shared in the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. As for...]

II. THE RECIPIENT OF THE LETTERS

A. THE GOSPEL OF LUKE...

1. Was written to "most excellent Theophilus" - **Lk 1:3**
2. Theophilus means "loved of God"
3. The appellation "most excellent" suggests a government official - cf. **Ac 23:26**; **24:3**; **26:25**

B. THE BOOK OF ACTS...

1. Was written to "O Theophilus" - **Ac 1:1**
2. Note that the honorific title "most excellent" was dropped, about which we will comment later

[Not much more is known about the identity of Theophilus, but what is said about him has led to some interesting possibilities about...]

III. THE PURPOSE OF THE LETTERS

A. THE GOSPEL OF LUKE...

1. “that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed” - **Lk 1:4**
2. Theophilus had undoubtedly heard many things about Jesus and his followers - **Lk 1:1**; cf. **Ac 17:6-7; 28:22**
3. There is evidence that Luke composed his work partially to prove that neither Jesus nor his followers were politically dangerous to the Roman government - **ISBE, “Theophilus”**

B. THE BOOK OF ACTS...

1. To continue the story begun in the gospel of Luke - **Ac 1:4**
2. Some have concluded that Theophilus was the magistrate who heard Paul’s case in Rome and that Acts (and Luke) was a legal brief in Paul’s defense - **ISBE, “Theophilus”**
3. The abrupt ending of Acts prior to Paul’s trial before Caesar lends support to the idea that it may have initially served as a “legal brief” in Paul’s behalf - cf. **Ac 28:30-31**

[Luke’s purpose in writing these two letters to Theophilus was to inform him about the life of Christ and the growth of the early church. How were these letters received by Theophilus...?]

IV. THE EFFECT OF THE LETTERS

A. THEOPHILUS’ CONVERSION...

1. We noted that Luke dropped the honorific title “most excellent” in his second letter - **Ac 1:1**
2. This has led many to conclude that Luke’s relation to Theophilus had changed, that receiving Luke’s gospel resulted in Theophilus’ conversion
3. For Christians did not use honorific titles to address one another - cf. **Mt 23:8-12**

B. PAUL’S RELEASE...

1. There is evidence that Paul’s first appearance before Caesar led to his release
2. After which he had time to travel, according to his plans written in his prison epistles - **Php 2:24; Phm 22**
3. During which he wrote his first epistle to Timothy, and the one to Titus

[Even if the letters were originally intended for Theophilus, may have even served as a “legal brief”, their inspiration by the Spirit of God has long been acknowledged. Leading one to inquire about...]

V. THE VALUE OF THE LETTERS

A. FOR CREATING FAITH IN CHRIST...

1. Many have used Luke’s gospel to introduce people to Jesus Christ
2. It is the most extensive of the four gospels, written in chronological order - **Lk 1:3**
3. Penned by a professional man (physician), with a view toward historical accuracy - **Lk 1:4; 2:1-2; 3:1-2**

B. FOR OBEYING THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST...

1. Luke records many examples of conversion in the book of Acts - e.g., **Ac 2:36-41; 8:30-38**
2. We read of the evangelistic methods and message of the early apostles and preachers
3. For assurance of our own salvation, we can compare our own conversion experience with those in Acts; were we told the same gospel, did we respond in the same way?

C. FOR UNDERSTANDING THE CHURCH OF CHRIST...

1. Acts contains the only record of the first thirty years of the early church
2. It describes establishment, growth, organization, and worship of the church - e.g., **Ac 2:42; 14:23**
3. Comparing Luke's record in Acts with the religious world today, we can see how far people have drifted from following Jesus as the Way

CONCLUSION

1. Two letters, written to one man, sometime in the early 60s A.D....
 - a. Who would have thought a simple correspondence would have the impact it did
 - b. Of course it is due to their inspiration and preservation by the Spirit of God!
2. Have you given yourself the opportunity to read these two letters? Do so, and you...
 - a. Already have read one fourth of the New Testament!
 - b. Will have the opportunity to learn much about Jesus, His salvation, and His church!

Along with the rest of the New Testament, you can ***“know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed”***...

Many Infallible Proofs

Acts 1:3

INTRODUCTION

1. Luke begins the sequel to his gospel with a reminder...
 - a. That his gospel described things Jesus both did and taught - **Ac 1:1**
 - b. That it covered events leading up to His ascension - **Ac 1:2**
 - c. That Jesus presented “many infallible proofs” of His resurrection - **Ac 1:3**
2. The importance the resurrection of Christ cannot be overemphasized...
 - a. It was the keystone of apostolic preaching - **1Co 15:14**
 - b. It is the foundation of our faith - **ibid.**
 - c. If it did not occur, our faith is empty!

[We can be thankful that our faith in the resurrection of Christ is not “empty”. It is based upon “**many infallible proofs**”! What were these infallible proofs? They involved...]

I. THE APPEARANCES OF CHRIST

A. TO MARY MAGDALENE...

1. Described in Mark’s gospel - **Mk 16:9-11**
2. Expanded upon by John in his gospel - **Jn 20:11-18**
-- **She saw Jesus and talked with Him**

B. TO THE OTHER WOMEN...

1. As revealed in Matthew’s gospel - **Mt 28:9-10**
2. Where Jesus reiterated what the angel had said - **ibid.**
-- **They touched Jesus and worshiped Him**

C. TO TWO DISCIPLES WALKING IN THE COUNTRY...

1. Described in Mark’s gospel - **Mk 16:12-13**
2. Elaborated by Luke in his gospel - **Lk 24:13-32**
-- **They walked with Him, talked with Him, and ate with Him**

D. TO PETER ALONE...

1. Reported after the testimony of the two disciples - **Lk 24:33-35**
2. Mentioned by Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians - **1Co 15:5**
-- **He saw Jesus**

E. TO THE APOSTLES WITH THOMAS ABSENT...

1. Described in detail by Luke - **Lk 24:36-43**
2. Also by John - **Jn 20:19-25**
-- **They saw Jesus, He ate food in their presence**

F. TO THE APOSTLES WITH THOMAS PRESENT...

1. A week later, as described by John - **Jn 20:26-31**

2. Mentioned by Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians - **1Co 15:5**
-- **Convincing Thomas, who would not believe unless he could see and touch Jesus**

G. TO SEVEN DISCIPLES BY THE SEA OF GALILEE...

1. Including Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, James and John - **Jn 21:1-2**
2. While they were fishing, and then eating together - **Jn 21:3-25**
-- **They saw Him, ate breakfast with Him, talked with Him**

H. TO FIVE HUNDRED BRETHERN AT ONCE...

1. Recorded by Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians - **1Co 15:6**
2. Possibly in Galilee as directed by the angel and Jesus - **Mk 16:7; Mt 28:10,16-17**
3. Possibly when the Great Commission was first given - **Mt 28:18-20**
-- **A large number, ruling out any vision or hallucination**

I. TO JAMES THE LORD'S BROTHER...

1. Recorded by Paul in his epistle to the Corinthians - **1Co 15:7**
2. Who previously did not believe, but then became a disciple - **Jn 7:5; Ac 1:14**
-- **Convincing a brother in the flesh who had his doubts**

J. TO THE DISCIPLES WITH ANOTHER COMMISSION...

1. Recorded by Luke in his gospel - **Lk 24:44-49**
2. This time in Jerusalem, shortly before His ascension - **Ac 1:3-8**
-- **They studied with Him for days, as He taught them from the Scriptures**

K. TO THOSE PRESENT AT HIS ASCENSION...

1. Recorded in Mark's gospel - **Mk 16:19-20**
2. Also by Luke in both of his books - **Lk 24:50-53; Ac 1:9-12**
-- **They looked steadfastly as they saw Him ascend**

[The number of appearances certainly qualifies as “many”. But in what way can we say these appearances qualify as “infallible proofs”? Consider the strength of...]

II. THE DISCIPLES' TESTIMONY

A. THE NATURE OF THEIR TESTIMONY...

1. Their testimony appealed to empirical evidence
 - a. I.e., evidence derived from experiment and observation rather than theory
 - b. They refused to accept second hand evidence - **Mk 16:11,13; Jn 20:25**
 - c. They saw, heard, and touched Him - **1Jn 1:1-2**
 - d. They ate and drank with Him - **Ac 10:40-41**
 2. There is no way they could have been deceived or deluded
 - a. If all they had were individual dreams, visions, or hallucinations...perhaps
 - b. But they testified that Jesus appeared to them in groups as well as to individuals
- **Such eyewitness testimony is the same sort of proof used in court today**

B. THEIR TRANSFORMED LIVES...

1. Prior to the resurrection, Jesus' disciples were afraid and without hope
 - a. They fled at his arrest - **Mk 14:50**
 - b. Peter cowardly denied Him three times - **Mk 14:66-72**

- c. Women mourned His crucifixion - **Lk 23:27**
 - d. His disciples were sad - **Lk 24:13-17**
 - e. His disciples hid behind closed doors in fear - **Jn 20:19**
 2. After the resurrection, they fearlessly praised God and proclaimed Jesus!
 - a. Praising God in the temple - **Lk 24:52-53**
 - b. Proclaiming Christ despite persecution - **Ac 5:28-32,41-42**
 3. This transformation is strong evidence for the resurrection!
 - a. "If the disciples were totally disappointed and on the verge of desperate flight because of the very real reason of the crucifixion..."
 - b. "...it took another very real reason in order to transform them from a band of disheartened and dejected Jews into the most self-confident missionary society in world history."
- **Pinchas Lapide**, former Chairman of the Applied Linguistics Department at Israel's Bar-Ilan University (TIME, May 7, 1979)
- **Their transformed lives is strong evidence of the resurrections of Jesus**

C. THEIR HIGH MORAL STANDARD...

1. They taught others to live holy lives - **1Th 4:1-7; Ep 4:25**
 2. They lived their own lives in an unimpeachable way - **1Th 2:3-12**
- **Does this sound like people who propagated a lie?**

D. THEIR PERSONAL SACRIFICES...

1. The apostles endured much suffering because of their testimony - **1Co 4:9-13; 2Co 11:23-28**
 2. All but one died martyrs' death because of their testimony
 3. Even Jesus' brother, James, was thrown off the temple and then clubbed to death for his testimony!
- **There was no motive (fame, power, wealth) for them to persistently lie!**

CONCLUSION

1. Jesus gave His disciples "**many**" proofs...
 - a. He appeared to them many times during forty days
 - b. He spoke with them, ate with them, let them touch Him
 - c. He met with them in groups, large and small, as well as individually
2. Such proof was "**infallible**" for them...
 - a. Not a single eyewitness recanted his testimony of the resurrection
 - b. They endured great hardship throughout their lives because of their testimony
 - c. They were willing to die for their testimony, and many did!
3. We too have "**many infallible proofs**", because of...
 - a. The nature of their testimony
 - b. The transformation that took place in their lives
 - c. The high moral standard they taught and lived
 - d. The personal sacrifices they made

Why not allow such proof to transform your life as it did those disciples in the first century...? - cf. **Jn 20:30-31**

The Promise Of The Father

Acts 1:4-5

INTRODUCTION

1. Before Jesus ascended to heaven, He gave His apostles instructions...
 - a. Not to depart from Jerusalem - **Ac 1:4**
 - b. But to wait for the Promise of the Father - **ibid.**
2. The apostles had heard of this Promise before...
 - a. From Jesus Himself - **Ac 1:4**; cf. **Jn 14:16-17,26; 15:26; Jn 16:12-13**
 - b. Related to their being baptized with the Holy Spirit within a few days - **Ac 1:5**
 - c. Of which John the Baptist spoke - **Lk 3:15-16**

[But even long before John and Jesus, God began making promises about the Spirit...]

I. THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

A. THE PROPHECY OF JOEL...

1. The Spirit would be poured out on all flesh - **Joel 2:28-29**
2. Sons and daughters would prophesy, young and old men see visions, dream dreams
3. God's Spirit would be poured out on His menservants and maidservants

B. THE PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH...

1. God would pour His Spirit on Israel's descendants, like water on dry ground - **Isa 44:3**
2. Another prophecy related to the promise of the Spirit - **Isa 32:15-17**
 - a. Found in a section with Messianic implications - cf. **Isa 32:1**
 - b. The result of this pouring of the Spirit: justice, righteousness, and peace - cf. **Ro 14:17**

C. THE PROPHECIES OF EZEKIEL...

1. One recorded in **Eze 36:26-27**
 - a. God promises to put His Spirit "within you" (an indwelling?)
 - b. Who will cause (enable) one to walk in His statutes and keep His judgments
2. Another prophecy that might relate to the promise of the Spirit - **Eze 39:29**
 - a. A prophecy that looks beyond the captivity and restoration of Israel
 - b. One that might not have been fulfilled until the coming of the Messiah

D. THE PROPHECY OF ZECHARIAH...

1. The Spirit of grace and supplication to be poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem - **Zec 12:10**
2. Prompting people to look upon Jesus whom they have pierced, and mourn because of Him - cf. **Ac 2:32-37**

[Whether the prophecies of **Ezekiel** and **Zechariah** have reference to a promise that would be fulfilled in the age of the Messiah may be questionable, but certainly the prophecies of **Joel** and **Isaiah** demonstrate that God promised an "outpouring" of the Spirit in a special way. Let's now return to...]

II. THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

A. THE PREACHING OF JOHN...

1. He spoke of One coming who would “baptize you with the Holy Spirit” - **Mt 3:11; Mk 1:7-8; Lk 3:16; Jn 1:33**
2. While he himself administered a baptism in water, there was One coming who would be the administrator of a baptism with the Holy Spirit
3. The promise was made to large crowds; its nature and full extent revealed in its fulfillment
 - a. We know that it is somehow tied to the events of Pentecost in **Ac 2:1-4**
 - b. Because of Jesus’ comments in **Ac 1:4-5**

B. THE TEACHING OF JESUS...

1. The Spirit would be given to those who ask the Heavenly Father - **Lk 11:13**
2. The Spirit would be given as “living water” to all those who thirst and come to Him in faith, and drink - **Jn 7:37-39**
 - a. Might this “living water” be “the gift of God” Jesus alluded to earlier? - cf. **Jn 4:10-14**
 - b. Note again the comparison of the Spirit to water in Isaiah’s prophecy - **Isa 44:3**
3. To His apostles, Jesus promised the “Spirit of truth” who would...
 - a. Be a Helper, and abide with them - **Jn 14:16-17**
 - b. Bring to their remembrance all things Jesus taught them - **Jn 14:26**
 - c. Bear witness of Christ, together with the apostles - **Jn 15:26-27**
 - d. Convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment - **Jn 16:7-11**
 - e. Guide the apostles unto all the truth, including things to come - **Jn 16:12-13**
 - f. Glorify Jesus, by taking of what is His and declaring it to them - **Jn 16:14**
4. Jesus told His apostles to wait in Jerusalem until they received the “Promise of the Father” - **Lk 24:49; Ac 1:4-5**
 - a. Which He clearly connects to the baptism of the Spirit spoken of by John
 - b. In which the apostles would receive power, and be eyewitnesses - **Ac 1:8**

C. THE PREACHING OF PETER...

1. On Pentecost, Peter connects the Spirit’s outpouring to Joel’s prophecy - **Ac 2:14-16**
2. Then, in the course of his sermon, Peter...
 - a. Speaks of the outpouring of the Spirit as a promise Jesus received from the Father - **Ac 2:33; cf. Ac 1:4-5**
 - b. Offers the gift of the Spirit to all who repent and are baptized - **Ac 2:38**
 - c. Says the promise is to them and others - **Ac 2:39**
 - 1) What promise does Peter have in mind?
 - 2) What promise would have come to mind to his hearers?
 - 3) Would it not have been the promise he just alluded to?
 - a) The promise received by Christ, and poured out by Christ - **Ac 2:33**
 - b) I.e., the Spirit which Jesus Himself promised to believers - **Jn 7:37-39**
 - c) Which Peter would later say was given to those who obey God - **Ac 5:32**
 - 4) “That we are right in referring the word promise, in this sentence, to the promise of the Holy Spirit just made by Peter, is evident from the fact that this is the only promise made in the immediate context.” - **J. W. McGarvey**
 - 5) “For the promise... - Of pardon, and the gift of the Spirit.” - **B. W. Johnson**
 - 6) “**Acts 2:39** shows that the gift of the Holy Spirit is to all, Jews and Gentiles, who accept that call of God.” - **David Lipscomb**

D. THE TEACHING OF PAUL...

1. Regarding those who have been saved - **Tit 3:4-7**
 - a. Have experienced a washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit
 - b. Have benefited by the Spirit poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ
2. Regarding those who have been baptized - **1Co 12:13**
 - a. Have been baptized by the Spirit into one body
 - b. Have been made to drink into one Spirit
3. Regarding those in whom the Spirit dwells - **Ro 8:9-13; Ep 3:16; 1Co 6:18-19**
 - a. Their mortal bodies will be given life
 - b. No longer debtors to live according to the flesh
 - c. Are able to put to death the deeds of the body
 - d. Are to flee immorality because their body is a temple of the Holy Spirit
4. Regarding those who have believed - **Ga 3:14; Ep 1:13-14; 2Co 1:22; 5:5**
 - a. Have received the promise of the Spirit through faith
 - a. Have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise
 - b. Have received the Spirit as a guarantee (deposit) of our inheritance
5. Regarding those walk after the Spirit - **Ga 5:16-25**
 - a. Will not fulfill the lust of the flesh, the works of the flesh
 - b. Will produce the fruit of the Spirit, because they live in the Spirit

CONCLUSION

1. In this lesson we have seen the following...
 - a. Old Testament prophets promised a special dispensation of the Spirit to come
 - 1) One that would include the manifestation of special gifts
 - 2) One that would enable the people of God to keep His will
 - b. John and Jesus promised a baptism of the Spirit, administered by Jesus
 - c. Peter in his first gospel sermon...
 - 1) Proclaimed this promise to be fulfilled with the outpouring of the Spirit - **Ac 2:16,33**
 - 2) Offered the Spirit as a gift to all who obey the gospel - **Ac 2:38-39**
 - d. Paul in his epistles...
 - 1) Wrote much about the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian
 - 2) Referring to the Spirit as “the Holy Spirit of Promise”
2. In view of “**The Promise Of The Father**” related to the Holy Spirit...
 - a. We should not be surprised to read more of the work of the Holy Spirit in Acts
 - b. In both the life of the church and in the lives of Christians

To what degree and in what way the Spirit continues to work **today** can be ascertained by a careful study of the New Testament (please see my series, [“The Holy Spirit Of God”](#)).

Have you experienced the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, made possible because **the Father kept His promise** to pour out His Spirit abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior? Let Peter show you how...

Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” - Ac 2:38-39

The Restored Kingdom

Acts 1:6-7

INTRODUCTION

1. Before Jesus ascended to heaven, His disciples asked a question...
 - a. “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” - **Ac 1:6**
 - b. To which they were told it was not for them to know the times or seasons - **Ac 1:7**
2. Many commentaries suggest the disciples were mistaken regarding the kingdom...
 - a. That they were still looking for an earthly, political kingdom
 - b. That they still failed to appreciate the spiritual nature of the kingdom

[Yet Jesus did not correct them about the **nature** of the kingdom, only their concern about the **timing**. In fact, there are reasons to believe they were not mistaken about the **nature** of the kingdom...]

I. THE DISCIPLES’ EDUCATION

A. DURING JESUS’ MINISTRY...

1. They were given privileged instruction about the kingdom
 - a. They were given to know the mystery of the kingdom - **Mk 4:10-11**
 - b. The parables about the kingdom were privately explained to them - **Mk 4:30-34**
2. They heard Jesus speak openly about the nature of the kingdom
 - a. When Jesus spoke to the Pharisees about the coming of the kingdom - **Lk 17:20**
 - b. How it would not come with observation, but would be “within you” - **Lk 17:21**
3. Jesus also told Pilate about the nature of the kingdom
 - a. That His kingdom was not of this world - **Jn 18:36**
 - b. That He was indeed a King - **Jn 18:37**

B. AFTER JESUS’ RESURRECTION...

1. Jesus spoke of things concerning the kingdom of God for 40 days - **Ac 1:3**
2. He explained the Scriptures to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus - **Lk 24:25-27,32**
3. He opened the apostles’ understanding to comprehend the Scriptures - **Lk 24:44-45**

[It seems unlikely that with such opportunities to learn from the Master Teacher, the disciples were still mistaken about the nature of the kingdom. I prefer to think they properly understood about...]

II. THE RESTORED KINGDOM

A. PROMISED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT...

1. God promised David to establish his kingdom and throne forever - **2Sa 7:12-16**
2. A promise reviewed in Psalms 89
 - a. A sworn oath, an everlasting covenant - **Ps 89:3-4,28-29,35-36**
 - b. Which at times appeared to have been renounced - **Ps 89:38-39,49**
3. Yet despite the divided kingdom, the captivity, etc., continued to be promised
 - a. By prophets to the northern kingdom, Israel - **Hos 3:5; Am 9:11**
 - b. By prophets to the southern kingdom, Judah - **Isa 9:6-7; Jer 23:5-6; Eze 34:23-24**

- c. Even after the restoration of Israel - **Zech 6:12-13**

B. ANNOUNCED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...

1. By the angel Gabriel to the virgin Mary - **Lk 1:31-33**
2. By Zacharias after the birth of John - **Lk 1:68-70**
3. By Peter in the first gospel sermon - **Ac 2:30-36**
4. By Jesus to the church in Philadelphia - **Re 3:7**

C. FURTHER OBSERVATIONS...

1. As announced by both Isaiah and Gabriel, Jesus would:
 - a. Be given the throne (authority) of David - **Isa 9:7; Lk 1:32**
 - b. Reign over the kingdom of David and house of Jacob - **Isa 9:7; Lk 1:33**
2. As proclaimed by Jesus and His apostles, His reign includes the Gentiles
 - a. Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth - **Mt 28:18**
 - b. The gospel was to spread to all nations - **Mt 28:19; Lk 24:46-47; Ac 1:8**
 - c. God has made Him Lord over all - **Ac 2:36; 10:36; Re 3:21**
 - d. He is now head over all things - **Ep 1:20-21; 1Pe 3:22; He 1:8-9; Re 1:5**
 - e. He is truly Lord of lords, King of kings! - **1Ti 6:14-15; Re 17:14; 19:16**
3. As explained by James, the Lord's brother...
 - a. The tabernacle (house) of David has been rebuilt - **Ac 15:13-16; cf. Am 9:11**
 - b. Which now includes the Gentiles (nations) - **Ac 15:17; cf. Am 9:12**
4. The timing of its restoration began when Jesus...
 - a. Ascended to heaven, given dominion, glory, and a kingdom - **Ac 1:9; cf. Dan 7:13-14**
 - b. To sit at God's right hand, over all principality, power, might, dominion - **Ep 1:20-22**

CONCLUSION

1. So the kingdom proclaimed by Jesus is **a restored kingdom**...
 - b. The fulfillment of promises made to David and Israel
 - b. In which a descendant of David now reigns over Israel
2. But **the restored kingdom is even better**; the reign of the Son of David is...
 - a. Not just over the house of Israel, but includes Gentiles as well!
 - b. Not limited to the land of Israel, but in heaven and on earth!
 - c. Not physical (ruling over bodies), but spiritual (reigning in the hearts)!

There were certainly things the disciples still had to learn about the kingdom (e.g., that Gentiles would not have to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses, cf. **Ac 10,11,15**); things about which the Holy Spirit would later guide them (**Jn 16:12-13**).

But instead of assuming the **disciples** were still confused about the **nature** of the kingdom, perhaps we should ask ourselves whether **we** might be the ones confused about the **nature** of the kingdom...

Witnesses For Christ

Acts 1:8

INTRODUCTION

1. Before Jesus ascended to heaven, He gave His disciples a **promise** and a **charge**...
 - a. “you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you” - **Ac 1:8**
 - b. “you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” - **ibid.**
2. The **charge** to be “witnesses” for Christ has been appropriated by many...
 - a. In their efforts to share the gospel of Christ with the lost
 - b. That in doing so they are “witnesses for Christ”
 - c. In so doing, they use “witnessing” as a synonym for evangelism

[But is “witnessing” an accurate term for our evangelistic efforts? Can we “witness” today like the apostles did in carrying out their charge? Let’s first review...]

I. WITNESSING FOR CHRIST TODAY

A. AS COMMONLY PRACTICED...

1. After telling others how to receive Christ, one is encouraged to share their own experience in “accepting Christ as their personal Lord and Savior”
 - a. This sharing of experiences of one’s own conversion is called “witnessing”
 - b. Used to convince a prospect of the power of the gospel to transform one’s life
2. New converts are often encouraged to quickly develop their own “witness”
 - a. That is, a personal testimony proclaiming how their lives were changed
 - b. For example, their testimony or “witness” might describe:
 - 1) Their actions and attitudes before they accepted Christ
 - 2) Circumstances that surrounded their conversion
 - 3) Changes that took place in life after receiving Christ
 - c. Of course, the more remarkable one’s story (witness), the better

B. JUSTIFICATION FOR SUCH WITNESSING...

1. The New Testament speaks of people being witnesses
 - a. E.g., in our text: “you shall be witnesses to Me” - **Ac 1:8**
 - b. This passage is taken to mean that all Christians were to “witness” for Christ
2. Yet consider the following questions:
 - a. Are the “witnesses” in our text referring to all Christians, or a select few?
 - b. What were they to bear witness to? Their own conversion, or something else?
 - c. Does the text imply that all Christians are to be “witnesses”?

[To help answer this question, let’s examine more closely...]

II. WITNESSING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

A. WHO WERE TO BE WITNESSES FOR CHRIST...?

1. The context of **Ac 1:8** reveals it was the apostles - **Ac 1:1-11**
 - a. They are specifically mentioned in verse 2
 - b. Note the pronouns used throughout the text (to whom, them, they, you)
 - c. They were “Men of Galilee” (many disciples were from other regions)
2. To be such a witness required very specific qualifications - cf. **Ac 1:21-22**
 - a. One had to have been with the apostles
 - b. From the time of Jesus’ baptism until His ascension to heaven
 - c. Because of what they were to bear witness

B. WHAT WAS THEIR WITNESS FOR CHRIST...?

1. They bore witness to Jesus’ resurrection - cf. **Ac 1:22; 2:32; 3:15; 5:30-32; 13:30-31**
2. They also bore witness to His life - **Ac 10:38-42**
3. The apostle Paul was a special witness - **Ac 22:14-15; 26:16,22**
4. The focal point of apostolic witness is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead!

C. WERE THERE OTHER WITNESSES FOR CHRIST...?

1. The Greek word for witness (**martus**) is also used as a designation for those who have suffered death in consequence of confessing Christ - **Complete Word Study Dictionary**
2. Used of Stephen, Antipas, and others - **Ac 22:20; Re 2:13; 17:6**

[But the term “witness” is never used of one who simply tells others about Christ, or of their own conversion experience. Is this a distinction without a difference? Does it really matter, along as Jesus is glorified...?]

III. APPRECIATING THE DISTINCTION

A. BETWEEN THE CONTENT OF THE WITNESS...

1. The modern witness: provides testimony involving one’s own conversion
 - a. Personal testimony that describes the change in one’s life
 - b. The more dramatic, the better
 - 1) Prone to exaggeration, even fabrication
 - 2) Especially if one can “sell” their testimony through appearances, videos, books
 2. The apostolic witness: provides testimony concerning the resurrection of Jesus
 - a. Eyewitness accounts based on empirical evidence - e.g., **1Jn 1:1-2; Ac 10:40-41**
 - b. Evidence that has been confirmed by:
 - 1) The number of witnesses
 - 2) The credibility of the witnesses (their life, teaching, suffering, even death)
- **The former is subjective evidence, the latter provides objective evidence**

B. BETWEEN THE PURPOSE OF THE WITNESS...

1. The modern witness: to have you place your faith in Jesus on the basis of another’s conversion experience and manner of life
 2. The apostolic witness: to have you place your faith in Jesus on the basis of historical facts that Jesus was raised from the dead and thereby declared to be the Son of God - **Ro 1:4**
- **The former produces faith based on emotional appeals, the latter produces faith based on historical evidence**

C. BETWEEN THE STRENGTH OF THE WITNESS...

1. The modern witness: what if those upon whose “testimony” we came to believe later

- disappoint us?
- a. Whose “conversion” proves to be less than real or short-term?
 - b. Will not our own faith be shaken?
2. The apostolic witness: their testimony forever remains unchanged
- a. Sealed by their manner of life, their exemplary teachings, their own blood!
 - b. Faith based on their testimony is therefore more durable!
- **The former leaves one open to great disappointment, the latter provides the foundation for a life of strong faith in Christ**

CONCLUSION

1. Jesus acknowledged that people would come to believe in Him through **the words of His apostles...**
 - a. As He mentioned in His prayer - cf. **Jn 17:20**
 - b. Therefore He equipped them with infallible proofs and the power of the Spirit - **Ac 1:2-3,8**
2. As impressive as many **modern day testimonies** may sound...
 - a. Beware of those who may be improperly motivated to enhance their story
 - b. Be aware that “remarkable transformations” take place in many different religions (they can’t all be true)

Place your faith instead in the witness Christ Himself has given to you and all: the testimony of His specially chosen witnesses, the apostles! - **1Jn 1:1-4**

Just as important, have you heeded what they proclaimed...? - cf. **Ac 2:36-39**

The Ascension Of Christ

Acts 1:9

INTRODUCTION

1. Forty days following His resurrection, Jesus ascended to heaven...
 - a. Watched by His disciples, until a cloud received Him out of their sight - **Ac 1:9**
 - b. Which took place near Bethany, while Jesus blessed them - **Lk 24:50-51**
2. Following His ascension to heaven...
 - a. What happened next?
 - b. What's happening now?

[Jesus' ministry as Lord and Savior did not end with His life here on earth. Important to our faith and hope is understanding what happened after Jesus ascended to heaven, beginning with...]

I. THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST

A. PROPHESED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT...

1. Despite efforts by rulers and kings against God's anointed - **Ps 2:1-7**; cf. **Ac 4:23-28**
 2. Spoken of the Suffering Servant - **Isa 52:13**; **53:12**
 3. Seen in a vision by Daniel - **Dan 7:13**
- **The psalmist and the prophets foretold that the Messiah would be exalted**

B. PROCLAIMED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...

1. Jesus told disciples He was about to enter His glory - **Lk 24:25-27**
 2. He is now seated at the right hand of God - **Mk 16:19**
 3. He has been exalted to be Prince and Savior - **Ac 2:33-35**; **5:31**
 4. He has been given a name above every name - **Php 2:9**
 5. He has obtained a more excellent name than the angels - **He 1:3-4**
- **Jesus and His apostles proclaimed the exaltation of Christ in glory**

[So Jesus has been exalted in glory. But what is He doing at the right hand of God? Biding His time until His return? No! For there is much revealed about...]

II. THE REIGN OF CHRIST

A. PROPHESED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT...

1. To rule the nations with a rod of iron - **Ps 2:8-12**
 2. To rule in the midst of His enemies, till they are made His footstool - **Ps 110:1-2,5-7**
 3. To have a government of peace, judgment, and justice - **Isa 9:6-7**
 3. That all peoples, nations, languages, should serve Him - **Dan 7:14**
- **The psalmist and the prophets foretold that the Messiah would reign over His enemies**

B. PROCLAIMED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...

1. Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth - **Mt 28:18**
2. He is above all principality, power, might, dominion, and every name - **Ep 1:20-22**

3. Angels, authorities, and powers have been made subject to Him - **1Pe 3:22**
4. He must reign until all enemies are put under His feet, including death - **1Co 15:24-26**
5. He is the ruler over the kings of the earth - **Re 1:5**
6. He rules them with a rod of iron - **Re 2:26-27**
7. Thus He is King of kings, Lord of lords - **Re 17:14; cf. 1Ti 6:14-15**
- **Jesus and His apostles proclaimed the present reign of Christ from heaven!**

[Just as God reigned over kingdoms of men (**Dan 2:21; 4:17**), so **now** His Son reigns in the midst of His enemies (**Ps 110:1-2**) until the last enemy is defeated (**1Co 15:25-26**). In the meantime, there is also...]

III. THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST

A. PROPHESED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT...

1. To serve as a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek - **Ps 110:4**
2. To be a priest on His throne - **Zec 6:13**
- **The psalmist and the prophet foretold of One who would be both king and priest!**

B. PROCLAIMED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...

1. Jesus has become a merciful and faithful High Priest - **He 2:17-18**
 - a. To make propitiation for the sins of the people
 - b. To aid those who are tempted
2. He is a sympathetic High Priest - **He 4:14-16**
 - a. Sympathizing with our weaknesses, having been tempted
 - b. Making it possible to obtain mercy and grace to help in time of need
3. According to the order of Melchizedek - **He 5:10; 6:19-20; 7:20-28; 8:1**
 - a. Called by God
 - b. In the Presence of God beyond the veil
 - c. Made a priest by the oath of God
 - d. The surety of a better covenant
 - e. An unchangeable priesthood because He continues forever
 - f. Able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him
 - g. Who always lives to make intercession for them
 - h. A High Priest holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, higher than the heavens
 - i. Does not need to offer daily sacrifices, His own sacrifice offered once suffices
4. He is a better High Priest - **He 8:1-2; 9:11-15; 10:11-14,19-22**
 - a. Seated at the right hand of God
 - b. Minister of the sanctuary and true tabernacle erected by the Lord, not man
 - c. Having obtained eternal redemption, even for those under the first covenant
 - d. Offering the promise of eternal inheritance
 - e. Sitting at the right hand of God, till His enemies are made His footstool
 - f. By one offering perfecting forever those who those being sanctified
 - g. Giving us boldness to draw near to God with assurance of faith
- **Jesus is truly the perfect and better High Priest for us in heaven!**

CONCLUSION

1. Thus we have seen that with the ascension of Jesus...
 - a. He was highly exalted above all things in heaven and earth
 - b. He began His reign as King and ministry as High Priest

c. Thus we have nothing to fear, and everything to hope for! - cf. **Ro 8:31-38**

2. Jesus will one day return; until then, what will you do...?

a. Freely volunteer in the day of His power! - cf. **Ps 110:3**

b. Submit to His kingly authority as Lord, obey the gospel! - cf. **Ac 2:36-38**

c. Enjoy the blessings with Him as your High Priest in heaven! - cf. **1Jn 1:7-9**

If we do not, then as His enemy we will eventually be crushed under His feet, and experience His wrath for having despised God's grace when we had ample opportunity... - cf. **Ro 2:4-11; 2Th 1:7-10**

The Return Of Christ

Acts 1:10-11

INTRODUCTION

1. As the disciples watched Jesus ascend to heaven...
 - a. Two men stood by in white apparel - **Ac 1:10**
 - b. With a promise that Jesus would one day return - **Ac 1:11**
2. Those who look for the Lord's return often differ greatly over the details...
 - a. The **premillennialist** looks for Christ to come in order to establish a literal kingdom on the earth, over which He will reign for a 1000 years
 - b. The **postmillennialist** believes that Christ will at some point begin a thousand year reign from heaven, at the end of which He will come to judge the world
 - c. The **amillennialist** believes that Christ has been reigning as King of kings, and Lord of lords ever since His ascension to heaven, and that His coming will be to raise the dead, judge the world, and usher in the new heavens and new earth

[In this lesson, the **amillennial** view will be presented, which I believe most accurately teaches what the Bible reveals about the Second Coming of our Lord. Beginning with...]

I. THE CERTAINTY OF HIS COMING

A. PROCLAIMED BY ANGELS...

1. The "two men...in white apparel" - **Ac 1:9-11**
2. Who said that "This same Jesus, who was taken up from into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." - **ibid.**

B. PROCLAIMED BY APOSTLES...

1. Peter - **Ac 3:19-21; 2Pe 3:1-13**
2. Paul - **1Co 11:26; 15:22-23; 1Th 1:9-10; 2:19; 3:13; 2Ti 4:1**
3. John - **1Jn 2:28**
4. The writer to the Hebrews - **He 9:27-28**

[In the OT one finds the recurring theme "**The Messiah is coming!**" In the NT we learn not only "**He has come!**", but that "**He is coming again!**" To the certainty of His coming, we can add..]

II. THE MANNER OF HIS COMING

A. HE WILL COME IN PERSON...

1. "This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come..." - **Ac 1:11**
2. "the Lord himself will descend from heaven..." - **1Th 4:15-17**

B. HE WILL COME WITH THE CLOUDS...

1. "This same Jesus...will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven" - **Ac 1:11** (referring to verse 9: "He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight")
2. "...in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." - **1Th 4:17**

3. “Behold, He is coming with clouds...” - **Re 1:7**

C. HE WILL COME WITHOUT WARNING...

1. “...the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.” - **1Th 5:2**
2. “For when they say, ‘Peace and safety!’ then sudden destruction comes...” - **1Th 5:3**
3. “...the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night...” - **2Pe 3:10**

[Of course, this unexpected coming of the Lord will not surprise the faithful, who seriously watch for the Lord’s coming (cf. **1Th 5:4-11**). With joyful anticipation, they await the personal return of their Savior. What will happen when the Lord returns? To answer this question we now consider...]

III. THE PURPOSE OF HIS COMING

A. TO RAISE THE DEAD...

1. “...for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth...” - **Jn 5:28-29**
 - a. Note that there is but **one resurrection**, including both the good and evil, that will occur at one time (“the hour”)
 - b. As Paul said, “...there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.” - **Ac 24:15**
2. Those who are alive at the Lord’s coming...
 - a. Will be “changed” in “the twinkling of an eye”, being clothed with immortality and incorruption - **1Co 15:50-54**
 - b. Then “caught up...to meet the Lord in the air.” - **1Th 4:16-18**

B. TO DELIVER UP THE KINGDOM TO GOD...

1. Contrary to the view that Jesus has yet to establish His kingdom on earth, He has been ruling over His kingdom since He first ascended to heaven!
 - a. In fulfillment of the prophecy that God would raise up the Christ to sit on the “throne of David”, Jesus was raised from the dead and made “Lord” - **Ac 2:30-36**
 - b. All authority in heaven and earth has been given unto Him - **Mt 28:18**
 - 1) He is far above all principality, power, might, and dominion, with all things placed under His feet - **Ep 1:20-22**
 - 2) At the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers are made subject to Him - **1Pe 3:22**
 - c. Christians are said to be “in” His kingdom
 - 1) Having been “delivered...from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love” - **Col 1:13**
 - 2) They are “in the kingdom...of Jesus Christ” - **Re 1:9**
 - d. Christ will continue to reign “till He has put all enemies under His feet” - **1Co 15:25**
 - 1) Note that His reign will be concurrent with the fact enemies are still present
 - 2) As prophesied by the Psalmist: “Rule in the midst of Your enemies!” - **Ps 110:1-2**
 - e. Thus Christ is NOW “the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of Lords” - **1Ti 6:15**; cf. **Re 19:16**
 - f. And He will reign “till He has put all enemies under His feet” - **1Co 15:25**
 - 1) The last enemy that will be destroyed is death itself - cf. **1Co 15:26**
 - 2) Which we have seen will be destroyed at the coming of the Lord when He will raise the dead - **1Co 15:51-54**
2. So when Jesus comes, it will not be to set up His kingdom, but to deliver up His kingdom!

- a. As Paul clearly told the Corinthians - **1Co 15:23-26**
- b. As taught by Jesus in His Parable of the Tares - **Mt 13:36-43**
 - 1) His kingdom will last until “the end of this age”
 - 2) After which “the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (i.e., the heavenly kingdom)

C. TO JUDGE THE WORLD AND PUNISH EVIL...

1. God has appointed a “day” in which He will judge the world - **2Pe 3:7**
 - a. The one appointed to be the Judge is Jesus Christ - **Ac 17:31; 2Co 5:10**
 - b. The standard by which He will judge will be the words He has spoken - **Jn 12:48**
2. It will be a day of perdition (utter destruction) of ungodly men - **2Pe 3:7**
 - a. Those who know not God and have not obeyed the gospel will be punished with everlasting destruction - **2Th 1:7-10**
 - b. Those not in the “Book of Life” will be cast into the “lake of fire” - **Re 20:11-15**

D. TO USHER IN THE NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH...

1. As taught by Peter - **2Pe 3:10-14**
 - a. This will follow the “passing away” of the present heavens and earth
 - b. It is in fulfillment of God’s promise - cf. **Isa 65:17-19; 66:22-23**
 - c. It is something we are to “look for” (**13-14**)
 - d. It will be a realm where righteousness dwells, therefore the need for us to be found “in peace, without spot and blameless” when Christ returns (**13-14**)
2. As taught by John - **Re 21:1-22:5**
 - a. It will follow after the first heaven and first earth have “passed away” - **Re 21:1; 20:11**
 - b. It will be the place where the New Jerusalem will abide when it “comes down out of heaven” - **Re 21:2; 3:10; 21:10**
 - c. God will dwell with us in this “New Jerusalem” that has “come down out of heaven” - **Re 21:3-27; 22:1-5**

CONCLUSION

1. The purpose of Jesus’ second coming can be summed up by His statement in **Re 22:12...**

“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.”

2. That Jesus has not yet come is only an indication of God’s long-suffering, but rest assured “that day” will one day come! - **2Pe 3:8-9**
3. In the meantime, what should be our attitude be toward the coming of our Lord? One of...
 - a. Prayerful preparation - **Lk 21:34-36; 2Pe 3:14**
 - b. Joyful expectation - **Ph 3:20-21**
 - c. Patient endurance - **He 10:35-39**

Waiting For The Promise

Acts 1:12-26

INTRODUCTION

1. After Jesus ascended to heaven, His disciples returned to Jerusalem...
 - a. As instructed by Jesus - **Ac 1:4**
 - b. To wait for the promise of the Spirit - **Ac 1:4-5**
2. Today, we are waiting for a promise...
 - a. Not the promise of the Spirit
 - b. But the promise of the Son - cf. **Ac 1:11**

[How the disciples of Jesus waited for **the promise of the Spirit** provides some insight as to how we should wait for **the promise of the Son**. So let's first consider what is said about how they waited for...]

I. WAITING FOR THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT (THEN)

A. THEY ASSEMBLED...

1. The disciples returned to Jerusalem from Mount Olivet - **Ac 1:12**
 - a. From which Jesus ascended to heaven
 - b. A distance described as "a Sabbath day's journey" (2000 cubits, or 0.6 miles)
2. The apostles assembled in an upper room - **Ac 1:13-14**
 - a. With "the women" (likely those who had accompanied Jesus from Galilee and witnessed the crucifixion and empty tomb) - cf. **Lk 8:2-3; 23:49,55-56; 24:2-11**
 - b. With Mary the mother of Jesus (the last time she is mentioned in the NT)
 - c. With Jesus' brothers (who had not believed prior to His resurrection) - **Mk 6:3; Jn 7:5**

B. THEY PRAYED...

1. They continued with one accord in prayer and supplication - **Ac 1:14**
2. "It is likely that they were praying constantly that the promised Spirit would descend" - **ESV Study Bible**

C. THEY PREPARED...

1. Peter outlines the need to replace Judas Iscariot - **Ac 1:15-20**
 - a. Who had died a gruesome death
 - b. Whose death and replacement was foretold by the Spirit - cf. **Ps 69:25; 109:8**
2. The apostolic requirements are given - **Ac 1:21-22**
 - a. Someone who had accompanied the apostles
 - b. From the baptism of John to the day Jesus ascended
 - c. Who could then serve as a witness of the resurrection
3. The replacement selected - **Ac 1:23-26**
 - a. Two men put forward: Joseph (Barsabas) Justus, and Matthias
 - c. Matthias is selected and numbered with the eleven apostles

[In this manner the disciples of Jesus waited for the promise of the Spirit. In a similar way, so should disciples today wait for the promise of the Lord's return...]

II. WAITING FOR THE PROMISE OF THE SON (NOW)

A. WE SHOULD ASSEMBLE...

1. A practice we are not to forsake - **He 10:24-25; 1Th 5:1-11**
 - a. Important to remaining encouraged and motivated
 - b. Especially since Christ's return can happen at any moment
2. Especially on the Lord's day - cf. **Ac 20:7; 1Co 11:26**
 - a. When we assemble on the first day of the week to break bread
 - b. In which we proclaim the Lord's death "till He come"
3. If we truly long for our Savior's return...
 - a. We will not forsake the practice of assembling
 - b. We will encourage one another with our presence

B. WE SHOULD PRAY...

1. Jesus taught His disciples the need to pray - **Lk 18:1-8; 21:34-36**
 - a. Lest they lose heart and faith
 - b. Lest the Day come upon them unexpectedly
2. Thus we are to pray - **Col 4:2; 1Co 16:22; Re 22:20; 2Pe 3:11-13**
 - a. Earnestly, with vigilance
 - b. Anxious for His coming
 - c. Looking for and hastening that Day
3. If we truly long for our Savior's return...
 - a. We will be fervent in our prayers
 - b. Expressing hope and anticipation concerning His return

C. WE SHOULD PREPARE...

1. Jesus taught His disciples the need to be prepared - **Mt 24:45-51; 25:1-30**
 - a. Like a wise and faithful servant
 - b. Like wise virgins waiting for the bridegroom
 - c. Like faithful servants putting their talents to work
2. Thus we are to be prepared and productive - **2Pe 3:11-14; 1Co 15:58**
 - a. With holy conduct and godliness, found in peace, without spot and blameless
 - b. Steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord
3. If we truly long for our Savior's return...
 - a. We will not only watch, but work!
 - b. Growing in grace, knowledge, and service!

CONCLUSION

1. The apostles received the promise of the Spirit...
 - a. In ten days, on the Day of Pentecost - **Ac 2:1-4**
 - b. Equipping them for service as witnesses for Christ - cf. **Ac 1:8**
2. One day we will receive the promise of the Son...
 - a. Even though it has almost been two thousand years - cf. **2Pe 3:3-9**
 - b. Rewarding us with the promise of wonderful blessings! - **2Pe 3:14; Re 21:1-7**

Until then, let us wait for the promise of the Son by **assembling, praying, and preparing...!**

The Outpouring Of The Spirit

Acts 2:1-21

INTRODUCTION

1. In our previous lesson, we saw how Jesus's disciples waited for the promise of the Spirit...
 - a. They assembled together - **Ac 1:12-14**
 - b. They prayed together - **Ac 1:14**
 - c. They prepared by selecting Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot - **Ac 1:15-26**
2. In Acts 2, we read of significant events that occurred on one day...
 - a. The outpouring of the Spirit
 - b. The first gospel sermon
 - c. The beginning of the Lord's church

[In this lesson, let's direct our focus on the first: **the outpouring of the Spirit**. Beginning with...]

I. THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE OUTPOURING

A. THE DAY...

1. It was the day of Pentecost - **Ac 2:1**
2. Called the Feast of Weeks in the OT, celebrating the wheat harvest - **Exo 34:22**
3. Pentecost means "fifty", observed fifty days after the Passover - **Lev 23:15-16**
4. Thus observed on a Sunday, the first day of the week
5. Jesus had ascended to heaven just ten days before - cf. **Ac 1:3,9-11**

B. THE EVENT...

1. "they were all with one accord in one place" - **Ac 2:1**
 - a. The entire company of 120 disciples, or just the apostles?
 - b. The pronoun "they" points back to the nearest antecedent noun ("apostles") - cf. **Ac 1:26**
 - c. "They" were sitting in one house (120 people in one house?) - cf. **Ac 2:2**
 - d. Those who spoke were Galileans, suggesting the apostles - cf. **Ac 2:6**
 - e. For the apostles were from Galilee, while the 120 disciples were from all over Palestine
2. The sudden arrival of audible and visual signs - **Ac 2:2-3**
 - a. A sound as of a mighty rushing wind, filling the house where they were sitting
 - b. Divided tongues, as of fire, sitting upon each of them
3. Enabling the apostles to speak in foreign languages - **Ac 2:4-11**
 - a. They were filled with the Holy Spirit
 - b. They began to speak with other tongues (i.e., foreign languages)
 - c. Drawing the attention of devout Jews from other nations assembled for Pentecost
 - d. Everyone heard them speak in their own language - cf. **Ac 2:6,11**

C. THE REACTION...

1. Those who understood were amazed and marveled, though perplexed - **Ac 2:7-8,12**
2. Those who did not understand the languages simply mocked - **Ac 2:13**
3. Peter explained that it was too early for them to be drunk - **Ac 2:14-15**

[The circumstances of the Spirit's outpouring were indeed amazing. What was significant about it...?]

II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE OUTPOURING

A. PROCLAIMED BY JOHN THE BAPTIST...

1. One was coming who would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire - **Mt 3:11**
2. Separating wheat from chaff, gathering the one and burning the other - **Mt 3:12**

B. FORETOLD BY JESUS...

1. Jesus told His apostles this would happen - **Ac 1:4-5**
2. It would empower them to be His witnesses - **Ac 1:8**

C. EXPLAINED BY PETER...

1. The events were prophesied by Joel - **Ac 2:16**; cf. **Joel 2:28-32**
2. Who foretold of the Spirit's outpouring - **Ac 2:17-18**
3. In a time of judgment (70 A.D.), but also a time of salvation - **Ac 2:19-21**; cf. **Mt 3:11-12**
4. What they saw and heard was evidence of Jesus' resurrection and exaltation to the right hand of God as Lord and Christ! - cf. **Ac 2:32-36**

D. MENTIONED BY PAUL...

1. The Spirit had been poured out abundantly through Jesus Christ - **Tit 3:5-7**
 - a. Saving people through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Spirit - cf. **Jn 3:5**
 - b. Leading to justification by grace and becoming heirs of eternal life - cf. **1Co 6:11**
2. By the Spirit we have been baptized and drunk freely - **1Co 12:13**
 - a. Baptized into one body (i.e., the church) - cf. **Col 1:18**
 - b. Made to drink of the Spirit - cf. **Jn 7:37-39**

CONCLUSION

1. With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost...
 - a. The promises of Joel, John the Baptist, and Jesus were being fulfilled
 - b. It proved that Jesus rose from the dead and was exalted to the right hand of God!
 - c. As foretold by Joel and John, a time of judgment and salvation was at hand!
2. With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost...
 - a. Some benefits were temporary, serving to reveal and confirm the Word
 - b. Other benefits are age-lasting, offering salvation and sanctification to all who obey

We learn more of the work of the Holy Spirit as we make our way through the Acts of the Apostles. For now, remember what Peter said to those who had witnessed the events on that day:

Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." ~ Ac 2:38-39

Three thousand Jews responded favorably by being baptized on that day (**Ac 2:41**). Have you responded in the same way...?

The First Gospel Sermon

Acts 2:22-41

INTRODUCTION

1. With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost...
 - a. The promises of Joel, John the Baptist, and Jesus were being fulfilled!
 - b. As foretold by Joel and John, a time of judgment and salvation was at hand!
2. After explaining the meaning of the miraculous events on that day, Peter...
 - a. Quickly diverted their attention from the miracles to the message
 - b. A message involving a crucified, risen, and exalted Lord!

[With Peter's message we find the proclamation of "**The First Gospel Sermon.**" For the first time, the gospel of Christ was preached and people were told how to respond. Let's take a closer look at...]

I. THE SERMON

A. JESUS ATTESTED BY GOD...

1. Peter proclaims Jesus as a Man attested by God through His miracles - **Ac 2:22**
2. Done in their midst, they could not deny the signs Jesus did while alive!

B. JESUS PUT TO DEATH...

1. By crucifixion, which they themselves did with lawless (Roman) hands - **Ac 2:23**
2. Though according to God's predetermined purpose and foreknowledge - cf. **Isa 53:10-12**
3. Jesus' death and their involvement they could not deny!

C. JESUS RAISED FROM THE DEAD...

1. God raised Jesus, having loosed the pains of death - **Ac 2:24**
2. Peter offered **three proofs** that Jesus rose from the dead
 - a. David's prophecy, fulfilled in Jesus - **Ac 2:25-31**; cf. **Ps 16:8-11**
 - b. Eyewitness testimony, by the twelve apostles - **Ac 2:32**; cf. **Ac 1:21-22**
 - c. Outpouring of the Spirit, which the audience themselves saw and heard - **Ac 2:33**
3. Compelling evidence to those who were present!

D. JESUS EXALTED AS LORD AND CHRIST...

1. The outpouring of the Spirit was the result of Jesus' exaltation - **Ac 2:33**
2. Jesus' exaltation was also prophesied by David - **Ac 2:34-35**; cf. **Ps 110:1**
3. Thus the crucified Jesus was now Lord and Christ! - **Ac 2:36**

[Powerfully, effectively, Peter presented Jesus as a good man who was crucified, raised from the dead, and now exalted as both Lord and Christ. As we continue, let's notice...]

II. THE RESPONSE

A. THE REACTION...

1. They were cut to the heart (convicted of their sin) - **Ac 2:37**

- a. This implies they believed the message about Jesus
- b. As told: “know assuredly that God has made Jesus...Lord and Christ” - cf. **Ac 2:36**
2. They asked Peter and the apostles, “What shall we do?” - **Ac 2:37**
 - a. Indeed what can one do, what should one do?
 - b. Some say there is nothing one can do, for that would suggest salvation by works
 - c. But obedience is not inconsistent with salvation by faith - cf. **Ro 1:5; 6:17; 16:25-26**
 - d. Indeed, Christ is the author of salvation to all who obey! - **He 5:9; cf. 1Pe 1:22**
 - e. Thus the gospel must be obeyed! - cf. **1Pe 4:17; 2Th 1:7-8**
 - f. Even as Paul was told to go to Damascus, where he would be told what he must do - cf. **Ac 9:6; 22:6**
 - g. And as Cornelius was to send for Peter, who would tell him what he must do - cf. **Ac 10:5-6,33,47-48**

B. THE REPLY...

1. They were told to repent - **Ac 2:38**
 - a. Which is what Jesus wanted His apostles to proclaim - cf. **Lk 24:46-47**
 - b. To repent is to make the decision to turn from one’s sins toward obeying God
2. They were told to be baptized - **Ac 2:38**
 - a. Which is what Jesus wanted His apostles to proclaim - cf. **Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15-16**
 - b. To be immersed in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins - cf. **Ac 22:16**
3. That they might received the gift of the Holy Spirit - **Ac 2:38**
 - a. That is, to receive the Holy Spirit as a gift (for more, [see here](#))
 - b. Which had been promised and now poured out - cf. **Ac 2:33**
 - c. And was now promised to all those who obey Christ - cf. **Ac 2:39; 5:32**

C. THE RESULT...

1. Following further exhortation: “Be saved (save yourselves, ESV) from this perverse generation” - **Ac 2:40**
2. 3000 gladly received his word and were baptized - **Ac 2:41**
3. Those baptized were “added” by the Lord to His church - **Ac 2:41; cf. Ac 2:47**

CONCLUSION

1. What an amazing conclusion to a day that started with amazing events...
 - a. Jesus was proclaimed as a crucified, raised and exalted Lord!
 - b. Three thousand souls responded immediately to the gospel!
2. When the gospel is shared, what should people do...?
 - a. **Believe** (know assuredly, with conviction that Jesus is the Lord who died for them) - **Ac 2:36**
 - b. **Repent of their sins** (make the decision to turn from sin and turn to God) - **Ac 2:38**
 - c. **Be baptized** for the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit - **Ac 2:38-39**

Is that what you were told to do when the gospel of Christ was shared with you? Or were you told a “different gospel” (cf. **Ga 1:6-10**)? To ensure that you are truly saved, make your response the same as those souls on the Day of Pentecost...

Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. ~ Ac 2:41

Baptism For The Remission Of Sins

Acts 2:38

INTRODUCTION

1. In response to the first gospel sermon, many asked “What shall we do?” - **Ac 2:37**
 - a. They were told to repent and to be baptized - **Ac 2:38**
 - b. The reason? “...for the remission of sins” - **ibid.**
2. Some argue that “for” *eis* in **Acts 2:38** means “because of”...
 - a. The “causal” sense of *eis* (because of) as opposed to the “purpose” sense of *eis* (in order to)
 - b. That the Greek preposition *eis* is so understood elsewhere and should be here - cf. **Mt 12:41**
 - c. That people were to be baptized because their sins were already forgiven (presumably upon repentance) - cf. **A.T. Robertson**, *Word Pictures*
 - d. Though Robertson admits this is a conclusion drawn as an interpreter, not as a grammarian - **Robertson, A. T.** (1919). *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, p. 592
 - e. And Robertson may have been biased in his interpretation, for he was...
 - 1) Founder of Baptist World Alliance in 1900
 - 2) Professor of New Testament interpretation at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
 - 3) Son-in-law of John Albert Broadus, co-founder of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

[What reasons might there be to conclude that *eis* means “in order to” or “for the purpose of” remission of sins, instead of “because of” as Robertson does? A good place to start is by comparing...]

