

Supplemental Notes:

The Acts of the Apostles

*compiled
by
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Acknowledgments

These notes have been assembled from speaking notes and related materials which had been compiled from a number of classic and contemporary commentaries and other sources detailed in the bibliography, as well as other articles and publications of Koinonia House. While we have attempted to include relevant endnotes and other references, we apologize for any errors or oversights.

The complete recordings of the sessions, as well as supporting diagrams, maps, etc., are also available in various audiovisual formats from the publisher.

Session Listing

Introduction and Acts 1

Background. Ascension and Marching Orders. Appointment of Matthias.

Acts 2

Pentecost. Peter's First Sermon.

Acts 3 and 4

Lame Man Healed. Peter's Second Sermon. First Persecution. Peter's Address to the Sanhedrin.

Acts 5 and 6

Ananias and Sapphira. Second Persecution. The Arrest of Stephen.

Acts 6 and 7

Third Persecution. Stephen Addresses the Sanhedrin. First Martyr.

Acts 8

Fourth Persecution. Philip and the Ethiopian. The Mercy Seat.

Acts 9 and 10

Conversion of Saul. Tabitha Raised from the Dead. Cornelius' Vision. Peter's Vision.

Acts 11 and 12

Peter's Ministry to Gentiles. Antioch New Headquarters. Peter's Arrest and Deliverance. Herod's Death.

Session Listing

Acts 13 and 14

Paul's First Missionary Journey. Paul and Barnabas Turn to Gentiles. Iconium, Derbe and Lystra. Elders Established.

Acts 15 and 16

Council at Jerusalem. Paul's Second Missionary Journey. Macedonian Call at Troas. Philippian Jailer.

Acts 17 and 18

Athens and Paul on Mar's Hill. Corinth. Paul's Third Missionary Journey.

Acts 19 and 20

Paul's Third Missionary Journey Continued. Galatia, Ephesus. Paul's Farewell Address to the Ephesian Elders.

Acts 21 - 23

Paul Returns to Jerusalem. His Defense Before the Mob. His Defense Before the Sanhedrin.

Acts 24 - 26

Paul's Defense Before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa. Five Key Statements Summarize Paul's Defense.

Acts 27 and 28

The Shipwreck of Paul on the Island of Malta. Paul's Imprisonment in Rome.

Revelation 2 and 3

Jesus' Letters to the Seven Churches.

Acts Session 1 Chapter 1

The Design of the Gospels				
	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Presents as:	Messiah	Servant	Son of Man	Son of God
Genealogy:	Abraham -- (Legal)		Adam (Blood line)	Eternal (Preexistence)
What Jesus	Said	Did	Felt	Was
To the:	Jew	Roman	Greek	Church
1st Miracle:	Leper cleansed (Jew = sin)	Demon expelled	Demon expelled	Water to Wine
Ends with	Resurrection	Ascension	Promise of Spirit: Acts	Promise of Return: Revelation
Camp Side:	East	West	South	North
Ensign:	Judah	Ephraim	Reuben	Dan
Face:	Lion	Ox	Man	Eagle

If you understand who Jesus was [is] then none of the events of the Gospels, and following, present any difficulties...Luke's Gospel sets the stage for his sequel: Acts, "Luke Volume 2."

Anticipative Pre-Announcement

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 14:26

His Mission

Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come.

John 16:13

The Next Phase

"It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

John 16:7

Introduction

The "Acts of the Apostles" is an unfortunate label because there are only two apostles that feature prominently in the book. Chapters 1-12 feature Peter & Philip, while Chapters 13-28 feature Paul.

The Book of Acts is a fragmentary, incomplete book. In the conceptual sense we can say that it is still continuing, as it ushers in the Church, the *Ecclesia*, the “called-out ones,” and this is still continuing. Acts covers the first 40 years; Revelation Chapters 2 - 3, the next 2000+.

Overview: Acts - Part 1

Chapter 1

Ascension & marching orders
Appointment of Matthias

Chapter 2

Pentecost
Peter’s 1st Sermon

Chapter 3

Lame man healed
Peter’s 2nd Sermon

Chapter 4

1st Persecution
Peter’s address to the Sanhedrin

Chapter 5

Ananias & Sapphira
2nd Persecution

Chapter 6

First Deacons
3rd Persecution

Chapter 7

Stephen’s Address to Sanhedrin
First Martyr

Chapter 8

4th Persecution (by Saul)
Philip & the Ethiopian Treasurer

Overview: Acts – Part 2

	<u>Chapter</u>
1 st Missionary Journey	13-14
Council of Jerusalem	15
2 nd Missionary Journey	15
Athens, Mars Hill	17
3 rd Missionary Journey	18
Outcry against Paul:	22
– Before Sanhedrin	23
– Before Governor Felix	24
– Before Governor Festus	25

– Before King Agrippa	26
Paul goes to Rome	27-28

The Departure: Acts 1

- 1) Post-resurrection instructions.
- 2) Disciples wait empowering from the Holy Spirit.
- 3) Ascension from Mt. of Olives.
- 4) A cloud received Him.
- 5) Two angels confirm His return “In Like Manner.”
- 6) Election of replacement for Judas: Matthias? Or Paul?

120 disciples draw lots to elect Matthias. Some commentators feel that it really turned out to be Paul. (Others distinguish the Jewish commitment of the Twelve vs. Paul’s mission to the Gentiles).

Luke was chosen by the Holy Spirit to write. Luke’s Greek is the highest Greek in the NT—the best of any New Testament writer. His writings are regarded as some of the finest pieces of historical writing in ancient literature.

Sir William Ramsay set out to disprove Luke. After careful investigation, he concluded Luke had not made one historical inaccuracy. Luke’s gospel is the most complete historically.

Purpose

A purpose of Luke in writing Acts was to show how it is God’s intention for His Millennial Kingdom to include a population of believers taken from Jews and Gentiles during this Age. It includes both Peter and Paul as prime characters: Peter was the minister to the circumcised, as Paul was to the uncircumcised.

Seven Progress Reports

- 1: “And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47).
- 2: “So the Word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly” (Acts 6:7).
- 3: “Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria... was strengthened; and [it was] encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord” (Acts 9:31).
- 4: “But the Word of God continued to increase and spread” (Acts 12:24).

- 5: “So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers” (Acts 16:5).
- 6: “In this way the Word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power” (Acts 19:20).
- 7: “Paul...welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 28:30-31).

Acts 1

- 1] The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

The “former treatise” refers to the Gospel of Luke. The Book of Acts is “Luke Volume 2.”

“...Theophilus”: His name means “lover of God”; may have even been his nickname. (In his Gospel, Luke was more formal in addressing his sponsor: perhaps he had become a believer in the interval...Lk 1:1-3.)

Theophilus

From a reliable source dating back to the second century, he was apparently an influential and wealthy man residing in the city of Antioch. He dedicated his magnificent palace, called a Basilica, to the preaching of the Gospel. Luke came most likely also from Antioch. He may have belonged to the household of Theophilus. Luke may have received great kindness from Theophilus; some claim that he used to be a slave and became a free man through Theophilus. [Source: Arno Gaebelein.]

Luke addressed Theophilus as a prominent man, a responsible person, whose name bespeaks a close walk with God, and through him to that assembly to which Theophilus belonged, and in a larger sense, to all the Gentile-Christian churches.

Prologue

Luke and Acts (“Luke Volume 2”) may have served as trial documentation. Roman law required historical background of a case to *precede* an appeal to Caesar. Such an undertaking was expensive and Theophilus may have been Paul’s sponsor.

Legal Background Documents?

One speculation is that Luke Volume 1 (the “Gospel”) and Volume 2 (“Acts”) were written to Theophilus, who prepared the accounts necessary for Paul’s appeal to Rome. One of the undercurrents seen throughout the Book of Acts is the continual uprisings that occur. The book makes it clear that Paul was not the instigator of these riots. Also throughout both books, Romans are not portrayed as “the bad guys,” but always as “the good guys.”

In Acts 1:1, Luke does not include the words “most excellent” before “Theophilus.” This makes some scholars presume that he probably was a believer, or had become one by reading Volume 1, because Luke is more intimate there.

“...do and teach”: Note the order of these verbs, do first, teach second.

The subject of Volume 2 is the same as Volume 1.

Same writer:	Luke;
Same reader:	Theophilus; and
Same subject:	Jesus Christ.

Note that this book is about *Jesus Christ*, and not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is very prominent and we will learn a great deal about Him, but as is consistent with His Mission, He bears testimony of the Son, Jesus of Nazareth!

The Book of Acts is continuing. It is a transition between the Kingdom message and the Church. The Kingdom was offered to Israel first and they rejected it. That opened the door to the Gentiles, and the story of the Book of Acts is all these different things that occurred to fulfill the promise of God to all flesh, not just Israel.

However, don’t fall into the trap that the promises of God to Israel are forfeited; they are yet to be fulfilled. (See *The Prodigal Heirs* briefing package for a complete study of the Church and Israel.)

If the book of Acts is a transition from the Kingdom to the Church, the Book of Revelation is the transition from the Church back to the Kingdom. (See *The Kingdom, Power, and the Glory* for a complete—yet overlooked—study of the Kingdom.)

- 2] Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

“...taken up”: This phrase occurs four times in this chapter alone, and refers to the ascension.

- 3] To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God:

“...forty days”: This is the only place that mentions the period of time between the resurrection and the ascension. For forty days Jesus was among them (the Emmaus Road and several times to the disciples). Ten of these incidents are recorded, some are not. Note this focus (Acts 1:6).

There are ten recorded appearances of Jesus after His resurrection. *His post-resurrection ministry, as revealed in His appearances, has an even more significant bearing on the lives of Christians today than does the three year ministry recorded in the Gospels.*

You and I do not know Him today as the One who walked on this earth over nineteen hundred years ago. We know Him as the one Man in the glory. He is up there right this moment, and He is real. How often the church loses sight of this fact.

J. V. McGee

- 4] And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.

(These first four verses are all one sentence.) To wait in Jerusalem, they were to tarry. For what?

Jesus was constrained as a man; for example, he could only be in one place at a time. Yet, in Acts, Jesus is free of that restraint through the power of the Holy Spirit (Lk 12:49-50). Jesus continues to talk of His “going away.” Jesus needs to go away to allow the Holy Spirit to come (Jn 16:7-11).

The Holy Spirit is seen from the beginning (Gen 1:2). All through the Old Testament the Holy Spirit is very busy; however, Jesus does note that the Holy Spirit is sent in a very special and unique way to the Church. (For a complete study of the Holy Spirit, see our Briefing Package, *The Trinity*.).

- 5] For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

“Not many days hence” - 10 days to be exact. Who is going to be “Baptized with the Holy Spirit”? The Apostles, 120 of them? The Baptism is of the Body of Christ on Pentecost. It is this baptism of the Holy Spirit which places a believer into the body of believers, which we sometimes refer to as the church.

John had predicted a Spirit baptism by the Lord Jesus. The greatness of Christ was seen in the fact that John identified people with himself by water baptism; Jesus would join His followers to Himself by the Holy Spirit.

The word baptized, which normally means “dipped or immersed,” here has the idea of “uniting with” (cf. 1 Cor 10:1-2). The Lord made the same prediction of Spirit baptism that John made (Mt 3:11; Mk 1:8; cf. Acts 11:16).

- 6] When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

“...at this time restore the kingdom”: “Restore at this time”? Many promises in the Old Testament of the Kingdom, this was a legitimate question for them to ask. This makes it clear that they did not know His plans, nor were they equipped for what is coming. Christ taught the coming of an earthly, literal kingdom (cf. Mt 19:28; Lk 19:11-27; 22:28-30).

The Reality of “the Kingdom”

“Thy Kingdom come”	Matthew 6:10; Luke 11:2
Gabriel to Mary	Luke 1:30
Confirmed here	Acts 1:6
Counsel of Jerusalem	Act 15:14-18
James quoting:	Amos 9:11

The phrase “Kingdom of God” appears 33 times in Luke’s Gospel, 15 times in Mark, 4 times in Matthew (who elsewhere focuses on “the Kingdom of Heaven”), once in John, and 6 times in Acts. [Source: Robertson, A. (1997).]

Beware of “Exclusionary Truth”

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable...

2 Timothy 3:16

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God...

Matthew 4:4

Whatsoever was written aforetime was written for our learning that we, through the comfort of the Scriptures (OT) might have hope.
Romans 15:4

Watch out for “exclusionary truth”: “Replacement Theology”; “Hyperdispensationalism”; etc.

- 7] And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

No man knoweth the day or the hour, only the Father.
Matthew 24:36

Notice how this verse is recorded in Mark 13:32: “No man, nor the angels, *neither the Son!*” That means there is something that the Father knows that the Son doesn’t, at least at that particular time.

Note that Jesus did NOT cancel the Kingdom of Israel. The issue here is *the timing*, not the event. There are promises to Israel that are yet to be fulfilled; Jesus is yet to sit on David’s Throne.

Jesus sent the disciples out on a trip specifically sent to Israel, and *not to the Gentiles* (Mt 10:5-6). *This is in contrast* to the mission which they are about to get, which was to go into Jerusalem and Judea first, then into Samaria, and then to the uttermost part of the world.

The Kingdom message was first of all aimed at Israel *exclusively*. John 1:11 states that Israel did not receive it, and because they rejected Him, Israel is “set aside” for awhile (see Romans 11:25).

Acts is a transition between the Kingdom message, which is the primary thing we see in the Gospels, and the peculiar mystery which we call the Church. The Book of Revelation is going to be the transition from the Church (Chapters 2-3) and the ushering in of the Kingdom.

Marching Orders

- 8] But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1) Jerusalem and Judea | Acts 1 through 7 |
| 2) Samaria | Acts 8 through 12 |
| 3) Uttermost parts | Acts 13 - 28 |
| ...and continuing! | Rev 2 & 3 |

“...you shall be witnesses unto Me”: “*BE* my witness.” Be His evidence, His credentials, His arguments, ...be His ambassador! [That’s why the Koinonia Institute is *global*...]

Outline

- Jerusalem till the martyrdom of Stephen Chapter 7
- The scattering of the saints through Judea and Samaria Chapter 8
- The conversion of Saul Chapter 9
- The spread of the gospel to Romans in Caesarea by Peter Chapter 10
- To Greeks in Antioch Chapter 11
- Finally Paul’s world tours and arrest and arrival in Rome Ch. 11-28

- 9] And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

(From Bethany, not on the Mount of Olives; cf. Luke 24:50.)

While He was speaking to them, He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight. This is important as this is how He is coming back! This was not an atmospheric cloud: the *Shekinah*...

“...received him out of their sight”: ὑπελαβεν *hupelaben*: Second aorist active indicative of ὑπολαμβάνω *hupolambanō*, literally here “took under him.” He seemed to be supported by the cloud (“in glory”).

Paul adds in 1 Tim 3:16 ἀπο τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτῶν *apo tōn ophthalmōn autōn* “From their eyes” ἀπο *apo* with ablative case.

- 10] And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

“...looked stedfastly toward heaven”: πορευομένου αὐτοῦ *poreuomenou autou*: Genitive absolute of present middle participle. They saw him slipping away from their eyes as the cloud bore him away (i.e., trans-dimensional?)

“...two men”: Moses and Elijah? They are seen in Mt 17...And in Rev 11? Perhaps also in Gen 18? We don’t know for sure who these men are in this scene, but it is an interesting thought. Two is the number of witness and it may be nothing more than that.

- 11] Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

“...this same Jesus”: The personal name assures them that Jesus will always be in heaven as our personal friend and divine Saviour.

“...in like manner as ye have seen him go”: They gave us this interesting prophecy that apparently, Jesus will come in the same way He left! He will come in a cloud, and when His foot touches the Mount of Olives there will be an earthquake, and it will split (Zech 14:4).

A Man on the Throne

We must not overlook the teaching of one great truth assailed so much in our times by “higher” critics and infidels. The Lord Jesus Christ passed through the heavens with a real glorified human body, a body of flesh and bones, and went *with that body* to a literal place, the Throne of God, where He sat down and where He is now “the Man” in the ultimate Glory.

The denial of this fact, so universal in our day, strikes at the very foundation of the Gospel, our salvation and our heavenly Hope. This great truth that the Lord left bodily on His own and bodily returned to the Father is indisputably seen in this account of His ascension. There is a *Man* on the Throne of the Universe.

The “Blessed Hope”?

The (2nd) Coming of the Lord is His coming to establish His rule upon the earth (Dan 7:14; Rev 1:7). When He comes in like manner as He went up, His Saints come *with Him* (Col 3:4; 2 Thess 1:10). The Blessed Hope of the church is to meet Him in the air and *not to see Him coming in the clouds of heaven*.

- 12] Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey.

A Sabbath Day’s walk was about 3,000 feet or a bit more than half a mile (cf. Ex 16:29; Num 35:5). The top of Olivet is 6 furlongs or 3/4 of a mile.

- 13] And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James.

Large groups normally would meet in upper stories because the largest rooms were upstairs (cf. Acts 20:8-9). The lower stories had smaller rooms so that their walls would bear the weight of the upper stories.

The disciples are listed here. Note that Bartholomew and Nathaniel are two names for the same guy. Philip is the apostle (not the deacon who will be featured in Acts 8, etc.) Thomas is the skeptic.

- 14] These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

“With his brethren”: Jesus did have brothers and sisters (Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3). John 7:5 notes that they did not believe in Him, yet after His resurrection two of them become very prominent, James and Jude.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, was there. Her reputation has now been cleared: it was now obvious that Jesus was the Son of God, and virgin born, as she had claimed (cf. Ps 69:8-12). Mary (Jesus’ mother) is praying *with* them to the Father; they were *NOT* praying to Mary! And this is the last time we read of her (except for John’s personal letter; cf. 2 John).

Scholars are divided as to where Chapter 2 happens, some feel that because of this verse, it happened in the Upper Room. Other scholars believe that while they abode here, they had their meetings in the Temple. One reason for the Temple stance is that it would have to be a place where you could baptize 3000 people, that would be a bit tough in the Upper Room.

- 15] And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

“Tell Peter *and* the disciples...” (Mk 16:7). He was reinstated later at the breakfast by the sea (Jn 21:15-21).

- 16] Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

“...this scripture must needs have been fulfilled”: Peter quotes from Ps 69:25; 109:8 in v.20.

- 17] For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.
18] Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

Cf. Zech 11:12-13. Note the betrayal for thirty pieces of silver and that the money would end up in the hands of the Potter. Jesus said of Judas, “Better for him had he not been born.”

- 19] And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

“Aceldama”: It is called “the field of blood” for two different reasons:

- 1) Because it was bought with blood money (Zech 11:13).
- 2) Because that is where Judas hung himself and his blood was spilled; (his girdle—or whatever he used—apparently broke and he fell on the rocks below, Cf. Mt 27:5).

- 20] For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.

Peter quotes from Ps 69:25; Ps 109:8 (LXX, from the Septuagint version). Peter argues from the Scriptures that Judas’ place (his office) is to be filled as there is to be twelve and not eleven. Twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Mt 19:27-28).

- 21] Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,
22] Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

Peter assumes that it must be someone who had been there for the whole tour of duty.

- 23] And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.
24] And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

Note that they preceded the lot with prayer...

- 25] That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

“...his own place”: (Some make much of this allusion...)

- 26] And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Proverbs 16:33 ordains the use of the lot in the Old Testament. Often when they had something to decide they would cast lots:

- The choice of the scapegoat on *Yom Kippur*;
- When Joshua conquered the land, they cast lots to divide the land;
- When Jonah was selected by a lot among the sailors.

Many scholars believe that this was a gigantic mistake because they believe that the one God had appointed was Paul, who was yet to surface. So many scholars view Paul as the twelfth apostle and not Matthias.

Acts 2:24 speaks of “the eleven,” and not “the twelve.”

Also Paul wrote 14 epistles, nine of them begin with the defense of his apostleship. For example, Galatians 1:1, and also Romans, both of the Corinthian letters, Ephesians, all start off by Paul having to establish his apostleship.

We must not forget that the Lord had previously “breathed” on them and imparted the Spirit to them (Jn 20:22). Remember also that the Lord had opened up their minds to understand the Scriptures (Lk 24:45). When Peter referred to Psalms 69:25 and 109:8, he was not doing this on his own, but was being led by the Spirit of God.

However, others appropriately point out that Paul was clearly appointed apostle of the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; Rom 11:13; 15:16).

Twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Mt 19:27-28). Twelve is the number of the Kingdom.

Paul could not have “filled up the ranks” because he could never have met the divine qualifications laid down in Acts 1:21–22:

- Paul was not baptized by John the Baptist;
- He did not travel with the Apostles when Jesus was with them on earth; and, though he saw the glorified Christ,
- Paul was not a witness of the Resurrection as were the original Apostles.

Paul made it clear that he was not to be classified with the Twelve (1 Cor 15:8; Gal 1:15–24). And the Twelve knew it. In fact, they refused to admit Paul into the Jerusalem fellowship until Barnabas came to his rescue! (Acts 9:26–27).

The 12 Apostles ministered primarily to the twelve tribes of Israel, while Paul was sent to the Gentiles (Gal 2:1–10). I don’t believe Paul was meant to be the twelfth apostle. Peter and the other believers were in the will of God when they selected Matthias, and God gave His endorsement to Matthias by empowering him with the same Spirit that was given to the other men whom Jesus had personally selected (Acts 2:1–4, 14).

It was necessary that twelve men witness at Pentecost to the twelve tribes of Israel, and also that twelve men be prepared to sit on twelve thrones to judge the twelve tribes (Lk 22:28–30).

Next Session

Read Acts Chapter 2.

Acts Session 2 Chapter 2

Overview	
Chapter 1	Chapter 5
– Ascension & marching orders	– Ananias & Sapphira
– Appointment of Matthias	– 2 nd Persecution
Chapter 2	Chapter 6
– Pentecost	– First Deacons
– Peter's 1 st Sermon	– 3 rd Persecution
Chapter 3	Chapter 7
– Lame man healed	– Stephen's Address to Sanhedrin
– Peter's 2 nd Sermon	– First Martyr
Chapter 4	Chapter 8
– 1 st Persecution	– 4 th Persecution (by Saul)
– Peter's address to the Sanhedrin	– Philip & the Ethiopian Treasurer

The Holy Spirit Descends

On the Feast of Pentecost according to the promise. Peter explains: “This is that...” (Joel 2). The mystical “Church” begins...

Pentecost

Pentecost is one of the seven Feasts of Moses (Lev 23). Three occur in the first month of the ecclesiastical year: Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, and Firstfruits; three occur in the seventh month: Feast of Trumpets, Yom Kippur, Feast of Tabernacles; leaving one which happened between, actually 50 days after Firstfruits: Feast of Weeks (or also called Feast of Pentecost). Pentecost means “Fifty.” Seven sevens plus one (Lev 23:9-22).

Each feast had several roles besides their ceremonial role. Each of the feasts had a historical commemorative effect and also a prophetic role.

For a complete study of the feasts of Moses, see our Briefing Package, *The Feasts of Israel*.

The Feast of Firstfruits is celebrated the day after the Sabbath after Passover. Passover is the 14th day of Nisan and that could be any day of the week. After Passover there is a Sabbath, the day after that Sabbath is the Feast of Firstfruits. (This would be our Sunday).

The Feast of Firstfruits was prophetic of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:23). Jesus was resurrected on the morning when they were celebrating the Firstfruits in the Temple.

The first three feasts in the first month speak of Jesus Christ's first coming. The three feasts in the seventh month relate to Jesus' second coming. In between there is the Feast of Pentecost.

Every able-bodied Jewish male was required to be in Jerusalem to celebrate these three festival seasons, if it were at all possible. Thus, in this chapter, because it was the Feast of Pentecost, Jerusalem was crowded with people there to celebrate the Feast.

The Feasts of Israel	
The Spring Feasts	(1st Month: Nisan)
– Passover	1 st Advent
– Feast of Unleavened Bread	
– Feast of First Fruits	
Feast of Weeks	?
The Fall Feasts	(7th Month: Tishri)
– Feast of Trumpets	2 nd Advent
– Yom Kippur	
– Feast of Tabernacles	

Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty:

Deuteronomy 16:16

And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete: Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days;

Leviticus 23:15,16

Feast of Weeks : *Shavuot*

- “Counting the Omer” (49 + 1 days). Always on a Sunday.
- One of three compulsory (Deut 16:16).
- Only use of *Leavened Bread*! Two loaves: (Jew & Gentile?)
- Prophetic: The Birth of the Church (Acts 2).

The Feast of Pentecost anticipates the Church. The Church is the Lord’s Body of believers. One would start a study of the Church in this chapter—this is where it makes its first appearance.

Note that Pentecost is 50 days after the day after the Sabbath. *That puts it at 50 days after the Resurrection!* Pentecost is measured from and relates to, not the Lord’s death, but His Resurrection (Lev 23:15-17).

Beware of “Exclusionary Truth”

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable...
2 Timothy 3:16

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God...
Matthew 4:4

Whatsoever was written aforetime was written for our learning that we, through the comfort or the Scriptures (OT) might have hope.
Romans 15:4

Examples of “exclusionary truth” include “Replacement Theology” and “Hyperdispensationalism.”

Two Loaves, *with* Leaven

On the Feast of Firstfruits, the priest waved a sheaf of grain before the Lord; but on Pentecost, he presented two loaves of bread. Why?

Because at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit baptized the believers and united them into one body.

The Jewish believers received this baptism at Pentecost, and the Gentile believers in the home of Cornelius (Acts 10: 44-48; 11:15–17; Cf. Eph 2:11–22).

Two Loaves, *with* Leaven. This explains the presence of two loaves of bread (1 Cor 10:17).

Leaven

At Pentecost, a new meat offering is to be offered with LEAVENED bread! All the other feasts and offerings are required to deal with UNLEAVENED bread. In Exodus and Leviticus, leaven is not to be in the house during these feasts, except Pentecost.

The idea of leaven is always used negatively. Levitically, leaven is a type (or symbol) of sin because it corrupts by puffing up. What is the source of all sin? Pride. God hates pride. Remember that it is through pride that Lucifer fell (1 Cor 5:6-8).

In Genesis 18, three measures of meal is offered as a meal offering. From that point on, three measures of meal is a fellowship offering, always to be unleavened.

In the prophetic picture of Pentecost, thus the Church, we have leaven as an image or symbol. Unfortunately, the Church is not perfect, and leaven is an appropriate type. (Study the Seven Letters to Seven Churches in our *Revelation Commentary* or in our Briefing Package, *Letters to Seven Churches*.)

Acts 2

- 1] And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

The Feast of Pentecost prophesied the advent of the Church, and the start of the Church occurred on the very day they were celebrating this Feast!

- 2] And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

“...a mighty wind”: Cf. John 3:8, reference to the Holy Spirit and the wind (Hebrew= *ruach*, Greek= *pneuma*). This wind is much wilder, like a hurricane, so strong that it caused attention throughout the town. Tongues will be discussed in Chapter 10.

- 3] And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

Several times in the Old Testament God displayed Himself in the form of flames (Gen 15:17; Ex 3:2-6; 13:21-22; 19:18; 40:38; cf. Mt 3:11; Lk 3:16).

- 4] And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The filling with the Holy Spirit is separate from the baptism of the Spirit. The Spirit's baptism occurs once for each believer *at* the moment of salvation (cf. 11:15-16; Rom 6:3; 1 Cor 12:13; Col 2:12), but the Spirit's filling may occur not only at salvation but also on a number of occasions *after* salvation (Acts 4:8, 31; 6:3, 5; 7:55; 9:17; 13:9, 52).

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

As Jesus predicted:	Acts 1:4,5
1) Regenerated: "Born Again"	John 3:5
2) Indwelt by the Spirit	Romans 8:9
3) Sealed by the Spirit	Ephesians 1:13,14; 4:30
4) Baptized of the Spirit	
– foretold by John the Baptist	Luke 3:16
– foretold by Jesus	Acts 1:5
– and ever since	1 Cor 12:13

Terminology

The *baptism* of the Holy Spirit is not a command given to us. It is not an experience. It is an act of God whereby the believer in Jesus Christ is indwelt by the Spirit of God, sealed unto the day of redemption, and placed into the church, the body of Christ, by the baptism of the Spirit.

The *filling* of the Spirit of God is the enablement for service. We are *commanded to be filled with the Spirit* (Eph 5:18).

The Spirit Came

The Holy Spirit had been active prior to Pentecost and had worked in:

- Creation Gen 1:1–2
- in Old Testament history Judg 6:34; 1 Sam 16:13
- in the life and ministry of Jesus Lk 1:30–37; 4:1,14; Acts 10:38

However, now there would be two changes:

- 1) The Spirit would dwell in people and not just come on them, and His presence would be permanent, not temporary (Jn 14:16–17);
- 2) The Spirit could not have come sooner, for it was essential that Jesus die, be raised from the dead, and return to heaven before

the Spirit could be given (Jn 7:37–39; 16:7ff). Remember the Jewish calendar in Lev 23: Passover, Firstfruits, and then Pentecost.

- 5] And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

There are 16 nations listed here, yet there were more than are listed. Remember that all were there as it was required for the Feast of Pentecost (To lift from men the curse of Babel?).

- 6] Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

"Noised abroad" - does not mean the rumor mill, they heard the hurricane! It was the wind that caused attention.

"Multitude came together" - came together because they heard the wind.
"Confounded" - because each heard it in their own language.

- 7] And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?

"...all ... Galileans": obviously the eleven were, but there was 120 there, so there must have been more down from Galilee.

- 8] And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

"...we every man in our own tongue": Not unknown languages...

- 9] Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,
10] Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,
11] Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

"Asia": Not what we now consider as the continent; Asia referred to a specific Roman province.

The group was speaking of the wonderful works of God. They were praising God! The crowd heard the praise each in their own tongue. This is a different thing than the gift of speaking in tongues, which comes up later.

- 12] And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

“...all amazed”: Pattern of “amazement, perplexity and then criticism” occurs again and again throughout the book. Out of wonder worship is born. When wonder ceases, worship ceases.

13] Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

Peter's First Sermon

Peter's sermon answers their question of “What meanest this?”

This sermon is an intricate masterpiece of organization and is well worth studying carefully. Also in this sermon we can see the infilling of the Holy Spirit of Peter. In the four gospels we see Peter speaking without thinking, but this sermon is presented elegantly and skillfully.

The sermon is not about the Holy Spirit, it is about the Son of God.

Seven “Firsts”

- 1) First Impression
- 2) First Message
- 3) First Opposition
- 4) First Discipline*
- 5) First Persecution
- 6) First Organization (deacons)
- 7) First Martyr: Stephen

* “What meanest this?": Peter's sermon

- 14] But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:
- 15] For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

“...Peter, standing”: Teachers sat, heralds stood. For example, Jesus in Nazareth, He sat down to teach. Peter is standing, he is a herald, he is going to announce something.

