

# **The Pilgrim Way Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles**



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## **Apology for This Work**

This commentary on the Acts of the Apostles follows in a long line of other works by divines of the past as they have sought to study and expound these precious epistles.

This work grew out of over 35 years of both preaching through the Acts in three pastorates in Maryland, Delaware and North Carolina as well as teaching through them as an instructor at Maryland Baptist Bible College in Elkton, Maryland. I needed my own notes and outlines as I taught and preached, so this fuller commentary flows from those notes and outlines. The layout of this commentary is a practical one, written by a preacher to be preached from in the pulpit or to be taught in a Sunday School. It was not written from an isolated study of a theologian who had little contact with people or practical ministerial experience. There are many such commentaries on the market, and they tend to be somewhat dull and not very practical in their application. It is written as something of a theological reference manual to me, filled with quotes and outlines from various books in my library. The layout and format are designed to help me in my preaching, teaching and personal study of this book. I hope there may be others who may benefit from this work, which is why I make it available.

This commentary cannot be easily classified into any single theological system. I believe that no single theological system is an accurate presentation of Scriptural truth in and of itself. When Charles Spurgeon once wrote "There is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified, unless we preach what nowadays is called Calvinism. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism; Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else", he displayed a most unfortunate theological hubris. Calvinism is a human, flawed, limited and uninspired theological system, as any other human theological system. There is some truth there, as there is in any theological system, but it ranks no better than other competing systems, such as Arminianism (which is nothing more than a modified version of Calvin's teachings), dispensationalism, covenant theology, Lutheranism, Romanism, Orthodox theology, pre-wrath rapture, take your pick. All these systems are flawed as they are all the products of human attempts to understand and systematize Biblical presentations. They can all make contributions to our overall understanding of truth but none may claim to be the only correct such presentation, at the expense of all others. Knowing the human impossibility for absolute neutrality and the human love for theological systems, I readily admit that I cannot be as dispassionate and uninfluenced by human teachings in these pages as I would like. No man can be. But I have made every attempt not to allow my own personal systems to influence my understanding of what the clear teachings of Scripture is. I do identify with premillennialism and dispensationalism, but even my dispensationalism is used mainly as an interpretative tool.

I have freely consulted a wide variety of commentaries and sermons for insights and other views of various texts that I might have missed. As the old preacher once remarked "I milked a lot of cows, but I churned my own butter." Direct quotes are attributed to their proper source to prevent that unpardonable sin of literary theft. But

simply because I quoted a writer should not be viewed as an endorsement of all that he wrote or of his theological system. I selected the quote because I found it interesting and useful, not because I am in any degree of agreement regarding the rest of his teachings. In this sense, I have tried to follow the pattern of Charles Spurgeon's *Treasury of David*, where he quoted a wide variety of other writers. I consider his commentary on the Psalms to be the greatest commentary ever in reference to its format.

This commentary is based on the text of our English Received Version, commonly referred to as the King James Version or the Authorized Version. I believe that this is the most preserved English translation available to us and that it is the superior translation in English. I can see no good reason to use or accept any of the modern versions, especially the current "flavor of the month" of the New Evangelicals and apostate fundamentalists, the corrupt and mis-named English Standard Version. When it comes to these modern, critical text versions, I reject them for a variety of reasons. One major reason is that they have not been proven on the field of battle. I have liver spots older than the English Standard Version, but I am expected to toss my English Received Text, over 400 years old, and take up this new translation, whose ink is still barely dry? How many battles has the ESV won? How many missionaries have done great exploits with an NIV? What revivals have been birthed and nurtured with an NASB? We will stick with the translations and texts that our fathers have used, and that God has blessed. It is too late in Church history to change English translations. We are also favorably inclined to the Geneva Bible, Tyndale Bible, Bishops Bible, and other "cousins" of our English text. The Greek text used is the underlying text of our English Received Text and its 1769 revision, which is the text most widely in use today by God's remnant. This is the Greek text that forms the foundation for the King James Bible. I am also going to make comparisons to the so-called New King James Version, the English Standard Version (so-called, as it is certainly no sort of standard version in English) and the more recent Legacy Standard Version of John MacArthur, to also demonstrate both its inferiority and how that it is a wholly new translation and not a simple revising or updating of the old Authorized Version text.

The presupposition of this commentary is that what the Bible says is so and that we will not change the text to suit our theological fancy. It says what it says and that is what we must accept, else we will be found unfaithful stewards of the Word of God, a judgment we fear. Simply because we cannot understand a text or because it doesn't "seem" right is no justification to change it. We will not fall into the same trap that John R. Rice did in his remarks on Acts 8:37. We believe the Authorized Version text is correct. If there is an issue, it is either with our limited understanding or the limitations imposed upon us by whatever theological system we are following.

This commentary certainly is not perfect, nor is it the final presentation of my understanding and application of Acts. A commentary over 35 years in the making can never said to be finished. As new insights are granted by the Holy Spirit and as my

understanding of the book deepens, additional material will be added, and sections will have to be re-written. One is never truly “finished” with any theological book. As one deepens and grows in his relationship with the Lord, so does his theological understandings and that should be reflected in one’s writings.

This book was also written as a theological legacy to my four children and three grandchildren (as of 2024). They will need to be mighty for God in their generation for their days will certainly be darker than the generation their father grew up in. This book is an expression not only of the heart of a preacher in the early 21st century but also of a Christian father for his children, so they may more fully understand what their father believed and preached during his ministry.

It is my sincere prayer that this unpretentious contribution to the body of Christian commentary literature will be a blessing to the remnant of God’s saints in the earth as we approach the coming of our Lord.

### **Introduction to Acts**

#### **TITLE**

The title "Acts of the Apostles" is very ancient and is the title the Holy Spirit chose for the book. No alternate titles (like “Acts of the Holy Spirit”) should be accepted by a Bible believing student.

1. “Suggested titles for the book are The Acts of the Holy Apostles (Hello, Rome!), The Gospel of the Holy Spirit, The Acts, The Demonstration of the Resurrection, or The Acts of the Holy Spirit. Harold E. Monser (editor of the Cross Reference Bible, 1959) speaks for R. A. Torrey, John R. Sampey, and Dr. A. T. Robertson—“conservatives” if you ever heard of them!—when he says that the AV (1611) title to the book is “NOT an exact description of the book.” Our rebuttal to all of this balloon juice is the usual: “A ‘yellow-tailed Sally’ works best over a grass bed with a weedless hook, even if you are using pork rind with it.” (Peter Ruckman, *The Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, page viii).”
2. An example of this mentality is seen in Oliver Greene’s “fundamentalist” commentary on Acts, where he thinks the title should be The Acts of the Risen, Glorified Christ Jesus the Lord (page ix in his commentary), thus passing judgment of the preserved title in the Authorized Version that the Holy Spirit wanted us to have.
3. J. Rawson Lumby, in the *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* commentary on Acts: “It will be clear from what has been already said of its contents that the title, by which the book is known to us, can hardly have been given to it by its author...We may conclude then that the title, as we now have it, was a later addition. The author (Acts 1:1) calls the Gospel “a treatise” (λόγος), a term the most general that could be used; and if that work were styled by him “the first treatise,” the Acts would most naturally receive the name of “the second treatise.” Or it may be that the form of title given in the Cod. Sinaiticus was its first appellation. There the book is called simply “Acts,” and for a while that