I. TRANSLATIONS

A. WELL KNOWN TRANSLATIONS...

1. for the remission of sins (KJV, NKJV)
 2. for the forgiveness of your sins (ESV, HCSB, ISV, LEB, NAB, NASB, NCV, NET, NIV, NLT, RSV, TNIV)
- **These skirt the issue, using *for* which can indicate either cause or purpose**

B. LESSER KNOWN TRANSLATIONS...

1. so that your sins may be forgiven (New Revised Standard Version)
 2. unto the remission of your sins (American Standard Version)
 3. for the forgiveness of and release from your sins; (Amplified Bible)
 4. so that your sins will be forgiven (Contemporary English Version, God’s Word Translation, Good News Translation)
 5. so that you may have your sins forgiven (JB Phillips New Testament)
 6. so your sins are forgiven (The Message)
 7. Then your sins will be forgiven (New International Readers Version)
 8. and your sins will be forgiven (New Life Version)
 9. Your wrong ways will be forgiven you (Worldwide English NT)
 10. into remission of your sins (Wycliffe Bible)
 11. to remission of sins (Young’s Literal Translation)
- **These all translate *eis* as indicating purpose (so that, unto, then, etc.)**

[Out of 27 translations, **not one** translates *eis* as causal (because of), whereas 13 translate *eis* indicating purpose (so that, unto, into, etc.)! The reason for this becomes clearer when we consider Greek...]

II. LEXICONS

A. THAYER...

1. Citing **Ac 2:38** - *eis aphasin hamartion*, to obtain the forgiveness of sins - **Thayer, J. H.** (1889).
2. *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti*. New York: Harper & Brothers, p. 94

B. ARNDT, DANKER, & BAUER...

1. to denote purpose *in order to* - εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν *for forgiveness of sins, so that sins might be forgiven* **Mt 26:28**; cp. **Mk 1:4**; **Lk 3:3**; **Ac 2:38** - **Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W.** (2000)
2. *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature* (3rd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 290

C. BALZ & SCHNEIDER...

1. *to/for* to indicate purpose... *for* the forgiveness of sins (**Ac 2:38**) - **Balz, H. R., & Schneider, G.** (1990-).
2. *Exegetical dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, Vol 1, p.399

D. KITTEL, BROMILEY & FRIEDRICH...

1. John baptizes, and Jesus sheds His blood, for the forgiveness of sins (**Mk 1:4**; **Lk 3:3**; **Mt 26:28**; cf. **Ac 2:38**) - **G. Kittel, G. W. Bromiley & G. Friedrich, Ed.** (1964-)
2. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, Vol. 2, p. 429

E. ROBERTSON...

1. Unto the remission of your sins [*eis aphasin tōn hamartiōn hūmōn*]... In themselves the words can express aim or purpose...One will decide the use here according as he believes that baptism is essential to the remission of sins or not. My view is decidedly against the idea that Peter, Paul, or any one in the New Testament taught baptism as essential to the remission of sins or the means of securing such remission. So I understand Peter to be urging baptism on each of them who had already turned (repented) and for it to be done in the name of Jesus Christ on the basis of the forgiveness of sins which they had already received. - **Robertson, A.** (1997). *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Oak Harbor
2. *baptistheto eis aphasin ton hamartion* ((Ac. 2:38)...only the context and the tenor of N. T. teaching can determine whether 'into,' 'unto' or merely 'in' or 'on' ('upon') is the right translation, a task for the interpreter, not for the grammarian. - **Robertson, A. T.** (1919). *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*. P. 592
3. As noted earlier, Robertson may have let his religious affiliation influence his scholarship

F. MANTEY...

1. J. R. Mantey, Professor of New Testament, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary
2. Mantey contended for the "causal" sense of *eis* in **Ac 2:38**, though he classified that use of the preposition as a "remote meaning." - [From an article by Wayne Jackson](#)

3. His discussion clearly indicated, however, that he yielded to that view because of his conviction that, if baptism was “for the purpose of the remission of sins,” then salvation would be of works, and not by faith (a false conclusion, please see below ~ MAC) **H.E. Dana & J.R. Mantey**, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, New York: Macmillan, 1955, 103-04). - **ibid.**
4. However, Daniel Wallace (associate professor of New Testament Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary) wrote that in a discussion between J. R. Mantey and Ralph Marcus: “Marcus ably demonstrated that the linguistic evidence for a causal *eis* fell short of proof.” - **Daniel B. Wallace**, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), p. 370

[Baptists frequently appeal to Robertson and Mantey as authorities on this matter. Both were Baptists who may have let their theology trump their scholarship. Beside lexicographers, consider a few...]

III. COMMENTARIES

A. LONGNECKER ON ACTS 2:38..

1. Peter calls on his hearers to “repent” (*metanoēsate*). This word implies a complete change of heart and the confession of sin. With this he couples the call to “be baptized” (*baptisthētō*), thus linking both repentance and baptism with the forgiveness of sins.
2. Gaebelien, F. E., Tenney, M. C., & **Longenecker, R. N.** (1981). *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Volume 9: John and Acts*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House

B. STOTT ON ACTS 2:38...

1. Peter replied that they must *repent*, completely changing their mind about Jesus and their attitude to him, and *be baptized* in his name...Then they would receive two free gifts of God—the forgiveness of their sins (even of the sin of rejecting God’s Christ) and the gift of the Holy Spirit (to regenerate, indwell, unite and transform them).
2. **Stott, J. R. W.** (1994). *The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the church & the world*. The Bible Speaks Today. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press

C. LARKIN ON ACTS 2:38...

1. By repentance and baptism we show that we have met the conditions for receiving forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit.
2. **Larkin, W. J., Jr.** (1995). *Vol. 5: Acts*. The IVP New Testament Commentary Series. Downers, IL: InterVarsity Press

D. NEWMAN & NIDA ON ACTS 2:38...

1. *So that your sins will be forgiven* (literally “into a forgiveness of your sins”) in the Greek may express either purpose or result; but the large majority of translators understand it as indicating purpose.
2. The phrase modifies both main verbs: *turn away from your sins* and *be baptized*. The clause *your sins will be forgiven* may be restructured in an active form as “God will forgive your sins.”
3. **Newman, B. M., & Nida, E. A.** (1972). *A handbook on the Acts of the Apostles*. UBS Handbook Series. New York: United Bible Societies

E. MEYER ON ACTS 2:38...

1. *eis* denotes the *object* of the baptism, which is the remission of the guilt contracted in the

state before *metanoia*. Comp. **Ac 22:16; 1Co 6:11**

2. **Meyer, H. A. W.** (1877). *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles, Volume 1* (W. P. Dickson, Ed.) (P. J. Gloag, Trans.). Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.

[Note that these are not so-called “Church of Christ” scholars. Even so, some contend (as did Robertson and Mantey) that if baptism was “for the purpose of the remission of sins,” then salvation would be of works, and not by faith. This is a false conclusion! For consider what has been said by these...]

IV. THEOLOGIANS

A. AUGUSTINE...

1. Referring to the efficacy of baptism, he wrote that “the salvation of man is effected in baptism”; also, that a person “is baptized for the express purpose of being with Christ.” - as quoted by **Jack W. Cottrell**, *Baptism And The Remission of Sins*, College Press, 1990, p. 30
2. In regards to the necessity of baptism, he refers to the “apostolic tradition, by which the Churches of Christ maintain it to be an inherent principle, that without baptism...it is impossible for any man to attain to salvation and everlasting life.” - **ibid.**, p. 30

B. THOMAS AQUINAS...

1. “...Men are bound to that without which they cannot obtain salvation. Now it is manifest that no one can obtain salvation but through Christ...”
2. “But for this end is baptism conferred on a man, that being regenerated thereby, he may be incorporated in Christ.”
3. “Consequently it is manifest that all are bound to be baptized: and that without baptism there is no salvation for men.” - **ibid.**, p. 31

C. MARTIN LUTHER...

1. In answer to the question, “What gifts or benefits does Baptism bestow?”, Luther replied in his Small Catechism, “It effects forgiveness of sins.” - **ibid**, p. 32
2. He also wrote concerning the sinner: “Through Baptism he is bathed in the blood of Christ and is cleansed from sins.” - **ibid.**, p. 32
3. Again, he wrote: “To put it most simply, the power, effect, benefit, fruit, and purpose of Baptism is to save.” - **ibid.**, p. 34
4. In his commentary on **Ro 6:3**, he wrote: “Baptism has been instituted that it should lead us to the blessings (of this death) and through such death to eternal life. Therefore it is necessary that we should be baptized into Jesus Christ and His death.” - *Commentary On Romans*, Kregel Publications, p. 101
5. In his commentary on **Ga 3:27**, he wrote: “This is diligently to be noted, because of the fond and fantastical spirits, who go about to deface the majesty of baptism, and speak wickedly of it. Paul, contrariwise, commendeth it, and setteth it forth with honourable titles, calling it, ‘the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost’. And here also he saith, that ‘all ye that are baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.’ Wherefore baptism is a thing of great force and efficacy.” - *Commentary On Galatians*, Kregel Publications, p.222
6. In response to those who would call this a kind of works-salvation, he said “Yes, it is true that our works are of no use for salvation. Baptism, however, is not our work but God’s.” - as quoted by **Jack W. Cottrell**, *Baptism And The Remission of Sins*, College Press, 1990, p. 33

D. BEASLEY-MURRAY...

1. G.R. Beasley-Murray, Principal of Spurgeon's College in London, later Senior Professor at Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, KY, wrote a modern classic, *Baptism In The New Testament*.
2. He gives chapters which thoroughly discuss baptism in the Gospels, in Acts, in Paul's writings, and in other apostolic writings
3. In his introduction, Beasley-Murray wrote:
 - a. "This book is intended to offer a Baptist contribution to the discussions on baptism that are taking place throughout the Christian world."
 - b. "But the indefinite article should be observed; the impression must not be given that my interpretations are characteristic of Baptist thought generally."
 - c. At most it can be claimed that they represent a trend gaining momentum among Baptists in Europe."
 - d. "I have striven to interpret the evidence of the New Testament as a Christian scholar, rather than as a member of a particular Christian Confession." - G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism In The New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962, pp. v-vi.
4. From his chapter on baptism in Acts, Beasley-Murray wrote:
 - a. "Consequently, baptism is regarded in Acts as the occasion and means of receiving the blessings conferred by the Lord of the Kingdom. Admittedly, this way of reading the evidence is not characteristic of our thinking, but the intention of the author is tolerably clear." - **ibid.** p. 102
 - b. "Whatever the relationship between baptism and the gift of the Spirit elsewhere in Acts, there appears to be no doubt as to the intention of **Acts 2:38**; the penitent believer baptized in the name of Jesus Christ may expect to receive at once the Holy Spirit, even as he is assured of the immediate forgiveness of his sins." - **ibid.**, p. 108
5. Some concluding statements were:
 - a. "In light of the foregoing exposition of the New Testament representations of baptism, the idea that baptism is a purely symbolic rite must be pronounced not alone unsatisfactory but out of harmony with the New Testament itself. Admittedly, such a judgment runs counter to the popular tradition of the Denomination to which the writer belongs..."
 - b. "The extent and nature of the grace which the New Testament writers declare to be present in baptism is astonishing for any who come to the study freshly with an open mind."
 - c. "...the 'grace' available to man in baptism is said by the New Testament writers to include the following elements:
 - 1) forgiveness of sin, **Ac 2.38** and cleansing from sins, **Ac 22.16, 1Co 6.11**;
 - 2) union with Christ, **Ga 3.27**, and particularly union with Him in his death and resurrection, **Ro. 6.3ff, Co 2.11f**, with all that implies of release from sin's power, as well as guilt, and the sharing of the risen life of the Redeemer, **Ro 6.1-11**;
 - 3) participation in Christ's sonship, **Ga 3.26f**;
 - 4) consecration to God, **1Co 6.11**, hence membership in the Church, the Body of Christ, **1Co 12.13, Ga 3.27-29**;
 - 5) possession of the Spirit, **Ac 2.38, 1 Co 6.11, 12.13**, and therefore the new life in the Spirit, i.e., regeneration, **Ti 3.5, Jn 3.5**;
 - 6) grace to live according to the will of God, **Ro 6.1ff, Col 3.1ff**;

- 7) deliverance from the evil powers that rule this world, **Col 1.13**;
 - 8) the inheritance of the Kingdom of God, **Jn 3.5**, and the pledge of the resurrection of the body, **Ep 1.3f, 4.30**.
- **Ibid.**, pp. 263-264

[These theologians believed strongly in justification by grace through faith, yet did not find that it precluded the role of baptism in receiving the remission of sins. Clearly, there are strong reasons to consider *eis* in **Ac 2:38** to indicate *purpose* (“in order to”). But in anticipation of some objections, allow me to share some...]

V. RELATED OBSERVATIONS

A. BAPTISM DOES NOT SAVE BECAUSE IT MERITS SALVATION...

1. Nearly everyone I talk to who takes issue with baptism being necessary, or having any part of the gospel plan of salvation, initially misunderstands this point
 - a. They assume that if baptism is necessary, one is saved by meritorious works
 - b. They assume that if one is baptized for the remission of sins, one has earned their salvation
2. But they need to listen carefully to Martin Luther...
 - a. In response to those who would call this a kind of works-salvation, he said “Yes, it is true that our works are of no use for salvation.”
 - b. Baptism, however, is not our work but God’s.” - as quoted by **Jack W. Cottrell**, *Baptism And The Remission of Sins*, College Press, 1990, p. 33

B. BAPTISM SAVES BECAUSE GOD IS AT WORK...

1. Note that Peter clearly says that “*baptism doth also now save us*” (KJV) - **1Pe 3:21**
2. But as observed by Luther, it is God who saves us in baptism:
 - a. He is the one at work in baptism - **Col 2:11-13** (cf. “*the working of God*”)
 - b. Other than possessing faith in Christ and God, MAN IS PASSIVE in baptism
 - 1) In fact, baptism is a more passive act than “saying the sinner’s prayer”!
 - 2) Like a patient submitting to the skill of a physician to remove cancer
 - 3) So we, seeking the removal of the cancer of sin, submit to the Great Physician to cut away our sins by the blood of Christ, which He does in baptism
 - c. It is God who makes us alive together with Christ, having forgiven all trespasses - **Col 2:13**
3. As stated in **ISBE**: “Baptism does not produce salutary effects ~ex~opere~operato~, i.e. by the mere external performance of the baptismal action. No instrument with which Divine grace works does. Even the preaching of the gospel is void of saving results if not ‘mixed with faith’ (He 4.2, AV).”
 - a. It is not the “act” of immersion that saves, though salvation occurs at that time
 - b. It is **God** who saves in baptism, by virtue of grace, when one believes in Christ!
 - c. But because God commands baptism, and saves us in baptism, it is proper to say...
 - 1) With Peter: “*baptism doth also now save us*” - **1Pe 3:21**
 - 2) With Jesus: “*He who believes and is baptized shall be saved...*” - **Mk 16:16**

Before we close, let’s return to our text and notice carefully...]

C. THE CONTEXT OF ACTS 2:38...

1. The Jews’ question

- a. They wanted to know what to do to remove their guilt - **Ac 2:36-37**
- b. Any instruction by Peter would be understood by them in this light, and must so be understood by us today
2. Peter's answer
 - a. He gave two commands: 1) repent and 2) be baptized - **Ac 2:38**
 - b. That the first imperative (repent) was second person plural, and the second imperative (be baptized) was third person plural, and the phrase (for the remission of sins) reverts back to second person plural, is a distinction without a difference
 - 1) "The phrase (for the remission of sins, MAC) modifies both main verbs: *turn away from your sins* and *be baptized*." - **Newman, B. M., & Nida, E. A.** (1972). *A handbook on the Acts of the Apostles*. UBS Handbook Series. New York: United Bible Societies
 - 2) "In my view, the phrase *eis aphasis hamartion* in Acts 2:38 applies in sense to both of the preceding verbs." - **Bruce Metzger**, editor of the *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, a companion volume to the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (4th rev. ed.)*. London; New York: United Bible Societies, and teacher at Princeton Theological Seminary - [Correspondence with David Padfield](#)
 - 3) "Since the expression *eis aphasis hamartion* is a prepositional phrase with no verbal endings or singular or plural endings, I certainly agree that grammatically it can go with both repentance and baptism. In fact, I would think that it does go with both of them." - **Arthur L. Farstad**, chairman of the New King James Executive Review Committee and general editor of the NKJV New Testament - **ibid.**
 - 4) "Whenever two verbs are connected by *kai* (and) and then followed by a modifier (such as a prepositional phrase, as in Acts 2:38), it is grammatically possible that modifier modifies both the verbs, or only the latter one...It does not matter that, here in Acts 2:38, one of the verbs is second person plural...and the other is third person singular...They are both imperative, and the fact that they are joined by *kai* ('and') is sufficient evidence that the author may have regarded them as a single unit to which his modifier applied." - **John R. Werner**, International Consultant in Translation to the Wycliffe Bible Translators. Also a consultant to Friberg and Friberg with the *Analytical Greek New Testament*, and from 1962 to 1972 professor of Greek at Trinity Christian College - **ibid.**
 - c. Since the conjunction *kai* "and" joins the two commands together, what is said of one command applies to the other
 - 1) If they were to be baptized "because of" remission of sins...
 - 2) ...then they were also to repent "because of" the remission of sins!
 - d. This would present two problems
 - 1) Where else are people told to repent "because" their sins are already forgiven?
 - 2) Peter would have failed to tell them what to do to remove their guilt!
3. Luke's summary
 - a. Peter told them what to do repeatedly, and they responded - **Ac 2:40-41**
 - b. "Be saved (save yourselves, ESV, NLT, NET) from this perverse generation"
 - c. "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized"

-- **They saved themselves by being baptized, and thus the immediate context confirms baptism was "in order to" the remission of sins, not "because of"!**

CONCLUSION

1. Allow me to share these words that I believe summarizes both **the issue** and **the solution** to properly

understanding “baptism for the remission of sins”...

A number of commentators seek to diminish the force of the phrase “for the forgiveness of sins” at this point, apparently seeking to safeguard the doctrine of salvation by grace. They take the preposition “for” (εἰς, *eis*) to mean “because of” rather than “in order to.” Peter, they say, meant he was baptized because of the forgiveness of sins, implying that such forgiveness had already been granted by the time baptism was administered.

This position disregards the very common use of *eis* in the New Testament to mean “for the purpose of, in order to.” In **Matthew 26:28** where this exact phrase appears, Jesus says his blood is poured out” for (*eis*) the forgiveness of sins. It would be absurd to argue that the phrase means “because of” and that Jesus’ blood was poured out because sins had already been forgiven.

Beyond this, the command to be baptized is only one of the imperatives Peter gave. “Be baptized” is joined to “repent” with “and.” Whatever Peter says about the forgiveness of sins follows from both imperatives. Just as repentance is needed “for the purpose of” the forgiveness of sins, so is baptism.

This position need not rob the plan of salvation of its basis in the grace of God. Both imperatives expect action to be taken on the part of the sinner. Yet Peter considered neither to be a work which merits salvation, but merely the response of faith dictated by the prophesy he had already cited—“everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (**Acts 2:21**).

- **Gaertner, D. (1995). *Acts. The College Press NIV Commentary. Joplin, MO: College Press.***

2. Salvation is truly by grace through faith, and not of works done to earn or merit salvation...
 - a. It is not by faith alone, because we need the grace of God, the blood of Christ, along with the washing of renewal and regeneration of the Holy Spirit - cf. **Tit 3:4-7**
 - b. So when the penitent believer submits to the command of Christ to be baptized, they can rest assured at that moment the blood of Christ washes away all their sin! - cf. **Ac 22:16**

And so we say with Peter to all who are convicted of their sins, who seek forgiveness by asking “What shall we do?”:

“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God calls to him.” ~ Ac 2:38-29

Hopefully they will “save themselves” by gladly accepting the word of Christ’s apostle, by being baptized this very day...! - **Ac 2:40-41**

The Gift Of The Holy Spirit

Acts 2:38

INTRODUCTION

1. In his first gospel sermon, Peter offered hope to his guilt-stricken audience...
 - a. The remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit
 - b. Provided they repent and were baptized - **Ac 2:36-39**
2. What is the gift of the Holy Spirit...?
 - a. Is the Holy Spirit Himself, or something the Spirit gives?
 - b. If the former, then in what way is the Spirit a gift?

[I understand that the gift of the Holy Spirit to be **the Holy Spirit Himself**. While I respect those who think otherwise, here are some reasons for my view...]

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT AS THE GIFT

A. GRAMMATICAL CONSIDERATIONS...

1. “gen., receive the Spirit as a gift, Ac 2:38.” - **Arndt & Gingrich**, Dorea, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, p.210
 2. ““you will receive (God’s) gift, the Holy Spirit’ Ac 2:38.” - **Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A.** (1996). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains*. New York: United Bible Societies
 3. “δωρεά, ἄς, ἡ *gift, free gift, benefit*; in the NT used only of spiritual and supernatural gifts that are freely given by God to believers, including eternal life (JN 4.10), the Holy Spirit (AC 2.38)” - **Friberg, T., Friberg, B., & Miller, N. F.** (2000). *Vol. 4: Analytical lexicon of the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI.
 4. “Unique to Acts is δωρεὰ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος (Acts 2:38; 10:45), but here the gen. is epexegetical: the gracious gift is the Holy Spirit.” - **Balz, H. R., & Schneider, G.** (1990-). *Exegetical dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans.
 5. “With the epexegetical gen. of the thing given, the Holy Ghost, Ac 2:38.” - **Thayer**, Dorea, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p.161
 6. “In Ac 2:38, ‘the gift of the Holy Ghost’, the clause is epexegetical, the gift being the Holy Ghost Himself.” - **Vine**, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p.147
 7. “The genitive is appositional, as in v.33 the promise is the Holy Spirit, so here the gift is the Holy Spirit.” - **Lenski**, *The Acts Of The Apostles*
 8. “of the Holy Spirit - this clause is an appositional genitive with ‘the gift’ and means ‘the gift, namely, the Holy Spirit.’” - **Kistemaker**, *Acts, New Testament Commentary*, p.110
- **That the Spirit is the gift in Ac 2:38 is the consensus of Greek scholars**

B. CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS...

1. The immediate context
 - a. Jesus spoke of the Spirit to His apostles as “the Promise of the Father” - **Ac 1:4-5**
 - b. Peter spoke of the outpouring of the Spirit as “the promise of the Holy Spirit” - **Ac 2:33**
 - c. Having just mentioned the “the gift of the Holy Spirit”, Peter then says “For the promise is to you...” - **Ac 2:38,39**

- d. What promise is Peter referring to in **Ac 2:39**?
 - 1) The context suggests the promise already mentioned and just offered as a gift
 - 2) I.e., the promised Holy Spirit who has been poured out is now available as a gift to those who obey
 - 2. The remote context
 - a. The Spirit is given (i.e., a gift) to those who obey God - **Ac 5:32**
 - b. The same phrase (“the gift of the Holy Spirit”) is used elsewhere when it clearly means the Holy Spirit Himself as the gift - cf. **Ac 10:44-47**
 - c. Other passages refer to the Holy Spirit as that given to Christians - **Jn 7:37-39; 2Co 1:21-22; 5:5; Ga 4:6; Tit 3:5-6**
- **That the Spirit is the gift is supported by both immediate and remote contexts**

C. HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS...

- 1. “The Holy Ghost is one of the promises of the New Testament, **Ac 2:38-39.**” - **Barton W. Stone**, *Works of Elder B. W. Stone*
 - 2. “The phrase ‘the gift of the Holy Ghost’ occurs in **Ac 2:38; 10:45**, and in both places must be understood as equivalent to the ‘the Holy Spirit as a gift’” - **T. W. Brents**, *The Gospel Plan Of Salvation*
 - 3. “The gift of the Spirit promised in **Ac 2:38** was the Spirit itself” - **David Lipscomb**, *Queries and Answers*
 - 4. “The expression means the Holy Spirit as a gift” - **J.W. McGarvey**, *New Commentary on Acts of Apostles*
 - 5. “Certainly the gift of the Spirit is the Spirit itself given.” - **Moses Lard**, *Lard’s Quarterly*
 - 6. “The gift of the Holy Spirit is not some definite thing the Holy Spirit gives, but the Holy Spirit as a gift.” - **R. L. Whiteside**, *Reflections*
 - 7. “I believe the Holy Spirit is the gift to those who repent and are baptized.” - **Ferrell Jenkins**, *The Finger Of God*
- **That the Spirit is the gift in Ac 2:38 is a view that has been held by many; these are but a sampling of those in the Restoration Movement**

[For such reasons, I understand the gift of the Holy Spirit to be **the Holy Spirit Himself**. In what way, then is the Spirit a gift? Allow me to summarize just a few blessings of the Spirit for the Christian...]

II. THE BLESSINGS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A. HE REGENERATES...

- 1. Saving one through the washing of regeneration (baptism) - **Tit 3:4-7**
- 2. Causing one to be reborn, in conjunction with the Word - **1Pe 1:22-23**

B. HE SANCTIFIES...

- 1. A process begun when washed and justified - **1Co 6:11**
- 2. A process that continues with the aid of the Word - cf. **Jn 17:17; Ac 20:32; Ep 6:17**

C. HE INDWELLS...

- 1. Otherwise we do not belong to Christ - **Ro 8:9**
- 2. He will give life to our mortal bodies - **Ro 8:11**
- 3. Which ought to motivate us to live holy lives - **1Co 6:18-20**

D. HE EMPOWERS...

1. That we might put to death the deeds of the flesh - **Ro 8:12-13**
2. Serving as God's instrumental agent whereby He strengthens us - **Ep 3:16,20**

E. HE INTERCEDES...

1. In times of weakness, when we do not know how to pray - **Ro 8:26**
2. Making intercession for the saints of God - **Ro 8:27**

F. HE SEALS...

1. A seal marking us as belonging to God - **Ep 1:13; 4:30; 2Co 1:22**
2. "It is our conviction that when a person obeys the gospel he is given the Holy Spirit. In this way God seals the person. In effect God says 'This person belongs to me; let everyone take note.'" - **Ferrell Jenkins, *The Finger of God*, p.19**

G. HE GUARANTEES...

1. An earnest or guarantee as a promise of our inheritance - **Ep 1:14; 2Co 1:22; 5:5**
2. "The Holy Spirit is God's earnest (down payment) to the Christian as assurance of the complete promised inheritance. There is no comfort here for the advocate of the impossibility of apostasy. The Christian can 'grieve' the Spirit (Ep 4:30). We can forfeit the down payment and not receive the inheritance." - **Ferrell Jenkins, *ibid.***

H. HE BEARS FRUIT IN OUR LIVES...

1. Leading those who walk in the Spirit - **Ga 5:16-18; Ro 8:5-6**
2. Producing spiritual graces of Christ-like conduct - **Ga 5:22-26**
3. Engendering a deepening love for God as our Father- **Ga 4:6; Ro 8:15-16**
4. Filling us with love and hope - **Ro 5:5; 15:13**

CONCLUSION

1. What is the gift of the Holy Spirit in **Acts 2:38**? I am mostly persuaded by ...
 - a. The overwhelming consensus of Greek scholars
 - b. The immediate and remote context in which the phrase is found
 - c. What else is taught regarding the Spirit in the life of the Christian
2. I believe "the gift of the Holy Spirit" is **the Spirit Himself...**
 - a. Given to those who become children of God - cf. **Ga 4:6**
 - b. A promise related to the indwelling of the Spirit - cf. **1Co 6:19**
3. Even if "the gift of the Holy Spirit" in **Ac 2:38** refers to something the Spirit gives...
 - a. Other passages speak of the Spirit as being given to the Christian - **Jn 7:37-39; Ac 5:32**
 - b. What a wonderful gift, one that refreshes the Christian like "rivers of living water"!

There is much more that could be said about the Holy Spirit, His role in the scheme of redemption, and work in the life of the Christian (cf. [The Holy Spirit Of God](#)).

But one does not have to have a comprehensive understanding of the Holy Spirit to begin enjoying the blessings of the Spirit.

They need only to respond to the gospel as proclaimed by the apostle Peter... - cf. **Ac 2:38-39**

The First Church Of Christ

Acts 2:42-47

INTRODUCTION

1. During His ministry, Jesus said He would build His church - **Mt 16:18**
2. With the preaching of the first gospel sermon...
 - a. Those that gladly received the Word were baptized - **Ac 2:41**
 - b. They numbered 3000 souls - **ibid.**

[From our text (**Ac 2:42-47**) we learn that thus began the first church of Jesus Christ, located in Jerusalem. What was it like? What should we be like today? Note first that they were...]

I. DEVOTED TO APOSTLES' DOCTRINE (Ac 2:42)

A. REGARDING THEIR DEVOTION...

1. Jesus expected people to accept their teachings - **Jn 13:20; Mt 28:20**
2. He gave the apostles the Holy Spirit to guide them - **Jn 16:12-13**
3. Thus the apostles' word was to be received as the Word of God - **1Co 14:37; 1Th 2:13-14**

B. DO WE HAVE THIS DEVOTION...?

1. Many churches today do not, allowing societal trends to supplant the Word
2. We need to heed Christ and His apostles regarding this - **Mt 15:8-9; 2Th 2:15**

[If we are to be a true church of Christ, we must emulate the Jerusalem church in its steadfastness to the apostles' doctrine. Next we note that they were...]

II. DEVOTED TO SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP (Ac 2:42)

A. REGARDING THEIR DEVOTION...

1. Godly people have always delighted in "spiritual sharing" - **Ps 122:1; Lk 22:14-16; 1Jn 1:3**
2. Sharing by assembling together is crucial to spiritual wellbeing - **He 10:24-25**

B. DO WE HAVE THIS DEVOTION...?

1. Many Christians today do not, allowing many things to hinder their assembling
2. We need to set our priorities straight - cf. **Mt 6:33; Lk 10:41-42**

[A true church will be made up of members who value the principle of assembling and sharing in spiritual matters. The first church of Christ was also...]

III. DEVOTED TO BREAKING BREAD (Ac 2:42)

A. REGARDING THEIR DEVOTION...

1. The context would suggest this refers to the Lord's Supper, which is a type of fellowship for it is called a sharing, a communion - **1Co 10:16**
2. Jesus Himself instituted the Supper, and was observed weekly - **1Co 11:23-34; Ac 20:7**

B. DO WE HAVE THIS DEVOTION...?

1. Sadly many churches do not, observing it monthly, quarterly, annually, or not at all
2. Others allow many things to hinder their observance: family, jobs, recreation

[But a true church of Christ will provide weekly opportunities for its members to partake, and its members will make diligent effort to participate. Another aspect of a true church of Christ is being...]

IV. DEVOTED TO STEADFAST PRAYER (Ac 2:42)

A. REGARDING THEIR DEVOTION...

1. Jesus taught His disciples to pray and not lose heart - **Lk 11:1-4; 18:1-8**
2. He now serves as our High Priest, through whom we can pray - **He 4:14-16**

B. DO WE HAVE THIS DEVOTION...?

1. We are taught to pray fervently, frequently - **1Th 5:17; Col 4:2**
2. Sadly, many churches and Christians are negligent in this important spiritual activity

[If we desire to be a true church of Christ, then let us be a people of prayer! As we continue in our text, we learn from the first church of Christ that they were...]

V. DEVOTED TO BROTHERLY LOVE (Ac 2:44-46)

A. REGARDING THEIR DEVOTION...

1. Demonstrated in our text, but also later - **Ac 4:32-35**
2. Such love was a sign of true discipleship - **Jn 13:34-35**
3. Other churches had similar love for their brethren - **1Co 16:15; 1Th 4:9-10**

B. DO WE HAVE THIS DEVOTION...?

1. We are to love one another fervently - **1Pe 1:22**
2. In dire circumstances, would we be willing to emulate the early disciples? - cf. **1Jn 3:16-17**

[While we may not face the same circumstances, we should prepare ourselves should similar occasions arise. *** As we continue examining the first church of Christ, we notice that they were...]

VI. DEVOTED TO DAILY SERVICE (Ac 2:46)

A. REGARDING THEIR DEVOTION...

1. Note the phrase “continuing daily”
2. They did not serve the Lord just one day a week
3. Perhaps it was “daily service” that resulted in “daily additions” - cf. **Ac 2:47; 5:42**

B. DO WE HAVE THIS DEVOTION...?

1. Serving the Lord every day of the week?
2. Including serving one another? - cf. **He 3:12-14**

[A true New Testament church will emulate the first church of Christ with daily service among its members. Consider also that the Jerusalem church was...]

VII. DEVOTED TO PURPOSEFUL UNITY (Ac 2:46)

A. REGARDING THEIR DEVOTION...

1. Note the phrase “with one accord”
2. United in their worship, and in their concern - cf. **Ac 4:32**
3. The sort of unity for which Jesus prayed - **Jn 17:20-23**

B. DO WE HAVE THIS DEVOTION...?

1. The unity the apostles worked diligently to maintain? - **1Co 1:10; Ep 4:1-3; Php 2:1-2; 1Pe 3:8**
2. Oneness of mind, purpose, and work, with a joyful and humble attitude?

[A true church of Christ will work hard to fulfill the prayer of Christ and maintain the unity of the Spirit. Another observation about the devotion of the first church of Christ...]

VIII. DEVOTED TO JOYFUL SIMPLICITY (Ac 2:46)

A. REGARDING THEIR DEVOTION...

1. Note the phrase “with gladness and simplicity of heart”
2. The word “simplicity” involves “humility associated with simplicity of life” - **Louw Nida**
3. Likely reflecting their contentment with what they had - cf. **1Ti 6:6-10**

B. DO WE HAVE THIS DEVOTION...?

1. Having learned contentment like Paul had? - **Php 4:11-12**
2. A contentment based on trust in God and willingness to share? - cf. **1Ti 6:17-19**

[A true church of Christ will consist of members, whether rich or poor, who go about their lives with joyful simplicity. They will also go about their lives like the first church of Christ, being...]

IX. DEVOTED TO PRAISING GOD (Ac 2:47)

A. REGARDING THEIR DEVOTION...

1. Despite their difficulties, they lived their lives praising God
2. Like the faithful saints under the Old Covenant - **Ps 145:1-2; 146:1-2; 147:1**

B. DO WE HAVE THIS DEVOTION...?

1. Delighting in opportunities to praise God?
2. Offering the sacrifice of praise continually? - cf. **He 13:15**

[A true church of Christ will be filled with people who love to praise God, not grumbling or complaining. Finally, we observe that the first church of Christ was...]

X. DEVOTED TO PLEASING PEOPLE (Ac 2:47)

A. REGARDING THEIR DEVOTION...

1. Note the phrase “having favor with all the people”
2. As the NLT puts it, “enjoying the goodwill of all the people”
3. A consequence of following the example of their Lord - e.g., **Lk 2:52; Ro 14:17-19**

B. DO WE HAVE THIS DEVOTION...?

1. Living lives that promotes goodwill from those who are lost?
2. Lives that as far as depends on us are peaceful and blameless? - cf. **Ro 12:17-21; 1Co 10:32-33; 1Ti 2:1-4; Php 2:14-15**

CONCLUSION

1. With the first church of Christ, God has given us an example of what a true church of Christ should be like: **devoted to...**
 - a. Apostles' doctrine
 - b. Spiritual fellowship
 - c. Breaking bread
 - d. Steadfast prayer
 - e. Brotherly love
 - f. Daily service
 - g. Purposeful unity
 - h. Joyful simplicity
 - i. Praising God
 - j. The people
2. Too often, churches today are more like those described in the following poem...

“FACTS 19:71-72”

Every individual
Each with his own opinions.
Competing for his own possessions
Looks out for his own,
Assuming there are no needs.
And once a week
Going to their private church
(With an annual communion)
Each return to his castle,
Fellowshipping with his family
Over good “native” cooking
After a short silent “grace”,
And glad to be away from everybody.
Occasionally there are
New faces at church,
And last year
Someone was saved.

~ **Myron Augsburg**

Brethren, may this never be true of us...!

*** Conclude first part here if lesson is presented in two parts

The Second Gospel Sermon

Acts 3:1-26

INTRODUCTION

1. In **“The First Gospel Sermon”**, we learned the apostle Peter...
 - a. Proclaimed the death, burial, resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ - **Ac 2:22-35**
 - b. Called for a response of faith, repentance, and baptism for remission of sins - **Ac 2:36-41**
2. We will now consider **“The Second Gospel Sermon”**, also preached by Peter...
 - a. Found in chapter three of the book of Acts
 - b. Which took place at Solomon’s porch in the temple

[Let’s begin by reviewing the circumstances that provided the opportunity for the sermon...]

I. THE SETTING

A. PETER AND JOHN WENT TO THE TEMPLE...

1. Christians had been gathering daily in the temple - **Ac 2:46**
2. Peter and John arrived at the “hour of prayer, the ninth hour” (3 p.m.) - **Ac 3:1**

B. MAN LAME FROM BIRTH WAS HEALED...

1. Who was left daily at the gate of the temple called “Beautiful” - **Ac 3:2-3**
 - a. Perhaps the Nicanor Gate made of Corinthian bronze
 - b. At the East entrance to the Court of Women
 - c. To ask alms from the people entering the temple, who asked Peter and John for alms
2. Peter healed him in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth - **Ac 3:4-8**
 - a. The lame man expected alms, but Peter gave him something better silver and gold!
 - b. Peter took him by the hand and lifted him up
 - c. His feet and ankles received strength, the miracle was immediate and total!

C. A CROWD GATHERED...

1. Drawn by the scene of the man walking, praising God - **Ac 3:9-10**
 - a. Who was walking, praising God
 - b. The people were amazed, wondering, for they knew he had been lame from birth
2. They gathered in the porch called “Solomon’s” - **Ac 3:11**
 - a. A colonnaded area along the eastern wall of the temple area - **ESVSB**
 - b. With double columns 38 feet tall, spanning 49 feet, supporting cedar ceilings - **AYBD**

[Note the similarity to the events in Acts 2: a miraculous event occurred, it attracted the attention of the people. As before, Peter used the opportunity to preach the gospel...]

II. THE SERMON

A. JESUS PROCLAIMED AS MIRACLE EXPLAINED...

1. The miracle was not by the power or godliness of Peter and John - **Ac 3:12**
2. It was through faith in God’s Servant, Jesus - **Ac 3:13-16**

- a. Whom the God of their fathers had glorified!
- b. Whom they had delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate!
- c. Whom they denied, asking for a murderer to be released in his stead!
- d. Whom they killed, but God raised from the dead and seen by eyewitnesses!
- e. Whom Peter describes as the Holy One, the Just, the Prince of Life!
- 3. Through faith in His name the lame man was healed - **Ac 3:16**
 - a. Note well: it was Peter and John's faith in Jesus, not the lame man's faith
 - b. For the lame man had not expected a miracle, but silver or gold - cf. **Ac 3:4-7**

B. REPENTANCE COMMANDED AS IGNORANCE ACKNOWLEDGED...

- 1. Peter acknowledges that they and their rulers acted in ignorance - **Ac 3:17**
- 2. What occurred was foretold and fulfilled by God - **Ac 3:18**; cf. **Ac 2:23**
- 3. Yet ignorance was no excuse, so they must "repent and be converted" - **Ac 3:19**
 - a. **Repent** - change their minds their minds regarding Jesus and their sinful ways
 - b. **Be converted** - turn back to God, which may imply baptism - cf. **Ac 2:38**; **1Pe 3:21**
- 4. Reasons to repent and turn to God are given - **Ac 3:19-26**
 - a. That their sins may be blotted out (remitted) - cf. **Ac 2:38**; **22:16**
 - b. That times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord (possibly referring to the gift of the Spirit)- cf. **Ac 2:38**; **Jn 7:37-39**; **Ga 4:6**; **5:22-23**
 - c. That God may send Jesus Christ (a reference to His second coming) - cf. **2Pe 3:12**
 - 1) Who was preached to them before (via the prophets)
 - 2) Whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things (of which the prophets had also spoken)
 - d. Lest they be utterly destroyed
 - 1) For Moses spoke of this Prophet (Jesus) - cf. **Deu 18:15**
 - 2) Those who will not Him, God will require it of them - cf. **Deu 18:18-19**
 - e. They were sons of the prophets, and of the covenant God made with their fathers
 - 1) A covenant made with Abraham, to bless the world in his seed - **Gen 12:3**; **22:18**
 - 2) A promise fulfilled by God through His Servant Jesus, Whom He raised
 - a) Who was sent by God to bless them
 - b) To bless them by turning them away from their sins

CONCLUSION

- 1. The response to "**The Second Gospel Sermon**" proved two-fold...
 - a. A negative response by the religious leaders - **Ac 4:1-3**
 - b. A positive response by many who heard (2000 believed) - **Ac 4:4**
- 2. Again we see that gospel preaching involved...
 - a. Proclaiming the death, burial, resurrection and lordship of Jesus Christ
 - b. Calling on people to respond with repentance (with faith and baptism implied)
 - c. Offering the remission of sins and refreshing gift of the Spirit
- 3. We also learn that it included proclaiming...
 - a. The character of Jesus (Servant, Holy, Just, Prince of life, Christ, Prophet)
 - b. The return of Jesus (i.e., His second coming)

How have you responded to the gospel preaching? In faithful obedience, or have you been hardening your heart by refusing to obey God's Prophet and His apostles in faith, repentance and baptism...?

The Times Of Refreshing

Acts 3:19

INTRODUCTION

1. As Peter preached his second gospel sermon...
 - a. He called on his audience to repent and be converted - **Ac 3:19**
 - b. He promised that their sins would be blotted out - **ibid.**
2. He also promised that “times of refreshing” will come from the presence of the Lord...
 - a. What are “the times of refreshing”?
 - b. Is it something to experience now, or in the future?

[The word *refreshing* occurs only once in the New Testament, making it difficult to ascertain the precise meaning of the word (**Kistemaker**). But let us consider...]

I. THREE POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS

A. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST...

1. Some connect “the times of refreshing” with “the times of restoration” - cf. **Ac 3:19,21**
2. Blessings accompanying the return of Christ:
 - a. “the future times of refreshing when Jesus returns” - **C.E. Arnold (ZIBBC)**
 - b. “likely synonymous with the concept of “restoration” in v. 21” - **J.B. Polhill (NAC)**

B. THE BLESSINGS OF SALVATION...

1. Some view it as general blessings accompanying salvation in Christ
2. A foretaste of what is to come:
 - a. “a kind of advance anticipation of the full and final ‘refreshment’” - **N.T. Wright (AE)**
 - b. “periodic seasons in which the forgiven and restored believer experiences the refreshing nearness of the Lord” - **S.J. Kistemaker (BNTC)**
 - c. “features of the new age” - **F.F. Bruce (NICNT)**

C. THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT...

1. Others suggest that it refers to “the gift of the Holy Spirit” in **Ac 2:38**; compare:
 - a. Repent (2:38) = Repent (3:19)
 - b. Be baptized (2:38) = Be converted (3:19)
 - c. For the remission of sins (2:38) = That your sins may be blotted out (3:19)
 - d. Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (2:38) = That times of refreshing may come (3:19)
2. Refreshment from the indwelling Holy Spirit in the life of the Christ:
 - a. “The reference of these words is, doubtless, to the gift of the Spirit; for they occupy the same place here that the gift of the Spirit did in the former discourse”. - **J.W. McGarvey (ACTS)**
 - b. “In 2:38 the steps are, (1) Repentance, (2) baptism, (3) remission of sins, (4) the gift of the Holy Spirit. Here, the order is (1) Repentance, (2) to turn, (3) the blotting out of sins, (4) the seasons of refreshing. One passage aids in interpreting the other.” - **B.W. Johnson (PNT)**
 - c. “A comparison with Peter’s promises in 2:38 suggests that the Holy Spirit may be the one

- who brings this refreshment.” - **D.G. Peterson (PNTC)**
- d. “people are ‘refreshed’ in their spirits when the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within them.”
- **ESV Study Bible**

[All three explanations have merit. But I suggest Peter had in mind **the gift of the Spirit**, not only because of similarities between **Ac 2:38** and **Ac 3:19**, but because what is revealed elsewhere about...]

II. THE REFRESHING GIFT OF THE SPIRIT

A. THE METAPHOR OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT...

1. A blessing promised by **God** in Isaiah - **Isa 44:3**
 - a. “I will pour water on him who is thirsty”
 - b. “I will pour My Spirit...and My blessing”
2. A blessing promised by **Jesus** in John - **Jn 7:37-39**
 - a. “If any one thirsts, let him come to Me and drink”
 - b. “Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water”

B. THE REFRESHING NATURE OF THE SPIRIT...

1. God’s love is poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit - **Ro 5:5**
2. Assistance in putting to death the deeds of the body - **Ro 8:12-13**
3. Endearment engendered to God (“Abba, Father”) - **Ro 8:14-16; Ga 4:6**
4. Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit - **Ro 14:17**
5. Abundance of hope by the power of the Holy Spirit - **Ro 15:13**
6. Washing, sanctification, and justification by the Spirit - **1Co 6:11; Tit 3:4-7**
7. A deposit (guarantee) of our inheritance - **2Co 1:21-22; 5:5; Ep 1:13-14**
8. Strengthening with might the inner man - **Ep 3:16,20**
9. Producing the nine-fold fruit of the Spirit - **Ga 5:22-23**

C. THIS REFRESHMENT IS AVAILABLE, PROVIDED...

1. We do not **grieve** the Spirit - **Ep 4:29-31; cf. 1Co 6:18-20; 1Th 4:3-8**
 - a. Through sinful conduct instead Christ-like conduct
 - b. Because our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit
 - c. We have been called to holiness, and God has given us of His Spirit
2. We do not **quench** the Spirit - **1Th 5:19-20; cf. Ep 6:17**
 - a. By despising prophecies, i.e., the Word of God
 - b. For the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit

CONCLUSION

1. Exactly what “the times of refreshing” means might be uncertain...
 - a. Whether present or future, “refreshing times” are promised to Christians
 - b. The Holy Spirit in particular qualifies as a refreshing gift for the Christian!
2. In light of what the Spirit does for the Christian, how tragic it would be...
 - a. If we were to **quench the Spirit** through sinful conduct and neglect
 - b. When He is given to Christians in order to **quench our spiritual thirst!**

If you desire to be “refreshed” with “living water”, then believe, repent, and be baptized that you might receive the promised gift of the Holy Spirit (**Jn 7:37-39; Ac 2:38-39; 3:19**)...!

The Times Of Restoration

Acts 3:21

INTRODUCTION

1. As Peter preached his second gospel sermon...
 - a. He called on his audience to repent and be converted - **Ac 3:19**
 - b. He promised that their sins would be blotted out - **ibid.**
2. Also that Jesus must remain in heaven until “the times of restoration of all things”... - **Ac 3:21**
 - a. What are “the times of restoration”?
 - b. Is it limited to events to occur at the end times, just before Jesus returns?
 - c. Or does it encompass the period between Jesus’ first coming and His final coming?

[The language in the text allows for either understanding. To be sure we understand the distinction between the two views, let’s first summarize them...]

I. TWO PROPOSED EXPLANATIONS

A. REGENERATION OF ALL THINGS AT THE END TIMES...

1. Many connect the word “restoration” with “regeneration” - cf. **Mt 19:28**
2. That when Christ comes (or shortly before) all things will be restored, or regenerated
3. Including the heavens and the earth, currently in bondage to pain and decay, but presumably will be “restored” (regenerated) as a permanent dwelling for the righteous - cf. **Ro 8:18-22**

B. PROPHETIC FULFILLMENT THROUGHOUT THE MESSIANIC AGE...

1. The word “restoration” can mean establishment or fulfillment
 - a. “the Greek could just as easily mean that a process of restoration is already underway and that Jesus’ return will mark its climax and dramatic conclusion.” - **D.G. Peterson**
 - b. ‘Establishment’ or ‘fulfillment’ is equally well attested, and makes good sense in the present context, in reference to the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecy - **F.F. Bruce**
2. As seen in the **RSV**: “whom heaven must receive until the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old.” - **Ac 3:21**
3. This understanding is supported further by Peter: “and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, *have also foretold these days.*” - **Ac 3:24**

[“It is difficult to determine the exact force of the term *restoration* in this connection” (**McGarvey**). Even so, I believe the second explanation gains merit when one considers the following question...]

II. THE END TIMES: REGENERATION OR RECREATION?

A. THE REGENERATION OF ALL THINGS...

1. Many believe that when Jesus returns the current heavens and earth will be purified by fire (i.e., refurbished, regenerated, not annihilated)
2. A cosmic redemption, if you will, to serve as the eternal home of the righteous (not to be confused with any millennial reign on the earth)

3. **Hoekema** (and other amillennialists) gives four reasons for renewal rather than annihilation:
 - a. The word for “new” (*kainos*) means “new in nature or in quality,” not new in the sense of “totally other”
 - b. Paul speaks of a universe longing to be liberated from corruption, not replaced - cf. **Ro 8:19-22**
 - c. The continuity between our old and new bodies is an analogy of the old earth being made new
 - d. If God has to annihilate this present cosmos, then His original purpose for it will have been thwarted and Satan will have won a victory

-- **The Bible And The Future, Anthony Hoekema, p. 280-281**

B. THE RECREATION OF ALL THINGS...

1. Putting **Ro 8:19-22** aside for the moment, consider what is revealed elsewhere:
 - a. The earth and the heavens will perish - **Ps 102:25-26**; cf. **He 1:10-12**
 - b. The heavens will vanish away like smoke, the earth grow old like a garment - **Isa 51:6**
 - c. Heaven and earth will pass away - **Mt 24:35**; **Mk 13:31**; **Lk 21:33**
 - d. The Lord will shake the earth and heaven, indicating its removal - **He 12:26-27**
 - e. The earth will be burned up, the heavens will be dissolved, the elements will melt, therefore we look for new heavens and a new earth - **2Pe 3:10-13**
 - f. Earth and the heaven will have fled away, no place found for them - **Re 20:11**
 - g. There will a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth will have passed away - **Re 21:1**
2. Every indication is that earth and the heavens will be *annihilated*; what then of **Ro 8:19-22** and the four arguments offered above in favor of *renewal*?
 - a. It is true that “new” (*kainos*) means “new in nature or in quality”, but if something is new in sense of “totally other” could it not also be “new in nature or in quality”?
 - b. **Ro 8:19-22** does speak of the universe longing to be liberated from corruption, but for what purpose? Note carefully what is actually written, that the creation:
 - 1) “eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God” - **Ro 8:19**
 - 2) “will be delivered...into the glorious liberty of the children of God” - **Ro 8:21**
 - 3) Seeks not its own revealing or glorious liberty, but that of the children of God!
 - 4) Is not actually said to be refurbished when freed of its corruption
 - 5) The focus in the passage is on what happens for the people of God when the creation is finally freed (which it will be when annihilated by fire)
 - c. The analogy between our bodies and the earth with the heavens is never made by Paul
 - d. Any victory by Satan when the earth and heavens are removed is negated by a new heavens and new earth, just as any victory by Death and Hades is negated when our decayed bodies are raised in incorruption and immortality as spiritual bodies - **1Co 15:52-55**

CONCLUSION

1. When Jesus returns, there will first be a *de-creation* followed by a *re-creation*...
 - a. All things will not be regenerated or restored, but annihilated by fire
 - b. All things will pass away, and there will be found no place for them
 - c. In their place will be a new heavens and a new earth: new in “nature and quality”, because it will also be new in the sense of “totally other”
2. If such is to be the case, then it is best to understand “*the restoration of all things*” as...

- a. Translated by the RSV: “whom heaven must receive until the time for establishing all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old.” - **Ac 3:21**
- b. Referring to the fulfillment of those things foretold by the prophets concerning the Messiah and His kingdom

This fulfillment of prophecy began with the first coming of Christ and the establishment of His reign (cf. *“the prophets...have also foretold of these days”* - **Ac 3:24**), and will continue until all is fulfilled with the events of His second coming and the culmination of His reign (cf. **1Co 15:22-26**).

Living in the days of such fulfillment, and looking forward to the Lord’s return, are we living as we should...?

“Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation...” - **2Pe 3:14-15**

The Persecution Begins

Acts 4:1-31

INTRODUCTION

1. Following Peter's healing of the lame man, and his second gospel sermon...
 - a. Religious leaders in Jerusalem became greatly disturbed - **Ac 4:1-2**
 - b. While many people believed, with believers numbering 5000 - **Ac 4:4**
2. This conflicting reaction led to the persecution of the church in Jerusalem...
 - a. What was the nature of this persecution?
 - b. What lessons might we learn from it?

[The fourth chapter in Acts will answer such questions. So let's begin by reviewing...]

I. THE ARREST OF PETER AND JOHN

A. BROUGHT BEFORE THE COUNCIL...

- 1 Peter and John taken into custody - **Ac 4:1-4**
 - a. By the priests, captain of the temple, and the Sadducees
 - b. Who were upset by their preaching in Jesus the resurrection from the dead - cf. **Ac 23:8**
 - c. Kept overnight until the next day
 - d. The number of those who believed came to be about five thousand
2. Their appearance before the Council (Sanhedrin) - **Ac 4:5-7**
 - a. Before the rulers, elders and scribes
 - b. Before Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, along with other family members of the high priest
 - c. Peter and John challenged to explain by what power or name they have acted
3. Peter's response as led be the Spirit - **Ac 4:8-12**
 - a. Were they being judged for doing a good deed to a helpless man in making him well?
 - b. It was by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth he was made whole
 - 1) Whom they crucified - cf. **Ac 2:23,36; 3:14-15**
 - 2) Whom God raised from the dead - cf. **Ac 2:24,34; 3:15**
 - 3) The stone rejected by the builders, now the chief cornerstone - cf. **Ps 118:22**
 - c. There is salvation in no other name under heaven - cf. **Mt 1:21; Jn 14:6**

B. THREATENED NOT TO TEACH...

1. The council's reaction - **Ac 4:13-18**
 - a. What the council saw
 - 1) The boldness of Peter and John - contra **Jn 20:19**
 - a) Perceived as uneducated and untrained men
 - b) Realized as having been with Jesus
 - 2) The man who had been healed
 - a) Standing with Peter and John - cf. **Ac 3:11**
 - b) Against whose healing nothing could be said
 - b. What the council reasoned
 - 1) A notable has occurred, evident to all, none could deny

- 2) To prevent further spread, to threaten the apostles
- c. What the council did
 - 1) Commanded Peter and John
 - 2) Not to speak at all or teaching in the name of Jesus
- 2. Peter and John's reply - **Ac 4:19-20**
 - a. Shall they listen to the council or to God? - cf. **Ac 5:29**
 - b. They cannot but speak what they have seen and heard - cf. **Ac 1:8; 2:32; 3:15**
- 3. Peter and John released - **Ac 4:21-22**
 - a. Upon further threatening, but finding no way of punishing them
 - b. Because of the people, who glorified God for what had been done - cf. **Ac 3:9-10**
 - c. For the man who was healed was over forty years old (lame from birth) - cf. **Ac 3:2**

[Thus the persecution against the Jerusalem church begins with threats (**Ac 4:18,21**) How did they respond? What can we learn from their response? As we continue, we read of...]

II. THE PRAYER FOR BOLDNESS

A. PETER AND JOHN RETURN...

- 1. To their brethren - **Ac 4:23**
- 2. To report all that had been said to them - cf. **Ac 4:18**

B. THEIR PRAYER...

- 1. Addressed to the Lord God, Creator of all things - **Ac 4:24-28**
 - a. Who prophesied by the mouth of His servant David - cf. **Ps 2:1**
 - b. Of the nations' rage and plotting against His Christ - cf. **Ps 2:2-3**
 - c. As fulfilled by Herod and Pilate, by Gentiles and Israel
 - d. Who did according to His predetermined purpose - cf. **Ps 2:4-6; Ac 2:22**
- 2. Asking for all boldness in the face of such threats - **Ac 4:29-30**
 - a. That His servants may speak His word
 - b. That His hand might stretch out
 - 1) To heal, to do signs and wonders - cf. **Ac 4:33; 5:12,15-16**
 - 2) Through the name of His holy Servant Jesus - cf. **Ac 3:16; 4:10**

C. THE ANSWER...

- 1. The place in which they were assembled was shaken - **Ac 4:31**; cf. **Ac 2:2**
- 2. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit - cf. **Ac 2:4**
- 3. They spoke the word of God with boldness - cf. **Ac 4:29**

CONCLUSION

- 1. The persecution against the church began with threats...
 - a. Warned not to speak nor teach in the name of Jesus - **Ac 4:18**
 - b. Which Peter and John were determined not to heed - **Ac 4:19-20**
- 2. The response to this persecution was two-fold...
 - a. Fellowship with one another - **Ac 4:23,32**; cf. **Ac 12:5,12**
 - b. Prayer through which they received boldness - **Ac 4:29,31**; cf. **Ep 6:18-20**

Should we experience persecution, may we likewise respond with fellowship, prayer, and boldness...!