“...Ye men of Judea”: Peter is addressing Jews, his whole presentation is aimed in that direction.

- 16] But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

This clause does not mean, “This is *like that*”; it means Pentecost began what Joel had described. However, the prophecies of Joel quoted in Acts 2:19-20 were not fulfilled. They had only begun.

The implication is that the remainder would be fulfilled if Israel would repent. This aspect of contingency will be discussed more fully in our comments on Acts 3:19-23.

- 17] And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:
- 18] And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

“...in the last days”: The scope of this prophecy is far broader than the experience that they had just witnessed. (It has lasted 2000 years...)

Joel 2:28-32

Peter quotes Joel 2:28-32. Peter picks out a verse that is not the earliest nor the latest, but the most crisp passage that deals with the promise of the Holy Spirit. Note that in the Hebrew Bible, this passage is in Chapter 3 (just divided differently); in the Hebrew Bible this passage is a chapter of its own. There is the promise of the Holy Spirit and it is followed by end-time prophecy.

Peter quotes from the Septuagint version (LXX, the Greek translation of the Old Testament). Peter speaks of this event which they just witnessed as being that which was prophesied by Joel. He is not implying that the total prophecy was fulfilled on this day, but that prophecy in Joel *included* that which they had just seen happen. (This also indicates that this phenomena can be expected *during the entire period* climaxing in the cosmic events anticipated in Joel's prophecy.)

The Gifts are for Today!

- 1) Our Lord announces them in John 14-17; without termination!
 - 2) No doctrine to be built upon “completion of the canon”: “That which is perfect is come...” (1 Cor 13:10). The Canon is not complete: Seven thunders uttering their voices not yet recorded (Rev 10:8).
 - 3) Peter's quoting Joel: Joel 2:16-20.
 - 4) One valid example destroys “expositional” rebuttals.
- 19] And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:
- 20] The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:

Has this occurred yet? No. This is obviously speaking of very endtime issues. The Day of Pentecost has been announced. How long does it last? Until the Church is gone.

- 21] And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

This passage destroys every major Hebrew prejudice. If you were Jewish, hearing Peter, you probably would get emotional when you heard Peter talk. Note that this verse says that God will pour out His Spirit on ALL flesh, not just Israel... meaning the Gentiles as well as Israel.

Seven Points

Jesus is the primary subject (not the Holy Spirit).

- 1) Naming the Person: "Jesus of Nazareth." (v.22)
- 2) Approved (demonstrated) of God as a perfect Man.
- 3) Referred to the death of this person. (v.23)
- 4) This person raised from the dead. (v.24)
- 5) ...exalted.
- 6) Received the fulfillment of the ancient promise of Jehovah (Luke 24:49; Act 1:4; Joel 2:28).
- 7) "Poured forth this": The Spirit.

Furthermore, the idea of prophesying is no longer limited to the office of the prophet. They were used to having a prophet, a priest. Joel says "Your sons and daughters shall prophesy." It doesn't denote just the Levites, or those ordained in the office of a prophet. Even servants and handmaidens. To the Jews this must have been very strange.

- 22] Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

1) "Jesus of Nazareth"

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| 1) Philip first designated | Jn 1:45 |
| 2) Demon possessed man | Mk 1:24 |
| 3) Triumphal Entry | Mt 21:11 |
| 4) Pilate: affixed to the cross | Jn 19:19 |
| 5) Resurrection: angel at tomb | Mk 16:6 |
| 6 & 7) Two men: Emmaus Road | Lk 24:19 |
| 8) Peter - the new beginning! | |

2) "Approved"

Approved (demonstrated) of God as a perfect Man. "I do nothing of Myself..." God demonstrated as approved by God through miracles and wonders and signs to you...

- 23] Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:
 24] Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

3) Referred to the death of this person.

4) This person raised from the dead.

The resurrection of the Lord is a basic doctrine in Acts v. 32; 3:15, 26; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 33-34, 37; 17:31; 26:23. Here is another indication that He is the Messiah for it was impossible for death to keep its hold on Him (Jn 20:9).

- 25] For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

	Psalm 16:8-11:	
Life:	Psalm 16:8,9a	(Acts 2:26a)
Death:	Psalm 16:9b, 10	(Acts 2:26b,27)
Resurrection:	Psalm 16:11	(Acts 2:28)

I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Psalm 16:8-11

- 26] Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:
 27] Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

	Psalm 16:8-11:	
Life:	Psalm 16:8,9a	(Acts 2:26a)
Death:	Psalm 16:9b, 10	(Acts 2:26b,27)
Resurrection:	Psalm 16:11	(Acts 2:28)

- 28] Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

Threefold Victory Over Sin

- 1) Originating evil (v. 25): mystery of evil in the universe is older than man (Isa 14; Ezek 28).
- 2) Evil from without: "I have not (been) moved" (v.25).
- 3) Assuming responsibility: "rest in hope..." death cannot hold Him (Jn 10:17,18).

29] Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

Peter's point is that this psalm cannot apply to David because it speaks of his not seeing corruption. Death has no hold on him.

30] Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;

"...he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne": When?

31] He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

32] This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

This could not be David: it is prophecy of Jesus Christ. If you really understand the nature of Jesus, the concept of Him suffering death is unthinkable.

33] Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

5) **...exalted.**

6) **Received the fulfillment of the ancient promise of Jehovah (Lk 24:49; Act 1:4; Joel 2:28)**

7) **"Poured forth this": The Spirit.**

Jesus Christ was promised the Holy Spirit, from the Father (Jn 16; Joel 2:28ff). So Peter is saying that what the people are seeing is Jesus Christ receiving the promise of the Father being fulfilled; i.e., The Holy Spirit. *Peter's central theme is the study of the person of Jesus Christ: His role, mission, character, and nature of the Messiah.*

34] For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

35] Until I make thy foes thy footstool.



"Until I make thy foes thy footstool": He goes on concluding the fact that Psalm 16 did not apply to David. Psalm 110:1. "Jehovah said to Adonai..." This is the quote that Jesus used to totally confuse the Pharisees in Matthew 22:41-45.

"YHWH said unto Adonai..." The grammar of the possessive hangs on a single yot! Cf. Mt 5:18.

Jesus said this in Mt 22:42-45. Note in Matthew that Jesus had just established himself as the final political, theological and ethical authority:

Political:	Pharisees, Herodians	Tribute
Theological:	Sadducees	Resurrection
Ethical:	Lawyers	Shema

"Until," not while. Christ's enemies WILL be made His footstool post-rapture, in Rev 6-19 (we are still in Rev 1-3). [For a study of the pre-tribulation and post-tribulation views, do see our Expository Commentary on *Revelation* or our Briefing Package, *From Here to Eternity*.] These verses include four proofs of the Lord's Resurrection and Ascension:

- 1) The prophecy of Psalm 16:8-11 and the presence of David's tomb (Acts 2:25-31);
- 2) The witnesses of the Resurrection (v. 32);
- 3) The supernatural events of Pentecost (v. 33);
- 4) The Ascension of David's greater Son (Ps 110:1; Acts 2:34-35).

On five occasions in Acts some of the apostles said they were witnesses of the resurrected Christ (Acts 2:32; 3:15; 5:32; 10:39-41; 13:30-31). They knew whereof they spoke!

36] Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

With the first of seven summary progress reports (cf. Acts 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:30-31), Luke brought this section of Acts to a close.

The Mystery of Enoch

- Oldest Prophecy uttered by a prophet—it is of the Second Coming of Christ.
- Three groups of people facing the judgment of the Flood:
 - 1) Those that *perished* in the flood
 - 2) Those that were *preserved* through the time of the flood
 - 3) Those that were *removed* prior to the flood

Was Enoch born on *Shavout*? Was Enoch removed prior to the judgment on *his birthday*? The Church was “born” on *Shavout* (Acts 2). Will the Church be removed on *its* birthday? Will the Jewish “clock” restart on the same feast day that it was stopped?

[Sources: Tosefta Sotah 11. 7-8; Babli 13b; Kiddushim 38a; Seder ‘Olam 10. q.v. Louis Ginzberg, The Legends of the Jews, 6 vols., Vol5, p.161, Jewish Publication Society of America, 5728-1968, Philadelphia PA.]

Next Session

Read Acts Chapters 3 and 4.

Acts Session 3 Chapters 3 and 4

Overview	
Chapter 1	Chapter 5
– Ascension & marching orders	– Ananias & Sapphira
– Appointment of Matthias	– 2 nd Persecution
Chapter 2	Chapter 6
– Pentecost	– First Deacons
– Peter’s 1 st Sermon	– 3 rd Persecution
Chapter 3	Chapter 7
– Lame man healed	– Stephen’s Address to Sanhedrin
– Peter’s 2 nd Sermon	– First Martyr
Chapter 4	Chapter 8
– 1 st Persecution	– 4 th Persecution (by Saul)
– Peter’s address to the Sanhedrin	– Philip & the Ethiopian Treasurer

Acts 3

- 1] Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.

Peter and John seem to be paired up in these early chapters. It is interesting to note that they are mentioned 7 times in the book of Acts. Also interesting is that John seems to be subordinate to Peter, it is always “Peter and John.”

- 2] And a certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;

We find out later that this man was lame for 38 years (John 5). This is the contrast we have here—a beautiful gate of the temple and a man lame from his mother’s womb. He was there to beg for alms. This was the way he lived, of course.

- 3] Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.
- 4] And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.

This shows us that after the Day of Pentecost, Peter and John still went up to the temple to pray. All the believers there in Jerusalem were Israelites or proselytes, and they continued to go to the temple to pray. The man is asking for alms, not to be healed. It was not the man’s faith that healed him.

- 5] And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.
- 6] Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.

(“Jesus Christ of Nazareth” appears in the Book of Acts seven times.)

- 7] And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.
- 8] And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

“...feet and ankle bones”: Feet = base or heel; anklebone (Gr. *sphuron*, only here). Very technical term, but we should not be surprised as Luke who is writing this was a doctor by profession.

In John 5, the lame man who was healed the Pharisees sought to kill (Jn 16, 18). Later on we find that this situation gave rise to an inquiry by the Sanhedrin. The inquiry never denies the reality of the miracle,

they couldn't: the man was *standing there*. Two ideas embodied in this miracle. One is that it is a natural continuity of the work of Jesus Christ. In this case, through the Holy Spirit through Peter and John. So on the one hand it is continuous, it was a continuity of what started in the gospels.

Second, it also was a commencement; it was the beginning; it was the first miracle of the period we call the Church (with indwelling Holy Spirit): from Pentecost onwards.

"In the Name of Jesus Christ"—his declaration, his authority. No evidence in the Scripture of faith on the lame man's part. He was there seeking alms, not healing. Peter asserted the authority of Jesus Christ and he healed him.

What does this have to do with us, you and me? The lameness of humanity is the Church's opportunity. Christianity is not come into the presence of the world's woes to give out doles in order to help bear its limitations. They came to give men life, to put them on their feet and to enable them to do without alms.

They did not just give him an handout, they empowered him. They gave him a gift that canceled disability, communicated ability, and created worship.

- 9] And all the people saw him walking and praising God:
10] And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

There are hyperdispensationalists today who call this another dispensation. It is not different at all. But it is a period of transition. The Lord had said they were to begin at Jerusalem. They were not to begin by going out to the ends of the earth.

Now the kingdom is being offered to Israel again. This will be the final opportunity. What will be some of the identifying marks of the kingdom? One is that the lame shall leap!

*Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing:
for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.*
Isaiah 35:6

- 11] And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

Peter's Second Sermon

Peter's sermon was a response to their amazement. If they understood history they should have expected this. Peter's sermon is very Jewish:

- 1) He is presenting it in the Temple;
 - 2) The very terms of his address are distinctly and uniquely Israel.
- 12] And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

"...Ye men of Israel": He is talking to Jews.

"Why marvel ye...": If strangers were present they should be amazed, but not the Jews. Note he points out that this miracle should *NOT* be ascribed to *them* (Peter and John).

- 13] The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.

"...his Son": the word should actually be translated "his Servant" (cf. Isa 53). Pilate tried to let Jesus go, but the crowd wanted Barabbas. The crowd said of Jesus: "Let his blood be on us and on our children" (Mt 27:25). His blood is on *all of us*, not just the Jews: it is our sins that put Jesus on the Cross.

- 14] But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;
15] And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

"...Prince of life"; ἀρχηγός *archegos* the chief leader; prince; the author or originator. "The one who goes first" is part of the thought behind that. Simon Peter will never preach a sermon without the mention of the Resurrection. Paul won't either. Unfortunately, today there are many sermons preached without any mention of the Resurrection.

Pharisees are the legalists, the literalists. They, to a fault, tried to take every detail of the Law and make a burden out of it. They were the extremists.

Sadducees were the opposite kind, they were the modernists, the liberals. They did not believe in the resurrection, and did not believe in angels, and did not believe in the supernatural. (That's why they were "sad, you see.")

So during the life of Christ His conflict seemed to be in large measure with the Pharisees, because that was the power ruling block at the time. In the time shift here between that era and now, the primary power group were the Sadducees in the Sanhedrin. They were the ones that got unglued with a display of the supernatural. Certainly, the healing was a problem; but even more so the presentation that Jesus Christ rose from the dead was something that the Sadducees clearly could not handle. It went completely contrary to their entire position.

- 16] And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.
- 17] And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.

Peter is saying that they are accountable, responsible, yet it was done through ignorance. Remember Jesus prayed, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do..." The significance behind this idea is that ignorance makes the difference between premeditated murder and manslaughter. For manslaughter the remedy is a City of Refuge (Num 35:11-28).

- 18] But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.
- 19] Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

"...therefore": All that Peter has said up to this point, supports what he is about to say. "Therefore," because of this...

- 20] And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:
- 21] Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

"...times of restitution of all things": A phrase of the "Jubilee" year:

- All debts forgiven;
- Alienated lands returned to their owners;
- All slaves go free.

The Jubilee Year (Lev 25:8-55; 27:16-25; Cf. Num 36:4)

There was the concept of a Sabbatical year; a week of years (i.e., 7 years) like a decade being 10 years (Lev 25:1-7). After the 7th Sabbatical year (7 X 7 years) plus one, is the Jubilee year. The Babylonian captivity was due to the failure of Israel to keep the Sabbatical year (2

Chr 36:21). For 490 years Israel failed to keep Lev 25! Thus, God used Nebuchadnezzar as his mechanism of judgment and took them slaves into captivity for 70 years to the very day. [For a complete study of this prophecy, see our Briefing Package, *Daniel's 70 Weeks*.]

When is the next Jubilee Year? The rabbis can't agree on the formulas to figure it out! The restitution of all things:

- 1) All debtors forgiven;
- 2) Slaves released from bondage;
- 3) Liberty to all captives;
- 4) All families reunited;
- 5) Land reverts to original owners.

יָבֵל *Yobel* a ram's horn. It became synonym for the year and for this special kind of trumpet. The Trump (Isa 27:12-13; Joel 2:15-16; Isa 26:19-21; 1 Thess 4; 1 Cor 15). There is going to be a trumpet which is going to cause some interesting things to occur. There is a major commandment upon Israel by God that relates to trumpets, but it is a different word, the *Yobel*, the Jubilee trumpet.

The Jubilee year starts in the seventh month. The Ecclesiastical year starts with Passover (the 14th of Nisan is Passover, a Mosaic Feast), and Nisan is the first month. In the 7th month of the Ecclesiastical year, Tishri is the 1st month of the Civil year.

Civil Year	Ecclesiastical Year
1. Tishri	1. Nisan
2. Heshvan	2. Iyar
3. Kislev	3. Sivan
4. Tevet	4. Tammuz
5. Shevat	5. Av
6. Adar	6. Elul
7. Nisan	7. Tishri
8. Iyar	8. Heshvan
9. Sivan	9. Kislev
10. Tammuz	10. Tevet
11. Av	11. Shevat
12. Elul	12. Adar

The Sabbatical year would be the first of Tishri, *Rosh HaShannah*. After the 7th Sabbatical year (7 X 7 years) plus one, is the Jubilee year. The Jubilee year would begin on *Yom Kippur*, the 10th of Tishri.

Why does the Jubilee Year start on Yom Kippur, 10 days *after* the beginning of the year? The Sabbatical year and the Jubilee year make no sense until the Israelites are in the land; i.e., Joshua. For a complete study of the book of Joshua, do see our Expositional Commentary series on *Joshua*. The Jubilee year is tied to Joshua's conquest of the land.

Jesus opened his ministry in Luke 4:16-20, quoting from Isa 61:1-2. Note that Jesus stopped at a comma. Jesus used some examples that got the crowd upset (Lk 4:25-27). He was teaching them the doctrine of election. Each example He uses is a *Gentile*.

It appears that this was about the 29th or 30th Jubilee (roughly about 1500 years since Joshua conquered Canaan).

The 70th Jubilee

We may be about to enter the 70th Jubilee. Is this significant prophetically? Forty is the number of testing; the Church has been on the earth approximately 40 Jubilee years. 70 is the number of fulfillment, Jesus opened his ministry at about the 30th Jubilee year. That puts us about the 70th Jubilee year!

However, we are not sure which year will be the Jubilee year. The rabbis have lost count as to which Jubilee we are at. You will see charts, none of them agree, as to when the Jubilee year is. It becomes very technical, with part of the problem being do you count the 50th year as part of the next seven.... In any case we may be approaching the 70th Jubilee...

See Rom 8:19-22. There is more to Redemption than just you and me. The Redemption is what the Bible is all about. The whole creation was subject to the curse and the bondage of corruption, so it is not surprising that God would link a prophetic horizon to the land.

Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

Romans 8:21,22

“...bondage of corruption”: Is entropy a result of the curse in Gen 3? Will the curse be lifted in the Millennial Kingdom?

- 22] For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

(Peter ascribes Deuteronomy to Moses.)

- 23] And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.
24] Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

Samuel was regarded as the next great prophet after Moses.

- 25] Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

“In thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed”—not just the Israelites. The main thrust of Peter's sermon is that this is the natural outcome of their history. To the extent that they understood the Old Testament, they should not be surprised.

- 26] Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

Acts 3:20,21

“...times of restitution of all things...”: Cf. The Jubilee Year.

Acts 4

- 1] And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,

The Pharisees were the legalists. The Sadducees were the rationalists, the modernists; they did not believe in the resurrection. Pre-resurrection opposition was from the Pharisees. *Post-resurrection opposition was from the Sadducees.*

At this time the power group is the Sadducees. They were the aristocrats, the money people. They had a strong emphasis on free will. They were more oriented toward the ethics, rather than the theology. They held the Pharisees in contempt.

- 2] Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

The Sadducees were particularly upset with the resurrection. The Pharisees were not as upset, while they did not want to acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the whole emphasis on His resurrection is something that the Pharisees tended to side with and later you will see Paul taking advantage of that. But for the Sadducees the idea of the resurrection goes against everything that they believe.

- 3] And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.
4] Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

Most assume that this 5,000 is 2,000 on top of the 3,000 from Chapter 2 (not bad for a chapter!). It is interesting that many of Pharisees (legalists) came to faith in Jesus; however, nowhere can I find a record of a Sadducee (liberal) coming to faith in Jesus.

- 5] And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,
6] And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

Annas was of the Aaronic priesthood, but he was deposed by the Romans, and Caiaphas was put in his place. Caiaphas was the acting high priest, but appointed by the Romans; he was not of the line of Aaron.

Caiaphas was in power for the Romans, but not really accepted by the Jews. Annas is still of powerful influence, although not officially in power. Annas and Caiaphas are two men who condemned Jesus to die.

- 7] And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?

The Sanhedrin had 71 members; 24 was a quorum. They are following the injunction of Deuteronomy 13: that if there is a teacher doing miracles, the question is, Is he drawing them towards or against *YHWH*? They are following what Deut 13 tells them to check the prophets.

- 8] Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

Notice that Peter is *filled* with the Holy Spirit. He wasn't baptized by the Holy Spirit at this time—that had already been accomplished. However he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Note the contrast with Peter prior to Pentecost: previously, he always seemed to have “foot-in-mouth” disease! Now, he is well organized, and amazingly effective and “on point”...

- 9] If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

He is filled with the Holy Spirit and he is saying the right thing: “Are we on trial for the good deed we did for the sick man?” That is the searching question!

- 10] Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.
11] This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

Peter is quoting Psalm 118:22. This is the psalm that they sang at the Triumphal entry, “Blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord,” the *Hallel* Psalm.

Peter is highlighting the Messianic reference. He is pointing out that this miracle is tying Jesus Christ and the worship of Jehovah. (Answering their question in v. 7).

“This is the stone”: Jesus had said, “...Upon this rock I will build my church ...” (Mt 16:18). Now Peter says, “This is the stone.” What is the stone? Is it the church, or is it Simon Peter? Neither. It is the Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth. What is the rock? “*The rock is Christ.*” (1 Cor 10:4).

- 12] Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

A very key verse. *Only one way! [If there is any other way, then Jesus' three prayers in Gethsemane went unanswered!]*

- 13] Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

“...ignorant”: This really implies a common, or plebeian. Not ignorant in the sense of dumb, but rather common, of the street.

“... they had been with Jesus”: That is always the impression given if you are filled with the Spirit.

- 14] And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

If you'd been healed wouldn't you be standing with them? They never deny the miracle. They never deny the resurrection. They don't challenge it: they can't deny the miracle as the guy is standing right there!

- 15] But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,
16] Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it.

Later they consult Gamaliel for advice on how to handle it.

- 17] But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.
18] And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.
19] But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.
20] For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.
21] So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done.
22] For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.
23] And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.
24] And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:

“...Lord”: absolute ruler, final sovereignty. A prayer meeting of praise.

“...hast made heaven, and earth...”: Different opening... why?

The Sadducees are materialists. They are challenged by the rationalists. The Sadducees had put their faith in the material world. So these are praying to God who made the very material world which the Sadducees relied upon.

- 25] Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?

Cf. Psalm 2—The Trinity speaking: Verse 3, world speaking: “we have no king but Caesar.” Verse 4-6: the Father speaking. Verse 7-9: the Son speaking. Verse 10-12, the Holy Spirit is speaking.

Psalm 2

The Voice of the Nations	2:1-3
The Voice of the Father	2:4-6
The Voice of the Son	2:7-9
The Voice of the Spirit	2:10-12

The Voice of the Nations: Psalm 2:1-3

Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, “Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.”

Psalm 2:1-3

When did this all begin? Over in the fourth chapter of the Book of Acts, when the first persecution broke out against the church, we're told that the apostles, Peter and John, after they had been threatened, returned back to the church to give their report:

And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

Acts 4:24-27

Here is this movement, beginning when Pilate joined up with the religious rulers and Herod in order to put Jesus to death. This is a movement against God and Christ and it is heading for a climax...

“Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us”: What “bands” or “cords”?

- Marriage
- Heterosexuality
- The Ten Commandments
- The rule of law... the move toward lawlessness... and the man of lawlessness!

The Voice of the Father: Psalm 2:4-6

He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall He speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his

sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

Psalm 2:4-6

I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right. Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save. Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

Isaiah 45:19-25

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:5-11

The Voice of the Son: Psalm 2:7-9

I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

Psalm 2:7-9

“The Rod of Iron”

And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

Revelation 2:27

And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

Revelation 12:5

And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Revelation 19:15,16

The Voice of the Spirit: Psalm 2:10-12

Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Psalm 2:10-12

The Voice of the Spirit

- **The Mind** (Psalm 2:10): “Be wise...be instructed!” The “counsel of the ungodly” has led the ungodly astray (Ps 1:1). The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God (1 Cor 1:18–31).
- **The Heart** (Psalm 2:11): “Serve Him!”
- **The Will** (Psalm 2:12): “Kiss the Son!” Reconciled to the world by the Cross (2 Cor 5:14–21). Righteousness & Peace (Ps 85:10); “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21).

26] The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.

27] For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

“...holy child”: *παῖς pais* a child; a servant, an attendant, servant, spec. a king’s attendant:

“Herod”: the Hebrew authority.

“Pilate”: the Roman authority.

“The nations”: the Gentiles.

“People of Israel”: All sides of the coin: Jew and Gentile, ruler and group.

28] For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

Whatever was decided was determined before to be done. The crucifixion of Christ did not surprise God, it was ordained before the creation of Adam. Their prayer is based on: 1) The Sovereignty of God 2) The Wisdom of God 3) The Active Government of God. They are conscious of the danger, but they take it and they give it to God.

- 29] And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,
- 30] By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

“...holy child”: should be rendered “servant.”

- 31] And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

“...with boldness”: the sign of the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

- 32] And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

This is an intimate, totally unified atmosphere. Before one undertakes this sort of pooling of belongings, note that they were already very intimate. Also, this does cause some problems later. (We are still fighting with our flesh, Romans 7.)

- 33] And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.

This intimacy did bear fruit. They were of one mind, one soul. They were so effective, not because they pooled their goods, but because they were that unified as a powerful fellowship.

Was the voluntary sharing among believers the cause of subsequent poverty of the Church at Jerusalem? Result: Ananias and Saphira? No compulsion, rules, regulations....but rather selfless *koinonia*.

- 34] Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,
- 35] And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.
- 36] And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus,
- 37] Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Joses Barnabas: His property was in Cyprus, and it was premium land. He put the proceeds in Jerusalem, which was in deep trouble. The city was ready to be judged. He was the brother of Mary, the wealthy mother of John Mark; probably, Mark's uncle.

“Nabas” = consolation, paraclete. We have now been introduced to Barnabas. We will hear more of him later.

Next Session

Read Acts Chapters 5 and 6.

Acts Session 4 Chapters 5 and 6

Introduction

The “Acts of the Apostles” is an unfortunate label because there are only two apostles that feature prominently in the book. The Chapters 1-12 feature Peter, while Chapters 13-28 feature Paul.

The Book of Acts is a fragmentary, incomplete book. In the conceptual sense we can say that it is still continuing, as it ushers in the Church, the *ecclesia*, the “called-out ones,” and this is still continuing. Acts covers the first 40 years; Revelation Chapters 2 & 3, the next 2000+.

Purpose

A purpose of Luke in writing Acts was to show how it is God's intention for His Millennial Kingdom to include a population of believers taken from Jews and Gentiles during this Age. It includes both Peter and Paul as prime characters: Peter the minister to the circumcised, and Paul to the uncircumcised.

Seven Progress Reports

1. “And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47).
2. “So the Word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly” (Acts 6:7).
3. “Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria ... was strengthened; and [it was] encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord” (Acts 9:31).
4. “But the Word of God continued to increase and spread” (Acts 12:24).
5. “So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers” (Acts 16:5).

6. "In this way the Word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power" (Acts 19:20).
7. "Paul ... welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 28:30-31).

Overview	
Chapter 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ascension & marching orders – Appointment of Matthias 	Chapter 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ananias & Sapphira – 2nd Persecution
Chapter 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Pentecost – Peter's 1st Sermon 	Chapter 6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – First Deacons – 3rd Persecution
Chapter 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lame man healed – Peter's 2nd Sermon 	Chapter 7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Stephen's Address to Sanhedrin – First Martyr
Chapter 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 1st Persecution – Peter's address to the Sanhedrin 	Chapter 8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 4th Persecution (by Saul) – Philip & the Ethiopian Treasurer

At the end of Chapter 4 we were introduced to a man by the name of Barnabas. He will be before us again. He was the first missionary partner of the apostle Paul when they went into the difficult Galatian area, and yet God marvelously blessed their ministry there.

Barnabas had given quite a sum of money to the church. He had made a generous contribution, and everyone was talking about it. Remember that in the early church they had all things common.

Acts 5

- 1] But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,
- 2] And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

"But": The adverse conjunction connects us to the verses before. The Church has never been harmed from without; it is perpetually harmed and hindered by perils from within. "It is more blessed to give than to receive": Jesus' words in Acts 20:35. "I am the Truth."

Whenever Jesus came upon an adulteress, or murderer, His response was always compassion and forgiveness, with one exception. There is one sin that he invariably used the harshest words against: the sin of hypocrisy (cf. Mt 23:13-31; Jn 8:18-19, 41-44, 56-58).

God hates a lie. With Ananias and Sapphira, it appears that their sin was a lie.

- 3] But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?
- 4] Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.
- 5] And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.
- 6] And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.

Peter was probably just as surprised as everyone else. Peter just confronted him with the issue and the guy died!

The error was not the gift, nor the sale of the land. And the error was not in giving it to the Church. The error was playing it one way and presenting it another. Basically, the sin of hypocrisy. There may be something deeper, as v. 3 notes that "Satan had filled thine heart to lie..." This may be a hint of something more than a simple hypocrisy. There is a "sin unto death" (1 Jn 5:16).

- 7] And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.
- 8] And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.
- 9] Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.
- 10] Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.

I believe that Ananias and Sapphira were Christians; however, they forfeited their rewards. There will be substantial diversity among the awards at the Bema Seat (although all present will have been "saved.")

- 11] And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.
- 12] And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

"...church": This is the first appearance of the word.

"...Solomon's Porch": A region of the Temple which has seen a lot of action in the last few chapters.

- 13] And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.
- 14] And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)

“Join himself to them” - probably meaning to the apostles as v.14 notes that more were added to the believers.

- 15] Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

“...the shadow of Peter”: Note—it does not say that the shadow of Peter actually healed them (it might have, but it doesn’t say that). It is descriptive of the attitude of the people, but not necessarily a declaration of a fact.

- 16] There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

Church was obedient	=> Church was Spirit filled.
Church was Spirit filled	=> Church was pure.
Church was pure	=> Church was powerful.

- 17] Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,

This was not the total Sanhedrin, but the Sadducees which were the power group that controlled the Sanhedrin. It was the Pharisees who had led in the persecution against Jesus; but it is the Sadducees who lead the persecution against the early church. The healings were an embarrassment to them as they denied the supernatural.

- 18] And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.
- 19] But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,
- 20] Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

“...the angel”: Should be rendered “an”, not “the”; one of many. [“The Angel of the Lord” is often used in the OT for an appearance of the pre-incarnate Messiah.]

- 21] And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

The council and the senate—the whole group was there.

- 22] But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,
- 23] Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.
- 24] Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.
- 25] Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.
- 26] Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.
- 27] And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,
- 28] Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.

Progress reports through the eyes of the enemy:

- “...ye have filled Jerusalem with your teachings...” (High Priest , Acts 5:28).
- “It is expedient for one man to die for the people.” (Caiaphas in Jn 18:14).
- “Behold I have betrayed innocent blood.” (Judas in Mt 27:4).

- 29] Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

Believers are commanded to obey civil authority—except when it comes in conflict with the commandment of God (Rom 13:1-7).

- 30] The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

Peter never mentions Jesus Christ without blaming them for the crucifixion.

- 31] Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

“...for to give repentance to Israel”: That door is still open to them today...

- 32] And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.
- 33] When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.

“Being a witness” does not mean that you win them over, but that you simply declare the Word of God.