designation may have been sufficient to distinguish it from other books. But it was not long before treatises came into circulation concerning the doings of individual Apostles and Bishops, and these were known by such titles as "The Acts of Peter and Paul," "The Acts of Timothy," "The Acts of Paul and Thecla," &c. It would become necessary, as such literature increased and was circulated, to enlarge the title of this original volume of "Acts," and from such exigency we find in various MSS. different titles given to it, such as "Acts of the Apostles," "Acting of Apostles," "Acts of all the Apostles," "Acts of the Holy Apostles," with still longer additions in MSS. of later date...According to the best MSS. this should be simply "Acts of Apostles." The Cod. Sin. gives only "Acts." The former of these titles, while having most authority, also most fitly describes the character of the composition. The book is not The Acts of the Apostles, but merely some Acts of certain Apostles."

4. Johann Bengel, *Gnomon of the New Testament*: "not so much the Acts of the Apostles, as the Acts of the Holy Spirit; even as the former treatise contains the Acts of Jesus Christ."

### **WRITER**

Obviously, it is Luke, as Acts is the second volume of his two volume church history (his gospel being the first volume).

### **DATE AND PLACE OF COMPOSITION**

The date of composition was probably in the late fifties to early sixties. Luke would have mentioned several important events had they occurred by the time he wrote, including the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and Paul's death in A.D. 68.

We do not know for sure where Luke was when he wrote Acts.

### **OTHER OBSERVATIONS**

The Book of the Acts has 28 chapters, 1,007 verses and 24,250 words in our English version.

Acts is the only inspired account of church history we have. As the Old Testament histories and gospels, Acts is not a comprehensive history but is rather a selective one.

"Throughout the book the millennial kingdom is in view (2:17—20; 3:19—21; 8:12; 14:22; 20:25; 28:23, 31). The question of the Apostles (1:6) rules the character of the Acts (Ethelbert Bullinger, *The Companion Bible*)."

Eighteen speeches, sermons or addresses are recorded in Acts

1. Seven by Peter:

- A. To the assembled believers, 1:15-22.
- B. On the day of Pentecost, 2:14-40.
- C. In the Temple, 3:12-26.
- D. Before the Sanhedrin, 4:8-12.

- E. Again before the Sanhedrin 5:29-32.
  - F. In the house of Cornelius, 10:28-43.
  - G. In the council at Jerusalem, 15:7-11.
- 2. One by James
  - A. 5:13-21.
- 3. One by Stephen
  - A. Before the Sanhedrin, 7:2-53.
- 4. Seven by Paul:
  - A. In the Synagogue at Antioch, 13:16-41.
  - B. At Lystra, 14:15-17.
  - C. On Mars' Hill, 17:22-31.
  - D. At Miletus, 20:18-35.
  - E. On the stairs before the castle, 22:1-21.
  - F. Before Felix, 24:10-21.
  - G. Before Agrippa, 26:2-29.
- 5. Gamaliel
  - A. 5:35-39
- 6. Tertullus
  - A. 24:2-8.

“The Acts of the Apostles has been named correctly by the King James translators, as the book is plainly The ACTS of the APOSTLES. The book begins with the acts of Peter, James, John, and the “eleven,” as they choose a replacement for Judas, wait for Pentecost, preach to Israel, heal the sick, choose deacons, raise the dead, and open the doors of the “Kingdom of Heaven” (Matt. 16:19) to the Gentiles. The book ends with the acts of Paul, Silas, and Barnabas—all called “apostles” (Acts 14:14; 1 Thess. 2:6 cf. 1:1)—as the gospel goes to the ends of the earth, still accompanied by the apostolic “signs and wonders” (Rom. 15:19; 2 Cor. 12:12)...Here is a transitional book that takes the reader from Matthew to Romans, showing him the development of the early church, the development of Christian doctrine, the problems involved in overcoming prejudice, and the calling out of the greatest Christian who ever lived, giving us the pattern for real Biblical Christianity where no one could miss it.

- 1. Street preaching.
- 2. Answers to prayer.
- 3. Soulwinning.
- 4. Doctrinal controversy.
- 5. Persecution.
- 6. The revelation of salvation by the grace of God alone.
- 7. Christians organized into local churches.
- 8. Believers ONLY partaking of water baptism.
- 9. Expectancy of the immediate return of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 10. Christian charity and unity of purpose.
- 11. Missions and missionary activity as the essence of obedience to the Lord Jesus.

12. Bible teaching in the local assembly. (Peter Ruckman, *The Bible Believer's Commentary on Acts*, pages xxi-xxii)."

Many commentators think the Holy Spirit was in error in giving the title as even the more conservative ones want to change the title to "The Acts of the Holy Spirit" or "the Acts of Jesus Christ". No, we will keep the title as it was handed down to us- the Acts of the Apostles.

"The New Testament, as shown by F. W. Grant, is built in the form of a Pentateuch, patterned after the Pentateuch of the first five books of the Bible. The four Gospels answer to the book of Genesis, giving us the beginning of things. Exodus pictures next the book of Acts, giving the story of the "going out" of the people of God, not from physical bondage, as in their deliverance from Egypt's slavery, but from the bondage of the law, which was a servitude (a "yoke," as Peter calls it in Acts 15:10) which neither their fathers nor they were able to bear. Hence in the book of Acts grace takes the place of law, Christianity the place of Judaism. Israel nationally is set aside, because in putting their Messiah on the Cross, the nation as such finally and fully refused and rejected its King (August Van Ryn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, page 14).

Acts shows that God is not idle in history, and certainly not in the history of His church. God is a God of history and has always been very active in His dealings with men and nations. God's hand and direction are evident in Acts, both in the church and in the Roman and Jewish world.

"Matthew concludes with the Resurrection, Mark with the Ascension, Luke with the promise of the Holy Spirit, and John with the promise of the Second Coming. Acts 1 brings all four records together and mentions each of them. The four Gospels funnel into Acts, and Acts is the bridge between the Gospels and the Epistles." (J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*)."

Acts is a difficult book theologically because it is a transitional book between Matthew and Romans. Acts 2-7 is some of the most difficult real estate in the Bible since the doctrine is fluid and changing with the possibility of the kingdom being renewed if Israel would have repented at Peter's preaching (Acts 2 and 3) and at Stephen's message in Acts 7. See the notes in those chapters regarding the "Second Offer of the Kingdom". It is in these chapters where the proof-texts for speaking in tongues and baptism being necessary for salvation are found.