Communal Christianity

Acts 4:32-37

INTRODUCTION

1. The first church in the local sense was the church at Jerusalem...
 - a. Noted for its dedication to apostolic doctrine and brotherly love - cf. **Ac 2:42-47**
 - b. Which continued to exist as described by Luke in our text - cf. **Ac 4:32-37**
2. The example of the Jerusalem church has often led some to ask...
 - a. Did the church practice **communism** as we know it today?
 - b. Is having “all things in common” to be **the norm** for all churches?

[In an effort to answer such questions, let’s begin by reviewing what is revealed about...]

I. COMMUNAL CHRISTIANITY IN JERUSALEM

A. THEY HAD ALL THINGS IN COMMON...

1. Mentioned twice by Luke - **Ac 2:44; 4:32**
2. Involving the selling of possessions, goods, homes, lands - **Ac 2:45; 4:34**
3. Dividing the proceeds among all, as any had need - **Ac 2:45; 4:34-35**

B. SPECIFIC EXAMPLES, GOOD AND BAD...

1. Joses (Barnabas) - **Ac 4:36-37**
 - a. Sold a piece of land
 - b. Brought the proceeds to the apostles
2. Ananias and Sapphira - **Ac 5:1-4**
 - a. Sold a possession
 - b. Kept back part of the proceeds, lied about it
3. Needy widows - **Ac 6:1**
 - a. Recipients of a daily distribution
 - b. But Hellenist widows were being neglected

[Without question the early church in Jerusalem practiced what could be called a form of “communal” Christianity. But was it **communism**? Is it to be **the norm** for churches today? Consider some...]

II. OBSERVATIONS ABOUT COMMUNAL CHRISTIANITY

A. IT WAS NOT COMMUNISM...

1. Communism: advocacy of a classless society in which private ownership has been abolished and the means of production and subsistence belong to the community
2. Communism **requires** that people of a society sell their property and give the proceeds to the community (or state)
3. In the Jerusalem church the selling and giving was done **freely**, not out of compulsion
4. As was giving by Gentile churches later on - cf. **2Co 8:12; 9:7**

B. IT WAS NOT THE NORM FOR ALL...

1. Ananias and Sapphira did not have to sell their possession, nor did they have give the full amount; their sin was lying about the actual amount - cf. **Ac 5:1-4,7-8**
2. Some in Jerusalem kept their homes; e.g., Mary - **Ac 12:12**
3. Christians elsewhere had their homes
 - a. Aquila and Priscilla, in Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome - **Ac 18:1-3; 1Co 16:19; Ro 16:3-5**
 - b. Nymphas, near Colosse - **Col 4:15**
 - c. Philemon, near Colosse, with a guest room - **Phm 1:2,22**
4. Rich Christians were commanded to do good, be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, but it had to be of their own free will - **1Ti 6:17-19**

CONCLUSION

1. The example of the church in Jerusalem is an inspiration to all...
 - a. Of brotherly love
 - b. Of free-will giving
2. It may have occurred due to unique circumstances...
 - a. Many new converts had been visiting from other nations on Pentecost - **Ac 2:1-11**
 - b. Staying after conversion to learn more, their resources would soon be exhausted
 - c. Those who lived in Jerusalem were willing to sell possessions to help them
3. But the “communal Christianity” practiced there should not be viewed as...
 - a. Communism or the approval of it
 - b. Required (the norm) for all churches

Rather, “communal Christianity” as practiced in Jerusalem can be considered **a viable option**, should the need for benevolence arise, and where it can be practiced without any sort of compulsion...

Ananias And Sapphira

Acts 5:1-11

INTRODUCTION

1. Previously, we examined the remarkable liberality in the Jerusalem church...
 - a. As people sold lands and possessions to aid their brethren - **Ac 2:44-45; 4:32-35**
 - b. As exemplified by Joses, named Barnabas by the apostles - **Ac 4:36-37**
2. In vivid contrast, we are then told of the example of Ananias and Sapphira...
 - a. A husband and wife who sold a possession, giving part of the proceeds to the apostles
 - b. Who were both struck dead!

[Why did this happen? What can we learn from this remarkable incident in the history of the early church? Let's take a closer look at the case of Ananias and Sapphira, beginning with...]

I. THEIR PLOT TO DECEIVE

A. FROM THE TEXT...

1. Ananias and his wife Sapphira sold a possession - **Ac 5:1**
2. Ananias kept back part of the proceeds, his wife knowing - **Ac 5:2**
3. He brought a part of the proceeds to the apostles - **Ac 5:2**

B. OBSERVATIONS...

1. From the context we know that they intended to deceive the apostles
2. To give the impression they gave the full amount of the proceeds
3. Evidently to appear magnanimous in their giving

[What happens next may at first seem shockingly extreme...]

II. THE DEATH OF ANANAIAS

A. FROM THE TEXT...

1. Peter challenges Ananias - **Ac 5:3-4**
 - a. Why has he allowed Satan to enter his heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?
 - 1) The land was his to use
 - 2) The money was his to control
 - b. He has not lied to men, but to God!
2. Ananias drops dead - **Ac 5:5-6**
 - a. Upon hearing the words of Peter
 - b. Creating great fear on those who heard
 - c. Carried out by young men and buried

B. OBSERVATIONS...

1. Noted in our lesson on "**Communal Christianity**"
 - a. The selling of homes, lands, possessions, et all, was free-will offerings
 - b. They did not have to sell their possessions, nor give 100% of the proceeds

2. The relationship of the apostles to the Holy Spirit
 - a. Lying to the apostles was lying to the Holy Spirit
 - b. Because the apostles were inspired by the Holy Spirit - cf. **Jn 16:13**
3. The relationship of the Holy Spirit to God
 - a. Peter identifies the Holy Spirit as God - **Ac 5:3-4**
 - b. One of many passages that illustrates the deity of the Holy Spirit

[Not long after the death of her husband, just as shocking is...]

III. THE DEATH OF SAPPHIRA

A. FROM THE TEXT...

1. Peter confronts Sapphira - **Ac 5:7-9**
 - a. She enters three hours later, unaware of her husband's death
 - b. Did she sell the land for a certain amount? Yes, she answers
 - c. Why did she agree with her husband to the test the Spirit?
 - d. Those who buried her husband were ready to carry her out
2. Sapphira falls dead - **Ac 5:10-11**
 - a. Immediately at the feet of Peter
 - b. Carried out by young men and buried by her husband
 - c. Creating great fear upon all the church and all who heard

B. OBSERVATIONS...

1. The accountability of Sapphira
 - a. Her complicity in the sin of lying was exposed
 - b. She could not use submission to her husband as an excuse
2. The punishment of death for lying to the apostles
 - a. Reminiscent of the deaths of Nadab & Abihu - **Lev 10:1-3**
 - b. Both incidents occur at the beginning of their respective dispensations
 - 1) Nadab and Abihu struck down just as the Law of Moses begins
 - 2) Ananias and Sapphira struck down just as the Church begins
 - c. Both make the point: God's Word and His spokesmen must be taken seriously
3. The first case of "church discipline"?
 - a. Jesus and His apostles taught church discipline - **Mt 18:15-17; 1Co 5:1-13; 2Th 3:6-15**
 - b. One effect of such discipline is to preserve the purity of the church - **1Co 5:6-8**
 - c. Of course, church discipline today calls for withdrawal from the one who refuses to repent, not death - cf. **Mt 18:17; 1Co 5:13; 2Th 3:6,14**
 - d. But even the extreme case of Ananias and Sapphira reveals the positive effect "church discipline" can have in the eyes of the community (i.e., respect) - cf. **Ac 5:11,13-14**

CONCLUSION

1. From the case of Ananias and Sapphira, we learn that apostles were to be taken seriously...
 - a. Lying to the apostles was lying to the Holy Spirit (i.e., God!)
 - b. Just as heeding their words is heeding the words of God - cf. **Jn 13:20**
2. Do we take the apostles of Christ seriously today...?
 - a. We may not lie to them as did Ananias and Sapphira
 - b. But do we respect their teaching as did the early church? - cf. **Ac 2:42; 1Th 2:13**

The Miracles Of The Apostles

Acts 5:12-16

INTRODUCTION

1. Following the death of Ananias and Sapphira, we read about...
 - a. The signs and wonders being done by the apostles - **Ac 5:12-13**
 - b. Where they were able to heal all those brought to them - **Ac 5:14-16**
2. “**The Miracles Of The Apostles**” provide an opportunity to make observations about...
 - a. The success of the apostles’ miracles
 - b. The purpose of the apostles’ miracles

[Similar observations can be made about the miracles of Jesus and Paul, which can serve to critique so-called miracles today (are they really miracles?). So let’s begin by noting...]

I. THE SETTING OF THE MIRACLES

A. IN JERUSALEM...

1. During the early days of the church - **Ac 5:12**; cf. **Ac 2:43**
2. Daily in the temple, in Solomon’s Porch - **Ac 5:12**; cf. **Ac 2:46; 3:1-10**
3. Even in the streets, as the shadow of Peter went by - **Ac 5:15**

B. OTHER OCCASIONS...

1. The miracles of Jesus - **Mk 6:53-56**
 - a. In the land of Gennesaret
 - b. In villages, cities, the country
2. The miracles of Paul - **Ac 19:11-12**
 - a. In the city of Ephesus
 - b. During his extended stay while on his third journey

[In both rural and urban settings, wonderful things happened when true men of God were healing the sick. So let’s consider carefully...]

II. THE SUCCESS OF THE HEALINGS

A. IN JERUSALEM...

1. The sick were laid out in the street on beds and couches - **Ac 5:15**
2. People from surrounding cities brought the sick and possessed - **Ac 5:16**
3. **Note well:** “they were all healed”

B. OTHER OCCASIONS...

1. Jesus in the land of Gennesaret - **Mk 6:53-56**
 - a. When people heard He was there, they gathered the sick
 - b. Wherever He went, they brought the sick to Him, on beds laying them in the market
 - c. **Note well:** “as many as touched Him were made well”
2. Paul at Ephesus - **Ac 19:11-12**

- a. God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul
- b. Even handkerchiefs brought from his body to the sick healed them
- c. **Note well:** implied is that all who received such ministrations were healed

[The crowds that gathered around the apostles, Jesus, and Paul were understandable, for the success of these three men was remarkable. Now for an observation or two about...]

III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MIRACLES

A. IN JERUSALEM...

1. The effect of the miracles led to high esteem among the people - **Ac 5:13**
2. The purpose of apostolic miracles was to confirm their message - **Mk 16:17-20**

B. OTHER OCCASIONS...

1. The purpose of Jesus' miracles was to confirm His claims - **Jn 5:36; 10:25,37-38**
 - a. People who saw such signs made the connection - **Jn 3:2; 9:30-33**
 - b. Jesus did refrain from doing miracles on one occasion for lack of faith - **Mt 13:58**
 - c. **But note well:** He never failed any miracle that He Himself attempted!
2. The purpose of apostolic miracles was to confirm they were from God - **Ac 14:3**
 - a. God bore witness to His Word by gifts of the Holy Spirit - **He 2:3-4**
 - b. The apostles did not always heal those they knew were sick - **2Ti 4:20**
 - c. **But note well:** the apostles never failed any miracle they attempted!

CONCLUSION

1. Today, there are self-proclaimed miracle workers who say God is working through them...
 - a. Large crowds often attend their meetings, hoping to be healed
 - b. But many people leave such meetings, disappointed that they were not healed
 - c. Despite having such healers lay their hands on them, and pray for them
2. When true servants of God worked miracles, everyone was healed...!
 - a. Whether it was the apostles, Jesus, or Paul
 - b. The purpose of miracles to confirm they were servants of God
 - c. And God left no room for doubt: **all were healed!**
3. It is important to remember that such miracles were for a specific purpose...
 - a. They were to confirm the message and messengers as being from God
 - b. Once the Word of God was completely revealed and confirmed, there is no longer a need for such miracles of confirmation - cf. **1Co 13:8-10**
 - c. Which explains why such miracles are not being done today
 - d. Contrary to claims made by false teachers who mislead many

When we carefully study the miracles of Jesus and those of His apostles, comparing them with the so-called miracle healers of today, we can easily see the difference...

The Persecution Intensifies

Acts 5:17-42

INTRODUCTION

1. Previously, we saw where persecution against the church began...
 - a. Religious leaders in Jerusalem had become greatly disturbed - **Ac 4:1-2**
 - b. They made threats against Peter and John, but nothing more - **Ac 4:18-22**
2. We saw how the apostles responded to the threats...
 - a. With fellowship and prayer for boldness - **Ac 4:23,29**
 - b. Strengthened by the Spirit, they continued to preach with boldness - **Ac 4:31**

[But as the church in Jerusalem grew, so did the persecution against it. Beginning with **Ac 5:17**, let's read about the apostles of Christ...]

I. IMPRISONED, THEN FREED

A. PUT INTO THE COMMON PRISON...

1. By the high priest and those of the Sadducees - **Ac 5:17-18**
2. Who were filled with indignation - cf. **Ac 4:1-2,18,21**

B. FREED BY AN ANGEL OF THE LORD...

- a. Who came at night, opened the prison doors, and brought them out - **Ac 5:19**
- b. Who charged them to return to the temple and speak the words of life - **Ac 5:20**
- c. Which they did, entering the temple in the early morning - **Ac 5:21**

[For the first time, we read of an angel freeing servants of the Lord (cf. **Ac 12:5-11**). But it is not long before the apostles are...]

II. BEFORE THE COUNCIL

A. THE COUNCIL CALLS FOR THE APOSTLES...

1. To be brought from the prison - **Ac 5:21**
2. But the officers are unable, for the apostles are not there! - **Ac 5:22**
3. Despite secure doors and the guards standing outside - **Ac 5:23**

B. THE APOSTLES BROUGHT FROM THE TEMPLE...

1. The council is informed that the apostles are teaching in the temple - **Ac 5:24-25**
2. The apostles are brought to the council peacefully, for fear of the people - **Ac 5:26**

C. THE HIGH PRIEST CHALLENGES THE APOSTLES...

1. Were they not strictly commanded to teach in Jesus' name? - **Ac 5:27-28**
2. "You have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, intending to bring this Man's blood on us!"

D. PETER AND THE APOSTLES RESPOND...

1. We ought to obey God rather than man - **Ac 5:29**

2. God has raised Jesus, whom you murdered - **Ac 5:30**; cf. **Ac 4:19**
3. God has exalted Jesus to His right hand - **Ac 5:31**; cf. **Ac 2:33,36**
 - a. To be Prince and Savior
 - b. To give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins - cf. **Lk 24:47**
4. We are witnesses to these things - **Ac 5:32**
 - a. And so is the Holy Spirit
 - b. Whom God has given to those who obey Him - cf. **Ac 2:38-39**

[The council's immediate reaction was anger, and plotted to kill them (**Ac 5:33**). But one of the council, like Nicodemus a good and fair man (cf. **Jn 3:1-2; 7:50-51; 19:38-39**), stands up to speak...]

III. THE ADVICE OF GAMALIEL

A. GAMALIEL STANDS IN THE COUNCIL...

1. A Pharisee, a teacher of the law - **Ac 5:34**
2. Held in respect by all the people - cf. **Ac 22:3**
3. Who commands the apostles to be put outside

B. GAMALIEL CAUTIONS THE COUNCIL...

1. To be careful what they do with the apostles - **Ac 5:35**
2. To remember what happened to Theudas - **Ac 5:36**
 - a. A man claiming to be someone, joined by 400 men
 - b. He was slain, and those who obeyed him came to nothing
3. To remember what happened to Judas of Galilee - **Ac 5:37**
 - a. He drew away many people after him
 - b. He also perished, and those who obeyed him dispersed
4. His advice regarding the apostles: leave them alone - **Ac 5:38-39**
 - a. If their work is of men, it will come to nothing
 - b. If it is of God, it cannot be overthrown and you will be fighting against God

[The Pharisee and teacher, Gamaliel, displayed wisdom and justice that spared the apostles' death on that occasion. But despite his efforts, the apostles were not released unharmed...]

IV. THE APOSTLES BEATEN

A. THE COUNCIL'S DECISION....

1. They agree with Gamaliel to let the apostles go - **Ac 5:40**
2. But first beat them and commanded them not to speak in the name of Jesus - cf. **Ac 4:17-18**

B. THE APOSTLES' REACTION...

1. Left rejoicing they were counted worthy to suffer for His name - **Ac 5:41**; cf. **Mt 5:10-12**
2. Continued to teach and preach Jesus daily in the temple and in every house - **Ac 5:42**

CONCLUSION

1. From threats to beatings, the persecution was intensified against the church
2. Once again, the apostles show how to respond to persecution: **with joy!** - cf. **Lk 6:22-23; Ro 5:3-4; 1Pe 2:19; 3:14; 4:14; Jm 1:2-4**

The Selection Of The Seven

Acts 6:1-7

INTRODUCTION

1. As the disciples in Jerusalem increased, problems increased as well...
 - a. Problems from without - **Ac 4:1-3; 5:17-18**
 - b. Problems from within - **Ac 5:1-11**
2. In chapter six of Acts, difficulties continue...
 - a. Complaints from those within - **Ac 6:1-7**
 - b. Persecution from those without - **Ac 6:8-15**

[In **Ac 6:1-7**, with “**The Selection Of The Seven**” we read how the church successfully addressed a serious complication...]

I. THE PROBLEM

A. CHURCH GROWTH...

1. The number of the disciples was multiplying - **Ac 6:1**; cf. **Ac 2:41; 4:4; 5:14**
2. Increasing numbers in a congregation often lead to problems
 - a. It is more difficult to know everyone
 - b. Cliques begin to form based on common interests
 - c. Misunderstandings become more frequent

B. HELLENISTS VS. HEBREWS...

1. Hellenists
 - a. Jews living in Jerusalem but originally connected with Diaspora Judaism and characterized by the use of Greek as their principle language, especially for worship and scripture - **AYBD**
 - b. The Hellenists in **Ac 6:1** are Christian Jews, while in **Ac 9:29** they represent the larger group of Diaspora Jews who have not converted - **ibid.**
2. Hebrews
 - a. Aramaic-speaking Jews who held to their native language and culture
 - b. In this passage they are evidently Christian Jews as well

C. DAILY DISTRIBUTION...

1. Feature of communal Christianity practiced in Jerusalem - **Ac 6:1**; cf. **Ac 2:44-45; 4:35**
2. Which was not the norm practiced elsewhere - see “[Communal Christianity](#)”

D. NEGLECT OF WIDOWS...

1. Churches would provide support for widows, with qualification - cf. **1Ti 5:3-16**
2. The Hellenist widows were being neglected - **Ac 6:1**
3. Leading to a complaint by the Hellenists against the Hebrews

E. DISTRACTING THE APOSTLES...

1. The twelve (apostles) summon the multitude - **Ac 6:2**

2. “It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables”
3. Leaders should not be distracted from their primary responsibilities - e.g., **Exo 18:13-26**
4. **Note well:** The apostles’ duty was prayer and the ministry of the Word - cf. **Ac 6:4**

[The problem threatened the care of the widows, the unity of the church and the spread of the Word. The solution serves as an example for solving church-related problems...]

II. THE SOLUTION

A. THE APOSTLES PROPOSED...

1. The apostles summon the multitude of disciples - **Ac 6:2**
2. The apostles explain the problem to the disciples - **ibid.**
3. The apostles propose a solution - **Ac 6:3-4**
 - a. The congregation to select seven men
 - b. Men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom
 - c. Whom the apostles could appoint over the distribution
 - d. So the apostles can be devoted to prayer and the Word

B. THE MULTITUDE PLEASED...

1. The proposal pleases the multitude - **Ac 6:5**
2. They select seven men - **ibid.**
 - a. Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, later the first martyr - **Ac 7:57-60**
 - b. Philip, who later served as an evangelist - **Ac 8:4; 21:8**
 - c. Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch
3. **Note well:** the church, while mostly Hebrews, appointed seven Hellenists!

C. THE SEVEN APPOINTED...

1. Set before the apostles by the multitude - **Ac 6:6**
2. Appointed with prayer and the laying on of hands - **ibid.**
 - a. Indicating acceptance and approval of those who have been selected by the congregation - cf. **1Ti 5:22**
 - b. Beseeching God’s blessing and protection on those who serve - cf. **Ac 13:1-3**
 - c. It may have also involved imparting a miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit via the apostles - cf. **Ac 6:8; 8:6-7,18; 19:6; Ro 1:11**

[The congregation was pleased, and the widows’ need was met. Not surprising, therefore, was...]

III. THE RESULT

A. WORD WAS SPREAD...

1. Once again the Word of God had free course - **Ac 6:7; cf. 2Th 3:1**
2. They were able to devote themselves to the ministry of the Word - cf. **Ac 5:42**

B. DISCIPLES WERE MULTIPLIED...

1. Once again the growth of the church grew exponentially - **Ac 6:7**
2. Which is what happens when the Word of God is spread - cf. **Ac 2:41,47; 4:4**

C. PRIESTS WERE OBEDIENT...

1. A great many of the priests were obedient to the faith - **Ac 6:7**

2. Perhaps many who earlier believed but were ashamed to confess - cf. **Jn 12:42-43**

CONCLUSION

1. Church problems are a common occurrence...
 - a. Especially as churches grow rapidly
 - b. Satan does what he can to hinder growth - cf. **Mt 13:24-25**
2. Church problems can be a great hindrance...
 - a. Creating ill will among members
 - b. Distracting members from important tasks
3. Church problems can be solved successfully...
 - a. By informing the congregation of the problem
 - b. By involving the congregation in finding a solution

From “**The Selection Of The Seven**”, a congregation can learn how to turn a trial into a triumph...!

The First Martyr

Acts 6:8-7:60

INTRODUCTION

1. As the church in Jerusalem grew, persecution intensified...
 - a. Beginning with threats not to preach - **Ac 4:18-21**
 - b. Followed by beatings and more threats - **Ac 5:40**
2. The persecution soon reached a new level...
 - a. Beginning with the martyrdom of Stephen, one of the seven - **Ac 6:5**
 - b. Leading to a great persecution against the whole church - **Ac 8:1**

[Stephen was the first martyr who gave his life for Christ. A man “full of faith and of the Holy Spirit” (**Ac 6:5**), his example has inspired many to suffer for Christ in a similar manner. To appreciate why, let’s begin by reviewing...]

I. STEPHEN’S ARREST

A. PROMPTED BY HIS MINISTRY...

1. Full of faith and power, he did great wonders and signs among the people - **Ac 6:8**
2. He disputed with some from the Synagogue of the Freedmen - **Ac 6:9-10**
 - a. Cyrenians, Alexandrians (Africa), and those from Cilicia and Asia (Turkey)
 - b. Who were unable to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke

B. LED BY FALSE ACCUSATIONS...

1. By men secretly induced to charge him with blasphemy against Moses and God - **Ac 6:11-12**
 - a. Who stirred up the people, the elders and the scribes
 - b. To seize and bring him to the council (the Sanhedrin)
2. By false witnesses set up to charge Stephen with blasphemy - **Ac 6:13-14**
 - a. Against the holy place (temple): “We have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place”
 - b. Against the law (of Moses): “and change the customs which Moses delivered to us”
3. Stephen may have referred to what Jesus spoke about:
 - a. Destroying the temple and rebuilding it in three days - **Mk 14:58**
 - b. Which John explained referred to the temple of His body - **Jn 2:19-21**
4. Stephen may also referred to what Jesus spoke about:
 - a. The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple - **Mt 24:1-2; Mk 13:1-2; Lk 21:5-6**
 - b. Which did affect customs that Moses delivered (e.g., animal sacrifices ceased)

C. ACCOMPANIED BY COMPOSURE...

1. All who sat in the council looked steadfastly at him - **Ac 6:15**
2. They saw his face as the face of an angel - **ibid.**
3. Evidence that he was filled with the Spirit - cf. **Ac 6:5; Ga 5:22-23**

[Stephen faced his accusers with “a presence marked by confidence, serenity, and courage.” (**EBC**) With the question of the high priest (**Ac 7:1**), the stage is set for Stephen’s defense...]

II. STEPHEN'S DEFENSE

A. GOD'S DEALINGS WITH ABRAHAM...

1. The call to leave Mesopotamia - **Ac 7:2-3**
2. The sojourn in Canaan - **Ac 7:4**
3. The promise of possession to his descendants - **Ac 7:5-7**
4. The covenant of circumcision - **Ac 7:8**
5. His descendants: Isaac, Jacob, the twelve patriarchs - **Ac 7:8**

B. THE PATRIARCHS' SOJOURN IN EGYPT...

1. Joseph sold into Egypt, becomes governor - **Ac 7:9-10**
2. Jacob and his sons move to Egypt during the famine - **Ac 7:11-14**
3. The patriarchs buried in Canaan - **Ac 7:15-16**

C. GOD'S DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL BY MOSES...

1. The children Israel in Egypt become slaves - **Ac 7:17-19**
2. The work of Moses, deliverer of Israel
 - a. Raised by Pharaoh's daughter - **Ac 7:20-21**
 - b. Educated by Egyptians, mighty in words and deeds - **Ac 7:22**
 - c. Kills an Egyptian, but despised by his brethren - **Ac 7:23-28**
 - d. Flees to Midian where he has two sons - **Ac 7:29**
 - e. The Lord appears to him in a burning bush at Mount Sinai - **Ac 7:30-34**
 - f. Returns to Egypt, delivers Israel and brings them into the wilderness - **Ac 7:35-36**

D. ISRAEL'S REBELLION AGAINST MOSES AND GOD...

1. Moses is the person:
 - a. Who said God would raise up another prophet like him - **Ac 7:37**
 - b. Who spoke to the Angel on Mount Sinai - **Ac 7:38**
 - c. Who received living oracles to give to Israel - **Ac 7:38**
 - d. Whom the fathers would not obey but rejected - **Ac 7:39**
2. Israel is the nation:
 - a. Who turned back into Egypt in their hearts - **Ac 7:39**
 - b. Who pressured Aaron to make a golden calf - **Ac 7:40-41**
 - c. Whom God gave up to worship idols for forty years in the wilderness - **Ac 7:42-43**
 - 1) They may have offered sacrifices to the Lord
 - 2) But they also worshiped Moloch and Remphan - cf. **Am 5:25-27**

E. GOD'S TRUE TABERNACLE...

1. The fathers of Israel had the tabernacle of witness
 - a. In the wilderness, built according to the pattern shown Moses - **Ac 7:44**
 - b. Brought into the promised land by Joshua - **Ac 7:45**
2. They also had the temple
 - a. Asked for by David, who found favor before God - **Ac 7:46**
 - b. Built by his son Solomon - **Ac 7:47**
3. Yet the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands
 - a. For heaven is His throne and earth is His footstool - **Ac 7:48-49**
 - b. His hand has made all these things - **Ac 7:50; cf. Isa 66:1-2**
 - c. This may have been to allay any concern about the destruction of the temple, as God is

not bound to be worshipped at just one location - cf. **Jn 4:19-24**

F. ISRAEL'S RESISTANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT...

1. Stephen charges the council of resisting the Holy Spirit, like their fathers - **Ac 7:51**
2. Their fathers persecuted and killed the prophets, so they have killed the Just One - **Ac 7:52**
3. They received the law, but did not keep it - **Ac 7:53**

[Stephen surveyed Israel's history of rejecting God and His Spirit, then charged that they followed in their fathers' rebellion by having murdered the Just One (Jesus). They themselves had not kept the very Law they accused him of having blasphemed! With such accusers, the outcome is not surprising...]

III. STEPHEN'S DEATH

A. THE REACTION OF THE COUNCIL...

1. They were cut to the heart
 - a. They gnashed at Stephen with their teeth - **Ac 7:54**
 - b. Compare those on the day of Pentecost - cf. **Ac 2:37**
2. Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven
 - a. He saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God - **Ac 7:55**
 - b. He tells what he saw: "The Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" - **Ac 7:56**
 - c. Why is Jesus standing?
 - 1) He is otherwise described as sitting - **Lk 22:69; Mk 16:19; Ac 2:34; Ep 1:20; Col 3:1; He 1:3; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; Re 3:21**
 - 2) Could it be out of respect, to welcome His first martyr?
3. In response, the council:
 - a. Cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears - **Ac 7:57**
 - b. Ran at him with one accord, and cast him out of the city - **Ac 7:58**

B. THE STONING OF STEPHEN...

1. The witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of Saul - **Ac 7:58; 22:20**
 - a. Who consented to Stephen's death - **Ac 8:1**
 - b. Who later led a great persecution against the church - **Ac 8:3; 9:1-2**
2. They stoned Stephen as he was calling on God - **Ac 7:59-60**
 - a. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" - cf. **Lk 23:46**
 - b. "Lord, do not charge them with this sin" - cf. **Lk 23:34**
3. Having said this, he fell asleep (i.e., died) - **Ac 7:60; 8:1**

CONCLUSION

1. Stephen's death was the first of many...
 - a. Saul (Paul) would later confess of others - **Ac 22:4; 26:9-11**
 - b. We read of other martyrs: James, Antipas - **Ac 12:1-2; Re 2:13**
 - c. Countless thousands have died for Christ over the years, even to the present day
2. We may never face martyrdom; but when we encounter persecution for our faith, we should...
 - a. Face with it the composure of Stephen - **Ac 6:15**
 - b. Possess the forgiving spirit of both Jesus and Stephen - **Lk 23:34; Ac 7:60**

Remembering Jesus' promise: "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life." - **Re 2:10**

Saul The Persecutor

Acts 8:1-3

INTRODUCTION

1. Following Stephen's death, a great persecution arose against the church...
 - a. Disciples in Jerusalem were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria - **Ac 8:1**
 - b. The apostles, however, remained in Jerusalem - **ibid.**
2. Leading the persecution against the church was a young man...
 - a. Whose name was Saul - **Ac 8:3**
 - b. Who later became known as Paul, the apostle - cf. **Ac 13:9**

(We will consider Saul's conversion later. But to appreciate the significance of his conversion, we should know his background and what motivated him as a persecutor, beginning with Saul's...]

I. EARLY LIFE AND TRAINING

A. HIS ANCESTRY AND YOUTH...

1. Born in Tarsus of Cilicia - **Ac 21:39; 22:3; 23:34**
 - a. Cilicia was a Roman province in SE Asia Minor (modern Turkey)
 - b. Tarsus was the capital ("no mean city"), known for its culture and learning said to exceed even those of Athens and Alexandria - **Strabo, Geography 14.5**
2. Born of Jewish ancestry
 - a. A Hebrew, or Israelite, of the seed of Abraham - **2Co 11:22**
 - b. Of the tribe of Benjamin - **Ro 11:1**
 - c. A Hebrew of the Hebrews (both parents Hebrews?) - **Php 3:5**
3. Born a Roman citizen - **Ac 22:25-29**
 - a. Some think because Tarsus was a free city, but such a designation did not automatically impart citizenship
 - b. One of Paul's ancestors either purchased or was rewarded citizenship for services rendered to Rome - **W. M. Ramsay**
 - c. We do not know the date of his birth, some place it around the time of Jesus' birth

B. HIS EDUCATION...

1. Taught in Jerusalem by Gamaliel, a Pharisee and respected teacher of the Law - **Ac 22:3**; cf. **Ac 5:34-40**
2. A son of a Pharisee, he became a strict Pharisee - **Ac 23:6; 26:4-5; Php 3:5**
3. He excelled above his contemporaries in Judaism - **Ga 1:13-14**
4. Was also trained as tent-maker - **Ac 18:1-3**

C. HIS CHARACTER...

1. He was zealous in persecuting the church, concerning the Law blameless - **Php 3:6**
2. He served God with a pure conscience - **2Ti 1:3; Ac 23:1**
3. Thus he was ignorant of his blasphemy and persecution - **1Ti 1:12-13**

[With his early life and training, Saul of Tarsus was on the “fast track” when it came to his religious faith. It was sincere zeal in defending his faith that led to his brief but fervent career as...]

II. PERSECUTOR OF THE CHURCH

A. AT THE DEATH OF STEPHEN...

1. Saul was present at the death of the first Christian martyr - **Ac 7:57-58**
2. He consented to the death of Stephen - **Ac 8:1; 22:20**

B. MAKING HAVOC OF THE CHURCH...

1. Entering homes, dragging men and women to prison - **Ac 8:3; 22:4**
2. Entering synagogues, imprisoning and beating those who believed in Jesus - **Ac 22:19**
3. He believed it necessary to do things contrary to the name of Jesus - **Ac 26:9-11**
 - a. Imprisoning believers by the authority of the chief priests
 - b. Casting his vote against them as they were put to death
 - c. Compelling them to blaspheme
 - d. Pursuing them to foreign cities (such as Damascus) - cf. **Ac 9:1-2**

C. HIS LATER CONFESSION...

1. Admits he persecuted the church “beyond measure” in an attempt to destroy it - **Ga 1:13**
2. It was due to his great zeal - **Php 3:6**
3. Though ignorant, he was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent man - **1Ti 1:13**
4. For such reasons, he considered himself the least of the apostles, not worthy to be called an apostle - **1Co 15:9**

CONCLUSION

1. From being the worst foe of the church, Paul would later become one of its best friends...
 - a. Saul the persecutor would soon become Paul the preacher - **Ga 1:22-24**
 - b. Paul attributed it to the grace and mercy of God - **1Co 15:9-10; 1Ti 1:12-14**
2. Every aspect of Saul’s life prior to his conversion prepared him for the task the Lord gave him...
 - a. His Jewish heritage and Roman citizenship suited him for preaching to both Jews and Gentiles
 - b. His training by Gamaliel would serve him well in his writings on the Law in Romans, Galatians
 - c. His skill as a tent-maker would assist him in his travels
 - d. Even his history as persecutor would strengthen his testimony as an eyewitness of Christ

But most of all, his conversion despite his persecution of the church serves as a wonderful example of God’s mercy:

“This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.” - 1Ti 1:15-16

Have you obtained the mercy offered in Jesus Christ (**Tit 3:4-7**)? No matter how you have lived in the past, you can be justified by His grace...! - **Ac 22:16**

The Conversion Of The Samaritans

Acts 8:4-13

INTRODUCTION

1. We have seen that preaching the gospel was not without controversy...
 - a. Some took issue with the message of Christ's resurrection - **Ac 4:1-3**
 - b. Persecution became progressively worse - **Ac 4:21; 5:40; 7:54-60**
 - c. Stephen's death led to the dispersal of many Christians from Jerusalem - **Ac 8:1-3**
2. But as Christians were scattered abroad, so was the gospel...!
 - a. Christians went everywhere, "preaching the word" - **Ac 8:4**
 - b. Among them was Philip, one of the seven selected in chapter six - **Ac 6:5; 8:5**
 - c. His evangelistic efforts involved the Samaritans and the Ethiopian eunuch - **Ac 8:4-40**

[In this study, we shall examine "The Conversion Of The Samaritans". They were the offspring of inter-marriages at the time of Assyrian captivity (**2Ki 17:24-41**) and disdained by most Jews (**Jn 4:9**)...]

I. THE MINISTRY OF PHILIP AT SAMARIA

A. THEY HEEDED PHILIP...

1. He preached Christ to them - **Ac 8:5**
2. They heeded the things he spoke - **Ac 8:6**
3. Having heard and seen the miracles which he did - **Ac 8:6**
4. Such as casting out unclean spirits, healing the paralyzed and lame - **Ac 8:7**
5. Leading to great joy in the city - **Ac 8:8**

B. THEY FORMERLY HEEDED SIMON...

1. A sorcerer, who had astonished the people, claiming to be great - **Ac 8:9**
2. Of whom all had said, "This man is the great power of God - **Ac 8:10**
3. Astonishing them with his sorceries for a long time - **Ac 8:11**

C. THEY THEN BELIEVED PHILIP...

1. As he preached the kingdom of God and the name of Christ - **Ac 8:12**
2. They believed and were baptized, both men and women - **Ac 8:12**
3. Even Simon also believed and was baptized - **Ac 8:13**
4. Who continued with Philip, amazed at the miracles and signs he did - **Ac 8:13**

[This is the first gospel preaching to those not fully Jews. Let's therefore take a closer look at...]

II. THE CONVERSION OF THE SAMARITANS

A. THE SAMARITANS...

1. The gospel message preached by Philip
 - a. We are told that he preached "Christ" - **Ac 8:5**
 - 1) This undoubtedly included Christ's death, resurrection, etc.
 - 2) The same things Peter preached about Christ in chapters 2 and 3

- b. We are told that he preached “the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” - **Ac 8:12**
 - 1) What things concerning “the kingdom of God”?
 - a) John, Jesus, and the apostles had earlier taught the kingdom was “at hand” - cf. **Mt 3:1; 4:17; 10:7**
 - b) Later, Paul and John wrote of the kingdom as present - **Col 1:13; Re 1:9**
 - c) The expression “kingdom of God” literally means the “reign of God”
 - d) It is likely that Philip spoke of the rule and reign of God now present in the Person of His Son Jesus Christ - cf. **Mt 28:18; Ac 2:36; 5:31**
 - 2) What things concerning “the name of Jesus Christ”?
 - a) Likely that repentance and remission of sins were now being proclaimed in His name - **Lk 24:47**
 - b) It clearly included what Jesus commanded - **Mk 16:15-16**
- 2. The response of the Samaritans
 - a. They “heeded the things spoken by Philip”; this implies obedience - **Ac 8:6**; cf. **He 5:9**
 - b. They “believed” and “were baptized” - **Ac 8:12**
 - c. Like Peter, Philip faithfully fulfilled the Lord’s great commission - **Mk 16:15-16**
 - d. Heeding the things spoken by Philip therefore included baptism - cf. **Ac 2:38; 22:16**

B. SIMON THE SORCERER...

- 1. Was Simon truly converted?
 - a. Many deny that he was, because of what happened afterward
 - b. But Luke (inspired by the Holy Spirit) says Simon “also believed” - **Ac 8:13**
 - c. Simon believed just as the others did
 - d. Therefore his faith was as real as the rest of the Samaritans
 - e. While there may be fanciful traditions concerning Simon outside of the Bible, the indication of Scripture is that his conversion was real
- 2. Simon is an example of how fallen Christians can be restored
 - a. He was later told to “repent” and “pray” - **Ac 8:22**
 - b. When a Christian sins, therefore, he needs not to be baptized again, but to repent and pray, confessing his sins - cf. **1Jn 1:9**
 - c. Simon reveals how quickly Christians can be overtaken in sin, but also how they can obtain forgiveness and be restored!

CONCLUSION

- 1. The conversion of the Samaritans (including Simon) is simple and straightforward...
 - a. When Christ is preached and heeded - **Ac 8:5-6**
 - b. People will believe and be baptized - **Ac 8:12-13**
- 2. Their conversion is as simple and direct as the commission under which Philip preached...
 - a. Jesus commanded His apostles to preach faith and baptism - **Mk 16:15-16**
 - b. Philip fulfilled that great commission regarding the Samaritans - **Ac 8:12-13**

How about you? Have you believed and been baptized? If so but you then strayed from the faith, have you repented and prayed like Peter later told Simon to do?

In either case, do not delay to “heed” the commands of the gospel...!

The Follow-Up Of The Samaritans

Acts 8:14-25

INTRODUCTION

1. The conversion of the Samaritans was simple and straightforward...
 - a. Philip preached Christ and the people heeded him - **Ac 8:5-6**
 - b. They responded by believing and being baptized - **Ac 8:12-13**
2. Unique with the Samaritans' conversion is the follow-up that occurred...
 - a. It has been described as one of the most extraordinary passages in Acts
 - b. Used to teach various doctrines related to confirmation, sanctification, and spiritual gifts

[We must be careful not to draw conclusions contrary to the rest of the Scriptures. With that goal in mind, let's first review...]

I. THE FOLLOW-UP BY PETER AND JOHN

A. THEY IMPART THE SPIRIT...

1. Hearing of the Samaritans' conversion, the apostles sent Peter and John - **Ac 8:14**
2. Peter and John imparted the Spirit to the Samaritans - **Ac 8:15-17**
 - a. While the Samaritans had been baptized, they had not "received the Spirit"
 - b. The Spirit had not yet "fallen upon" any of them - cf. **Ac 10:44-46; 11:15-17**
 - c. Through prayer and laying on of the apostles' hands, they "received the Spirit"

B. SIMON TRIES TO BUY THE GIFT...

1. He sought to buy the ability to impart the Spirit - **Ac 8:18-19**
2. Peter rebuked him strongly, called upon him to repent and pray - **Ac 8:20-23**
3. Simon asks Peter to pray for him - **Ac 8:24**

[Peter and John preached the gospel in many villages in Samaria on their return to Jerusalem (**Ac 8:25**). Now let's go back and look at some questions frequently raised...]

II. THE FOLLOW-UP EXAMINED MORE CLOSELY

A. FREQUENT QUESTIONS...

1. Why is it said the Samaritans received baptism by Philip, but not the Spirit?
2. What does it mean "that they might receive the Holy Spirit"?
3. What did the apostles have that Philip did not?
4. Was this some sort of confirmation? Second stage of sanctification?

B. PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS...

1. Whatever Luke meant to "receive the Holy Spirit"...
 - a. It required the apostles' laying on of hands
 - 1) Philip could not impart it, making it necessary for the apostles to come
 - 2) Simon could see that it was through the apostles' laying on of hands the Spirit was given - **Ac 8:18**

- b. It was something visible or audible
 - 1) It caught Simon's attention, who sought to buy the ability to impart it
 - 2) It was clearly something miraculous, perhaps speaking in tongues - cf. **Ac 19:1-7**
 - 3) It involved the Spirit "falling upon them," as with Cornelius - cf. **Ac 10:44-46**
- 2. Was it actually the Spirit Himself, or something the Spirit gives?
 - a. All Christians receive the Spirit upon obedience to the Gospel - **Ac 2:38; 5:32; 1Co 12:13; Ep 1:13-14; Ga 4:6; Ro 8:9-11**
 - b. But in NT times many (not all) Christians received miraculous gifts - **1Co 12-14**
- 3. Since the Samaritans had believed and been baptized (**Ac 8:12,16**)...
 - a. They probably received the Spirit as any baptized believer normally would
 - b. They apparently had not received the Spirit regarding miraculous gifts (see below)

C. PLAUSIBLE EXPLANATION...

- 1. The expression "receive the Holy Spirit" is a metonymy = "receive spiritual gifts"
 - a. **Metonymy** - A figure of speech in which one word or phrase is substituted for another with which it is closely associated
 - 1) E.g., "Washington" for the United States government; "Crown" for royalty
 - 2) E.g., "The pen is mightier than the sword" ("pen" stands in for "the written word"; "sword" stands in for "military aggression and force")
 - b. What the Samaritans had not received were miraculous spiritual gifts that the Spirit often bestowed in the early church - cf. **1Co 12:1-11**
- 2. The apostles of Christ had the ability to impart spiritual gifts
 - a. Paul imparted the "Holy Spirit" in this way - cf. **Ac 19:1-7**
 - b. Paul hoped to impart such a gift to the Romans - **Ro 1:11**
 - c. He imparted such a gift to Timothy - **2Ti 1:6**
- 3. The ability to impart spiritual gifts was limited to the apostles
 - a. Which is why Philip could perform miracles, but not pass the ability on to others
 - 1) The apostles had laid hands on him earlier - **Ac 6:5-6**
 - 2) Philip, like Steven, could then do miracles - **Ac 6:7; 8:6-7**
 - b. Which is why it was necessary for Peter and John to come to Samaria
 - 1) If spiritual gifts came simply by praying, why send for Peter and John?
 - 2) It took an apostle for the spiritual gifts to be imparted!
- 4. It was this ability to impart spiritual gifts that Simon wanted to buy
 - a. He was not content to simply **receive** a spiritual gift
 - b. He wanted that apostolic ability to **impart** spiritual gifts! - **Ac 8:19**

CONCLUSION

- 1. The ministry of Philip among the Samaritans had...
 - a. Been confirmed by the miracles which Philip did in their midst - **Ac 8:6-7**
 - b. Resulted in true conversions when they believed and were baptized - **Ac 8:12-13**
- 2. Peter and John's mission to Samaria appears straightforward...
 - a. To impart miraculous spiritual gifts by the apostolic laying on of hands
 - b. Which served to establish the new converts in their faith - cf. **Ro 1:11**

Today, conversion occurs wherever people believe and are baptized (**Mk 16:16; Ac 2:38; 22:16**). They are established in the faith when they observe the apostles' doctrine (**Mt 28:20; Ac 2:42**) which was revealed and confirmed by the miraculous gifts of the Spirit in the first century (cf. **He 2:1-4**)...

The Conversion Of The Ethiopian

Acts 8:26-40

INTRODUCTION

1. The conversions we have noted so far have involved large numbers of people...
 - a. The 3000 at Pentecost - **Ac 2:1-41**
 - b. The 2000 on Solomon's Porch - **Ac 3:1-4:4**
 - c. The multitudes in Samaria - **Ac 8:5-13**
2. In each case, the gospel message was basically the same...
 - a. Christ is proclaimed
 - b. Responses called for included faith, repentance and baptism
3. Now we have the opportunity to examine the conversion of just one person...
 - a. A queen's treasurer, a eunuch from Ethiopia
 - b. A very religious man, who had traveled a great distance to worship God
4. With the account of the conversion of "**The Ethiopian**"...
 - a. We not only have the opportunity to confirm what we have already learned
 - b. We can also glean a few more points regarding Biblical conversions

[Let's start with a reading and review of the basic facts related to this conversion...]

I. THE CONVERSION OF THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

A. PHILIP IS SENT TO THE EUNUCH...

1. An angel of the Lord tells Philip to go toward Gaza - **Ac 8:26**
2. On the way there is a man sitting in his chariot - **Ac 8:27-28**
 - a. A eunuch of Ethiopia, in charge of the treasury of Queen Candace
 - b. Returning home from having gone to worship in Jerusalem
 - c. Reading from the prophet Isaiah
3. The Spirit tells Philip to overtake the chariot - **Ac 8:29**

B. PHILIP PREACHES JESUS TO HIM...

1. Hearing the eunuch reading Isaiah, Philip asks if he understands - **Ac 8:30**
2. The eunuch asks Philip to help him - **Ac 8:31-34**
 - a. He expresses a need for someone to guide him, and invites Philip to sit with him
 - b. The scripture under consideration is **Isa 53:7-8**
 - 1) Which speaks of one led as a sheep to the slaughter
 - 2) Which describes one whose life is taken from the earth
 - c. The eunuch asks if Isaiah was speaking of himself, or of someone else
3. Beginning with that Scripture, Philip preaches Jesus to him - **Ac 8:35**

C. THE EUNUCH IS BAPTIZED...

1. The eunuch expresses a desire to be baptized - **Ac 8:36-37**
 - a. Seeing some water along the way, he wonders what would hinder him from being

- baptized
- b. Philip replies that if he believes with all his heart, he may
- c. The eunuch confesses his faith in Jesus as the Son of God
- 2. Philip baptizes the eunuch - **Ac 8:38-40**
 - a. Stopping the chariot, both Philip and the eunuch go down into the water
 - b. Philip then baptizes him
 - c. When they come up out of the water, the Spirit catches Philip away
 - d. Though seeing Philip no more, the eunuch goes on his way rejoicing
 - e. Philip is found at Azotus, and continues preaching in the cities until he arrives at Caesarea

[One might wonder why the Spirit led Luke to spend so much time describing the conversion of just one person. Clearly there must be important lessons or principles that we can glean from this historical account. With that in mind, let me offer..]

II. SOME OBSERVATIONS

A. PROSPECTS FOR THE GOSPEL...

1. The Ethiopian eunuch was a very religious man
 - a. He had traveled a great distance to worship in Jerusalem
 - b. He was reading from the Scriptures when Philip found him
2. In fact, most examples of conversions involved very devout people
 - a. The 3000 at Pentecost, who had traveled to observe the feast day
 - b. Later, we will study the conversions of such people as:
 - 1) Paul, the Pharisee zealous for the Law
 - 2) Cornelius, the devout Gentile who feared God and prayed always
 - 3) Lydia, a woman who met every Sabbath to pray with others
3. From this we can glean the following...
 - a. Just because one is religious does not mean they are saved!
 - b. Religious people are often good prospects for the gospel!
 - 1) They already fear God and respect His authority
 - 2) As such, they simply need to be shown “the way of God more accurately” - cf. **Ac 18:26**
 - c. Those who are truly seeking God’s will, will one day have an opportunity to hear the gospel and obey it! - **Mt 5:6**

-- This does not discount the fact that rank sinners are often receptive (cf. the Corinthians, **1Co 6:9-11**), but good people are usually more open to the Word

B. WHAT IT MEANS TO PREACH JESUS...

1. From Isaiah’s “quotation” (Isa 52:13-53:11), we know it involves teaching:
 - a. How Jesus died for our sins - cf. **1Co 15:1-3**
 - b. How Jesus has been exalted by God - cf. **Ac 2:36; 3:13; 5:30-31**
2. From the Eunuch’s “question” (Ac 8:36), we know it includes stressing:
 - a. The importance of baptism
 - 1) Why did the eunuch ask, “What hinders me from being baptized?”
 - 2) Perhaps because Philip told him...
 - a) What the Lord had said - **Mk 16:15-16**
 - b) The purpose of baptism, as expressed by Peter and Paul - **Ac 2:38; Ro 6:3-4; 1Pe 3:21**

- As we have seen and will see, baptism is the expected response when one believes in Jesus
- b. The immediacy of baptism
 - 1) Why did the eunuch asked to be baptized right then (“See, here is water.”)?
 - 2) Perhaps because baptism’s purpose is such that one does not want to delay
 - a) It is “for the remission of sins” - **Ac 2:38**
 - b) It is to have one’s sins “washed away” - **Ac 22:16**
 - c) It is an appeal for a clear conscience - **1Pe 3:21**
 - Indeed, in every example of conversion found in Acts, people were baptized immediately, after just one lesson!
- 3. From Philip’s “qualification” (Ac 8:37), we know it requires explaining:
 - a. The necessity of faith in Jesus
 - 1) One must believe in Jesus as the Son of God - **Jn 8:24; 20:30-31**
 - 2) Without faith, God won’t do His work in our baptism - cf. **Col 2:12**
 - b. The necessity of whole-heartedness in our faith
 - 1) God has always required whole-heartedness - cf. **Mt 22:37**
 - 2) Without it, even those saved are in danger of falling away - cf. **He 3:12-14**
 - Unless “you believe with all your heart”, you are not a proper subject for baptism!

C. BAPTISM...

1. Baptism involves water
 - a. When the eunuch was baptized...
 - 1) “...both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water” - **Ac 8:38**
 - 2) “...he baptized him” - **Ac 8:38**
 - 3) “...they came up out of the water” - **Ac 8:39**
 - b. Later, we see the same truth expressed by Peter - cf. **Ac 10:47-48**
2. Baptism involves a burial in water
 - a. Both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water - **Ac 8:38**
 - 1) If sprinkling satisfies the meaning of baptism, it seems strange that Philip would need to go down into the water
 - 2) Why get wet, when all he needed to do was get a handful of water?
 - b. Baptism means “to immerse”, and such requires the baptizer to get in the water with the one being baptized
 - c. Later, Paul describes baptism as a “burial” - cf. **Ro 6:3-4; Col 2:12**
3. Baptism is NOT a public confession of one’s faith
 - a. Some say that the purpose of baptism is to publicly confess one’s faith in Christ
 - 1) Especially those who deny that baptism is for the remission of sins
 - 2) Seeking to provide a reason for baptism, they offer this as an alternative
 - 3) But the Bible nowhere says this is the purpose for baptism!
 - b. If the purpose of baptism is to publicly confess one’s faith...
 - 1) Why did Philip baptize the eunuch?
 - a) There was no one else around to witness the baptism
 - b) They were all alone in the desert
 - 2) Why didn’t Philip answer the eunuch’s question differently?
 - a) He wanted to know what would hinder him from being baptized
 - b) If baptism is a public confession of one’s faith, we would expect Philip to say he must wait until they get to town, find a church, etc.
 - c. But the purpose of baptism is such that it can be done...
 - 1) In public or in private

- 2) With thousands present, or with just the one doing the baptizing
- Later, we will see that the conversion of the Philippian Jailor also involved a baptism in relative privacy

CONCLUSION

1. With the conversion of **“The Ethiopian”**, we are impressed with the simplicity of salvation...
 - a. With a simple presentation of the gospel, one can be saved after just one lesson
 - b. Whether it is preached to large crowds or to just one person, the gospel is indeed God’s power to save! - cf. **Ro 1:16**
2. When the gospel of Jesus is truly preached...
 - a. The death of Jesus for our sins will be stressed
 - b. The importance of baptism as commanded by Jesus will be mentioned as well
 - 1) Such that people will want to know “what hinders me from being baptized?”
 - 2) Such that people will want to be baptized immediately
 - c. The purpose of baptism will be properly understood, knowing that one can be baptized in private just as well as in public
 - d. The necessity for a wholehearted faith in Jesus will be emphasized, otherwise one simply gets wet in baptism!

Was your conversion anything like that of **“The Ethiopian”**? When someone “preached Jesus” to you, were you compelled to ask:

“See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” - Acts 8:36

If not, have you considered why not? Could it be that the gospel of Jesus Christ was not shared with you in its fullness...?

“What Hinders Me From Being Baptized?”

Acts 8:36

INTRODUCTION

1. With the story of the Ethiopian eunuch, we have an example of conversion involving one...
 - a. Who was very religious, yet still lost - **Ac 8:27-28**
 - b. Who was willing to learn, open to being taught - **Ac 8:29-34**
 - c. To whom Philip preached Jesus - **Ac 8:35**
 - d. Who then immediately requested and received baptism - **Ac 8:36-38**
2. His inquiry, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” is enlightening...
 - a. It reveals that baptism in water was integral to preaching Christ - **Ac 8:35-36**
 - b. Indeed it was commanded by Christ Himself - **Mk 16:15-16**
 - c. His apostles commanded it as well - cf. **Ac 2:38; 10:47-48**
3. His inquiry also raises questions that we do well to ask...
 - a. What does hinder one from being baptized?
 - b. What should not hinder one from being baptized?

[In answer to such questions, let’s first notice...]

I. WHAT DOES HINDER ONE

A. LACK OF FAITH...

1. Belief in Christ as a prerequisite is clearly stated by Philip - **Ac 8:37**
2. Jesus also stressed the necessity of faith - **Mk 16:16**; cf. **Jn 8:24**
- **If one does not believe, or is incapable of belief, then that hinders baptism**

B. LACK OF REPENTANCE...

1. Repentance as a prerequisite to baptism is implied by Peter - **Ac 2:36-38**
2. It is clearly a prerequisite to having one’s sins “blotted out” - **Ac 3:19**
- **If one does not repent, or is incapable of repentance, then that hinders baptism**

C. LACK OF WATER...

1. We are talking about baptism in water - **Ac 8:36; 10:47**
2. A baptism that “washes away sin”, because it is a burial with Christ - **Ac 22:16; Ro 6:3-4**
- **If there is no water, then that hinders baptism**

[Of course, lack of water is rarely the issue. God has made water plentiful. It is the lack of faith or repentance that is really the only thing that hinders one from being baptized. Yet people often allow things they should not to keep themselves from being baptized. Let’s now examine...]