- 34] Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;

Gamaliel wants the apostles excused so that he can talk to the Sanhedrin. This Gamaliel was an outstanding man and greatly respected. (Paul identifies with him as his teacher.)

Gamaliel

Gamaliel ha-zagen, “Gamaliel the Elder”: A highly venerated teacher, mentioned twice in Acts (Acts 5:34; 22:3). He was the head of a large prominent family; he was quoted in the *Mishnah* and was known for his pragmatic counsel. His grandfather may have been Hillel the Elder. Traditions that he embraced Christianity before his death in 70 A.D., however, are without documented foundation.

- 35] And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.
- 36] For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.
- 37] After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

His point was that there were guys who would rise up and get a following; but if God is not behind it, it will fail. If God *is* behind it, you don’t want to stand in His way!

Theudas?

Josephus tells of a Theudas, a magician around A.D. 44 who led a great band of adherents to the Jordan, promising to divide it for an easy passage of the river, but was caught and beheaded by the soldiers of the procurator Fadus [Josephus, *Antiq.* XX.5.1].

Judas the Galilean led an insurrection in days of the taxing under Quirinius in A.D. 6. However, neither of these are necessarily the ones alluded to in Luke’s account. There were others leading “ten thousand other disorders”...[Josephus, *Antiq.* XVII.10.4].

- 38] And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:
- 39] But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

We don’t know if this hints that Gamaliel might lean to the possibility that this could be the Messiah; however, it certainly was good advice!

- 40] And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

If these men were innocent, they should have let them go. If these men were guilty, they should have held them and punished them. Beating them and then letting them go was a sorry subterfuge. They should have listened to Gamaliel more carefully.

- 41] And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.
- 42] And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

“...teach and preach Jesus Christ”: What is the gospel? It is a Person! It is Jesus Christ.

Acts 6

- 1] And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

“...the Grecians”: “Greeks” or Hellenistic Jews. There was a traditional rivalry between Palestinian Jews (Hebrews, Jewish Jews) and Hellenists.

The world outside of Palestine spoke Greek. It was for this reason that 285 years before Christ was born that the Jewish establishment impaneled 70 scholars in Alexandria, a major city and a major Jewish center, to translate the Hebrew Scriptures (what we call the Old Testament), into Greek. The result is called the Septuagint version (LXX, meaning 70 scholars). This took place from 285 to 270 B.C. (Most of the Old Testament quotes in the New Testament are from this Greek translation.)

A Jew in those days spoke Greek; one might learn Hebrew to be able to participate in a local synagogue. Israel did not speak Hebrew after the Babylonian captivity, they spoke Chaldean Aramaic. Hebrew was reestablished in 1948.

The Hellenistic Jews were Jews born outside Israel and spoke Greek; they were still Jewish, but were looked down upon by the native-born Jews.

- 2] Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.
- 3] Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

The start of “deacons”—men who serve. These were *impressive credentials*: nothing trivial or incidental here!

- 4] But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

Primary priorities, indeed! Yet tragically rare to today’s pace-driven society.

- 5] And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:

Note that the whole congregation, not just the apostles, made the selection of the deacons.

“...Philip”: We will hear more of him shortly.

“...Prochorus”: May have become an assistant to John; and, later, Bishop of Nicodema

Four Criteria

- 1) From among you; no outsiders.
- 2) Of good report; good witness (word is *martyr*).
- 3) Full of the Spirit.
- 4) Full of wisdom (*sophia*) - sanctified common sense.

Notice who they picked: All were Grecian Jews except Nicolas who was a proselyte (converted Gentile). Interesting that it was the Hellenists who felt that they were getting short changed, yet all seven picked were non-Palestine Jews.

- 6] Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.
- 7] And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

“...company of the priests”: They actually converted members of the priesthood.

The Arrest of Stephen

- 8] And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

This deacon, who was called to wait tables, demonstrated great spiritual power. Steven was one of the great men in the early church. Apparently these deacons are one with the apostles in having the sign gifts.

- 9] Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.

Because Stephen is a strong witness to the gospel, he incurs the hatred of the Sadducees. False witnesses will be brought before the council to accuse Stephen.

- 10] And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.
- 11] Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.

Stephen was effective in his speeches. Not true statements, made by false witnesses.

- 12] And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council,
- 13] And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:
- 14] For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.

Two accusations: 1) Destroy this place (as if spirituality was a location)
2) Destroy the Law.

- 15] And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

(Stephen’s speech will be discussed in the next session. Skip to Acts 7:54-60.)

In Acts 7:55-56, Jesus is standing, standing is the role of the priesthood. Jesus is in the role of a priest of the order of Melchizedek.

Stephen becomes the first martyr, but that is backwards: not “martyr” because he died, but he died because he was a martyr. Martyr means to be a good witness right to the end.

The Stoning of Stephen: Acts 7:54-60

54] When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.

“...gnashed”: medical terms in Greek. [“Gnashing teeth” = Hebraism for extreme disappointment or frustration; *not necessarily soteriological*...]

55] But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

“...Jesus standing”: Jesus is in the role of the priest. No chairs in the Tabernacle. Standing used twice in vv.55 & 56.

56] And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

They heard this before from Jesus in the trial: “The next time you see me you are going to see me in glory” (Mt 27:64; Lk 2:69).

“...Son of Man”: Our Lord’s usual designation of Himself, this is the only place where that is used by someone other than Jesus. (We don’t know Saul’s reaction; however, this may have had an impact preparing him for the Damascus road experience yet to come...)

57] Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

58] And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul.

“Saul”: This isn’t casual, he was not just a bystander. This implies that he was one that did some of the accusing. Saul never forgave himself for this, see Chapter 8. He grieves in his letters of this incident (2 Tim 1:12).

59] And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

60] And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Jesus

“Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”

“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.”

Stephen

“Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.”

“Lord Jesus, Receive my spirit.”

Comparing Two Deaths

Jesus said, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.”

Stephen says, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.”

Jesus said, “Father into thy hands I commend my Spirit.”

Stephen says, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

There is a parallel between the two.

Next Session

Read Acts Chapters 6 and 7, especially in relation to Stephen.

Acts Session 5 Chapters 6 and 7

Acts 6: Review

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Yet tragically rare to today’s pace-driven society...

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Mission Impossible

Stephen is a new Christian, and yet his insights and background are staggering. He is going up against the Sanhedrin, the elite, ruling, ecclesiastical people of Israel. The Sadducees dominate this group. Stephen has been accused of espousing a separation from the law of Moses, and he is going to answer his accusations in such a way that shows he is more Jewish than they are!

Stephen's Address

This is a review of the history of the nation Israel and of their resistance and rebellion against God. He charges the council of being betrayers and murderers of Jesus. That, of course, engenders their bitterest hatred and leads to the stoning of Stephen. He is not a martyr because he died, rather he died because he was a martyr, which actually means witness.

Acts 7

- 1] Then said the high priest, Are these things so?

Stephen's presentation provides a summary of the entire Old Testament. Acts 7 is my favorite Old Testament commentary: since Steven points out many details that most Bible scholars have overlooked. Note: Who is on trial? It will appear that the Sanhedrin are!

- 2] And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,

“...Men, brethren, and fathers”: He calls them *brethren*. They are his brethren in the flesh. He calls the older men *fathers*. He is a younger man and shows them this respect.

“...God of glory”: Chapter 7 begins and ends with God.

“...before he dwelt in Charran”: Stephen is going to begin with an overlooked lapse on the part of Abraham! A 25-year delay in responding to what God had called him to do...

- 3] And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.

Notice what God had called Abraham to do!

- 4] Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.

“...and from thence, when his father was dead”: Abraham’s original call was from Ur, not Haran. (Haran was 50 miles up river; cf. Gen 12:1-3). Abraham was called in Ur and he moved to Haran, and did not move again *until 25 years later* when his father died! He didn’t really do what God called him to do, *until* his father died. 25 years of disobedience? (Gen 11:31). His sin, however, is blotted out (Heb 11:8).

Discrepancy about ages occurs only if Abram is Terah’s firstborn (Gen 11:27). Being listed first does not imply *order* of birth, but rather *importance*:

- 1) Shem, Ham and Japheth: Ham was youngest (Gen 9:24); Japheth was oldest (Gen 10:2, 21).
- 2) Jacob and Esau: Esau was older (Gen 25:25).
- 3) Moses and Aaron (Ex 5:20) Aaron was older (1 Chr 6:3).
- 4) Ephraim and Manasseh. Manasseh was eldest (Gen 48:1).

There also may have been other sons of Terah:

- Nahor: because Rebekah was his Granddaughter (Gen 24:25,24), and Rachel was his great-granddaughter.
- Haran: because he was father of Lot.

So Stephen’s point is that there was a lapse of faith on Abraham’s part. [For a complete study of Abraham, see our *Expositional Commentary on Genesis*.]

Consistent Historical Profile

Watch carefully Stephen’s key points: Unresponsive flow of their history—yet God’s persistent purpose; Stephen starts with Abraham as he, in a sense, was the first Jew.

Their history was characterized by: 1) Rejection first time, and 2) Acceptance on a second time...

- 5] And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.

Recognize that the land was promised to Abram’s seed, when both he and Sarai were beyond childbearing age.

- 6] And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years.

“....four hundred years”: 430 year total (Ex 12:40,41; Gal 3:17). Stephen always quoted from the Septuagint. Is there a discrepancy? Three answers:

- 1) Round numbers. As is Gen 15:13 where it mentions 400 years.
- 2) The last 400 of the 430 were the ill treatment.
- 3) If you count from the recognition of Isaac in Gen 21:12 it turns out to be 400 years.

- 7] And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place.
- 8] And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.

Jacob’s 12 sons become the head of the 12 tribes, the Patriarchs.

Circumcision

Vitamin K, the clotting element, is not formed until the 5th to the 7th day Prothrombin, also necessary for clotting: 3rd day: 30% of normal; 8th day: peaks at 110%, then levels off at 100% of normal. How did Moses know to circumcise on the 8th day? (Gen 17:12). “Trial and error”?

- 9] And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him,
- 10] And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.

“...governor over Egypt and all his house”: Joseph was hated by his brothers. “The Stone which the builders rejected has become the head stone of the corner.” (Arthur W. Pink, *Gleanings in Genesis*, lists 101 ways that Joseph is a “type” of Christ.)

Stephen is going to point out, again and again, that the very guy which God sent, their forefathers beat up! Here Joseph was hated by his brothers and they sold him into slavery. Yet, this was in God's plan all along. God's plan was executed in spite of, or in anticipation of, the reaction of his brethren. Israel's misapprehension of God's purposes and opposition to them, in spite of which, and by means of which, they were accomplished.

- 11] Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance.
- 12] But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first.
- 13] And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh.

Stephen's point is that again, Israel does not recognize him until the second time. *If history is their guide, then Israel will not recognize their Messiah until the second time!*

- 14] Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls.

"...threescore and fifteen souls": Stephen was quoting from the Septuagint which says 75 souls. The Hebrew Bible says 70. All the scholars believe that the five difference is additional kindred of the 70 that went there, but they don't agree on which are the five.

- 15] So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers,
- 16] And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem.

There is much confusion over burial sites: Most commentators say that Stephen made a mistake. But it turns out that there are two different burial sites in Genesis, one bought by Abraham and one bought by Jacob:

Burial Sites

Bought by:	Abraham	Jacob
Where:	Machpelah	Shechem
From whom:	Ephron, Hittite	Sons of Hamor, Shechem's father
Who buried:	Gen 23:17 Abraham & Sarah Isaac & Rebekah Jacob & Leah	Gen 33:19 Joseph (Josh 24:32) 12 Patriarchs?

[There is no mention of the 12 patriarchs burial by Hebrew writers since it is in Samaria. Jerome and others record...]

Alternatives

- 1) Error?
- 2) Abraham originally purchased (Gen 12:6) and Jacob repurchased. His altercation with the sons of Hamor over property bequeathed to Joseph (Gen 49:22).

Don't be too quick to accept some commentator's view that there is an error, not that there aren't occasional textual problems. Praise God for apparent contradictions, as behind their resolution may yet lay another discovery...

- 17] But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,
- 18] Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.

Some significant period of time occurs between Joseph and Pharaoh of the exodus.

"...another king arose": Greek *heteros* = of a different kind (vs. *allos* = of the same kind)! *The Pharaoh that oppressed the Hebrews was Assyrian, not Egyptian* (Isa 52:4).

Stephen Before the Sanhedrin

Pattern of failures:

Abraham	Acts 7:4
Joseph	Acts 7:13
Moses	Acts 7:27
Law	Acts 7:35
Joshua	Acts 7:45

- 19] The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.
- 20] In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months:

"...nourished up": ἀνατρέφω *anatrepho*, of young children and animals nourished to promote growth; a technical medical term in Greek. There are several places in this chapter where the term used is one that *only a doctor* would use, which is interesting in that Acts was written

by Luke, a physician, using a larger vocabulary than Hypocrites, “the father of medicine.”

- 21] And when he was cast out, Pharaoh’s daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son.
22] And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.

Pharaoh’s daughter brought him up as her own son. This pharaoh had no sons, so Moses would have been the next in line.

“...mighty in words”: (So he lied in Ex 4:10!) Josephus points out that he was mighty in military arts. Moses was being groomed for leadership in Egypt. Philo points out that Moses was tutored by the most celebrated foreign schools in arithmetic, geometry, music, philosophy, hieroglyphics, arts and sciences.

They had developed mathematics, chemistry, engineering, architecture, and astronomy to a very fine point. They had calculated the distance to the sun. They had a highly developed culture and were not an ignorant people. And yet...

Papyrus Ebers 1332 B.C.

- Embedded splinter? Apply worm’s blood & ass’s dung.
- Losing Hair? Apply six fats (Horse, Hippopotamus, Crocodile, Cat, Snake, Ibex).
- Turning Gray? Anoint with blood of black calf which has been boiled in oil or fat of rattlesnake

The well-stocked medicine cabinet:

- Lizard’s blood
- Swine’s teeth
- Putrid meat
- Moisture from pig’s ears
- Milk goose grease
- Asses’ hooves
- Animal fats
- Excreta from animals (Human, Donkeys, Antelopes, Dogs, Cats, Flies)

Yet, none of these superstitions were retained in the Torah, vs. Circumcision; Hygiene Nutrition Standards [Source: *None of These Diseases*, McMillen, S.I., M.D., Fleming H. Revell Co., Old Tappan, NJ, 1958.]

- 23] And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.
24] And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:
25] For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.

“...but they understood not”: This insight is not clear from the account in Exodus. Stephen’s point is that here again, Israel is slow to apprehend the Divine purposes of love. Again, rejecting their leader.

- 26] And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?
27] But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?
28] Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?

Cf. Christ: “By what authority...” (Mt 21:23).

- 29] Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Midian, where he begat two sons.

Israel had to stay in Egypt 40 years longer because they did not recognize Moses as their deliverer the first time. The implication here is that if they had accepted Moses then, that God might have delivered them then. But because they rejected Moses the first time, they were stuck with another 40 years of bondage. “Who made ye a ruler over us” echoes from Matthew 21:23 and also Hosea 5:15, John 1:11.

- 30] And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.
31] When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him,

Burning Bush

Acacia: “Thorn bush of the desert.”

Thorns: Symbol of the curse (Gen 3:18); borne on His brow (Mt 27:29).

Fire: Symbolizes Judgment.

Not consumed: thus, a symbol of Grace. This is what attracted Moses...

- 32] Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.
33] Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground.

“Shoes” are a symbol of:

- Calling (no shoes in Tabernacle)
- Divine provision in the wilderness
- Boaz’ marriage license (Ruth 4)
- Symbol of Stature: John the Baptist

- 34] I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.
- 35] This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.
- 36] He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years.

“...this Moses whom they refused”: Second trip: Moses was accepted!

- 37] This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.

“...that Moses, which said”: Moses himself foretold the coming of Christ; Moses is also a prophet (quoting Deut 18:15), where Moses predicts the Messiah. Stephen clearly understands grace as opposed to the Law, and that this line of teaching would give rise to their accusations.

- 38] This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

Stephen’s point is that Moses himself predicted the very person whom they are now rejecting. In this entire passage Stephen is venerating Moses even more than they do!

- 39] To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,
- 40] Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

Deepest dishonor from the nation that professes greatest jealousy for his honor.

- 41] And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.
- 42] Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness?

“Gave them up to serve the host of heaven”: Meaning stars and planets (Ps 81:12). Idol worship is still in their blood, and these idols are linked to the planets!

- 43] Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

“...Remphan”: Amos 5:25-26. Star of Remphan (LXX for Heb. *Chium*), Coptic name for Saturn.

Saturn was associated with the worship of Moloch, idol of the Ammonites and Phoenicians, with the Solar Bull (Taurus); brass statue with human body, bull’s head, arms outstretched; worshiped by putting your children in his arms of brass with fire all around, the children would roll off into the fire, child sacrifice!

[Babylonian ideograph for planet = sheep + dead = a dead sheep was a sign of augury, or omen. The planets were viewed as a mechanism of forecasting in the astrological sense, and here it shows up even in the very linguistic structure.]

Five planets + Sun and Moon = 7 days of the week; 7th day = Saturn’s day = Saturday. [God ordains this 7th as *Shabbat*.]

Astrology

Astrology started in Babel. But the idea of a horoscope and that somehow your future and character are determined by the position of the stars at the moment you were born is not an idea that goes back that far. That particular style of astrology turns out to first show up under Ptolemy in 130 A.D.

Astrology is a form of deception far broader than that and obviously all mixed up with ancient cultic literature. Astrology is prohibited by God in the Old Testament. (Ask someone who is into astrology if they had to redo all the horoscopes since the discovery of Neptune, etc.)

- 44] Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen.

“...according to the fashion that he had seen”: Moses was given, along with the Ten Commandments, detailed specifications on the Tabernacle. Here Stephen points out that Moses saw it, perhaps in a vision...

45] Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David;

“...Jesus”: “Joshua” is Hebrew for the Greek word Jesus. Stephen here is talking about Joshua, the son of Nun who was the successor to Moses.

46] Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

47] But Solomon built him an house.

48] Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet,

They originally accused him of desecrating the Temple, and he is not disparaging the Temple, but is pointing out that God does not dwell in a house made with hands (quoting from Isa 66:1-2).

49] Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest?

50] Hath not my hand made all these things?

51] Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

“You are just like your fathers were...”: He uses Moses’ very words (Ex 33:3,5).

“...uncircumcised in heart”: from Lev 26:41; Deut 10:16; Jer 9:26; Ex 44:7; cf. Paul (Rom 2:28, 29; Phil 3:2,3; Col 2:11).

52] Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:

Israel’s national trait: deadly hostility to the messengers of God.

53] Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

Major climax:	Matthew 23:37-39
• Purpose of all history	v. 37
• Tragedy of all history: “ye would not,”	v. 38
• Triumph of all history	v. 39

Jesus Himself summarizes the exact point that Stephen is making before the Sanhedrin.

54] When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.

“...gnashed”: A medical term in Greek. [“Gnashing teeth” = Hebraism for extreme disappointment or frustration; *not necessarily soteriological*...]

55] But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

“Standing” - Priesthood, is the role of the priest. (There were no chairs in the Tabernacle). Standing used twice in vv.55 & 56.

56] And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

They heard this before from Jesus in the trial: “The next time you see me you are going to see me in glory” (Mt 27:64; Lk 2:69).

“...Son of Man”: Our Lord’s usual designation of Himself, this is the only place where that is used by someone other than Jesus. Jesus is in the role of a priest of the order of Melchizedek.

Stephen becomes the first martyr, but that is backwards: not “martyr” because he died, but he died because he was a martyr. Martyr means being a good witness right to the end.

57] Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,

58] And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul.

“...Saul”: This isn’t casual, not just a bystander, implies that he was one that did some of the accusing. Saul never forgave himself for this, see Chapter 8. He grieves in his letters of this incident (2 Tim 1:12).

59] And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

60] And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

(We don’t know Saul’s reaction; however, this may have had an impact preparing him for the Damascus road experience yet to come...)

Comparing Two Deaths

Jesus said, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.”

Stephen says, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.”

Jesus said, “Father into thy hands I commend my Spirit.”

Stephen says, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

This is the turning point in Acts, where Saul persecutes the Church, which causes the apostles to move out. Now into Chapter 8, Samaria. Then later in Chapters 9, 10 and on, we move to “the uttermost parts of the earth.”

Next Session

Read Acts Chapter 8.

Acts Session 6 Chapter 8

Overview	
Chapter 1	Chapter 5
– Ascension & marching orders	– Ananias & Sapphira
– Appointment of Matthias	– 2 nd Persecution
Chapter 2	Chapter 6
– Pentecost	– First Deacons
– Peter’s 1 st Sermon	– 3 rd Persecution
Chapter 3	Chapter 7
– Lame man healed	– Stephen’s Address to Sanhedrin
– Peter’s 2 nd Sermon	– First Martyr
Chapter 4	Chapter 8
– 1 st Persecution	– 4 th Persecution (by Saul)
– Peter’s address to the Sanhedrin	– Philip & the Ethiopian Treasurer

Marching Orders

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. [Chapters 8-12.]

Acts 1:8

Judea surrounds Jerusalem, and Samaria lies to the north of Jerusalem. The center of attention is shifting away from Jerusalem, to Samaria, and then, later, to the uttermost parts of the earth.

Acts 8

- 1] And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

“And...”: This word connects events of Chapter 7 and 8.

“...his death”: Whose death? Stephen’s. Remember that the chapter breaks are man’s invention. This persecution caused them to spread out into other regions.

- 2] And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.

Cremation vs. Burial?

Cremation was a pagan practice; it was practical hygiene but not a Biblical practice. Planting the body in the earth like a seed is a testimony—an evidence of your faith in a future resurrection (1 Cor 15:42-44).

- 3] As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

Saul was intensely devoted to what he believed was right; however, sincerity is not enough. Zeal without knowledge... (another example will be Simon Magus).

- 4] Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.
- 5] Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

“...scattered abroad”: The actual Greek is “passed through”; it occurs 43x in the New Testament.

But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.

Philippians 1:12

The church can never be hurt from the outside. It can be hurt from the inside, as we shall see later in this chapter.

“Philip” - Not the apostle; this was one of the deacons. Philip was introduced in Acts 6:3-6; and as an evangelist in Acts 21:7.

Meantime, Saul’s persecution drove Philip to Samaria. The Samaritans were looked down upon by the Jews; they were sometimes viewed as “half-Jews.” So Samaria was not a choice district to go out and evangelize in.

- 6] And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

- 7] For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.
- 8] And there was great joy in that city.
- 9] But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:

“But”: An adverse conjunction: note opposition.

“...a certain man, called Simon”: Simon Magus, a magician.

- 10] To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.
- 11] And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.
- 12] But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.
- 13] Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.

One can believe a great deal about Christ, and yet not be saved. (No reason to say that Simon was insincere!) Simon was baptized, but not saved?! (Clearly self-deceived.)

- 14] Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:

“...Peter and John”: Always paired together. This is the last time you read about John: he disappears from the narrative record, but shows up, of course, on Patmos when he pens The Revelation and the Letters to the Seven Churches.

- 15] Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:
- 16] (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)

How could the Samaritans be saved, and yet not have received the Holy Spirit at the moment they professed faith? For 500 years temples in South at Jerusalem and in the North at Mt Gerizim had been rivals. Note that the issue for them was which temple to worship at (cf. Jn 4:3-24)! If the Spirit had immediately fallen on these Samaritan believers, the Body might have suffered division through the centuries...

But when the apostles from Jerusalem came and identified themselves with the believing Samaritans, the work was recognized as of One

Body. God’s intention was to build a single Body of Christ, not pieces and parts (1 Cor 12:13).

- 17] Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.
- 18] And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,
- 19] Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

Simon offered money! He didn’t ask for the Spirit himself, he wanted the power to give the Spirit.

“Simony” = buying and selling position and office within the church... the purchase of spiritual things.

- 20] But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.
- 21] Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.
- 22] Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

Simon still had the opportunity to repent.

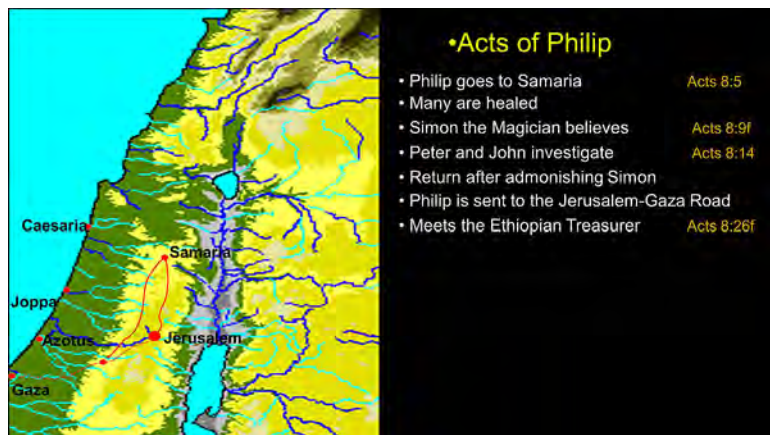
- 23] For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.
- 24] Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

Simon doesn’t repent; he wants the apostles to pray for him thinking that their power would be greater. This is the last place we read of Simon in the Scriptures. Yet, we read a lot about him in the early church writings: he became the first anti-christ, one that fought the church, going from place to place opposing the Gospel. The difference between believing about Christ, and totally trusting Him with your life is FAITH.

Don’t let miracles or supernatural events fool you because Satan is not only capable of it: prophecy says he will deceive many in the end times. Your protection is in the Word of God; remember Acts 17:11, always.

- 25] And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.
- 26] And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

Gaza was one of the five cities of the Philistines which was destroyed by Alexander.



- 27] And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,
- 28] Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Isaiah the prophet.

“...who had the charge of all her treasure”: Returning apparently confused. Why? What was his mission? This was not just any Ethiopian caravan with a treasurer, this was *the* treasurer of all the treasure of the Queen of Ethiopia.

“...a eunuch”: In the ancient times officials in the palace were eunuchs to protect the harem. But as time went on that title tended to be an office, not necessarily a condition imposed biologically. Eunuchs were not allowed in the congregation of Israel (Deut 23:1) ...but this guy *was worshipping*.

Background:

The Ark of the Covenant, The Mercy Seat and the Gift from Ethiopia

Theories About the Ark of the Covenant

- 1) Taken by Shishak? 2 Chronicles 12:9
- 2) Hidden by Jeremiah on Mt. Nebo? 2 Maccabees 2:4-5
- 3) Hidden under the Temple Mount?
- 4) Taken by the Babylonians?
- 5) Taken by Menelik I to Ethiopia during Solomon's apostasy? (Official legend)

- 6) Taken to Egypt during Manasseh's atrocities? 2 Chronicles 35:3f

The Ark of the Covenant (An Alternative View)

- Levites seek protection from Manassah under Pharaoh Necho (2 Kgs 21).
- Josiah seeks Ark's return (2 Chr 35:3).
- Josiah dies fighting Necho (2 Chr 35:20f).
- Ark transferred from Elephantine Island to Tana Kirkos Island for eight centuries;
- Currently guarded in a special compound at Axum.
- Destined to be presented to the Messiah when He rules on Mt. Zion.

A Documented Tradition

- 642 B.C. Elephantine Island, Egypt: Archeologically confirmed.
- 470 B.C. Tana Kirkos Island, Ethiopia: Special access required.
- 330 A.D. Ark transferred from Lake Tana to Axum, Ethiopia; currently under guard there
- Destined to be presented to the Messiah on Mt. Zion (Isa 18, Zeph 3:10, et al). Was the Ethiopian Treasurer on a mission for the queen? The Ark—and the Mercy Seat—are the subjects of specific briefings available from our ministry (see *The Mercy Seat* briefing pack).

The Menelik Legend

The Queen of Sheba visited Solomon, and in those days Ethiopia included Saudi Arabia, so the Queen of Sheba was Ethiopian. They had a son, Menelik, who grew up there until he was 19. He then returned to Ethiopia, and he brought with him the Ark of the Covenant, leaving behind only a replica.

They apparently have been guarding this object for over 2,400 years. This legend has been included in their Constitution. It served to ascribe Solomonic descent for the early Ethiopian kings.

This traditional legend is not compatible with the Biblical record since the Ark is referred to in the subsequent days of Josiah (2 Chr 35:3).

And [Josiah] said unto the Levites that taught all Israel, which were holy unto the LORD, "Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build; it shall not be a burden upon your shoulders: serve now the LORD your God, and his people Israel..."

2 Chronicles 35:3

“... it shall not be a burden upon your shoulders”: *It doesn’t say that they complied!* The Levites had apparently had taken the Ark (*and the Mercy Seat*) out of the Temple, out of Jerusalem, and out of the jurisdiction (and the atrocities) of Manasseh who was attempting to eliminate Mosaic Judaism...

What has been overlooked is that the Ark may have arrived there by another series of events which are alluded to later in that same chapter (2 Chr 35: 20ff).

After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him. But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, “What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not.” Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded.

2 Chronicles 35:20-23

Note: v.22 is a declaration of the Chronicler, not Pharaoh Necho!

Issues

- Why did Josiah persist in attacking Pharaoh Necho?
- Why did Pharaoh Necho feel that he had God on his side?
- How could Pharaoh Necho have had instructions “from the mouth of God”?
- Why did Josiah rely on the Prophetess Huldah rather than the Levitical Priesthood?
- (Pharaoh Necho wasn’t Egyptian: *He was Ethiopian!*)

Pulpit Commentary, Vol 6, p.436

A Continuing Trust?

There is a 2400-year history of a sacred relic, guarded by the Ethiopians, from its tenure at Elephantine Island in Upper Egypt (642 B.C.) and Tana Qirqos Island on Lake Tana (470 B.C.) to its present location in its compound at Axum. Protected until they can deliver it to the Messiah when He rules at Mt. Zion (Isa 18, Zeph 3:10).



Falashas

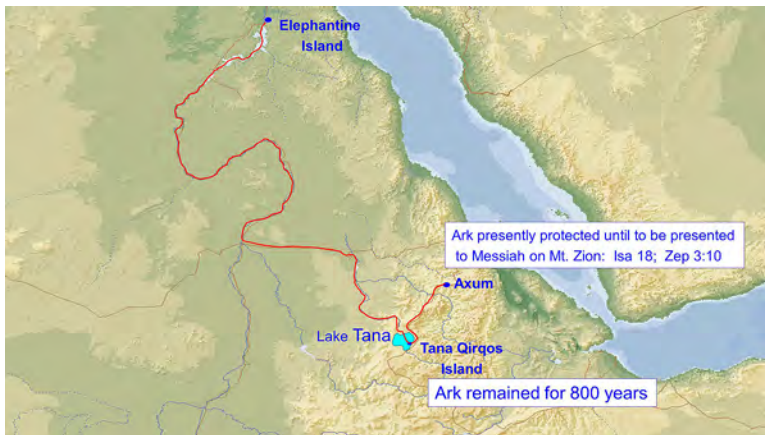
Falashas: an Ethiopian of Jewish faith. “Beta Israel”: They consider themselves Jews (about 30,000 of them today). They observe the Sabbath, circumcision, dietary laws, ritual cleansing, etc. They have a Bible written in Ge’ez which is a derivative of the Septuagint. However: their guardianship of the Ark of the Covenant is a government and Christian Church commitment.