There is a parallel between Peter in the first part and Paul in the second:

<b><u>PETER</u></b>	<b><u>PAUL</u></b>
First sermon (ii.).	First sermon (xiii.).
Lame man healed (iii.).	Lame man healed (xiv.).
Simon the sorcerer (viii.).	Elymas the sorcerer (xiii.).
Influence of shadow (v.).	Influence of handkerchief (xix.).
Laying on of hands (viii.).	Laying on of hands (xix.).
Peter worshipped (x.).	Paul worshipped (xiv.).



Tabitha raised (ix.)                      Eutychus raised (xx).  
 Peter imprisoned (xii.).                Paul imprisoned (xxviii.).

**PART 1 (i.-xii.).**

Jerusalem the centre.  
 Peter the chief figure.  
 Out to Samaria  
 Word rejected by Jews of homeland.  
 Peter imprisoned.  
 Judgment on Herod.  
 (J. Sidlow Baxter, *Explore the Book*, pages 1417-1418).

**PART 2 (xiii.-xxviii.).**

Antioch the centre.  
 Paul the chief figure.  
 Out to Rome.  
 Word rejected by Jews of Dispersion.  
 Paul imprisoned.  
 Judgment on Jews.

There are 5 transitions listed in Acts:

- |                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Jews to Gentiles        | 4. Jerusalem to Antioch |
| 2. Judaism to Christianity | 5. Peter to Paul        |
| 3. Israel to the Church    |                         |

**A CHRONOLOGY OF ACTS**

by O. Talmadge Spence, Founder, Foundations Bible College (H. T. Spence, *The Canon on Scripture*, pages 162-169):

A.D. 30	Acts 1:1-8	Crucifixion & Resurrection of Jesus (Spring)
A.D. 30	Acts 1:9-11	Ascension at the Mount of Olives (Summer)
A.D. 30	Acts 1:12-26	The Upper Room Prayer Meeting (Summer)
A.D. 30		The Day of Pentecost (Summer)
	Acts 2:1-36	9:00 A. M. - The First Outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Jerusalem
	Acts 2:37-41	11:00 A.M. - The Second Outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Jerusalem
A.D. 30		The First Week After Pentecost (Summer)
	Acts 2:42-47	The First Giving of Things in Common
A.D. 30-AD. 34		The First Four Years After Pentecost
	Acts 3:1-10	The Lame Man at the Gate Beautiful Healed
	Acts 3:11-26	The Preaching by Peter at Solomon's Porch
	Acts 4:1-7	Arrest by Sanhedrin
	Acts 4:8-12	Peter's Sermon
	Acts 4:13-22	Warned and Released from Prison
	Acts 4:23-30	Apostles Return to the Believers from Prison
	Acts 4:31	The Third Outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Jerusalem
	Acts 4:32-37	The Second Giving of All Things in Common
	Acts 5:1-11	Ananias and Sapphira Sin Against the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts, The Fourth Great Wave of Conversions 2:37-41 & 2:47 & 4:4 & 5:14)
A.D. 35		The Second Four Years of Pentecost
	Acts 5:17,18	Apostles Put in Prison
	Acts 5:19	The Angel of the Lord Releases Them

- Acts 5:20-25 They Return to the Temple Preaching  
 Acts 5:26-28 The Sanhedrin Takes Them from the Temple  
 Acts 5:29-32 Peter's Response to Sanhedrin  
 Acts 5:33-40 The Advice of Gamaliel  
 Acts 5:41, 42 The Sixth Great Wave of Conversions (120, 3,000, 5,000; possibly 15,000 in the first five years since the Day of Pentecost)
- A.D. 37 Acts 6:1a The Seventh Great Wave of Conversions in Seven Years Since Pentecost (possibly 20,000 believing in seven years since the Day of Pentecost)
- Acts 6:1b, 2 The First Division Among the Believers  
 Acts 6:3-6 Seven Men Selected to Serve the Practical Need of Jews and Gentile Believers  
 Acts 6:7, 8 The Eighth Great Wave of Conversions in the Seventh Year Since Pentecost
- A.D. 38 Acts 6:9-11 Stephen in the Synagogue  
 Acts 6:12-15 Stephen in the Sanhedrin  
 Acts 7:2-53 Stephen's Sermon - Defense of the Lord Jesus  
 Acts 7:54-56 The Sanhedrin Reacts Against Stephen  
 Acts 7:57-60 Stephen in the Stoning Pit  
 Acts 8:1, 3 Saul the Persecutor Is Introduced  
 Acts 8:2 Devout Men Carry Stephen to His Burial  
 Acts 8:4 The First Beginning of Scattering of Possibly 20,000 Believers  
 Eight Years After Pentecost  
 Acts 8:1 The Scattering of Philip Took Him to Samaria  
 Acts 8:2-7 The Preaching and Ministry of Philip  
 Acts 8:8 The First Great Wave of Conversions in Samaria  
 Acts 8:9-13 The Coming of Simon the Sorcerer to the Ministry of Philip  
 Acts 8:14-17 The Coming of Peter and John to the Samaria Ministry  
 Acts 8:17 The Fourth Outpouring of the Holy Spirit Since the Day of Pentecost  
 Acts 8:18-24 Peter's Denunciation of Simon  
 Acts 8:25 The Second Great Wave of Conversions in Other Villages of Samaria
- A.D. 38-AD.43 Acts 8:26-40 The Further Ministry of Philip for the Next Five Years  
 Acts 8:26-38 The Ministry of Philip Towards the Gaza Desert  
 Acts 8:39, 40a The Ministry of Philip at Azotus  
 Acts 8:40b The Ministry of Philip at Caesarea (cf. Acts 21:8)
- A.D. 38 Acts 9:1 Saul, the Persecutor, Cleans Out Jerusalem of 20,000 Believers  
 Acts 9:2 Saul, Securing Sanhedrin Papers, Proceeds to the Northern Outpost, Damascus