II. WHAT SHOULD NOT HINDER ONE

A. PRIDE...

1. Some are too proud to admit they need forgiveness for their sins

2. Some are too proud to acknowledge they are mistaken about their need for baptism
 3. Such pride will keep God away - cf. **Ps 138:6; Jm 4:6**
- **Pride should never hinder one from being baptized**

B. FAMILY...

1. Some are concerned what their family will think
 2. Perhaps they are afraid of being disowned by their family
 3. Jesus made clear that family should not prevent us from doing His will - **Mt 10:37-38**
- **Family should never hinder one from being baptized**

C. PEER PRESSURE...

1. Some are afraid of being ridiculed or ostracized by their friends
 2. It was peer pressure that kept some from confessing Jesus - cf. **Jn 12:42-43**
 3. Jesus made it clear that what others think should not sway us - cf. **Lk 9:26**
- **Peer pressure should never hinder one from being baptized**

D. IMPROPER MISUNDERSTANDING...

1. Some believe they do not know enough to be baptized
 - a. They presume that one must know everything the Bible teaches
 - b. Yet like the eunuch, most conversions in the NT occurred after one sermon
 - c. Jesus stated that much teaching follows, not precedes, baptism - **Mt 28:19-20**
 - d. If one is a penitent believer, willing to follow Jesus as Lord, they are ready
 2. Some believe they are not good enough to be baptized
 - a. They presume that they must reform themselves first
 - b. But baptism is for sinners, not saints
 - c. Much spiritual development occurs after salvation, not before - cf. **Col 3:1-14**
 - d. If one has repented (changed their mind to serve God), they are ready
- **Improper misunderstanding should never hinder one from being baptized**

E. LOCATION, TIME OF DAY OR NIGHT...

1. Some may think baptism can occur only at certain times, certain places
 2. As in response to the invitation at the end of a sermon, or at a special baptismal service
 3. The eunuch's baptism illustrates it can be done anywhere, anytime - **Ac 8:38**
 4. Likewise the baptisms of the Philippian jailor and his family - **Ac 16:25-33**
- **The time or place should never hinder one from being baptized**

CONCLUSION

1. After the eunuch was baptized, he went on his way rejoicing - **Ac 8:39**
 - a. He believed that Jesus was the Christ, who died for his sins
 - b. He confessed his faith in Jesus as the Christ
 - c. Though not mentioned, we can assume that he repented of his sins
2. If you desire the same assurance of salvation that the eunuch enjoyed...
 - a. Then let nothing hinder you from obeying the gospel in the same manner
 - b. Be baptized as soon as possible, upon the confession of your faith in Jesus

“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” - Ac 22:16

The Conversion Of Saul

Acts 9:1-19

INTRODUCTION

1. From the conversion of “**The Ethiopian**”, we now turn our attention to the most famous conversion in the New Testament...
 - a. That of Saul of Tarsus, chief persecutor of the early church - **Ac 8:1,3; 9:1-2**
 - b. Later known as Paul the apostle (**Ac 13:9**), who suffered much persecution for the cause of Christ - cf. **2Co 11:23-28**
 - c. Whose conversion stands as a powerful testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ
2. There are three accounts of his conversion in The Book of Acts...
 - a. **Ac 9:1-19** - where Luke describes it as it happened
 - b. **Ac 22:6-16** - where Paul recounts his conversion before a large crowd
 - c. **Ac 26:12-18** - where Paul defends himself before King Agrippa
3. From “**The Conversion of Saul**” we find...
 - a. Not only a powerful testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ
 - b. But more evidence concerning the nature of conversions as revealed in The Book of Acts
4. For example...
 - a. **When was Saul saved?**
 - 1) Was it on the road to Damascus, when the Lord appeared to him?
 - 2) Was it in Damascus, at some point after he arrived there?
 - b. **How was Saul saved?**
 - 1) Through saying a sinner’s prayer?
 - 2) By being baptized?

[Such questions can be answered by a careful consideration of Biblical evidence. Let’s begin with a review of the evidence provided by all three accounts of Saul’s conversion...]

I. A HARMONY OF SAUL’S CONVERSION

A. SAUL ON HIS WAY TO DAMASCUS...

1. To persecute more Christians - **Ac 9:1-2; 22:4-5; 26:9-11**
2. When a light shone around him from heaven - **Ac 9:3; 22:6; 26:12-13**
3. When a voice began to speak to him in Hebrew...
 - a. Identifying itself as the voice of Jesus - **Ac 9:4-5; 22:7-9; 26:14-15**
 - b. Jesus then tells Saul...
 - 1) Why He has appeared to him - **Ac 26:16-18**
 - 2) To go on to Damascus, where...
 - a) He will be told “what you must do” - **Ac 9:6**
 - b) He will be told “all things which are appointed for you to do” - **Ac 22:10**

B. SAUL ARRIVES IN DAMASCUS...

1. Led by the hand, having been blinded by the light - **Ac 9:8; 22:11**

2. For three days, he neither eats nor drinks - **Ac 9:9**

C. THE LORD SENDS ANANIAS TO SAUL...

1. The Lord appears to Ananias in a vision, and tells him to go to Saul - **Ac 9:10-16**
2. Ananias goes to Saul, and...
 - a. Restores his sight - **Ac 9:17-18; 22:12-13**
 - b. Tells him why the Lord appeared to him, how he will be a witness of what he has seen - **Ac 22:14-15**
 - c. Tells him to be baptized and wash away his sins, calling upon the name of the Lord - **Ac 22:16**
3. After which Paul breaks his fast and spends some days with the disciples - **Ac 9:18-19**

["**The Conversion Of Saul**"] is a powerful testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. What other reasonable explanation can be given for the drastic change from **chief persecutor** to **chief proclaimer** of the Christian faith? But Saul's conversion is also valuable for insights regarding the process of conversion. With that in mind, allow me to share...]

II. SOME OBSERVATIONS

A. WHEN SAUL WAS SAVED...

1. Some state that Saul was saved on the road to Damascus
 - a. When the Lord appeared to him
 - b. That his conversion took place at that moment
 2. Saul was not saved until after he arrived in Damascus
 - a. Note that while on the road, the Lord said it would be in Damascus where he would be told "what you must do" - **Ac 9:6**
 - b. In Damascus, Ananias told him to "wash away your sins" - **Ac 22:16**
 - 1) Up to that point, Saul was still in his sins!
 - 2) In other words, he was still not saved!
- While in one sense he was "converted" on the road (his view of Jesus certainly changed), conversion in the sense of salvation did not occur until after he arrived in Damascus

B. HOW SAUL WAS SAVED...

1. From Ananias' statement in **Ac 22:16** (to wash away his sins), we learn that:
 - a. Saul had not been saved by the vision on the road to Damascus
 - b. Saul had not been saved by prayers and fasting for three days - cf. **Ac 9:9,11**
 2. Saul was saved when his sins were "washed away" - **Ac 22:16**
 - a. Which occurred after spending three days in Damascus
 - b. Which occurred when he was baptized to wash away his sins!
- This concurs with what Peter said about the purpose of baptism in **Ac 2:38**

C. BAPTISM AND CALLING UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD...

1. After quoting Joel who wrote of calling upon the name of the Lord to be saved, Peter told the crowd at Pentecost to be baptized - cf. **Ac 2:21,38**
2. Ananias commanded Saul to be baptized, "calling upon the name of the Lord" - **Ac 22:16**
3. Peter wrote baptism saves us, as an appeal to God for a good conscience (ESV) - **1Pe 3:21**
4. In the act of baptism, in faith we are...
 - a. "Calling upon the name of the Lord"
 - b. Appealing to God by the authority of His Son Jesus to forgive our sins

- While we can certainly pray as we are being baptized, baptism itself is a prayer (an appeal) to God for a good conscience!

CONCLUSION

1. From the conversion of Saul we learn that one is not saved by...
 - a. Visions of the Lord (who could have a vision more impressive than Saul's?)
 - b. Saying the sinner's prayer (Saul had been praying and fasting for three days!)
2. In keeping with what is taught elsewhere, one is saved when...
 - a. They are baptized "for the remission of sins" - **Ac 2:38**
 - b. They are baptized to have sins "washed away" - **Ac 22:16**
 - c. They are baptized "as an appeal to God for a good conscience" (ESV) - **1Pe 3:21**
3. Paul later wrote in Romans 6 that baptism is efficacious because in baptism...
 - a. We are baptized (buried) into Christ's death - **Ro 6:3-4**
 - b. We are united with Christ in the likeness of His death - **Ro 6:5**
 - c. We are crucified with Christ, and our body of sin is done away - **Ro 6:6**
 - d. We die to sin, and are therefore freed from sin - **Ro 6:7**
 - Such baptism is conditioned upon our faith and God's working - **Ac 8:36-37; Col 2:12**
4. In his commentary on **Ro 6:3**, **Martin Luther** wrote:

"Baptism has been instituted that it should lead us to the blessings (of this death) and through such death to eternal life. Therefore IT IS NECESSARY that we should be baptized into Jesus Christ and His death."

- Commentary On Romans, Kregel Publications, p. 101

And so we say, as did Ananias, to anyone who has yet to be baptized for the remission of their sins...

"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." - Ac 22:16

The Way

Acts 9:2

INTRODUCTION

1. Today it is common to use terms referring to the people of God such as...
 - a. The church of Christ, the church of God - **Ro 16:16; 1Co 1:2**
 - b. The body of Christ, the kingdom of Christ - **Ep 1:22,23; Col 1:13**
 - c. The temple of God, the bride of Christ - **1Co 3:16; Re 19:7-8**
2. In the early days of the church, they were also known as people of “**The Way**”...
 - a. Saul of Tarsus persecuted those of “the Way” - **Ac 9:2; 22:4**
 - b. Others spoke evil of “the Way” - **Ac 19:9**
 - c. At Ephesus there was a riot about “the Way” - **Ac 19:23**
 - d. Paul confessed to worship God according to “the Way” - **Ac 24:14**
 - e. Felix the governor gained accurate knowledge about “the Way” - **Ac 24:22**

[Today the expression “**The Way**” is rarely used, except by parachurch organizations, individual congregations, and even some cult groups. But what did it mean in the early days of the church...?]

I. THE MEANING OF “THE WAY”

A. PROBABLE ORIGIN...

1. Jesus taught about two ways - **Mt 7:13-14**
 - a. The broad way that leads to destruction
 - b. The narrow way that leads to life
 2. Jesus claimed to be the way - **Jn 14:6**
 - a. The way to truth and life
 - b. The only way to the Father
- **It is likely that Jesus’ statements led to the use of “The Way”**

B. POSSIBLE MEANINGS...

1. Simon J. Kistemaker (BNTC) suggests it refers to:
 - a. The teaching of the gospel
 - b. The Christian’s conduct directed and guided by the gospel
 - c. The Christian community in general
 2. W. A. Ewell (ECB) suggests it connotes something of:
 - a. The way of salvation - **Ac 16:17**
 - b. The true way of God - **Ac 18:25-26**
 3. J. B. Polhill (NAC) suggests it reflects an early self-designation of the Jewish Christian community in which they saw themselves as the “true way” within the larger Jewish community - cf. **Ac 24:14**
- **It likely referred to following Jesus as “the Way” in both doctrine and life**

[Here are several things involved in following Jesus as “**The Way**” in doctrine and life...]

II. THE WAY OF JESUS

A. THE WAY TO GOD...

1. Jesus is the only way to God - **Jn 14:6**
2. Through Jesus, both Jew and Gentile have access to the Father - **Ep 2:18**

B. THE WAY TO TRUTH...

1. Jesus came to this world to bear witness to the truth - **Jn 18:37**
2. He offers the truth that sets us free from the bondage of sin - **Jn 8:32-36**

C. THE WAY TO LIFE...

1. Jesus came that we might live more abundantly - **Jn 10:10**
2. He offers life beyond this life - **Jn 11:25**

D. THE WAY OF LOVE...

1. Jesus taught His disciples to love one another - **Jn 13:34**
2. He even taught them to love their enemies - **Mt 5:43-45**

E. THE WAY OF JOY...

1. Jesus spoke in order that His disciples' joy might be full - **Jn 15:11**
2. He did so that they might have His joy fulfilled in themselves - **Jn 17:13**

F. THE WAY OF PEACE...

1. Jesus offered a peace unlike any the world could give - **Jn 14:27**
2. A peace that overcomes tribulation in the world - **Jn 16:33**

G. THE WAY OF UNITY...

1. Jesus prayed for unity among those who believe in Him - **Jn 17:20-23**
2. He died on the cross to reconcile Jew and Gentile - **Ep 2:11-17**

H. THE WAY OF PRAYER...

1. Jesus taught us how to pray, diligently and humbly - **Lk 11:1-13; 18:1-14**
2. He serves as High Priest and Advocate as we pray - **He 4:14-16; 1Jn 2:1**

I. THE WAY OF FORGIVENESS...

1. Jesus taught the importance of forgiving others - **Mt 6:12,14-15**
2. He demonstrated the attitude of forgiveness on the cross - **Lk 23:34**

J. THE WAY OF BEARING FRUIT...

1. Jesus taught the necessity of bearing fruit to being His disciples - **Jn 15:1-2,8**
2. Abiding in Him is the key to bearing fruit - **Jn 15:4-5**

K. THE WAY OF SERVICE...

1. Jesus came to serve, and taught His disciples to do likewise - **Mt 20:25-28; Jn 13:12-17**
2. Therefore His followers are to serve one another in love - **Ga 5:13; 1Pe 4:9**

L. THE WAY OF SUFFERING...

1. Jesus had to suffer to enter His glory - **Lk 24:25-26**
2. He calls us to follow in His steps, if need be - **1Pe 2:20-23**

M. THE WAY TO GLORY...

1. Jesus will one day be revealed in glory - **2Th 1:10**
2. We too shall be revealed in glory in Him! - **2Th 1:12; Col 3:4**

CONCLUSION

1. We may or may not refer to ourselves as **people of “The Way”**...
 - a. Other designations are just as scriptural
 - b. In some circumstances it could be misunderstood as a cult
2. But we should never stop thinking of **Jesus as “The Way”**...
 - a. To God, truth, life, and glory
 - b. To love, joy, peace, and unity
 - c. To prayer, forgiveness, bearing fruit
 - d. To service, and suffering for righteousness' sake

Have you accepted Jesus as your Way to salvation and eternal life? Are you willing to become His disciple and learn from Him...?

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” - Mt 11:28-30

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. - Mt 28:18-20

Paul's Early Years As A Christian

Acts 9:19-30

INTRODUCTION

1. When people think of the life of Paul (Saul), they are likely mindful of...
 - a. His persecution of the church prior to his conversion
 - b. His vision of the Lord on the road to Damascus
 - c. His three missionary journeys recorded in the book of Acts
2. What may not be as well-known are the years immediately following his conversion...
 - a. His conversion likely took place around 35-36 A.D.
 - b. His first missionary journey began 45 A.D.

[What was Paul doing during his early years as a Christian? Knowing the zeal of Paul, it was not likely an idle time of his life. This period began with...]

I. THREE YEARS IN DAMASCUS AND ARABIA (36-39 A.D.)

A. INITIAL PREACHING IN DAMASCUS...

1. Immediately after his conversion, Paul began preaching - **Ac 9:19-20**
2. To the amazement of those who heard him - **Ac 9:21-22**

B. TIME IN ARABIA...

1. Paul did not stay in Damascus long after his conversion - **Ga 1:15-17**
2. He went to Arabia, the desert area east and south of Damascus
3. How long he stayed is uncertain, though it is thought to have been the greater part of three years - **Ga 1:18**
4. What he did is unknown, though some think it was a time of personal reflection, and of revelations from the Lord - **Ga 1:11-12**

C. RETURN AND ESCAPE FROM DAMASCUS...

1. He returned from Arabia to Damascus - **Ga 1:17**
2. Some time later an attempt was made to kill him, which he escaped - **Ac 9:23-25**
3. Years later he recounted his narrow escape - **2Co 11:32-33**

[Damascus was the first place Paul preached (**Ac 26:19-20**), and the first place he experienced persecution. It would not be the last place for either experience! Leaving Damascus, Paul made his...]

II. FIRST VISIT TO JERUSALEM (39 A.D.)

A. SKEPTICAL RECEPTION BY THE CHURCH...

1. At first, the church was afraid to receive him - **Ac 9:26**
2. Barnabas (cf. **Ac 4:36-37**) introduced him to the apostles - **Ac 9:27**
3. He saw Peter, and stayed with him fifteen days - **Ga 1:18**
4. He also saw James the Lord's brother - **Ga 1:19**

B. PREACHING IN JERUSALEM...

1. He was given free access to the church - **Ac 9:28**
2. He proclaimed boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus - **Ac 9:29**
3. He disputed with the Hellenists (Grecian Jews) - **Ac 9:29**

C. ATTEMPT ON HIS LIFE...

1. The Hellenists attempted to kill him - **Ac 9:29**
2. Paul was warned by the Lord in a vision - **Ac 22:17-21**
3. The brethren send him to Tarsus by way of Caesarea - **Ac 9:30**

[Paul had now become a dangerous enemy to his former friends. His testimony concerning the Lord and his own conversion was difficult to answer, and the opposition was willing to do anything to silence him! At this point Paul returned home (Tarsus) and spent...]

III. FIVE YEARS IN SYRIA AND CILICIA (39-43 A.D.)

A. RETURN TO TARSUS...

1. The place of his birth - **Ac 22:3**
2. It became the center of preaching in the surrounding regions of Syria and Cilicia - **Ga 1:21**
3. Churches in Judea heard of his preaching - **Ga 1:22-24**
4. Little else is known of this period of Paul's life, though it may have been a time when:
 - a. Churches in the area were established - **Ac 15:23,41**
 - b. Paul suffered persecution not recorded in Acts - **2Co 11:24-26**
 - c. He had the vision of Paradise - **2Co 12:1-4**

B. DEPARTURE FROM TARSUS...

1. Occasioned by the arrival of Barnabas - **Ac 11:25**
 - a. Who introduced him to the Jerusalem church earlier - **Ac 9:26-27**
 - b. Who traveled with him on his first missionary journey later - **Ac 13:1-4**
2. Who had come from Antioch of Syria, the site of a new and growing church - **Ac 11:19-24**

CONCLUSION

1. **“Paul's Early Years As A Christian”** was a time of...
 - a. Relative obscurity, out of the limelight in comparison with later years
 - b. Service and experience which prepared him for the work to come later
2. In our zeal to be of great service to the Lord...
 - a. Don't discount the need for time spent in preparation, and preliminary acts of service
 - b. How we serve in small things will determine our usefulness in greater things

As Jesus told His other apostles in their time of training...

He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. - Lk 16:10

As we have ability and opportunity, even if it be seemingly insignificant, let us be faithful so that Lord might one day find us useful for greater service...

Walking In The Fear Of The Lord

Acts 9:31

INTRODUCTION

1. In writing about the early church, Luke recorded:

“Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.” - Ac 9:31

2. In writing to the church at Philippi, Paul told them:

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,” - Php 2:12

3. The concept of “**fear and trembling**” in connection with God is not a popular concept today...
 - a. People prefer to hear about God’s love, longsuffering and mercy
 - b. When we point out God’s righteous indignation, holiness, and justice, some say “My God is not like that!”
 - c. The emphasis on God’s love and mercy today is probably a reaction to the “hell, fire, and brimstone” preaching of another generation
4. But could it be that we have gone to other extreme...?
 - a. Where there is no concept of fear and trembling as it relates to the Christian?
 - b. Could this be why many Christians are apathetic in their service?
 - c. Have we forgotten Whom we should fear if we are negligent in our service? - cf. **Mt 10:28**
5. In this lesson, I hope to accomplish three things...
 - a. Define the fear of the Lord
 - b. Point out why the fear of the Lord is important to the Christian
 - c. Suggest how we can develop a healthy fear of the Lord without going to either extreme

[Let’s begin by...]

I. DEFINING THE “FEAR OF THE LORD”

A. THE WORD “FEAR”...

1. The Hebrew word is **yir’ah** and is used in the Old Testament to describe:
 - a. Fear, terror
 - b. Awesome or terrifying thing (object causing fear)
 - c. Fear (of God), respect, reverence, piety
2. The Greek word is **phobos**, and it is used to describe:
 - a. Fear, dread, terror
 - b. that which strikes terror

B. WITH REGARDS TO THE FEAR OF THE LORD, IT IS OFTEN DEFINED AS REVERENCE OR AWE...

1. Which is fine as far as it goes...
2. But I wonder if this definition truly goes far enough...
3. For though the terms reverence and awe imply a place for “trembling”, do most make the connection?

C. FEAR OF THE LORD SHOULD INCLUDE A PLACE FOR TREMBLING...

1. Even as Paul indicated by combining “fear and trembling” - **Php 2:12**
2. The Greek word for “trembling” is **tromos** (a trembling or quaking with fear)
3. Just as one would likely tremble in the presence of one who could take our life, so Jesus taught us to fear the Lord - **Mt 10:28**

D. A PROPER FEAR OF THE LORD WOULD THEN INCLUDE...

1. “reverence and awe...”
2. “being afraid to offend God in any way” - **Hendriksen**
3. A trembling and quaking if one knows they have offended God and have not obtained forgiveness! - cf. **He 10:26-27, 30-31; 12:28-29**

[The value of such an attitude is seen as we continue and now notice...]

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE “FEAR OF THE LORD”

A. FROM THE BOOK OF PROVERBS, WE LEARN...

1. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge - **Pr 1:7**
2. The fear of the Lord will cause one to hate evil - **Pr 8:13**
3. The fear of the Lord will prolong life - **Pr 10:27**
4. The fear of the Lord provides strong confidence and is a fountain of life - **Pr 14:26-27**
5. The fear of the Lord prompts one to depart from evil - **Pr 16:6**
6. The fear of the Lord leads to a satisfying life, and spares one from much evil - **Pr 19:23**
7. The fear of the Lord is the way to riches, honor, and life! - **Pr 22:4**

B. WITHOUT THE FEAR OF THE LORD...

1. We close ourselves to the treasures of God’s wisdom and knowledge!
2. We will flirt with evil and be corrupted by it
3. Our lives are likely to be shortened by our refusal to heed God’s word (e.g., suffering STDs because we did not heed His Word on sexual relationships)
4. We will not come to know the love of God that gives us assurance and confidence of our salvation
5. When fallen into sin, we will not be motivated to repent and turn to God!
6. We will not be motivated to truly “work out our own salvation”!

[Without the fear of the Lord, we cannot please God (cf. **Isa 66:1-2**). Only the person who “trembles at His Word” has God’s promise to receive His tender mercy! (cf. **Ps 103:17-18**). But how does one develop the proper fear of the Lord without going to the extreme of earlier generations...?]

III. DEVELOPING THE “FEAR OF THE LORD”

A. IT COMES THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD...

1. Just as “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” - cf. **Ro 10:17**
2. The children of Israel were told to gather every seven years to read and hear the Word - **Deut 31:10-13**
3. The purpose? “...that they may learn to fear the Lord”! - cf. **Deut 31:13**
4. As one reads the Word of God, they should gain a healthy degree of the fear of the Lord
 - a. Consider the words of Paul in **Ro 2:4-11**
 - b. And the words of Peter in **2Pe 3:7-14**

B. THE WORD OF GOD, PROPERLY USED, MAINTAINS A PROPER BALANCE...

1. To avoid extremes, we must read **all** of God’s Word
 - a. Some read only portions that reveal God’s love and mercy, and have no fear of the Lord
 - b. Others focus on the fire, hell and brimstone passages, and know nothing of God’s everlasting loving kindness
 - c. The one develops an attitude of permissiveness that belittles God’s holiness and justice
 - d. The other develops a psychosis of terror that forgets God’s grace and compassion
2. Even in passages noted above, the context of each speaks much of God’s grace and forgiveness for those who will repent!
3. So we must be careful how we use the Word of God, but use it we must!

CONCLUSION

1. The Psalmist wrote...

“God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, And to be held in reverence by all those around Him.” - Ps 89:7

2. Why do we need to fear the Lord? So we will be sure to work out our salvation with fear and trembling! - **Ac 9:31; Php 2:12**
3. The warning is necessary, for as it is written in Hebrews...

“Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.” - He 4:1-2

And again...

“Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.” - He 4:11

4. With the proper fear of the Lord, we will “work out our salvation”, we will “be diligent to enter into that [heavenly] rest”...!

“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” - 2Co 7:1

Are we perfecting holiness in the fear of God...?

Walking In The Comfort Of The Holy Spirit

Acts 9:31

INTRODUCTION

1. In writing about the early church, Luke recorded:

“Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied.” - Ac 9:31

2. In our previous lesson, we considered **“walking in the fear of the Lord”**...
 - a. The need for having a proper fear of the Lord
 - b. The role of the Word of God in producing this fear
3. With this lesson, we shall consider **“walking in the comfort of the Holy Spirit”**...
 - a. What it meant to the apostles and the early church
 - b. What it likely means for us today

[The phrase “comfort of the Holy Spirit” should naturally remind us of Jesus’ promise regarding...]

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT AS COMFORTER

A. PROMISED TO THE APOSTLES...

1. As another Helper (**parakletos**, comforter) for them - **Jn 14:16-18**
 2. To teach them all things, reminding them what He said - **Jn 14:26**
 3. Who Himself will testify of Jesus, together with the apostles - **Jn 15:26-27**
 4. To guide them into all the truth - **Jn 16:12-13**
- **We should not presume what was promised the apostles was for all Christians**

B. PROMISED TO ALL BELIEVERS...

1. As something new, to be given after His resurrection - **Jn 7:37-39**
 2. As a gift to those who obey God in repentance and baptism - **Ac 2:38-39; 5:32**
 3. When they become sons of God through faith and baptism - **Ga 3:26-27; 4:6**
 4. As an earnest, a down payment toward their full inheritance - **Ep 1:13-14**
- **The Spirit has a significant role in the lives of all Christians**

[While the role the Spirit in the lives of the apostles and believers was varied, He was certainly a source of great comfort to all Christians...]

II. THE COMFORT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A. AS GIVEN TO THE APOSTLES...

1. The Spirit came while they were in Jerusalem - **Ac 1:4-5; 2:1-4**
2. Empowering them to be witnesses of Jesus’ resurrection - **Ac 1:8; 2:32-33**
3. Confirming their word through signs, wonders, miracles, gifts - **He 2:3-4**
4. Which they passed on to some through laying on of hands - **Ac 8:14-18; 19:6**

-- **Again, we should not presume the apostles' experience was normative for all believers**

B. AS GIVEN TO ALL BELIEVERS...

1. When baptized into one body, the church - **1Co 12:13**
 2. Filling hearts with love, hope, and other fruits of the Spirit - **Ro 5:5; 15:13; Ga 5:22-23**
 3. Though not all possessed the miraculous spiritual gifts then - **1Co 12:27-31**
 4. Such were temporary, while faith, hope, and love would continue - **1Co 13:1-13**
- **The Spirit did provide a degree of comfort for all believers then**

[With an appreciation of the Spirit's role in the life of the early church, here are thoughts on what it meant then and what it means today to be...]

III. WALKING IN THE COMFORT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A. FOR THE APOSTLES AND EARLY CHURCH...

1. The direct guidance of the Spirit in their lives - e.g., **Ac 8:29; 10:19; 13:2-4; 16:6-7; 20:23; 1Co 12:11; 1Ti 4:1**
 2. All related to revealing and confirming God's Word - cf. **Mk 16:17-20; He 2:3-4**
- **The early church certainly enjoyed walking in the comfort of the Spirit as He guided them through the early years of establishing the church and revealing all truth to them**

B. FOR CHRISTIANS AND THE CHURCH TODAY...

1. We have the benefit of God's Word completely revealed and confirmed
 - a. Scriptures all-sufficient to instruct and guide us - **2Ti 3:16-17**
 - b. Providing all we need for life and godliness - **2Pe 1:3**
 - c. Revealed once for all, for which we must contend - **Jude 3**
 2. We enjoy the comforting presence of the Spirit today through the Word
 - a. Which is the sword of the Spirit, an instrument used by the Spirit - **Ep 6:12**
 - b. A source of great comfort and patience, creating hope - cf. **Ro 15:4**
 3. We enjoy the comforting presence of the Spirit today through His indwelling
 - a. For our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit Who is in us - **1Co 6:19**
 - b. And the Spirit serves as God's instrumental agent to bless us - **Ep 3:16,20-21**
 - c. For empowerment, comfort, bearing spiritual fruit - **Ro 8:12-13; 15:13; Ga 4:6; 5:22-23**
- **With the Spirit's indwelling in conjunction with the Word, we can walk in the comfort of the Holy Spirit!**

CONCLUSION

1. Returning to our text (**Ac 9:31**), we note that the churches **multiplied** when they walked **both...**
 - a. In the fear of the Lord
 - b. In the comfort of the Holy Spirit
2. If we desire to experience such growth today, then we also need to...
 - a. Develop the fear of the Lord and walk in it
 - b. Experience the comfort of the Holy Spirit as we walk in it

Hopefully this lesson and the preceding one may encourage us to do both, for the glory of God and His Son's church...!

Peter's Ministry In Western Judea

Acts 9:32-43

INTRODUCTION

1. With the conversion of Saul, the chief instigator of persecution...
 - a. The churches in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria enjoyed a reprieve - **Ac 9:31**
 - b. They experienced peace, edification, and growth - **ibid.**
2. The apostle Peter took the opportunity to travel...
 - a. Which may have included areas of Galilee and Samaria - **Ac 9:32**
 - b. But definitely included regions of western Judea - **Ac 9:32-43**

[Especially two cities, **Lydda** and **Joppa**, where Philip may have preached earlier (cf. **Ac 8:40**). It was at those **two cities**, that Peter performed **two miracles** that Luke recorded in Acts...]

I. AT LYDDA - HEALING AENEAS (Ac 9:32-35)

A. THE CITY...

1. Formerly known by its Hebrew name Lod
2. Located eleven miles southeast of Joppa
3. In the picturesque plain of Sharon - cf. **Ac 9:35**
4. Built by Shemed of Benjamin - **1Ch 8:12**
5. Re-populated after the Babylonian exile - **Ezr 2:1,33**
6. Where there was evidently a church ("saints who dwelt at Lydda") - **Ac 9:32**

B. THE MIRACLE...

1. Peter finds Aeneas, bedridden for 8 years and paralyzed - **Ac 9:33**
2. Appealing to the name and power of Jesus, Peter heals him - **Ac 9:34**; cf. **Ac 3:6**
 - a. Commanding him to arise and make his bed
 - b. Whereby he arose immediately, healed instantly
3. This miracle is reminiscent of Jesus healing the paralytic - cf. **Lk 5:17-26**
4. All in Lydda and Sharon who saw Aeneas "turned to the Lord" - **Ac 9:35**

[The miracle served to confirm Jesus as Lord and Peter as His apostle (cf. **Mk 16:19-20**). The same would prove true at...]

II. AT JOPPA - RAISING TABITHA (Ac 9:36-43)

A. THE CITY...

1. A harbor town on the Mediterranean Sea, today is known as Jaffa
2. Located thirty-five miles northwest of Jerusalem
3. From which Jonah boarded a ship to Tarshish - **Jon 1:3**
4. It too had a church ("the disciples had heard") - **Ac 9:38**

B. THE MIRACLE...

1. There was a certain disciple named Tabitha - **Ac 9:36**

- a. Tabitha was her Aramaic name, Dorcas her Greek name
- b. Both literally means “gazelle” (a small, swift, long-horned antelope)
2. She was full of good works and charitable deeds - **Ac 9:36**
3. She became sick and died - **Ac 9:37**
 - a. Her body was washed
 - b. Her body was laid in an upper room
4. Hearing that Peter was in Lydda, two disciples were sent for him - **Ac 9:38**
5. Arriving, Peter was brought to the upper room - **Ac 9:39**
 - a. Where widows stood by weeping
 - b. Displaying tunics and garments Dorcas had made
6. Peter raised Dorcas from the dead - **Ac 9:40**
 - a. He put everyone out of the room - **Ac 9:40**
 - b. He knelt and prayed
 - c. Turning to the body, he said “Tabitha, arise”
 - d. She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up
7. Peter then lifted her up and presented her alive - **Ac 9:41**
8. This miracle is also reminiscent of Jesus raising Jairus’ daughter - cf. **Lk 8:41-42,49-56**
9. It became known throughout Joppa, and many “believed on the Lord” - **Ac 9:42**

CONCLUSION

1. Peter remained in Joppa many days...
 - a. Staying with Simon, a tanner - **Ac 9:43**
 - b. From where he would be sent for by Cornelius - **Ac 10:5-6**
2. The effect of the two miracles in the two cities is expressed differently...
 - a. In Lydda, it is said people “**turned to the Lord**”
 - b. In Joppa, it is said people “**believed on the Lord**”
3. But these are simply two ways of saying the same thing...
 - a. To turn from sin and self, and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ
 - b. To place one’s faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ

This is how evidence that Jesus is the Christ and Peter was His apostle should affect us (cf. **Jn 20:30-31**). With such evidence, not only here in **Acts 9**, but throughout the Scriptures, shouldn’t we be careful not to neglect the great salvation that we have in Christ...? - cf. **He 2:1-4**

The Conversion Of Cornelius

Acts 10:1-48

INTRODUCTION

1. Up to this point, the gospel had been somewhat limited in its outreach...
 - a. It had spread throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria - **Ac 9:31**
 - b. Other than Samaritans (who were half Jewish), it had gone only to the Jews
2. With **“The Conversion Of Cornelius”** the first Gentile is saved...
 - a. A conversion noted not only because he was the first Gentile
 - b. But also for the miraculous events that accompanied his conversion
3. As with Saul of Tarsus, we have more than just one account of his conversion...
 - a. There is Luke’s description, given as it occurred - **Ac 10:1-48**
 - b. There is Peter’s description, when he is called to defend his actions - **Ac 11:1-18**

[In this lesson, we will focus our attention to Luke’s description of the events as they occurred...]

I. LUKE’S ACCOUNT OF THIS CONVERSION

A. CORNELIUS HAS A VISION...

1. Cornelius, a centurion, is a very religious man - **Ac 10:1-2**
2. The angel appears to him - **Ac 10:3-6**
 - a. With an announcement that his prayers and alms have been noticed by God
 - b. With instructions to send for Peter: “He will tell you what you must do.”
3. Cornelius then sends two servants and a devout soldier to Peter - **Ac 10:7-8**

B. PETER HAS A VISION...

1. The next day, praying, hungry, Peter has a vision - **Ac 10:9-15**
 - a. A sheet descends from heaven, containing all sorts of creatures
 - b. A voice tells Peter to “kill and eat”
 - c. Peter objects, for he has never eaten anything common or unclean
 - d. The voice tells him, “What God has cleansed you must not call common.”
2. The vision is repeated three times - **Ac 10:16**

C. THE SPIRIT INSTRUCTS PETER...

1. The men from Cornelius arrive as Peter contemplates the vision - **Ac 10:17-18**
2. The Spirit tells Peter to go, “doubting nothing, for I have sent them” - **Ac 10:19-20**
3. Peter receives the men and takes brethren with him as they go to Cornelius - **Ac 10:21-23**

D. PETER ARRIVES AT CORNELIUS’ HOUSE...

1. Cornelius has gathered his family and close friends - **Ac 10:24**
2. Peter deflects an attempt by Cornelius to worship him - **Ac 10:25-26**
3. Peter explains his presence is a violation of Jewish custom, but now understands “I should not call any man common or unclean” - **Ac 10:27-28**
4. To explain why Peter was called, Cornelius recounts the appearance and instructions of the

angel - **Ac 10:29-32**

5. Cornelius and household were ready “to hear all things commanded you by God” - **Ac 10:33**

E. PETER’S SERMON TO THE HOUSEHOLD OF CORNELIUS...

1. He begins with a full perception that God shows no partiality - **Ac 10:34-35**
 - a. A perception started with the vision of the sheet and unclean beasts
 - b. A perception continued with the Spirit’s instruction to go with the messengers
2. Peter then proceeds to proclaim Jesus Christ - **Ac 10:36-43**
 - a. As Lord who was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power - **Ac 10:36-38**
 - b. Who was killed, but then raised from the dead and seen by eyewitnesses who knew Him well - **Ac 10:39-41**
 - c. Who has commanded the apostles to proclaim Him as ordained by God to be the Judge of the living and dead - **Ac 10:42**
 - d. Through Whom remission of sins is offered to those who believe - **Ac 10:43**

F. THE SPIRIT FALLS ON ALL WHO HEARD...

1. While Peter was still speaking - **Ac 10:44**
2. Astonishing those of the circumcision - **Ac 10:45-46**
 - a. Jewish Christians who had come with Peter
 - b. Because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on Gentiles also
 - c. Empowering them to speak with tongues and praise God

G. PETER COMMANDS THEM TO BE BAPTIZED...

1. How could anyone forbid water to those who had received the Spirit just as the apostles did? - **Ac 10:47; cf. Ac 2:1-4**
2. So Cornelius and his household were commanded to be baptized in the name of the Lord - **Ac 10:48; cf. Ac 2:38**

[The events surrounding this conversion are certainly remarkable. They evidently were intended to convey important truths. As we endeavor to glean what those truths were, here are a couple of...]

II. OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THIS CONVERSION

A. RELIGIOUS PEOPLE NEED SAVING...

1. Many people believe that if you are religious, you will be saved
 - a. That if you go to church, do good, etc., you have a hope of heaven
 - b. That you will have earned the right to enter heaven
2. Yet, though Cornelius was a man who...
 - a. Was a devout man and feared God with his whole family - **Ac 10:2**
 - b. Gave alms generously and prayed to God always - **ibid.**
 - c. Still needed to be told “words by which you and all your household will be saved” - cf. **Ac 11:14**
3. Clearly, being religious alone isn’t what saves you
 - a. Most examples of conversion in Acts involved religious people
 - b. It is the blood of Christ that saves! - cf. **Ep 1:7**

B. THE GOSPEL IS FOR ALL NATIONS...

1. Peter perceived that God is no respecter of persons - **Ac 10:34-35**
2. Indeed, God desires that ALL men be saved - cf. **Jn 3:16; 1Ti 2:3-6; 2Pe 3:9**

3. Therefore He has not predestined some to be saved and others to be lost!

C. THE GOSPEL CULMINATES IN BAPTISM...

1. It begins with the need to believe in Jesus - **Ac 10:42-43**
2. It ends with immersion in water - Ac 10:47-48; cf. **Ac 2:38; 8:35-38; 22:16**
3. “Baptism is here [in **Ac 2:38**, MAC] a part of the proclamation of Christ. In an Apostolic sermon it comes as its logical conclusion. An effort ought to be made to restore this note in our [Baptist, MAC] preaching.” - **George Beasley-Murray**, *Baptism In The New Testament*, p. 393

CONCLUSION

1. There are other observations to be made...
 - a. Which we will consider in the next chapter
 - b. As Peter is called to account for his actions
2. While miraculous events surrounded “**The Conversion Of Cornelius**”, his salvation was no different from what we have already seen...
 - a. He had to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ - e.g., **Ac 8:35**
 - b. He was taught to believe and commanded to be baptized - e.g., **Ac 2:36-38; 8:36-38**
3. As Peter would later say, it is “through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ” that both Gentiles and Jews are saved - cf. **Ac 15:11**
 - a. We are saved by grace, not works - cf. **Ep 2:5,8; Tit 3:4-5**
 - b. For it is not enough to be religious...
 - 1) Who could be more religious than Cornelius?
 - 2) Or the 3000 at Pentecost, the Ethiopian eunuch, Saul of Tarsus, Lydia of Thyatira?
4. The grace of God which saves does require a response, however...
 - a. A response of faith - **Ac 10:43**
 - b. Faith in Jesus that comes by hearing the gospel - **Ac 10:42**
 - c. Faith which expresses itself in obedience - cf. **He 5:9**
 - 1) Particularly, repentance and baptism - cf. **Ac 2:38; 3:19; 10:48**
 - 2) Not as works of merit, but as acts of faith by which one receives God’s grace

Those of us who are not descended from Israel can rejoice in what God revealed with “**The Conversion of Cornelius**”. As properly concluded later by Jewish brethren in Jerusalem:

“God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.”
Ac 11:18

Have you taken advantage of this wonderful gift, by responding to the gospel of Jesus Christ in faith, repentance, and baptism...?

Peter Defends His Actions

Acts 11:1-18

INTRODUCTION

1. The news of Cornelius' conversion quickly spread...
 - a. Those in Jerusalem heard of the Gentiles' reception of the Word - **Ac 11:1**
 - b. But Peter's actions were soon criticized by some Jewish Christians - **Ac 11:2-3**
2. As noted previously, there are two accounts of Cornelius' conversion...
 - a. There is Luke's description, given as it occurred - **Ac 10:1-48**
 - b. There is Peter's description, when he is called to defend his actions - **Ac 11:1-18**

[In this lesson, we will focus our attention to Peter's description of the events as they occurred...]

I. PETER'S ACCOUNT OF THIS CONVERSION

A. PETER HAS A VISION...

1. While praying in Joppa, in a trance, Peter has a vision - **Ac 11:4-9**
 - a. A sheet descends from heaven, containing all sorts of creatures
 - b. A voice tells him "Rise, Peter; kill and eat"
 - c. Peter objects, for he has never eaten anything common or unclean
 - d. The voice tells him, "What God has cleansed you must not call common."
2. The vision is repeated three times - **Ac 11:10**

B. THE SPIRIT INSTRUCTS PETER...

1. Three men from Caesarea arrive as Peter contemplates the vision - **Ac 11:11**
2. The Spirit tells Peter to go with them, doubting nothing - **Ac 11:12**
3. Six brethren from Joppa went with him (now with Peter in Jerusalem) - **Ac 11:12**
4. They entered the man's house - **Ac 11:12**

C. CORNELIUS EXPLAINS WHY HE SENT FOR PETER...

1. He had seen an angel standing in his house - **Ac 11:13**
2. Who told him to send to Joppa and ask for Peter - **Ac 11:13**
3. "who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved" - **Ac 11:14**

D. THE SPIRIT FALLS ON THE GENTILES...

1. "As I began to speak...as upon us at the beginning." - **Ac 11:15**; cf. **Ac 2:1-4**
2. Reminded Peter of the Lord's promise to the apostles concerning being baptized with the Holy Spirit - **Ac 11:16**; cf. **Ac 1:5**
3. Convinced him that if God gave Gentiles the same gift as given to the apostles when they believed on the Lord, who was he to withstand God? - **Ac 11:17**

E. THE IMPACT ON THOSE AT JERUSALEM...

1. They were silenced, then glorified God - **Ac 11:18**
2. Saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life." - **ibid.**

[Peter's account silenced the objectors, and led to the Gentiles considered acceptable recipients of the gospel of Christ. His account also adds a few details of which we should take careful note...]

II. OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THIS CONVERSION

A. THE ORDER IN WHICH EVENTS OCCURRED...

1. Peter explained the events "in order from the beginning" - **Ac 11:4**; cf. **Lk 1:3**
2. If there is any question as to the sequence of events, Peter's account takes precedence

B. THE MOMENT WHEN CORNELIUS WAS SAVED...

1. Remember that Cornelius was told to send for Peter, who would tell him...
 - a. "what you must do." - **Ac 10:6**
 - b. "words by which you...shall be saved." - **Ac 11:14**
2. From this, and from what we see in other conversions...
 - a. Cornelius was not saved until he heard the "words" (i.e., after the sermon)
 - b. Cornelius was not saved until he obeyed what he was told to do
3. What were the words he and his household were told to do?
 - a. They were told to believe, as implied in **Ac 10:43**
 - b. They were told to be baptized, as commanded in **Ac 10:48**
4. Thus Cornelius and his household were not saved until they believed and were baptized! - cf. **Mk 16:16; Ac 8:12,13**

C. THE PURPOSE OF THE SPIRIT FALLING ON THEM...

1. Some presume that the purpose was to save Cornelius and his family
 - a. That therefore they were saved before obeying the command to be baptized
 - b. But the Spirit came upon them as Peter "began to speak", before they could hear words by which they could be saved! - **Ac 11:14-15**
2. The purpose of the Spirit can be gleaned from the following...
 - a. The effect it had on the Jewish brethren who were present, and Peter's response - **Ac 10:45-47**
 - b. The reaction of those in Jerusalem when Peter explained what happened - **Ac 11:17-18**
 - c. Peter's explanation at the council held later in Jerusalem - **Ac 15:7-11**
3. The purpose of the Spirit falling on Gentiles was therefore to show Jewish brethren...
 - a. That God was no respecter of persons - **Ac 10:34-35**
 - b. That God was willing to grant Gentiles opportunity to repent and have life - **Ac 11:18**
 - c. That Gentiles could be saved in the same way as Jews... - **Ac 15:9,11**; cf. **Ac 2:38; 10:48**

CONCLUSION

1. Peter's defense of his actions silenced those who accused him of impropriety...
 - a. For socializing with Gentiles
 - b. For sharing the gospel with them
2. But the issue of Gentiles in the church was not over...
 - a. It will come up again later in Acts - cf. **Ac 15:1-2**
 - b. It was a major issue addressed in several epistles (Romans, Galatians, etc.)

But we who are Gentiles today can be thankful that God in His grace has made it clear: He is no respecter of persons, and that **all** can be saved by the grace extended through His Son Jesus Christ...!

The Church In Antioch Of Syria

Acts 11:19-30

INTRODUCTION

1. A major church in New Testament times was the church in Antioch of Syria...
 - b. Begun by disciples who had been in Jerusalem - **Ac 11:19-21**
 - c. Where disciples of Christ were first called “Christians” - **Ac 11:26**
2. The church in Antioch of Syria would later...
 - a. Serve as Paul’s starting point for his three missionary journeys - **Ac 13:1-3**
 - b. Send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to resolve the issue of circumcision - **Ac 15:1-2**

[In our text for this lesson (**Ac 11:19-30**), we read the beginning of the church in Antioch of Syria. But first, let’s review some background material concerning the city of Antioch itself...]

I. THE CITY OF ANTIOCH

A. BEGINNING...

1. Founded in 300 B.C. by Seleucus Nicator, one of Alexander the Great’s generals
2. Named after his father Antiochus
3. Located on the river Orontes, 15 miles upstream from the port city Seleucia (named after Seleucus himself)

B. FAME...

1. Became known as “Antioch the Beautiful”
2. Famous for its fine buildings, and a long, paved boulevard flanked by a double colonnade with trees and fountains
3. Absorbed by the Roman empire in 64 B.C., it became the capital of the imperial province of Syria (and later Cilicia)
4. Josephus called it the third city of the empire, after Rome and Alexandria

C. POPULATION...

1. Estimated at 300,000, extremely cosmopolitan (multicultural)
2. A Greek city by foundation, inhabitants included Latins as well
3. With a large colony of Jews, attracted by Seleucus’ offer of equal citizenship
4. There were also people from Persia, India, and even China, earning it another name: “the Queen of the East”

[Much of the above information about the city of Antioch is from **Stott, J. R. W.** (1994). *The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church & the World*. The Bible Speaks Today. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. Now let’s consider the church itself...]

II. THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH

A. ESTABLISHED BY EVANGELISTS...

1. Of those scattered by the persecution in Jerusalem, who first spoke only to the Jews - **Ac**

11:19; cf. **Ac 8:1-4**

2. Some of them from Cyprus and Cyrene, began speaking to Hellenists (Greeks) - **Ac 11:20**
3. Preaching the Lord Jesus, with the aid of the Lord, a great number believed and turned to the Lord - **Ac 11:21**

B. ENCOURAGED BY BARNABAS...

1. News of this new church reached Jerusalem, so they sent Barnabas - **Ac 11:22**
 - a. Introduced earlier as also being from Cyprus - **Ac 4:36-37**
 - b. Who helped Saul to be accepted by the church in Jerusalem - **Ac 9:26-27**
2. Upon his arrival, Barnabas (whose name means “son of encouragement”):
 - a. Saw the grace of God and was glad - **Ac 11:23**
 - b. Encouraged them to continue with the Lord with purpose of heart - **ibid.**
3. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith - **Ac 11:24**; cf. **Ac 4:37; 6:5**
4. Result: “And a great many people were added to the Lord” - **Ac 11:24**; cf. **Ac 2:41,47**

C. EDUCATED WITH SAUL...

1. Barnabas went to Tarsus to find Saul - **Ac 11:25**; cf. **Ac 9:30**
2. Together at Antioch, Barnabas and Saul assembled with the church for a year and taught a great many people - **Ac 11:26**
3. It was at Antioch disciples were first called Christians - **Ac 11:26**; cf. **Ac 26:28; 1Pe 4:16**

D. EXEMPLIFIED GOOD WORKS...

1. Some prophets arrived from Jerusalem - **Ac 11:27**; cf. **1Co 12:28; Ep 4:11**
2. One of them, Agabus, by the Spirit foretold of a famine - **Ac 11:28**; cf. **Ac 21:10,11**
3. The disciples at Antioch determined to send relief - **Ac 11:29**
 - a. Each according to his ability - cf. **1Co 16:1-2; 2Co 8:2-4,12-14**
 - b. Sent by the hands of Barnabas and Saul to the elders
4. Thus the church demonstrated one “zealous for good works” - cf. **Tit 2:14; 3:1,8,14**

CONCLUSION

1. So began a great church in a great city...
 - a. Established by evangelists
 - b. Endorsed by Barnabas
 - c. Educated with Saul
 - d. Exemplified good works

-- **Perhaps the second most influential church after Jerusalem in the first century A.D.**
2. We will read more of this church in the book of Acts...
 - a. As an important factor in Paul’s missionary journeys
 - b. Contributing to the successful resolution of a problem involving Gentiles

Indeed, there are good lessons we might glean from “**The Church In Antioch Of Syria**”, a few of which we shall look at in our next study...

Examples From Antioch

Acts 11:19-30

INTRODUCTION

1. A wonderful example in New Testament times was the church in Antioch of Syria...
 - b. Begun by disciples who had been in Jerusalem - **Ac 11:19-21**
 - c. Where disciples of Christ were first called “Christians” - **Ac 11:26**
2. The church in Antioch of Syria would later...
 - a. Serve as Paul’s starting point for his three missionary journeys - **Ac 13:1-3**
 - b. Send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to resolve the issue of circumcision - **Ac 15:1-2**

[In our text for this lesson (**Ac 11:19-30**), we can glean from the church in Antioch of Syria several things that are worthy of emulation. Let’s start with...]

I. HOW TO START A CHURCH

A. CHURCHES CAN BEGIN IN VARIOUS WAYS...

1. Paul started many churches through his missionary journeys - e.g., **Ac 14:21**
2. Others start when a person or family moves to an area where there is no church
3. Sadly, today many churches begin as a result of division

B. CHURCHES START BEST WHEN CHRISTIANS “SWARM”...

1. Like bees swarming from one hive to begin another
2. The church in Antioch began when disciples came from Jerusalem - **Ac 11:19-20**
3. Today, “church plantings” most often succeed when several families begin a new work

[What is often needed to for more churches are not just more **preachers**, but more **families** willing to be the nucleus of a new work, whether locally or abroad. From the church at Antioch, we can also learn...]

II. HOW TO BE A STRONG CHURCH

A. MANY CHURCHES HAVE MEMBERS WHO PROFESS FAITH...

1. They may love to assemble and express their faith in praise
2. They may even confess their faith to friends and neighbors
3. But sometimes their faith is not accompanied with true repentance

B. ANTIOCH WAS COMPOSED OF PENITENT BELIEVERS...

1. They “believed and turned to the Lord” - **Ac 11:21**
2. They turned from sin, and turned to the Lord (an indication of true repentance)
3. More than mere confessors, they were true converts - e.g., **2Co 7:10-11**

[A church made up of penitent believers who became such through “godly sorrow” will be a strong, vibrant church. From the church at Antioch, we can learn...]

III. HOW TO BE A GROWING CHURCH

A. BY PREACHING THE LORD JESUS...

1. They were “preaching the Lord Jesus” - **Ac 11:20**
2. Today, some preach the “church”, almost to the exclusion of preaching “Christ”!
 - a. Consider much of the evangelistic tools we sometimes use:
 - 1) Which stress “undenominational Christianity”
 - 2) Or focus on the “NT pattern for the church”
 - b. What can be the result of such preaching?
 - 1) People may be converted to the **idea** of the church, rather than to the **Lord Jesus!**
 - 2) Extent of faithfulness may be limited to church related activities (e.g., attendance)
3. We need to be sure that we preach the Lord Jesus!
 - a. In other words, proclaiming that Jesus is Lord - cf. **Mt 28:18; Ac 2:36; 10:36**
 - b. The result of preaching Jesus as Lord?
 - 1) They will be faithful disciples in all things that Jesus taught - **Mt 28:19-20**
 - 2) People will then be converted to Christ, as well as to His church!

B. WITH THE HAND OF THE LORD...

1. At Antioch, “the hand of the Lord was with them” - **Ac 11:21**
2. Without Divine help, we can never have the right kind of growth
 - a. It is God who opens doors of opportunity - **Col 4:3**
 - b. It is God who gives the increase - **1Co 3:5-7**
3. With God’s help, we should expect growth
 - a. That is the nature of the kingdom - **Mt 13:31-33**
 - b. Where there is little or no growth, something is amiss!

C. WITH THE AID OF TEACHERS...

1. Like Barnabas, who encouraged them by word and example - **Ac 11:22-24**
2. Like Saul, who together with Barnabas taught a great many people - **Ac 11:25-26**

[Preach Jesus as Lord, pray for God’s helping hand, utilize those able to teach, and a church will grow! Finally, we learn from the church at Antioch, when faced with an impending crisis...]

IV. HOW TO BE A GENEROUS CHURCH

A. ACCORDING TO ABILITY...

1. The prophet Agabus foretold of a famine to come upon the world - **Ac 11:27-28**
2. The disciples gave according to their ability - **Ac 11:29**
3. Which is all that God asks of any congregation - **1Co 16:2; 2Co 8:12-14**

B. WITH DETERMINATION...

1. To send relief to the brethren in Judea - **Ac 11:29**
2. To send via trusted messengers (Barnabas and Saul) - **Ac 11:30; cf. 1Co 16:3**

CONCLUSION

1. The church at Antioch was where disciples of Christ were first called Christians - **Ac 11:26; cf. Ac 26:28; 1Pe 4:16**
2. For reasons we have considered, they are certainly worthy of our imitation! - cf. **Php 3:17**

Herod's Harassment Of The Church

Acts 12:1-25

INTRODUCTION

1. We have seen that with Saul's conversion the persecution against the church diminished...
 - a. The churches in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee had peace - **Ac 9:31**
 - b. The gospel had spread as far as Antioch in Syria - **Ac 11:19-21**
2. But then a new persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem...
 - a. Initiated by Herod Agrippa I - **Ac 12:1**
 - b. His grandfather was Herod the Great, who massacred the babies - **Mt 2:16**
 - c. His uncle was Herod Antipas, who beheaded John, and tried Jesus - **Mt 14:1-14; Lk 23:8-12**
 - d. His son was Herod Agrippa II, who tried the apostle Paul - **Ac 25:13-26:32**

[Thus it was **Herod Agrippa I** who harassed the church in Jerusalem at this time. How God and the church responded to his harassment is instructive, so let's begin with how...]

I. HEROD KILLS JAMES

A. JAMES, BROTHER OF JOHN...

1. Son of Zebedee, one of Jesus' first disciples - **Mk 1:19-20**
2. Together with John his brother were called "Sons of Thunder" - **Mk 3:17**
3. Part of the inner circle of Jesus' closest disciples - cf. **Mk 5:37; 9:2; 13:3; 14:33**

B. THE FIRST APOSTLE TO DIE...

1. Not counting Judas Iscariot, who died before the church began
2. Jesus foretold James would suffer (the cup and baptism of suffering) - **Mk 10:35-40**
3. And so Herod killed James with the sword (i.e., beheaded him) - **Ac 12:2**
4. **Note:** James the apostle was not replaced after his death, nor is there any indication in the Scriptures that other apostles were replaced when they died (excluding Judas Iscariot)

[Herod's harassment against the church by killing James pleased the unbelieving Jews (**Ac 12:3**). The most liked by the Jews of any of the Herods (cf. **Josephus**), to further incur their favor...]