Elephantine Island

Early advance outpost of Egypt; Southernmost border town. It was a fortified installation serving as First Dynasty fortress and was of military importance during XXV Dynasty. A Temple to YHWH served the Jewish colony prior to Persian occupations of 525-404 B.C.

[Source: *Elephantine*, Official Guidebook, German Institute of Archaeology, Cairo, 1998.]





- 29] Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.
 30] And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Isaiah, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?
 31] And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

“...heard him read”: Reading out loud.

“...guide me”: A medical technical term. He needs an authoritative teacher. He was reading the Greek translation of Isaiah 52 & 53. Both the Eunuch and Philip are prepared by the Holy Spirit for this interview.

Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD. For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your reward. Behold, my

servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

Isaiah 52:11-15

- 32] The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:
 33] In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

The passage is from Isaiah 52 & 53.

- 34] And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?
 35] Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.

“...preached unto him Jesus” He preached a *person*: The Lord Jesus.

- 36] And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?
 37] And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
 38] And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.
 39] And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

An impressive exit...

- 40] But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

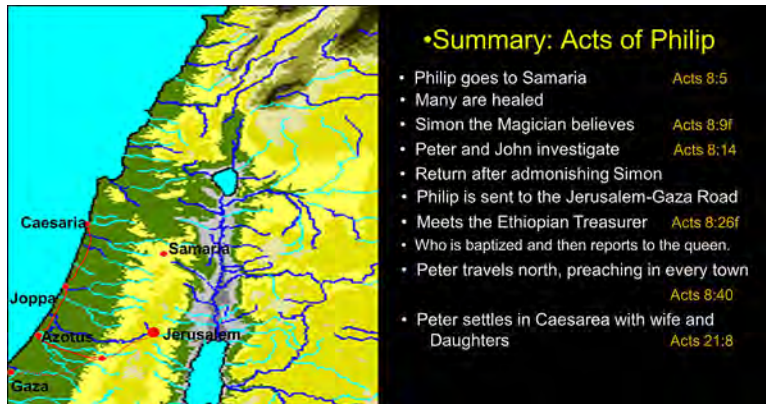
“...Azotus” = ancient Ashdod.

“...Caesarea”: Caesarea Sebaste - Built by Herod in honor of Augustus (Greek *Sebastos*). Between Carmel and Joppa, 55 mi NW of Jerusalem. Roman procurators resided there; present ruin has an inscription of Pontius Pilate. (Not Caesarea Philippi, which is north of the Sea of Galilee.)

Lingering Questions

Why was the Ethiopian Treasurer visiting Jerusalem? Why was he then confused? Was he on a mission for the Queen? What did he report to

Candace, the Queen of Ethiopia? (My conjecture:) Queen: “Has the time come?” Treasurer: “*Not yet!*”



An Appointment with Destiny?

We were received at the home of the Administrator, the officer to whom the Guardian reports. We reviewed (*with his potential replacement*), the eschatological passages for several hours. Their commitment to the Solomonic legends remain an ostensible obstacle, but there was keen interest in the apparent prophetic role of the Mercy Seat...

The Mercy Seat: Distinctive Destiny?

And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those days, saith the LORD, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the LORD: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the Throne of the LORD; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart.

Jeremiah 3:16-17

The Ark is no longer the focus of worship in Jerusalem. It will be replaced by the Throne of the Lord as all nations shall be gathered to it. The Ark and Mercy Seat were *two separate objects* in the Scripture. *The Holy of Holies was defined by the presence of the Mercy Seat* (Num 7:89; 1 Chr 28:11).

Yom Kippur

Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the

blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat:

Leviticus 16:15

This verse speaks of the priest sprinkling the blood of the sacrificed animal on the Mercy Seat in payment of the sins of the people. This was done once a year on the specific day known as Yom Kippur. Jesus Christ, known as the Lamb of God, shed His blood as the ultimate sacrifice for our sins. The Mercy Seat is uniquely suitable for His throne.

And I heard him speaking unto me out of the Temple; and the man stood by me. And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places.

Ezekiel 43:6,7

This verse is a prophecy specific to the Second Coming of Christ, known as the Messianic Reign. We see in this verse that God speaks from the **Temple** and from His **Throne** and a place where He will **dwell** in the midst of the children of Israel **forever**.

His Throne

And in mercy shall the Throne be established: and he shall sit upon it in truth in the Tabernacle of David, judging, and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness.

Isaiah 16:5

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

Matthew 25:31

And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the Temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his Throne:

Zechariah 6:12-13

The only object known in all history that is suitable for the Throne of Christ is the Mercy Seat. This suggests that the Mercy Seat may have a distinct place in Biblical prophecy as it relates to Christ's Second Coming, when He will rule and reign on earth in the Temple on Mount Zion. It may be *the Mercy Seat*, rather than the Ark, which will be the special

gift of Ethiopia to the Messiah when He rules in the Kingdom (Isa 18; Zeph 3:10, et al.).

Presenting The Gift

From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my supplants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering.

Zephaniah 3:10

“bring” = יָבֵל yabal: to bear or carry, as in a royal procession.

“offering” = מִנְחָה minchah, gift, tribute, present.

In that time shall the present be brought unto the LORD of hosts of a people tall and smooth of skin, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the mount Zion.

Isaiah 18:7

Next Session

Study Acts Chapter 9; the conversion of Saul.

Acts Session 7 Chapters 9 and 10

Unit 1	Unit 2
Chapter 9 <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Conversion of Saul– Tabitha raised from the dead Chapter 10 <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Cornelius' vision– Peter's vision Chapter 11 <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Peter's ministry to Gentiles– Antioch new headquarters Chapter 12 <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Peter's arrest and deliverance– Herod's death	Chapter 13 <ul style="list-style-type: none">– 1st Missionary Journey– Paul & Barnabas turn to Gentiles Chapter 14 <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Iconium, Derbe, & Lystra– Elders established Chapter 15 <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Council at Jerusalem– 2nd Missionary Journey Chapter 16 <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Macedonian call at Troas– Philippian Jailer

When the persecution broke out in Jerusalem, the church went underground. The apostles remained in Jerusalem, but many of the others were scattered: Philip went up to Samaria and along the Mediterranean coast.

It was the stoning of Stephen that triggered it. Most religious leaders were satisfied once they had run the Christians out of Jerusalem. Not Saul of Tarsus! His goal was to exterminate the Christians everywhere he could find them.

Hebraism vs. Hellenism

Hebraist Jews were those born in Israel. Hellenistic Jews were born in the Greek empire, but Jewish.

“I will stir up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece.”

Zechariah 9:13

For example: Judas Maccabeus against Antiochus Ephiphanes. The Sadducees were Hellenists (materialistic, worldly, deny the supernatural). The Pharisees were the Hebraists (strictly adhered to the Law, espoused Moses, believed in angels and resurrection; they were the supernaturalists).

Tarsus

Tarsus was a free Greek city, having received its liberty from Mark Antony; it received title of “metropolis” of Cilicia, as well as other privileges, conferred by Augustus. The great university of its time was found there; it surpassed even Athens and Alexandria in its zeal for philosophy and derived its civilization—and its origin—from Greece, having been founded by an Argive colony.

Saul

Saul's father and mother were Hebrews; Pharisees (not Sadducees). Although raised in the Hellenistic culture, he was sent to Jerusalem to study under Gamaliel. Saul is a Pharisee to the core! He is a member of the Sanhedrin, which governs not only over Jerusalem, but over *all* Judaism.

Acts 9: The Conversion of Saul

- 1] And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,

“And Saul”: Again the connective, linking up with the previous chapter. “...yet breathing out”: Really says, “Breathing hard still.” He has motivation behind his commitments.

- 2] And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

“...letters”: The Sanhedrin had jurisdiction beyond Jerusalem. Damascus was the capital of Syria.

“...this way”: Used four times, speaking of the Christians (9:2, 19:9, 23; 24:22).

- 3] And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:
- 4] And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?
- 5] And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

“I am Jesus”: Name from before birth.. “At the name of Jesus, every knee should bow...” Acts 22 and 26 recount this experience and includes some details not recorded here.

“...whom thou persecutest”: 1) Christ and His people are one. He felt every throb of Stephen’s pain. 2) That against which you are fighting is not the zeal of mistaken fanatics; it is the march of God through history.

“...pricks”: Goads—Saul was sincere, fighting whom he believed was an enemy of Judaism & the Law of Moses. This hints that there is a pricking going on inside Saul (perhaps the arguments of Stephen still echoed in his ears) Cf. 6:8,9. Stephen’s conflict was with the Hellenists, not with the Hebrews: his fight was with the Sadducees.

Saul was a member of the Sanhedrin: Saul had heard Stephen’s presentation. Saul went to the Sadducean High Priest for letters of authority against those who, while antagonistic to the ancient ritual of his people, nevertheless held to the spiritual verities of which he himself held...

- Christ spoke to him in the Hebrew tongue (cf. 22:6-16; 26:9-18).
 - Saul saw as well as heard (v. 17, v. 27; 22:14; 26:16).
 - Saul never forgave himself (1 Cor 15:9; Gal 1:13).
 - Saul was not the first of his family to be saved: “My kinsmen...who also were in Christ before me” (Rom 16).
 - Every conversion is a miracle.
- 6] And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

- 7] And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.
- 8] And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.

“...brought him into Damascus”: Damascus was one of the first cities that Alexander had conquered.

Saul means “destroyer,” Paul means “builder.”

“...led him by the hand”: It seems he had an eyesight problem...

- 9] And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

What did Paul do for these three days? He did not eat nor drink, probably a lot of thinking (Phil 3:7; Gal 2:20).

Gal 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ.” (Hebraism)
“and it is no longer I that live” (Hellenism)
“but Christ liveth in me” (Christianity)

“...three days without sight”: Thorn in the Flesh: mentioned (2 Cor 12); a hint that it is an eye problem (Gal 4:13-15 . Also in Gal 6:11; 2 Thess 2:2). Perhaps, he never fully recovered from this Damascus road blinding.

“Three Days”

- 1) Abraham (Isaac dead to him for)
 - 2) Joseph (dreams in prison)
 - 3) Rahab’s spies (from *chebel* to *tikvah*)
 - 4) Esther (fasted 3 days)
 - 5) Jonah (in the fish)
 - 6) Christ (in the tomb)
 - 7) Nation Israel (asks Jesus to return; cf. Hos 6)
- 10] And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.
- 11] And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,

“...street which is called Straight”: Goes East and West between the gates. Divided by Corinthian columns into three avenues: center for footmen; one for eastern traffic; one for western traffic.

- 12] And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.
- 13] Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:
- 14] And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

You can understand Ananias' apprehension...

- 15] But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:
- 16] For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.
- 17] And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.
- 18] And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

(However, it seems his eyes continue to be a problem...Cf. Acts 22:12-21.)

- 19] And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.
- 20] And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

“Son of God”: This phrase appears in John's epistles 23x; Paul's epistles 29x; Peter's confession at Caesarea Phillipi once.

- 21] But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?
- 22] But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

The Missing Years

There is about a three-year gap missing here. At least two years of which he goes to Arabia (Gal 1:15-18; 1 Cor 15:1-4). The Sinai desert preparation was for both Moses and Elijah, and Paul also.

Paul insists that what he preaches he got directly from Jesus, not from Paul or the apostles. When? Probably in Arabia.

God never uses for the great work of interpreting His Kingdom any man who has not been definitely called and spiritually trained.

- Jerusalem vs. Antioch (Gal 4:25).
- Saul returns to Damascus, escapes to Jerusalem; then returns to Tarsus. (Later because of a new movement in Antioch, Barnabas goes to Tarsus to find him.)
- Between the Damascus road apprehension and Jerusalem was three years.

- 23] And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:
- 24] But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.

“Gates”: These were ordered by the King to be guarded (2 Cor 11:32,33).

- 25] Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.
- 26] And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.
- 27] But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

“...Barnabas”: a Levite; a native of Cyprus (annexed as a Roman province, off coast of Cilicia near where Saul was born). His name means the “son of consolation and comfort” Both were Hellenistic Jews and eminent in their respective localities; he may have known him before.

- 28] And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.
- 29] And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.

“...disputed” (only here and 6:9 in Acts) with Hellenistic Jews. Saul picks up the ministry of Stephen, the very man to whose death he consented.

- 30] Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

Vision sends him away (Acts 22:17-21). [Direct route: Sail from Caesarea N. to Cydnus, the harbor for Tarsus; however (Gal 1:21; “came into regions of Syria and Cilicia”): He landed at Seleucia and proceeded by land to Antioch, then North to Cilicia, ending in Tarsus.]

- 31] 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.

Churches had a “rest”: Emperor Caligula had a persistent determination to have an image of himself set up in the Temple of Jerusalem;

influential Jewish deputation continually attempted to prevent this from happening. Petronius, governor of Syria, was ordered to make war on the Jews to force them to put the image of Caligula in the Temple. Thousands implore him not to do this, offering their own lives. Even Herod Agrippa, who was very influential at the time, intercedes, but probably ineffectually.

But for Caligula's death, the measure would have succeeded. This whole distraction between the Jews and Caligula over the image issue may have been part of why the church was a second priority for a while. [The installation of a pagan image in the Holy of Holies seems to be reserved for (1) Antiochus Epiphanes, and (2) the Antichrist.]

Peter's Ministry

- From here to Chapter 12 is Peter's ministry.
- From Chapters 13-28 is Paul's ministry.

32] And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.

"dwelt at Lydda": 12 miles Southeast of Joppa.

"...saints": Believers; a result of Philip's efforts (Acts 8:40).

33] And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.

34] And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

"...Aeneas": There is no evidence that he was a believer; it was not his faith that made this happen.

35] And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.

36] Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

"...at Joppa": Modern Jaffa; 45 miles Southeast of Jerusalem; Jonah's seaport.

"...Tabitha": Syro-Chaldaic.

"...Dorcas": Greek for antelope, gazelle. It sounds like she had the gift of helps (1 Cor 12:28).

37] And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber.

38] And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them.

39] Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

40] But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

Peter did exactly what Jesus did to his mother-in-law. Christ raised from the dead only on three occasions: 1) Jairus' daughter 2) Widow of Nain's son 3) Lazarus.

41] And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

42] And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.

Peter continuing the work of Christ as a member of the Body.

43] And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

"Simon the Tanner": Tanning was an abhorrent profession to the Jews as it deals with contact with dead animals, blood, etc. The law said that he had to be outside the city. This is the first insight that Peter, to some extent, is overcoming prejudice, by his very willingness to stay with Simon the Tanner. For a complete study of the gifts of the Spirit, see our Briefing Package, *The Spiritual Gifts*.

Acts 10: Cornelius

To the Uttermost Parts

The Book of Acts shifts from the Jews (Jerusalem and Judea), to the half-Jews (the Samaritans), then to the uttermost parts of the earth (the Gentiles). This was about eight years after Pentecost.

Peter, not Paul, is to be the "door opener" to the Gentiles. [Had Paul been the prime move toward uncircumcised Gentiles into the Church, the Jewish contingent, who were never friendly to him, could have acquired such strength to bring a disastrous schism in the Church.]

1] There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band,

“Caesarea”: This was not Caesarea Phillipi, which is in the north. This Caesarea is on the coast, the headquarters for the Roman establishment.

“Cornelius”: a centurion of an Italian cohort, serving under Herod Agrippa, the representative Roman power in the district.

Legion Structure

Centurian does not actually mean “hundred.” Rome had a total of 28 legions, a legion being 5500. Each legion had 59 centurions and consisted of 10 cohorts. The first cohort was larger than the others, it was divided into five double centuries of about 800 men total.

Cohorts 2 - 10 were 6 centuries, about 80 men each. Since each legion also had about 120 horsemen, the total legion was about 5500 men.

So a centurian was a rank of officer of *nominally* a hundred. If you signed up with the Roman legions you signed up for 25 years; it was a very serious obligation.

- Chapter 8 gives the conversion of the Ethiopian Treasurer, a son of Ham.
- Chapter 9 gives the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, a son of Shem.
- Chapter 10 gives the conversion of Cornelius, a Roman centurion, a son of Japheth. [Evidence of deliberate design?]

- 2] A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.

“Godly” but not a proselyte: outside the covenant. [Let’s also remember that a centurion built the synagogue in Capernaum... Luke 7:5.]

- 3] He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.

“...ninth hour”: Three in the afternoon.

- 4] And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

His alms and prayers are accepted before God.

- 5] And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter:
6] He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

Joppa is about 30 miles away, south of Caesarea.

“Simon the tanner”: Remember, a tanner was despised. [If a girl was betrothed to a tanner without knowing he was a tanner, the betrothal was void.] His house had to be at least 50 cubits outside the city.

- 7] And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;
8] And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

“...declared all these things”: He apparently explained to them, they must have been devout also.

- 9] On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:

“...the sixth hour” = about noon. Peter must be overcoming some of his prejudices as he is staying with a tanner.

- 10] And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,
11] And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:

“...a great sheet”: a vast “tarpaulin.”

- 12] Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.
13] And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.

In Leviticus 11, read the Levitical laws of clean and unclean animals. He is no longer under the Mosaic system and is free to eat anything

- 14] But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.

“Not so, Lord”: This is an oxymoron (a self-contradictory phrase). To an observant Jew, to eat a Levitically unclean animal is unthinkable (Col 2:14, 16, 17).

- 15] And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.
16] This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.
17] Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon’s house, and stood before the gate,

- 18] And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.
- 19] While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.
- 20] Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

Not only did he have a vision, but the Spirit was talking to him.

- 21] Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?
- 22] And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.
- 23] Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

Two visions bring together two men 30 miles apart. Ten men journeyed: two household servants and a soldier; the apostle Peter; and six Christian Jews (11:12). Ten is the number of witness: Boaz in Ruth, etc.

- 24] And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.
- 25] And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.
- 26] But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.

Obeisance misunderstood (Eastern custom). However, Peter refused.

- 27] And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.

Quite a group was forming: Peter's ten and Cornelius' gang. Remember, a Jew is not even supposed to enter the house of a Gentile; this was probably the first time that Peter had ever been in a Gentile house.

- 28] And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

This shows Peter finally understood the vision, he "broke the code."

- 29] Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?
- 30] And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,

- 31] And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.
- 32] Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.
- 33] Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.
- 34] Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:
- 35] But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.
- 36] The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)
- 37] That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;
- 38] How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.
- 39] And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:
- 40] Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;
- 41] Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.
- 42] And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.
- 43] To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

Note that Peter is talking to a Gentile group, he is opening the door to them!

- 44] While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.
- 45] And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Peter's speech is interrupted ...with a Gift of Praise. There was a manifestation of the supernatural and the Gentiles were included!

- 46] For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,
- 47] Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?
- 48] And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Baptism in water was an act of profession, not to be confused by the giving of the gifts or the “baptism of the Spirit.”

Gifts of the Spirit: 1 Corinthians 12, 13 and 14

1 Corinthians 12:

Not everyone receives the same gift;
Gives them all severally as He wills (1 Cor 12:4-11);
Body consists of a variety of members (1 Cor 12:27-30);
Your gift is a key to your calling (Rom 12:3-8).

1 Corinthians 14:

Speaking in unknown tongues.
No two spiritual gifts are the same.

1 Corinthians 13:

The rebuttal: “A More Excellent Way”;
“...that which is perfect” (1 Cor 13:10);
Permanent: “without repentance” (Rom 11:29);
No gift to be put above another.

The Gifts are for Today!

- 1) Our Lord announces them in John 14-17; without termination!
- 2) No doctrine to be built upon “completion of the canon”: “That which is perfect is come...” (1 Cor 13:10). The Canon is not complete: Seven thunders uttering their voices not yet recorded (Rev 10:8).
- 3) Peter’s quoting Joel (Joel 2:16-20).
- 4) One valid example destroys “expositional” rebuttals.

Suggested reading: *Charismania: Fact or Fiction?* by Chuck Smith.
For a complete study of the Gifts do see our Briefing Package, *The Spiritual Gifts* or our *Expositional Commentary on First Corinthians*.

Are We a Contradiction?

- Trials Without Triumph?
- Battles Without Victory?
- Service Without Success?
- Movement Without Progress?
- Profession Without Experience?
- Life Without Health?
- Union Without Communion?

Where Are We?

- Are we on the correct side of Resurrection...
But on the wrong side of Pentecost?
- On the correct side of Pardon...
But on the wrong side of Power?
- Justified but not yet sanctified?

Next Session

Read Acts Chapters 11 and 12.

Acts Session 8 Chapters 11 and 12

Unit 1	Unit 2
Chapter 9 <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Conversion of Saul– Tabitha raised from the dead	Chapter 13 <ul style="list-style-type: none">– 1st Missionary Journey– Paul & Barnabas turn to Gentiles
Chapter 10 <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Cornelius' vision– Peter's vision	Chapter 14 <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Iconium, Derbe, & Lystra– Elders established
Chapter 11 <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Peter's ministry to Gentiles– Antioch new headquarters	Chapter 15 <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Council at Jerusalem– 2nd Missionary Journey
Chapter 12 <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Peter's arrest and deliverance– Herod's death	Chapter 16 <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Macedonian call at Troas– Philipian Jailer

Antioch

The real ministry to the Gentiles emerges out of Antioch. The first 1-18 verses are a recap of Chapter 10.

Acts 11: Peter's Ministry

- 1] And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.
- 2] And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,
- 3] Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.
- 4] But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying,

- 5] I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:
- 6] Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.
- 7] And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.
- 8] But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.
- 9] But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.
- 10] And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.
- 11] And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me.
- 12] And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:

“...these six brethren”: That’s how we got to ten at Joppa...

- 13] And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter;
- 14] Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.
- 15] And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.
- 16] Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.
- 17] Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?
- 18] When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

“...Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life”: What is implied in Chapter 10 is stated here.

- 19] Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phoenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

“...Phoenicia”: strip of Mediterranean coast between Caesarea, northward 100 miles, ½ way to Antioch.

“...Cyprus”: a rich and productive island Southwest of Seleucia.

Antioch

Antioch was the third greatest city, after Rome and Alexandria. North of Damascus from the mountain range of AntiLibanus flows the ancient river Orontes, flowing N 200 miles, it bends westward by the mountain chain of Amanus, after SW less than 20 miles it empties into the Mediterranean.

At the bend of this river, on its left bank, Seleucus Nicator, one of Alexander’s greatest generals and successors and founder of the Seleucidæ dynasty of Greek kings of Syria, built the city of Antioch in 300 B.C. as the capital of the Syrian empire.

Enjoying unequaled advantages—natural and geographical—it rose to be the “Queen of the East.” (The harbor at Seleucia was on the Mediterranean; open country lying to the east of Lebanon range) The Grove of Daphne, a main street, was 4 miles long...

[Work at Antioch commenced without Jerusalem.]

- 20] And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.

Cyrene lay on the south shore of Mediterranean, between Carthage and Egypt. Simon of Cyrene, who carried Jesus’ cross, was from here.

- 21] And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.
- 22] Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

The center of influence begins to shift from Jerusalem to Antioch which then becomes a primary base for the churches...

- 23] Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.
- 24] For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

He exhorted them. Barnabas = “son of comfort,” “son of exhortation.” He becomes the pastor there and he needs an assistant. He knows a good one...

- 25] Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:

Barnabas is the first to recognize the genuineness of Saul’s conversion. It is interesting that when he goes to Antioch and sees action he does not return to Jerusalem; instead he tracks down Saul in Tarsus.

- 26] And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

Probably on an evangelistic tour.

First use of “Christians”: A Greek word with a Latin termination; no longer a sect of Hebraism. This might have started in a derogative way.

On Paul’s previous trip from Caesarea to Tarsus he appears to have taken the land route through Syria and Cilicia (Acts 9:30). Afterwards he sent Judas, Silas, and Barnabas with the letter from the Council of Jerusalem “unto the brethren of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia...” (Acts 25:23).

- 27] And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.
 28] And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar.

“...great dearth”: There were four specific local famines under Claudius:

- 1st & 2nd years, at Rome
- 4th year, in Judea
- 9th year, in Greece
- 11th year, in Rome

- 29] Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:

There was a general famine, but the effect was especially felt in Jerusalem where the church had been persecuted, decimated, and hurt. They were in dire need during this time. These were the first spontaneous gatherings of voluntary relief for their brethren in Judea.

- 30] Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

A bit of irony: the hands that previously had attacked them now brings relief... Saul assists Barnabas for at least one year.

Summary Comments

- **Continuity**
 - Stephen’s martyrdom spreads efforts;
 - Peter’s vision = church’s eyesight;
 - Saul’s apprehension = Antioch’s supply.
- **Absolute freedom, independent actions**
 - Men of Cyprus, Cyrene preach to Greeks;
 - Sending of Barnabas by apostles;
 - Finding of Saul by Barnabas;
 - Collection for Judea = spontaneous.

- **Unity**
 - “One Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is in all, and through all” (Eph 4:5,6).
- **Perpetual Variety**
 - Apostolic gift, evangelistic gifts, prophetic gifts, and the pastoral gifts (Eph 4:11). No one man can win a soul.

Acts 12: Peter’s Arrest & Herod’s Death

	Acts Chapter:
• Ascension	1
• Pentecost – Birth of the Church	2
• Outrage against Stephen	7
• Philip & Ethiopian Treasurer	8
• Call of Paul	9
• Peter’s Vision at Cornelius’	10
• Mission to Gentiles	11-14
• Council at Jerusalem	15

Antioch will now be the center, not Jerusalem. Jerusalem, as the center of the Church’s operations, passes out of sight. It appears only two more times:

- 1) Council regarding Gentile obligations; Chapter 15.
- 2) Paul’s visit, compelled to seek Roman protection for his life Chapters 21,22.

- 1] Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

Herod Agrippa I is the nephew of Herod Antipas who murdered John the Baptist. The Herods were Edomites (“Idumean”)... This leads to an important insert on “What is an Edomite?” ...today?

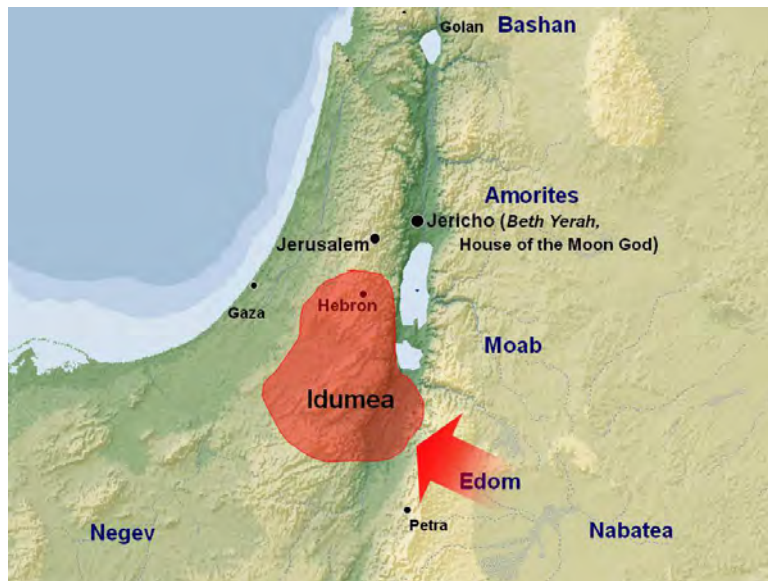
The Everlasting Hatred עוֹלָם אִיְבָה *olam eybah*

- The struggle between Esau and Jacob (Gen 25:19-26).
- The Herods of the NT were Edomites:
 - One of them killed the Jewish babies in his attempt to destroy Christ (Mt 2:16-18);
 - Another Herod murdered John the Baptist;
 - Another one killed James the brother of John (Acts 12).
- The struggle between the Israelis and the “Arabs” today is a continuation of this battle that started in Genesis 25:19-26.

Emergence of “Idumea”

Nomadic Nabateans migrated out of Arabia into Edom and drove the Edomites westward. Directly west of Edom were established routes of passage. Land there was historically more prosperous and resourceful than the land of Edom, which consisted of infertile deserts and jagged mountains. Furthermore, the land bore a family association: after all, Esau was Jacob’s brother.

At the Babylonian captivity when Jews were deported, Edomites seized on the Amalekite territory, so that Idumea came to mean the region between the Arabah and the Mediterranean. Hebron, 19 miles South of Jerusalem, began their new frontier. At 3400 ft. above sea level, unlike Jerusalem, Hebron was left intact as prime real estate.



Forced Conversions to Judaism

Hebron remained under Edomite control until Judas Maccabeus retook the city under Jewish control in 164 B.C. Thirty-eight years later, 126 B.C., they had to be reconquered by the Jewish Army under prince and high priest John Hyrcanus. Idumeans were forced to die, flee or be *proselytized into Judaism*. [Source: 1 Macc. 10:84–89; 11:60–62; Josephus *Antiquities*, 13.17; 12.11.]

Rise of Idumeans

In 47 B.C. Julius Caesar promoted Idumean Antipater as procurator over Judea, Samaria and Galilee. In 37 B.C., the Romans named Herod, son of Antipater, as King over Israel—his mother was Nabatean. The Idumeans had five centuries of prior history in Israel by the time of arrival of the Messiah Jesus (Mk 3:8).

Fall of Jerusalem, 70 A.D.

At the time of the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., there was civil turmoil among the Zealots, the Idumeans, and the Orthodox Jews—20,000 Idumean infantry slaughtered many of the Orthodox Jews; yet, many fought with the Jews against the Romans. Many were killed, sold into slavery, or enjoined among the 40,000 set free by Caesar.

The Renaming of the Land

Bar Kokhba had about 200,000 men at his command, and had recaptured Jerusalem and many strongholds throughout the country. Emperor Hadrian called legion upon legion to crush the Jewish insurgents. Over 580,000 lost their lives. Hadrian purposed to stamp out Jewish nationalism entirely. Traditions such as circumcision, the Sabbath, and reading the Torah was forbidden under penalty of death.

In their choice of the Jews’ worst enemy, the Romans had two choices: Idumea and Philistia. Idumeans were viewed as practitioners of Judaism, and not as great an enemy as were the Philistines. (There are many who still appear today as “Jews” but are really not...) Maps until 135 A.D., after the Bar Kokhba revolt, still displayed “Idumea.” After the Romans chose to name the Land “Palestina,” Idumea disappeared from future maps and history.

The Edomites, later known as Idumeans, became assimilated into the “Palestinians” of today.