	Acts 9:3-7	Saul's Conversion on the Damascus Road Before the Year of Dispersion Was Ended
	Acts 9:8, 9	Saul Sent into Damascus to a House on a Street Called "Straight"
	Acts 9:10-19a	The Reluctant Obedience and Ministry of Ananias to the Christian, Saul
	Acts 9:17	The Fifth Outpouring of the Holy Spirit Since the Day of Pentecost
	Acts 9:19b-22	The First and Brief Ministry of Saul in Damascus
	Acts 9:23-25	The Jews Seek to Kill Saul (cf. Galatians 1:17, 18, Saul Goes to Jerusalem After Three Years, Acts 9:26, in the Arabian Desert)
		1. Saul was saved in 38 A.D., possibly 29 years old, probably 9 years younger than Jesus.
		2. Saul is now possibly 32 years old when he visits Jerusalem for 15 days. First visit to Jerusalem
		3. Barnabas brings Saul to meet the apostles (Acts 9:27-29). The Apostles accompany Saul to Caesarea and then sent him on to Tarsus (Acts 9:30).
A.D. 41	Acts 9:31	The First Great Wave of Conversions Away from Jerusalem
	Acts 9:32-35	Peter's Ministry to Lydda
	Acts 9:36	Peter's Ministry Is Detoured to Joppa Because of Death of Dorcas
	Acts 9:37-43	Peter, for the First Time, Raises a Person, Dorcas, from the Dead
	Acts 10:1-23	Peter Goes to Caesarea Because of a Vision and Three Men Coming for Him of the Home of Cornelius
	Acts 10:24-43	Peter Eats with and Preaches to Gentiles
	Acts 10:44-46	The Sixth Outpouring of the Holy Spirit Since the Day of Pentecost (3:00 P.M., A.D. 41)
	Acts 10:47,48	The Results of the Fifth Outpouring
	Acts 11:1	The Apostles Hear of the Gentile Outpouring
	Acts 11:2-18	Peter Rehearses and Repeats the Gentile Details
	Acts 11:19	The Twofold Scattering of the 20,000 Believers from Jerusalem in A.D. 38. By A.D.41 Some Scattered to the Jewish Places Only
	Acts 11:20	By A.D. 41 Others Scattered to the Gentile Places Only
	Acts 11:21	The Fourth Wave of Conversions Away from Jerusalem to Gentiles
A.D. 43	Acts 11:22a	The Antioch Wave Reaches the Apostles in Jerusalem
	Acts 11:22b	Barnabas Is Sent to Antioch by Apostles in Jerusalem
	Acts 11:23, 24a	Barnabas Believes in the Antioch Evangelistic Wave
	Acts 11:24b	The Fifth Wave of Conversions Away from Jerusalem in Antioch
	Acts 11:25, 26a	Barnabas Goes to Tarsus to Seek Saul and Brings him to

Antioch. (Barnabas possibly 43 years old, born the year of the birth of Jesus; saved on the Day of Pentecost A.D. 30, a Christian now for 13 years; starting his ministry back at Antioch at 43 years old)

A.D. 43-AD. 47

Acts 11:26b Paul Remains at Antioch with Barnabas, A.D. 47 for One Year. (Paul had been in Tarsus for 3 years plus 3 years in Arabian Desert, A.D. 38-44 Altogether Paul will be at Antioch 4 years, A.D. 47, Acts 13:1.)

A.D. 47

Acts 13:1, 2 The Five Antioch Men Prayer Meeting  
Acts 13:2 The Holy Spirit Reveals Barnabas and Saul Called to the Ministry

Acts 13:3 Barnabas and Saul Sent Out  
1. God Sent One Apostle.  
2. Jesus Sent Twelve Apostles (A.D. 27-30).  
3. The Holy Ghost Sends Two Apostles. (The Total to Date: 15 (Estimated Population of Roman Empire at This Time: 250,000,000)

A.D. 47

Acts 13:3-14:26 The First Missionary Journey: Barnabas, Paul, and picked up John Mark who turned back home. (The Eastern Journey)

Acts 13:1 Antioch in Syria

Acts 13:4 To Seleucia

Acts 13:5 To Cyprus (Salamis) John Mark

Acts 13:6 To Cyprus (Paphos) A Jew Bar-jesus

Acts 13:8 Sergius Paulus

Acts 13:8 Elymas, the Sorcerer

Acts 13:9 Saul's Name Changed to Paul

Acts 13:13 To Pamphylia (Perga) John Mark Returns to Jerusalem

Acts 13:14 Antioch in Pisidia (Paul's Sermon Acts 13:16-41) (accepted)

Acts 13:44 The Next Sabbath Back in Antioch in Pisidia

Acts 13:46 (Rejected) "We turn to the Gentiles"; Gentiles Receive and Rejoice

Acts 13:48 The Jews Raise Persecution, Acts 13:50

Acts 13:51, 52 To Iconium. Preaching in the Synagogue in Iconium

Acts 14:1-5 Sought to Stone Them

Acts 14:6a To Lystra

Acts 14:6b To Derbe (cities of Lycaonia)

Acts 14:8 At Lystra - Healing of Crippled Man; Paul Preaches; Called "gods"

Acts 14:19 Men Come from Antioch in Pisidia and Iconium to Stone Paul

Acts 14:20 At Derbe

Acts 14:21 Returned Again to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia

Acts 14:22 Confirming the Saints

Acts 14:23 Ordained Elders

	Acts 14:24	Pisidia to Pamphylia
	Acts 14:25	Perga to Attalia. Ten places named in the First Missionary Journey
	Acts 14:26	Returned to Antioch in Syria
	Acts 14:27	Ministry in Antioch in Syria (14:26-15:35)
A.D. 54	Acts 15:1	The Problem of Circumcision and Jerusalem Council (Third time Paul goes to Jerusalem)

### The Jew-Gentile Problem Outlined

We must go back now and establish the New Testament Narrative as best we can to see the problem itself. Few books have meticulously presented the narrative in an approximate order so that a factual conclusion may be drawn. We choose to begin with the incident of the conversion of Paul (formerly Saul) and his call to preach to the Gentiles. For the purpose of this article, we place the events in a simplistic order through the entire problem. Let us note these events.

1. Saul's Conversion and Call to the Gentiles at Damascus (Acts 9:1-19)
2. Saul immediately confers not with Jerusalem; goes to Arabia and returns to Damascus (Galatians 1:15-17)
3. Saul's visit and fearful rejection at Jerusalem, which Barnabas defends (Acts 9:26-28); three years after this conversion (Galatians 1:18-20), spends fifteen days with Peter.
4. Saul speaks boldly and disputes against the Grecians (Acts 9:29), at Jerusalem.
5. Saul is led by the Jerusalem brethren away to Caesarea (Acts 9:30), and afterward Saul goes into regions of Syria and Cilicia (Galatians 1:21-24), from Tarsus.
6. Peter, from Jerusalem, goes throughout certain areas; comes to Lydda where Aeneas is healed (Acts 9:32-35).
7. Peter is called upon to come to Joppa because of the death of Tabitha (Dorcas), and she is raised from the dead (Acts 9:36-42)
8. Peter remains in Joppa and resides at the home of Simon the tanner (Acts 9:43).
9. Peter, while waiting for the noon meal in Simon's house, has a vision of certain animals and fowls which are unclean according to the Old Testament and Jewish knowledge (Acts 10:1-16). The vision corrects Peter's previous belief of the "unclean Gentiles."
10. Peter, after the completion of the vision, sees three men sent from the house of Cornelius, a Gentile centurion at Simon's gate (Acts 10:17-23).
11. Peter goes to the house of Cornelius and after his sermon, realized that the vision prepared him to understand that God accepts Gentiles and is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:24-48).
12. Peter returns to Jerusalem and declares to the Jerusalem brethren, whoever they are, that his vision and visit to Cornelius revealed that God accepts Gentiles through the Gospel (Acts 11:1-18).
13. But there remains a distinction in two different preaching missions in the

persecutions and scatterings of the saints from Jerusalem: one to "the Jews only" (Acts 11:19); two, "unto the Grecians" (Acts 11:20). This indicates a separation of fellowship between Jews and Gentiles.

14. Antioch, in Syria, receives a great manifestation of evangelism because of the revival among the saints scattered there from Jerusalem (Acts 11:20, 21).