II. HEROD IMPRISONS PETER

A. IMPRISONED BY A KING...

1. Herod arrested Peter during the Days of Unleavened Bread, his trial delayed - **Ac 12:3-4**
2. Peter was therefore imprisoned, guarded by four squads of soldiers - **Ac 12:4**

B. RELEASED BY AN ANGEL...

1. In the meantime, the church responded with constant (fervent) prayer - **Ac 12:5**
2. Peter was bound by chains between two soldiers, with guards before the door - **Ac 12:6**
3. An angel appeared, freed Peter, and led him out of the prison - **Ac 12:7-10**
4. Peter realized it was real, not a vision, that the Lord delivered him - **Ac 12:11**
5. He goes to the house of Mary, mother of John Mark, where many were praying - **Ac 12:12**

6. His arrival led to denial, then astonishment, but Peter explained it all - **Ac 12:13-17**
7. He gave instructions to inform James (the Lord's brother) and then left - **Ac 12:17**

[For some reason, the Lord saw fit to allow James to die while Peter lived. Peter would later die for Christ as well (as would most of the apostles). As for Herod, God was not done with him yet...]

III. HEROD STRUCK BY AN ANGEL

A. EXALTED BY MAN...

1. Angered by Peter's escape, Herod executes the guards - **Ac 12:18-19**
2. Leaving Judea, Herod goes to Caesarea (seat of the Roman government) - **Ac 12:19**
3. The people of Tyre and Sidon appeal to him via their friend Blastus, his aide - **Ac 12:20**
4. Giving an oration, the people praise Herod as having the voice of a god - **Ac 12:21-22**

B. HUMBLD BY GOD...

1. Failing to give glory to God, Herod is immediately struck by an angel - **Ac 12:23**
2. Luke (a physician) tells us he was eaten by worms and died - **Ac 12:23**
3. Josephus says that a severe pain arose in his belly and became so violent that he was carried into his palace where he died five days later
4. Dr. A. Rendle Short, who was professor of surgery at Bristol University and wrote a book entitled *The Bible and Modern Medicine*, stated that a great many people in Asia 'harbor intestinal worms', which can form a tight ball and cause 'acute intestinal obstruction'. This may have been the cause of Herod's death. - **Stott, J. R. W.** (1994). *The message of Acts: The Spirit, the church & the world*. The Bible Speaks Today. Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

CONCLUSION

1. With the death of Herod and the end of his harassment against the church...
 - a. "...the word of God grew and multiplied" - **Ac 12:24**
 - b. Paul and Silas would later be able to complete their ministry and return to Antioch with John Mark - **Ac 12:25**
2. From this account of "**Herod's Harassment Of The Church**" we learn...
 - a. How the church is to react against persecution: pray! - e.g., **Ac 12:5,12**; cf. **Ac 4:23-31**
 - b. How God is able to humble governmental authorities who resist Him - cf. **Rev 17:14**

Whether it be through Divine intervention or Divine providence, Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords is in ultimate control (cf. **Ro 13:1-4**).

As His disciples we must trust Him, even if in His wisdom it means that some might be martyrs while others go free...

The Call Of Barnabas And Saul

Acts 13:1-3

INTRODUCTION

1. In **Acts 1:8**, Luke described the commission Jesus gave to His apostles...
 - a. To be witnesses to Him
 - b. In Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth
2. Thus far in his historical account, Luke has described how the commission was fulfilled...
 - a. In Jerusalem - **Ac 1:1-8:3**
 - b. In all Judea and Samaria - **Ac 8:4-12:25**
3. The rest of Luke's account focuses on the ministry of the apostle Paul...
 - a. Saul of Tarsus, former persecutor of the church, now apostle to the Gentiles
 - b. Whose missionary journeys illustrated how the gospel was taken "to the end of the earth"

[His first journey began soon after returning to Antioch of Syria with Barnabas and John Mark (**Ac 12:25**), with a special call by the Holy Spirit...]

I. THE CALL OF BARNABAS AND SAUL

A. THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH...

1. Started by men from Cyprus and Cyrene, by way of Jerusalem - **Ac 11:19-21**
2. Strengthened by Barnabas, then later together with Paul - **Ac 11:22-26**
3. Blessed with a number of prophets and teachers - **Ac 13:1**
 - a. **Barnabas**, a Levite from Cyprus - **Ac 4:36**
 - b. **Simeon** called Niger ("black"), presumably a black African, possibly Simon of Cyrene who carried Jesus' cross - cf. **Lk 23:26; Mk 15:21**
 - c. **Lucius** of Cyrene, also from North Africa - cf. **Ro 16:21**
 - d. **Manaen**, brought up with Herod the tetrarch (Herod Antipas, who killed John the Baptist and tried Jesus) - cf. **Mt 14:1-10; Lk 23:7-11**
 - e. **Saul**, from Tarsus in Cilicia - **Ac 11:25; 22:3**

B. THE CALL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT...

1. As they ministered (worshiped) to the Lord and fasted - **Ac 13:2**
2. The Spirit told them to separate Barnabas and Saul for the work He had for them - **Ac 13:2**
3. With fasting, prayer, and the laying on of hands, they are sent on their way - **Ac 13:3**

[And so Barnabas and Saul are "sent out by the Holy Spirit" (**Ac 13:4**). Our next study will follow them as they make their way to the island of Cyprus. But for the rest of this study, allow me to share...]

II. SOME OBSERVATIONS

A. THE DIVERSITY OF THE CHURCH...

1. Note the racial, cultural and social diversity of the five prophets and teachers
2. Two from North Africa, one from Cyprus, one from Cilicia, one from Palestine

3. One was raised with royalty, another was wealthy, another a rabbi
4. Isn't this the way churches should be? - cf. **Ro 10:12; Ga 3:26-28; Col 3:11**
5. Churches should reflect our oneness in Christ, not our society's divisions (e.g., white churches, black churches, Hispanic churches), unless language differences are too great

B. THE PRINCIPLE OF SYNERGY...

1. Synergy: the working together of two things to produce a result greater than the sum of their individual effects
2. Two (or more) working together can accomplish more than their working separately
3. Jesus believed in the principle of synergy - **Mk 6:7; Lk 10:1**
4. Barnabas believed in the principle of synergy - **Ac 11:25-26**
5. The Holy Spirit believed in the principle of synergy - **Ac 13:2,4**
6. We do well to support teams of two or more, not just individuals working alone

C. THE PRACTICE OF FASTING...

1. Jesus said His disciples would fast, and taught them how to fast - **Mt 9:14-17; 6:16-18**
2. The church at Antioch fasted - **Ac 13:2-3**
3. Elders were appointed with prayer and fasting - **Ac 14:21-23**
4. Paul wrote of spouses fasting and prayer during periods of separation - **1Co 7:5**
5. Fasting in conjunction with prayer is suitable in the life of the Christian and the church

D. THE LAYING ON OF HANDS...

1. Used often in the appointment or dedication of service - **Ac 6:6; 13:3**
2. Indicating acceptance and approval of those who have been selected by the congregation - cf. **Ac 6:1-6; 1Ti 5:22; He 6:2**
3. Beseeching God's blessing and protection on those who serve - e.g., **Ac 13:1-3**
4. "...the imposition of hands, accompanied by fasting and prayer, was, in this case, as in that of the seven deacons [**Ac 6:6**], merely their formal separation to the special work to which they had been called. This, indeed, is sufficiently evident from the context. What they did was doubtless what they had been told to do by the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit simply said to them, 'Separate me Barnabas and Saul to the work to which I have called them.' The fasting, prayer, and imposition of hands was, then, merely their separation to this work." - **J. W. McGarvey, *Commentary on Acts*, commenting on **Ac 13:1-3****
5. "It was a ceremony deemed by infinite wisdom suitable to such a purpose; and, therefore, whenever a congregation has a similar purpose to accomplish, they have, in this case, the judgments and will of God, which should be their guide." - **J. W. McGarvey, *ibid.***

CONCLUSION

1. Thus Barnabas and Saul are sent out on their missionary journey...
 - a. Separated and sent out by the Holy Spirit Himself to the task before them
 - b. With fasting, prayer, and the laying on of hands by those left behind
2. Barnabas and Saul will return to the church of Antioch of Syria...
 - a. It will serve as the point of departure for Paul's three missionary journeys
 - b. As Saul, soon to be called Paul (**Ac 13:9**), does his part in fulfilling the Great Commission

Thousands of years later and thousands of miles away, we benefit from the work of those willing to go (and willing to send). May their example encourage us to do our part today in spreading the Gospel...

Barnabas And Saul On Cyprus

Acts 13:4-12

INTRODUCTION

1. Previously we studied “**The Call Of Barnabas And Saul**”, two men who were...
 - a. Working with the church at Antioch with other prophets and teachers - **Ac 13:1**
 - b. Separated by the Holy Spirit for the work to which He had called them - **Ac 13:2**
 - c. Sent out by the church with fasting, prayers, and laying on of hands - **Ac 13:3**
2. Thus “*sent out by the Holy Spirit*” (**Ac 13:4**), they began their missionary journey...
 - a. First to **Seleucia**, a port city on the Mediterranean coast, 16 miles away
 - b. Then sailing to **Cyprus**, an island 130 miles southwest of Seleucia

[Upon their arrival at Cyprus, Barnabas and Saul began their preaching ministry. We begin our study with a few observations about...]

I. THE ISLAND OF CYPRUS

A. GEOGRAPHICAL FACTS...

1. 43 miles S of Asia Minor, 76 miles W of Syria - ABD
2. The third largest island of the Mediterranean, after Sicily and Sardinia
3. Maximum length E-W is 138 miles; maximum width N-S is 60 miles
4. An area of 3584 square miles

B. BIBLICAL FACTS...

1. Barnabas himself was from Cyprus - **Ac 4:36**
2. The gospel had previously been preached in Cyprus - **Ac 11:19**
3. The church in Antioch of Syria had been started by men from Cyprus - **Ac 11:20**
4. Barnabas and John Mark would later return to Cyprus - **Ac 15:39**

[It is interesting the Spirit sent Barnabas and Paul to Cyprus, a place well-known by Barnabas (Perhaps a principle to be gleaned regarding missionary efforts?). We next read of their preaching in...]

II. THE SYNAGOGUES AT SALAMIS

A. BARNABAS AND SAUL PREACH THE WORD...

1. In the synagogues of the Jews - **Ac 13:5**
2. As Jews, Barnabas and Saul would have access
3. Being from Cyprus, Barnabas may have been well-known
4. Starting at Jewish synagogues became Paul’s pattern - **Ac 17:1-2**; cf. **Ro 1:16**

B. ACCOMPANIED BY JOHN MARK...

1. As their assistant - **Ac 13:5**
2. Whose mother Mary had a home in Jerusalem - **Ac 12:12**
3. He had accompanied Barnabas and Saul back to Antioch - **Ac 12:25**
4. He was the cousin of Barnabas - **Col 4:10**

[We will have opportunity to consider a sermon Paul preached in a synagogue in our next study. But as we continue with Barnabas and Saul's ministry on the island of Cyprus, we read about...]

III. THE PROPHET AND PROCONSUL AT PAPHOS

A. A FALSE PROPHET CONFRONTED...

1. A Jew whose surname was Bar-Jesus - **Ac 13:6-8**
 - a. Who was also called Elymas the sorcerer
 - b. Who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus
 - c. Who sought to prevent Sergius Paulus from hearing the gospel
2. Whom Saul (also called Paul) miraculously blinded - **Ac 13:9-11**
 - a. Being filled with the Holy Spirit
 - 1) Paul was not acting on his own initiative
 - 2) He was moved by the Holy Spirit (i.e., inspired)
 - b. Able to see Elymas for what he truly was:
 - 1) Full of deceit and fraud
 - 2) A son of the devil and enemy of righteousness
 - 3) Seeking to pervert the ways of the Lord
 - c. Blinding Elymas by a mist and a darkness
 - 1) The hand (judgment) of the Lord was upon him
 - 2) But only for a time (perhaps as an act of mercy?)
3. Should we emulate Paul's manner? (Not unless we are similarly inspired!) - cf. **2Ti 2:24-26**

B. AN INTELLIGENT PROCONSUL CONVERTED...

1. Proconsul - the highest-ranking official in a Roman senatorial province
2. Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man, wanting to hear the word of God - **Ac 13:7**
3. He believed - **Ac 13:12**
 - a. Seeing what was done to Elymas
 - b. Astonished at the teaching of the Lord
4. Teaching that was confirmed by miracles! - cf. **Mk 16:19-20; He 2:3-4**

CONCLUSION

1. An auspicious start for a missionary journey begun by the Spirit...
 - a. The word of God proclaimed in the synagogues of Salamis
 - b. The teaching of the Lord confirmed in the city of Paphos
2. Note that Luke begins using the name of Paul instead of Saul...
 - a. Up to this point, Saul was called by his Hebrew name - **Ac 13:1,2**
 - b. From this point, Paul will be called by his Roman name - **Ac 13:9,13**
3. Note also how Paul begins to have precedence over Barnabas...
 - a. Formerly the two men were called Barnabas and Saul - **Ac 13:2,7**
 - b. Now the two men will be called Paul and Barnabas - **Ac 13:43,46,50**

The precedence of Paul is seen further as Luke describes their departure from Paphos ("*when Paul and his party*" - **Ac 13:13**). Leaving the island of Cyprus, they sail on to Perga in Pamphylia, where we will begin our next study...

Paul And Barnabas At Antioch Of Pisidia

Acts 13:13-52

INTRODUCTION

1. Following their ministry on Cyprus, Paul and Barnabas arrived in Perga of Pamphylia...
 - a. At which point John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem - **Ac 13:13**
 - b. This later became a sore point between Paul and Barnabas - **Ac 15:36-40**
2. From Perga they journeyed to Antioch of Pisidia...
 - a. An arduous trip over the Taurus mountain range
 - b. A road known for robbers and brigands - cf. **2Co 11:26**

[At some point Paul may have become ill, either in Perga or on the way to Antioch (cf. **Ga 4:13**). But neither illness nor physical dangers prevented him from carrying on his mission. And so we read of...]

I. PAUL'S SERMON IN THE SYNAGOGUE

A. THE SETTING...

1. As noted earlier, Paul's custom was to first visit the local synagogue - **Ac 13:5; 17:1-3**
2. At Antioch of Pisidia, Paul accepted an invitation to speak - **Ac 13:14-16**

B. THE SERMON...

1. He reviews God's dealings with Israel - **Ac 13:17-22**
2. He proclaims that Jesus is the promised Savior - **Ac 13:23-26**
3. He reviews Jesus' death, and evidence for His resurrection - **Ac 13:27-37**
4. He proclaims that forgiveness is now offered them through Jesus - **Ac 13:38-39**
5. He warns not to fulfill prophecy by rejecting God's work in Christ - **Ac 13:40-41**

[Paul's sermon echoes the same themes preached by Peter (**Ac 2:22-36; 3:12-26**), and the defense given by Stephen (**Ac 7:2-53**). We saw how some responded to Peter and Stephen. Now let's consider...]

II. THE RESPONSE TO THE SERMON

A. ON THAT SABBATH...

1. The Gentiles (people, **ESV**) begged for more on the following Sabbath - **Ac 13:42**
2. Many Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who persuaded them to continue in the grace of God - **Ac 13:43**

B. ON THE NEXT SABBATH...

1. Almost the whole city came to hear the word of God - **Ac 13:44**
2. The Jews were envious of the large crowds, and began resisting Paul - **Ac 13:45**
3. Paul and Barnabas grew bold, and turned their attention to the Gentiles - **Ac 13:46-47**
 - a. Jews had the privilege of hearing the gospel first
 - b. But those who did not believe judged themselves unworthy of eternal life
 - c. Gentiles would then be given the opportunity, as God commanded - **Isa 42:6; 49:6**
4. The Gentiles were glad and glorified the Word, and many believed - **Ac 13:48**

- a. What does “as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed” mean?
- b. It is a difficult passage; at face value it seems to support Calvinistic views of election
- c. But God desires all men to be saved; He is unwilling that any perish - **1Ti 2:4; 2Pe 3:9**
- d. Perhaps the appointment here is based on God’s foreknowledge; knowing that they would believe in Christ, they were appointed for eternal life (e.g., given the opportunity to hear)
- e. When someone rejects the Word of God, they judge themselves unworthy of eternal life (**Ac 13:46**); for those who will believe, God has appointed them worthy of eternal life!

[As elsewhere, there was a mixed reaction to the preaching of the Word of God. As would become increasingly common, the reaction on this occasion eventually led to...]

III. EXPULSION FROM ANTIOCH

A. PAUL AND BARNABAS FORCED TO LEAVE...

1. The Word was being spread throughout the region - **Ac 13:49**
2. But Jews stirred up prominent devout women and chief men of the city - **Ac 13:50**
3. Paul and Barnabas were persecuted and expelled from the region - **Ac 13:50**; cf. **2Ti 3:11**
4. Shaking the dust off their feet, Paul and Barnabas went to Iconium - **Ac 13:51**; cf. **Mt 10:14**

B. DISCIPLES FILLED WITH JOY AND THE HOLY SPIRIT...

1. Perhaps rejoicing they had suffered for righteousness’ sake - **Ac 13:52**; cf. **Mt 5:10-12**
2. Empowered by the Spirit with joy, peace, hope, in their faith - cf. **Ro 15:13**; **Ga 5:22-23**

CONCLUSION

1. In Antioch, Paul and Barnabas experienced what the apostles did in Jerusalem...
 - a. Success to some degree, winning many converts to Christ
 - b. Persecution for preaching Christ, but leaving a strong church behind
2. If you had been in Antioch of Pisidia, how might you have responded to Paul’s ministry...
 - a. Wanting to learn more? Willing to believe and rejoice despite persecution?
 - b. Envious of his success? Easily stirred up and willing to persecute him?
3. And what is your standing in regards to eternal life...
 - a. Have you judged yourself unworthy of eternal by rejecting the Word of God?
 - b. Have you shown yourself appointed by God for eternal life by believing in Christ?

If you want to be filled with joy and the Holy Spirit, then become and remain faithful disciples of Jesus Christ who died for your sins and rose from the grave. In the words of Jesus...

**“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest.**

**“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me,
for I am gentle and lowly in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls.**

“For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

- Mt 11:28-30

Tribulations For The Kingdom Of God

Acts 14:1-22

INTRODUCTION

1. Previously, we read about Paul and Barnabas at Antioch of Pisidia...
 - a. Where they experienced both success and conflict - **Ac 13:42-45**
 - b. They were eventually expelled, though leaving joyful disciples behind - **Ac 13:49-52**
2. Paul and Barnabas then went on to Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe...
 - a. Cities of Phrygia and Lycaonia, in Asia Minor (Turkey)
 - b. Establishing churches to which Paul likely wrote Galatians - cf. **Ga 1:1-2**

[As with Antioch, Paul and Barnabas found success mixed with ill treatment (cf. **2Ti 3:11**). Paul's observation about such treatment (**Ac 14:22**) raises some questions, but let's first summarize...]

I. THE MINISTRY AT ICONIUM, LYSTRA, AND DERBE

A. ICONIUM...

1. Again the procedure was to start with the local synagogue - **Ac 14:1; 17:1-2**
2. Unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles against the brethren - **Ac 14:2; 13:45**
3. Paul and his companions stayed "a long time", speaking boldly in the Lord with signs and wonders - **Ac 14:3; cf. Mk 16:19-20; He 2:4**
4. It may have been during this time to which Paul had reference when he later wrote to the Galatians of their reception of him - cf. **Ga 4:13-15**
5. The city eventually became divided between the Jews and the apostles - **Ac 14:4**
 - a. Note that Paul and Barnabas are referred to as "apostles" - cf. also **Ac 14:14**
 - b. Likely because they had been "sent" by the Holy Spirit - cf. **Ac 13:2,4**
 - c. Not in quite the sense as used of the Twelve - cf. **Ac 1:15-26; Re 21:14**
6. An attempt to stone them forced Paul and Barnabas to flee to Lystra and Derbe - **Ac 14:4-6**

B. LYSTRA...

1. They preached the gospel throughout the region - **Ac 14:6-7**
2. Paul healed a lame man, whom he saw had faith to be healed - **Ac 14:8-10**
3. The Gentiles assumed Paul to be Hermes, Barnabas Zeus, and prepared to offer a sacrifice to them - **Ac 14:11-13**
4. Barnabas and Paul reacted strongly, scarcely restraining them - **Ac 14:14-18**
 - a. By proclaiming there is one living God, the Creator of all things
 - b. Who bore witness of Himself through the blessings of nature - cf. **Ac 17:24-25**
5. Jews from Antioch and Iconium persuade the multitude to stone Paul - **Ac 14:19; 2Co 11:25**
6. The next day Paul and Barnabas departed and went to Derbe - **Ac 14:20**

C. DERBE...

1. They preached the gospel - **Ac 14:21a**
2. They made many disciples - **Ac 14:21a**

[Paul and Barnabas soon retraced their steps, returning to Lystra, Iconium, Antioch (**Ac 14:21**). There

they strengthened the disciples and exhorted them to continue in the faith, saying “*We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.*” (Ac 14:22). This has led some to ask...]

II. MUST ALL CHRISTIANS SUFFER TRIBULATION FOR THE KINGDOM?

A. THE APOSTLES CERTAINLY DID...

1. As Jesus said they would - **Mt 10:22**
2. As Paul mentioned of others and himself - **1Co 4:9-12; 2Co 4:8-10; 11:23-29**
3. Indeed they all died as martyrs, with the exception of John who suffered exile

B. MANY EARLY CHRISTIANS DID...

1. The church in Jerusalem - **Ac 8:1,3**
2. The churches in Thessalonica and Philippi - **1Th 1:6; 2:14; 3:2-4; 2Th 1:4-6; Php 1:29-30**
3. As Jesus warned those of Smyrna - **Re 2:10**

C. BUT NOT ALL EARLY CHRISTIANS DID...

1. There were periods of peace among the churches - **Ac 9:31**
2. Jesus promised the church at Philadelphia they would be spared - **Re 3:10**
3. Why pray for peace /aspire for quiet lives/ if tribulation is inevitable? - **1Ti 2:3-4; 1Th 4:11**

D. HOW DO WE RECONCILE PAUL’S STATEMENTS...?

1. Which sound as though **all** Christians **must** suffer - e.g., **Ac 14:22; 2Ti 3:12**
2. Consider the context: To whom and when did he say such things?
 - a. Was it to those who would be given the privilege to suffer? - cf. **Php 1:29-30**
 - b. Living at a time and in a place where persecution might arise?
3. It seems that some of the early Christians were permitted to suffer
 - a. To confirm the testimony of those early witnesses of the faith
 - b. But not all Christians suffered the persecutions of others
4. But Christians were not told to seek out persecution
 - a. They were permitted to flee persecution - **Mt 10:23**
 - b. As Paul did on one occasion - **Ac 9:23-25; 2Co 11:32-33**
5. **If** they were persecuted for the cause of Christ...
 - a. They were told to glorify God - **1Pe 4:16**
 - b. They were told to rejoice for the honor - **1Pe 4:14; Mt 5:10-12**

CONCLUSION

1. When Paul and Barnabas suffered tribulation for the kingdom of God...
 - a. They did not give up preaching the gospel
 - b. It did not hinder the growth and development of the church
2. We may not suffer the persecution they did...
 - a. Ours may in the lesser form of ridicule, or being ostracized
 - b. But we must always be prepared to suffer should it become our lot

Are we preparing ourselves with the proper mindset should persecution come our way? Willing to suffer for Christ? Quick to forgive those who persecute us? Steadfast in the proclamation of the gospel of Christ...?

Paul's Missionary Policies

Acts 14:21-28

INTRODUCTION

1. Following the attempt on Paul's life in the city of Lystra...
 - a. The next day Paul and Barnabas went on to Derbe - Ac 14:20
 - b. Where they preached the gospel and made many disciples - Ac 14:21
2. At this point, Paul and Barnabas began to retrace their steps...
 - a. Visiting many of the places where they had established churches
 - b. Finally returning to Antioch of Syria where they had started

[In this lesson we will review "Paul's Missionary Policies" that we can glean from his first missionary journey. But first, let's briefly summarize...]

I. THE RETURN TRIP HOME

A. VIA LYSTRA, ICONIUM, ANTIOCH... - Ac 14:21

1. **Lystra** - where Paul healed a lame man, but then was stoned
2. **Iconium** - where Paul had spent some time, but he fled an attempt to stone him
3. **Antioch of Pisidia** - where Paul preached the gospel in the synagogue until expelled from the region

B. STRENGTHENING THE DISCIPLES - Ac 14:22

1. Exhorting them to continue in the faith
2. Telling them to expect tribulations for the kingdom of God

C. APPOINTING ELDERS IN EVERY CHURCH - Ac 14:23

1. With prayer and fasting
2. Commending them to the Lord

D. PREACHING IN PERGA OF PAMPHYLIA - Ac 14:24-25

1. **Perga** - from where John Mark left them earlier - **Ac 13:13-14**
2. No mention was made of them preaching before, but now they do

E. VIA ATTALIA TO ANTIOCH OF SYRIA - Ac 14:25-26

1. **Attalia** - a city on the coast of Pamphylia
2. **Antioch of Syria** - the place from which they began their journey

F. REPORTING WHAT GOD HAD DONE - Ac 14:27

1. To the church that had sent them - cf. **Ac 13:1-3**
2. Telling how God had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles

[At this point Luke mentions that Paul and Barnabas stayed a long time with the disciples at Antioch of Syria (**Ac 14:28**). Looking back over Paul's first missionary journey, let's glean what we can about...]

II. PAUL'S MISSIONARY POLICIES

A. PREACH THE GOSPEL...

1. He preached the gospel of Jesus Christ - **Ac 14:7,21**
2. As commanded by Jesus Himself - **Mk 16:15-16**

B. MAKE DISCIPLES...

1. He made disciples by preaching the gospel - **Ac 14:21**
2. Not just baptizing them, but teaching them as disciples - cf. **Mt 28:19-20**

C. ESTABLISH LOCAL CHURCHES...

1. Today, missionaries often establish missions (i.e., parachurch organizations)
2. Paul's policy was to establish churches - **Ac 14:23**; cf. **Ro 16:16**

D. STRENGTHEN AND EXHORT BRETHERN...

1. Which may explain why he retraced his steps - **Ac 14:21-22**
2. Which explains why he visited them again and again - **Ac 15:36,41**; **16:1-5**; **18:23**

E. APPOINT ELDERS IN EVERY CHURCH...

1. These were bishops (overseers), also known as pastors (shepherds) - **Ac 14:23**; **20:17,28**
2. Older men who had to meet certain qualifications - cf. **1Ti 3:1-7**; **Tit 1:5-9**
3. The quick appointment may be due to Jewish converts, already well versed in the Word and who may have served earlier as elders in the synagogues

F. COMMEND THEM TO THE LORD'S CARE...

1. The early church did not practice "apostolic succession" - **Ac 12:2** (James was not replaced)
2. Instead, apostles left the churches to the grace (providence) of God - **Ac 14:23**; **20:28-32**

G. REPORT TO THE CHURCH THAT SENT THEM...

1. The church at Antioch of Syria had sent Paul on this journey - **Ac 13:1-3**
2. It was only proper to report back to them what took place - **Ac 14:27**

CONCLUSION

1. Paul's missionary policies were actually those of the Holy Spirit...
 - a. Who sent Paul and Barnabas on their journey - **Ac 13:1-4**
 - b. Who undoubtedly guided them in the work that they did
2. Today, many churches and missionaries involved in foreign work...
 - a. Establish missions instead of churches
 - b. Create paternalistic oversight of indigenous churches
3. Such practices are without scriptural authority...
 - a. Paul and Barnabas established independent, autonomous congregations - **Ac 14:23**; **20:28**
 - b. They commended such congregations to God's Word and God's care - **Ac 20:32**

If we desire to increase the kingdom of God (and not denominations of men), then we do well to study carefully and apply faithfully the policies of those like Paul and Barnabas on their missionary journey...!

Conflict Over Circumcision

Acts 15:1-35

INTRODUCTION

1. During his first missionary journey, Paul saw that God “*opened a door of faith to the Gentiles*” - **Ac 14:27**
 - a. The conversion of Sergius Paulus - **Ac 13:6-12**
 - b. The conversion of many Gentiles in Antioch of Pisidia - **Ac 13:42-49**
 - c. The conversion of Greeks in Iconium - **Ac 14:1**
2. It wasn't long before the question of Gentiles in the church became an issue...
 - a. Should the Gentiles be accepted without first converting to Judaism?
 - b. Should they be required to be circumcised, and keep the Law of Moses?

[After a “*long time*” in Antioch of Syria, Paul and the church were faced with a crisis regarding the issue of the Gentiles...]

I. THE CONFLICT

A. SOME CAME FROM JUDEA...

1. Teaching that Gentiles could not be saved without circumcision - **Ac 15:1**
2. With whom Paul and Barnabas strongly disagreed - **Ac 15:2**
3. This conflict might have involved Peter - **Ga 2:11-16** (some think this was during **Ac 15:1-2**; others think it was later)

B. PAUL AND BARNABAS SENT TO JERUSALEM...

1. Accompanied by “*certain others*” (such as Titus) - **Ac 15:2; Ga 2:1**
2. To talk to the apostles and elders, which Paul did “*by revelation*” - **Ac 15:2; Ga 2:2**
3. On the way, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria - **Ac 15:3**
 - a. Describing the conversion of the Gentiles
 - b. Causing great joy among the brethren

[Since the men causing disturbance came from Judea, Paul and his companions went to Jerusalem, to locate the actual origin of this problem. This led to...]

II. THE CONFERENCE

A. PRELIMINARY MEETINGS...

1. Formal reception by the church
 - a. Paul's party was received by the church, the apostles, and the elders - **Ac 15:4**
 - b. To whom Paul reported all that God had done with them - **Ac 15:4; cf. Ac 14:27**
 - c. Some of the sect of the Pharisees objected - **Ac 15:5**
 - 1) Likely Jewish Christians who had been Pharisees
 - 2) Demanding Gentiles be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses
2. Private meeting with some who were “*of reputation*”
 - a. In which Paul explained the gospel which he preached - **Ga 2:1-2**

- b. Where some false brethren tried to compel Titus (a Gentile) to be circumcised, which Paul refused - **Ga 2:3-6**
- c. James, Peter, and John commended Paul for his work among the Gentiles - **Ga 2:7-10**
 - 1) Extending to him the right hand of fellowship
 - 2) Asking only that he remember the poor (something he was careful do on his remaining missionary journeys)

B. PUBLIC MEETING...

1. The speech of Peter - **Ac 15:6-11**
 - a. How God selected him to be the first to preach to the Gentiles - cf. **Ac 10:1-43**
 - b. How God bore witness to their acceptability by giving them the Spirit - cf. **Ac 10:44-48; 11:15-18**
 - c. That God purified them through faith, just as He did the Jews
 - d. That they should not test God, by placing a burden on the Gentiles which they themselves could not bear
 - e. That God will save the Jews in the same way, through the grace of the Lord Jesus - cf. **Ac 2:38** (Jews) with **Ac 10:48** (Gentiles)
2. The testimony of Paul and Barnabas - **Ac 15:12**
 - a. How God did many miracles and wonders through them among the Gentiles
 - b. Which the multitude listened to quietly
3. The counsel of James - **Ac 15:13-21**
 - a. Reminding them of what Simon (Peter) had just said
 - b. Reminding them of the Old Testament prophecy of Amos - **Am 9:11-12**
 - c. Offering his judgment:
 - 1) Not to trouble the Gentiles who were turning to God
 - 2) But write to them, asking them to abstain from:
 - a) Things polluted by idols (i.e., meats offered to idols)
 - b) Sexual immorality
 - c) Things strangled
 - d) Blood
 - d. This would go a long way in keeping peace between Jewish and Gentile converts

[With the testimony of Paul and Barnabas, Peter, and James, supported by God's approval through miraculous signs and prophetic scriptures, the conflict came to a quick resolution (for the time being)...]

III. THE CONCLUSION

A. DELEGATION AND LETTER...

1. The apostles, elders, and the whole church agree to send a delegation - **Ac 15:22**
2. Judas and Silas, selected to accompany Paul and Barnabas along with the letter - **Ac 15:22**
3. A copy of this letter is preserved by Luke - **Ac 15:23-29**
4. **Note:** those who caused the trouble are identified as having done so without any authority from those in Jerusalem - **Ac 15:24**

B. RETURN AND RECEPTION...

1. Paul and the delegation return to Antioch, and deliver the letter - **Ac 15:30**
2. The multitude rejoice over its encouragement - **Ac 15:31**
3. Judas and Silas exhort the brethren with many words - **Ac 15:32-34**
 - a. Judas eventually returned to the apostles in Jerusalem

- b. Silas stayed in Antioch, later to join Paul on his travels - cf. **Ac 15:40**
- 4. Paul and Barnabas remain in Antioch, teaching and preaching - **Ac 15:35**

CONCLUSION

1. The conflict over circumcision and the Law illustrates the challenges faced by the early church...
 - a. The challenge of transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant
 - b. The challenge of accepting into the church those who were considered “unclean”
2. But the challenges were overcome, in large part due to the apostle Paul...
 - a. A Hebrew of the Hebrews, but also an apostle to the Gentiles
 - b. Whom God used to help bridge Jew and Gentile together

To fulfill what Jesus died to accomplish on the cross, to bring peace between Jew and Gentile, making one new body (**Ep 2:11-16**). This ought to remind us who are Gentiles how blessed we are to be able to come into the fellowship with God and His people.

Have we let Jesus add us to His one new body, the church...? - cf. **Ac 2:41,47**

Division Over John Mark

Acts 15:36-41

INTRODUCTION

1. After the controversy over circumcision, (**Ac 15:1-35**), another conflict soon arose...
 - a. As Paul and Barnabas prepared for another journey - **Ac 15:36**
 - b. Over whether to take John Mark with them - **Ac 15:37-38**
2. The contention between Paul and Barnabas was so sharp...
 - a. They went their separate ways - **Ac 15:39**
 - b. With Barnabas taking John Mark, and Paul taking Silas - **Ac 15:39-41**

[It may seem at first that this event would hinder the cause of Christ. But the saying “**all’s well that ends well**” certainly applies here as we consider all that is eventually revealed in the Scriptures...]

I. QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

A. WHO WAS JOHN MARK...?

1. Son of Mary - **Ac 12:12**
 - a. Who owned a house in Jerusalem where many gathered to pray for Peter
 - b. Some scholars believe that it may have been where the Last Supper was observed
2. Cousin of Barnabas - **Col 4:10**
 - a. Identified as such by Paul in his epistle
 - b. KJV calls him the “sister’s son to Barnabas” (i.e., nephew)
3. Assistant to Barnabas and Saul - **Ac 12:25; 13:5**
 - a. Joining them as they as returned from Jerusalem to Antioch
 - b. Going with them as they set out on their first journey

B. WHAT DID HE DO...?

1. Left Paul and Barnabas mid-journey - **Ac 13:13**
 - a. Many scholars speculate as to the reason why
 - b. Luke does not give the reason why
2. Which now caused a rift - **Ac 15:36-41**
 - a. Paul did not John Mark to join them on the second journey
 - b. Barnabas was adamant about taking him with them
 - c. So Paul (with Silas) and Barnabas (with John Mark) went their separate ways

C. WHAT EVENTUALLY HAPPENED...?

1. Paul and John Mark eventually reconciled
 - a. Paul instructs the church at Colossae to receive him - **Col 4:10**
 - b. Together with others, Paul says that he “proved to be a comfort to me” - **Col 4:11**
 - c. Paul tells Philemon that Mark and others are “fellow-laborers” - **Phm 24**
 - d. In his last epistle, Paul tells Timothy “Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.” - **2Ti 4:11**
2. Mark became close to Peter, who called Mark “my son” - **1Pe 5:13**
3. Mark is considered to be the author of the Gospel of Mark

[Whatever the reason John Mark returned to Jerusalem, no matter how it divided Paul and Barnabas, things turned out well in the end. As we contemplate these things, here are some...]

II. OBSERVATIONS TO CONSIDER

A. UPHOLD THE WEAK, BE PATIENT WITH ALL...

1. Barnabas was determined to give John Mark another chance - **Ac 15:37**
 2. Perhaps it was because John Mark was his cousin (or nephew) - **Col 4:10**
 3. But Barnabas was also a man known for his encouragement - **Ac 4:36**
 4. He even gave encouragement to Paul earlier - cf. **Ac 9:26-29; 11:25-26**
 5. Barnabas put into practice what Paul later enjoined - **1Th 5:14**
- **Barnabas was inclined to give people a second chance**

B. THE LORD'S WORK COMES FIRST...

1. Paul and Barnabas were unwilling to let their contention affect their service to the Lord
 2. They could not agree, but they both continued to serve the Lord
 3. Barnabas (and Mark) went to Cyprus (where he was from); Paul (and Silas) went to Syria and Cilicia (where he was from) strengthening the churches - **Ac 15:39-41**
- **A "falling out" with brethren is no reason to stop serving the Lord!**

C. NEVER GIVE UP TRYING...

1. John Mark could have let his initial failure discourage him
 2. But he did not let failure stop his own service to the Lord - **Ac 15:39**
 3. He took advantage of another opportunity to serve the Lord
- **Making a mistake is no reason to give up trying again to serve the Lord**

D. NOT HOLDING A GRUDGE...

1. Paul was willing to acknowledge Mark's later usefulness - **Col 4:10-11; Phm 24; 2Ti 4:11**
 2. Some refuse to forgive those who disappoint them; not Paul!
- **Give credit where credit is due; praise those turn who themselves around**

E. THE END IS BETTER THAN THE BEGINNING...

1. Mark grew to become useful to the apostles Paul and Peter
 2. He even became useful to us today (in writing the Gospel of Mark!)
 3. *"The end of a thing is better than its beginning"* - **Ec 7:8**
- **Success is measured by how we finish, not how we start!**

CONCLUSION

1. Things certainly turned out well for John Mark, despite...
 - a. Disappointing the apostle Paul
 - b. Driving a wedge between Paul and Barnabas
2. But in the end, the story of the division over John Mark is one of encouragement...
 - a. How failure can be turned into success
 - b. How nothing should keep us from trying to serve the Lord

Don't let your failures in the past keep you from serving the Lord and His church in the present...!

A True Son In The Faith

Acts 16:1-5

INTRODUCTION

1. Paul's second missionary began when he and Silas left Antioch of Syria...
 - a. Commended by the brethren to the grace of God - **Ac 15:40**
 - b. Passing through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches - **Ac 15:41**
2. Coming to Derbe and then Lystra, they added a third companion to their party...
 - a. A young disciple named Timothy - **Ac 16:1-3**
 - b. Who would assist Paul for decades at personal cost and great risk

[Paul called Timothy “**a true son in the faith**” (**1Ti 1:2**). I like to think of him as “**The Daniel Of The New Testament**”. What was so remarkable about him? Let's first review what we know about...]

I. TIMOTHY - BEFORE HIS SELECTION BY PAUL

A. PERSONAL INFO...

1. His name means “honoring God” (he would prove true to his name!)
2. He was a native of Lystra - **Ac 16:1-2**
3. His mother was a Jewish, his father a Greek - **Ac 16:1**
 - a. There is no mention of a synagogue in Lystra
 - b. The mixed marriage might suggest a shallow faith earlier in her life
 - c. Which might also explain why Timothy had not been circumcised
 - d. Though he was taught the Old Testament Scriptures - **2Ti 3:15**

B. DISCIPLESHIP INFO...

1. His mother (Eunice) and grandmother (Lois) had become believers - **Ac 16:1; 2Ti 1:5**
2. Timothy was likely converted by Paul on his 1st missionary journey
 - a. Paul had preached the gospel in Lystra and left disciples there - **Ac 14:6-7,20**
 - b. Paul considered himself a spiritual “father” of those he taught - e.g., **1Co 4:17**
 - c. He certainly thought of Timothy as his “son” in the faith - **1Ti 1:2; 2Ti 1:2**
3. Timothy may have been as young as 13 when converted
 - a. Paul's first missionary journey was around 47-48 AD
 - b. Yet 16 years later (64 AD) he was still a “youth” - **1Ti 4:12**
4. As a new disciple, he may have witnessed Paul's stoning at Lystra - **Ac 14:19-20**
5. He was familiar with Paul's persecutions at Antioch, Iconium, Lystra - **2Ti 3:10-11**
6. As a disciple he was well-spoken of by brethren at Lystra and Iconium - **Ac 16:2**

[It was this very young disciple that Paul wanted to join him and Silas. Imagine the courage required on Timothy's part to accept, knowing the tribulations Paul had already faced! Imagine the faith required by Timothy's mother and grandmother to let him go with Paul! But now let's review what we know of...]

II. TIMOTHY - AFTER HIS SELECTION BY PAUL

A. BEFORE LEAVING LYSTRA...

1. Paul had Timothy circumcised because of the Jews
 - a. Jews in the region knew Timothy's father was a Greek - **Ac 16:3**
 - b. Remember Paul's evangelistic method: Jews first, then Gentiles - **Ro 1:16**
 - c. His custom was to visit synagogues first - **Ac 17:1-3**
 - d. As a Jew (reckoned as such because of his mother), being uncircumcised would hinder Timothy's effectiveness among Jews
 - e. As a matter of expediency, Paul had no qualms with Jewish Christians keeping elements of the Law - cf. **1Co 9:19-23; Ac 18:18,21; 21:17-26**
 - f. When made an issue of salvation, Paul would refuse circumcision - **Ac 15:1-2; Ga 2:1-5**
2. Consider what circumcision required of Timothy
 - a. For young and older men, it was a serious and painful procedure - **Gen 34:24-25**
 - b. For Timothy, his first act of service for Paul involved bloodshed!
3. Timothy may have also been commissioned with spiritual gifts at this time
 - a. By the laying on of hands by the elders of the church - **1Ti 4:14**
 - b. Together with the laying on of Paul's hands - **2Ti 1:6**

B. AFTER LEAVING LYSTRA...

1. Timothy fulfilled special and often dangerous missions for Paul
 - a. Staying behind with Silas in troubled Berea - **Ac 17:13-14**
 - b. Sent to learn of the brethren in afflicted Thessalonica - **1Th 3:1-8**
 - c. Leaving Ephesus to go to Macedonia with Erastus - **Ac 19:22**
 - d. Sent to Corinth to remind them of Paul's ways in Christ - **1Co 4:17**
 - e. Sent to persecuted Philippi to learn of their condition - **Php 2:19**
 - f. Left at Ephesus to deal with any who might be trouble - **1Ti 1:3-4,18-19**
2. Timothy truly became Paul's "fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ"
 - a. Paul considered no one as like-minded as him - **Php 2:19-22**
 - b. He had Timothy join him as co-authors of 6 epistles - **2Co, Ph, Co, 1Th, 2Th, Phile**
 - c. Timothy received 2 epistles from Paul - **1Ti, 2Ti**
3. As Paul faced death, he asked Timothy to come (which involved risk) - **2Ti 4:9**
4. Timothy himself was imprisoned at some point, but later released - **He 13:23**

CONCLUSION

1. Summarizing what we learned about Timothy, he was...
 - a. Blessed by the faithful upbringing of his grandmother Lois and mother Eunice
 - b. Dedicated as a disciple to serve Jesus and His apostle Paul
 - c. Faithful in carrying out tasks assigned to him
 - d. Courageous in the face of persecution, risking imprisonment and death
 - e. Humble enough to accept a "second string" position, the perfect "preacher's helper"
2. Like Daniel, Timothy is a wonderful example for serving God in youth...
 - a. "in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" - **1Ti 4:12**
 - b. "purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself" - **Dan 1:8**

For all Christians, Timothy demonstrates what it means to be "**A True Son In The Faith.**"

As sons of God through faith and baptism into Christ (**Ga 3:26-27**), let the example of Timothy in the Scriptures inspire us to be more faithful and fruitful in our service to Christ, no matter the cost...!

The Macedonian Call

Acts 16:6-10

INTRODUCTION

1. With Timothy accompanying Paul and Silas, they...
 - a. Delivered decrees determined by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem - **Ac 16:1-5**
 - b. Journeyed through Phrygia and the region of Galatia - **Ac 16:6**
 - c. Were not alone; the Holy Spirit was very much with them - **Ac 16:6-7**
2. The Holy Spirit's guidance in this case was unique...
 - a. Though it was very much in evidence in Paul's journeys - cf. **Ac 13:2,4**
 - b. It should not be considered typical as to how God directs His people

[If so, how does God guide His people today? How can we ascertain God's will for us in our own lives? Before I suggest how God directs us today, let's first review...]

I. GOD'S GUIDANCE OF PAUL AND HIS COMPANIONS

A. FORBIDDEN TO PREACH IN ASIA...

1. By the Holy Spirit - **Ac 16:6**
2. Paul later spent 2 plus years at Ephesus - **Ac 19:1-10**
3. Perhaps the Spirit forbid them at this time, knowing that they would later have the opportunity to serve for some time in Asia (southwest Turkey)

B. NOT PERMITTED TO GO INTO BITHYNIA...

1. By the Spirit of Jesus - **Ac 16:7**; cf. **Ro 8:9-10**
2. Peter later wrote to Christians in Bithynia - **1Pe 1:1-2**
3. Perhaps the Spirit did not permit them at this time, knowing that others would minister the area of Bithynia (northwest Turkey)

C. ARRIVAL AT TROAS...

1. Bypassing Mysia (northwest Turkey), they arrived at Troas (the coast of Mysia) - **Ac 16:8**
2. Paul has a vision of a man of Macedonia ("Come over to Macedonia and help us.") - **Ac 16:9**
3. Conclusion (dream) and inclusion (Luke) - **Ac 16:10**
 - a. Concluding that the Lord was calling them to preach the gospel in Macedonia
 - b. Including the author (Luke) who now uses the personal pronouns "we" and "us"

[And so the Spirit directly led Paul in doing God's will on this journey. But what about us today? How we can be sure that we live and act in harmony with God's will for us? Here are thoughts to consider...]

II. UNDERSTANDING GOD'S GUIDANCE TODAY

A. THERE IS GOD'S PROCLAIMED WILL...

1. God has made His will known in many respects - e.g., **1Th 5:18**; **1Pe 2:15**
2. This He has done through revelation
 - a. By sending inspired prophets in the past - **He 1:1**

- b. By sending His own Son - **He 1:2**
- c. By having the Spirit guide the apostles - **Jn 16:12-13**; e.g., **1Co 14:36-37**
- 3. It is this proclaimed will of God that we must do to be saved - cf. **Mt 7:21**
- **That which is essential to know, God has revealed through Scripture - 2Ti 3:16-17**

B. THERE IS GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL WILL...

- 1. God acts providentially in our lives - cf. **Ro 1:10; 15:32**
- 2. For such reason we are to pray regarding our plans - **Jm 4:13-15**
- 3. Our requests are answered as it may suit God's will - **1Jn 5:14**
- **We may not have certainty as to what is God's providential will for us**

C. THERE IS GOD'S PERMISSIVE WILL...

- 1. God allows things to happen that are not necessarily according to His desired will
- 2. He permits people to sin and even hurt other people
 - a. He is not pleased, and will one day render judgment - **Ac 17:30-31**
 - b. He is able to fulfill His own will, despite such rebellion - cf. **Isa 10:5-7**
- 3. God permits people to do things that are indifferent to Him
 - a. There are some matters of indifference to God - e.g., **Ro 14:5-6**
 - b. Likewise, some decisions we make might not really matter to God
- **Thus not all choices please God, nor are they necessarily required by God**

[With these thoughts in mind, here are some suggestions for...]

III. SEEKING GOD'S GUIDANCE TODAY

A. FOCUS ON THE PROCLAIMED WILL OF GOD...

- 1. I.e., study diligently to learn what God has revealed
 - a. If you don't embrace and practice the revealed will of God...
 - b. ...what difference does it make to seek areas of God's will unknown to you?
- 2. The value of focusing on the proclaimed will of God
 - a. We will not be ignorant of what is essential for us to know and do
 - b. We can avoid choices that are clearly contrary to God's will

B. SEEK ADVICE FROM OTHERS...

- 1. Discuss your alternatives with older, mature Christians - **Pr 11:14; 12:15**
- 2. Consult the wisdom found in the Bible (especially Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon)

C. ASK GOD FOR WISDOM...

- 1. Pray diligently for the ability to discern wisely - **Jm 1:5-8**
- 2. Wisdom is that spiritual insight that enables you to evaluate situations clearly, and helps utilize what options and abilities you have
- 3. Use such wisdom to eliminate what appears less acceptable

D. COMMIT YOUR WAY TO THE LORD...

- 1. Whatever you do, do it for the Lord's sake - cf. **Ps 37:5-6, 23-26**
- 2. Make your plans subject to God's will, both proclaimed and providential - **Jm 4:15**
 - a. Give God permission to close the door on your choice if that is His will
 - b. If He closes the door on your choice, look for alternatives

E. OTHER THINGS TO REMEMBER...

1. God is not like a train; he is able to run on more than one track
2. A choice may not be between good and bad, but between good and better
3. God can use us in many different ways
4. If need not choose right away, wait; that will give you time to grow and gain wisdom
5. Whatever your hands finds to do in your existing circumstances, do it with all your might

CONCLUSION

1. Our goal should be to “stand perfect and complete in all the will of God”... - cf. **Co 4:12**
 - a. Especially as it pertains to the proclaimed will of God
 - b. Even as much as possible in the providential and permissive will of God
2. Epaphras’ desire for his brethren serves as a good example; as does that of our Lord...
 - a. Who taught us to pray, “Your will be done on earth as it in heaven” - **Mt 6:10**
 - b. Who Himself prayed, “Not as I will, but as You will...” - **Mt 26:39-42**

Are you seeking to “find a way in the will of God" as it pertains to the plans in your life...?

The Conversion Of Lydia

Acts 16:11-15

INTRODUCTION

1. One of the best reasons to study Acts is to take note of the examples of conversion...
 - a. In which the gospel was preached and people responded
 - b. Noting what was preached, and how people responded
2. For today, many people in the name of Christianity...
 - a. Preach a false gospel of Christ
 - b. Or proclaim a false response to the gospel

[We have examined several conversions already in our study of Acts. Now we come to “**The Conversion of Lydia**”, perhaps the first convert to Christ in the continent of Europe...]

I. OCCASIONED BY THE MACEDONIAN CALL

A. PAUL’S VISION AT TROAS...

1. He and his company had been making their way through Asia (Turkey)
2. The Spirit had limited their options - **Ac 16:6-8**
3. In Troas Paul had a vision (“The Macedonian Call”) - **Ac 16:9**
4. Taking the vision as a call from the Lord, they depart for Macedonia - **Ac 16:10**

B. PAUL’S ARRIVAL AT PHILIPPI...

1. Sailing from Troas - **Ac 16:11**
 - a. They sail to Samothrace, a small mountainous (5000+ ft.) island
 - b. And then to Neopolis, seaport for the city of Philippi
2. Arriving at Philippi - **Ac 16:12**
 - a. Foremost city of that part of Macedonia
 - b. Made a Roman colony in 42 B.C.

[Arriving at Philippi, Paul and his companions (including Luke, note “we”) were staying in the city for several days (**Ac 16:12**). On one of those days, they went down to the river...]

II. THE BAPTISM OF LYDIA AND HER HOUSEHOLD

A. AT THE RIVERSIDE FOR PRAYER...

1. Paul and his company go down to the riverside on the Sabbath - **Ac 16:13**
2. Paul’s custom was to find a synagogue on the Sabbath - **Ac 17:1-3**
 - a. To reason with Jews about Christ
 - b. Evidently there were not many Jews in Philippi, and no synagogue
 - c. According to Jewish custom, at least 10 male Jews were required for a synagogue
3. But women met at the river to pray, and Paul’s company speaks to them

B. LYDIA HEEDS THE WORD OF GOD...

1. Lydia was a successful business woman - **Ac 16:14**

- a. A seller of purple (goods, dye), suggesting wealth on her part
- b. From Thyatira, a city of Asia (Turkey) known for its expensive purple dyes
2. Lydia was a religious woman - **Ac 16:14**
 - a. One who worshipped God
 - b. Her name is Greek, so perhaps a Gentile convert to Judaism
3. She heard Paul, and the Lord opened her heart to heed what he said - **Ac 16:14**
 - a. In what way the Lord opened her heart is not stated
 - b. But she “heard” what Paul was speaking - **Ac 16:13,14**
 - c. We know that “faith comes by hearing the word of God” - **Ro 10:17**
4. Through the gospel, one’s heart can be opened to be receptive
 - a. For the gospel is God’s power to save - **Ro 1:16**
 - b. It tells of God’s goodness, that should lead one to repent - **Ro 2:4**
5. Lydia was willing “to heed the things spoken by Paul” - **Ac 16:14-15**
 - a. I.e., to do or obey whatever Paul had said
 - b. We can infer that it included baptism - cf. **Mk 16:15-16; Ac 2:38**
 - c. For she and her household (family, servants) were baptized - cf. **Ac 8:12,35-38**

[At this point, allow me to make some...]

III. OBSERVATIONS RELATED TO LYDIA’S CONVERSION

A. RELIGIOUS PEOPLE NEED SAVING...

1. Throughout Acts, the gospel was proclaimed to religious people
 - a. The thousands of devout Jews in Jerusalem on Pentecost - **Ac 2:1-41**
 - b. The many Jews gathered on Solomon’s Porch at the temple - **Ac 3:1-26**
 - c. The Ethiopian eunuch who had travelled to Jerusalem to worship - **Ac 8:26-40**
 - d. Saul of Tarsus, a devout Jewish rabbi - **Ac 9:1-19; 22:1-16; 26:1-13**
 - e. Cornelius, a devout Gentile who feared God, prayed always - **Ac 10:1-48**
 2. Without Jesus, religious people are lost!
 - a. He is the way, the truth, the life; there is no way to God but through Him - **Jn 14:16**
 - b. There is no other name but Jesus whereby one can be saved - **Ac 4:12**
 - c. He is the only Mediator between God and man - **1Ti 2:5-6**
- **It is not enough to be religious; we need Jesus Christ as our Savior!**

B. THE LOGICAL CONCLUSION TO GOSPEL PREACHING...

1. In every case of conversion described in Acts with detail, baptism occurs quickly
 2. In most cases, after hearing just one lesson about Christ! - e.g., **Ac 8:35-38**
 3. Referring to Peter’s sermon on Pentecost, a respected Baptist scholar wrote: “Baptism is here a part of the proclamation of Christ. In an Apostolic sermon it comes as its logical conclusion. An effort ought to be made to restore this note in our [Baptist] preaching.” - *Baptism In The New Testament, George Beasley-Murray, p. 393*
- **Indeed, the command of baptism needs to be restored to all gospel preaching!**

C. AN INDICATION OF FAITHFULNESS...

1. In asking Paul and his companions to stay with her, Lydia asks “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord...” - **Ac 16:15**
 2. What evidence was there to determine whether she was faithful?
 3. At the very least, her willingness to be baptized! - **Ac 16:15**
- **Would not refusal to be baptized indicate a lack of faithfulness?**

D. THE ISSUE OF INFANT BAPTISM...

1. Some appeal to “household conversions” as evidence of infant baptism, such as:
 - a. The conversion of Cornelius and his household - **Ac 10:1-48**
 - b. The conversion of Lydia and her household - **Ac 16:11-15**
 - c. The conversion of the Philippian jailor and his household - **Ac 16:25-34**
 2. The argument is that we may assume infants were present, but is that the case here?
 - a. Lydia was a businesswoman, with no mention of a husband
 - b. She was from Thyatira, possibly in Philippi on business (though she did have a home)
 - c. We can just as easily assume that her household was made up of servants, or at least children old enough to travel
- **The burden of proof rests upon those seeking to support infant baptism, and the evidence in this case simply isn't there (nor elsewhere)**

CONCLUSION

1. With the conversion of Lydia, we have...
 - a. Perhaps the first gospel convert in the continent of Europe
 - b. The beginning of the church at Philippi, which may have met in her home - cf. **Ac 16:40**
2. We also have an example of the Providence of God...
 - a. Leading servants who are prepared to teach, to seekers who are praying
 - b. As in the case of Cornelius, and the Ethiopian treasurer
3. Fulfilling the words of Jesus:
 - a. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.” - **Mt 5:6**
 - b. “Seek and you will find” - **Mt 7:7-8**

Such individuals are like the man in **The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price**:

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.”
- **Mt 13:45-46**

Lydia was a successful merchant, but she knew there was something much more valuable than money. Her worship and prayer gave her the opportunity to hear the gospel, and she showed her faithfulness to God by obeying the gospel immediately through faith and baptism (cf. **Mk 16:15-16**).

How about you...?