Judgment Upon the Nations (Ezek 25-32)

- Ammon
 - Moab
 - Edom
 - Philistia
 - Tyre
 - Sidon
 - Egypt
- All Muslims

The Judgment against Edom

The Judgment against Edom is mentioned in more Old Testament books than it is against any other foreign nation: Isa 11:14; 34:5-17; 63:1-6; Jer 9:25-26; 25:17-26; 49:7-22; Lam 4:21-22; Ezek 25:12-14; 35:15; Joel 3:19; Amos 1:11-12; 9:11-12; Obadiah 1:1-21; Mal 1:4.

Acts 12

- 1] Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

Herod Agrippa I is the nephew of Herod Antipas who murdered John the Baptist. He is the grandson of Herod the Great, the son of Aristobulus and Bernice of the Maccabean or Hasmonean line; he was the murderer of the innocents at the birth of our Lord. (Paul will make his celebrated defense in Ch 26 before his son, Herod Agrippa II.)

Herod Agrippa I

Herod Agrippa was brought up in Rome with Caligula and Claudis. On the accession of Caligula to the empire, he obtained from him the dominions of this uncles, Philip and Herod Antipas-Batanaea, Tachonitis, and Auranitis (after the death of Philip); Galilee and Peraea (on the banishment of Antipas to Gaul); and Abilene with the title of the King.

On the accession of Claudius he was further invested with the sovereignty of Samaria and Judea; thus having at length all the dominions over which his grandfather (Herod the Great) had reigned, and from which he derived an immense revenue. He was of Roman habits: he lived for 30 years in Rome; a companion in every kind of vice of the son of the emperor.

Yet, he also had Jewish interests. He interceded when Caligula ordered an image of himself in the Temple. He was their last king, the sycophant of a child of Roman voluptuousness, an Edomite, attempting to retain Jewish power, supremely given over to all manner of Greek frivolity.

This man is the representative of the people whom God had offered to rule; this was the man who stretched forth his hand to vex the church of God and one of the first things he does is kill James.

- 2] And he killed James the brother of John with the sword.

James, the brother of John, also surnamed “Boanerges” (Son of Thunder). He was at the Transfiguration, at the raising of Jairus’ daughter and at the Garden of Gethsemane.

Herod Agrippa killed James with a sword. Even though he had Rome behind him, he was an Edomite and was anxious to win favor with the leadership of the Jews.

- 3] And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)
4] And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after [Passover] to bring him forth to the people.

Quaternions: squads of four men each; (third time for Peter).

“Easter” (KJV) is a mistranslation from the Greek. This is an example of how prejudice (and early anti-Semitism) has injured both Israel and the Church...

Quartodecimanism

“Fourteenism” (derived from Latin) refers to the practice of fixing the celebration of Passover for Christians on the fourteenth day of Nisan in the Old Testament Calendar (Lev 23:5). This was the original method of fixing the date of the Passover, which is to be a “perpetual ordinance” (Ex 12:14).

Second Century Tensions

- 115-125 A.D.: The Roman church celebrated Passover on a Sunday at least since the time of Bishop Xystus or Sixtus I (Eusebius H.E. 5.24.14).
- 154 A.D.: Polycarp visited Rome to discuss the difference in Paschal calculation with Bishop Anisettes and reached an amicable compromise.
- Polycrates of Ephesus and Irenaeus wrote in support of the Quartodecimans (Eusebius H.E. 5.24.17).

Council of Nicea

The council unanimously ruled that the Easter festival should be celebrated throughout the Christian world on the first Sunday after the full moon following the vernal equinox; and that if the full moon should occur on a Sunday, and thereby coincide with the Passover festival, Easter should be commemorated on the following Sunday. As result of the Council of Nicea, and amended by numerous subsequent meetings,

the formal church deliberately attempted to design a formula for “Easter” which would *avoid* any possibility of falling on the Jewish Passover, even accidentally! ...and *Quartodecimans* were excommunicated!

- 5] Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

Peter is in prison but there are two forces at work: 1) Kept in prison by Herod; 2) Prayer made earnestly by the Church.

- 6] And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

A sinner’s condition: asleep, indifferent, bound in the chains of our sins, guarded by Satan’s emissaries, doomed to die. He can do nothing for himself; saved by a messenger from heaven...

- 7] And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.

(“An”, not “the”; *not* an OT incident of the preincarnate Christ.)

- 8] And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

Get dressed: this isn’t a dream...

- 9] And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.
10] When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.
11] And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.
12] And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.

Mary, mother of the writer of Gospel of Mark. Her brother was Barnabas (Col 4:10), also a man of substance (Acts 4:37).

- 13] And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.
14] And when she knew Peter’s voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.

Rhoda was appropriately cautious; however, she could have let Peter in...

- 15] And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel.
16] But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished.

(Skeptical Christians don’t bring umbrellas when they pray for rain.)

- 17] But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

“James”: A different one—this is the Lord’s brother. Peter departs and went to another place. *All history of Peter in Acts terminates here.*

- 18] Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter.
19] And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judaea to Caesarea, and there abode.

Impotent vengeance! (Keepers are responsible for the loss of prisoners.)

- 20] And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king’s chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king’s country.

Herod had cut off the export of food to their country.

- 21] And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.
22] And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.
23] And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

Herod’s grandfather, Herod the Great, died of the same horrible disease.

Herod’s Death

Herod was at Caesarea, presiding over the games in honor of Caesar. On the second day of the games, Agrippa entered at daybreak, clothed in a robe of silver, on which the rays of the morning sun were alighting, he appeared as if all irradiated with glory; numerous voices saluted him as a god; and on his making an oration to them they shouted, “We have taken thee for a

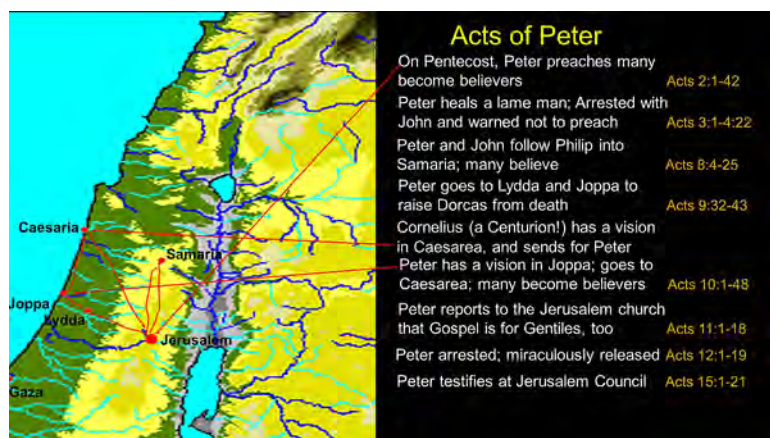
man, but henceforth we recognize in thee a god!" The king rebuked them not, nor showed any displeasure at this impiety; he saw an owl perched on a rope over his head, and immediately, taking this for an ill omen, he was filled with remorse, and was seized with violent pain in his bowels, exclaiming to his friends, "Your god is already come to his life's end, and he who you saluted immortal is going to away to die." To such a height did the pain rise that he had to be carried hastily into the palace, where, after five days torture, he expired in his 54th year.

— Josephus

- 24] But the word of God grew and multiplied.
 25] And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.

Persecution didn't hurt the church at all.

Barnabas, Saul, and Mark (nephew to Barnabas) are on their way to Antioch... 300 miles before them; Jerusalem is behind them, in more ways than one...



The Rest of Peter's Work

Peter meets Paul in Antioch	Gal 2:11-14
Peter visits churches in north Asia Minor	1 Pet 1:1
Evidence of Peter in Corinth	1 Cor 1:12
Wrote his 1 st letter from Babylon	1 Pet 5:13

Peter was executed in Rome (as the Lord had predicted). Mark wrote his Gospel in Rome just after Peter's death.

Marching Orders

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Acts 1:8

- Acts – Unit 1: Philip and Peter
 - Chapters 1-12: Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria.
- Acts – Unit 2: Paul
 - Chapters 13-28: Uttermost part of the earth.

Parallels	
1 - 12	13 - 28
• Jerusalem the Center	• Antioch the Center
• Peter the Chief figure	• Paul the chief figure
• Out to Samaria	• Out to Rome
• Word rejected by Jews of homeland	• Word rejected by Jews of Dispersion
• Peter imprisoned	• Paul imprisoned
• Judgment on Herod	• Judgment on Jews

Parallels

Peter		Paul	
First Sermon	2	First Sermon	13
Lame Man healed	3	Lame man healed	14
Simon the Sorcerer	8	Elymas the sorcerer	13
Influence of shadow	5	Influence of handkerchief	19
Laying on of hands	8	Laying on of hands	19
Peter worshipped	10	Paul worshipped	14
Tabitha raised	9	Eutychus raised	20
Peter imprisoned	12	Paul imprisoned	28

End of Unit 1

We have come now to the end of the First Unit of the Book of Acts. The gospel has gone into Judea and Samaria. Beginning with the next chapter we will see the movement of the gospel to the uttermost part of the earth. We are still in that movement today (Rev 2 & 3).

Acts Session 9 Chapters 13 and 14

Marching Orders

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

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Chapters 13 & 14: 1st Missionary Journey—Galatia

Tarsus

Tarsus was a free Greek city, having received its liberty from Mark Antony; it received title of “metropolis” of Cilicia, as well as other privileges, conferred by Augustus. The great university of its time was found there; it surpassed even Athens and Alexandria in its zeal for philosophy and derived its civilization—and its origin—from Greece, having been founded by an Argine colony.

Saul

Saul’s father and mother were Hebrews; Pharisees (not Sadducees). Although raised in the Hellenistic culture, he was sent to Jerusalem to study under Gamaliel. Saul is a Pharisee to the core! He is a member of the Sanhedrin, which governs not only over Jerusalem, but over *all* Judaism.

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Antioch

Antioch was the third greatest city, after Rome and Alexandria. Seleucus Nicator, one of Alexander’s greatest generals and successors and founder of the Seleucidae dynasty of Greek kings of Syria, built the city of Antioch in 300 B.C. as the capital of the Syrian empire.

Enjoying unequalled advantages—natural and geographical—it rose to be the “Queen of the East.” [Work at Antioch commenced without Jerusalem. Antioch of Syria becomes the center to the Gentile outreach.]

Acts 13

- 1] Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

“...Barnabas”: the Levite, a man of property on Cyprus; sold all his land and put everything he had into the work of the Lord.

“...Simeon that was called Niger (Nigeria)”: (No race prejudice here.) Very possibly the Simeon (Simon) who was forced by the Romans to bear the cross of Jesus.

“...Lucius of Cyrene (also black, a Gentile)”: Same as referenced in Rom 16:21? He may have been one of the Cypriots by whom the Gospel was first brought to Antioch in Acts 11:20.

“...Manaen”: Brought up in royal court as foster-brother of Herod, the Tetrarch (now occupying a higher honor than Herod ever obtained!). (Cf. Johanna, wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward, Lk 8:1-3.)

“...Saul”: Paul was listed as a teacher, not yet as an Apostle (until the first miracle of his first missionary journey), also here still called Saul.

- 2] As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

“...I have called them”: Sent by the Holy Ghost (not sent by, nor ordained by the church!).

- 3] And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

Simply a means of indicating partnership.

- 4] So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

Seleucia is the seaport for Antioch.

- 5] And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.

“...Salamis”: The Grecian capital of Cyprus, East side. (Cyprus had two capitals, the other, a Roman capital called Paphos.)

“...in the synagogues”: Note they start in the Jewish synagogues.

“...John”: Actually John Mark, we know as Mark.

- 6] And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus:

“...Paphos”: The Roman capital of island, where the proconsul resided, west side, 100 miles along the south shore.

“...Barjesus”: In the Greek, “son of Jesus.” This guy goes by two names: Barjesus and Elymas (Arabic name); he is trying to hide his Jewish nationality.

- 7] Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

“...deputy”: *Anthupatos*, proconsul: for settled provinces, placed directly under the Roman Senate by Emperor Augustus. (Title never given to Pilate, Festus, or Felix, who were but procurators, or subordinate administrators, of unsettled, imperial, military provinces.) Cyprus was put directly under the Roman Senate.

“...Sergius Paulus”: First Gentile convert on their first missionary journey. Confirmed by Archaeology: Inscription with both title and name found on a coin of 52 A.D. in Cyprus. Sir William Ramsey also uncovered evidence that his entire family became prominent Christians after this event.

- 8] But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

“...Elymas”: An Arabic name (“all knowing one, wise one”), hiding his Jewish nationality. This sorcerer deliberately tries to obstruct the Word of God with the most senior Roman official in the area!

- 9] Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

Designated as “Paul” from here on. The name signifies “small, or little” (Commemorates conversion of Paulus?) Hebrew => Roman name.

- 10] And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

“...child [son] of the devil”: The Spirit of God never used a term like that of ordinary unsaved men (Cf. John 8:44). The severest words of the Bible are reserved for:

- Those who stand between men and truth...
- Those who stand between men and God.

Eight woes: not upon sinning men, but on false teachers (Mt 23:13-29). Cf. Jannes & Jambres withstanding Moses before the Pharaoh of Egypt (2 Tim 3:8). The opposition of the supernatural and the occult is one of the gravest perils threatening the Christian faith.

[Source: *Beautiful Side of Evil* by Johannah Michaelson]

- 11] And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

Paul’s first miracle: he makes this guy blind. Blindness is a natural symbol of man’s spiritual condition. This guy is blind for a season, which implies an opportunity for repentance. This miracle is Paul’s first act as an apostle; he shows that he is more than a teacher.

- 12] Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.
- 13] Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.

“...Paul and his company”: They left Cyprus. Barnabas, now in the background, will later visit again and spend some time there. It was his original home.

“John” is John Mark; his departure disturbs Paul. Note that “Paul and company” shows that Paul had become the leader.

“Perga”: The principal metropolis in Pamphylia, situated on the river Cestrus, 7 miles N from Attaleia.

Why Did Mark Leave?

- Blameworthy (son of a rich woman?)
- Resented change in leadership?
- Unattracted to the difficulties ahead?
- Paul did not approve (Acts 15:38).
- Barnabas did share Paul’s view.
- Paul will later receive Mark (2 Tim 4:11).

- 14] But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.

Antioch at Pisidia (not Antioch at Syria). Part of the ancient Roman province of Galatia (includes: Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe). Due North of Perga...mountainous country, difficult to reach; hangout of robbers, etc. (cf. 2 Cor 11:26).

Three influences: 1) Roman government 2) Greek mental mood and 3) Hebrew religious influences.



- 15] And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.
- 16] Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.

“...ye that fear God”: “The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom” (Prov 9:10). The “fear” of God is too often the critical initial step. “The readiness of mind” is the primary prerequisite to obtaining truth (Acts 17:11).

Paul’s first recorded address: contrast with Peter’s (only) address to Gentiles (Cornelius, still very Jewish). While although modeled after Stephen’s address (Jewish phraseology avoided), Paul presents the Gospel with no reference to Hebrew history or Hebrew Scriptures: meets Gentiles on Gentile ground (cf. 1 Cor 9:20-22), emphasizing God’s Government and God’s Grace.

- 17] The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it.

18] And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness.

(It was 38 years, actually; cf. Deut 2:14; Lk 21:32; 11:30-32, 50-51).

“...suffered he their manners in the wilderness”: (1 letter in Greek: as in some manuscripts: “He bare them as a nursing Father...” cf. Deut 1:31; Num 11:12).

19] And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.

“...seven nations”: One verse summarizes the whole book of Joshua. [Pattern: $3 + 7 = 10 \dots ?$]

20] And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.

450 years (= Abraham’s covenant until Judges)

Or: Exodus to building of Temple, 591 years,
less, 40 years wilderness,
25 years of Joshua’s rule,
40 years of Saul,
40 years of David’s
1st 4 years of Solomon to the Temple
442 or “about 450 years”

21] And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

Both “Sauls” were of the tribe of Benjamin...

22] And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

David as a man after God’s own heart (Ps 89:20, 1 Sam 13:14, Ps 78:70-72?); David asked for Fellowship.

23] Of this man’s seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:

24] When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

25] And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose.

26] Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

27] For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.

28] And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

29] And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.

Sin blinds men’s eyes to the truth.

30] But God raised him from the dead:

31] And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.

Paul is telling them the whole story, but from an Old Testament perspective as a fulfillment, and here even all the things they did he highlights showing in the global summary that that was predicted. He is wrapping up with Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53.

32] And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,

33] God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

Psalm 2.

34] And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.

35] Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

36] For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:

37] But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

Psalm 16:10: This can’t apply to David literally; it applied to the Messiah out of David.

38] Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

39] And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

“...justified”: Grand gospel statement...

Grand Gospel Statement

“Justified” - first use of the word. He is saying that you could not be justified by the Law of Moses. And his point is that all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses. This was shattering to men who honored Law of Moses! Paul => “justified,” not just forgiven...in such a way that God’s honor and integrity are preserved (Rom 5:1).

- 40] Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;
41] Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

Cf. Hab 1:5 (!) Often misapplied: God is going to use their enemies as His means of judgment...

Paul’s paradigm on Hab 2:4:

The Just shall live by faith	Rom 1:17
The Just shall live by faith	Gal 3:11
The Just shall live by Faith	Heb 10:38

- 42] And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.

[Gr. “in the week between,” or, “in the sabbath between.”]

The Gentiles want to hear more! A solemn word of warning! (Hab 1:5).
You will never be the same again after you have heard the message:

- Acceptance: Justification
- Rejection: Condemnation is greater!

- 43] Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.
44] And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.
45] But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.
46] Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

All that hate me love death: Prov 8:36.

- 47] For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

- 48] And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

Cf. Isa 49:6. Commission as Authority to go to the Gentiles. Note: Divine ordination is the *cause*, not the *effect*, of believing!

- 49] And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.
50] But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.
51] But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.
52] And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

“...Iconium”: A populous city, 45 miles southeast from Pisidian Antioch, at the foot of Mt Taurus, on the borders of Lycaonia, Phrygia, and Pisidia; in later times, contributing to the consolidation of the Turkish empire.

“...dust”: Luke 10:10-12.

Acts 14

- 1] And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.

A great multitude believed”: Luke gives us fruits only from here on...
“Disbelieving (unpersuadable) Jews...”

- 2] But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.
3] Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

When they encountered resistance they spent MORE time there. They were possibly in Iconium for as long as six months.

- 4] But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.
5] And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them,

The Gospel is intended to be divisive (Mt 10:34).

“...with the apostles”: See v. 14.

- 6] They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about:

- 7] And there they preached the gospel.

There might not have been a synagogue at Lystra as they start out right away to preach the gospel.

- Lystra: 20 miles to the South.
- Derbe: 60 miles to the East of Iconium.
- Lycaonia: a wide district of Asia Minor, lying between Phrygia Cilicia, and Cappadocia.

- 8] And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:
- 9] The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,
- 10] Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

Physical, emotional or spiritually lame: You are held in bondage until you begin to obey the Word of God about it..

- 11] And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.
- 12] And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.
- 13] Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people.

Pagan Legends

This area carried the legend that Jupiter and Mercury had descended to this area.

- **Jupiter (Roman), Zeus (Greek):** father of the gods, tall and dignified.
- **Mercury (Roman), Hermes (Greek):** (winged feet). Attendant and messenger of Jupiter: spokesman.

[**Ovid:** legend that the temple erected at Lystra in memory that Jupiter and Mercury had descended there long before...]

- 14] Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

“...rent their clothes”: Classic Jewish way of showing grief, or distress.

Note: “Apostles”? More than the 12 + Paul...

- 15] And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

“...vanities”: An expressive name for idols of every sort (Ps 146:6).

Paul's two points: 1) Creation = one “living God...”
 2) Free choice = allows evil...

[No single reference to *Hebrew* Scripture, history.]

- 16] Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.
- 17] Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

Rain is very scarce in Lycanoia.

- 18] And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.
- 19] And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

Paul stoned: (20 years later; 2 Cor 11:25). Out of body experience? (2 Cor 12:2-4). He “bears marks” (Gal 6:17).

- 20] Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

Timotheus may have been among them (Acts 16:1-3).

- 21] And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch,

“...taught many”: Gr. “had made many disciples.” In Derbe, the apostle gains a friend, companion, and fellow-helper: Gaius (Rom 16:23; 1 Cor 1:14; 3 John 1). They return via Lystra (20 miles), Iconium (40 miles) and Antioch (60 miles), Rather than the quick (and safe) sea route home...
...confirming, exhorting, organizing...

- 22] Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.
- 23] And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.
- 24] And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.

- 25] And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia:
 26] And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

“...Attalia”: A seaport on the Gulf of Pamphylia, which drew commerce from Egypt and Syria.



- 27] And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

“...all that God had done”: No numbers: Gentile converts are never counted! (In Acts 2:41 and 4:4 = 3000, 5000: Jewish only are numbered.

Mystery: “Fullness of the Gentiles” (Rom 11:25).

- 28] And there they abode long time with the disciples.

“...long time”: 4-5 years; journey: 2 years.

Next Session

Study Acts Chapters 15 & 16.

What were the *two* issues before the Council in Jerusalem? How were they resolved? Why does the Scofield Bible suggest that this is the most important dispensational passage in the New Testament?

Acts Session 10 Chapters 15 and 16 The Council of Jerusalem

Introduction

One of the most difficult things for us to grasp is the “freeness” of God’s salvation: Grace. Nothing can be added. (It is blasphemy to try!) Even the devil knows a man will be saved if he will believe (Mt 13:19).

Background: Galatians 2

Peter is sensitive because of Cornelius, etc. (Ch 10). The Apostles agreed that Peter should remain in Jerusalem to minister to the Jews (Gal 2:7,9). Peter visits Antioch, fellowships with the Gentiles there, but withdraws when legalistic Jews visit from Jerusalem (Gal 2:11-14). Tensions mount and a split is threatened (Antioch as the “parent” of Gentile Christianity, threatens to eclipse Jerusalem as the “mother” church...).

Two Big Questions

- 1) Are the Gentiles under the Law?
- 2) What about the Messianic Kingdom?
 - Restoration of Israel?
 - Christ on David’s throne in Jerusalem?
 - Is the church “spiritual Israel”?
 - Vital issues in the Body TODAY....
 - cf. “Synagogue of Satan” (Rev 2:9, Rom 2:28, 29).
 - False Teachers continue to be an issue (Jn 8:44).

1st Apostolic Council

The council was held in Jerusalem about 52 A.D., 20 years after the Ascension. [This was not an authoritative, “governing” body: Paul was probably prepared to defy all 12 apostles and the whole Church of Jerusalem if they had disagreed with him!] It probably was quite a discussion.

Acts 15

- 1] And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

- 2] When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

They decide to send a leadership—Paul and Barnabas and “certain others” = Titus, an uncircumcised Greek (Gal 2:4-6).

- 3] And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.
- 4] And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.
- 5] But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.
- 6] And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

The issue was not just circumcision, it is only the representative issue. Unlike today where circumcision is done for health as well as other reasons, then the idea was to be under the covenant of Abraham.

- 7] And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

“...a good while ago”: about 13 years before.

- 8] And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;
- 9] And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.
- 10] Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?
- 11] But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

“...we shall be saved, even as they”: One of the biggest arguments is implied here. These Gentiles were saved, they weren’t circumcised, and this had been happening for years. The Gentiles were already saved—why would they have to be circumcised? Notice the inversion, “We Jews can be saved even as the Gentiles are...”

Peter is magnificent: “We shall be saved, even as they” (these are the last recorded words of Peter recorded in Acts).

[Note the change in Peter since being filled with the Spirit; in the Gospels, he only opened his mouth to change feet...]

- 12] Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

Notice that it is here stated: “Barnabas and Paul,” why, when Paul is usually noted first? Barnabas is better known to this group.

- 13] And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:

James, the brother of our Lord Jesus. (There are four different Jameses.)

Dispensationally, this is the most important passage in the New Testament.
—Scofield Study Bible

It gives the divine purpose of this age and for the beginning of the next.

- 14] Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.
- 15] And to this agree the words of the prophets;

Fullness of the Gentiles (Rom 11:1...25-27).

- 16] After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

“After this I will return...” Quoting Amos 9:11, 12. He is answering the implied pressing question: If a Gentile does not have to come under the Law, what is the future of Israel?

“...tabernacle of David”: The fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant (Isa 11:1, 10-12; Jer 23:5-82; Sam 2:8-17; Lk 1:31-33).

“After this” refers to the calling out of the Gentiles. After that he will return. Who? Jesus.

In Romans 9, 10, 11 - Paul deals with the future role of Israel. Do see our Briefing Package, *The Prodigal Heirs*, for a study of the Church and Israel.

- Romans 11:25: “...until” implies that the blindness will be lifted. The Fullness of the Gentiles is that group of people that God, in his foreknowledge, has predestinated to be in the Church.
- Ephesians 3:3-6: Postponement of the Kingdom and the calling out of the church: “a mystery.”
- Thus, “after this” is after the fullness of the Gentiles. After this, two things happen: 1) Blindness is relieved from Israel; 2) The return of Jesus Christ.

The Bible does not promise a conversion of the world in this age: only a remnant (always, only a remnant).

Future Role of Israel

- Dan 9; Isa 63; Zech 12, 14; Rev 12; Hosea 5...
- An understanding of God's Word with respect to the future of Israel will avoid the current heresies of "Kingdom Now," "Dominion Theology," "Reconstructionists," etc. Read *Road to Holocaust* by Hal Lindsey.
- Promise to Mary: Throne of David, Lk 1:32,33.

- 17] That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.
- 18] Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.
- 19] Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:
- 20] But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.

James is concluding that the Gentile converts are not to be burdened with the yoke that Israel has had to bear. There is no reason for them to, because Israel and the Church are separate entities.

"...idols...fornication": Two chief sins of the Gentiles.

"...things strangled and from blood": Two things which would be particularly offensive to a Jew. Prohibition of eating of blood antedated the Law by almost 900 years (Gen 9:4).

No Sabbath....(?)! No Circumcision... Blood = murder?

- 21] For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

Ignoring one very "stubborn" fact: these Gentiles were already saved.

- 22] Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

"...Judas": Not to be confused with Judas the brother of James, etc. (Nothing more known than here.)

"Silas" (= Silvanus in the epistles): Paul's close companion on this Second Missionary journey.

- 23] And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:
- 24] Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment:

- "Synagogue of Satan": Rev 2:9-10; Rom 2:28, 29; Deut 30:6; Jer 4:4; Deut 9:24-26. (Circumcision is of the heart, far beyond the symbol of the circumcision of the flesh.)
- John 8:12-44; Luke 10:49-59. Note: Sincerity not enough: they were sincere.
- Does "Judaizing" end?

- 25] It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,
- 26] Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 27] We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth.
- 28] For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;
- 29] That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.
- 30] So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:
- 31] Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

Rejoicing as a division of the church was avoided!

- 32] And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.
- 33] And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles.
- 34] Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.
- 35] Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.
- 36] And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.

Time is summarized. A substantial amount of time goes by before v.36, the "2nd Missionary Journey."

- 37] And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.
- 38] But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.

John Mark: Barnabas was his uncle and he had left earlier. Paul won't give Mark another chance. [He would later...]

A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city.

Proverbs 18:19

Aren't you glad that Paul gave Mark another chance? Mark became Peter's amanuensis and converted Peter's gospel from the Aramaic to the Greek which gave us the Gospel of Mark!

- 39] And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;
- 40] And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.
- 41] And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

Barnabas then disappears from the record...

The Invasion of Europe

When Paul and his gang (Silas, Timothy and Luke) crossed the Dardanelles, they changed the whole course of Western Civilization!

- 42] Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek:

(Acts 16:1 in the KJV). Back at Lystra, where Paul had been stoned.

Acts 16: The Selection of Timothy

Timothy, from this time on, is closely associated with Paul (Rom 16:1). He was a convert from previous visit (16 years old? Acts 14:7). His mother Eunice as well as her mother, Lois, had instructed Timothy in Scriptures from infancy (2 Tim 1:5; 3:15). His mother was Jewish but his father was a Greek, yet brought up in the Scriptures.

Two of Paul's letters are addressed to him: "My own son in the faith" (1 Tim 1:2, 18; 2 Tim 1:2). In six of Paul's Epistles, Timothy is joined in salutation. Timothy was with Paul on his 2nd missionary journey:

- ...at Ephesus during the days of strife;
- ...with him on last journey to Jerusalem;
- ...with him on his first imprisonment;
- ...Paul sent for him in the loneliness of his 2nd imprisonment;
- ...his son, his child, his comrade in the fight.

- 2] Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.
- 3] Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

Iconium, Lystra, Derbe: they were worshiped as gods; then stoned (to death?)...These were the Galatians of Paul's later letter.

Paul circumcised him so as not to offend Jewish prejudices; something he would not have done if he were a Gentile, like Titus. It was for their ministries' sake that they wanted him accepted by the Jewish audiences.

- 4] And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.
- 5] And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.
- 6] Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,

Galatia = Iconium, Lystra and Derbe were in this province. (This proscribed region, "Asia," is where the "Seven churches" of Revelation are located.)

- 7] After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

"Bithynia": southeast shore of Sea of Mamora, south shore of Black Sea.

- 8] And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.
- 9] And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

Alexandreia Troas, a port on the coast of Mysia, 30 miles south of the Dardanelles. Macedonia is across the Dardanelles in Greece; it is what we would call Europe. The Dardanelles is the classic dividing line between Asia and Europe.

- 10] And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

"...we" = Luke joins here. This is the first place in Acts where the writer includes himself. Was Luke the man in the vision?

- 11] Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;

“Samothracia”: highest in elevation of northern Aegean islands, midway between Troas and Philippi.

“Neapolis”: harbor of Philippi, 10 miles inland favorable wind: 2 days; later it took 5 days.

- 12] And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.

Paul always focused on strategic centers. (He arrives about 20 years after the foundation of the church at Jerusalem.)

Philippi

Philippi is the scene of decisive battle ending the Roman republic, in 42 B.C. Brutus and Cassius, murderers of Julius Caesar, were defeated by the combined forces of Mark Antony and Octavian, who later became Emperor Augustus. Because of their assistance, Octavian granted Roman citizenship to these Philippians when he became emperor. First of the district, a city of Macedonia, a colony (Amphipolis had been chief city, still a rival). Note Paul’s ellipsis: “Our citizenship is in heaven...” (Phil 3:20).

Strange Guidance?

Paul must have been puzzled: Quarreling with Barnabas, he parted from him. He wanted to preach the Gospel, so he passed through Syria and Cilicia, and came to Derbe and Lystra, and there he met Timothy. He wanted to go on to proconsular Asia, and he could not do it. He was sick, he was ill, an infirmity of the flesh was upon him and he could not go.

It was necessary to that he should take another direction and he went into Galatia and preached there. Then he turned back again. There was no reason that he could understand. It is a picture of cross currents, of difficulty, perplexity and darkness.

Then he felt the lure of Bithynia; he would go there. No, he must go west and on he went, perplexed. Then came the vision of the man of Macedonia (and when he talked it over with Luke in later days, Luke would write the story with the advantage of hindsight).