15. Jerusalem hears of this mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit and sends Barnabas to investigate the matter (Acts 11:22), at Antioch, in Syria.

16. Barnabas, from Jerusalem, seeing the grace of God at Antioch, in Syria, departs for Tarsus to get Paul (Saul; some 80 miles away) instead of returning to Jerusalem (some 300 miles away) for assistance to the revival (Acts 11:23-26).

17. Agabus, from the Jerusalem brethren, comes to Antioch, in Syria, and prophesies of the great famine to come (Acts 11:27-30), which would particularly hurt Jerusalem, no doubt, in view of the later contributions from other Christians which were always needed (Galatians 2:10).

18. Great persecution came to Jerusalem, killing James, the brother of John, and imprisoning Peter, who was supernaturally delivered by an angel (Acts 12:1-18).

19. Peter goes down to Caesarea to reside for a while. God, in judgment, kills Herod amidst his glory (Acts 12:19-24).

20. Saul (Paul) and Barnabas make a quick trip to Jerusalem, no doubt, to take a contribution to the poor saints, and because of the persecution there are hindered from serious opportunity to see the Jerusalem brethren. They take John Mark back to Antioch, in Syria, with them (Acts 12:25).

21. Saul and Barnabas go out on the First Missionary Journey and establish at least four churches in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe (Acts 14:1-25) and return to Antioch, in Syria (Acts 14:26-28).

22. Men from Jerusalem, in Judea, however, had come down to Antioch, in Syria, while Paul (named changed at Paphos, in Cyprus; first Gentile place on First Missionary Journey) and Barnabas were on their first journey, demanding that the Antioch Christians be circumcised (Acts 15:11).

23. Paul and Barnabas, with "no small dissension and disputation" to them were unable to stop this error, "determined" that they should go to Jerusalem for a resolve (Acts 15:2), although Paul did not go to Jerusalem for a sanction or decision; he had already been given revelation of the matter from the Lord (Galatians 2:1, 2, 5, 6).

24. Paul took Titus, who had been "compelled to be circumcised" (Galatians 2:1, 3). Undoubtedly, Paul was against the circumcision of Titus, being a "Greek" (Galatians 2:3), whereas Timothy, on the other hand, was a Jew through his mother but a Greek by his father, and Paul circumcised him (Acts 16:1-3). In the former, Titus was Greek only, and Paul stood against circumcision for Gentile Christians; in the latter, Timothy was of Jewish blood with Gentile, and Paul endeavored to give a good spirit of testimony in circumcision. (I believe Spence is wrong here, as Galatians 2:3 makes it clear that Titus was not compelled to be circumcised. Spence may have mis-read the verse).

25. The Jerusalem Council, through a resolution by Peter (Acts 15:7), and James being the moderator (Acts 15:13), lifted completely the stipulation of circumcision

as a necessity of Gentile Christians (Acts 15:19-28). Only the four stipulations concerning contemporary sins of the time were demanded (Acts 15:29).

- A. Abstain from meats offered to idols.
- B. Abstain from drinking blood.
- C. Abstain from eating things strangled.
- D. Abstain from fornication.

And only, also, that they continue to remember the poor, especially at Jerusalem (Galatians 2:10), Paul was faithful to these contributions to the end of his ministry.

26. The decision of this Jerusalem Council was then published in letters and brought back to Antioch, in Syria, and read in the presence of certain witnesses from Jerusalem including Judas Barsabas and Silas (cf. Acts 15:22-24 & 30-32).

27. Peter, after the Jerusalem Council, however, came to Antioch, in Syria, again. Before certain Jewish brethren came from James in Jerusalem, Peter would eat with the Gentiles. However, after they arrived, Peter would not eat any longer with the Gentiles (Galatians 2:11, 12). Even Barnabas was carried away in this dissimulation or hypocrisy (Galatians 2:13).

28. Paul, therefore, and necessarily also, had to stand up and rebuke Peter "before them all" for his inconsistency (Galatians 2:14). The charge was: "they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel" (Galatians 2:14b). Paul strengthened the statement with words which should have utterly destroyed the return to the legalistic rite of circumcision, and undoubtedly, it did (Galatians 2:15-21).

29. Paul, after all these events, was led of the Holy Spirit to write all these matters and send them to the "churches of Galatia" (Galatians 1:1-5).

30. Paul, on his final visit at Jerusalem, continues to be plagued with Jewish problems of the Jerusalem brethren and finally takes a Jewish vow with the hope to establish his own good spirit of Christian apostleship among the Jerusalem brethren (Acts 21:1-26).

31. In Jerusalem, in the Temple, Paul is seized by Jewish authorities and tried before the Jewish Sanhedrin (Acts 21:27-23:22) from which he was sent to Caesarea (cf. Acts 23:23 & 33); and ultimately sent to Rome to be martyred (cf. Acts 23:23-28:31 & II Timothy 4).

32. It is believed that Paul suffered two Roman imprisonments: the first, Acts 28:30, 31; the second, martyred under Nero (II Timothy 4:6-8).

- A.D. 55      Acts 15:30-35 Back to Antioch  
              Acts 15:36-18:22 The Second Missionary Journey: Paul and Silas: (The Western Journey); Barnabas and John Mark to Cyprus (The Eastern Journey)  
              Acts 15:41    To Syria and Cilicia  
              Acts 16:1, 2    To Derbe and Lystra: Met Timothy (Timotheus: Jewish mother; Greek father). Well reported of by brethren at Lystra and Iconium.  
              Acts 16:1-3    Paul takes Timothy with him; circumcised him.

	Acts 16:4	Delivered decrees to keep; ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.
	Acts 16:5	Churches established; increased in number daily.
	Acts 16:6-8	Having gone through Phrygia, Galatia, forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach in Asia. Mysia, Bithynia, the Spirit suffered them not; and passing through Mysia to Troas.
	Acts 16:9	A vision appears to Paul in the night. "Come over into Macedonia and help us."
	Acts 16:11	Loosing from Troas, they came to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis.
	Acts 16:12	Thence to Philippi, chief city of Macedonia. A Prayer Meeting at the riverside.
	Acts 16:14	Lydia, a seller of purple, of Thyatira. She is baptized and her house.
	Acts 16:16	A damsel possessed with a spirit of divination.
	Acts 16:20	Paul and workers brought to the magistrates: cast into prison.
	Acts 16:25	At midnight, Paul and Silas sang; prison shaken.
	Acts 16:30	The jailor saved and his house.
	Acts 16:35	Released with apology from magistrates.
	Acts 16:40	Went into the house of Lydia.
	Acts 17:1	Passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia to Thessalonica. (Jewish opposition)
	Acts 17:10	Paul and Silas sent by night unto Berea, a more noble group.
	Acts 17:13	Enemies from Thessalonica come to Berea to stir up trouble.
	Acts 17:15	While Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea, Paul conducted to Athens.
	Acts 17:22	Paul's sermon at Mars Hill; converts at Athens (v. 34).
	Acts 18:1	Paul comes to Corinth; meets Aquila and Priscilla. Continues there 1 1/2 years. I and II Thessalonians written at Corinth.
	Acts 18:12	Paul before Gallio, deputy of Achaia.
	Acts 18:17	Paul beaten; yet after that Paul tarried there yet a good while.
	Acts 18:18b	Paul and brethren sail to Syria, with Aquila and Priscilla. Paul has his head shorn in Cenchrea, because of a vow.
	Acts 18:19	Paul and party come to Ephesus; they desired him to tarry long, but Paul consented not; he had to be in Jerusalem at the feast.
	Acts 18:22	Paul sails from Ephesus to Caesarea; he then went on to Antioch in Syria. There are 23 places named in The Second Missionary Journey.
A.D. 58	Acts 18:23	The Third Missionary Journey Galatia Phrygia