Persecuted For Righteousness' Sake

Acts 16:16-25

INTRODUCTION

1. Jesus spoke of being persecuted for righteousness' sake... - **Mt 5:10**
2. The apostles of Christ certainly suffered much persecution...
 - a. As Paul alluded to in his epistles - **1Co 4:9-13**
 - b. Paul especially endured much suffering for Christ - **2Co 11:24-25**

[Such persecution came as a result of trying to live godly or righteous lives (cf. **2Ti 3:12**). At this point in our study of Acts, we find an example of Paul being "**Persecuted For Righteousness' Sake**"...]

I. PAUL EXPELS A SPIRIT

A. THAT POSSESSED A SLAVE GIRL...

1. She possessed "a spirit of divination" - **Ac 16:16**
 - a. The Greek speaks literally of a "python spirit."
 - b. The python was the symbol of the famous Delphic oracle and represented the god Apollo, who was believed to render predictions of future events.
 - c. The serpent had thus become a symbol of augury, and anyone who was seen to possess the gift of foretelling the future was described as led by the "python."
-- **Polhill, J. B. (1995). Vol. 26: Acts. The New American Commentary**
2. She brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling - **Ac 16:16**

B. THAT GREATLY ANNOYED PAUL...

1. The possessed girl followed Paul and his companions on the way to prayer - **Ac 16:17**
2. She would cry out "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." - **Ac 16:17**
3. This she did for many days, which annoyed Paul - **Ac 16:18**; cf. **Lk 4:34,41**
4. Why was Paul annoyed ("grieved", KJV)?
 - a. The acclamations may have been true in one sense
 - b. But they were open to misunderstanding by pagan hearers
 - c. The term "Most High God" was commonly applied to Zeus, and "the way of salvation" could also be misconstrued by Gentiles - **Polhill, ibid.**
5. "The course pursued by Paul was the same with that of Jesus, who invariably stopped the mouths of demons when they attempted to testify to his claims. The propriety of this course will be apparent upon observing:
 - a. "First, That to have permitted demons to testify for the truth would have convinced the people that there was an alliance between them and the preachers.
 - b. "Second, This supposed alliance would have caused all the good repute of Jesus and the apostles to reflect upon the demons, and all the evil repute of demons to reflect upon them.
 - c. "If Christ and the apostles had given countenance to demons while telling the truth, they could have used their endorsement to gain credence when telling a lie; and thus, believers would have been left to the mercy of seducing spirits, fulfilling, with the apparent

sanction of Christ, the prophesy of Paul that, *'In the latter times men shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and teachings of demons, speaking lies in disguise, having the conscience seared with a hot iron.'* (1Ti 4:1-2)

- d. "To guard against this result, it was necessary to exorcise all demons who ventured to speak in favor of the truth."

-- McGarvey, J. W. (1872). **A commentary on Acts of Apostles**

5. So Paul commanded the spirit to come out, and it did that very hour - **Ac 16:18**

[In exorcising the spirit, Paul was doing the slave girl a kindness, an act of righteousness if you will. But as Jesus implied, righteousness can often lead to persecution...]

II. PAUL AND SILAS ARE PERSECUTED

A. BY MASTERS AND MAGISTRATES...

1. The slave girl's masters motivated by loss of profit - **Ac 16:19-21**
 - a. Seized Paul and Silas, dragging them to the marketplace and the authorities
 - b. Accusing them as Jews troubling the city, teaching customs not lawful for Romans
2. The magistrates (normally two per colony) motivated by the multitude - **Ac 16:22**
 - a. As the multitude rose up together against Paul and Silas
 - b. The magistrates tore off Paul and Silas' clothes, commanded them to be beaten with rods

B. WITH BEATINGS AND IMPRISONMENT...

1. Beaten with rods - **Ac 16:22-23**
 - a. Probably by lictors; lit., rod bearers (the "officers") - cf. **Ac 16:35,38**
 - b. With many stripes; likely one of the three times Paul mentions - cf. **2Co 11:25**
2. Imprisoned with stocks - **Ac 16:23-24**
 - a. Securely in the inner prison
 - b. With feet fastened in stocks

C. FOLLOWED BY PRAYER AND PRAISE...

1. Despite pain of beaten skin, discomfort of fastened feet - **Ac 16:23-25**
 - a. They prayed, likely with thanksgiving - cf. **Php 4:6-7**
 - b. They sang hymns to God (hymns are songs of praise and joy) - cf. **Ep 5:19**
2. Thus Paul and Silas rejoiced when persecuted for righteousness' sake!
 - a. As Jesus told His disciples to do when persecuted - **Mt 5:11-12; Lk 6:22-23**
 - b. As other apostles did they were persecuted - **Ac 5:41**

CONCLUSION

1. **By precept**, we're told how to respond when persecuted for righteousness' sake...
 - a. Jesus: "Rejoice...be exceedingly glad; leap for joy!" - **Mt 5:12; Lk 6:23**
 - b. Peter: "Rejoice...glorify God" - **1Pe 4:12-16**
2. **By example**, we're told how to respond when persecuted for righteousness' sake...
 - a. Pray, as Paul and Silas prayed to God in prison
 - b. Sing, as Paul and Silas sang hymns to God in prison

May the **example** of Paul and Silas inspire us to keep the **precept**...!

The Conversion Of The Jailer

Acts 16:25-40

INTRODUCTION

1. In **Ac 16:25-40**, we have another example of conversion...
 - a. Commonly called “The Conversion Of The Jailer”
 - b. Which included the conversion of his household
2. In **Ac 16:30** we find a familiar passage...
 - a. In which Paul is confronted by the Philippian jailer
 - b. Who asked, “**Sirs, what must I do to be saved?**”
3. This is a very important question...
 - a. Salvation from sin is our greatest need - cf. **Ro 6:23**
 - b. The answer must be according to the Word of God
4. The answer given is often limited to what is mentioned in **Ac 16:31**...
 - a. Without consideration of all that is said in the context
 - b. Without noting what is taught elsewhere in the Scriptures

[If one were to ask today, “**What Must I Do To Be Saved?**”, how should we reply? Shall we limit our response to the words of **Ac 16:31**? Well, consider first of all...]

I. WHAT IS NOT MENTIONED

A. THE NEED TO REPENT OF SINS...

1. Yet Jesus wanted repentance to be preached in His name - **Lk 24:46-47**
 2. And so the apostles often preached the need to repent of sins
 - a. As Peter did in his first two sermons - **Ac 2:37-38; 3:19**
 - b. As did Paul in his sermon in Athens - **Ac 17:30-31**
- **Shall we conclude that repentance is not necessary because it is not mentioned in the conversion of the Philippian jailer?**

B. THE NEED TO CONFESS CHRIST...

1. Yet Jesus taught of the necessity of confessing Him before others - **Mt 10:32-33**
 2. And so the apostles often mentioned the importance of confessing Christ
 - a. Confessing with the mouth the Lord Jesus leads to salvation - **Ro 10:9-10**
 - b. Confessing that Jesus is the Son of God leads to abiding in God - **1Jn 4:15**
- **Shall we conclude that confession is not necessary because it is not mentioned in the conversion of the Philippian jailer?**

[We would be mishandling the Scriptures to suggest because repentance and confession are not mentioned in **Ac 16:31** that they are not necessary to salvation. But now let's consider...]

II. WHAT IS MENTIONED

A. BELIEVING ON THE LORD...

1. The jailer was told to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ - **Ac 16:31**
 2. This is consistent with what Jesus Himself taught
 - a. Believing in the Son is key to having eternal life - **Jn 3:36**
 - b. Unless we believe in Him, we will die in our sins - **Jn 8:24**
 3. And so the apostles often proclaimed the importance of faith in Jesus
 - a. That one might have life in His name - **Jn 20:30-31**
 - b. That believing with the heart leads to righteousness - **Ro 10:9-10**
- **Faith in Christ is imperative to salvation, because of what the Bible says about it**

B. BAPTISM IMMEDIATELY...

1. We notice that the jailer and his family were baptized immediately - **Ac 16:33**
 2. Similar to what we read elsewhere in other cases of conversion
 - a. The 3000 baptized on the day of Pentecost - **Ac 2:41**
 - b. The Ethiopian eunuch was baptized as soon as he saw water - **Ac 8:35-38**
 - c. Paul encouraged not to delay - **Ac 22:16**
 3. Why were they baptized immediately, even when it was after midnight? - cf. **Ac 16:25,33**
 - a. Peter said it was for the remission of sins - **Ac 2:38**
 - b. Paul was told it was to wash away sins - **Ac 22:16**
 - c. Paul later wrote that it was a cutting away of the body of sins - **Col 2:11-13**
 - d. Peter later wrote that it saves us through the resurrection of Christ - **1Pe 3:21**
- **When one sees what is revealed about baptism in the New Testament, we can understand why it was received as soon as possible by those who heard the gospel**

C. INCLUDING HIS HOUSEHOLD...

1. Some appeal to the mention of “household” to infer infants were included in the baptism
 2. Yet the text states that:
 - a. Paul “spoke the word of the Lord...to **all** who were in his house”, implying that **all** were able to listen and understand what was said - **Ac 16:32**
 - b. The jailer rejoiced, “having believed in God with **all** his household”; i.e., **everyone** believed, implying the ability of **all** to believe what they heard - **Ac 16:34**
 3. There is nothing here to preclude what we have already concluded as necessary requirements to be a subject qualified for baptism:
 - a. Repentance - **Ac 2:38**
 - b. Whole-hearted faith - **Ac 8:37**
- **Infants are incapable of faith and repentance, and nothing in the text implies that infants were in the household of the jailer**

CONCLUSION

1. Why does Paul only mention faith in answer to the question in **Ac 16:31**...?
 - a. Because the answer takes into consideration one’s spiritual state or condition
 - b. For the jailer, he first needed to be told to believe in Jesus
 - c. For the 3000 on Pentecost, they already believed by the time they asked their question, so faith is not even mentioned (but implied nonetheless) - cf. **Ac 2:36-37**
2. What answer should we give to those who ask today, “**What must I do to be saved?**”...
 - a. Our answer depends upon what the spiritual state or condition the person is in
 - b. If they have yet to believe in Jesus, then the need to believe in Him - **Ac 16:30**

c. If they believe in Jesus, then the need to repent, confess, and be baptized for the remission of their sins - **Ac 2:38; 22:16; Ro 10:9-10; Ga 3:26-27**

3. Our answer should entail all found in the Word of the Lord...

- a. Paul proceeded to speak the word of the Lord to the jailor and his family - **Ac 16:32**
- b. Such evidently included the need to be baptized immediately - **Ac 16:33**

A proper answer to “**What must I do to be saved?**” will take into consideration both the spiritual state of the inquirer and all that that the Word of God reveals on the subject.

Have you responded to what the Bible teaches regarding salvation in Christ...?

Tumult In Thessalonica

Acts 17:1-10

INTRODUCTION

1. Following their release from prison in Philippi, Paul and Silas...
 - a. Departed from the city and made their way through Amphipolis and Apollonia
 - b. Arriving in Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews - **Ac 17:1**
2. Thessalonica as a city...
 - a. Was named in 315 B.C. after the half-sister of Alexander the Great
 - b. That served as the capital of Macedonia (northern Greece) after 146 B.C.
 - c. Along with Corinth, one of the two most important commercial centers in Greece
 -- **Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary**
3. Paul immediately found a synagogue of the Jews...
 - a. As was his custom, to evangelize Jews - **Ac 17:1-3**; cf. **Ac 9:20; 13:5,14; 14:1; 19:8**
 - b. Where he was successful in persuading some, along with a great multitude of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women - **Ac 17:4**

[But as seen before (cf. **Ac 13:45**), Jews that were envious led a resistance against the efforts of Paul and Silas, resulting in an uproar or tumult in the city...]

I. THE NATURE OF THE TUMULT

A. INVOLVED EVIL MEN...

1. Stirred up by unbelieving Jews
2. Who gathered evil men in the marketplace
3. Creating a mob that set the city in an uproar
4. Attacking the house of Jason (where Paul and Silas had been staying) - **Ac 17:5,7**

B. LEADING TO JASON'S ARREST...

1. The mob did not find Paul and Silas at Jason's house
2. They dragged Jason and some of the brethren to the rulers (politarchs) of the city
3. The charges that the mob made - **Ac 17:6-7**
 - a. Paul and Silas: "These who have turned the world upside down have come here too."
 - b. Jason: "Jason has harbored them"
 - c. All of them: "these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king—Jesus." - cf. **Ac 16:21**
4. The crowd and the rulers (politarchs) were troubled by these charges - **Ac 17:8**
5. Jason and the brethren with him were released - **Ac 17:9**
 - a. Only after taking (money as) security from them
 - b. Probably with the stipulation Paul and Silas leave town

[The brethren sent Paul and Silas to Berea by night (**Ac 17:10**). One might think such an inauspicious start bode ill for the gospel and the church in Thessalonica. Not so! Within a year or so Paul wrote his first epistle to the church at Thessalonica, where we can read about...]

II. THE EFFECT OF THE TUMULT

A. PAUL'S INITIAL CONCERNS...

1. He endeavored to see the Thessalonian brethren with great desire - **1Th 2:17**
2. He was hindered by Satan (the security imposed by the government?) - **1Th 2:18**
3. He sent Timothy from Athens to establish and encourage them - **1Th 3:1-4**
4. He was concerned that his labor with might have been in vain - **1Th 3:5**

B. TIMOTHY'S ENCOURAGING REPORT...

1. He brought Paul good news of their faith and love! - **1Th 3:6**
2. Their memory of him was good; they wanted to see him as well! - **1Th 3:6**
3. Their faith comforted Paul in his own affliction and distress! - **1Th 3:7**
4. Their steadfastness in the faith gave Paul life and gratitude! - **1Th 3:8-10**

C. DESPITE THE TUMULT, THE CHURCH THRIVED...

1. With work of faith, labor of love, patience of hope - **1Th 1:1-3**
2. With evidence of their election by God - **1Th 1:4**
3. Having received the Word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit - **1Th 1:5-6**
4. Serving as examples to all believers in Macedonia, Achaia - **1Th 1:7**
5. Trumpeting the Word throughout Macedonia, Achaia, everywhere! - **1Th 1:8**
6. Paul could not go somewhere without their reputation preceding him! - **1Th 1:9-10**

CONCLUSION

1. As Paul relates in the second chapter of 1st Thessalonians...
 - a. His coming to them had not been in vain - **1Th 2:1**
 - b. Despite his persecution in Philippi, the conflict in Thessalonica - **1Th 2:2**
2. Why did the “**Tumult In Thessalonica**” fail to hinder the establishment of the church...?
 - a. Because of Paul's conduct as a preacher of the Word - **1Th 2:3-12**
 - b. Because of the Thessalonians' reception of the Word despite persecution - **1Th 2:13-16**

Wherever faithful gospel preachers proclaim the Word to people willing to accept the Word of God, not even Satan with all his forces can prevent the establishment and spread of the church of Christ...!

Two Mindsets In Berea

Acts 17:10-15

INTRODUCTION

1. Following “**The Tumult In Thessalonica**” (Ac 17:1-10)...
 - a. Paul and Silas were sent away by night to Berea - **Ac 17:10**
 - b. Where once again they went into the synagogue of the Jews - cf. **Ac 17:1-3**
2. The city of Berea...
 - a. Its name means “a place of many waters”
 - b. Was located near natural springs
 - c. One of the most populous cities of Macedonia
3. The Jews of Berea...
 - a. Described as “more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica” (NKJV) - **Ac 17:11**
 - b. Other translations describe them as “more noble” (ESV), “more open-minded” (HCSB)
 - c. He used a word (**eugenesteros**) that originally meant high born but came to have a more general connotation of being open, tolerant, generous, having the qualities that go with “good breeding.” - **Polhill, J. B.** (1995). Acts. The New American Commentary (Vol. 26). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

[The mindset of the Berean Jews is worthy of emulation by all people today. But in what way were they more “noble” or “open-minded”...?]

I. THE NOBLE BEREANS

A. THEIR RECEPTION OF PAUL’S WORDS...

1. First, they received his words with all readiness (NKJV) - **Ac 17:11**
 - a. Other translations say “with all eagerness” (ESV)
 - b. This suggests a willingness to listen so as to understand, to give Paul a fair hearing
2. This willingness to give a fair hearing...
 - a. Was taught in the Law - **Deut 13:14**
 - b. Was exemplified by Nicodemus - **Jn 7:50-51**
3. The “Berean attitude” involves first seeking to understand what someone is saying
 - a. Often in religious discussions, people are unwilling to understand what others believe
 - b. Then they argue without understanding another’s position, which is folly - **Pr 18:13**

B. THEIR STUDY OF GOD’S WORDS...

1. Second, they searched the Scriptures daily (NKJV) - **Ac 17:11**
 - a. Other translations say “examining the Scriptures daily” (ESV)
 - b. This suggests a willingness to let the Scriptures be their authority
2. This willingness to let the Scriptures be their authority...
 - a. Was taught in the Law - **Deut 4:1-2**
 - b. Is taught in the New Testament - **2Ti 3:16-17; Re 22:18-19**
3. The “Berean attitude” involves study of God’s word to confirm what someone is saying
 - a. Often in religious discussions, people simply believe what others have told them

- b. Arguing what they've always believed, hindering their ability to learn the truth - **2Ti 3:7**

[Because of the mindset of those in Berea, the Word of God bore fruit (**Ac 17:12**). We emulate the mindset of "**The Noble Bereans**" only when we apply both principles:

- Listen carefully to understand others
- Study the Scriptures diligently to determine what is true

Otherwise, we are susceptible to developing a different mindset: becoming more like...]

II. THE IGNOBLE THESSALONIANS

A. LIKE OTHERS BEFORE THEM...

1. The unbelieving Jews in:
 - a. Jerusalem - **Ac 6:9-14**
 - b. Antioch of Pisidia - **Ac 13:50**
 - c. Iconium - **Ac 14:2**
2. Harassing Paul from town to town
 - a. Like the unbelieving Jews from Antioch and Iconium - **Ac 14:19**
 - b. So did the unbelieving Jews from Thessalonica - **Ac 17:13**

B. LIKE SOME TODAY...

1. Among denominations, attacking churches of Christ
 - a. Misrepresenting their views regarding the church, baptism, etc.
 - b. Calling them by prejudicial names (e.g., "Campbellites", "a cult")
2. Among mainstream churches of Christ, attacking more conservative brethren
 - a. Misrepresenting their views regarding church cooperation, benevolence, etc.
 - b. Calling them by prejudicial names (e.g., "anti", "orphan haters")
3. Among conservative churches of Christ, attacking some less conservative than they
 - a. Presuming those who oppose them just have no respect for the Scriptures
 - b. Calling them by prejudicial names (e.g., "liberal")

CONCLUSION

1. Because of the persecution of the unbelieving Jews from Thessalonica...
 - a. Paul was forced to leave Berea - **Ac 17:14**
 - b. Arriving in Athens, to await the arrival of Silas and Timothy - **Ac 17:15**
2. **The noble Bereans** provide a mindset sorely needed today...
 - a. Giving others a fair hearing
 - b. Examining all things in the light of God's Word
3. **The ignoble Thessalonians** provide a mindset we must avoid...
 - a. Blind adherence to previously held beliefs
 - b. Leading to zealous persecution of the innocent

Which mindset do we possess? Do we seek first to understand, then to be understood? Do we study the Scriptures daily, examining not only the beliefs of others, but constantly testing our own beliefs?

If so, then we are truly "fair-minded", and more likely to come to a knowledge of the truth...

Paul's Sermon In Athens

Acts 17:16-34

INTRODUCTION

1. In Acts, we have several examples of gospel preaching; such include...
 - a. Three by the apostle **Peter** - **Ac 2,3,10**
 - b. Two by the evangelist **Philip** - **Ac 8**
 - c. One by the apostle **Paul** - **Ac 13**
2. The sermons recorded thus far were to those who believed in one God...
 - a. Like Jews and Samaritans
 - b. Or Gentile God-fearers like Cornelius
3. Now we have an opportunity consider a sermon to pagan philosophers who were polytheists

[It was during Paul's second missionary journey, in the city of Athens, Greece...]

I. THE SETTING

A. PAUL HAD JUST ARRIVED IN ATHENS...

1. Known as a center of learning and artistry, but also for its idols
2. Petronius said that it was easier to find a god than a man in Athens
3. Provoked by the idolatry, Paul began preaching at every opportunity - **Ac 17:16-17**
 - a. Reasoning in the synagogues with the Jews and Gentile worshipers
 - b. Reasoning daily with any in the marketplace

B. HE ATTRACTED ATTENTION OF PHILOSOPHERS...

1. In particular, Epicurean and Stoic philosophers - **Ac 17:18**
 - a. Some of whom viewed him as a proclaimer of foreign gods
 - b. Because Paul was preaching of Jesus and the resurrection
2. They brought him to the Areopagus (Mar's Hill) and invited him to speak - **Ac 17:19-21**
 - a. A rocky hill about 370 feet high, not far from the Acropolis and the Agora (marketplace) in Athens - **Holman Bible Dictionary**
 - b. A place where Athenians and visitors spent their time discussing new ideas
 - c. Not having heard of the doctrine of Christ, they wanted to know more

[With such an invitation, you can imagine Paul's delight to accommodate them (cf. **Ro 1:16-17**)...]

II. THE SERMON

A. THEME: THE GOD THEY DID NOT KNOW...

1. Acknowledging their devotion, he makes mention of one altar in particular - **Ac 17:22-23a**
 - a. An altar with the inscription: ***"To The Unknown God"***
 - b. So devout, they sought to worship a god they did not know
2. He uses the opportunity to preach concerning the True God they did not know! - **Ac 17:23b**

B. MAIN POINTS...

1. **God is the creator of the universe - Ac 17:24**
 - a. He made the world, He is Lord of heaven and earth
 - b. As such, He does not dwell in temples made with hands - cf. **1Ki 8:22-30**
 2. **God is the sustainer of life - Ac 17:25**
 - a. He gives to all life their breath and what they need - cf. **Jm 1:17**
 - b. Therefore God is not worshipped as though He needs it
 3. **God is the ruler of all the nations - Ac 17:26-27**
 - a. He has created every nation and determined their rise and fall - **Dan 2:20-21; 4:17**
 - b. Everything is designed to prompt men to seek God, who is not far from any of us
 4. **God is the Father of mankind - Ac 17:28-29**
 - a. From God we come; and in Him we live, move, and have our very being
 - b. Therefore we should not think that God is like any idol of gold, silver or stone
 5. **God is the Judge of the world - Ac 17:30-31**
 - a. What ignorance He may have overlooked in the past, such is no longer the case
 - b. He now commands all men everywhere to repent
 - c. Why? Because of the coming Judgment, in which...
 - a. God will judge the world in righteousness
 - b. God will judge the world through Jesus Christ - **Jn 5:22,26-27; 12:48**
 - d. As proof such will occur, God has raised Jesus from the dead
- **These five points are from “The Spirit, The Church, And The World”, by John Stott**

C. RESPONSE...

1. Mentioning the resurrection provoked a response - **Ac 17:32**
 - a. Some mocked (to many at that time, the idea of a bodily resurrection was foolishness)
 - b. Others were more cordial, offering to listen again at another time
2. As Paul left, some joined him and believed - **Ac 17:33-34**
 - a. Specifically mentioned are Dionysius the Areopagite, and Damaris, a woman
 - b. Others also joined Paul and believed

[Having considered the setting and the sermon, allow me to make some...]

III. OBSERVATIONS

A. REGARDING THE SERMON...

1. **Paul used tact - Ac 17:22-23**
 - a. He acknowledges their spirituality, though misdirected
 - b. We should not hesitate to acknowledge the devotion one might have; if in error, our task is to explain “the way of God more accurately” - e.g., **Ac 18:24-26**
2. **Paul began with the present spiritual condition of his audience - Ac 17:23-27**
 - a. They believed in supreme beings, but didn’t know the True God
 - b. With the Jews he began with the Law, with the Gentiles he began with the nature of God; we too should take into consideration where one is spiritually
3. **Paul made use of an accepted authority - Ac 17:28-29**
 - a. He quotes from one of their own prophets to make his point
 - b. When appropriate, we can appeal to an uninspired authority accepted by others
4. **Paul led his audience to the main themes of the gospel - Ac 17:30-31**
 - a. Such as repentance, the judgment, Jesus and the resurrection - cf. **Ac 17:18**
 - b. So our ultimate goal in preaching should be the gospel message - e.g., **Ac 2:38; 3:19**

5. **Paul used the resurrection of Jesus as ultimate proof - Ac 17:31**
 - a. God has given assurance of the coming Judgment by raising Jesus
 - b. Indeed, if Jesus truly did rise from the dead, it is proof of:
 - 1) The existence of God
 - 2) The truthfulness of all of Jesus' claims
 - 3) The reality of sin, judgment, and the need to repent
 - c. This is why we need to develop a strong apologetic for the resurrection of Jesus

B. REGARDING THE RESPONSE...

1. People responded in three different ways - **Ac 17:32-34**
 - a. **Rejection** - "some mocked"
 - b. **Reluctance** - "others said, 'we will hear you again on this matter'"
 - c. **Reception** - "some men joined him and believed"
2. Of those who responded favorably, it is only said that they "**believed**" - **Ac 17:34**
 - a. Are we to conclude from this that was all they did?
 - b. Did they not also "repent", as commanded in **Ac 17:30**?
 - c. The term "believed" encompassed more than simply an acceptance of the facts that had been proclaimed
 - 1) It involved a complete reception of the message preached
 - 2) It included an obedience to whatever conditions had been proclaimed by the apostles (such as repentance, baptism)
 - d. Just as **faith** was not explicitly mentioned in **Acts 2**, or **repentance** in **Acts 16**, but is fairly inferred from what we know in other passages, so also with **baptism** here
 - 1) "There is, indeed, much to be said for the contention, independently advocated by theologians of varied schools, that in the New Testament faith and baptism are viewed as inseparables whenever the subject of Christian initiation is under discussion, so that if one is referred to, the other is presupposed, even if not mentioned." - **G. R. Beasley-Murray, Baptism In The New Testament, p. 272**
 - 2) "Baptism and faith are but the outside and inside of the same thing" - **James Denny (as quoted by Beasley-Murray, ibid.)**
 - 3) "Where baptism is spoken of faith is presumed, and where faith is spoken of baptism is included in the thought" - **N. J. Engelsen (as quoted by Beasley-Murray, ibid.)**

CONCLUSION

1. Whether Jew or Gentile, philosopher or simpleton, the gospel of Christ is for all...
 - a. Where we begin may vary with the spiritual condition of our audience
 - b. Where we end must always be the same: Jesus is the only way to salvation!
2. When one becomes convicted of their sinful condition and their need for Jesus, the proper response should also be the same no matter who we are...
 - a. Faith in Jesus as the Son of God, who died for our sins and was raised from the dead
 - b. Repentance from sin
 - c. Baptism into Christ for the forgiveness of sins through His blood

One's reaction to the gospel will always be one of three ways: **rejection**, **reluctance**, or **reception**. In Athens, people such as **Dionysius** and **Damaris** exemplified the proper response.

Are you willing to imitate their example...?

Paul's Ministry At Corinth

Acts 18:1-18

INTRODUCTION

1. Following his limited time at **Athens**, Paul went to nearby **Corinth**...
 - a. An economic center of Greece, also known for its immorality
 - b. It became an important focus of Paul's ministry as an apostle
 - c. A well-known church was established, recipient of at least two epistles by Paul
2. Paul's ministry at Corinth lasted **a year and a half**, involving...
 - a. His labor as a tentmaker, and teaching in the local synagogue
 - b. His conversion of many Corinthians, including the ruler of the synagogue
 - c. His providential protection by the Lord
 - d. His writing two epistles to the church at Thessalonica

[His ministry at Corinth as recorded by Luke is in **Ac 18:1-18**. We begin by observing...]

I. PAUL'S ARRIVAL AT CORINTH

A. HE LIVED WITH AQUILA AND PRISCILLA... (Ac 18:1-3)

1. He found this couple who had been expelled from Rome
 - a. A husband and wife who later converted Apollos - **Ac 18:24-28**
 - b. Mentioned in several of Paul's epistles - **Ro 16:3; 1Co 16:19; 2Ti 4:19**
2. Of the same trade (tentmakers), Paul stayed with them
 - a. He worked to support himself as a matter of principle - **1Co 9:6-15; Ac 20:33-35**
 - b. He also received support from churches like Philippi - **2Co 11:7-10; Php 4:15**

B. HE TAUGHT IN THE SYNAGOGUE... (Ac 18:4)

1. He "reasons" with the people, as with...
 - a. Those at Thessalonica, Athens, and Ephesus - **Ac 17:2,17; 18:19; 19:8-9**
 - b. Government officials like Felix, Festus, and Agrippa II - **Ac 24:25; 26:25**
 - The gospel is designed to appeal to the mind as well as the heart! - cf. **Mt 22:37**
2. He "persuaded" both Jews and Greeks...
 - a. As he did at Thessalonica and Ephesus - **Ac 17:4; 19:8**
 - b. As he almost did with Herod Agrippa II - **Ac 26:28**
 - Again, the gospel appeals to the reasoning processes of the mind - cf. **Isa 1:18**

[Not long after his arrival, Paul is then joined by his two close companions and co-workers...]

II. FOLLOWING THE ARRIVAL OF TIMOTHY AND SILAS

A. THEY HAD COME FROM MACEDONIA... (Ac 18:5)

1. With good news regarding the church at Thessalonica - **1Th 3:1-7**
2. Prompting Paul to write **First Thessalonians** (ca. 49-51 A.D.) - **1Th 1:1**

B. PAUL FURTHER COMPELLED BY THE SPIRIT... (Ac 18:5)

1. He “testified” to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ - cf. **Ac 20:21,24; 23:11; 28:23**
2. Such testimony likely involved:
 - a. Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament - **Ac 17:2-3**
 - b. His own eyewitness testimony as an apostle - cf. **Ac 26:16**

C. PAUL THEN MET OPPOSITION... (Ac 18:6-7)

1. By some Jews who blasphemed, just like those in Antioch of Pisidia - **Ac 13:45**
2. He turned to the Gentiles, like he did in Antioch of Pisidia - **Ac 13:46**
3. In Corinth, he had only to go next door, to the home of Justus - **Ac 18:7**

D. YET THE GOSPEL BORE FRUIT... (Ac 18:8)

1. Crispus, ruler of the synagogue
 - a. Who believed on the Lord with all his household - **Ac 18:8**
 - b. Who was personally baptized by Paul - cf. **1Co 1:14**
2. Many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized
 - a. Just like those in Jerusalem, Samaria - cf. **Ac 2:37-41; 8:12**
 - b. Later problems made Paul thankful he himself had baptized few - cf. **1Co 1:10-17**

[In the midst of opposition, Paul and his companions found success in preaching the gospel! He then received encouraging confirmation from the Lord that led to a long stay at Corinth...]

III. EIGHTEEN MONTHS AT CORINTH

A. ENCOURAGED BY THE LORD... (Ac 18:9-11)

1. In a vision, told not to be afraid, nor remain silent, “for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; *for I have many people in this city.*” - **Ac 18:10**
 - a. Most understand this to refer to divine foreknowledge for the success of the gospel
 - b. That the Lord knew there were many souls (people, Gr. **laos**) who would obey the gospel
 - c. But it may refer to *why* (cf. “*for*”) none would hurt him; i.e., because of men like Gallio
2. So Paul remained a year and six months
3. During which he wrote Second Thessalonians (ca. 51-52 A.D.) - **2Th 1:1**

B. ENABLED BY THE PROCONSUL... (Ac 18:12-18)

1. The Jews brought Paul up on charges before Gallio, proconsul of Achaia
2. Gallio refused to heed them, not willing to be a judge in religious matters
3. The Greeks beat Sosthenes, ruler of the synagogue, which Gallio ignored
4. Thus Paul remained in Corinth a good while - **Ac 18:18**

CONCLUSION

1. In Paul’s ministry at Corinth, we see...
 - a. His dedication and methodology as a preacher of the gospel
 - b. The response of those who hear the gospel (they believed and were baptized)
2. From such, hopefully there are things we can learn...
 - a. Whether we are servants of the Lord like Paul and his companions
 - b. Or those seeking to learn the truth on how to be saved

Have you heard the gospel, believed, and been baptized...? - **Ac 18:8**

Paul Returns To Antioch

Acts 18:18-23

INTRODUCTION

1. After a long and successful stay in Corinth, Paul...
 - a. Began the last leg of his second missionary journey
 - b. From Corinth to Antioch of Syria
 - c. By way of Cenchrea, Ephesus, Caesarea, and Jerusalem
2. Luke's description of the last leg of Paul's second journey is brief...
 - a. Covered in only six verses - **Ac 18:18-23**
 - b. Immediately followed by the start of his third journey - **Ac 18:23**

[Though brief, Luke's description contains several things of interest. So let's follow along on...]

I. THE LAST LEG OF THE JOURNEY

A. FROM CORINTH TO EPHESUS...

1. Paul left Corinth, joined by Aquila and Priscilla - **Ac 18:18**
 - a. With whom Paul had stayed in Corinth - **Ac 18:1-3**
 - b. Mentioned later in several epistles - **Ro 16:3; 1Co 16:19; 2Ti 4:19**
2. In nearby Cenchrea, Paul cut his hair - **Ac 18:18**
 - a. Cenchrea - a port city, about nine miles from Corinth
 - b. Home of Phoebe, a servant of the church there - **Ro 16:1**
 - c. Paul had taken a vow, perhaps the Nazarite vow - cf. **Num 6:1-21**
 - d. As a Jew, Paul had no problems observing certain elements of the Law, understanding it was not necessary to be saved - cf. **Ac 21:20-26; 1Co 9:19-23; Ga 5:4-6**
3. Arriving at Ephesus - **Ac 18:19-21**
 - a. Aquila and Priscilla stayed; they later had a church in their home - cf. **1Co 16:19**
 - b. Paul reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue - cf. **Ac 17:1-3**
 - c. The Jews wanted him to stay longer
 - 1) But he was anxious to get to Jerusalem
 - 2) Some manuscripts indicate it was to keep the feast (Passover - cf. **Ramsay**)
 - d. He promised to return, God willing; which he did - cf. **Ac 19:1**

B. FROM EPHESUS TO JERUSALEM...

1. Paul sailed from Ephesus to Caesarea - **Ac 18:21-22**
 - a. Caesarea was Palestine's chief port - **ESV Study Bible**
 - b. Where Paul would visit again later - cf. **Ac 21:8**
2. Went "up" (elevation-wise) and visited the church - **Ac 18:22**
 - a. Most likely the church in Jerusalem
 - b. "About sixty-five miles inland, the terms 'going up' and 'going down' are used so frequently of the journey to and from Jerusalem as to establish this usage." - **Stott, J.R.W.** (1994). *The Message of Acts: the Spirit, the church & the world*. The Bible Speaks Today. Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press.

C. FROM JERUSALEM TO ANTIOCH...

1. He went “down” to Antioch - **Ac 18:22**
 - a. Antioch of Syria was actually north of Jerusalem
 - b. But it was “downhill” in relation to Jerusalem
2. He spent “some time” in Antioch of Syria - **Ac 18:23**
 - a. Probably from early summer of AD 52 to early spring of 53 - **Stott, ibid.**
 - b. Thus Paul’s second journey that began in Antioch was completed - cf. **Ac 15:36-40**

[Luke immediately begins his record of Paul’s third missionary journey (**Ac 18:23**). But let’s use the rest of this study to summarize...]

II. THE IMPACT OF PAUL’S SECOND JOURNEY**A. ON CHURCHES...**

1. Paul was able to **encourage churches**
 - a. In Syria, Cilicia - **Ac 15:41**
 - b. In Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia - **Ac 16:1-5**
2. Paul was able to **establish churches**
 - a. In Philippi - **Ac 16:11-40**
 - b. In Thessalonica - **Ac 17:1-4**
 - c. In Berea - **Ac 17:10-12**
 - d. In Athens - **Ac 17:34**
 - e. In Corinth - **Ac 18:1-8**

B. ON BRETHREN...

1. Paul began lasting relations with **co-workers**
 - a. Silas - **Ac 15:40; 16:19,25,40; 17:4,10,14-15; 18:5; 2Co 1:19; 1Th 1:1; 2Th 1:1**
 - b. Timothy - **Ac 16:1; 17:14-15; 18:5; 19:22; 20:4; Ro 16:21; 1Co 4:17; 16:10; 2Co 1:1,19; Php 1:1; 2:19; Col 1:1; 1Th 1:1; 3:2,6; 2Th 1:1; 1Ti 1:2,18; 6:20; 2Ti 1:2; Phm 1; He 13:23**
 - c. Luke (author of Acts) - **Ac 16:10-13,16; 20:6,13-15; 21:1-17; 27:1-28:16; Col 4:14; 2Ti 4:11; Phm 24**
 - d. Aquila and Priscilla - **Ac 18:1-3,18; Ro 16:3; 1Co 16:19; 2Ti 4:19**
2. Paul began lasting relations with **brethren**
 - a. Brethren at Philippi (Lydia, the jailor, Clement, Euodia, Syntche) - **Php 1:3-8; 4:1-3,15-18**
 - b. Brethren at Thessalonica - **1Th 1:2-4; 2:17-20; 3:6-10; 2Th 1:3-4,11-12; 3:1-5**
 - c. Brethren at Corinth (Gaius, Chole, Crispus, household of Stephanas) - **Ac 18:8; 1Co 1:11,14-16; 16:15,17; Ro 16:23**

C. ON HISTORICAL BACKGROUND...

1. **Mentioning churches** to whom epistles were written
 - a. Antioch of Pisidia, Lystra Iconium, Derbe (Galatians)
 - b. Philippi (Philippians)
 - c. Thessalonica (1st & 2nd Thessalonians)
 - d. Corinth (1st & 2nd Corinthians)
2. **Introducing persons** whose impact is felt in the books of the New Testament
 - a. Luke (author of the gospel of Luke and book of Acts)
 - b. Timothy (recipient of 1st & 2nd Timothy)

CONCLUSION

1. Paul's second missionary also contained notable examples of **conversion**...
 - a. Lydia of Thyatira - **Ac 16:13-15**
 - b. The Philippian jailer - **Ac 16:25-34**
 - c. The Corinthians - **Ac 18:8**

2. We also read of worthy examples of **character**...
 - a. Timothy, the dedicated disciple - **Ac 16:1-3**
 - b. Lydia, the hospitable convert - **Ac 16:15**
 - c. The noble (fair-minded) Bereans - **Ac 17:11**

May such examples of **conversion** and **character** inspire us us in our own devotion to the Lord...!

The Conversion Of Apollos

Acts 18:24-28

INTRODUCTION

1. When Paul left Ephesus on his second missionary...
 - a. Aquila and Priscilla stayed behind - **Ac 18:18-19**
 - b. They hosted a church in their home - cf. **1Co 16:19**
2. Aquila and Priscilla were responsible for converting Apollos...
 - a. A man with great talent and zeal before his conversion
 - b. Who served the Lord greatly, especially in Corinth

[The conversion of Apollos offers an important lesson or two on how we might be more effective in our own evangelistic efforts today. Let's first consider what we know about...]

I. APOLLOS, THE PROSPECT

A. HIS BACKGROUND...

1. He was a Jew - **Ac 18:24**
2. Born at Alexandria - **Ac 18:24**
 - a. Capital of Egypt from 330 B.C.
 - b. Founded by Alexander the Great
 - c. An outstanding Greek cultural and academic center
 - d. Contained the finest library in the ancient world
 - e. The Jewish population numbered in the hundreds of thousands
 - f. It became the most important center of Judaism outside of Jerusalem
 - g. Jewish rabbis gathered in Alexandria to produce the Septuagint (LXX)
- **Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary**
3. Well educated, "an eloquent man" - **Ac 18:24**
 - a. Grk., **logios**, learned, skilled, eloquent - **ESV Study Bible**
 - b. Pertaining to one who has learned a great deal of the intellectual heritage of a culture—'learned, cultured.' - **Louw Nida**

B. HIS ABILITIES...

1. Mighty (powerful, competent) in the Scriptures (Old Testament) - **Ac 18:24**
2. Instructed in the way of the Lord (Jesus) - **Ac 18:25**
3. Fervent in spirit; lit., "to boil in the spirit", an idiom for enthusiasm - **Louw Nida**
4. Taught accurately the way of the Lord (Jesus) - **Ac 18:25**
5. Though he knew only the baptism of John - **Ac 18:25**
 - a. His knowledge of Jesus was limited
 - b. Perhaps knowing only John's witness to Jesus as the Messiah
 - c. Likely unaware of Jesus' commission involving baptism - cf. **Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16**
 - d. Similar to those "disciples" in Ephesus whose knowledge was also deficient - **Ac 19:1-5**

[With such knowledge, eloquence, and enthusiasm, Apollos began to speak boldly in the synagogue at Ephesus (**Ac 18:26**). Listening to him were two people, husband and wife...]

II. AQUILA AND PRISCILLA, THE TEACHERS

A. THEIR BACKGROUND...

1. Husband and wife, Jews expelled from Rome - **Ac 18:1-2**
2. With whom Paul stayed in Corinth, working together as tentmakers - **Ac 18:3**
3. Traveled with Paul from Corinth to Ephesus, and stayed there - **Ac 18:18-19**
4. Hosted a church in their home in Ephesus - **1Co 16:19**
5. At some point risked their lives for Paul - **Ro 16:3-4**
6. Later in Rome, hosting a church in their house - **Ro 16:3-5**
7. Mentioned in Paul's last epistle, shortly before his death, back in Ephesus - **2Ti 4:19**

B. THEIR METHOD...

1. They attended the synagogue - **Ac 18:26**
 - a. As Jews, they would have that privilege
 - b. Perhaps like Paul, they utilized it as an evangelistic opportunity - **Ac 17:1-4**
2. They heard Apollos speak - **Ac 18:26**
 - a. I believe we can fairly infer that they listened respectfully
 - b. Like the Bereans, who with fair-mindedness listened to Paul - **Ac 17:11**
3. They took him aside - **Ac 18:26**
 - a. Talking to him privately, conducive to constructive dialogue
 - b. Like Paul, their goal was to reason and persuade - **Ac 17:1-4; 18:4**
4. They explained to Apollos the way of God more accurately - **Ac 18:26**
 - a. Implying that his knowledge was somewhat accurate
 - b. They sought to build on what he already knew, with truth he did not know

[Aquila and Priscilla were successful in leading Apollos to a more accurate understanding of the way of God. With that understanding, the highly educated, fervent Jew from Alexandria became...]

III. APOLLOS, THE MINISTER

A. HIS SUCCESS AT CORINTH...

1. Endorsed by brethren at Ephesus, he went to Corinth - **Ac 18:27**
2. He greatly helped those who believed through grace - **Ac 18:27**
3. Apollos "vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ." - **Ac 18:28; cf. Ac 17:3**
4. As Paul wrote, "I planted, Apollos watered..." - **1Co 3:5-6**

B. THE PROBLEM AT CORINTH...

1. Division because of "preacher-itis" involved Apollos - **1Co 1:10-12**
2. Paul diagnosed such "preacher-itis" as carnality - **1Co 3:4**
3. In no way did Paul impugn Apollos with causing the problem
 - a. Apollos was a minister and co-worker through whom the Lord worked - **1Co 3:5-9**
 - b. Paul included Apollos and Cephas (Peter) as serving the church - **1Co 3:21-23**
 - c. Paul included himself with Apollos as examples in whom not to boast - **1Co 4:6**
 - d. He wanted Apollos to go to Corinth, but Apollos was unwilling at the time - **1Co 16:12**
4. Those who identified themselves with Apollos may have been swayed by his eloquence

CONCLUSION

1. Paul later mentioned Apollos in his epistle to Titus... - **Tit 3:13**
 - a. Together with Zenas, a lawyer
 - b. Asking Titus to send them on, lacking nothing
 - c. Some think Zenas and Apollos may have been the bearers of the epistle to Titus
 - d. Luther and others suggested Apollos as the author of Hebrews, but no one knows

2. What is known is the successful conversion of Apollos, by Aquila and Priscilla...
 - a. Whose methodology is worthy of imitation in evangelism
 - b. Acknowledging the faith and understanding of those we try to teach
 - c. Building on their faith as we seek to teach them “the way of God more accurately”
 - d. Doing so privately when possible, as friends not adversaries

Have you explained to others the way of God more accurately? Are you willing to let others explain to you the way of God more accurately? We can all learn from **“The Conversion Of Apollos”**...

The Twelve Disciples Of John

Acts 19:1-7

INTRODUCTION

1. In our study of “**Acts**”, we have considered many examples of conversion...
 - a. The 3000 on Pentecost - **Ac 2:1-41**
 - b. The 2000 at Solomon’s Porch - **Ac 3:1-4:4**
 - c. The Samaritans - **Ac 8:4-25**
 - d. The Ethiopian Eunuch - **Ac 8:26-40**
 - e. Saul Of Tarsus - **Ac 9:1-19; 22:6-16; 26:12-18**
 - f. Cornelius And His Household - **Ac 10:1-48; 11:1-18**
 - g. Lydia of Thyatira - **Ac 16:6-15**
 - h. The Philippian jailor - **Ac 16:25-34**
 - h. The Athenians - **Ac 17:16-34**
 - i. The Corinthians - **Ac 18:1-11**
2. In these examples of conversion we learn that...
 - a. **The gospel message** was focused on Jesus
 - 1) Who died for our sins
 - 2) Who was raised from the dead
 - 3) Who is both Lord and Christ, returning again one day to judge the world
 - b. **The response expected** of those who heard involved:
 - 1) Faith in Jesus as the Christ, the son of God (which included confessing that faith)
 - 2) Repentance of one’s sins
 - 3) Baptism for the remission of sins
3. We have yet another case of conversion...
 - a. The last detailed example of conversion in Acts
 - b. Unique for several reasons, one is that it describes a “re-baptism”

[I am referring to “**The Twelve Disciples Of John**”, recorded in **Ac 19:1-7**. As we begin this study, let’s review the Biblical record...]

I. THE CONVERSION OF TWELVE DISCIPLES

A. PAUL’S ARRIVAL IN EPHEBUS...

1. He had just started his third journey - **Ac 18:22-23**
2. At the end of his second journey, he had made a quick stop at Ephesus - **Ac 18:19-21**
3. True to his word, he returned to Ephesus - **Ac 19:1**

B. PAUL MEETS TWELVE DISCIPLES...

1. He finds some “*disciples*”, twelve in number - **Ac 19:1b,7**
2. He learns they were disciples of John the Baptist - **Ac 19:2-3**
 - a. He asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed
 - 1) As explained in the conversion of “**The Samaritans**” (**Ac 8:4-25**), I believe the phrase “*receive the Holy Spirit*” to be a metonymy for receiving a miraculous gift

- from the Spirit
- 2) As an apostle, Paul had the ability to impart spiritual gifts - **Ro 1:11; 2Ti 1:6**
- 3) Assuming the “disciples” to have been baptized into Christ, he desired to give them gifts from the Spirit (such as the gifts of tongues and prophesy, cf. **1Co 12:10**)
- b. Their answer sparks another question from Paul
 - 1) They had not heard about a “Holy Spirit”
 - a) They must not have known much of John’s own teaching, for he taught concerning the Holy Spirit - cf. **Mt 3:11**
 - b) They clearly could not have been properly baptized into Christ, for it is a baptism into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit! - cf. **Mt 28:19**
 - 2) So Paul inquires into their baptism
 - a) He learns that it was John’s baptism
 - b) Some have suggested that these 12 may have been converted by Apollos before Apollos himself learned the truth - cf. **Ac 18:24-25**

C. THE TWELVE ARE “RE-BAPTIZED”...

1. Paul explains that while John did teach a baptism of repentance, he directed people to believe on Jesus who would come after him - **Ac 19:4**
2. The twelve are then baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus - **Ac 19:5**
 - a. This would be the baptism commanded by Jesus - **Mt 28:18-20**
 - b. And the baptism expected of all would-be disciples of Jesus - **Ac 2:38; 22:16**
3. Following their baptism, Paul laid hands on them and the Spirit imparted gifts of tongues and prophesy - **Ac 19:6-7**

[This was the beginning of a very successful period for Paul’s ministry in Ephesus (cf. **Ac 19:8-10**). Again we see the normal response of one who wished to become a disciple of Jesus (faith and baptism, **Mk 16:16**).

The example of “**The Twelve Disciples Of John**” raises an interesting question concerning “re-baptism”: Under what circumstances should one be baptized again? Here are some thoughts regarding this question...]

II. IS “RE-BAPTISM” EVER NECESSARY?

A. OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING THE TWELVE DISCIPLES...

1. They had been previously “baptized”
2. Their baptism, however, was lacking in some way
 - a. Even though it was immersion
 - b. Even though it was “*for the remission of sins*” - **Mk 1:4**
 - c. But their baptism was not in the name of Jesus - **Ac 2:38; 10:48; 19:5**
 - 1) That is, by His authority
 - 2) Which would have been a baptism into the name of the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the Son - **Mt 28:19**
3. Because their first baptism **lacked an essential element**, “re-baptism” was necessary!
4. May we not conclude that if one’s baptism lacks some essential element, then “re-baptism” is necessary?

B. WHEN “RE-BAPTISM” IS APPROPRIATE...

1. There are four “essential elements” of Bible baptism

- a. The proper **mode**: a burial (immersion) - **Ro 6:3; Col 2:12**
- b. The proper **authority**: in the name of Christ - **Ac 19:5**
- c. The proper **purpose**: remission of sins - **Ac 2:38; 22:16**
- d. The proper **subject**: penitent believer - **Ac 2:38; 8:37; Mk 16:16**
2. When one of these “essential elements” was lacking, “re-baptism” was commanded
 - a. In **Ac 19:1-5**, the proper **authority** was lacking
 - b. Even though their previous baptism had the right **mode, purpose, and subject**
3. Some cases where “re-baptism” would seem appropriate
 - a. If we were baptized **by sprinkling or pouring** (for the proper mode is immersion)
 - b. If we were baptized **by the authority of anyone other than Jesus** (for the proper authority is Jesus Christ)
 - c. If we were baptized **as a public confession faith**, thinking that we were already saved (for the proper purpose is the remission of sins)
 - d. If we were baptized **but were not penitent believers** (for a proper subject is one who believes “with all their heart”)
 - 1) E.g., when one is baptized just because their friends are doing it
 - 2) E.g., Because their spouse, fiancé, or parents are pressuring them to do it (and they do it to please them, not God)
4. Let me be sure to clarify:
 - a. When one is baptized because their “first” baptism lacked an essential element...
 - 1) It is not really “re-baptism!”
 - 2) For that person is finally being baptized scripturally for the **first** time!
 - b. When one has been scripturally baptized **once**...
 - 1) There is never a need to be baptized again!
 - 2) Once we have clothed ourselves with Christ in baptism:
 - a) The blood of Christ continually cleanses us of our sins
 - b) As we **repent** and **confess** our sins to God in prayer - **Ac 8:22; 1Jn 1:9**

CONCLUSION

1. The example of “**The Twelve Disciples Of John**” certainly illustrates that one can...
 - a. Be religious and have undergone some baptismal experience
 - b. Yet still not be a true disciple of Jesus Christ!
2. One can rest assured that they are a true disciple of Jesus when their baptism had...
 - a. The right **mode** - immersion
 - b. The right **authority**- Jesus Christ
 - c. The right **purpose** - remission of sins
 - d. The right **subject** - penitent believer
 - **Lacking any of these “essential elements”, one should consider being baptized again in order to “make your calling and election sure”**
3. If we desire to truly be the disciples of Jesus Christ, then let’s be sure...
 - a. We proclaim the pure gospel of Jesus Christ, as preached by His apostles in the first century
 - b. We personally have responded to that gospel in the same manner as those who heard the good news preached in its purity and simplicity

Might you need to be “re-baptized”...?

Paul's Ministry At Ephesus

Acts 19:1-41

INTRODUCTION

1. Paul's third missionary journey began in Antioch of Syria...
 - a. Where he started all three journeys - **Ac 13:1-3; 15:36-41**
 - b. As with his second journey, it began by visiting churches established on his first missionary journey - **Ac 15:41; 16:1-5; 18:22-23**
2. The first major stop on Paul's third journey with the city of Ephesus...
 - a. Where he had briefly stopped on his second journey - **Ac 18:19-20**
 - b. Where he had promised to return, God willing - **Ac 18:21**

[Paul's stay at Ephesus on his third journey proved to be the longest of any recorded by Luke. It lasted about three years (52-55 A.D., **ESV Study Bible**), and was a very productive ministry by Paul...]

I. PAUL'S MINISTRY AS RECORDED BY LUKE

A. CONVERTING TWELVE DISCIPLES...

1. Who needed to be baptized again (see previous lesson) - **Ac 19:1-5**
2. Who received the Spirit, spoke in tongues and prophesied, after Paul laid his hands on them - **Ac 19:6-7**

B. TEACHING IN THE SYNAGOGUE...

1. As was Paul's custom when allowed - **Ac 17:2; 18:4**
2. This Paul did at Ephesus for three months - **Ac 19:8**
3. This was longer than at other places - cf. **Ac 13:42-45; 14:1-2; 17:1-10,11-15; 18:4-6**

C. TEACHING IN THE SCHOOL OF TYRANNUS...

1. As happened elsewhere, Paul was forced to leave the synagogue - **Ac 19:9**; cf. **Ac 18:4-6**
2. He then taught in the school of Tyrannus for two years - **Ac 19:9-10**; cf. **Ac 18:7**
3. During this time, all in Asia (western Turkey) heard the word of the Lord - **Ac 19:10**
4. Probably through the aid of men like Epaphras - **Col 1:7; 4:12-13**

D. WORKING UNUSUAL MIRACLES...

1. Involving handkerchiefs or aprons from his body to heal others - **Ac 19:11-12**
2. Prompting Jewish exorcists to try and use Jesus' and Paul's names - **Ac 19:13-16**
3. The evident contrast between true and false miracle workers led many to believe - **Ac 19:17**
4. Those who believed were willing to confess and repent at great cost - **Ac 19:18-19**
5. Thus the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed - **Ac 19:20**

E. THE RIOT AT EPHEBUS...

1. Toward the end of his ministry, as Paul began making plans to leave - **Ac 19:21-22**
 - a. Purposing in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia - cf. **Ac 20:1-5**
 - b. Then returning to Jerusalem, followed by a trip to Rome - cf. **Ac 20:5-21:17; 27:1-28:16**
 - c. In preparation for his departure, he sent Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia - **Ac 19:22**

2. The Diana incident - **Ac 19:23-41**
 - a. A great commotion, brought on by Demetrius and other silversmiths - **Ac 19:23-28**
 - b. In which a mob takes two of Paul's companions, Gaius and Aristarchus - **Ac 19:29**
 - c. Paul was restrained by officials from Asia from addressing the mob - **Ac 19:30-31**
 - d. The Jews put forth Alexander, which further enraged the mob - **Ac 19:32-34**
 - e. The riot was barely controlled by the city clerk, who exonerated Paul's companions - **Ac 19:35-41**

[Paul soon left Ephesus and went on to Macedonia as planned (**Ac 20:1**). Luke's account of Paul's ministry in Ephesus records great success (**Ac 19:10,20**). But we can glean even more about his time in Ephesus from other New Testament sources...]

II. PAUL'S MINISTRY AS INDICATED ELSEWHERE

A. A QUICK TRIP TO CORINTH...

1. Paul made a short visit to Corinth, his second - cf. **2Co 12:14; 13:1**
2. His first visit was during the second journey - **Ac 18:1**
3. His third visit was later on the third journey - **Ac 20:1-3**
4. The book of Acts is silent about this second visit, but most place it sometime during his stay at Ephesus

B. EPISTLES TO CORINTH...

1. A letter to the Corinthians (now lost), only alluded to - **1Co 5:9**
2. Another letter what we now know as First Corinthians - **1Co 16:5-8,19**

C. EMISSARIES TO CORINTH...

1. Timothy
 - a. Sent from Ephesus to Macedonia - **Ac 19:22**
 - b. Who would arrive after First Corinthians - **1Co 4:17; 16:10-11**
2. Titus and "a brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches" (Luke?)
 - a. To encourage the Corinthians concerning the collection - **2Co 8:6,16-19**
 - b. To bring Paul word as to how the Corinthians received the first letter? - **2Co 12:17-18**
 - c. Whose delayed return would later give Paul concern - **2Co 2:12-13**
 - d. But who would eventually bring Paul good news - **2Co 7:5-7,13-16**

D. ADDITIONAL DETAILS ABOUT PAUL'S STAY IN EPHEBUS...

1. Sosthenes was there, joining Paul in writing to the Corinthians - **1Co 1:1**
2. Paul had been visited by Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus - **1Co 16:17**
3. Aquila and Priscilla hosted the church in their house - **1Co 16:19**
4. Paul's sufferings while at Ephesus - **Ac 20:17-19; 1Co 15:30-32; 2Co 1:8-11**
5. Paul's preaching while at Ephesus - **Ac 20:21-21,25-27,31**
6. Paul's manual labor while at Ephesus - **Ac 20:33-35; 1Co 4:11,12**

CONCLUSION

1. Harmonizing Luke's account with what is written elsewhere, we learn that...
 - a. The gospel spread throughout Asia (SW Turkey) - **Ac 19:10,20**
 - b. Paul's three years in Ephesus was very productive - **Ac 20:17-21,31**
 - c. His influence spread even further through epistles and emissaries

2. Reflecting on Paul's ministry in Ephesus, we glean many things, including...
 - a. The importance of scriptural baptism - **Ac 19:1-7**
 - b. The power of the gospel to transform lives - **Ac 19:18-20**
 - c. The resistance of many who put money and tradition above the will of God - **Ac 19:23-34**

May Paul's example of faithful ministry in Ephesus encourage and inspire us to be faithful in our own service to the Lord...!