The Spirit forbade him preaching in Asia. The Spirit of Jesus drove him ever and ever on toward Troas. The guidance of the Holy Spirit is validated by the results: Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth.

The guidance of the Spirit was subsequently recognized by these men... not always by flaming visions...not by words articulate in human ears; but by circumstances, by commonplace things, by difficult things, by dark things, by disappointing things.

The man the Spirit will guide is the man who is in an attitude in which it is possible for the Spirit to guide him...an attitude of life; of loyalty to the Lord, faith in the guidance of the Spirit, and constant watchfulness. It is the watcher for the Lord who sees the Lord.

- 13] And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.

Ten adult male Jews were required to make a synagogue (a “minion”); otherwise, they usually met near a body of water for prayer, fellowship, worship, ritual washings, etc. It was through a women’s prayer group that the Gospel entered Europe!

- 14] And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

“...seller of purple”: Celebrated purple dye was made from the murex, a shellfish. (Ref. By Homer)

“...Thyatira”: inscriptions of the guild of dyers have been found at Thyatira. (Thyatira was one of the cities Paul had to omit on his way to Troas.)

- 15] And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

“Constrained” - only here and at Emmaus Road...

- 16] And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

“A spirit of divination”: Python = (Greek mythology) serpent destroyed by Apollo, who was hence called Pythius; a priestess at the famous temple at Delphi was called the Pythoness. The term Python became equivalent to soothsaying demon (today’s “channel”, et al.) She was Apollo’s “channel” (there’s nothing “new” about the “New Age”; cf. 2 Cor 2:11; 1 Tim 4:1-3).

- 17] The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

The occult is always motivated by self-interest. Even “truth” is used to “suck them in”; soon it is mixed with error, etc. On each previous occasion (in Mark & Luke), Jesus commanded the acknowledging demon to silence.

- 18] And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

“...being grieved”: Annoyed= deeply troubled. If our infiltration doesn’t work, then direct oppression. Outright violence demonstrates that one of the enemy’s strongholds was being attacked (2 Cor 10:4; Eph 6).

Note that her statements were true. The occult is always motivated by its own self-interests (here her owners’ monetary gain). Here even more insidious is that the occult is an arm, an agency, an organization which is under Satan’s command. The damage here is taking a bit of truth and slowly turning off course.

- 19] And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,
20] And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,
21] And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.
22] And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.

The lecturers who attend on the praetors carried rods or staves for that purpose, and were called rod-bearers (2 Cor 10:3-4).

- 23] And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:
24] Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.
25] And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

Adoration and worship. (Not, “deliver your servants.” etc.) Cf. Ps 113; 115:11; 116:3,4,15,17; 118:6, 29; 114:7. A concert that was so successful that it brought the house down! Other prisoners were “attentively listening.” Suffering is part of the program (Phil 1:29).

- 26] And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed.

- 27] And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

The Certificate of Debt

Prison guards were responsible for the sentences of their prisoners, if one escaped, they would have to pay their debt. When prisoners were done with their time, the court would sign their Certificate of Debt as “Paid in Full” (*Tetelestai*). Thus, this jailer was going to kill himself as he thought all the prisoners were gone, and thus, he himself would have to fulfill all their sentences! (Jesus fulfilled ours!)

- 28] But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.
29] Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,
30] And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

Irony: Stocks become their throne; their jailer lies suppliant at their feet!

“Sirs” = “Lords...” The jailer is the first male convert in Philippi, first in Europe. [Was he the Macedonian in the vision?] His household is saved when they believed. (Not just saved because he was; they were saved because they all believed.)

- 31] And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.
32] And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.
33] And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.
34] And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.
35] And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.
36] And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.
37] But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.
38] And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.

Roman citizens were entitled to trial, and should never have been beaten or imprisoned without due process. Imprisoning Romans without due process exposed them all to jail or worse!

- 39] And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city.
- 40] And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

“...the brethren”: Other prisoners who were listening? ...results of the women witnessing?

The Letter to the Philippians, written from Paul’s Roman prison, is full of triumph, encouragement, etc.

[Paul left Luke behind here; he rejoins in the 20th chapter. We get these inferences from the use of pronouns, but it doesn’t show in the English.]

How God Guides

Problem

- Understanding doctrine?
- No sense of direction?
- Relations with others?
- Irreconcilable differences?
- Customs, rituals?
- Directions to take?
- Major change?

Solution

- Unanimous agreement
- Persistent obedience
- Responsible concern
- Cordial separation
- Important principles
- Sense of Peace
- Vision or call

Next Session

Study Acts Chapters 17 & 18.

Acts Session 11 Chapters 17 and 18

The Second Missionary Journey: Review

Paul and Barnabas agree to revisit the Galatian churches, but they disagree about taking John Mark who had left them on the earlier mission. After an argument, Barnabas takes Mark to Cyprus. Paul takes Silas to Galatia. At Lystra Paul asks Timothy to join them (Acts 16:1-3). They revisit the towns, telling the believers the decisions of the Jerusalem Council about Gentile converts (Acts 16:4-5).

Paul tries to go to Bithynia, but is blocked by the Holy Spirit (Acts 16:6-7). At night, Paul has a vision: a Macedonian urges him to come to help. At this point Luke joins them: they sail for Macedonia (Acts 16:8-10). Paul delivers a girl medium from an evil spirit. Her owners protest; the crowd attacks; they are flogged, imprisoned; freed by earthquake. Jailer is converted (Acts 16:11-40). They travel to Thessalonica (Acts 17:1).



Thessalonica

Thessalonica = strategic center: capital city of Macedonia (200,000?). Timothy and Luke were left behind in Philippi. Paul and Silas used the famous Roman road: *Via Egnatia*, which crossed Macedonia, connecting the Adriatic Sea with the Black Sea. (Greek extension of the *Via Appia*).

Acts 17

- 1] Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

“...Amphipolis” = 33 miles southwest of Philippi, North coast of Aegean;
 “...Apollonia” = 30 miles Southwest Amphipolis;
 “...Thessalonica” = 37 miles west Apollonia, northwest extremity of Aegean.

- 2] And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

“...three Sabbath days”: Forceful teaching (1 Thess 1:8). Note that he taught them for three weeks. (In Paul’s two eschatological epistles, he simply reminded them of what he had taught them during this visit!)

- 3] Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

Expositional approach: texts, relationships... The Gospel as defined in 1 Cor 15:1-4; used Old Testament (Ps 16; 22; Isa; Hosea, etc.); Emmaus road example. Paul worked at tentmaking (1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:7,8).

- 4] And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.
5] But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

Jason may have been a kinsman (Rom 16:21).

- 6] And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;

“...rulers”: (Greek) *politarch*, used nowhere else; found on inscription on marble arch in Thessalonica, including seven names of founders.

“...turned the world upside down”: “Turned right side up”? Cf. Testimony of their enemies (cf. Judas, Caiphas, et al.) All the persecution that follows Paul is caused by the Jews (note Luke’s emphasis).

- 7] Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.
8] And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.

Under the emperors, it was declared high treason to violate the majesty of the state.

- 9] And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

“...taken security”: To keep the peace Paul and Silas should leave town? Paul desired to stay and expected soon to return (1 Thess 2:17, 18). Timothy, whom Paul left at Philippi, was sent to them (1 Thess 3:5-7).

- 10] And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.

Berea was a small out-of-the-way town, off the beaten path, in foothills of the Olympic Mountains, 60 miles southwest of Thessalonica. (Paul was not a healthy man; he was a fugitive that needed continuing assistance...)

- 11] These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

[Our “trademark” verse for over 40 years.]

Thessalonica was persuaded (by argument); Bereans believed—spiritually apprehended; yet searched (like stalking game); cf. John 5:39

Without Scriptures, we are lost in a sea of relativism... We do not read of any other city wherein he was given so fair a hearing, wherein people were so honest in seeking to know whether the Word was really in accordance with the Scripture or not... Sopater became ardent helper... (Acts 20:4). Never follow a single man: Cephas, Apollos, Paul... (or especially Chuck Missler!!)

- 12] Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.
13] But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.

Upper classes of these European Greek and Romanized towns were probably better educated than those in Asia Minor.

- 14] And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.
15] And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.

Silas and Timothy were left behind to establish a church.

Athens

At the time of Paul’s visit to Athens, Corinth was the commercial and political center under the Roman Caesars. (Athens belonged to province of Achaia, whose capital was Corinth.)

Athens was still the university center, heir to the great philosophers—the city of Pericles and Demosthenes; of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Sophocles and Euripides—men who established patterns of thought that have affected human learning for centuries.

This was 400 years after the golden age of Greece, but still a center for art, beauty, culture, and knowledge. Still the most sacred shrine of the fair humanities of paganism...



Paul was left alone (Luke left in Thessalonica; Silas and Timothy left in Berea...) He sent for Silas and Timothy (heading for Corinth). When Timothy arrives, he is immediately sent back to Thessalonica (1 Thess 3:1-2).

- 16] Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.
- 17] Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.

Sight-seeing: Temples of the Acropolis, crowned by the Parthenon; temples, theaters, marketplace (the Agora); over 30,000 “gods.”

- 18] Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babblers say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

Idolatry

There probably is no temple, altar, or idol of Athens that is not reproduced in our cities today:

- Athene, the mother of the mental;
- Demeter, mother of the earth;
- Zeus, the god of force;
- Rumor, the base goddess had her Scriptures issued every morning until the very life of man is made restless by her lying...
- Shame, Philanthropy, et al..
- We are still idolaters...(Ex 20:3-6; Isa 44:9-20; Jer 10:3-5; 1 Cor 1:21).

Major Contemporary Groups

Epicureans: Atheistic materialists; universe is the product of chance; denied God’s existence and life after death. Pleasure is the chief end of this existence. More sober disciples interpreted in a refined sense; they were not hedonistic but existentialists, living for the experience of the moment. [Epicurus, 342 - 270 B.C.]

Stoics (equally celebrated, but opposite): Followers of the Cypriote Zeno, who lectured at the *stoa*, or portico. Pantheists: Everything is god, god is everything. After death, life is fungible. Result: attitude was one of ultimate resignation, apathy, take whatever comes, fatalistic, passionless conformity. [Zeno, 340 - 265 B.C.] Hallmark: spiritual pride.

Epicureans more popular among the Greeks; Stoics were more comfortable to the Roman mind. Both are hostile to the Gospel.

Other Sects

Peripatetics, disciples of Aristotle, at the Lyceum. **Academicians**, disciples of Plato, at the Academy. (Both situated outside the city.) They were seed-picker (“nitpicker”?), eclectic dilettantes. As we find today: Religious odd-balls, remote from life and powerless to affect it; Thoughtless idolaters, sunken in superstition, living lives of quiet desperation; Atheistic existentialists; Self-sufficient fatalists...

Invictus

*Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.*

*In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.*

*Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find, me unafraid.*

*It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,*

*I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.*

—William Ernest Henley

Rebuttal: My Captain

*Out of the light that dazzles me,
Bright as the sun from pole to pole,
I thank the God I know to be
For Christ the conqueror of my soul.*

*Since His the sway of circumstance,
I would not wince nor cry aloud
Under that rule which men call chance
My head with joy is humbly bowed.*

*Beyond the place of sin and tears
That life with Him! And His the aid,
Despite the menace of the years,
Keeps, and shall keep me, unafraid.*

*I have no fear, though strait the gate,
He cleared from punishment the scroll.
Christ is the Master of my fate,
Christ is the Captain of my soul.*

—Dorothea Day

Architecture

Areopagus: The court of the judges (where Socrates was tried and put to death 400 years earlier). It is still the name of their Supreme Court today.

It was a rocky hill northwest of the Acropolis. *Pausanias*: the “stone of Imprudence.” [Not a trial: contemptuous dilettante curiosity.]

- 19] And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?
- 20] For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.
- 21] (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)

The whole atmosphere in Athens was very much like a university atmosphere, the public pastime was to exchange ideas and traffic in new thoughts.

- 22] Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars’ hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

“...superstitious”: mistranslated in English, “very religious” would better fit Paul’s intent.

Paul begins where the people are... he did not denounce them, did not attack their idolatry; you are “extremely devout,” “very god-fearing.”

- 23] For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

An altar to the Unknown god: How this voices the agony of humanity!

“...ignorantly” = “not knowing him...”

- 24] God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

Creation testimony—Romans 1 [The idea of creation is nowhere to be found in classical literature and ancient philosophy... *No one is ever going to believe in the resurrection if he does not believe in creation.*]

- 25] Neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

God does not live in temples made with hands. Paul probably pointed to the Parthenon, home of Athene, the goddess for whom the city was named. He is the Giver, without needs Himself—neither buildings for worship, nor priest to minister with human hands.

- 26] And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

“...one blood”: One race, one source, one species. God draws men; does not seek to evade them!

“...hath determined”: This opposes both Stoical fate and Epicurean chance, ascribing to periods and localities his sovereign will and prearrangements (Dan 2:21).

- 27] That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

“...feel”: only New Testament occurrence. God is searchable (Jer 29:13-14; Heb 11:6).

28] For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

“live...move...have our being” - Epimenides, 606 B.C. (also quoted in Titus 1:12).

“...we are his offspring”: Astronomical poem of Aratus, a Greek countryman of Paul’s, and his predecessor by 300 years; religious hymn of Cleantes of Troas, a contemporary of Aratus, a most celebrated Stoic who taught at Athens (Paul also quotes Menander...1 Cor 15:33).

29] Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device.

“...offspring of God”: Man is God’s offspring. The Image of God: A passion for life; a revolt against death, boredom, frustration... We are to seize hold of life, dominion, desire to succeed, reach out and try something new, accomplish new objectives, conquer new territory... Create, invent, produce, fashion, shape, make... man’s greatest dignity.

30] And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

“...times of ignorance”: man’s responsibility.

“...commandeth all men everywhere”: universal character of Christianity. Aimed at everyone. Our duty = “repent.” Man retreats to intellectual excuses for refusing moral demands (Ps 14:1, 53:1).

31] Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Three Key Points

- 1) Inescapable day: God has fixed as the time when He will judge the world. Every life evaluated.
- 2) Unchallengeable judge.
- 3) Irrefutable fact: The resurrection.

32] And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.

Mocking is always the defense of pride (A University city is more resistant to the Gospel); 1 Cor 1:23, 24.

33] So Paul departed from among them.

Paul had no patience with intellectual flippancy and moral dishonesty.

34] Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

“...Dionysius, the Areopagite”: Tradition, other non-Biblical sources: placed over the flock at Athens. 1st Century: Publius, Quadratus, Aristides, Athenagoras, and other bishops, martyrs. 4th Century: Basil and Gregory.

[The church that Paul founded in Greece was the lineal predecessor of the Greek Orthodox Church, which has now become sunken in apathy, liturgy, ritual, and dead orthodoxy, and is now persecuting the fresh, alive evangelical church in those areas.]

Acts 18

1] After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;



Corinth

Corinth, 50 miles W of Athens, was the center for sensuality. It is located on the isthmus which connects the Peloponnesus with the rest of Greece, separating the Aegean from the Ionian Sea. It had two ports:

- 1) Cenchraea on the east, on the Aegean toward Asia, 8 miles distant;
- 2) Lecheum, on the west, or Ionian Sea toward Italy, 1 ½ miles distant.

Its hill, Citadel Acrocorinthus, was 2000 ft high. Julius Caesar, appreciating its natural military and commercial potential, made it a Roman

colony, and capital of the Roman province of Greece, Achaia. Its sea-port: goods between orient and Rome passed through (Arabian balsam, Egyptian papyrus, Phoenician dates, Lybian ivory, Babylonian carpets, Cicilian goats, Lycaonian wool, Phrygian slaves)...markets at Corinth.

It was an art capital: simple Doric and Ionic columns developed in the Corinthian column; architecture achieved the highest ever in history... Center of worship of Aphrodite, goddess of Sex. 1,000 temple prostitutes (Rom 1:21-32).

Proverbial: "He corinthinizes..." (1 Cor 6:9-11). Athens had Minerva, the goddess of wisdom; Corinth had Venus, the goddess of love. [Two enslaving twins: Athens: intellectual pride; Corinth: sensual lust.]

- 2] And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.

Claudius Caesar banished Jews (disturbances instigated by "Chresto" (?). Paul speaks of relatives who "were in Christ before me" (Rom 16:7).

"Aquila...with his wife Priscilla - interesting couple: later more to Ephesus v.19 and still there when 1 Cor was written (1 Cor 16:19). Later back in Rome (Rom 16:3); later back in Ephesus (2 Tim 4:19).

- 3] And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

"...by their occupation": He earned his own way (2 Cor 11:9).

"..they were tentmakers": Tents made from hair from a special breed of goats in Cilicia...

- 4] And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.
5] And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus [is the] Christ.

Paul "pressed in the Spirit"? "Engrossed in the word," NIV "devoted himself exclusively to preaching." Timothy brings love offerings from Thessalonica, which may have allowed Paul to minister full time (1 Thess 3:6).

- 6] And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

Our ancestors living on acorns and raw meat in the German forest hadn't learned to cultivate fields. (Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, German, English, Scotch, Irish, Dutch, et al...barbarians.)

- 7] And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue.

Now independent, he moved closed to danger.

- 8] And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

Crispus (and Gaius and the household of Stephanas) was baptized by Paul himself (1 Cor 1:14-16). Crispus was the head of the synagogue! "To the Jews, a stumbling block..." (1 Cor 1:23, 24).

- 9] Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:
10] For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

There is a pattern developing (of Jews resisting), but he is to keep right on speaking...He suffered just as we do, with apprehensions, forebodings, etc. (1 Cor 2:3).

- 11] And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Read 1 & 2 Corinthians to see the impressive results of his efforts in that vile city. (Or for an in-depth study of these letters do see our Ex-positional Commentary on *First and Second Corinthians*.)

During this period, he wrote the Thessalonian letters. He also wrote the Epistle to the Romans from Corinth.

- 12] And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat,
13] Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

"...deputy": Proconsul. (Tiberias had changed this province from a senatorial to an imperial one, accordingly "procurator" would be the correct term. Claudius restored its senatorial character, its proper governor would be, as here stated, a proconsul.)

Gallio, ruler of Greece, originally known as Marcus Annaeus Novatus; adopted by Roman orator called Lucius Junius Gallio. Gallio was brother to the celebrated philosopher Seneca, Nero's tutor, who would become the emperor after Claudius (and who afterwards passed the sentence of death on both of them).

- 14] And when Paul was now about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you:
- 15] But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it; for I will be no judge of such matters.
- 16] And he drave them from the judgment seat.

This was a very important decision! Paul was now free to preach the gospel throughout the Roman empire without being charged with breaking the law. (Gallio declared, in effect, that Christianity was, in the eyes of Romans, officially a Jewish sect.)

- 17] Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.

Sosthenes apparently succeeded Crispus after his conversion. Sosthenes also later converts (beating is not recommended method for evangelism...); 1 Cor 1:1.

- 18] And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

Syria = Antioch. Silas, Timothy, Caius, and Aristarchus also accompany him, as well as Aquilla and Priscilla.

Of Silas as Paul's companion we read no more. He apparently accompanies him as far as Jerusalem (from which he initially had come to Antioch as one of the deputies of the council). He later appears to put himself with Peter (1 Pet 5:12). Cenchrea = Eastern harbor of Corinth.

It is not clear what sort of a vow Paul had taken nor why he took it. It may have been a thank offering for the outcome at Corinth. Paul as a Jew kept up his observance of the ceremonial law, but refused to impose it on the Gentiles.

When Paul made this vow is unstated. He may have made it when he left Troas for Macedonia, or at the beginning of his ministry at Corinth, or more likely, before the Lord gave him the vision (vv. 9-10). During the vow Paul would have let his hair grow. Now the time of the Nazarite vow was over (after about a year and a half), and Paul got a haircut at Cenchrea (cf. Num 6:1-21). Josephus wrote about some Jews who immediately after a misfortune, shaved their heads and refused to offer sacrifices for 30 days [Source: *Jewish Wars* 2. 15. 1.]

- 19] And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

Never forgot his friends (Rom 16:3; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Tim 4:19).

- 20] When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;
- 21] But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

Paul later returns and spends two years.

- 22] And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.

Paul's 4th visit to Jerusalem.

3rd Missionary Journey

To strengthen and teach the existing churches (Paul's last days at liberty...). The threat of Judaizing teachers (Gal 2:21, 4:4): Galatians was written on his second visit to Ephesus.

- 23] And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.

"...in order": nothing haphazard; he planned every movement.

How could a sick man accomplish so much? (Phil 4:12-13). The raising of contributions was a key part of cementing the Jewish and Gentile factions (Gal 2:9,10; 1 Cor 16:1-4; 2 Cor 8,9; Rom 15:25,26). Timothy, Erastus, Gaius, Aristarchus (and probably Titus) accompany him on this journey.

Ephesus

Ephesus: Outstanding church; two letters addressed to it—the Lord's and Paul's. Paul's summit.

- Romans = foundational truths.
- Corinthians = correction of failures.
- Ephesians = sublimest truths of the Church. Given to idolatry, demonism, witchcraft, and sorcery. The temple of Artemis, or Diana was located there.

- 24] And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

“...Apollos”: [A parenthetical anecdote in anticipation of 19:1-7.]

“...Alexandria”: Alexandria was on the southern shore of the Mediterranean in Egypt. Founded by Alexander the Great, it was a major Greek and Hebrew cultural center. Source of the LXX. Athanasius, Tertullian, and Augustine, three great men of the early church, came from there. Philo, a contemporary of Apollos, mingled Greek philosophy with Judaism. This combined Platonism and Judaism. Philo reckons the population at about 1,000,000.

- 25] This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

“...fervent” = boiling hot. “Way of the Lord” (Mt 3:3; Isa 40:3). John the Baptist = three great truths:

- 1) Forgiveness of sins (only) on the basis of repentance.
- 2) Expression through baptism.
- 3) One was coming who would complete their salvation.

Missing: 4) Cross. 5) Resurrection. 6) Holy Spirit’s baptism.

- 26] And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

It was providential that Priscilla and Aquila were left in Ephesus (right people, right place, at the right time.) How impressive that Apollos was open to correction. The teachable will be humble...Apollos received that and became a mighty evangelist, he then went on to Achaia.

- 27] And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:
- 28] For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

The capital of Achaia was Corinth.

- He becomes the subject of schisms (1 Cor 1:10-17).
- Apollo was not the cause (1 Cor 3:6; Titus 3:13).
- He resists Paul’s requests to revisit (1 Cor 16:12).

Next Session

Study Acts Chapters 19 & 20.

Acts Session 12 Chapters 19 and 20

Review from Acts 18

And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

Acts 18:24

The incident with Apollos in the previous session was a parenthetical anecdote in anticipation of 19:1-7...

This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

Acts 18:25

“...fervent” = boiling hot. “Way of the Lord” (Mt 3:3; Isa 40:3). John the Baptist = three great truths:

- 1) Forgiveness of sins (only) on the basis of repentance.
- 2) Expression through baptism.
- 3) One was coming who would complete their salvation.

Missing: 4) Cross. 5) Resurrection. 6) Holy Spirit’s baptism.

And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

Acts 18:26

It was providential that Priscilla and Aquila were left in Ephesus (right people, right place, at the right time.) How impressive that Apollos was open to correction. The teachable will be humble...Apollos received that and became a mighty evangelist, he then went on to Achaia.

And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace: For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

Acts 18:27,28

“...Achaia”: The capital of Achaia was Corinth.

Acts 19: Paul’s 3rd Missionary Journey - Continued

- 1] And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

Province of Asia

The province of Asia included the western part of Asia Minor. The Romans took this country in 130 B.C. Finally the name was extended to the whole continent.

It was a jewel in the Roman empire along with Africa and was a senatorial province. It was full of great cities like Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea (the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3), Colossae, Hierapolis, Apamea, to go no further. Hellenism had full sway here.

Ephesus was the capital and chief city and was a richer and larger city than Corinth. It was located at the entrance to the valley of the Maeander to the east. Here was the power of Rome and the splendor of Greek culture and the full tide of oriental superstition and magic. The Temple of Artemis was one of the seven wonders of the world.

While in Ephesus some hold that Paul at this time wrote the Epistle to the Galatians after his recent visit there; some that he did it before his recent visit to Jerusalem (but it is still possible that he wrote it from Corinth just before writing to Rome).

- 2] He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

“The Holy Spirit did ye receive on believing?” (Rom 8:9).

- 3] And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism.
4] Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

John’s baptism: Christ and His salvation was expected than actually come... faith in the Risen Christ! The Old Testament ended in Luke 16:16.

Holy Spirit

There are five verbs:

- (Singular:)
 - Born of the Spirit into the family John 3:6
 - Baptized of the Spirit into the body 2 Cor 12:13
 - Indwelt by the Spirit, living in us Rom 8:9
 - Sealed by the Spirit unto redemption Eph 1:13; 4:30
- (Frequent:)
 - Filling by the Spirit Eph 5:18

Are We a Contradiction?

Union	without	Communion?
Profession	without	Experience?
Life	without	Health?
Movement	without	Progress?
Battles	without	Victory?
Service	without	Success?
Trials	without	Triumph?

Are we on the right side of Easter...

...but on the wrong side of Pentecost?

...on the right side of Pardon...

...but on the wrong side of Power?

...justified...

...but not sanctified?

For an in-depth study of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, do see our Briefing Package, *The Spiritual Gifts*.

- 5] When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
6] And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.
7] And all the men were about twelve.
8] And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.
9] But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

“...spake evil of the Way”: Cf. Rev 2:2. “I am the Way” (Jn 14:6). The school of Tyrannus was used by Paul as an outreach throughout the Province of Asia for two years.

- 10] And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

He may have had an unrecorded visit to Corinth, since the one next recorded is twice called his third visit (2 Cor 12:14; 13:1). During the close of this long stay, he wrote 1 Corinthians (1 Cor 16:8) and possibly Galatians (Gal 1:2). This was the most productive period in Paul's life...

School of Tyrannus

The name Tyrannus ("our tyrant") is a common one. It is an inscription in the Columbarium of the Empress Livia as that of a physician in the court. Furneaux suggests the possibility that a relative of this physician was lecturing on medicine in Ephesus and so as a friend of Luke, the physician, would be glad to help Paul with a place to preach. It was probably a public building or lecture hall with this name whether hired by Paul or loaned to him. The pagan sophists often spoke in such halls.

The Codex Bezae adds "from the fifth hour to the tenth" as the time allotted Paul for his work in this hall, which is quite possible, from just before midday till the close of the afternoon (from before the noon meal till two hours before sunset) each day—the "siesta" pattern: a leisurely meal, nap, sports...then it reopened until 9:30 at night.

Just as at Corinth, Paul's greatest success was after his withdrawal to a separate place of meeting (Acts 18:7-10). Faithful helpers: Epaphras, Archippus, Philemon (Col 1:7; 4:12-17; Phil 23), Erastus, Gaius, Aristarchus, Titus, Trophimus and Tychicus...assist Paul in establishing churches eastward: Colosse (Epaphras and Philemon), Laodicea, Hierapolis... and probably Smyrna, Thyratira, Pergamum, Philadelphia, Sardis... (Rev 2 & 3).

Paul worked at tentmaking (Acts 20:33-34) and probably stayed with Priscilla and Aquila (1 Thess 2:9); he also pastored from house to house (Acts 20:20).

- 11] And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:
12] So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

"Handkerchiefs" = sweat bands; "Aprons" = leather work aprons. These are just symbols: cf. Moses' rod, et al. God wrought the miracles...God often condescends to meet us in our ignorance and weakness where he can reach us.

Elisha had a notion that some of the power of Elijah resided in his mantle (2 Kgs 2:13). Some even sought help from Peter's shadow (Acts 5:15).

- 13] Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.
14] And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.

Note the article, "the Jesus," as if to identify the magic word to the demons with the addition "whom Paul preaches." They thought that success turned on the correct use of the magical formula.

- 15] And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?
16] And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

The one man overcame all seven!

- "Jesus I know": deep, instinctive, innate knowledge.
- "Paul I am acquainted with..."
- (Notice the personality of Satan's forces...they are personages that are sentient, knowledgeable, and very resourceful.)
- 4th Satanic encounter: Simon Magus, Elymas/Bar Jesus, Philippian Pythoness; cf. Matthew 12:22-23

- 17] And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.
18] And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.
19] Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.
20] So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

The point is clearly that what they brought were their artifacts and books and such of the occult; these were weapons of Satan's warfare. "Entries" are no laughing matter: Ouiji boards, horoscopes, role playing games, etc. They are weapons of Satan's warfare. Human beings not easily invaded; it requires "entries."

Demetrius will confirm (v.26) the tremendous influence of Paul's ministry in Ephesus on Asia. Forty years after this, Pliny in his famous letter to Trajan from Bithynia will say of Christianity:

For the contagion of this superstition has not only spread through cities, but also through villages and country places.

It was during these years in Ephesus that Paul was greatly disturbed over the troubles in the Corinthian Church. He apparently wrote a letter to them now lost to us (1 Cor 5:9).

- 21] After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.
- 22] So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

The vastness of the Apostle's plans...Paul was intensely conscious of needs of believers in Judea (1 Cor 16:1-9; 2 Cor 9:1; Rom 15:25).

The Corinthian Problems: 3 Visits & 4 Letters

Visits

- 1) When the church was founded

(Chloe, et al, visit Paul with a letter from Corinth; 1 Cor 7:1.)

- 2) The "Painful" visit (2 Cor 12:14)

(Titus' report)

- 3) Third visit

- 23] And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.
- 24] For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;
- 25] Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.

"...workmen of like occupation": A trade union for promotion of industry...

Diana of the Ephesians

It is a pity that the Revised Version renders Artemis here. Diana as the Ephesian Artemis is quite distinct from the Greek Artemis, the sister of Apollo, the Diana of the Romans. This temple, built in the 6th century B.C., was burnt by Herostratus Oct. 13, 356 B.C., the night when Alex-

ander the Great was born. It was restored and was considered one of the seven wonders of the world. The great festival in May would offer Demetrius a golden opportunity for the sale of the shrines.

- 26] Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:
- 27] So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

Religious zeal is always the hypocritical pretext: self-interest is real cause... The Agora: 300 ft sq.; vestibule > 400 more. The Gymnasia (5) 450 x 377 ft, to 925 x 685. That's 15 acres of ground!

- 28] And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.
- 29] And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

The Theatre

The theatre was 660 ft. in diameter (2 football fields or 40 ft. > than major axis of the Coliseum); 56,700 seating capacity.

The temple was 425 ft. x 220 ft.; 127 columns, 60 ft. high, each a gift of a king, 36 of them ornamented.

- 30] And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.
- 31] And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.