## The Seventh Outpouring of the Holy Spirit Since the Day of Pentecost

	Acts 19:1	Ephesus: "The Holy Ghost"; in the synagogue
	Acts 19:4	Asia
	Acts 19:8-10	In the school of one Tyrannus, 2 years; to Jews and Greeks.
	Acts 19:13, 14	Sceva, the Exorcist
	Acts 19:21	Paul desired to go to Macedonia, Achaia, Jerusalem, and then Rome.
	Acts 19:22	Sent into Macedonia Timotheus and Erastus; Paul stays in Asia.
	Acts 19:24	Demetrius, the Silversmith
	Acts 19:28	"Great is Diana of the Ephesians"
	Acts 20:1	Paul departs to Macedonia
	Acts 20:2	Paul departs to Greece
	Acts 20:4	Paul departs to Asia and is accompanied by Sopater of Berea; Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe; Timotheus; and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.
	Acts 20:5	They went before and tarried at Troas.
	Acts 20:6	Paul and Luke sailed away from Philippi and came to them at Troas.
	Acts 20:9	Eutychus falls from the third loft.
	Acts 20:13	Sailed to Assos; Paul meets them.
	Acts 20:14	They came to Mitylene.
	Acts 20:15	They came to Chios and Samos and tarried at Trogyllium; the next day to Miletus.
	Acts 20:16	Paul determined to sail by Ephesus; he would not spend time in Asia. He hasted, if it were possible for him to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.
	Acts 20:17	Called the Elders of the church from Ephesus.
	Acts 20:38	The Elders Sorrow
	Acts 21:1	They departed to Coos, then to Rhodes, and then to Patara.
	Acts 21:2	They sailed into Phenicia.
	Acts 21:3	To Cyprus and then sailed into Syria, and landed at lyre.
	Acts 21:7, 8	To Ptolemais, then on to Caesarea. There are 31 places named on the Third Missionary Journey.
A.D. 60	Acts 21:15	The Fifth Visit to Jerusalem
A.D. 60-AD. 61	Acts 23:23	Imprisonment Back at Caesarea
	Acts 24:27	Two years; Felix trembled.
	Acts 25:1	Festus mocks.
	Acts 26:1	Agrippa knows.
A.D. 61	Acts 27, 28	From Caesarea to Rome
		1. 24 places to get to Rome
		2. About 6 months of travel
		3. Caesarea; August A.D. 60

		4. Shipwreck beginning of November, Melita
		5. Melita: 3 months
		6. Leave Melita, February A.D. 61
		7. Arrive in Rome, March A.D. 61
Acts 27:2		Entering the ship, Adramyttium, Caesarea, proceeding to coasts of Asia
Acts 27:3		Sidon
Acts 27:4		Cyprus
Acts 27:5		Sea of Cilicia, Pamphylia, Myra (a city of Lycia)
Acts 27:7		Cnidus, under Crete, over against Salmone
Acts 27:12		Phenice, a haven of Crete
Acts 27:16		Clauda
Acts 27:27		In Adria
Acts 27:39		A certain creek with a shore
Acts 28:1		Melita
Acts 28:12		Syracuse
Acts 28:13		Rhegium, Puteoli
Acts 28:15		Appii forum, Three Taverns
Acts 28:16		Rome (24 places are mentioned from Caesarea to Rome.)
		The catacombs: entrances are present outside the city of Rome on the Appian Way.
		1. 587 miles underground; equal to the entire length of Italy.
		2. 42 subterranean sections.
		3. 70,000 inscriptions.
		4. 4,000,000 graves; some believe 7,000,000 graves.
A.D. 64	Acts 28:16	Paul arrives at Rome; First Imprisonment; for two years.
A.D. 66-A.D. 68		Second Roman Captivity: Paul was released from his house arrest in Rome because his accusers did not choose to press their charges before Caesar (Acts 24:1; 28:30). Paul then visits Ephesus, left Timothy there to supervise the churches, and he went on to Macedonia (northern Greece); he visited Crete, left Titus there; went to Nicopolis in Achaia (southern Greece), Titus 3:12; he visited Troas (II Timothy 4:13) where he was suddenly arrested, taken to Rome, imprisoned, and finally beheaded under Nero. Paul's death, A.D. 68 (II Timothy 4).

### **Outline**

1. Introduction 1:1,2
2. Preparation 1:3-26
3. Propagation 2:1-28

**THE ITINERARY OF PAUL'S  
THREE MISSIONARY JOURNEYS (from the Precept Austin website  
[https://www.preceptaustin.org/acts\\_commentaries](https://www.preceptaustin.org/acts_commentaries)**

<b>FIRST</b>	<b>SECOND</b>	<b>THIRD</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Antioch Acts 13:1-3</li> <li>2. Seleucia Acts 13:4</li> <li>3. Salamis on Cyprus Acts 13:5</li> <li>4. Paphos on Cyprus Acts 13:6-12</li> <li>5. Perga in Pamphylia Acts 13:13</li> <li>6. Pisidian Antioch Acts 13:14-50</li> <li>7. Iconium Acts 13:51</li> <li>8. Lystra Acts 14:6-20</li> <li>9. Derbe Acts 14:20</li> <li>10. Lystra Acts 14:21</li> <li>11. Iconium Acts 14:21</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Antioch Acts 15:36-40</li> <li>2. Syria Acts 15:41</li> <li>3. Cilicia Acts 15:41</li> <li>4. Derbe Acts 16:1</li> <li>5. Lystra Acts 16:1-5</li> <li>6. Phrygia/Galatia Acts 16:6</li> <li>7. Mysia Acts 16:7</li> <li>8. Troas Acts 16:8-10</li> <li>9. Samothrace Acts 16:11</li> <li>10. Neapolis Acts 16:11</li> <li>11. Philippi Acts 16:12</li> <li>12. Amphipolis Acts 17:1</li> <li>13. Apollonia Acts 17:1</li> <li>14. Thessalonica Acts 17:1-9</li> <li>15. Berea Acts 17:10-14</li> <li>16. Athens Acts 17:15-34</li> <li>17. Corinth Acts 18:1-17</li> <li>18. Cenchreae Acts 18:18</li> <li>19. Ephesus Acts 18:19</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Antioch Acts 18:23</li> <li>2. Phrygia/Galatia Acts 18:23-28</li> <li>3. Ephesus Acts 19:1-41</li> <li>4. Macedonia Acts 20:1</li> <li>5. Greece Acts 20:2</li> <li>6. Macedonia Acts 20:3-5</li> <li>7. Philippi Acts 20:6</li> <li>8. Troas Acts 20:6-12</li> <li>9. Assos Acts 20:13</li> <li>10. Mitylene Acts 20:14</li> <li>11. Samos Acts 20:15</li> <li>12. Miletus Acts 20:15-38</li> <li>13. Cos Acts 21:1</li> <li>14. Rhodes Acts 21:1</li> <li>15. Patara Acts 21:1</li> <li>16. Tyre Acts 21:3-6</li> <li>17. Ptolemais Acts 21:7</li> <li>18. Caesarea Acts 21:8-14</li> </ol>