Journeys In Macedonia And Greece

Acts 20:1-6

INTRODUCTION

1. The turmoil over Paul in Ephesus provided an opportune time for him to leave...
 - a. He had made plans to go to Macedonia, Achaia, Jerusalem, Rome - **Ac 19:21**
 - b. He had sent Timothy to Macedonia and on to Corinth - **Ac 19:22; 1Co 4:17**
 - c. He had also sent Titus and another brother to Corinth - **2Co 8:6,16-19; 12:17-18**

2. And so Paul left Ephesus and headed toward Macedonia...
 - a. After embracing (encouraging, ESV) the disciples at Ephesus - **Ac 20:1**
 - b. At Troas (still in Asia Minor), he found an "open door" to preach the gospel - **2Co 2:12**
 - c. But not finding Titus, Paul continued on toward Macedonia - **2Co 12:13**

[With anxiety over the condition of the church at Corinth, Paul continued on his journeys to Macedonia and Greece. Luke records very little of this part of Paul's travels, but by harmonizing what Luke wrote with what Paul wrote in his epistles, we can glean the following regarding...]

I. PAUL'S ITINERARY

A. MACEDONIA...

1. Paul preached throughout Macedonia (northern Greece) - **Ac 20:2**
 - a. He had preached in Macedonia on his second journey - **Ac 16:11-17:15**
 - b. When he had established churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea
 - c. On this trip he may have ventured to Illyricum - cf. **Ro 15:19**
2. Paul found Titus with comforting news from Corinth - **2Co 7:5-7,13-16**
3. The Macedonian brethren gave generously for the relief of saints in Jerusalem - **2Co 8:1-5**
4. Timothy returned to Paul, and joined him in writing 2nd Corinthians - **2Co 1:1**
5. Titus and "two brethren" are sent to Corinth - **2Co 8:16-24**
 - a. Likely taking Second Corinthians
 - b. To assist the Corinthians concerning the collection - **2Co 8:6-8; 9:1-5**

B. GREECE...

1. Paul spent just three months - **Ac 20:2-3**
2. This was his third visit to Corinth - **2Co 12:14**
 - a. A visit he hoped would not be sorrowful - **2Co 2:1**
 - b. A visit he hoped would not be embarrassing for them - **2Co 9:3-4**
 - c. A visit he hoped would not require stern judgment - **2Co 12:20-21; 13:1-3**
3. Paul wrote Romans (about 57 A.D.) from Corinth - **Ro 16:23**; cf. **1Co 1:14; 2Ti 4:20**
4. Paul's acquaintances and companions while in Corinth
 - a. Phoebe, servant of the church in nearby Cenchrea - **Ro 16:1-2**
 - b. Timothy, Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, Paul's countrymen - **Ro 16:21**
 - c. Tertius, writer for Paul - **Ro 16:22**
 - d. Gaius, host of Paul and the church - **Ro 16:23**
 - e. Erastus, treasurer of the city, and Quartus, a brother - **Ro 16:23**
5. Paul's plans for when he leaves Corinth

- a. To visit Rome and eventually Spain - **Ro 1:8-13; 15:22-24**
- b. But first he must go to Jerusalem with the contribution for the needy saints - **Ro 15:25-29**

C. MACEDONIA...

1. Paul's plan to sail straight to Syria was spoiled by a plot against him - **Ac 20:3**
2. Paul decided to go through Macedonia to Asia - **Ac 20:3**
3. Seven travelling companions went on to wait for Paul at Troas - **Ac 20:4-5**
4. We will review the seven companions shortly (see below)

D. PHILIPPI...

1. At Philippi, Luke evidently joins Paul - **Ac 20:5** (note the use of “we”)
2. We last read of Luke with Paul at Philippi on the second journey - **Ac 16:11-16**
3. Paul and Luke sailed from Philippi after the Days of Unleavened Bread (Passover) - **Ac 20:6**

[In five days, they arrived at Troas where they stayed seven days (**Ac 20:6**). There they rejoined their other traveling companions (**Ac 20:4**), at whom we shall now take a closer look...]

II. PAUL'S COMPANIONS

A. WHO WERE THEY...?

1. **Sopater of Berea**
 - a. A member of the church in Berea - **Ac 20:4**; cf. **Ac 17:10-15**
 - b. One of those who were more noble-minded? - **Ac 17:11**
 - c. Possibly the same man as Sosipater - **Ro 16:21**
2. **Aristarchus of Thessalonica**
 - a. A member of the church in Thessalonica - **Ac 20:4**; cf. **Ac 17:1-4; 1Th 1:1; 2Th 1:1**
 - b. Who was taken into the theater in the Diana incident at Ephesus - **Ac 19:29**
 - c. Who travelled with Paul and Luke to Rome - **Ac 27:2**
 - d. Described as a “fellow prisoner” with Paul in Rome - **Col 4:10**
 - e. Described also as a “fellow laborer” with Paul in Rome - **Phm 23**
3. **Secundus of Thessalonica**
 - a. A member of the church in Thessalonica - **Ac 20:4**; cf. **Ac 17:1-4; 1Th 1:1; 2Th 1:1**
 - b. His name means “second”; little more is known of him
4. **Gaius of Derbe**
 - a. A member of the church in Derbe - **Ac 20:4**; cf. **Ac 14:20-21**
 - b. Other men named Gaius in the scriptures
 - 1) Gaius of Macedonia, who with Aristarchus were taken into the theater at Ephesus - **Ac 19:29**
 - 2) Gaius of Corinth, Paul's convert and host of the church - **1Co 1:14; Ro 16:23**
 - 3) Gaius the beloved recipient of John's 3rd epistle - **3Jn 1**
5. **Timothy of Lystra**
 - a. The young disciple at Lystra personally selected by Paul - **Ac 16:1-4**
 - b. Who fulfilled special and often dangerous missions for Paul - **Ac 17:13-14; 1Th 3:1-8; Ac 19:22; 1Co 4:17; Php 2:19; 1Ti 1:3-4,18-19**
 - c. A true fellow-laborer in the gospel, none other like-minded as Paul - **Php 2:19-22**
 - d. Co-authored with Paul in writing six epistles - **2Co, Php, Co, 1Th, 2Th, Phile**
 - e. Recipient of two epistles from Paul - **1Ti, 2Ti**
 - f. As Paul faced death, he asked Timothy to come (which involved risk) - **2Ti 4:9**
 - g. Timothy himself was imprisoned at some point, but later released - **He 13:23**

6. **Tychicus of Asia**

- a. A Christian from Asia Minor (western Turkey) - **Ac 20:4**
- b. Sent with the letter to the Ephesians, a beloved brother and faithful minister - **Ep 6:21**
- c. Carried the letter to the Colossians, together with Onesimus - **Col 4:7-9**
- d. Sent to Ephesus on another occasion - **2Ti 4:12**
- e. And possibly to Crete on another occasion - **Tit 3:12**
- f. Tradition holds that he died a martyr - **Holman Bible Dictionary**

7. **Trophimus of Asia**

- a. A Christian from Asia Minor (western Turkey) - **Ac 20:4**
- b. From Ephesus, falsely accused as taken by Paul into the temple - **Ac 21:29**
- c. Left sick in Miletus toward the end of Paul's life - **2Ti 4:20**

8. **Luke of Philippi**

- a. The author of the gospel of Luke and Acts - **Lk 1:1-4; Ac 1:1-3**
- b. Who joined Paul on his second journey at Troas - **Ac 16:11**
- c. Then remained at Philippi when Paul when on to Thessalonica - **Ac 16:15; 17:1**
- d. Now to rejoin Paul as he passed through Philippi on his third journey - **Ac 20:5-6**
- e. From the use of personal pronouns ("we", "us"), we learn that Luke accompanied Paul from this point forward until Paul's arrival in Rome - **Ac 28:16**

B. WHY WERE THEY WITH HIM...?

1. In discussing the collection for the saints, Paul mentioned it would be taken by representatives from the churches - **1Co 16:1-4**
2. The intention was to do things honorable in the sight of all men - **2Co 8:18-21**
3. It is most likely that the traveling companions were representatives of the churches they were from in regards to the collection for the needy saints in Jerusalem - cf. **Ro 15:25-26**

C. WHAT MIGHT WE GLEAN FROM THIS...?

1. That the spread of the gospel in first century was a team effort
 - a. Not just the "first string" like the apostles
 - b. But many others we might call "God's second string"
2. Many others served at great personal expense and sacrifice
 - a. As emissaries of the apostles, bearing their letters
 - b. Whose lives were often in grave danger
 - c. Who suffered imprisonment themselves, and sometimes martyrdom
3. The extra effort to do things honorable in the sight of all men - cf. **2Co 8:18-21**
 - a. Transparent in their dealings involving money
 - b. Making sure that they were beyond reproach

CONCLUSION

1. A quick reading of Paul's journeys in Macedonia and Greece may not seem to reveal much at first...
2. But when harmonized with what is recorded elsewhere in the Scriptures...
 - a. We can learn more about what happened during this portion of Paul's third journey
 - b. We can be inspired by what we know about those who travelled with Paul

For seven days Paul and his traveling companions stayed in Troas (**Ac 20:6**). What happened before they left will be the focus of our next two studies...

The First Day Of The Week

Acts 20:7

INTRODUCTION

1. For almost 2000 years, Christians have assembled on Sunday to observe the Lord's Supper...
 - a. Why on Sunday (the first day of the week)?
 - b. Why not on the Sabbath (the seventh day of the week)?
2. In **Ac 20:7**, we find the first reference to worship on a Sunday...
 - a. When disciples came together to break bread
 - b. When Paul spoke to them

[Some might wonder whether this passage refers to a weekly observance, and whether Christians did in fact assemble on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord's Supper. Consider the evidence for...]

I. THE OBSERVANCE OF THE SUPPER

A. THE BIBLICAL EVIDENCE...

1. When the church began, they continued steadfastly in "the breaking of bread" - **Ac 2:42**
 2. Disciples came together on the first day of the week to "break bread" - **Ac 20:7**
 3. "Breaking bread" is likely a reference to the Lord's Supper - cf. **1Co 10:16-17**
 4. Other indications of a weekly observance:
 - a. The church at Corinth was coming together to eat the Lord's Supper, though they were abusing it - cf. **1Co 11:17-22**
 - b. Instructions concerning the collection suggest their coming together was on the first day of the week - cf. **1Co 16:1-2**
- **Seemingly slight, the Biblical evidence weighs more than any human opinion**

B. THE HISTORICAL EVIDENCE...

1. The earliest historical evidence outside the Bible confirms the day and frequency
 - a. **The Didache** (ca. 95 A.D.) indicates Christians were to come together on the first day of the week to break bread - **Didache 14:1**
 - b. **Justin Martyr** (ca. 150 A.D.) records how Christians assembled on Sunday and partook of the Supper - **Apology I, 67**
 - c. "...the early church writers from Barnabas, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, to Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Cyprian, all with one consent, declare that the church observed the first day of the week. They are equally agreed that the Lord's Supper was observed weekly, on the first day of the week." - **B. W. Johnson**, People's New Testament
2. Religious scholars confirm this was the practice
 - a. "As we have already remarked, the celebration of the Lord's Supper was still held to constitute an essential part of divine worship every Sunday, as appears from Justin Martyr (A.D. 150)..." - **Augustus Neander** (Lutheran), History Of Christian Religion And Church, Vol. I, p. 332
 - b. "This ordinance (the Lord's Supper) seems to have been administered every Lord's day; and probably no professed Christian absented themselves... - **Thomas Scott** (Presbyterian), Commentary On Acts 20:7

- c. “This also is an important example of weekly communion as the practice of the first Christians.” - **A. C. Hervey** (Episcopalian), *Commentary On Acts 20:7*
 - d. “It is well known that the primitive Christians administered the Eucharist (the Lord's Supper) every Lord's day.” - **P. Doddridge** (Congregationalist), *Notes On Acts 20:7*
 - e. “We understand v. 7 to indicate that the Breaking of Bread on the first day of the week was customary during the apostolic period.” - **F. F. Bruce**, (Open Brethren), *New International Bible commentary* (p. 1302)
- **The overwhelming consensus of extra biblical sources supports the conclusion that the Biblical practice was to observe the Lord's Supper each first day of the week**

[But as asked in the introduction, why Sunday? Why not the Sabbath Day? Consider the following regarding...]

II. THE DAY OF THE OBSERVANCE

A. **WHY THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK...?**

- 1. Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday - **Mt 28:1; Mk 16:2,9; Lk 24:1; Jn 20:1**
 - 2. Jesus appeared to His disciples on Sunday - **Jn 20:19**
 - 3. The church began on Pentecost, which was on a Sunday - **Ac 2:1-42**
 - 4. The command to lay by in store was to be carried out on a Sunday - **1Co 16:1-2**
 - 5. Jesus appeared to John on “the Lord’s Day”, later understood to be Sunday - **Re 1:10**
- **The Scriptures do not explicitly declare the above to be reasons why Christians assembled on the first day of the week, but it might indicate why they did**

B. **WHY NOT THE SABBATH...?**

- 1. The Sabbath was the sign of the Mosaic Covenant (**Exo 31:16, 17; Neh 9:14; Eze 20:12**), whereas Christians are under the New Covenant (**2Co 3; He 8**)
 - 2. There is no NT command to keep the Sabbath
 - 3. The first command to keep the Sabbath was not until the time of Moses (**Ex 16:23-30; 20:8**)
 - 4. The Jerusalem Council (**Ac 15**) did not order Gentile believers to keep the Sabbath
 - 5. Paul never cautioned Christians about breaking the Sabbath
 - 6. The NT explicitly teaches that Sabbath keeping was not a requirement (**Ro 14:5; Ga 4:10-11; Col 2:16-17**)
- **The above reasons are from The MacArthur Study Bible (Acts 20:7), for why Scripture does not require Christians to observe the Saturday Sabbath**

C. **AS PER ENCYCLOPEDIAS...**

- 1. “Sunday, first day of the week; in Christianity, the Lord’s Day, the weekly memorial of Jesus Christ’s resurrection from the dead. The practice of Christians gathering together for worship on Sunday dates back to apostolic times...” - **Encyclopedia Britannica**
 - 2. “From the apostolic era to the present it has been customary for Christians to assemble for communal Sunday services...” - **Encyclopedia Americana**
 - 3. “The celebration of the Lord’s Day in memory of the resurrection of Christ dates undoubtedly from the apostolic age. Nothing short of apostolic precedent can account for the universal religious observance in the churches of the second century. There is no dissenting voice. This custom is confirmed by the testimonies of the earliest post-apostolic writers, as Barnabas, Ignatius, and Justin Martyr.” - **History Of The Christian Church, Philip Schaff, vol. 1, pg. 201-202**
- **Both internal and external evidence from the Bible indicates that Christians met**

together on the first day of the week, i.e., Sunday

CONCLUSION

1. Again from **Philip Schaff, History of Christian Church, Vol. 1, pg. 478-479...**
 - a. "...it appears, therefore, from the New Testament itself, that Sunday was observed as a day of worship, and in special commemoration of the Resurrection, whereby the work of redemption was finished."
 - b. "The universal and uncontradicted Sunday observance in the second century can only be explained by the fact that it has its roots in apostolic practice."
2. Some may say that the Biblical evidence is scarce...
 - a. But a whisper of God's Word is worth more than a blast of man's opinions
 - b. The apostolic example is more authoritative than any human tradition

If you are a disciple of Christ, do you assemble with other Christians on the first day of the week to break bread (observe the Lord's Supper)? If not, why not...?

An Eventful Sunday At Troas

Acts 20:7-12

INTRODUCTION

1. The city of Troas was an important seaport...
 - a. Founded before 300 B.C. by Antigonus, a successor of Alexander the Great
 - b. Located about 10 miles south of the city of Troy
 - c. Made a Roman colony by the emperor Augustus (31 B.C. - 14 A.D.)
2. Troas was visited several times during Paul's missionary journeys...
 - a. On his second journey, where he was joined by Luke - **Ac 16:8,11**
 - b. On his third journey, having left Ephesus - **Ac 20:1**; cf. **2Co 2:12-13**
 - c. Again on his third journey, having left Philippi - **Ac 20:6**

[It was on Paul's third visit that Luke describes an eventful Sunday for the church at Troas. In **Ac 20:7**, we are first told about...]

I. THE ASSEMBLY OF DISCIPLES

A. ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK...

1. Literally, "the first of the Sabbath (sabbaton)"
 - a. Metaphorically, sabbaton denotes a period of seven days (week);
 - b. As used in reference to Jesus' resurrection (cf. Sabbath w/ week) - **Mt 28:1**
2. And so here, to refer to Sunday, the first day of the week
 - a. The day of the week in which Jesus rose from the dead - **ibid.**
 - b. The day of the week in which the church began - **Ac 2:1-47**
 - c. The day of the week disciples were to lay by in store - **1Co 16:1-2**
 - d. The day which came to be known as "the Lord's day" - **Re 1:10**; cf. **Didache 14:1**

B. TO BREAK BREAD...

1. The reason they came together on the first day of the week
2. To observe the Lord's Supper - **Lk 22:19-20**; **Ac 2:42**; **20:7**; **1Co 10:16-17**; **11:17-34**
3. A weekly practice continued by the early church - cf. **Didache 14:1**; **Apology I, 67**

[Assembled on the day of the week precious to early Christians, to observe a memorial meal instituted by Jesus Himself, the disciples at Troas had a special treat on that day...]

II. THE PREACHING OF PAUL

A. THE SPEAKER...

1. A special guest, along with eight other special guests - **Ac 20:4-6**
2. A guest speaker, an apostle of Jesus Christ! - **Ac 20:7**
3. Who had established and strengthened churches throughout the Mediterranean world

B. THE SERMON...

1. We are not told the subject matter, but from what we know of Paul...

- a. It could have been the gospel of Christ - cf. **Ro 1:14-17**
- b. It could have been exhortations to holy living - cf. **1Th 4:1-3**
- c. It could have been encouragement to endure persecution - cf. **Ac 14:21-22**
2. Whatever the subject, it was a long sermon
 - a. He continued his message until midnight - **Ac 20:7**
 - b. He later resumed and talked until daybreak - **Ac 20:11**
 - c. Because he was departing the next day - **Ac 20:7,11**

[What a privilege! To listen and learn from the apostle Paul! For those willing to stay all night, they also witnessed a special treat. What first may have appeared to be a tragedy, led to...]

III. THE RAISING OF EUTYCHUS

A. A SLEEPY YOUNG MAN...

1. In an upper room with many lamps - **Ac 20:8**
2. Sitting in a window, sinking into a deep sleep - **Ac 20:9**
3. Overcome by sleep as Paul continued speaking; “on and on” (NIV) - **Ac 20:9**
4. Perhaps having worked all day, the crowded room, the heat from the lamps - all contributing to his drowsiness

B. A LUCKY YOUNG MAN...

1. The name “Eutychus” means “fortunate, good luck”
2. Overcome by sleep, he fell from the third story, and taken up dead - **Ac 20:9**
3. Paul went down, fell on him, and embraced him - **Ac 20:10**; cf. **1Ki 17:21**; **2Ki 4:34**
4. Paul then said “Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him.” - **Ac 20:10**; cf. **Mk 5:39**
5. Paul then broke bread and ate, talked until daybreak, and departed - **Ac 20:11**
 - a. Was this the Lord’s Supper? Or a common meal to refresh Paul before his journey?
 - b. If Luke used Roman time (as many presume), it would have now been Monday
 - c. “Here the compound “broke bread and ate,” signifies an ordinary meal, not the Lord’s Supper.” - **Longenecker**, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: John and Acts*
 - d. “The second reference to ‘breaking bread’ seems to take that phrase beyond the Lord’s Supper and describes what could well be called a midnight snack.” - **Gangel**, *Holman New Testament Commentary, Acts*
6. With the young man brought in alive, “they were not a little comforted” - **Ac 20:12**
 - a. What an understatement! But that is what Luke literally wrote (NKJV, ESV)
 - b. We would more likely say, “were greatly comforted” (HCSB, NASB)

CONCLUSION

1. Truly an eventful Sunday for the disciples in Troas...!
 - a. To observe the Lord’s Supper, an important event for disciples every Sunday
 - b. To hear “our beloved brother Paul” share “the wisdom given him” - cf. **2Pe 3:15**
 - c. To witness the raising of young Eutychus from the dead!
2. What can we glean from this eventful Sunday in Troas...?
 - a. What day the church assembled for worship, and for what reason - **Ac 20:7**
 - b. A confirmation of Paul as a true apostle of Jesus Christ - **Ac 20:8-12**; cf. **2Co 12:12**

And as **Gangel** put it: “Attend church regularly - especially on Sunday - and try not to fall asleep.”

Paul's Discourse To The Ephesian Elders

Acts 20:13-38

INTRODUCTION

1. After “**The Eventful Sunday At Troas**”, Paul continued his third journey...
 - a. Walking from Troas to Assos (about 20 miles) - **Ac 20:13**
 - b. Joining his companions at Assos, and sailing to Mitylene - **Ac 20:14**
 - c. Sailing past Chios, on to Samos, Trogyllium, arriving at Miletus - **Ac 20:15**
2. Paul's plan was to bypass Ephesus...
 - a. So he would not have to spend time in Asia (SW Turkey) - **Ac 20:16**
 - b. Hoping to arrive in Jerusalem in time for Pentecost - **ibid.**

[Though in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, Paul called for the elders of the church in Ephesus to come to Miletus (**Ac 20:17**). When they arrived, Paul spoke to them. In his discourse with the elders...]

I. PAUL REVIEWED HIS HISTORY

A. HIS SERVICE AT EPHEBUS...

1. They knew his manner of life - **Ac 20:18**
2. How he served the Lord with all humility - **Ac 20:19**
3. With many tears and trials amid Jewish persecution - **Ac 20:19**

B. HIS TEACHING AT EPHEBUS...

1. He kept back nothing that was helpful - **Ac 20:20**
2. He taught publicly and house-to-house - **Ac 20:20**
3. He testified to both Jews and Greeks - **Ac 20:21**
4. He taught repentance toward God, and faith toward Christ - **Ac 20:21**

[Having reviewed his history of service and teaching at Ephesus...]

II. PAUL SPOKE OF HIS FUTURE

A. HIS JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM...

1. He was going to Jerusalem “bound in the spirit” - **Ac 20:22**
2. Not knowing what will happen to him there - **Ac 20:22**
3. Except the Spirit has testified in every city that trials and tribulations await him - **Ac 20:23**
4. Yet none of those things moved him - **Ac 20:24**
 - a. For he did not count his life dear to himself
 - b. For he wanted to finish his race with joy
5. He wanted to finish his ministry - **Ac 20:24**
 - a. Received from the Lord Jesus
 - d. To testify to the gospel of the grace of God

B. HIS SUMMARY OF HIS FUTURE...

1. They, among whom he has preached the kingdom, will see his face no more - **Ac 20:25**

2. Yet he is innocent of their blood, for he has proclaimed God’s counsel - **Ac 20:26-27**; cf. **Eze 3:18-20**

[Having thus spoken of his own future...]

III. PAUL WARNED OF THEIR FUTURE

A. TO FULFILL THEIR DUTIES AS ELDERS...

1. Take heed to themselves - **Ac 20:28**; cf. **2Chr 19:6-7**
2. Take heed to the flock among them - **Ac 20:28**; cf. **1Pe 5:1-2**
3. As overseers (bishops) and shepherds (pastors) of the church - **ibid.**
4. The church of God purchased with His own blood - **ibid.**

B. TO BEWARE THE COMING APOSTASY...

1. The that will occur after his (Paul’s) departure - **Ac 20:29**
2. Savage wolves from without will come in, not sparing the flock - **Ac 20:30**
3. Even from within the church men will arise, drawing disciples away - **ibid.**
4. Therefore watch, even as Paul did for three years, night and day - **Ac 20:31**

C. TO ADDRESS THE COMING APOSTASY...

1. Paul commended them **to God**, placing them in His providential care - **Ac 20:32**
2. Paul commended them **to the word of His grace**, able to build them up and give them an inheritance among all the sanctified - **ibid.**
3. By remembering Paul’s own example while with them - **Ac 20:33-34**
 - a. He coveted no one’s silver, gold, apparel
 - b. He provided for his own necessities, and for those with him
 - c. His labor exemplified how to care for those who were weak
4. By remembering that Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” - **Ac 20:35**

[Then Paul and the Ephesian elders knelt down and prayed. The elders wept profusely and kissed Paul, sorrowing that they would see him no more. Then they accompanied him to the ship (**Ac 20:36-38**)...]

CONCLUSION

1. From Paul’s discourse and the tearful departure, we can learn much about...
 - a. The work of an evangelist (both subject and methodology)
 - b. The duties and limitation of elders (limited to shepherding the flock among them)
 - c. The danger of apostasy (from whence it comes, how to address it)
 - d. The importance of selfless service (from Paul’s example, Jesus’ words)
 - e. The love that ought to exist among brethren (an emotional bond)
2. We do well to ask ourselves...
 - a. How do we carry out our work, whatever our duties?
 - b. Do we take the danger of apostasy seriously, looking to God and His word?
 - c. Do we remember what Jesus about the blessedness of giving over receiving?
 - d. Are we developing the kind of love for one another exemplified in our text?

As members of the body of Christ, the church purchased with His own blood, should we not seek to apply and emulate what we can from “**Paul’s Discourse To The Ephesian Elders**”...?

The End Of Paul's Third Journey

Acts 21:1-17

INTRODUCTION

1. Following Paul's discourse with the Ephesian elders (**Ac 20:17-38**)...
 - a. Paul and his companions departed by ship - **Ac 21:1**
 - b. As indicated earlier, Paul wanted to go to Jerusalem - **Ac 20:16**
2. The last leg of Paul's third journey reads like a journal...
 - a. Perhaps from a diary that Luke kept at the time
 - b. Listing the itinerary from Miletus to Jerusalem
 - c. With brief mention of contacts with brethren along the way

[Luke's description contains several things of interest. So let's follow along on...]

I. THE LAST LEG OF THE JOURNEY

A. FROM ASIA TO SYRIA...

1. Sailing from **Miletus** to **Patara** - **Ac 21:1-2**
 - a. By way of **Cos** and **Rhodes**, likely on a small coastal vessel
 - b. At **Patara**, transferring to a ship (a larger seafaring vessel) going to **Phoenicia**
2. Sailing from **Patara** to **Tyre** - **Ac 21:3**
 - a. Bypassing **Cyprus** on the left (west side)
 - b. On to **Syria**, landing at **Tyre**
 - c. Where the ship unloaded its cargo
3. Finding disciples at **Tyre** - **Ac 21:4-6**
 - a. Staying there seven days
 - b. The disciples told Paul through the Spirit not to go to Jerusalem (perhaps not at that moment, but to wait for a few days)
 - c. At the end of the days, Paul and his companions were escorted by the disciples and their families down to the ship where they knelt on the shore and prayed
 - d. Paul and his companions boarded their ship, the disciples of Tyre returned home

B. FROM SYRIA TO JERUSALEM...

1. Sailing from **Tyre** to **Ptolemais** - **Ac 21:7**
 - a. Greeting more brethren at Ptolemais
 - b. Staying there one day
2. From **Ptolemais** to **Caesarea** - **Ac 21:8-14**
 - a. Where they stayed with Philip the evangelist - cf. **Ac 8:40**
 - b. Philip had four virgin daughters who prophesied - cf. **Ac 2:17; 1Co 11:5**
 - c. After many days, the prophet Agabus came down from Judea - cf. **Ac 11:27-28**
 - d. Using Paul's belt to bind his own hands and feet, Agabus foretells what awaits Paul at Jerusalem (a symbolic act commonly used by OT prophets) - cf. **Isa 20:2-4; Eze 4:1-3**
 - e. The brethren plead with Paul not to go to Jerusalem, but Paul is ready to be bound and killed for the name of the Lord Jesus
 - f. The brethren relent, saying "The will of the Lord be done"

3. From **Caesarea to Jerusalem - Ac 21:15-17**
 - a. Accompanied by disciples from Caesarea
 - b. Brought to Mnason of Cyprus (“an early disciple”), with whom they were to lodge
 - c. Gladly received by the brethren in Jerusalem

[Thus ends Paul’s third missionary journey. Was it a successful journey? Consider...]

II. THE IMPACT OF PAUL’S THIRD JOURNEY

A. STRENGTHENING CHURCHES...

1. In Galatia and Phrygia - **Ac 18:23**
2. In Ephesus - **Ac 19:1-40; 20:17-38**
3. In Macedonia, Achaia, Troas, Syria, Caesarea - **Ac 20:1-12; 21:1-17**

B. SPREADING THE GOSPEL...

1. From Ephesus, whereby all Asia heard the Word - **Ac 19:10**
2. Which may have led to churches in Colosse, Hierapolis, Laodicea - **Col 4:12-15**
3. Preaching as far as Illyricum - cf. **Ro 15:19**

C. WRITING NT EPISTLES...

1. During this journey Paul wrote **1st and 2nd Corinthians, Romans**
2. Dealing with current problems, and daily Christian living
3. Motivating Gentile Christians to assist needy Jewish brethren in Jerusalem

CONCLUSION

1. The events of Paul’s third journey also has an impact on issues such as...
 - a. **Baptism**: when there might be a need for re-baptism - **Ac 19:1-5**
 - b. **Church worship**: when and why Christians assemble - **Ac 20:7**
 - c. **Church organization**: the duty and limitations of elders - **Ac 20:28**
 - d. **Apostasy**: its origin and how to deal with it - **Ac 20:29-32**
2. Paul’s arrival in Jerusalem must have been with mixed emotions...
 - a. He was accompanying the contribution for needy Christians in Jerusalem - **Ro 15:25-27**
 - b. He had intentions of going to Rome, and then Spain - **Ro 15:28; cf. Ac 19:21**
 - c. Yet he knew that chains awaited him in Jerusalem - **Ac 20:22,23; 21:11-14**

Indeed, **within twelve days** of his arrival to Jerusalem (cf. **Ac 24:11**), Paul found himself dragged out of the temple, beaten by a mob, almost scourged by Roman soldiers, barely escaped an assassination plot on his life, and imprisoned in Caesarea.

But the Lord Jesus had a plan for Paul:

But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.”

- Ac 23:11

How Paul came to bear witness of Jesus at Rome; well, that is the rest of the story...

Paul's Perplexing Purification

Acts 21:17-26

INTRODUCTION

1. When Paul arrived in Jerusalem at the end of his third journey...
 - a. The brethren received him and his companions gladly - **Ac 21:17**
 - b. The next day, Paul and his companions met with James and the elders - **Ac 21:18**
 - c. He recounted what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry - **Ac 21:19**
 - d. James and the elders glorified the Lord for what Paul reported - **Ac 21:20**
2. But James and the elders had a concern...
 - a. The church at Jerusalem included thousands of Jewish Christians - **Ac 21:20**
 - b. While believers in Christ, they were zealous for the Law (of Moses) - **Ac 21:20**
 - c. They had been informed that Paul taught the Jews among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, not to circumcise their children, nor to walk according to the customs - **Ac 21:21**
 - d. When the assembly (church) meets, they will certainly hear that Paul has come - **Ac 21:22**

[The church leaders proposed a course of action, in which Paul participated, and which has perplexed many since. Let's take a look at "**Paul's Perplexing Purification**", which began with...

I. THE ELDERS' PROPOSAL

A. TO PARTICIPATE IN A VOW...

1. Four men had taken a vow - **Ac 21:23**
 - a. They were likely Jewish Christians (note: "We have four men...")
 - b. It was likely a Nazarite vow - **Num 6:1-21**
2. With such a vow, these four men would:
 - a. Consecrate or separate themselves to the Lord - **Num 6:1-2**
 - b. Abstain from wine, vinegar, grape juice, fresh grapes, raisins - **Num 6:3-4**
 - c. Let no razor come upon their head - **Num 6:5**
 - d. Not go near a dead body, even if members of their family - **Num 6:6-8**
 - e. If defiled by a dead body, undergo an eight day purification - **Num 6:9-12**
3. At the completion of such a vow, offer the following at the tabernacle (temple):
 - a. One year-old male lamb as a burnt offering - **Num 6:13-14**
 - b. One year-old ewe lamb as a sin offering - **Num 6:14**
 - c. One ram as a peace offering - **Num 6:15**
 - d. A basket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and a grain offering with their drink offerings - **Num 6:15**
 - e. Which the priest at the tabernacle will use to help complete the vow - **Num 6:16-21**
4. In particular, for Paul to participate by:
 - a. Being purified with the men - **Ac 21:24**
 - 1) Not as the vow keepers (Nazarite vows were 30 days minimum)
 - 2) Probably as a Jew defiled by traveling in Gentile nations
 - b. Paying their expenses so they can shave their heads - **ibid.**

B. TO DEMONSTRATE TO ALL...

1. That what they heard about Paul was not true - **Ac 21:24**
2. That Paul also walked orderly and kept the law - **ibid.**
3. That it was Gentile believers (not Jewish Christians) who were told:
 - a. They did not have to keep the law - **Ac 21:25**
 - b. They should keep themselves from things offered to idols, blood, things strangled, and sexual immorality - **ibid.**; cf. **Ac 15:19-29**

[Such was the counsel of James and the elders of the church in Jerusalem, hoping to dispel false rumors that had been spread about Paul's ministry among the Jews during his journeys. This leads us to...]

II. THE APOSTLE'S PARTICIPATION

A. PAUL AGREES WITH THE PROPOSAL...

1. The next day he enters the temple with the four men - **Ac 21:26**
2. Having been purified with them - **ibid.**
3. To announce the completion of the days of purification - **ibid.**
4. At which time (in seven days) an offering should be made for each one of them - **ibid.**

B. VIEWS OF PAUL'S PARTICIPATION...

1. Paul acted ignorantly, not fully aware that the Law was no longer binding
 - a. Yet Paul had already preached "the whole counsel of God" - **Ac 20:27**
 - b. Paul had already penned **Romans, 1st & 2nd Corinthians, and Galatians**, which clearly reveal Paul was not ignorant
2. Paul acted hypocritically, like Peter did at Antioch - cf. **Ga 2:11-13**
 - a. Yet Paul had endured so much mistreatment already - cf. **2Co 11:23-29**
 - b. Paul was willing to be bound and to die for Christ - cf. **Ac 20:22-24; 21:13**
3. Paul acted consistently (my view), with what he taught elsewhere
 - a. The Law was no longer in force - cf. **Ro 7:1-6; Ga 3:24-25**
 - b. Justification comes by faith in Christ, not by the Law of Moses - **Ga 2:16**
 - c. Yet a Jewish Christian (like Paul) could observe the customs of the Law - cf. **Ac 16:1-3; 18:18; 1Co 9:19-20**
 - d. A Jewish Christian could therefore observe elements of the Law provided:
 - 1) He did not do so seeking justification, for that comes only through the sacrifice of Christ (any sacrifices offered would be remembered as shadows of the true) - **Ga 5:4**
 - 2) He did not bind it upon others, especially Gentiles - e.g., **Ga 2:3-5**

CONCLUSION

1. It may be that behavior like Paul's was permitted during a period of transition...
 - a. In which the Law and the First Covenant was obsolete and thus growing old - **He 8:13**
 - b. The New Covenant began when the Law was nailed to the cross, but the Old Covenant was definitively finished when the temple and its sacrifices came to an end in 70 A.D.
2. In any case, through Paul's teaching we know that...
 - a. Christ is the end of the Law to those who believe - **Ro 10:4**
 - b. That any who seek to be justified by the Law are fallen from grace - **Ga 5:4**

In our next study, we shall consider what happened while Paul was in the temple carrying out the proposal of James and the elders in Jerusalem...

Paul's Arrest In Jerusalem

Acts 21:27-40

INTRODUCTION

1. As Paul was traveling to Jerusalem nearing the end of his third journey...
 - a. He knew that chains and tribulation awaited him - **Ac 20:22-23**
 - b. That the Jews would deliver him to the Gentiles - **Ac 21:10-11**
2. Even so, he arrived at Jerusalem...
 - a. With the contribution for needy Christians in Jerusalem - **Ro 15:25-27**; cf. **1Co 16:1-4**
 - b. Warmly greeted by the brethren, the elders, and James - **Ac 21:17-19**
 - c. Agreeing to reach out to Jewish Christians who had been misinformed - **Ac 21:20-26**

[It was in the course of carrying out the advice of James and the elders in Jerusalem that the chains and tribulations foretold began to be fulfilled with...]

I. PAUL'S ARREST IN JERUSALEM

A. THE RIOT IN THE TEMPLE...

1. Prompted by Jews from Asia who saw Paul in the temple - **Ac 21:27**
 - a. Diaspora Jews were often known for their great zeal for the temple
 - b. Paul had already experienced trials from Jews in Asia - cf. **Ac 20:19**
2. Making false accusations against him - **Ac 21:28-29**
 - a. Similar to charges made Diaspora Jews against Stephen - **Ac 6:9-14**
 - b. But also accusing Paul of bringing a Gentile into the temple (a capital offense)
3. Disturbing the crowd who seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple - **Ac 21:30**
 - a. Either the temple itself, the court of men, or the court of women
 - b. Out into the court of the Gentiles

B. THE RESCUE BY THE ROMANS...

1. As the crowd sought to kill Paul, the Roman commander received word - **Ac 21:31**
 - a. On the east side of the temple was the Antonia Fortress, named after Mark Anthony
 - b. Housing Roman soldiers who could quickly assist temple police with crowd control
2. The commander sent soldiers that stopped the crowd from beating Paul - **Ac 21:32**
 - a. At least two centurions and their contingents
 - b. That would be at least 200 soldiers
3. The commander bound Paul, sought to determine his identify, what he had done - **Ac 21:33**
 - a. Note that Paul was bound with two chains (likely for hands and feet)
 - b. Thus fulfilling the prophecy of Agabus - cf. **Ac 21:10-11**
4. Unable to ascertain the truth, he commanded Paul to be taken to the barracks - **Ac 21:34**
 - a. The commander wanted to know who Paul was and what he had done
 - b. But the crowd did not even agree why Paul was worthy of death
5. Paul had to be carried up the stairs due to the violence of the mob - **Ac 21:35**
 - a. Remember that Paul had already been beaten by the mob - cf. **Ac 21:32**
 - b. Together with hustle and bustle of the mob, Paul would need assistance
6. The mob cried out "Away with him!" - **Ac 21:36**

- a. So the crowd called out when it was Jesus before Pilate - cf. **Jn 19:15**
- b. I can't help but wonder what Paul thought, especially if then he had part of the crowd

C. THE PERMISSION TO SPEAK...

1. Paul asked to speak with the Roman commander - **Ac 21:37**
 - a. Paul spoke in educated Greek which surprised the commander
 - b. Paul also spoke with great politeness, also surprising given the circumstances
2. The commander assumed Paul to be an Egyptian insurrectionist - **Ac 21:38**
 - a. Three years before, an Egyptian led a large band of assassins out to Mt. Olivet
 - b. He predicted the city walls would fall flat; Felix sent troops to disperse them
3. Identifying himself as a Jew from Tarsus, Paul asked to speak to the people - **Ac 21:39**
 - a. Tarsus in Cilicia was not an insignificant city
 - b. Again, Paul's request to speak is made with politeness
4. Granted permission, from the stairs Paul begins to speak - **Ac 21:40**
 - a. Motion with his hands, silencing the people
 - b. Speaking to them in Hebrew (or Aramaic)

[Paul's speech before the mob continues into the next chapter which we hope to examine in our next lesson. But in reflecting on the events we have just studied, allow me to offer some...]

II. OBSERVATIONS ABOUT HIS ARREST

A. THE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST PAUL...

1. Were made by Jews from Asia - **Ac 21:27**
 - a. Who had possibly clashed with Paul in Ephesus - cf. **Ac 20:19**
 - b. Who likely were biased against Paul and his doctrine - cf. **Ac 19:8-10**
 2. Who misrepresented what Paul actually taught - **Ac 21:28**
 - a. That he taught against the Jewish people, the Law of Moses, and the temple
 - b. When he taught Jesus was Israel's hope and fulfillment - cf. **Ro 9:1-5; 10:1-4**
 3. Were false, based on faulty assumptions - **Ac 21:29**
 - a. Paul had been seen in the city with Trophimus the Ephesian
 - b. His accusers assumed that Paul brought Trophimus (a Gentile) into the temple
- **Those with bias and an agenda often resort to half-truths and mistruths to mislead and manipulate others**

B. THE MOB MENTALITY AGAINST PAUL...

1. The reaction of the people is a perfect example of mob mentality
 - a. Also known as herd mentality, or the bandwagon effect
 - b. When people are influenced by their peers, or what they see others doing
 - c. Especially in large gatherings, such as political rallies, concerts, sporting events
 - d. They are swayed by reasoning, "if many believe so, it is so"
 - e. Also known as "appeal to the people" (argumentum ad populum)
 2. Some well known examples of mob mentality
 - a. The French Revolution's Reign of Terror
 - b. Hitler's rise to power and the Holocaust
 - c. Popular urban legends spread via the Internet
- **People are easily swayed when they are in large crowds, or give credence to the idea that the majority is always right**

C. THE COMMANDER'S SEARCH FOR TRUTH...

1. Later identified as Claudius Lysius - cf. **Ac 23:26**
 2. In the midst of the turmoil, he determined to know the truth - **Ac 21:33**
 3. He was willing to give up first impressions upon learning the truth - **Ac 21:37-39**
 4. He was willing to let Paul tell his side of the story - **Ac 21:40**
- **Like Cornelius (Ac 10:33), Claudius was willing to listen before passing judgment**

CONCLUSION

1. Paul's arrest in Jerusalem shows people at their worst, and at their best...
 - a. The worst - allowing religious prejudice and mob mentality to attack the innocent
 - b. The best - allowing search for truth to change one's opinion and open to more information
2. How can we avoid mob mentality, being misled and manipulated by those with bias...?
 - a. Be more like the Jews of Berea than the Jews from Asia - cf. **Ac 17:11**
 - b. Seek to understand what others believe, or are saying
 - c. Make truth your priority, think for yourself, don't just follow the crowds
 - d. Remember what happened in the flood, in the wilderness, and in the holocaust

The likelihood is that the majority is always wrong, for as Jesus said...

“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.” - Mt 7:13-14

Paul's Defense Before The Mob

Acts 22:1-21

INTRODUCTION

1. We left Paul barely surviving a beating at the hands of an angry mob - **Ac 21:30-36**
2. When he appealed to the Roman commander who saved him to grant him an opportunity to speak to the people - **Ac 21:37-39**

[Paul was given the opportunity, and was able to quiet down the mob with a motion of his hands (**Ac 21:40**). The mob quieted down further when Paul spoke in Hebrew (**Ac 22:1-2**)...]

I. PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE THE MOB

A. HIS EARLY LIFE...

1. A Jew born in Tarsus of Cilicia - **Ac 22:3**
2. Brought up in Jerusalem - **Ac 22:3**
 - a. At the feet of Gamaliel - cf. **Ac 5:34**
 - b. Taught according to the strictness of the Law (i.e., a Pharisee) - cf. **Php 3:5**
 - c. Zealous toward God, just like they were - cf. **Php 3:6**
3. His persecution of the church - **Ac 22:4-5**
 - a. Persecuted this "Way" to death - cf. **Ac 26:9-11**
 - b. Imprisoning men and women - cf. **Ac 8:3**
 - c. To which the high priest and council could bear witness - cf. **Ac 9:1-2**
 - d. From whom he received letters to synagogues in Damascus to arrest those of the "Way" and bring them to Jerusalem - cf. **Ac 9:1-2**

B. HIS CONVERSION...

1. On the road to Damascus - **Ac 22:6-11**
 - a. Near Damascus, about noon, a great light from heaven shone around him
 - 1) Falling to the ground, he heard a voice: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"
 - 2) Paul answered, "Who are you, Lord?"
 - 3) The voice answered, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting."
 - b. Those who were with him were afraid
 - 1) They saw the light
 - 2) They did not hear (understand) the voice - cf. **Ac 9:7**
 - c. The conversation continued between Paul and Jesus
 - 1) Paul: "What shall I do, Lord?"
 - 2) Jesus: "Arise and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do."
 - d. Blinded by the light, Paul was led by the hand into Damascus
2. In the city of Damascus - **Ac 22:12-16**
 - a. The arrival of Ananias - cf. **Ac 9:10-14**
 - 1) A devout man according to the law
 - 2) Having a good testimony of all the Jews who dwelt in Damascus
 - 3) Who healed Paul of his blindness

- b. The message from Ananias - cf. **Ac 9:15-16**
 - 1) “The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth.”
 - 2) “For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.”
- c. The command from Ananias - cf. **Ac 9:6**
 - 1) “And now why are you waiting?”
 - 2) “Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

C. HIS VISION...

- 1. Of the Lord, on a later visit to Jerusalem - **Ac 22:17**
- 2. Of the Lord, telling him to flee Jerusalem - **Ac 22:18-20**
 - a. For they would not receive his testimony concerning the Lord
 - b. Even though Paul was telling them his persecution of the church
 - c. Even though Paul participated in the stoning of Stephen
- 3. Of the Lord, telling him to go to the Gentiles - **Ac 22:21**

[At this point the mob refused to listen further, and Paul had to be taken away by the Roman soldiers (**Ac 22:22-24**). Our next study will continue with what happened next, but for now...]

II. SOME OBSERVATIONS

A. REGARDING HIS DEFENSE...

- 1. Note **Paul’s politeness** under trying circumstances
 - a. We saw earlier his polite appeal to the commander - **Ac 21:37**
 - b. Now he addresses a mob wanting to kill him as “brethren and fathers” - **Ac 22:1**
 - c. Demonstrating what he later taught others - cf. **Col 4:6; 2Ti 2:24-26**
- 2. Note **Paul’s purpose** in recounting his conversion
 - a. In the context of his earlier history, it was to explain his actions
 - b. It was not “witnessing” (telling your conversion story) as often done today
 - c. In Acts, witnessing is always in regards to Jesus’ resurrection - cf. **Ac 1:8,22; 2:32**
 - d. No one ever told their “conversion story” as a method of evangelism in the NT
 - e. Such “witnessing” encourages one to believe in Jesus based on another’s experience rather than on apostolic testimony concerning Jesus’ resurrection - cf. **Jn 17:20**
 - f. Such “witnessing” calls for people to base their faith on subjective and often exaggerated stories rather than in the objective eye-witness testimony of the apostles!

B. REGARDING HIS CONVERSION...

- 1. We learn that **Paul was not saved on the road** to Damascus
 - a. Perhaps converted in the sense of having his view of Jesus changed
 - b. But after arriving in Damascus, he was still in his sins! - **Ac 22:16**
 - c. Despite three days of praying and fasting (faith and repentance) - cf. **Ac 9:9,11**
- 2. We learn that **Paul’s sins were washed away in baptism**
 - a. As the Lord had Ananias tell Paul “what to do” - **Ac 22:16**; cf. **Ac 9:6**
 - b. As the Spirit-led Peter told both Jews and Gentiles - **Ac 2:38; 10:48**
 - c. Jesus’ blood washes away sin at the point of baptism - **Ro 6:3-7; Col 2:12-13**
- 3. We learn **how one calls upon the name of the Lord** (**Ac 22:16**)
 - a. One is saved by calling upon the name of the Lord - **Ac 2:21; Ro 10:13**
 - b. Peter told people how to call upon his name: via baptism! - **Ac 2:38**
 - c. Peter wrote that baptism saves: as an appeal to God for a clean conscience - **1Pe 3:21**

CONCLUSION

1. Paul's defense before the mob is the first of several; he will defend himself...
 - a. Next, before the Sanhedrin council (**Ac 23**)
 - b. After that, before two Roman governors (Felix, **Ac 24**, Festus, **Ac 25**)
 - c. Then, before Herod Agrippa (**Ac 26**)
 - d. Ultimately, before the Roman emperor Nero

2. Luke's record of Paul's defenses may have served several purposes...
 - a. To help whoever ("most excellent Theophilus"? **Lk 2:4**) handled Paul's appeal to Nero
 - b. To help all better understand Paul's conversion and ministry as an apostle of Christ

As we continue in our study of Acts, may such understanding serve us well regarding our own conversion and ministry as servants of Christ...!

Paul's Roman Citizenship

Acts 22:22-30

INTRODUCTION

1. As Christians, we enjoy a special citizenship...
 - a. Our citizenship is in heaven - **Php 3:20**
 - b. We are fellow citizens with the saints and members of God's family - **Ep 2:19**
 - c. As such, we are in one sense pilgrims and sojourners in this world - **1Pe 2:11**
2. But we also have an earthly citizenship...
 - a. As citizens of an earthly nation in this world
 - b. Thus we enjoy "dual citizenship," if you will

[At times, this "dual citizenship" works to our advantage, as it did for Paul when his life was in jeopardy in Jerusalem. Turning to our text (**Ac 22:22-30**), let's consider some things about...]

I. PAUL'S ROMAN CITIZENSHIP

A. HIS LIFE THREATENED...

1. When Paul defended himself before the mob in Jerusalem...
 - a. They listened to him quietly until he mentioned being sent to the Gentiles - **Ac 22:1-2,22**
 - b. When they again called for Paul to be put to death - **Ac 22:22-23**; cf. **Ac 21:36**
2. The Roman commander, determining to know the truth...
 - a. Ordered Paul back into the barracks - **Ac 22:24**
 - b. Prepared to have Paul examined by scourging - **ibid.**
 - c. A form of torture involving beating with leather thongs in which were inserted rough pieces of bone or metal

B. HIS LIFE SPARED...

1. About to be scourged, Paul asked the centurion a question...
 - a. Is it lawful to scourge a Roman who has not been condemned? - **Ac 22:25**
 - b. Prompting the centurion to go to the commander, urging caution - **Ac 22:26**
 - c. The centurion's caution reflects the magistrates' fear at Philippi - cf. **Ac 16:35-39**
2. The commander questioned Paul about his Roman citizenship...
 - a. Paul confirmed that he was a Roman - **Ac 22:27**
 - b. The commander boasted of his purchased citizenship - **Ac 22:28**
 - c. Paul claimed to be a born citizen, evidently a higher status of citizenship
3. The response to Paul's claim was immediate...
 - a. Those about to scourge him withdrew from Paul - **Ac 22:29**
 - b. The commander was afraid for having bound a Roman - **ibid.**
4. Knowing that Paul was a Roman citizen, the commander...
 - a. Was determined to know why Paul was accused by the Jews - **Ac 22:30**
 - b. Arranged for a legal hearing before the Sanhedrin council - **ibid.**

[Paul certainly used his Roman citizenship to his advantage. **But what are our duties as Christians in regards to our earthly citizenship?** Let's use this opportunity to review what they are...]

II. OUR EARTHLY CITIZENSHIP

A. THE DUTY TO OBEY...

1. As taught by Paul - **Ro 13:1-5**
2. As taught by Peter - **1Pe 2:13-14**
3. Whenever there is a conflict, we must obey God rather than man - **Ac 5:29**

B. THE DUTY TO PAY...

1. To pay taxes, customs - **Ro 13:6-7**
2. To pay respect toward authorities - **Ro 13:7; 1Pe 2:17**
3. Whether we approve their political or personal behavior (e.g., Nero)

C. THE DUTY TO PRAY...

1. For kings and all in authority - **1Ti 2:1-2**
2. That we might lead quiet, peaceful, godly lives - **1Ti 2:2; 1Th 4:11**
3. Christians who pray in this way serve their country in very powerful way!
 - a. God does not hear the prayers of the wicked - **1Pe 3:12**
 - b. If not for the righteous, this world would be in dire straits!
4. Think of Christians as spiritual chaplains, serving their country as military chaplains serve their country ministering to their fellow soldiers

CONCLUSION

1. As Christians living in the world, **we have an earthly citizenship...**
 - a. As citizens of the nations granted by birth or other means
 - b. We must be careful to fulfill our God-given duties as citizens
 - c. And as did Paul, utilize our rights as citizens when they serve God's purposes
2. As Christians living in the world, **we have a heavenly citizenship...**
 - a. That calls us to be spiritual priests making intercession for all men
 - b. That calls us to be peacemakers as we serve the Prince of peace
 - c. That cautions us to place our heavenly citizenship over our earthly one

For in the end, **we are still pilgrims and sojourners.** But properly discerned and lived, our “**dual citizenship**” can be a blessing for both God and country...!

Paul's Defense Before The Council

Acts 23:1-10

INTRODUCTION

1. Previously, we studied **Paul's defense before the mob**...
 - a. Permitted by the Roman commander seeking the truth about Paul
 - b. Which ended with an outburst by the mob against Paul
2. We now have the opportunity to consider **Paul's defense before the council**...
 - a. Arranged by the Roman commander still trying to find out why Paul was so hated
 - b. Which quickly ended with dissension among the council members themselves

[While Paul's defense before the council did not help the Roman commander much, several things are mentioned that are helpful to us as Christians today. Let's first review the text (**Ac 23:1-10**)...]

I. PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE THE COUNCIL

A. ANGERED THE HIGH PRIEST...

1. Paul claimed a clear conscience - **Ac 23:1**
2. This angered Ananias the High Priest, who had Paul struck - **Ac 23:2**
3. Paul responded, not knowing that Ananias was the High Priest - **Ac 23:3**
 - a. "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall!"
 - b. "For you sit to judge me according to the law, and do you command me to be struck contrary to the law?"
4. When informed that Ananias was High Priest, Paul was conciliatory - **Ac 23:4-5**
 - a. "I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest..."
 - b. "...for it is written, 'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'"

B. DIVIDED THE SADDUCEES AND PHARISEES...

1. Seeing Sadducees and Pharisees, Paul identified himself as a Pharisee - **Ac 23:6; Php 3:5**
 - a. "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee"
 - b. "Concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!"
2. A dispute then arose between the Sadducees and the Pharisees - **Ac 23:7-9**
 - a. Because they disagreed about such things as the resurrection, angels, and spirits
 - b. The Pharisees sided with Paul, defending Him

[The dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees became great, and once again the Roman commander feared for Paul's life, sending soldiers to take Paul back into the barracks (**Ac 23:10**). At this point, allow me to make...]