Paul eludes again! Fellow travelers are also mentioned in Act 20:4; 27:2; Rom 16:23; 1 Cor 1:14 (3 John 1?). [If Paul was at the house of Aquilla and Priscilla (whom he left at Ephesus on his first visit) his asylum would explain Rom 16:3,4.]

Asiarchs, political rulers of the province of Asia who were responsible to the Romans, were concerned and sent word to Paul not to venture into the Theater. Romans would not tolerate civil disorder; they were in danger of losing their status as a free city, unencumbered by direct Roman rule. All that happened at Ephesus is not known... "I have fought with the beasts of Ephesus" (1 Cor 15:32; cf. 2 Cor 11:24-27). Timothy had become a bishop of the church at Ephesus.

- 32] Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.
- 33] And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people.

Alexander = Alexander the coppersmith? (1 Tim 1:19-20; 2 Tim 4:14).

- 34] But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.
- 35] And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?

Artemis fashioned from a meteorite? [Jupiter was their supreme god.]

- 36] Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.
- 37] For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.
- 38] Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another.
- 39] But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.

The clerk's speech: Their uproar was undignified, unjustifiable and unnecessary.

- 40] For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.
- 41] And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

Acts 20

- 1] And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

(Inappropriate chapter division, v.1 should be part of Chapter 19.)
Exhortation: sufficiency not of ourselves (2 Cor 1:8-11).

Paul through Macedonia into Greece

Luke's brevity requires culling details from epistles. Many visits are not recorded: e.g., Albania and Yugoslavia (Illyricum). Paul had dispatched Titus to Corinth, but was now anxious to meet him in Troas (anxious to

know what effect his first epistle had); his concern for his being overdue causes Paul to leave for Macedonia; he lands at Philippi. At length, Titus arrives, with better tidings than Paul had dared to expect (2 Cor 7:6,13). Paul writes his 2nd Epistle to Corinthians, dispatching Titus with it (2 Cor 2:12, 13; 7:5-8).



- 2] And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,
- 3] And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.
- 4] And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.
- 5] These going before tarried for us at Troas.
- 6] And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.
- 7] And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.
- 8] And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.

Paul addressed for six hours! (Preaching = "art of talking in someone else's sleep"). Numerous lights: a large group (also note that the lights would be consuming oxygen).

- 9] And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

"...taken up dead": The Greek plainly indicates that he was taken up lifeless.

- 10] And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

Paul's approach of falling on this young lad is the same thing as:

- Elijah, dead son of woman of Sarepta (1 Kgs 17:21);
- Elisha, dead son of Shunammite (2 Kgs 4:34);
- Jesus (Mk 5:39; Lk 8:52).

- 11] When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.
12] And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

The Greek implies that he was raised from the dead, not just unconscious.

- 13] And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.

This trip was 35 miles by sea (around Cape Lectum); 20 by land: a desire for privacy, prayer and solitude.

- 14] And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.
15] And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios; and the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next day we came to Miletus.

Paul chose a ship that deliberately did not stop at Ephesus. He goes to Miletus and sends for the Ephesian elders to meet him there.

- 16] For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

Overland trip due to plot discovery. Paul was too hasty: trip to Jerusalem cost two precious years of his life.

- 17] And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

Miletus is 15 miles south of Ephesus. He stayed for 3 or 4 days.

Farewell Address to the Ephesian Elders

This is the most poignant of all his utterances.

- 18] And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,
19] Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

Condition of the apostle in Ephesus was one of great danger (1 Cor 15:31, 32; 2 Cor 1:8-10).

- 20] And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,

Note here Paul notes that he preached house to house.

- 21] Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.
22] And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

"...in the spirit": Paul's own spirit...

- 23] Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.
24] But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.
25] And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.
26] Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.
27] For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.
28] Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

It will not do to say that Paul did not call Jesus "God": cf. Rom 9:5; Col 2:9; Titus 2:13 where he does that very thing, also Col 1:15-20 and Phil 2:5-11.

"...all the counsel of God": The "whole counsel of God" is your best assurance against heretical views...

- 29] For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.
30] Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Grievous wolves; perverse men. There are two classes of enemies: external and internal. It will not be many years before Epaphras will come to Rome from Colossae with news of the new peril there (Epistle to the Colossians). In writing to Timothy Paul will warn him against some who have already made shipwreck of their faith (1 Tim 1:20). John will represent Jesus as describing false apostles in Ephesus (Rev 2:2).

There are no fewer than six false teachers from Ephesus:

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| 1) Hymeneus | 1 Tim 1:20 |
| 2) Alexander | 1 Tim 1:20 |
| 3) Phygellus | 2 Tim 1:15 |
| 4) Hermogenes | 2 Tim 1:15 |
| 5) Philetus | 2 Tim 2:17 |
| 6) Diotrephes | 3 John 9 |

Doctrine of the Nicolaitans? Rev 2:6
Where's their lightstand? Rev 2:1-7

Epistle to the Colossians, written at the same time as the one to its neighbor, Ephesus: evidence the propagation of Gnostic errors in Proconsular Asia.

- 31] Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.=
- 32] And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

“...to give you an inheritance”: Not just initial stages of salvation, but the subsequent stages of “upbuilding,” even to consummation of final inheritance, is here ascribed to the ability of God to bestow it as in Rom 16:25; Eph 3:20; Jude 24. (Same ascribed to Christ in 2 Tim 1:12.)

Four Ways:

- 1) Admonish with tears, speaking the truth in love.
- 2) Use the Word.
- 3) Be selfless in your ministry.
- 4) It is better to give than to receive vs. “The giver is foolish, but the receiver is fortunate” (Athenaeus, 8:5).

- 33] I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.
- 34] Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

Paul notes that he earned his own living.

- 35] I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.
- 36] And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

(Not found among the recorded sayings in the Gospels...)

- 37] And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,
- 38] Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

They did see his face once more: 1 Timothy hints that he did end up going back once more. And according to Jesus' own letter to Ephesus, they apparently heeded Paul's admonition regarding false teachers (Rev 2:2,4,6). (John spent his final years a Bishop of Ephesus, and as the custodian for Mary; cf. 2 John.)

Next Session

Study Acts Chapter 21, 22 & 23.

Acts Session 13 Chapters 21 - 23

Paul Returns to Jerusalem

Chapter 20 concluded with the tender meeting he had with the Ephesian elders at Miletus. Now he boards ship for the voyage that will return him to Israel. But along the way warnings are coming to him. He knows that trouble awaits him in Jerusalem.

Acts 21

- 1] And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara:

“...as when we had at last torn ourselves away from them.” [ISV]

- 2] And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth.
- 3] Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.
- 4] And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

Paul's biggest mistake of his life? If he hadn't gone to Jerusalem, he would not have been imprisoned for two years!

- 5] And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.

- 6] And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again.
- 7] And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

Paul always met with Christians: The work of Philip? (Cf. v.8) or possibly converts from Pentecost, 26 years earlier... [There must have been millions of believers in the Roman Empire by the end of the first century.]

- 8] And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.
- 9] And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

"...Philip": one of the original seven deacons; he evangelized in Samaria and baptized the Ethiopian treasurer.

- 10] And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.
- 11] And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

"...Agabus": (Acts 11:28). Same style of presentation in Jeremiah 13:4; 27:2-3; Isa 20:3-4. Some fifteen years before, Paul and Agabus had worked together in a famine relief program for Judea (Acts 11:27-30), so they were not strangers.

- 12] And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.
- 13] Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.
- 14] And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.
- 15] And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

It was 60 miles from Caesarea to Jerusalem.

Was Paul to Go to Jerusalem?

Con: These repeated messages do sound like warnings to Paul to stay out of Jerusalem. For over twenty years before, the Lord had commanded Paul to get out of Jerusalem because the Jews would not receive his testimony (Acts 22:18). Paul had already written to the Romans about

the dangers in Judea (Acts 15:30-31). He had shared these same feelings with the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:22-23), so he was fully aware of the problems involved

Pro: The prophetic utterances can be taken as warnings ("Get ready!") rather than as prohibitions ("You must not go!"). Agabus did not forbid Paul to go to Jerusalem; he only told him what to expect if he did go. As for the Lord's command in Acts 22:18, it applied to that particular time and need not be interpreted as a prohibition governing the rest of Paul's life.

While it is true that Paul avoided Jerusalem, it is also true that he returned there on other occasions: with famine relief (Acts 11:27-30); to attend the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15:1ff); and, after his second missionary journey (Acts 18:22)—("going up to greet the church" refers to Jerusalem).

In view of Paul's statement in Acts 23:1, and the Lord's encouraging words in Acts 23:11, it is difficult to believe that the apostle deliberately disobeyed the revealed will of God. God's prophecy to Ananias certainly came true in the months that followed as Paul had opportunity to witness for Christ (Acts 9:15).

Ever since the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15), trouble had been brewing; and the legalists had been following Paul and seeking to capture his converts. It was a serious situation, and Paul knew that he was a part of the answer as well as a part of the problem. But he could not solve the problem by remote control through representatives; he had to go to Jerusalem personally.

- 16] There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.
- 17] And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

"...old disciple" = "ancient," "early"; original Cypriot won on day of Pentecost? (Acts 2:8-11).

- 18] And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.
- 19] And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

[Presented gifts; a great famine had impoverished local believers...]

- 20] And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:

Even though the Jews are free from the law if they are Christians, that doesn't mean that they can't observe it, even though they are no longer under the law (cf. Galatians).

- 21] And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.
- 22] What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.

You get the impression that the legalists had been working behind the scenes. No sooner had Paul finished his report than the elders brought up the rumors that were then being circulated about Paul among the Jewish Christians. It has well been said that, though a rumor doesn't have a leg to stand on, it travels mighty fast.

- 23] Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them;

"...which have a vow on them": The Nazarite Vow (Num 6): 30 days; last 7 in Temple courts; cut hair and burn it; offer a prescribed offering: 4 he-lambs of the 1st year. [Expensive: loss of trade for a week + offerings: sponsorship deemed praiseworthy.]

- 24] Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.

The leaders suggested that Paul demonstrate publicly his reverence for the Jewish Law. All they asked was that he identify himself with four men under a Nazarite vow (Num. 6), pay for their sacrifices, and be with them in the temple for their time of purification. He agreed to do it. If it had been a matter involving somebody's personal salvation, you can be sure that Paul would never have cooperated; for that would have compromised his message of salvation by grace, through faith.

- 25] As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.
- 26] Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

Was it a mistake for Paul to participate in this procedure? Paul is still a Jew, and accommodating this is a ritualistic, customary thing.

- 27] And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,

This was the introduction to the closing section of Luke's account. There were many visitors in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost.

- 28] Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.
- 29] (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)
- 30] And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

The evidence was against Paul's enemies:

- Paul had Timothy circumcised before taking him along on that second missionary journey (Acts 16:1-3);
- Paul had taken a Jewish vow while in Corinth (Acts 18:18);
- And it was his custom not to offend the Jews in any way by deliberately violating their customs or the Law of Moses (1 Cor 9:19-23).

- 31] And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.
- 32] Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

Claudis Lysias, the Chief Captain.

- 33] Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.
- 34] And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.
- 35] And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people.
- 36] For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.
- 37] And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?
- 38] Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?

Dangerous Egyptian: Came out of Egypt, claimed to be a prophet, advised a multitude of followers to go with him to the Mount of Olives, and at his command the walls would fall down. Felix was informed; soldiers with weapons attacked; the Egyptian escaped [Josephus].

- 39] But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.
- 40] And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying,

Paul would have yielded his salvation for them (cf. Rom 9:3).

Acts 22: Paul's Defense Before the Mob at Jerusalem

- 1] Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.
- 2] (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)

This is the first of five sermons (cf. Rom 9:3).

- 3] I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.

“...Tarsus”: Tarsus was actually the center of Greek learning of that day. The finest Greek university in Paul's day was in Tarsus, not in Athens or Corinth, which had passed their zeniths. Tarsus was a thriving Greek city and an educational center. Paul's sister lived in Jerusalem, and may have reared her young brother (Acts 5).

“...Gamaliel”: Rabban Gamaliel I, president of the council after the death of his own father, Rabban Simeon, son of Hillel. Paul's master, 35th receiver of the traditions.

Tarsus

Tarsus was actually the center of Greek learning of that day. The finest Greek university in Paul's day was in Tarsus, not in Athens or Corinth, which had passed their zeniths.

- 4] And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.
- 5] As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

Notice that Paul calls it “this way” again. He doesn't mention the church or the followers of Christ or Christians. He uses the term which they and he understand.

- 6] And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.
- 7] And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?
- 8] And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.
- 9] And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

This follows the Chapter 9 account. Paul was sought; he did not seek Christ. [There is no contradiction to Acts 9:7 at all: the men heard a voice—they heard the sound, but they did not understand what the voice said.]

- 10] And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.
- 11] And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.
- 12] And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,
- 13] Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.
- 14] And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.
- 15] For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

“...chosen thee” = *proxeiriso* = “appointed” (3x in NT) implies foreknowledge, predestinated...

“The Just one” appears 7x in Scripture: which was a title for Messiah.

The “Just One”

“The Just One”	Acts 22:14
Pilate's wife “have nothing to do”	Mt 27:19
Pilate, washing his hands	Mt 27:24
Centurian at the cross	Lk 23:46-47
Peter's sermon	Acts 3:14
Stephen before the council	Acts 7:51-52
Peter's letter: just for unjust	1 Pet 3:18

- 16] And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

The KJV of Acts 22:16 conveys the impression that it was necessary for Saul to be baptized in order to be saved, but that was not the case. Saul

washed away his sins by “calling on the Lord” (Acts 2:21; Rom 10:13). Kenneth Wuest translates Acts 22:16, “Having arisen, be baptized and wash away your sins, having previously called upon His name.” In the Greek, it is not a present participle (“calling”), but an aorist participle (“having called”). His calling on the Lord preceded his baptism.

- 17] And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

“...in a trance”: Veiled reference to his “out of body experience”? (2 Cor 12:1-4).

- 18] And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.
19] And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:
20] And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.
21] And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.
22] And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live.

That ended the accommodation of the mob: they will hear him no longer.

- 23] And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,
24] The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

The Centurion probably did not understand Aramaic; he was confused. If a riot damaged property, he could be held responsible. If he were proven neglectful, he could lose his post.

Paul is being misunderstood all the way around. The Jews thought he had brought Trophimus into the temple, and he hadn't done that. The captain thought he was an Egyptian who was a riot leader, and he wasn't that man. Notice who he is. He is a Hebrew who can speak fluent Greek. However, he also is a Roman citizen, and thus is entitled to certain protections. He now appeals to that citizenship to escape the scourging of a prisoner.

- 25] And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?
26] When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.

An edict of Caesar Augustus stipulated that all Roman citizens were to be exempted from flogging, and that, prior to any trial before the magistrate, a formal charge had to be made against them. Any official permitting such floggings was publicly executed! (cf. 2 Cor 11:24-25).

- 27] Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.
28] And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born.

This captain was an ex-slave. He had saved his money or somehow he got the money to buy his freedom. He has advanced in the Roman army so that now he is a captain. He is amazed that he has a prisoner who is a Roman citizen who was born free. Paul's parents had been Roman citizens, and it became inherent right of descendants. (In 171 B.C., when Tarsus became a free city, many of its prominent citizens were awarded citizenship.)

- 29] Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.
30] On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

Chapter 23: Paul's Defense Before the Sanhedrin

Gentile officers were never permitted to participate in the deliberations of the Jewish Sanhedrin. Lysias had been appointed by Caesar and was responsible for the protection of any person who claimed to be a citizen of Rome. Therefore, he commanded the Jewish rulers to appear before him where he could not be excluded.

- 1] And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.
2] And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.

“...brethren” = offensive to them. This is the fifth time there is a defense of Christ to the Sanhedrin.

Ananias

“[A] Glutton, tyrant, bigot and murderer. He defrauded impoverished priests of tithes; sent paid servants to the threshing floors to steal corn;

Any who resisted were bludgeoned to death” [Josephus]. The Talmud speaks of unpardonable conduct when what remained of the sacrifices was completely devoured so that nothing remained for the hungry priests. Eventually he was sent by Quadratus, the governor of Syria, to answer for his deeds before Caesar. Apparently, the emperor gave his support to the priests, who returned to resume his work in Jerusalem. Ananias was a traitor to his own nation and a puppet of the Romans.

- 3] Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?

“...whited wall”: Paul was calling him a grave: “barefaced hypocrite” (Mt 23:27; see Ezek 13:10–12). This prophecy was fulfilled according to Josephus—Ananias was later dragged from a sewer in which he was hiding and killed by an assassin’s dagger. When the Jews revolted against Rome in the year 66, Ananias had to flee for his life because of his known sympathies with Rome. The Jewish guerrillas found him hiding in an aqueduct at Herod’s palace, and they killed him. It was an ignominious death for a despicable man.

- 4] And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God’s high priest?
5] Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

Paul quotes Exodus 27:28.

Paul’s Lack of Recognition of the High Priest

1) Uncertain identity at the time: Ananias, dismissed from office, had been to Rome to answer charges made against him and only recently returned to Jerusalem. Paul had been away for several years and would not have known the ruling high priest.

2) Not being a properly convened assembly of the national council, it was hurriedly arranged in response to Lysias; therefore, the high priest probably was not wearing his robes of office.

3) Paul’s poor eyesight? His “thorn in the flesh”?

Paul wrote; “Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour” (Rom 13:7). It is interesting that he wrote this at a time when Nero was on the throne in Rome, and Nero was a madman. (This may help as we face politicians today...)

- 6] But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

Paul’s background: His father had also been a Pharisee, probably a wealthy and influential man.

- 7] And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.
8] For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

Paul turns the trial into a theological argument between the “fundamentalists” and the “liberals.” That is easy to do. There never has been a time when you couldn’t get these two groups at each other’s throats!

- 9] And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees’ part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.
10] And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle.

This is the last sermon Paul would preach in Jerusalem, never again to set foot in the City of David. This is the third time the Romans rescue Paul.

- 11] And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

This had to be the darkest night of Paul’s life: No prayer meeting (re: Peter’s imprisonment, Acts 12). “The Lord stood by him” judged in faithfulness, not by success. He is to spend two years in prison in Caesarea; when he arrives in Rome, he is to spend another three years.

“Lo, I Am With You Always” (Mt 18:20).

A few years after Paul’s conversion, when Paul’s life was in danger in Jerusalem, Jesus appeared to him in the temple and told him what to do (Acts 22:17–21). When Paul was discouraged in Corinth and contemplated going elsewhere, Jesus appeared to him and encouraged him to stay (Acts 18:9–10).

Here, when Paul was certainly at “low ebb” in his ministry, Jesus appeared once again to encourage and instruct him. Paul would later receive encouragement during the storm (Acts 27:22–25) and during his trial in Rome (2 Tim 4:16–17).

- 12] And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.
- 13] And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.

“...under a curse”: or, with an oath of execration. Vow precedent (1 Sam 14:24).

- 14] And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.
- 15] Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would enquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.

Never underestimate the ability of men to rationalize! Regret: tendency for religious people to become instruments of evil and ruin the very cause they profess to cherish...

- 16] And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.
- 17] Then Paul called one of the centurions unto him, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him.

Junia may have been Paul's sister (Rom 16:7). [What a “coincidence” that Paul's nephew was able to overhear the plot, etc.]

- 18] So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee.
- 19] Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went with him aside privately, and asked him, What is that thou hast to tell me?

“Took him by the hand” implies a young child. If a Roman citizen was murdered the consequences would be grave...

- 20] And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would enquire somewhat of him more perfectly.

God's use of children: the captive maid (2 Kgs 5:2) and the willing lad (Jn 6:9).

- 21] But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.
- 22] So the chief captain then let the young man depart, and charged him, See thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me.

- 23] And he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;

The garrison at Antonia had approximately 1000 men.

Paul's detachment:

200 infantry

70 cavalry

200 spearmen = *dexiolabous*: graspers, lance-men.

- 24] And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor.
- 25] And he wrote a letter after this manner:
- 26] Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting.

“...a letter after this manner”: But it does amount to a letter of acquittal of any serious charge against Paul!

- 27] This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.
- 28] And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council:

The captain in Jerusalem wants the governor in Caesarea to know that he is performing his duty protecting Roman citizens.

- 29] Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds.
- 30] And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straight-way to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell.

“...but to have nothing laid to his charge”: It is clear that Claudius Lysias never did know exactly what the charge was against Paul. He knew it pertained to their law. Under Roman law Paul was not guilty of anything worthy of death or of imprisonment.

Felix

Antonius Felix was Pilate's successor as Governor of Judea: He was made a free man by Antonia, mother of the emperor, Claudius, and was the brother of another liberated slave, Pallas. He was married to Drusilla, a Jewess and a daughter of Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:1), who left her husband to become Felix's third wife. She was a sister of Herod Agrippa II (Acts 25:13ff).

The Roman historian Tacitus said that Felix “exercised the power of a king in the spirit of a slave.” Felix was called “a vulgar ruffian” and lived up to the name; a scoundrel who exploited political situation; encouraged conflicts and confiscated any loot that became available. During his rule, the countryside became a center of anarchy and the mountains of Judea became havens from which guerilla fighters operated. He was hated by everybody.

- 31] Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris.
32] On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle:

Caesarea = 60 miles from Jerusalem. Antipatris was 35 miles from Jerusalem, between Joppa and Caesarea.

- 33] Who, when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.
34] And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia;
35] I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod’s judgment hall.

There are two kinds of provinces: Senatorial and Imperial. Cilicia was an imperial province under direct control of the emperor himself. The steps are being laid to bring Paul face-to-face with Emperor Nero...

The “Silences”

Several periods in the life of Paul, after his conversion, are passed over in a silence which is itself significant: the journey into Arabia, from which the Apostle returned in full possession of the Gospel explanation as set forth in Galatians and Romans; and the two silent years in prison in Caesarea, between his arrest in the temple at Jerusalem and his deportation to Rome.

It was inevitable that a trained intellect like that of Paul, a convinced believer in the *Torah*, and, until his conversion on the Damascus road, an eager opposer of Christianity, must seek the underlying principles of the Gospel.

Immediately after his conversion, he preached Jesus as the Messiah; but the relation of the Gospel to the Law, and, in a lesser degree, to the great Jewish promises, needed clear adjustment if Christianity was to be a reasonable faith, and not mere dogma.

In Arabia Paul sought and found that adjustment through revelation by the Spirit. Out of it came the doctrinal explanation of salvation by grace through faith, wholly apart from the law, as embodied in Galatians and Romans. But the Gospel also brings the believer into great relationships—to the Father, to Christ, to other believers, and to the future purposes of God. It is not only a salvation from sin and the consequences of sin, but into an amazing place in the Divine counsels.

Furthermore, the new thing, the “church,” an organism with its various aspects and functions, demanded clear revelation. It is contrary to the method of inspiration, as explained by Paul himself, to suppose that these crowning revelations were made apart from deep meditation, demanding quietness, and earnest seeking.

These are the chief themes of the “Prison epistles” written by Paul from Rome: Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians.

[It seems most incongruous with the events of Paul’s life to suppose that these great revelations came during the silent years at Caesarea—often spoken of as wasted. There may also have been an interval between his two imprisonments in Rome...]

Next Session

Study Acts Chapters 24, 25 & 26. Summarize the predicaments facing each of Paul’s adversaries in: his defense before Felix (twice); two years in Caesarea; Paul’s defense before Festus; his appeal to Caesar; and, his defense before Agrippa.

Acts Session 14 Chapters 24 - 26

Law was the most characteristic and lasting expression of the Roman spirit:

The first person in Roman law was the citizen.

Will Durant in *Caesar and Christ*

In other words, it was the responsibility of the court to protect the citizen from the State; but too often various kinds of corruption infected the system and made justice difficult for the common man.

Paul would soon discover how corrupt a Roman governor could be.

The secret of Roman government was the principle of indirect rule.

Arnold Toynbee

This meant that the real burden of administration was left pretty much on the shoulders of the local authorities. Imperial Rome got involved only if there was danger from without or if the local governing units were at odds with one another. In this chapter we see the Roman legal system at work and three men each making his contribution.

Review: Paul saved by the Romans (Acts 23)

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never did know exactly what the charge was against Paul. He knew it pertained to their law. Under Roman law Paul was not guilty of anything worthy of death or of imprisonment.

Review: Paul Before the Governor, Felix

Antonius Felix was Pilate's successor as Governor of Judea: He was made a free man by Antonia, mother of the emperor, Claudius, and was the brother of another liberated slave, Pallas. He was married to Drusilla, a Jewess and a daughter of Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:1), who left her husband to become Felix's third wife. She was a sister of Herod Agrippa II (Acts 25:13ff).

The Roman historian Tacitus said that Felix “exercised the power of a king in the spirit of a slave.” Felix was called “a vulgar ruffian” and lived up to the name; a scoundrel who exploited political situation; encouraged conflicts and confiscated any loot that became available. During his rule, the countryside became a center of anarchy and the mountains of Judea became havens from which guerilla fighters operated. He was hated by everybody.

- 31] Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris.
32] On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle:

Caesarea = 60 miles from Jerusalem. Antipatris was 35 miles from Jerusalem, between Joppa and Caesarea.

- 33] Who, when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.
34] And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia;
35] I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.

There are two kinds of provinces: Senatorial and Imperial. Cilicia was an imperial province under direct control of the emperor himself. The steps are being laid to bring Paul face-to-face with Emperor Nero...

Acts 24

- 1] And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul.

With Ananias the high priest were some of the Jewish elders as well as a lawyer to present the case and defend their charges. Roman law was

as complex as our modern law, and it took an expert to understand it and know how to apply it successfully to his client's case.

Tertullus, Advocate for the Prosecution

The lawyer complimented Felix because the governor's many reforms had brought quietness to the land. It was true that Felix had put down some revolts, but he had certainly not brought peace to the land. In fact, during the time Felix was suppressing robbers in his realm, he was also hiring robbers to murder the high priest Jonathan! So much for his reforms.

- 2] And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence,
- 3] We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.
- 4] Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words.
- 5] For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:
- 6] Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law.
- 7] But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands,
- 8] Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him.

But the prosecutor's accusations against Paul were no more truthful than his flattery. He brought three charges:

- 1) A personal charge ("he is a pestilent fellow")
- 2) A political charge (sedition and leading an illegal religion)
- 3) A doctrinal charge (profaning the temple)

1) A Personal Charge

As for Paul being "a pest," it all depends on one's point of view. The Jews wanted to maintain their ancient traditions, and Paul was advocating something new. The Romans were afraid of anything that upset their delicate "peace" in the Empire.

This personal charge was based on the Jews' conflicts with Paul in different parts of the Roman world. It was his own countrymen, not the Roman authorities, who caused Paul trouble from city to city.

2) A Political Charge

The political charge was much more serious, because no Roman official wanted to be guilty of permitting illegal activities that would upset the "Pax Romana" (Roman Peace). When Tertullus called Paul "an instigator of insurrections among all the Jews throughout the Roman Empire" (Wuest), he immediately got the attention of the governor. Of course, his statement was an exaggeration, but how many court cases have been won by somebody stretching the truth?

3) A Doctrinal Charge

Tertullus' third accusation had to be handled with care because it implicated a Roman officer who had saved a man's life. For the most part, Roman officials like Felix did not want anything to do with cases involving Jewish Law (Jn 18:28-31; Acts 16:35-40; 18:12-17). The fewer Jews who ended up in Roman courts, the better it would be for the Empire. Tertullus had to present this third charge in a way that made the Jews look good without making the Romans look too bad, and he did a good job.

Compare

Luke's account of Paul's arrest	Acts 21:27-40
The captain's account	Acts 23:25-30
The lawyer's account	Acts 24:6-8

Tertullus gave the impression that Paul had actually been guilty of profaning the temple, that the Jews had been within their rights in seizing him, and that the captain had stepped out of line by interfering.

It was Claudius, not the Jews, who was guilty of treating a Roman citizen with violence! But Felix had the official letter before him and was more likely to believe his captain than a paid Hellenistic Jewish lawyer. (That may be why Claudius wasn't present to testify.)

Tertullus implied that if Claudius had not interfered, the Jews would have tried Paul themselves, and this would have saved Felix and Rome a great deal of trouble and expense..

- 9] And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.
- 10] Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself:

- 11] Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship.

But the governor did not examine Paul. He merely nodded his head as a signal that it was now Paul's turn to speak. Paul then proceeded to answer the charges of:

- 1) Tertullus Acts 24:10–16
- 2) The Asian Jews Acts 24:17–19
- 3) The Jewish council Acts 24:20–21

- 12] And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:
- 13] Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.
- 14] But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:
- 15] And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.
- 16] And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.
- 17] Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.

“...a conscience void of offence toward God”: Conscience does not *set the standard*; it only applies it.

- 18] Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult.
- 19] Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me.
- 20] Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council,
- 21] Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.
- 22] And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.

Do we detect a bit of holy sarcasm in Paul's closing statement? We might paraphrase it, “If I have done anything evil, it is probably this: I reminded the Jewish council of our great Jewish doctrine of the Resurrection.” Felix really was after a bribe. Felix was first slave to be freed and become a Roman Governor.

- 23] And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.

- 24] And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

“...Drusilla”: Drusilla probably wanted to hear Paul: her family had been involved with “the Way” on several occasions: Her great-grandfather tried to kill Jesus in Bethlehem (Mt 2); her great-uncle killed John the Baptist and mocked Jesus (Lk 23:6–12), and her father killed the Apostle James (Acts 12:1–2).

Felix's Wives

- 1) Princess
- 2) Granddaughter of Anthony and Cleopatra
- 3) Drusilla. (Daughter of Herod Agrippa) She had been the wife of another king.

He delays Paul in prison to try and figure out what to do with him. Then he gets replaced by Festus, the new governor. Paul does testify before kings, as Jesus prophesied (Acts 9:15).

- 25] And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

Righteousness: sins of the past—yesterday's sin.
Temperance: sins of the present—today's temptations.
Judgment to come: tomorrow's judgment.

“...Felix trembled”: ἐμφοβος γενόμενος “Felix became terrified.”

- 26] He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.

Probing for a bribe...

- 27] But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

The new governor, Porcius Festus, was a better man than his predecessor and apparently took up his duties with the intention of doing what was right. However, he soon discovered that Jewish politics was not easy to handle, especially the two-year-old case of the Apostle Paul, a prisoner with no official charges against him.

Paul was a Jew whose countrymen wanted to kill him, and he was a Roman whose government did not know what to do with him.

Acts 25: Paul's Defense Before Festus

- 1] Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem.

Festus has a unique problem, he is the new governor and here is a guy whom the Jews hate, who is appealing to Caesar. The Jews say that they want to examine Paul, but really it is just a ploy to get him back to Jerusalem so they can kill him. So, he should send Paul to Rome, yet on what charges?

- 2] Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him,
3] And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him.
4] But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly thither.

“...the high priest”: The new high priest was Ishmael; he had replaced Jonathan who had been killed by Felix. Ishmael wanted to resurrect the plot of two years before and remove Paul once and for all (Acts 23:12–15).