12. <b>Pisidian Antioch Acts 14:21</b>	20. <b>Caesarea Acts 18:22</b>	
13. <b>Pamphylia Acts 14:24</b>	21. <b>Jerusalem Acts 18:22</b>	
14. <b>Perga Acts 14:25</b>	22. <b>Antioch Acts 18:22</b>	
15. <b>Attalia Acts 14:25</b>		
16. <b>Antioch Acts 14:26</b>		

In this study, I see no reason to quote or cite any sort of “B. C. Septuagint” (or LXX) as many commentators do even if it did exist (which I do not believe). The LXX was not inspired and was not written until well after the crucifixion. It is simply not reliable. One of my teachers, O. Talmadge Spence, once remarked that the LXX was useful as a Greek dictionary, but little else.

### **Booklist on Acts**

@ *Commenting and Commentators*, Charles Spurgeon

! *New Testament Commentaries for Bible Expositors*, 1987-92, by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible Exposition, The Master’s College

\$ *Top 5 Commentaries on the Book of Acts*, Keith Mathison, Ligonier Ministries

<http://www.ligonier.org/blog/top-5-commentaries-on-the-book-of-acts/>

% bible.org

\* *Biblical Viewpoint*, Bob Jones University

& *The Minister’s Library*, Cyril Barber

+ *An Annotated Bibliography of Reference Works and Commentaries on the Greek New Testament*, Jon Weatherly

# *New Testament Commentary Survey*, D. A. Carson, of limited value as Carson seldom gives the titles of the commentaries he is discussing.

= *Witness to Christ, a A Commentary on Acts* by Stewart Custer

Comments by the author, Dr. John Cereghin are in italics.

Notes in italics are by the author, Dr. John Cereghin. The majority of commentaries attack the Authorized Version or are bland and “plain vanilla” in their applications, not willing to “go out on a limb” with unpopular or “non-traditional” interpretations. We are challenged by such commentators, even when we disagree with them. Recommended commentaries are in **bold**.

As always, discernment is required. A discerning reader can still glean some nuggets even from a “bad” commentary. I would not be so quick to heap praise on the majority of the “mainline” commentaries that the reviews speak so highly of below. Peter Ruckman, in his commentary on Acts, would summarize it this way: “G. Campbell Morgan and John R. Rice are the most refreshing, without committing themselves doctrinally 80 percent of the time! Cornelius Stam is the most intriguing—committing himself doctrinally everywhere! However, the rest of the commentaries resemble burnt toast that has been lying on the kitchen sink two or three days (*The Bible Believers Commentary on Acts*, page xiii).”

@ Alexander, Joseph Addison, *The Acts Explained*. 2 volumes, 1869. In all respects a work of the highest merit.

\* An exhaustively thorough exposition. He often gives accurate help on the meaning of the Greek (pp. 43, 190, 355, 633, etc.), opposed immersion (pp. 84, 425), vigorously defends Stephen's accuracy (pp. 257, 258, 260, 267, 269, etc.), holds that Eutychus was dead (p. 693), defends Paul's going to Jerusalem (pp. 722, 729).

@ Alford, Henry, *Homilies on the former part of the Acts of the Apostles. Ch. I-X*, 1858. Not so good as his critical notes; but such an author always deserves attention.

\* Alford, Henry. *Acts* in vol. II of *The Greek Testament*. 4 volumes, 1875, 341 pages. Concise comments on the Greek text. He defends Lucan authorship (p. i), the ascension (pp. 4-5), infant baptism (p. 28); warns against handling the Word of God deceitfully in trying to explain Stephen's speech (pp. 68-69); defends the bodily resurrection of the Lord (p. 99); gives six interpretations of predestination and free will, but all in Latin! (pp. 153-154); defends the Pre-millennial restoration of Israel (p. 166), the reality of demon possession (p. 180), and the reality of Eutychus' death (pp. 224-225).

\* Allen, Frank Emmett. *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1931, 858 pages. An exhaustive practical exposition filled with illustrations and anecdotes of Moody, Torrey, S. D. Gordon, etc. He often refers to missions and missionaries: Carey, Hudson Taylor, John Paton, Judson, etc. He holds that Luke is the author (p. XVII), date A.D. 63 (p. XXII), once in a while refers to the Greek (pp. 24, 231), defends miracles (p. 114), attacks Spiritualism, Christian Science (p. 498).

\* Andrews, Herbert Tom. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Westminster New Testament, 1908, 318 pages. Brief liberal notes. He defends Lucan authorship (p. 5), favors a date A.D. 75-85 (p. 14), has a brief section on the theology of Acts (pp. 27-30), questions Luke's interpretation of the “tongues” at Pentecost (p. 45), explains away the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira (p. 78), admits discrepancies in Stephen's speech (p. 100), the “angel” is not literal (p. 119), Philip was not literally caught away (p. 120), although Luke thought Eutychus was dead, he may not have been (p. 241), doubts that 20:28 teaches the deity of Christ (p. 246).

@ Arnot, William, *The Church in the House*. 1873. Intended to be read in families on Sabbath afternoons; but all who are acquainted with Dr. Arnot will know that even his simplest expositions are rich and full. He hath dust of gold.

& These sermons reveal Arnot's thorough awareness of the original text and the milieu of the early church. His material is provocative as well as edifying. Both laypeople and pastors should read this book eagerly in order to better determine the course of the church, its commitments, and the criteria of its fellowship. Recommended

! Arrington, French L. *The Acts of the Apostles. An Introduction and Commentary*, 1988. 298 pages. This is a fairly good work by the professor of New Testament Greek and Exegesis at the Church of God School of Theology, Cleveland, Tennessee. It helps on many basic points from an evangelical perspective, but it does not rank high.

# Not theologically rich but generally useful if one overlooks the occasional intrusive semi-Pelagianism.

= Autrey, C. E. *Evangelism in the Acts*, 1964, 87 pages. A devotional and practical study of evangelism in Acts. He treats briefly the expansion of the church, its message and method, Source of power (the Holy Spirit), the internal handicaps (Ananias and Sapphira, etc.), the external handicaps (persecution, religious and governmental). He maintains that the infilling of the Holy Spirit is permanent, but that tongues are not (p. 34).