II. SOME OBSERVATIONS

A. REGARDING PAUL'S CONSCIENCE...

1. Paul had a clear conscience about his past - **Ac 23:1**
 - a. Something he strove to do - **Ac 24:16; 2Ti 1:3**
 - b. Even though he had persecuted Christians - **Ac 26:9-11**

2. This illustrates that following your conscience is not always a sure guide
 - a. For your conscience is like a clock: it is correct only if properly set
 - b. If misinformed, your conscience could mislead you time and again
3. It is imperative that we properly inform our conscience
 - b. Not with opinions and doctrines of others (including self) - **Pr 14:12; 28:26; Jer 10:23**
 - b. But with the truth of God's Word - **Ps 119:104-105**

B. REGARDING PAUL'S OUTBURST...

1. When commanded to be struck on the mouth, Paul rebuked the high priest - **Ac 23:2-3**
 - a. "God will strike you, you white-washed wall!" (i.e., a hypocrite) - cf. **Mt 23:37**
 - b. "For you to sit to judge me according to the law, and do you command me to be struck contrary to the law?" - cf. **Lev 19:15**
2. While Paul did not know (or recognize) it was the high priest, his words were prophetic
 - a. Josephus depicted Ananias as one of the very worst of the high priests, known for his pro-Roman sentiments, his extreme cruelty, and his greed - **John B. Polhill (NAC)**
 - b. Less than ten years later, Ananias came to an untimely end at the hand of Jewish freedom fighters - **ibid.**
3. Informed of Ananias' identity as High Priest, Paul quickly apologized - **Ac 23:4-5**
 - a. The Law taught that one should not speak evil of a ruler - **Exo 22:28; Ec 10:20**
 - b. The New Testament teaches likewise - cf. **2Pe 2:10; Jude 8-10**
4. Paul's outburst is difficult to justify, but consider two possibilities:
 - a. He simply lost his temper (as most would do), but quickly brought it under control
 - b. He was moved by the Spirit with righteous indignation to pronounce judgment on the hypocritical Ananias
5. In any case, we should look to his teaching rather than his example - cf. **2Ti 2:24-26**

C. REGARDING PAUL'S HOPE...

1. Paul spoke of the hope and resurrection of the dead - **Ac 23:8**
2. He often connected the resurrection of the dead to our hope - **Ac 24:15; 26:6-8**
3. He wrote of the redemption of our body as the hope for which we are saved - **Ro 8:23-25**
4. He wrote the resurrection of the dead is a crucial element of our faith - **1Co 15:12-19,50-54**
5. Thus the resurrection of the body is a crucial element of the "one hope" - cf. **Ep 4:4**

CONCLUSION

1. From Paul's defense before the council, we can learn important things about...
 - a. The importance, yet limitation as a guide, of having a good conscience before God
 - b. The sin of speaking evil about those who rule over us
 - c. The connection between our hope in Christ and the bodily resurrection from the dead
2. How then do we compare with the apostle Paul...?
 - a. Do we strive for a good conscience, making sure that it is in harmony with God's will?
 - b. Are we careful not to speak evil about those in positions of authority?
 - c. Is the resurrection of our bodies a strong element of our hope that we have in Christ?

One day we will have to give a defense, not before a council of men, but before the judgment seat of Christ (**2Co 5:10**).

Are we giving serious thought as to how we will be judged at that time...?

Paul's Transfer To Caesarea

Acts 23:11-35

INTRODUCTION

1. After Paul's defense before the council...
 - a. Once again his life is threatened - **Ac 23:10**
 - b. Once again he is saved by the Roman soldiers - cf. **Ac 21:30-36; 22:22-23**
2. The following night the Lord appeared to Paul...
 - a. Telling him, "Be of good cheer" (i.e., take courage) - **Ac 23:11**
 - b. Promising him, "For as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome." - **ibid.**

[With such an encouraging vision, Paul could take great comfort knowing what the Lord promised. But it would not happen soon. It would take at least two years, starting with...]

I. PAUL'S TRANSFER TO CAESAREA

A. PRECIPITATED BY A PLOT...

1. A foolish plot - **Ac 23:12-15**
 - a. Forty Jews bound themselves with an oath not to eat nor drink until they killed Paul
 - b. They conspired with the chief priests and elders to have Paul brought before the council
 - c. Planning to kill Paul before he arrived
2. A failed plot - **Ac 23:16-22**
 - a. Overheard by Paul's sister's son, who then told Paul
 - b. Paul had a centurion take his nephew to the commander
 - c. Informed of the plot, the commander sent Paul's nephew away

B. PROTECTED BY THE ROMANS...

1. With a Roman guard - **Ac 23:23-24,31-32**
 - a. Two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, two hundred spearmen
 - b. Leaving Jerusalem at the third hour of the night (9pm)
 - c. With the seventy horsemen escorting Paul beyond Antiparis
2. With a Roman letter - **Ac 23:25-30,33-35**
 - a. Written by Claudius Lysias (Roman commander) to Felix (Roman governor)
 - b. Read by Felix, who arranged another hearing for Paul and his accusers

[Until the hearing, Paul was detained in Herod's Praetorium (**Ac 23:35**). We will read his defense before Felix in our next study. But for now...]

II. SOME OBSERVATIONS

A. GOD'S PROVIDENCE...

1. We find in Paul's life an example of God's providence
2. Similar to what we read of Joseph's life in the book of Genesis - cf. **Gen 37-50**
3. In both cases, God made a promise - cf. **Ac 23:11; Gen 37:5-11**

4. The promises were fulfilled, though it took years with intervening challenges
5. Similarly, God may answer our prayers, but it may not be when and how we expect
6. Like Paul and Joseph, we must place our trust in God that He will provide what we need

B. MAN'S FAILINGS...

1. Until he wrote the letter to Felix, the Roman commander was commendable in his actions
 - a. He used his forces to protect Paul's life on several occasions
 - b. He made several efforts to learn the truth about who Paul was
2. But in writing to Felix, the Roman commander lied!
 - a. He claimed to have rescued Paul knowing him to be a Roman - **Ac 23:27**
 - b. He did not know Paul was a Roman until almost scourging him - **Ac 22:24-29**
3. He apparently was trying to protect himself, or trying to save face
 - a. Twisting the truth, making himself look good
 - b. A common weakness and failing among men
4. Compare that to the godly character described by David in his psalm
 - a. Who speaks the truth in his heart - **Ps 15:2**
 - b. Who swears to his own hurt and does not change - **Ps 15:4**
5. Why we must put our trust in the Lord, not man! - **Ps 146:3-7; Jer 17:5-6**

CONCLUSION

1. In who do you place your trust..?
 - a. In man, who often lies to protect himself?
 - b. Or in God, who cannot lie! - **He 6:18; Tit 1:2**
2. In trusting God, do you make allowances for His providential workings...?
 - a. Understanding that He does not always fulfill his promises in the way we expect?
 - b. Remembering that as God, His ways and thoughts are not like our own? - **Isa 55:8-9**

Paul's life, like that of Joseph, is a reminder that while God keeps His promises, it may involve much time and many experiences before they are fully realized. Even so...

*Seek the LORD while He may be found,
Call upon Him while He is near.
Let the wicked forsake his way,
And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
Let him return to the LORD,
And He will have mercy on him;
And to our God,
For He will abundantly pardon.
- Isa 55:6-7*

Paul's Defense Before Felix

Acts 24:1-27

INTRODUCTION

1. Transferred from Jerusalem to Caesarea...
 - a. Paul faced Ananias the high priest and elders from the council once again
 - b. This time, before Felix the Roman governor - **Ac 24:1-27**
2. Antonius Felix became procurator of Judea in A. D. 52...
 - a. He remained in office until A.D. 60, when recalled by Nero - **HIBD**
 - b. Tacitus and Josephus paint Felix as a brutal, incompetent politician - **ibid.**

[In our text, we learn Felix had many opportunities to listen to Paul. But he failed to make a decision with regard to his case, and with regard to Paul's message of the gospel. Let's first note...]

I. THE CHARGES

A. THE ANTAGONISTS ARRIVE...

1. The chief priest and elders arrive - **Ac 24:1**
2. Tertullus, an orator, brought along - **ibid.**

B. THEY MAKE THEIR CASE...

1. Tertullus began with great praise to Felix - **Ac 24:2-4**
2. Charges were then levied against Paul - **Ac 24:5-6**
 - a. "A plague"
 - b. "A creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world"
 - c. "A ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes"
 - d. "He tried to profane the temple"
3. Tertullus gave his timeline of events - **Ac 24:7-8**
 - a. The Jews had seized Paul
 - b. They wanted to judge him according to their law
 - c. The commander took Paul out of their hands "with great violence"
 - d. He commanded them to appear before Felix to make their accusations
4. The attending Jews agreed with Tertullus' accusations - **Ac 24:9**

[With the charges made against Paul, he is allowed to speak in his own defense...]

II. THE DEFENSE

A. PAUL PERMITTED TO SPEAK...

1. With a nod, Felix motioned for Paul to speak - **Ac 24:10**
2. Paul acknowledged Felix to have judged Israel for many years - **ibid.**
3. Thus Paul was happy to speak for himself - **ibid.**

B. PAUL REVIEWED THE EVENTS...

1. It had only been twelve days since Paul went to Jerusalem to worship - **Ac 24:11**

2. They had not found Paul in the temple disputing in the temple - **Ac 24:12**
3. Nor had he incited the crowd, either in the synagogues or in the city - **ibid.**
4. His accusers could not prove the charges brought against him - **Ac 24:13**

C. PAUL CONFESSED HIS FAITH...

1. According to the Way, which they call a sect, he worshiped God - **Ac 24:14**
2. Believing all things written in the Law and the Prophets - **ibid.**
3. He had hope in the resurrection of the dead, as did they - **Ac 24:15**
4. He strove to have a conscience without offense toward God and men - **Ac 24:16**

D. PAUL CONCLUDED HIS DEFENSE...

1. After many years he came to bring alms and offerings to his nation - **Ac 24:17**
2. Jews of Asia found him purified in the temple, with no mob or tumult - **Ac 24:18**
3. If said Jews had objections against him, they should be before Felix - **Ac 24:19**
4. Those present could only bring one charge - **Ac 24:20-21; cf. Ac 23:6**
 - a. That in the council standing before them he cried out with one statement
 - b. “Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day.”

[That statement is the only thing those present could attest. The charges made by Tertullus were based on hearsay and without proof. Having heard both sides, Felix made his decision: to wait...]

III. THE PROCRASTINATION

A. FELIX ADJOURNED THE PROCEEDINGS...

1. With a “more accurate knowledge of the Way” - **Ac 24:22**
2. Delaying until Lysias the commander came down - **ibid.**
3. Paul kept by a centurion, with unlimited visitation and provisions by friends - **Ac 24:23**

B. FELIX HAD MANY MORE OPPORTUNITIES...

1. At first with his wife Drusilla (who was Jewish) present - **Ac 24:24-25**
 - a. Drusilla was the youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa I - **HIBD**
 - 1) She had been married to King Aziz of Emesa
 - 2) With the aid of Atomos, a magician of Cyprus, Felix won her away from her husband
 - 3) Her son (and possibly she herself) died in when Mt. Vesuvius erupted in 79 A.D.
 - b. They heard Paul “concerning faith in Christ”
 - c. Paul reasoned about “righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come”
 - d. Felix was afraid, and sent Paul away until “a convenient time”
2. Then often, over a period of two years - **Ac 24:26-27**
 - a. Felix hoped for a bribe from Paul to release him
 - b. Thus he sent for Paul often and conversed with him
 - c. Finally, as a favor to the Jews, he left Paul bound when succeeded by Festus

CONCLUSION

1. It is sad to consider the character of Felix (both immoral and incompetent)
2. He had ample opportunity to learn the truth and obey it, but kept putting it off

His procrastination led to his ultimate downfall. Let us beware lest we wait for “a convenient time”!

The Way Which They Call A Sect

Acts 24:14

INTRODUCTION

1. We live in a religiously divided world...
 - a. There are various world religions (Judaism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism)
 - b. Each of those religions have many divisions within themselves
 - c. Among so-called “Christianity” there are more than 38,000 denominations
2. New Testament Christians are opposed to denominationalism...
 - a. Because Jesus prayed for unity among believers - **Jn 17:20-23**
 - b. Because Paul condemned religious division - **1Co 1:10-13**

[Yet despite efforts to be simply Christians, non-denominational in any sense of the word, the world in which we live wants to define and categorize every group of Christians as a denomination.

When we disdain denominationalism and yet are viewed as a denomination, what can we do? Perhaps we can learn from how the apostle Paul handled a similar situation in his day...]

I. THE WAY WHICH THEY CALL A SECT

A. THE SECT OF THE NAZARENES...

1. Paul was accused of being “a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes” - **Ac 24:5**
2. In the beginning, many Gentiles and Jews considered Christians a sect of Judaism
3. They were called “Nazarenes” by enemies because they followed Jesus of Nazareth
4. It was not a label the Christians used to describe themselves
5. They considered themselves the promised fulfillment of Judaism, not another branch of it

B. DESIGNATIONS OF THE CHURCH...

1. Collectively, followers of Jesus Christ were called by various terms
 - a. The church of Christ, the church of God - **Ro 16:16; 1Co 1:2**
 - b. The body of Christ, the kingdom of Christ - **Ep 1:22,23; Col 1:13**
 - c. The temple of God, the bride of Christ - **1Co 3:16; Re 19:7-8**

-- **Note that not one of these terms was used as some exclusive, official name**
2. In the early days of the church, they were also known as people of “The Way”
 - a. Saul of Tarsus persecuted those of “the Way” - **Ac 9:2; 22:4**
 - b. Others spoke evil of “the Way” - **Ac 19:9**
 - c. At Ephesus there was a riot about “the Way” - **Ac 19:23**
 - d. Paul confessed to worship God according to “the Way” - **Ac 24:14**
 - e. Felix the governor gained accurate knowledge about “the Way” - **Ac 24:22**

-- **Likely called “The Way” because they followed Jesus as the Way - Jn 14:6**

C. PAUL’S RESPONSE TO THE CHARGE...

1. It is interesting how Paul responded to being called a “sect” - **Ac 24:5**
2. He acknowledged that what his accusers called a sect was how he worshiped God - **Ac 24:14**
3. Yet he did not feel it necessary to explain to those with a sectarian mindset how he was not a

- member of a sect
- 4. Instead, he used the opportunity to confess his faith in the Scriptures and hope in God concerning the resurrection - **Ac 24:14-16**
- 5. In other words, he focused his response on the gospel of Christ, rather than on their misconceptions about Christians being a sect of Judaism

[Perhaps Paul's response can offer guidance on how Christians who are non-denominational can respond to those who want to label us as a denomination...]

II. THE WAY WHICH THEY CALL A DENOMINATION

A. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST TODAY...

1. There are thousand of churches of Christ around the world - **Ro 16:16**
2. They are made up of disciples of Jesus, and are simply Christians - **Ac 11:26**
3. The congregations are autonomous and independent of one another - **Ac 20:28; 1Pe 5:1-2**
4. They abide in the apostles' doctrine, using the New Testament as their guide in matters of worship, work, and organization - **Ac 2:42**
5. Their goal is to abide in the doctrine of Christ, the faith once for all delivered to the saints - **2Jn 1:9; Jude 3**
6. Yet many in denominational churches view such churches as simply another denomination; e.g., the "Church of Christ" denomination
7. This concerns many Christians, who do not want to be viewed as another denomination

B. DESIGNATIONS OF THE CHURCH TODAY...

1. As indicated above there, there are various terms, not one exclusive name
2. The expression "Church of God" is scriptural, but not expedient
 - a. Sadly, more than 200 denominations use the term "Church of God"
 - b. Churches that use this expression are more than likely denominational
3. The expression "Church of Christ" has long been both scriptural and expedient
 - a. It is often used by denominations to refer to the universal church
 - b. Churches that use this expression are more than likely non-denominational
4. But more and more, "Church of Christ" is used in a denominational sense
 - a. Certainly by those who are in a denomination themselves
 - b. But also by churches of Christ who have adopted a denominational mindset
5. Thus today, many if not most say the "Church of Christ" is another denomination

C. OUR RESPONSE TO THE CHARGE...

1. Some suggest churches use other designations to avoid being misunderstood
 - a. E.g., having the church sign say "Christians Meet Here"
 - b. E.g., identifying ourselves simply as "The Church" (cf. The Church at Birmingham)
2. Not that such would be unscriptural, but is it expedient?
 - a. Like the sign of the fish in the first century, the term "Church of Christ" is still a more likely way to find New Testament churches
 - b. How long before people viewed us the "Christians Meet Here" denomination, or "The Church" denomination?
 - c. In a world with a denominational mind-set, it is virtually impossible not to be called or thought of as a denomination
3. Why not consider the response of Paul in our text? - **Ac 24:14**
 - a. He did not consider it necessary to explain how he was not a member of a sect

- b. Instead, he used the opportunity to proclaim his faith and hope in God
- c. In fact, do we ever find Paul or others preaching about the church in Acts?
- d. Instead, they proclaimed the gospel of Jesus Christ and the proper response
- e. Once people obeyed the gospel, they received instructions as to what they were now as members of the body of Christ (i.e., the church) - cf. **Mt 28:20**
- f. It is in the epistles that Christians learned about the identity, the work, the worship, and the organization of the church

CONCLUSION

1. Living in a world filled with people with a denominational mindset...
 - a. We need not worry so much about them viewing us another denomination
 - b. Changing names (scriptural or otherwise) is not likely to make much difference
2. Our concern should be proclaiming the gospel of Christ and the kingdom of God...
 - a. Calling people to respond to the gospel by submitting to the rule of God in their lives
 - b. Following up with apostolic teaching on the nature and design of the Lord's church
 - c. Making sure **we** understand that what others may call a denomination is truly the fulfillment of what Jesus meant when He said "I will build My Church" - **Mt 16:18**

To **paraphrase** (actually, **rephrase**) the apostle Paul...

"But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a denomination, so I serve Jesus Christ, believing all things which are written in the Old and New Testaments."

Righteousness, Self-Control, And The Judgment

Acts 24:25

INTRODUCTION

1. After Paul's initial defense before Felix, he had another opportunity to speak to him...
 - a. Along with his wife Drusilla who was Jewish (approximately age 16) - **Ac 24:24**
 - b. Talking to them about "**the faith in Christ**" - **ibid.**
2. Felix and Drusilla had a marital history tainted by promiscuity (**Kistemaker**)...
 - a. Drusilla was the third wife of Felix, according to the Roman historian Suetonius
 - b. Drusilla married Azizus king of Emesa (Syria) at age 14, and soon after married Felix

[We're told Paul "**reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come.**" (**Ac 24:25**). From his epistles and sermons in Acts, we can surmise what Paul may have said to them...]

I. CONCERNING RIGHTEOUSNESS

A. GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS...

1. I.e., God's way of making man righteous - **Ro 3:21**
2. Through faith in Jesus Christ - **Ro 3:22**
3. For all who believe, for all are sinners - **Ro 3:22-23**
4. Justified by grace through redemption in Christ - **Ro 3:24**
5. For Christ has been set forth as a propitiation by His blood - **Ro 3:25**
6. Demonstrating God's own righteousness as being both Just and the Justifier - **Ro 3:25-26**
- **Perhaps, then, Paul reasoned thus about God's system of righteousness in saving us**

B. OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS...

1. We are made righteous in Christ, according to God's righteousness - **Ro 3:21-26**
2. And in baptism we die to sin, that we might rise to walk in newness of life - **Ro 6:1-4**
3. Having died to sin, we are freed from sin, that we might now live with Christ - **Ro 6:5-11**
4. Thus we must not let sin reign in our bodies, but let them be instruments of righteousness - **Ro 6:12-14**
- **Perhaps, then, Paul reasoned that saved by grace, we must now live righteously for God**

[As Paul spoke about righteousness to Felix and Drusilla, I suspect their consciences were made uneasy by their disregard for God's law on marriage (cf. **Mal 2:14-16**). Perhaps even more, as he spoke...]

II. CONCERNING SELF-CONTROL

A. BEFORE CONVERSION...

1. The inability to live righteously as one carnal, sold under sin - **Ro 7:14-20**; cf. **Jn 8:34**
2. The law of sin wages war against the law of one's mind, leading to slavery - **Ro 7:21-24**
- **Perhaps Paul reasoned that self-control was unattainable by sinners outside of Christ**

B. AFTER CONVERSION...

1. In Christ, there is no condemnation and there is now freedom from sin! - **Ro 8:1-4**

2. But only for those who live according to the Spirit, with minds set on the Spirit - **Ro 8:5-8**
 3. For if the Spirit indwells a person, by the Spirit they can put to death the deeds of the flesh - **Ro 8:11-14**; cf. **Ep 3:16,20-21**
 4. Thus walking by the Spirit, led by the Spirit, they can produce the fruit of the Spirit, which includes self-control! - **Ga 5:16-18,22-23**
- **Perhaps Paul reasoned that Spirit-aided self-control would help them live righteously**

[But why should Felix and Drusilla even be concerned about righteousness and self-control? Perhaps Paul made that very clear when he spoke to them...]

III. CONCERNING THE JUDGMENT

A. THE DAY OF JUDGMENT...

1. To philosophers, Paul spoke of God's command for all men to repent - **Ac 17:30**
 2. Because God has appointed a day on which He will judge the world - **Ac 17:31**
 3. God will judge the world by His Son Jesus Christ - **Ac 17:31**; cf. **Ro 14:9-12**; **2Co 5:10**
- **Perhaps Paul reasoned that a righteous God will have to judge mankind for their sins**

B. THE RESULT OF JUDGMENT...

1. Knowing the terror of the Lord when He comes, Paul persuaded men - **2Co 5:11**
 2. He warned of flaming fire for those who know not God, nor obey the gospel - **2Th 1:7-9**
- **Perhaps Paul reasoned that punishment would be fearful beyond comprehension**

CONCLUSION

1. We may not know exactly what Paul covered when he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment...
2. We do know the effect it had on Felix...
 - a. At first Felix was afraid - **Ac 24:25**
 - b. But he put off making the right decision, looking for a more opportune time - **ibid.**

Sadly, Felix seemed hardened by his lust for money, and despite other opportunities to hear Paul for two years, he never responded to gospel of Christ (**Ac 24:26-27**).

What about us today? Have we given heed to the Biblical revelation and reasoning concerning such things as righteousness, self-control, and the judgment? Or have we endangered our souls by saying like Felix, "When I have a more convenient time..."

Remember Paul's plea in his epistle to the Corinthians:

We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says:

***"In an acceptable time I have heard you,
And in the day of salvation I have helped you."***

Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

- 2Co 6:1-2

Paul Before Festus And Agrippa

Acts 25:1-27

INTRODUCTION

1. While Felix remained governor, Paul remained in Caesarea...
 - a. Though he did enjoy some privileges - **Ac 24:23**
 - b. But he was imprisoned for two years - **Ac 24:27**
2. Finally, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus... - **Ac 24:27**
 - a. Who assumed the office by Nero's appointment in A.D. 60 - **HIBD**
 - b. Who held the office until his death in A.D. 62 - **ibid.**
 - c. Josephus describes Festus as prudent and honorable governor - **ISBE, Revised**

[We catch a glimpse of Festus' character in his handling of Paul's case inherited from Felix's own procrastination...]

I. PAUL BEFORE FESTUS

A. THE JEWS PETITION FESTUS...

1. Shortly after arriving, Festus traveled from Caesarea to Jerusalem - **Ac 25:1**
2. The high priest and chief men informed Festus of Paul - **Ac 25:2**
3. They petitioned him to bring Paul back to Jerusalem - **Ac 25:2-3**
4. Meanwhile the Jews plotted to ambush and kill Paul - **Ac 25:3**
5. Festus answered that Paul should be kept in Caesarea - **Ac 25:4**
6. He invited the Jews in authority to Caesarea to accuse Paul there - **Ac 25:5**

B. PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE FESTUS...

1. After ten days in Jerusalem, Festus returned to Caesarea - **Ac 25:6**
2. The next day he commanded Paul brought before the judgment seat - **Ac 25:6**
3. The Jews from Jerusalem laid serious but unproved complaints against Paul - **Ac 25:7**
4. Paul replied, "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all." - **Ac 25:8**

C. PAUL'S APPEAL TO CAESAR...

1. Festus asked Paul if he would go to Jerusalem with him - **Ac 25:9**
 - a. Festus wanted to do the Jews a favor
 - b. He suggested that he would judge Paul there
2. Paul objected to being taken to Jerusalem - **Ac 25:10-11**
 - a. He stood at Caesar's judgment seat where he ought to be judged
 - b. He had done no wrong to the Jews, as Festus knew
 - c. Paul was willing to die if he had committed anything worthy of death
 - d. But there was nothing in the charges of which he was accused
3. Paul therefore appealed to Caesar - **Ac 25:11-12**
 - a. As a Roman citizen he had the right to appeal his case before Caesar - **ESVSB**
 - b. Caesar at that time was the emperor Nero - **ibid.**

[Conferring with his council Festus answered, “You have appealed to Caesar? To Caesar you shall go!” (**Ac 25:12**). Before sending Paul to the Roman Caesar, Festus took advantage of a visit by a Jewish king...]

II. PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA

A. FESTUS PRESENTS PAUL’S CASE TO KING AGRIPPA...

1. After some days, King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus - **Ac 25:13**
 - a. Agrippa was Agrippa II - **HIBD**
 - 1) Son of Herod Agrippa I, who killed James - **Ac 12:1**
 - 2) Great-grandson of Herod the Great, who killed the babies - **Mt 2:1-18**
 - b. Bernice was the half-sister of Agrippa - **AYBD**
 - 1) She married Marcus Julius Alexander in A.D. 41
 - 2) After Marcus’ death, she married her uncle Herod of Chalchis in A.D. 44
 - 3) After Herod died in A.D. 48, she became Agrippa’s constant companion (some think it was an incestuous relationship)
 - 4) Because of such regarding her brother, she eventually married Polemo king of Cilicia
 - 5) She finally became the mistress of the Roman emperor Titus
2. Festus laid Paul’s case before Agrippa - **Ac 25:14-21**
 - a. He noted that Felix had left Paul a prisoner
 - b. The chief priests and elders of the Jews informed Festus about Paul
 - c. He told the Jews that it was not Roman custom to deliver the accused for “destruction” without the accused having the opportunity to answer the charges
 - d. Festus had Paul come before the judgment seat
 - e. Festus discovered nothing wrong, other than there were questions about “their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, whom Paul affirmed to be alive”
 - f. Festus asked Paul to go to Jerusalem, since he was uncertain about these matters
 - g. Paul then appealed to Caesar
3. Agrippa wanted to hear Paul, and Festus promised a hearing the next day - **Ac 25:22**

B. PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA AND BERNICE...

1. The next day Festus commanded Paul brought forth - **Ac 25:23**
 - a. Following the arrival of Agrippa and Bernice with great pomp
 - b. Before an audience of commanders and prominent men of the city
2. Festus explained the situation to Agrippa and the men gathered - **Ac 25:24-27**
 - a. In Jerusalem and Caesarea the Jews claimed Paul was not “fit to live any longer”
 - b. Festus had found that Paul committed nothing deserving death
 - c. Paul had appealed to Caesar, and Festus was going to send him
 - d. But he had nothing to write to Caesar about Paul
 - e. He hoped after Agrippa’s examination of Paul, he may have something to write
 - f. For he thought it unreasonable to send a prisoner to Caesar without specifying charges

CONCLUSION

1. At this point, King Agrippa permitted Paul to speak for himself...
 - a. Paul’s defense before Agrippa is covered in the next chapter - **Ac 26:1-32**
 - b. Which we shall consider in our next study
2. Luke detailed account of these events may have been for a particular reason...

- a. There is good reason to believe that Theophilus was a Roman official - **Lk 2:1-4; Ac 1:1**
- b. Some suggest Theophilus may have been in charge of Paul's case at Rome
- c. Which might be why the book of Acts ends so abruptly with Paul awaiting trial - **Ac 28:30-31**
- d. With such detailed accounts of Paul's trials, it may have helped Paul's release after his first imprisonment in Rome

Of course, with the Holy Spirit inspiring Luke and preserving his two books for our benefit, we can see the providence of God at work as Jesus' promises regarding Paul are fulfilled...

“...he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.” - *Ac 9:15*

“But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.” - *Ac 23:11*

Paul's Defense Before Agrippa

Acts 26:1-32

INTRODUCTION

1. Following his arrest in Jerusalem, Paul had the opportunity to defend himself before...
 - a. The Jewish mob - **Ac 22:1-21**
 - b. The Sanhedrin council - **Ac 23:1-10**
 - c. The Roman governor Felix and Drusilla - **Ac 24:1-27**
 - d. The Roman governor Festus - **Ac 25:1-12**
2. After being incarcerated in Caesarea for two years...
 - a. Jewish leaders wanted Paul brought back in Jerusalem - **Ac 25:1-3**
 - b. But there was a plot to ambush Paul along the way - **Ac 25:3**
 - c. Rather than be returned to Jerusalem, Paul appealed to Caesar - **Ac 25:9-11**

[Festus was willing to grant Paul's appeal. Uncertain of charges to specify against Paul, Festus solicited King Agrippa's help (**Ac 25:12-27**). Once again, Paul was permitted to defend himself (**Ac 26:1**)...]

I. THE DEFENSE

A. PAUL'S GRATITUDE...

1. To be able to answer for himself before the king - **Ac 26:2**
2. Because the king was known for his expertise regarding Jewish matters - **Ac 26:3**

B. PAUL'S EARLY LIFE...

1. Brought up in Jerusalem (though born in Tarsus) - **Ac 26:4**; cf. **Ac 22:3**
2. Lived as a Pharisee, the strictest sect of Jewish religion - **Ac 26:5**
3. He was being judged for the hope of the resurrection, a promise made by God to the Jews which the king should not think incredible - **Ac 26:6-8**; cf. **Ac 23:6**
4. As a zealous Pharisee, he thought he should persecute Christians - **Ac 26:9-11**
 - a. Imprisoning them in Jerusalem
 - b. Casting his own vote to put them to death
 - c. Punishing them in the synagogues, forcing them to blaspheme
 - d. Persecuting them to even foreign cities

C. PAUL'S CALLING...

1. While journeying to Damascus, commissioned by the chief priests - **Ac 26:12**
2. Along the road, seeing a bright light shining about him and his fellow travelers - **Ac 26:13**
3. Falling to the ground, hearing a voice in Hebrew - **Ac 26:14**
 - a. "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"
 - b. "It is hard for you to kick against the goads."
4. Asking "Who are you, Lord?", Jesus identifies Himself - **Ac 26:15**
5. Jesus then tells Paul why He has appeared to him - **Ac 26:16-18**
 - a. To make him a minister
 - b. A witness of things seen and things yet to be revealed
 - c. To be delivered from Jews and Gentiles, while opening their eyes

- d. To turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God
- e. That they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those sanctified by faith in Him

D. PAUL'S MINISTRY...

1. He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision - **Ac 26:19**
2. But declared to those in Damascus, Jerusalem, Judea, and to the Gentiles - **Ac 26:20**
 - a. That they should repent, turn to God
 - b. And do works befitting repentance
3. For such reasons Jews seized him in the temple and tried to kill him - **Ac 26:21**
4. But with help from God, to that day Paul witnessed to both small and great - **Ac 26:22**
5. Saying only what the prophets and Moses said would come - **Ac 26:22-23**
 - a. That the Christ would suffer
 - b. That He would be the first to rise from the dead
 - c. That He would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles

[At this point, Paul is interrupted by an outburst from the Roman governor Festus...]

II. THE REACTION

A. FROM FESTUS...

1. "Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!" - **Ac 26:24**
2. Paul's calm response - **Ac 26:25-26**
 - a. "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason."
 - b. "For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things."
 - c. "For I am convinced that none of these things escape his attention."
 - d. "Since this thing was not done in a corner."

B. FROM AGRIPPA...

1. Paul: "King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe" - **Ac 26:27**
2. Agrippa: "You almost persuade me to become a Christian." **Ac 26:28**
3. Paul: "I would to God that not only you, but all who hear me today, might become almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains." - **Ac 26:29**

C. FROM EVERYONE...

1. At this point, Agrippa, Festus, Bernice, and others went aside to talk - **Ac 26:30**
2. Their conclusion: "This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains." - **Ac 26:31**
3. Agrippa: "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar." - **Ac 26:32**

CONCLUSION

1. The final two chapters of Acts (**27-28**) will cover Paul's eventful sea journey to Rome...
2. In the meantime, give serious consideration to whether we are experiencing the blessings of Paul's ministry in our own lives... - cf. **Ac 26:18**

"to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me."

To See And Be Free!

Acts 26:18

INTRODUCTION

1. When Saul of Tarsus (later known as the apostle Paul) was on the road to Damascus...
 - a. The Lord Jesus appeared to him in a blinding light - **Ac 26:12-14**
 - b. Jesus identified Himself, and told Saul the task he would fulfill - **Ac 26:15-17**
2. The commission given to Saul concerning both Jews and Gentiles was clear... - **Ac 26:18**
 - a. “to open their eyes”
 - b. “so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God”
 - c. “that they may receive forgiveness and a place among those sanctified by faith in Me.”

[In this lesson, I want to direct our attention to the idea of turning “*from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God.*” Let’s begin with the idea of turning...]

I. FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

A. THE WORLD IS IN DARKNESS...

1. Many people walk in the futility of their minds - **Ep 4:17**
2. Their understanding darkened, alienated from the life of God - **Ep 4:18**
3. Because of ignorance, because of the blindness of their heart - **Ep 4:19**
4. Past feeling, given over to lewdness, working uncleanness with greed - **Ep 4:19**
- **This helps us to understand the moral decline prevalent in our society**

B. JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD...

1. He offers the light of life and truth - **Jn 8:12; 14:6**
2. The truth (that which is true, real) is to be found in Jesus - **Ep 4:20-21**
3. Who teaches us to put off corrupt and deceitful lusts - **Ep 4:22**
4. Who renews the spirit of our minds, in true righteousness and holiness - **Ep 4:23-24**
- **Only in Jesus can we find our way through the moral morass in the world**

[Jesus helps us to “see the light”, so we can then “walk as children of light” and “expose the unfruitful works of darkness (**Ep 5:8-14**). But in order for this to happen we must be set free, delivered...]

II. FROM THE POWER OF SATAN TO GOD

A. SATAN ENSLAVES THROUGH SIN...

1. He works in the sons of disobedience, who fulfill their lusts and desires - **Ep 2:1-3; Ti 3:3**
2. As man sins, he becomes enslaved to sin - **Jn 8:34**
3. Slavery to sin leads to death, which is what we deserve - **Ro 6:16,23**
4. Even the “good man” finds himself enslaved by his sin - **Ro 7:14-24**
- **What a terrible dilemma, but in Christ there is deliverance! - Ro 7:25**

B. CHRIST DELIVERS FROM SIN...

1. He offers deliverance from the **guilt** of sin

- a. Through forgiveness of sins - **Ac 26:18**
 - b. With redemption through His blood - **Ep 1:7**
 - c. So there is no more condemnation for sin - **Ro 8:1; Jn 5:24**
 - d. This occurs when we are baptized into Christ - **Ac 2:38; 22:16**
 2. He provides deliverance from the **bondage** of sin
 - a. As we walk according to the Spirit - **Ro 8:1-4**
 - b. As we set our minds on the things of the Spirit - **Ro 8:5-8**
 - c. For the Spirit indwells the Christian - **Ro 8:9-11**
 - d. And with the Spirit's aid, we can put to death the deeds of the body - **Ro 8:12-13**
- **Instead of serving Satan and sin, we can now live as sons of God! - Ro 8:14**

CONCLUSION

1. By faith in Jesus, we receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance... - **Ac 26:18**
 - a. Forgiveness through His blood - **Ep 1:7**
 - b. An inheritance in which the Spirit is the down payment - **Ep 1:13-14**
2. By faith in Jesus, we are thus sanctified (set apart)... - **Ac 26:18**
 - a. Delivered from the power of darkness, conveyed into His kingdom - **Col 1:13**
 - b. Free to set on our minds on things above, to put off the old and put on the new - **Col 3:1-17**

Thus Jesus helps us **“To See And Be Free!”** It begins when in faith and repentance we are baptized into Christ (cf. **Tit 3:3-7**). In the words of what some take to be an early baptismal hymn...

*“Awake, you who sleep,
Arise from the dead,
And Christ will give you light.”
- Ep 5:14*

Have you seen the light of truth and life? Have you been delivered from the power of Satan and sin, empowered to serve God in righteousness and holiness? If not, look to Jesus in obedient faith...

A Tempestuous Voyage

Acts 27:1-44

INTRODUCTION

1. Following Paul's defense before King Agrippa...
 - a. It was determined that he was not deserving of death or chains - **Ac 26:30-31**
 - b. Yet due to his earlier appeal, he would be sent to Rome - **Ac 26:32**; cf. **Ac 25:11**
2. With great detail, Luke describes the journey to Rome by sea...
 - a. Highlighted by a shipwreck along the way - **Ac 27:39-44**
 - b. Something Paul experienced three times before - **2Co 11:25**

[The keynote of Luke's account is God's providence, especially in preserving Paul for his Roman testimony (**ESV Study Bible**, cf. **Ac 23:11**). It was indeed "A Tempestuous Voyage", so let us follow along as...]

I. THE VOYAGE BEGINS

A. FROM CAESAREA TO SIDON...

1. Paul was delivered to a centurion named **Julius** - **Ac 27:1-2**
 - a. Together with other prisoners
 - b. Accompanied by **Luke**, author of Acts (note "we")
 - c. With **Aristarchus** of Thessalonica - cf. **Ac 19:29**; **20:4**; **Col 4:10**; **Phm 1:4**
2. They sailed on a ship of **Adramyttium** - **Ac 27:2**
 - a. A seaport on the western coast of Turkey
 - b. Intending to sail along the coasts of Asia (modern Turkey)
 - c. Probably a small coasting vessel, not adequate for open-sea voyage (**ESVSB**)
3. The next day they stopped at **Sidon** - **Ac 27:3**
 - a. A seaport of Phoenicia, 22 miles north of Tyre
 - b. Where Julius the centurion treated Paul kindly
 - c. Allowing Paul liberty to see friends and receive care

B. FROM SIDON TO MYRA...

1. Leaving Sidon they sailed under the shelter of the island of **Cyprus** - **Ac 27:4**
 - a. Because the winds were contrary
 - b. Paul had sailed to Cyprus before - **Ac 13:4**
2. They then sailed over the sea off **Cilicia** and **Pamphylia** - **Ac 27:5**
 - a. Regions of Asia (SE Turkey)
 - b. Paul had been born in Tarsus of Cilicia - **Ac 22:3**
3. Arriving at **Myra of Lycia** - **Ac 27:5-6**
 - a. In SE Turkey located on the River Andracus about two and a half miles from the sea
 - b. There they transferred to an Alexandrian (Egyptian) ship headed for Italy
 - c. This probably was a larger ship, suited for open-sea voyage

C. FROM MYRA TO CRETE...

1. Strong winds hindered their progress - **Ac 27:7**

- a. Forcing them to sail slowly for many days
- b. Arriving with difficulty off **Cnidus** (SW Turkey)
2. They headed toward **Crete** (mountainous island S of Greece) - **Ac 27:7-8**
 - a. Passing the shelter of **Salmone** (promontory on the NE coast of Crete) with difficulty
 - b. Arriving at **Fair Havens** (an open bay near the city of Lasea on the S coast of Crete)

[So far the journey had not been easy. **Contrary winds** forced them to sail under Cyprus, **difficult winds** forced them to turn toward Crete. The worse was yet to come...]

II. THE STORM AT SEA

A. PAUL'S WARNING IGNORED...

1. Paul advised against sailing further at that time - **Ac 27:9-10**
 - a. Sailing was now dangerous
 - b. **The Fast** (Day of Atonement, late September or early October) was over
 - c. He thought it would end in disaster, with loss of cargo, ship and lives
 - d. **Note:** this was Paul's uninspired opinion, not a prophecy
2. His advice was overturned by the majority - **Ac 27:11-12**
 - a. The centurion was persuaded by the helmsman and owner of the ship
 - b. The harbor at Fair Havens was not suitable for spending the winter
 - c. The majority wanted to sail to **Phoenix** (on the SE coast of Crete) and winter there

B. INTO THE TEMPEST...

1. With a soft south wind, they set sail along the coast of Crete - **Ac 27:13**
2. Soon a tempestuous head wind arose, called **Euroclydon** (or **Euroquilo**) - **Ac 27:14**
3. Unable to head into the wind, they let the ship be driven - **Ac 27:15**
4. Running under the shelter of **Clauda** (an island 23 miles S of Crete), they secured the skiff (a small boat) with difficulty and used cables to undergird the ship - **Ac 27:16-17**
5. Fearing they might run aground on the **Syrtis Sands** (a sandy shoal off the African coast of Cyrene) they struck sail and were driven by the wind - **Ac 27:17**
6. Exceedingly tempest tossed, the next day they lightened the ship - **Ac 27:18**
7. On the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard - **Ac 27:19**
8. Many days the tempest blew, clouds obscuring sun and stars, all hope lost - **Ac 27:20**

C. PAUL'S ASSURANCE OF SURVIVAL...

1. After long abstinence from food, Paul admonished the crew for not heeding him - **Ac 27:21**
2. Yet he urges them to take courage, for while the ship is lost, no lives will be lost - **Ac 27:22**
3. The basis for such confidence: **an angelic vision** - **Ac 27:23-24**
 - a. From an angel of the God to whom Paul belongs and serves
 - b. Telling Paul not to be afraid, for he must appear before Caesar
 - c. Indeed, God has granted him all souls sailing with him
4. So Paul encouraged them, confident the vision will prove true though they must run aground on a certain island - **Ac 27:25-26**

D. ATTEMPT TO ABANDON SHIP ABORTED...

1. After 14 nights, in the **Adriatic Sea**, sailors sensed they were nearing land - **Ac 27:27-29**
 - a. In NT times, the Adriatic included the sea between Crete and Sicily - **HIBD**
 - b. The sailors took soundings after midnight that indicated land was near
 - c. Fearing they would run aground on rocks, they dropped 4 anchors from the stern

- d. They then prayed for day to come
- 2. Paul prevented sailors from secretly abandoning ship - **Ac 27:30-32**
 - a. The sailors tried to let down the skiff (small boat) under false pretenses
 - b. Paul told the centurion and soldiers the sailors must stay on the ship
 - c. The soldiers then cut the ropes of the skip and let it fall off

E. PAUL ENCOURAGES THOSE ON BOARD...

- 1. Paul begged everyone to eat food - **Ac 27:33-34**
 - a. As day was about to dawn
 - b. Since they had been fasting for 14 days
 - c. It was necessary for their survival, as none would be lost
- 2. Paul then took bread and gave thanks in the presence of all - **Ac 27:35-37**
 - a. He thanked God, and then began to eat
 - b. The others encouraged, also took food
 - c. Altogether there were **276 souls on board**
- 3. After eating, they lightened the ship by throwing wheat into the sea - **Ac 27:38**

[With land nearby, hearts encouraged by Paul's reassuring words, and bodies nourished by food, the 276 souls were ready to face what the day would bring...]

III. SHIPWRECKED ON MALTA

A. ATTEMPT TO RUN SHIP ONTO THE BEACH FAILED...

- 1. They did not recognize the land, but saw a bay with a beach - **Ac 27:39**
 - a. The land was the island of **Malta**, located south of **Sicily** - **Ac 28:1**
 - b. The traditional site of the shipwreck is known as **St. Paul's Bay** - **ESVSB**
- 2. Planning to run the ship onto the beach, they cast off anchors, loosed the rudder ropes, hoisted the mainsail to the wind, and made for shore - **Ac 27:39-40**
- 3. But striking a reef (or sandbar) where two seas met, the bow became stuck and immovable, the stern broken up by violent waves - **Ac 27:41**

B. THE SHIP WAS LOST, BUT ALL SOULS WERE SAVED...

- 1. The soldiers intended to kill the prisoners lest they escape - **Ac 27:42**
- 2. But the centurion wanted to save Paul and prevented them - **Ac 27:43**
- 3. Commanding those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land, the rest using boards or parts of the ship - **Ac 27:43-44**
- 4. And so all arrived safely to land - **Ac 27:44**

CONCLUSION

- 1. One character that stands out in this story is **Julius the centurion...** - **Ac 27:1**
 - a. Who treated Paul kindly, giving him liberty to see friends and receive care - **Ac 27:3**
 - b. Who did not listen to Paul when he advised staying at Fair Havens - **Ac 27:8-12**
 - c. Who did listen to Paul when the sailors tried to sneak off the ship - **Ac 27:30-32**
 - d. Who saved Paul and other prisoners when the soldiers wanted to kill them - **Ac 27:42-44**
- 2. Another character that stands out is **Paul the apostle...** - **Ac 27:1**
 - a. Whose advice to stay at Fair Havens should have been heeded - **Ac 27:8-12**
 - b. Whose visitation by an angel of God let Paul and all know what would happen - **Ac 27:21-26**

- c. Whose counsel concerning the sailors helped to save all on board - **Ac 27:30-32**
- d. Whose urging to eat and offer of thanks encouraged all on board - **Ac 27:33-37**

God's providence is seen in how **He used a good soldier** to provide for His faithful apostle and **using a storm and shipwreck** to demonstrate the value of one's faith in God to bless the lives of many souls...

From Malta To Rome

Acts 28:1-16

INTRODUCTION

1. Following weeks of terrifying sea travel...
 - a. Beginning with contrary winds near the island of Crete - **Ac 27:4**
 - b. With difficult winds making progress slow off Cnidus - **Ac 27:7**
 - c. Arriving at Fair Havens on Crete with further difficulty - **Ac 27:7-8**
 - d. Encountering tempestuous winds off Crete that blew them toward Clauda - **Ac 27:13-16**
 - e. Forced to undergird the ship, lightening the ship, throwing tackle overboard - **Ac 27:18-19**
 - f. Seeing neither sun nor stars for many days as the storm raged - **Ac 27:20**
 - g. Finally nearing land, fearing that they might run aground - **Ac 27:27-29**
 - h. Deciding to run the ship onto the beach if possible - **Ac 27:39**
 - i. Instead hitting a reef or bar that stuck the bow - **Ac 27:41**
 - h. With violent waves breaking up the stern - **Ac 27:41**
2. They were forced to swim ashore...
 - a. With some on boards, others on parts of the ship - **Ac 27:43-44**
 - b. Even so, all 276 souls escaped safely to land - **Ac 27:44**

[They found themselves on the island of Malta (**Ac 28:1**), an island 60 miles south of Sicily and on the main route from Myra (**Ac 27:5**) to Rome. God's providence had actually brought them through the storm and back on course (**ESVSB**)! Divine providence continued as we continue reading about...]

I. THE SOJOURN ON MALTA

A. KINDNESS ON THE BEACH...

1. The natives (lit., barbarians, i.e., non-Greeks) showed unusual kindness - **Ac 28:2**
2. Paul was bit by a viper, but did not die - **Ac 28:3-6**
 - a. The natives presumed Paul a murderer
 - b. Despite surviving shipwreck, justice would not let him live
 - c. When Paul suffered no harm, the natives thought him to be a god - cf. **Ac 14:14-15**
3. This is an example of Jesus' promise to His disciples
 - a. Made to the seventy following their mission - cf. **Lk 10:1,17-19**
 - b. Made to the apostles when given the Great Commission - cf. **Mk 16:15-18**
 - c. Such signs confirmed the words that they preached - **Mk 16:19-20; He 2:3-4**

B. KINDNESS AT THE ESTATE...

1. A prominent citizen, Publius, entertained them for three days - **Ac 28:7**
2. When his father lay sick of fever and dysentery, Paul healed him - **Ac 28:8**
3. This led to many others on the island being healed - **Ac 28:9**
4. Which led to much honor and provisions for their journey - **Ac 28:10**

[After three months on the island of Malta (**Ac 28:11**), the journey continued...]

II. THE JOURNEY TO ROME

A. BY SHIP...

1. In an Alexandrian ship - **Ac 28:11**
 - a. Whose figurehead was the Twin brothers (Castor and Pollux, twin sons of Zeus, who were viewed as gods who protected seamen) - ESVSB
 - b. Which had wintered at the island of Malta
2. Sailing to Syracuse where they stayed three days - **Ac 28:12**
3. On to Rhegium (the southern tip of Italy), and then the next day to Puteoli - **Ac 28:13**
4. At Puteoli they found brethren who invited them to stay seven days - **Ac 28:14**

B. BY FOOT...

1. From Puteoli they headed toward Rome - **Ac 28:14**
2. When brethren from Rome heard they were coming, they came to meet them - **Ac 28:15**
 - a. At Appii Forum (40 miles from Rome)
 - b. At Three Havens (28 miles from Rome)
3. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage - **Ac 28:15**
4. Finally arriving at Rome - **Ac 28:16**
 - a. Where the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard
 - b. While Paul was allowed to dwell by himself with a soldier to guard him

CONCLUSION

1. I can only imagine Paul's emotions upon his arrival at Rome...
 - a. An opportunity he had prayed for years earlier - **Ro 1:8-12; 15:22-24; Ac 19:21**
 - b. The fulfillment of a promise Jesus and an angel made to him - **Ac 23:11; 27:23-24**
2. Though **it took years** and **unexpected twists and turns**...
 - a. God's providence led him to his destination
 - b. And throughout it all, gave evidence of such Divine providence

Similar to stories like that of Joseph and Esther, Paul's life is a reminder that God is good, He watches and provides for His people, though at the time our faith may be tested when it seems that He is not near.

May such Biblical accounts encourage us to never lose faith, but to trust in God's providence to lead us through the stormy seas of life to our final destination, the heavenly city that awaits...!

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” - Ro 8:28

Paul In Rome

Acts 28:17-31

INTRODUCTION

1. After his fateful voyage, Paul and his companions arrived at Rome where he...
 - a. Was immediately placed under house arrest - **Ac 28:16**
 - b. Waited two years to make his appeal before Caesar - cf. **Ac 25:9-12; 28:30**
2. Yet Paul was not idle during this time...
 - a. He met with the Jewish leaders in Rome
 - b. He received many visitors
 - c. He likely composed several epistles

[Indeed, it was a fruitful time for the apostle Paul. Such is evident as we read the final words of Luke in his account of Acts, beginning with...]

I. HIS MEETINGS WITH JEWISH LEADERS

A. THE FIRST MEETING...

1. Paul called for the leaders of the Jews in Rome - **Ac 28:17**
2. He explained why he was there, and the reason for his appeal - **Ac 28:17-20**
 - a. He had done nothing against the Jews or their customs
 - b. Roman officials wanted to let him go, but Jews from Jerusalem spoke against it, forcing him to appeal to Caesar
 - c. Yet it was for the hope of Israel he was bound in chains
3. The Jewish leaders desire to learn more - **Ac 28:21-22**
 - a. For they neither received letters or heard anything evil of Paul
 - b. But they wanted to hear what he had to say about this “sect” spoken against everywhere

B. THE SECOND MEETING...

1. On an appointed day, many came to his lodging - **Ac 28:23**
2. They heard him explain and solemnly testify from morning until evening - **Ac 28:23**
 - a. Of the kingdom of God and concerning Jesus - cf. **Ac 8:12**
 - b. From both the Law of Moses and the Prophets - cf. **Lk 24:44-47**
3. Their reaction was mixed; some were persuaded, while others disbelieved - **Ac 28:24**
4. They departed after Paul gave them solemn warning - **Ac 28:25-28**
 - a. Of being hard of hearing and closing their eyes - cf. **Isa 6:9-10**
 - b. The message of salvation has been sent to Gentiles and they will hear it - cf. **Isa 42:1,6**
5. They departed and disputed among themselves - **Ac 28:29**

[The closing verses in Acts indicate that similar meetings were repeated time and again during the two years of Paul’s captivity (**Ac 28:30-31**). When we turn to Paul’s epistles, we can glean more things about...]

II. HIS CIRCUMSTANCES IN ROME

A. PAUL'S COMPANIONS...

1. Timothy
 - a. The young disciple Paul picked up on his second journey - **Ac 16:1-3**
 - b. Who joined Paul in several epistles written from Rome - **Phm 1; Col 1:1; Php 1:1**
 - c. Who was sent to Philippi in behalf of Paul - **Php 2:19-23**
 2. Epaphras
 - a. Whose visit to Paul prompted the writing of Colossians - **Col 1:3-8**
 - b. Who sent his greetings to his beloved brethren at Colossae - **Col 4:12-13**
 - c. Who was described as Paul's "fellow-prisoner" - **Phm 1:23**
 3. Onesimus and Tychicus
 - a. Onesimus, the runaway slave converted to Jesus Christ, who was sent along with the letter to his master Philemon - **Phm 1:10-21**
 - b. Onesimus also accompanied Tychicus who bore the epistle to the Colossians - **Col 4:7-9**
 - c. Tychicus, who was from Asia (**Ac 20:4**) and the bearer of the epistle to the Ephesians - **Ep 6:21-22**
 4. Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, Jesus (Justus) - **Phm 24**
 - a. Marcus, also known as John Mark, Barnabas' cousin - **Col 4:10; cf. Ac 12:25; 13:5,13; 15:37-40**
 - b. Aristarchus, Paul's "fellow-prisoner" - **Col 4:10; cf. Ac 19:29; 20:4; 27:2**
 - c. Demas, who later forsook Paul - **Col 4:14; cf. 2Ti 4:10**
 - d. Luke, the beloved physician who traveled off and on again with Paul, and accompanied him on his voyage to Rome - **Col 4:14; cf. Ac 16:10-12; 20:6; 21:1-17; 27:1-28:16**
 - e. Jesus (also called Justus), a "fellow-worker" with Paul - **Col 4:11**
 5. Epaphroditus
 - a. Who brought a gift to Paul from the Philippians - **Php 4:18**
 - b. Who became the bearer of the epistle to the Philippians - **Php 2:25-30**
- **His companions undoubtedly were a great source of comfort for Paul, and enabled him to do much good while imprisoned in Rome**

B. PAUL'S PREACHING...

1. Continued preaching despite his chains - **Col 1:23-29; Ep 3:1-9**
 2. Requested prayers for wisdom and boldness to continue preaching - **Col 4:3-4; Ep 6:18-20**
 3. Converted Onesimus, the runaway slave - **Phm 1:10**
 4. Had opportunities among the palace guard, and apparent success in Caesar's household - **Php 1:12-20; 4:22**
- **Paul's success in preaching reinforce the idea that the gospel cannot be bound!**

C. PAUL'S LETTERS...

1. The epistle to Philemon (61 or 62 AD.) - **Phm 1:1**
 - a. Purpose: To secure forgiveness for Onesimus
 - b. Theme: Restoration Of A Slave Brother
2. The epistle to the Colossians (61 or 62 A.D.) - **Col 1:1-2**
 - a. Purpose: To warn against the "Colossian heresy"
 - b. Theme: Christ, The Fullness Of God And Pre-Eminent, All-Sufficient Savior
3. The epistle to the Ephesians (61 or 62 A.D.) - **Ep 1:1**
 - a. Purpose: To remind Christians of their spiritual blessings and responsibilities
 - b. Theme: The Believer's Riches In Christ
4. The epistle to the Philippians (63 A.D.) - **Php 1:1**
 - a. Purpose: To thank the church for their gift, and encourage faithfulness

- b. Theme: Rejoice In The Lord!
- **Through letters Paul's influence spread from Rome throughout the world till today!**

D. PAUL'S LOVE AND CARE FOR THE CHURCHES...

1. Evidenced in the epistles he wrote during this time
 - a. Such as Colossians, to a church he had not seen - **Col 2:1-5**
 - b. Such as Ephesians, to a church with whom he had spent much time - **Ac 20:17-21**
 - c. Such as Philippians, to a church that was dear to his heart - **Php 1:3-5; 4:1**
 2. Evidenced in the prayers he offered for them
 - a. His prayer for the Colossians - **Col 1:9-11**
 - b. His prayers for the Ephesians - **Ep 1:15-21; 3:14-19**
 - c. His prayer for the Philippians - **Php 1:9-11**
- **Paul's love and concern for others despite his own circumstances exemplifies the mind of Christ - cf. Php 2:4-8**

E. PAUL'S FAITH AND JOY IN HIS SUFFERING...

1. He rejoiced in his sufferings - **Col 1:24; Php 2:16-18**
 2. He sought to magnify Christ in his sufferings - **Php 1:20**
- **Paul's imprisonment gave him an opportunity to practice what he had been preaching (and practicing) all along - cf. Ro 5:3-5**

CONCLUSION

1. Paul fully expected to be released from his imprisonment, as expressed...
 - a. By his plans to visit Philemon - **Phm 1:22**
 - b. In his epistle to the Philippians - **Php 1:23-27; 2:24**
2. That he was released and traveled some more is evidenced...
 - a. By references made in such epistles as **1st & 2nd Timothy, Titus**
 - b. By the testimony of those who came along later: **Chrysostom, Jerome, Eusebius, and even Clement of Rome**, who lived in the latter part of the first century A.D.

J.W. McGarvey notes in his commentary on Acts: **“No two years of Paul's life were better filled with earnest labor than these two spent in his Roman prison.”** Indeed, we have seen that such was the case, as Paul himself wrote:

“But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.” (Php 1:12-14)

May we learn from Paul's example of how **“good can come out of ill”**, and use whatever circumstances in which we find ourselves to be utilized for the glory of God!