- 5] Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with me, and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him.
6] And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought.
7] And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.
8] While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all.
9] But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?
10] Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.

But a Roman judge could not move a case to another court without the consent of the accused, *and Paul refused to go!* Instead, he claimed the right of every Roman citizen to appeal to Caesar.

- 11] For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar.
12] Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? Unto Caesar shalt thou go.

By appealing to Caesar, Paul forced the Romans to guard him and take him to Rome. He knew that his destination was Rome, not Jerusalem; and the fastest way to get there was to appeal to Caesar. Paul also knew that the Jews had not given up their hopes of killing him, so he was wise to stay under the protection of Rome. Finally, Paul realized that he could never have a fair trial in Jerusalem anyway, so why go?

But the new governor's problems were not over. He had managed not to offend the Jews, but he had not determined the legal charges against his prisoner. How could he send such a notable prisoner to the emperor and not have the man's crimes listed against him?

- 13] And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus.

Agrippa is the last of the Herods. Bernice was sister of Drusilla (wife of Felix), yet she was also her husband's sister. Incest on the throne: Agrippa and Bernice, husband and wife, and brother and sister! The fact that his sister lived with him created a great deal of suspicion on the part of the Jewish people, for their Law clearly condemned incest (Lev 18:1–18; 20:11–21). Rome had given Herod Agrippa II legal jurisdiction over the temple in Jerusalem, so it was logical that Festus share Paul's case with him.

Herods

The dynasty of the Herods were Edomites: he was Idumean (he came from Edom). The Edomites came from Esau, the rival brother of Jacob (whom the Jews came from). During the reign of the Hasmoneans, John Hyrcannus forced the Edomites to become Jews under pain of death. The Romans had established the Edomites on the throne regarding them as “a kind of Jew.” (Who are the “Edomites” today?) Herod attempted to win the favor of the Jews by rebuilding the Temple.

Herod the Great was the one who killed the babes in Bethlehem.

Herod Antipas was the one who beheaded John the Baptist when Salome danced for him.

Herod Agrippa I is the one who put the apostle James to death with a sword.

Herod Agrippa II is the one seen here.

- 14] And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix:
15] About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him.

- 16] To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.
- 17] Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth.
- 18] Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed:
- 19] But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.
- 20] And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters.
- 21] But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Caesar.

(“Augustus” in Acts 25:21, 25 is a title, “the august one,” and not a proper name.)

- 22] Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.
- 23] And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus’ commandment Paul was brought forth.

This must have been quite a scene with Festus in his Roman robes, and King Agrippa and Bernice with all the royal ceremony, and in comes Paul, probably in his prison clothes!

- 24] And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and also here, crying that he ought not to live any longer.
- 25] But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.

Acts 25:25 gives us the second of Luke’s “official statements” declaring Paul’s innocence (see Acts 23:29); and there will be others before his book is completed.

- 26] Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write.
- 27] For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him.

Acts 26: Paul’s Defense Before King Agrippa

- 1] Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself:

- 2] I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:
- 3] Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

Paul is pleased that he is not dealing with a Roman, but with someone that knows the customs, the laws, the traditions of the Jews.

- 4] My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews;
- 5] Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

Pharisees were as strict as one could get.

- 6] And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:
- 7] Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope’s sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

“...twelve tribes”: Paul is claiming to be accused of being a good Jew. Note that the none of the 12 are “lost”!

No Ten “Lost Tribes”

While it is true that the ten northern tribes (Israel) were conquered by Assyria in 722 B.C. and assimilated to some extent, it is not true that these ten tribes were “lost” or annihilated (cf. 2 Chr 11:13ff et al.). Jesus spoke about all twelve tribes (Mt 19:28), and so did James (James 1:1) and the Apostle John (Rev 7:4–8; 21:12). God knows where His chosen people are, and He will fulfill the promises He has made to them.

- 8] Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?
- 9] I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.
- 10] Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.

“...gave my voice against them”: In the Greek it actually says “gave a small pebble.” The point of this is that the Sanhedrin’s practice was to vote with small stones: Black and white; Guilty or not guilty. From this many scholars believe that Paul was once a member of the Sanhedrin. If he was, he had to have been married, because you had to be married to be on the Sanhedrin. We infer that he was married but became a widower (1 Cor 7:7).

- 11] And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.

Five Key Statements Summarize Paul's Defense

- 1) "I lived a Pharisee" vv. 4–11
 - 2) "I saw a light" vv. 12–13
- 12] Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,
- 13] At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.
- 14] And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.
- 15] And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.
- 16] But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;
- 17] Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,
- 18] To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Greatest synopsis of the Gospel message.

Five Key Statements Summarize Paul's Defense

- 3) "I heard a voice" vv. 14–18
- 19] Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:
- 20] But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.
- 21] For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.
- 22] Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

Five Key Statements Summarize Paul's Defense

- 4) "I was not disobedient" vv. 19–21
 - 5) "I continue unto this day" vv. 22–32
- 23] That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

- 24] And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

Paul never gets to finish a sermon! He is always interrupted. Before the session ended, Paul became the judge, and Festus, King Agrippa, and Bernice became the defendants! Paul was indeed defending himself, but at the same time, he was presenting the truth of the Gospel and witnessing to the difference Jesus Christ can make in a person's life.

- 25] But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.
- 26] For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.
- 27] King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.
- 28] Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

"...almost": A very controversial phrase. Many get the impression that Agrippa was almost persuaded. Other scholars feel that it is a more cynical comment than that.

- 29] And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.
- 30] And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them:
- 31] And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.
- 32] Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.

Five Key Statements Summarize Paul's Defense

- 1) "I lived a Pharisee" vv. 4–11
- 2) "I saw a light" vv. 12–13
- 3) "I heard a voice" vv. 14–18
- 4) "I was not disobedient" vv. 19–21
- 5) "I continue unto this day" vv. 22–32

Next Session

Study Acts Chapters 27 - 28. Paul will go to Rome, spend some years there in prison, finally get to see the emperor. We don't know from Scripture, but we have other reasons to believe that the case was dismissed; he was freed, and went on to other things, including Spain and Britain. He gets arrested again, back to Rome in prison again, and finally taken outside the city and beheaded. Luke remains with him right to the end!

Acts Session 15

Chapters 27 and 28

The shipwreck narrative in Acts 27 has more words assigned to it by Luke than are found in the entire Genesis account in Scripture. Luke's amazing details include everything from:

- the vessel's nautical headings,
- the type of storm,
- the ship's direction of drift,
- geographical landmarks on Malta,
- reef configurations,
- and even the depths of the seafloor.

Every detail, including how every man on board, including Paul, survived is included. In addition to highlighting Paul's heroic actions, Luke's narrative includes details which yielded the clues which recovered the very anchors which were cast out...

- 1] And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.

"...we": Luke is tagging along! Many scholars believe that Paul had illness and infirmities and that Luke was his personal physician. Luke will be right with him to the end!

- 2] And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.

"...Aristarchus": He may have been Paul's slave. He certainly spent a lot of time with Paul. In Chapter 19 he was the one that the mob grabbed in the whole scene. He was also the one who was with Paul on his last visit to Jerusalem, and he is mentioned in Paul's letter to the Colossians as very dear.

Nautical Terms

The ships were single-masted, they did not have a single rudder; instead two paddles on either side, which they used to maneuver. This chapter discusses an enormous amount of technical details about sailing techniques of the period (inferred from the Greek).

- 3] And the next day we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself.

The centurion found a coastal ship leaving Caesarea, so they embarked and covered the 80 miles from Caesarea to Sidon in one day. Even though Paul is a prisoner, Julius gives him the freedom in Sidon to visit the believers of the area. Julius trusted that Paul would not flee.

- 4] And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.

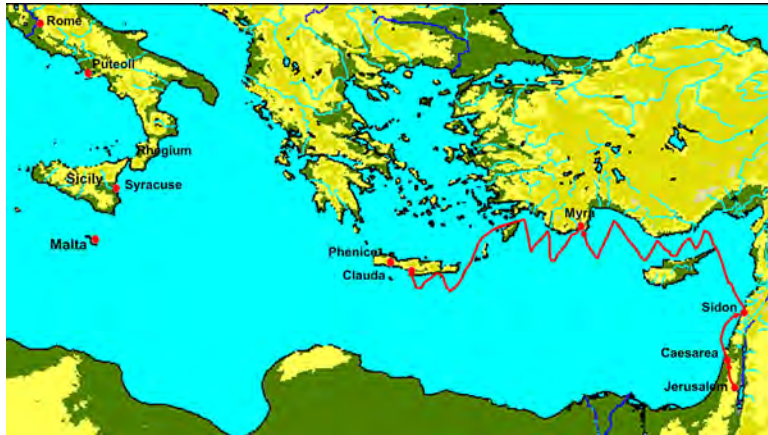
The Jewish belief was that you couldn't really navigate those waters after the Feast of Tabernacles: they are running out of time, and running into the storm season. From Sidon to Myra, the voyage became difficult because of the westerly winds. At Myra, Julius, a Roman officer, found a ship going to Italy; so he abandoned the slower coastal ship and put Paul and the others on board this large grain ship from Egypt that carried 276 passengers (Acts 27:37–38). The model ship below is an exhibit at the Maritime Museum in Malta.



- 5] And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia.
- 6] And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.

A larger vessel, typically carrying grain from Egypt to Italy.

- 7] And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone;
 8] And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.



The strong winds again hindered their progress so that “many days” were required to cover the 130 miles from Myra to Cnidus. The pilot then steered south-southwest to Crete, passing Salmone and finally struggling into a harbor at Fair Havens. It had been a most difficult voyage, a portent of things to come.

- 9] Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them,

“The fast” refers to the Day of Atonement, which fell in September/October; and every sailor knew that sailing was difficult from mid-September to mid-November, and impossible from mid-November to February. Paul admonished them to stay in Fair Havens. They had already encountered adverse winds, and it was now the start of the stormy season.

- 10] And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.

The centurion now had to decide whether to winter at Fair Havens or set sail and try to reach the port of Phenice on the southern coast of Crete, about 40 miles away. Fair Havens was not a comfortable place to settle down because it was too open to the winter storms. Phenice had a more sheltered harbor.

- 11] Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

- 12] And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west.

This small town probably could not support 276 people for winter.

- 13] And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete.

“South wind” is a favorable wind, contrary to the normal winds there.

- 14] But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.
 15] And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive.

This unique storm system that drove Paul’s ship was called a *Euroclydon*, a hybrid Greek and Latin word that means “a northeasterner.” The storm was so violent that cables had to be lashed underneath the ship to keep the planking from pulling apart...

- 16] And running under a certain island which is called Claudia, we had much work to come by the boat:
 17] Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.

It was then blown past the small island of Claudia in the direction of Syrtis, the northern coast of Africa. The ship made a slight arching towards the west–northwest in the direction of Malta.

“...quicksands”: These were a form of sand bar.

- 18] And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship;
 19] And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

Rigging had to be tossed into the sea, along with cargo.

- 20] And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

They used the sun and the stars for guidance, and when they were blocked, they had no way to know where they were. [No Loran or GPS available...]

- 21] But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

- 22] And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.
- 23] For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,
- 24] Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.
- 25] Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

Paul's Visions

- 1) Paul saw the glorified Christ on the very day he was converted (Acts 9:3; 22:6).
- 2) He saw a vision of Ananias coming to minister to him (Acts 9:12).
- 3) He had a vision from God when he was called to minister to the Gentiles (Acts 22:17).
- 4) He had a vision of God when he was called to Macedonia (Luke?) Acts 16:9.
- 5) When his ministry was difficult in Corinth, God encouraged him by a vision (Acts 18:9-10).
- 6) After his arrest in Jerusalem Paul was encouraged by a vision (Acts 23:11).
- 7) In the midst of the storm at sea an angel appeared to him and assured him that he and the passengers would be saved (Acts 27:33).

Along with these special visions related to his call, spiritual revelations of divine mysteries were also communicated to Paul: the mystery of the church itself (Eph 3:1-6). God also honored Paul by taking him to heaven 14 years earlier (A.D. 43?), between his departure for Tarsus Acts 9:30 and his visit from Barnabas (Acts 11:25-26).

Jewish rabbis were accustomed to speaking about themselves in the third person and Paul adopted that style in sharing this experience with his friends (and enemies) in Corinth.

- 26] Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.
- 27] But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country;

Finally, after 14 nights of hopeless, interminable drifting and driving wind and rain, the men aboard heard something. Over the howling wind, the sailors made out the faint rumblings of waves crashing the rocks. When the sailors heard the waves crashing they knew that they were going into shallow water. The helmsmen commanded that they find out the depth.

In first century Roman times, a lead sounding device was a bell-shaped lead object affixed to rope. The sounding device would be dropped overboard so that the sailors could determine the depth of the water. The first recorded depth was 120 ft. or 20 fathoms.

A second sounding was made and the depth was 90 ft. or 15 fathoms. The captain of the ship knew that they were approaching land and gave the order to drop four anchors from the stern.

First century anchors on an Alexandrian grain freighter would be approximately 12 ft. long made entirely of wood. The anchor's stock, or the cross bar of the anchor would have been made of solid lead. The wood would, over the years, decay in the sea and not survive, but the lead crossbar would last indefinitely.

- 28] And sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms.
- 29] Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.

(From the details in this narrative, the anchors were recovered and now rest in the Maritime Museum on Malta. See photo, below.)



- 30] And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship,
- 31] Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.
- 32] Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.
- 33] And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

- 34] Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.
- 35] And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat.
- 36] Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat.
- 37] And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.
- 38] And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.

They ate what they could and threw the rest overboard to lighten the ship.

- 39] And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.

Luke describes the location of Paul's shipwreck as being in front of a bay with a beach. Since most of Malta's coastline is cliff area, the vast majority of the search area can be quickly eliminated. Luke describes this bay with a beach as having a reef in front of it where the two seas collide (v.41).

- 40] And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoised up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.

"...taken up": or cut, the anchors: they left them in the sea (cf. v.25). The details in this narrative enabled the Greek maritime authorities, using the latest navigational computer software, to assist in locating these very anchors which were cut loose! (We were with Bob Cornuke in 2004 when they were presented to the Naval Museum on Malta.)

- 41] And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.

The course of drift was verified using the computer system of the Operations Center of the Armed Forces of Malta, which serves as the search and rescue coordination center of Malta.

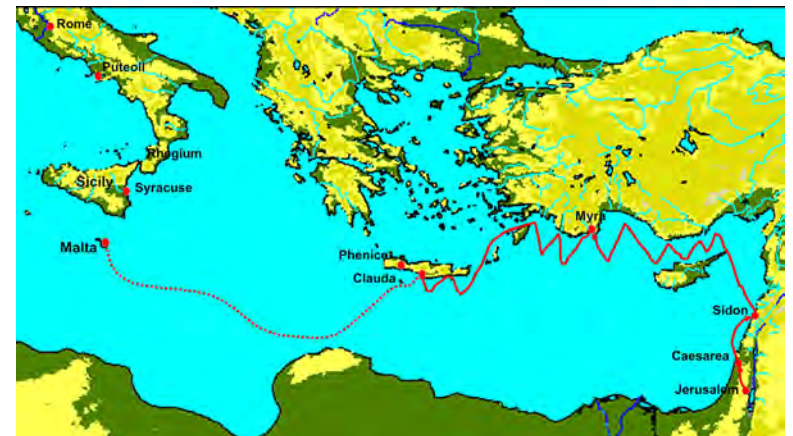
Their computer program matched the course of drift as Luke describes and revealed that the ship of Paul would have impacted on the southeast coast of Malta.

The only bay that matches all the criteria in Scripture and computer findings was St. Thomas Bay.

Authentication

The surviving anchor stocks, currently on display at the Maritime Museum on Malta, have been inspected by Professor Bonanno, who is considered to be the foremost expert in Malta on Roman antiquities. Dr. Bonanno earned a Ph.D. from the prestigious University of London Institute of Archaeology and has taught at the University of Malta since 1971. Dr. Bonanno has concluded that these anchor stocks are appropriate to the era of St. Paul's shipwreck in Malta.

As with most Biblical events, there is a traditional site on Malta where people believe the shipwreck to have occurred. This site, known as Saint Paul's bay, is on the northern coast of Malta. This traditional site does not fit the drift scenario that Scripture offers and was proposed as the shipwreck site approximately 1,200 years after Paul's arrival on the island of Malta. (Since most of the tourist accommodations have been built on the north side, locals have not been enthusiastic about these relatively recent discoveries...)



- 42] And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.
- 43] But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land:

Roman soldiers could swim, it was part of their training, but the prisoners were on their own.

- 44] And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.

Why did the shipwreck occur? Was Paul in God's will or was it Satanic opposition? God's strengthening is made perfect in man's weakness (we find from 2 Corinthians 11:25 that Paul was in *three* shipwrecks!)

Acts 28

- 1] And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.

Melita is Malta (which means "refuge").

- 2] And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

"...barbarous": This term is misleading as we use it in a different way than the Romans did. A barbarian meant that one didn't speak Greek or Latin!

- 3] And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

There are no snakes on Malta any more. The books are full of things about this, but remember that it was 2000 years ago; as things get cultivated, the snakes are gone.

- 4] And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.
5] And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

Cf. Mark 16:17-18.

- 6] Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.
7] In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.
8] And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

The wording here implies an instantaneous healing.

- 9] So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:
10] Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary.

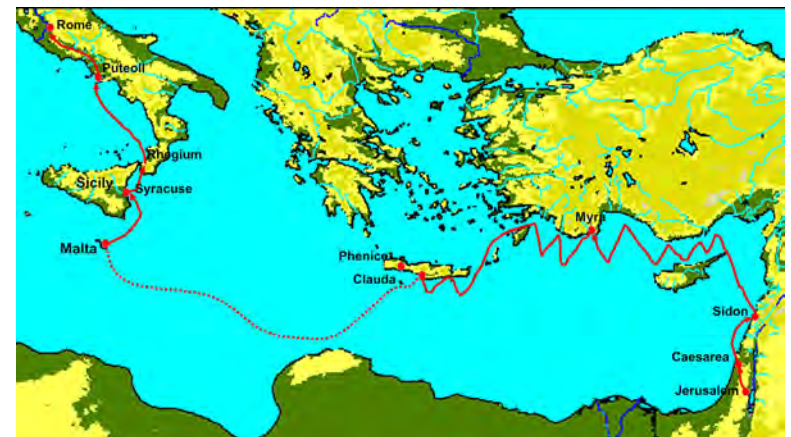
The word "healed" in verse 9 is a different word in the Greek, implying a gradual healing.

- 11] And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.
12] And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days.

"...Castor and Pollux": These were twin sons of Zeus in mythology and were revered as protectors of men on the sea. (We would know them as Gemini, in astronomical terminology.)

- 13] And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:
14] Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.
15] And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.
16] And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.

Julius and his party took the famous Appian Way and traveled 125 miles from Puteoli to Rome. The first group of Christians met Paul at the Forum of Appius, about 43 miles from Rome, and the second group met him at the Three Taverns, 10 miles nearer to the city.



- 17] And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

- 18] Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me.
- 19] But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of.
- 20] For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.
- 21] And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee.
- 22] But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.
- 23] And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening.
- 24] And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.
- 25] And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,

Cf. Isaiah 6:9-10.

Tragic Words

Paul quoted the words of Isaiah to these men words that described their tragic spiritual condition (Isa 6:9–10). Jesus had used this passage in connection with His parables of the kingdom (Mt 13:13–15; Mk 4:12; Lk 8:10). The Apostle John in his Gospel applied them to Israel (Jn 12:39–40), and Paul quoted them in his Roman epistle (Rom 11:7–8).

- 26] Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:
- 27] For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.
- 28] Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.
- 29] And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

During this time, he had Timothy with him (Phil 1:1; 2:19; Col 1:1), as well as John Mark, Luke, Aristarchus, Epaphras, Justus, and Demas (Col 4:10–14; Philemon 24). At least twenty-six are named in Romans 16.

- 30] And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,

- 31] Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

He was chained to a guard who was relieved every six hours, but who was forced to listen as Paul preached and taught and prayed. No wonder some of them were saved! (Phil 1:12–14; 4:22).

The “Prison Epistles”

During these two years in Rome, Paul writes the letters to the Philippians, the Ephesians, the Colossians, and the letter to Philemon: the so-called “prison epistles.”

According to traditions (not found in the Bible), Paul did appear before the emperor, and the case was dismissed. He went back to Crete where Titus was left in charge; he also probably visited Ephesus where Timothy was left in charge. There is some evidence that he visited Spain (Rom 15:24, 28), and some scholars believe he even visited Britain.

[The Scottish Constitution makes reference to “the uttermost part (singular) of the earth” and maintains the view that Paul had visited Scotland, (which is literally consistent with Acts 1:8).]

But Paul was arrested again and did some more time in prison in Rome. (Where he probably wrote the 2 Timothy letter, his last.) One day he was taken outside the walls of Rome and beheaded.

The tradition from Clement to Eusebius favors two Roman imprisonments with a year of liberty between them. W. J. Erdman has pointed out that the leaving of Trophimus sick at Miletus (2 Tim 4:20) could not have been an occurrence of Paul’s last journey to Jerusalem, for then Trophimus was not left (Acts 20:4; 21:20), nor of the journey to Rome to appear before Caesar, for then he did not touch at Miletus. To make this incident possible there must have been a release from the first imprisonment, and an interval of ministry and travel.

Conclusion

Acts is an unfinished book: it has continued for more than 1900 years. The last word in the book of Acts is ἀκωλύτως *akolutos* “unhindered.” Revelation is the continuation. The most relevant part for us is, of course, Revelation Chapters 2 & 3, which we will cover in the next session.

Some Lessons From this Session

Storms often come when we disobey the will of God (Jonah is a good example of this truth). Storms have a way of revealing character. Yet even the worst storms cannot hide the face of God or hinder the purposes of God. Paul received the word of assurance that they needed, and God overruled so that His servant arrived safely in Rome. Storms can give us opportunities to serve others and bear witness to Jesus Christ.

Next Session

Study Revelation Chapters 2 and 3.

Acts Session 16 Revelation 2 - 3

The Church

The Book of Acts covers the first 30 years of church history; Revelation 2 and 3 covers the next 2000...

Revelation: “The Unveiling”

- The consummation of all things.
- The only book promising a special blessing to the reader.
- 404 verses containing over 800 allusions from the Old Testament.
- It presents the climax of God’s Plan for Man.

To Whom Given?

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by his angel unto His servant John: who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

Revelation 1:1,2

A Unique Promise

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

Revelation 1:3

The Divine Outline (Rev 1:19)

Write the things which thou hast seen (The Vision of Christ; Rev. 1),
and the things which are (The Seven Churches; Rev 2-3),
and the things which shall be hereafter (Which Follows after the Churches; Rev 4-22).

The Ultimate Report Cards

The key(s) are self-contained:

The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: And the seven lampstands which thou sawest are the seven churches.

Revelation 1:20

Seven Design Elements In Each of the Letters

- 1) Name of the Church
- 2) Title of Christ Chosen
- 3) Commendation
- 4) Concern
- 5) Exhortation
- 6) Promise to the Overcomer
- 7) “He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

The Seven Churches: “The Things that are”

Why these seven? Why not Jerusalem? Antioch? Rome? Lystra? Iconium, et al...?

[“He that hath an ear...” 7X elsewhere.]

- 1) **Local:** actual churches. Researched archaeologically by Sir Wm. Ramsey...
- 2) **Admonitory:** “..churches”: all of them. Each message applies to each, to some extent.
- 3) **Homiletic:** “He that hath an ear...” Applies to us.
- 4) **Prophetic:** In their particular order, they lay out the history of the church. [They fill the gap implied in Daniel 9:26, and between Rev 12:5 and 6, etc.]

Letter to Ephesus (Rev 2:1-7)

Title of Christ:

- 1] Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; these things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden lampstands;

Commendation:

- 2] I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:
- 3] And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

Concern:

- 4] Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

Exhortation:

- 5] Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy lampstand out of his place, except thou repent.
- 6] But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

Nicolaitans

A first century sect abusing the liberty in Christ? An untranslated word?

νικάω *Nicao* Conquer, overcome, rule
λαός *Laos* Laity; people

Using their clerical stature or position to rule over the laity (vs. washing of feet, John 13).

- 7a] He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;

Promise to the Overcomer:

- 7b] To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Notice that the “Promise to the Overcomer” comes *after* the “He that hath an ear” phrase.

Letter to Smyrna (Rev 2:8-11)

Title of Christ:

- 8] And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

Commendation:

- 9] I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

Exhortation (note no Concern):

- 10] Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.
- 11a] He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;

Promise to the Overcomer:

- 11b] He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

Notice that the “Promise to the Overcomer” comes *after* the “He that hath an ear” phrase.

“10 Days”

54- 68	Nero
95- 96	Domitian (John exiled)
104-117	Trajan
161-180	Marcus Aurelius
200-211	Septimus Severus
235-237	Maximinus
249-251	Decius
257-260	Valerian
270-275	Aurelian
303-313	Diocletian

Letter to Pergamos (Rev 2:12-17)

Title of Christ:

- 12] And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

Commendation:

- 13] I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

Concern:

- 14] But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.
15] So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

Exhortation:

- 16] Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

The Prophet Balaam

- **“Doctrine of Balaam”** (Rev 2:14): Spiritual unchastity; marriage with the world.
- **“Way of Balaam”** (2 Peter 2:15); Hireling = making a “market” for his gift
- **“Error of Balaam”** (Jude 11): Sacrificing eternal riches for temporal gain

- 17a] He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;

Promise to the Overcomer:

- 17b] To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

Notice that the “Promise to the Overcomer” comes *after* the “He that hath an ear” phrase.

Letter to Thyatira (Rev 2:18-29)

Title of Christ:

- 18] And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

Commendation:

- 19] I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

Concern:

- 20] Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.
21] And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.
22] Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

Queen Jezebel (1 Kings 21)

King Ahab desires Naboth's vineyard. Queen Jezebel arranges an Inquisition (with false witnesses, condemnation, and execution). Naboth's vineyard is then seized for the king.

- 23] And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

Exhortation:

- 24] But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.
25] But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

Promise to the Overcomer:

- 26] And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:
27] And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.
28] And I will give him the morning star.
29] He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Notice that the “Promise to the Overcomer” comes *before* the “He that hath an ear” phrase.

Letter to Sardis (Rev 3:1-6)

Title of Christ:

- 1a] And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars;

Concern (note no Commendation):

- 1b] I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

Exhortation:

- 2] Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.
- 3] Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.
- 4] Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

Promise to the Overcomer:

- 5] He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.
- 6] He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Notice that the “Promise to the Overcomer” comes *before* the “He that hath an ear” phrase.

Letter to Philadelphia (Rev 3:7-13)

Title of Christ:

- 7] And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

Commendation (note no Concern):

- 8] I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.
- 9] Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.
- 10] Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

Exhortation:

- 11] Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Promise to the Overcomer:

- 12] Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.
- 13] He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Notice that the “Promise to the Overcomer” comes *before* the “He that hath an ear” phrase.

Letter to Laodicea (Rev 3:14-22)

Title of Christ:

- 14] And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

Concern (note no Commendation):

- 15] I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.
- 16] So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.
- 17] Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

Exhortation:

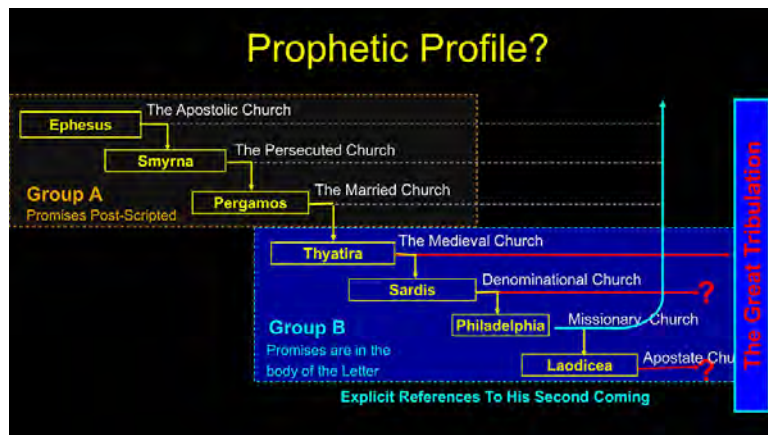
- 18] I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.
- 19] As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.
- 20] Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

Promise to the Overcomer:

- 21] To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.
- 22] He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Notice that the “Promise to the Overcomer” comes *before* the “He that hath an ear” phrase.

Design Tally:							
	Ephesus	Smyrna	Pergamos	Thyatira	Sardis	Philadelphia	Laodicea
Name	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Title	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Commendation	+	+	+	+	×	+	×
Concerns	-	×	-	-	-	×	-
Exhortation	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
				+	+	+	+
"He that hath an ear, hear what the Spirit says to the Churches"							
Promise to the Overcomer	+	+	+				



The Seven Kingdom Parables	
Rev. 2 & 3	Matthew 13
Ephesus	The Sower and 4 Soils
Smyrna	The Tares and the Wheat
Pergamos	The Mustard Seed
Thyatira	The Woman & the Leaven
Sardis	The Treasure in the Field
Philadelphia	The Pearl of Great Price
Laodicea	The Dragnet

Seven Churches	
Jesus:	Paul:
Ephesus	Ephesus
Smyrna	Philippians
Pergamos	Corinthians
Thyatira	Galatians
Sardis	Romans
Philadelphia	Thessalonians
Laodicea	Colossians

And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a scroll written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll, and to loose the seals thereof?" And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the scroll, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the scroll, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, "Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood the Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

Revelation 5:1-6

The Apocalypse

- Catastrophic End-crisis of present age
- Spectacular reappearance of the King of Kings in His global empire
- Internment of Satan in the *Abouso*
- Millennial earth-reign of Christ
- Final insurrection & the abolition of sin
- New Heaven and New Earth

The Central Theme

The Old Testament is an account of a Nation. The New Testament is the account of a Man. The Creator became a Man. His appearance is the Central Event of all history. He died to purchase us and is alive now. The most exalted privilege is to know Him. That's what the Bible is all about.

Two Basic Discoveries

The Bible consists of 66 separate books penned by over 40 authors over a period of several thousand years *that are an integrated message system*; it can be demonstrated that the origin of this message is from *outside of our dimensions of space and time*.

Prophetic Scriptures

The Bible contains 8,362 predictive verses; 1,817 predictions on 737 separate matters.

J. Barton Payne, *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecy*

Our Challenge

We are being plunged into a period of time about which the Bible says more than about any other period in history ...*including the time when Jesus walked the shores of Galilee and climbed the mountains of Judea*.

The Ultimate Issue

We are in possession of message of extraterrestrial origin. It portrays us as objects of an unseen warfare. Our eternal destiny depends upon our relationship with the ultimate victor in this cosmic conflict. Where do *you* stand with respect to *Him*?

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