% Barclay, William. *The Acts of the Apostles*. The Daily Bible Study, 1955. Barclay is a rationalist but writes with warmth. He is good for word studies, historical background (although he never cites sources) and application, however, one must read him with caution hermeneutically.

\* Brief liberal notes filled with religious and literary quotations. He holds to Lucan authorship (p. xiii), has fine discrimination in Greek words (p. xiv), thinks that tongues at

- Pentecost were ecstatic speech (p. 15), denies an angelic miracle (p. 46), thinks that Paul's conversion resulted from an electrical storm! (p. 72), has good historical background (pp. 82, 98-99), doubts that it was a real viper that bit Paul on Melita (p. 206).

& Denies miracles, looks upon Paul's conversion as the result of an electrical storm, and bypasses many problems in the text.

*He held to the "Second Chance of the Kingdom" being offered to Israel.*

= Barker, William P. *They Stood Boldly*, 1967, 188 pages. Not a commentary, but a series of studies of the men and women in Acts. He holds that the church must teach or die (p. 71), that Paul's thorn was "undoubtedly" malaria (p. 105), that Paul was cool toward Barnabas (p. 121), that demon possession is schizophrenia (p. 128), that Paul felt failure at Athens (p. 139), that John the Baptist was an Essene (p. 144), that the account of the seven sons of Sceva was gossip (p. 150), that Eutychus was only knocked out (p. 154), that the viper did not bite Paul (pp. 182-183).

= Barnhouse, Donald Grey, *Acts, an Expositional Commentary*, 1979, 233 pages. Colorful expository sermons by a Presbyterian pastor. He urges revising the KJV (p. 35); holds that the sovereignty of God is the most important doctrine in the Bible (p.39); corrects the word "charity" to "giving love" (p. 58); defends Billy Graham (p. 106).

\$ Barrett, C. K., *Acts 1-14, Acts 15-28*, International Critical Commentary, 2004. Like the commentary on Matthew by Davies and Allison, this two-volume commentary on Acts in the ICC series is massive and technical. But it is also thoroughly exhaustive. It is written from a moderately critical perspective, so it should be used with care, but for students and pastors needing to look at every aspect of the text, it is invaluable (The publisher apparently thinks so too because these volumes are not cheap). There is also a one-volume abridged version available for those who do not need all of the technical details.

# The fruit of decades of study, these two volumes offer acute and thought-provoking comments on almost every page. At the same time, one wonders why, in the face of the evidence, this esteemed author stands as loose to the document's historical claims as he does.

\* Bartlett, J. Vernon. *The Acts*. The Century Bible, 1901. 394 pages. Brief Arminian notes. He favors a date A.D. 72-75 (p. 19), thinks that Luke may be popular rather than accurate (p. 152), defends the account of Ananias and Sapphira (p. 173), as well as Stephen's accuracy (p. 194) but holds that the catching away of Philip may be a misunderstanding (p. 217), gives an Arminian interpretation of 18:48 (p. 265), identifies the "tent of David" with the "messianic theocracy" (278), holds that Eutychus had really died (p. 325), has a helpful note on the Holy Spirit in Acts (pp. 386-388).

= Bauckham, Richard, ed. *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting*, vol. 4 of The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting, 1995, 526 pages. An unequal anthology. Rajak discusses the culture of Jews, Greeks, and foreigners in Palestine (pp. 1-14). Gill explains the Roman political policy in Judaea (pp. 15-26). Hengel gives a liberal appraisal of the geography of Palestine in Acts (pp. 27-78), suggesting that Luke made mistakes (p. 47), used legends (p. 57), reworked traditions and shaped them editorially (p. 60); thinks that Luke exaggerated the numbers of the soldiers that escorted Paul (p. 65). Williams provides a rather dry discussion of Jewish personal names in Acts (pp. 79-113). Mason evaluates the chief priests, Sadducees, Pharisees and Sanhedrin in Acts (pp. 115-177). He thinks that Jesus taught that the Pharisees had the kingdom (p. 142); but the moment Jesus confronted the chief priests, they tried to kill him (p. 144); thinks that the Sadducees are flat characters in Luke (p. 147); wonders whether Luke knew more when he divided the Sanhedrin into two parties (p. 154). Riesner defends the historicity of the synagogues in Jerusalem in Luke-Acts (pp. 179-210). Fiensy studies the composition of the Jerusalem church (pp. 213-236), concluding that the socioeconomic composition of the Jerusalem church was as pluralistic as that of the population of Jerusalem (p. 230). Reinhardt evaluates the population size of Jerusalem and the numeric growth of the church (pp. 237-265), concluding that the first century size was 60,000-120,000 (p. 263). Falk examines Jewish prayer literature and the

Jerusalem church (pp. 267- 301), concluding that Luke portrays Christian prayer as Jewish and authentic to the pre-70 period (p. 298). Murphy-O'Connor argues that the Cenacle was the first assembly-place of the church in Jerusalem (pp. 303-321). Capper thinks that the Essene community of goods may have a connection with the early Christian community of goods (pp. 323-356). Bammel documents Jewish activities against Christians (pp. 357-363). Legasse discusses Paul's pre-Christian career (pp. 365-390). He holds that none of the five references in Acts to Paul's being from Tarsus offer a guarantee of historicity (p. 366); refers to Paul's "certainly authentic letters" (p. 375, n. 29); sees Luke as a "redactor" (p. 379); wonders what facts Luke embellished (p. 389). Schwartz covers Peter and Ben Stada in Lydda (pp. 391-414), presenting antichristian, Jewish interpretations that are demeaning to Peter, Stephen, and others. Bauckham studies James and the Jerusalem Church (pp. 415-480). He gives a sympathetic portrait of James gradually replacing the twelve as the leadership of the church and shows the historical accuracy of Luke's description of the Jerusalem Council.

@ Baumgarten, Michael, *Apostolic History*. 3 volumes, 1854. An exposition at once profoundly scientific and sublimely Christian, one of the most pressing wants of our times."- *Eclectic Review*. Alford calls it excellent, though somewhat fanciful.

@ Bennett, James, *Lectures on the Acts*. 1847. A good specimen of plain and popular pulpit exposition. Dr. Bennett fights very earnestly for the Congregationalist view of Baptism, for which we do not blame him; for common humanity leads us to admire a man who struggles for a weak cause.

@ Benson, George, *History of the first planting of the Christian Religion*. 3 volumes, 1756. Dull, but displaying considerable research. Benson was an Arian.

\* Blaiklock, Edward Musgrave, *The Acts of the Apostles*. 1959, 197 pages. Brief commentary manifesting an overdependence on Sir William Ramsay. He defends Lucan authorship (pp. 13-14), has helpful historical introduction (pp. 20-44), defends the ascension (p. 51), cannot decide what the tongues were (pp. 55-57), or whether Paul was right in going to Jerusalem (p. 168), has thorough analysis of Paul's conversion (pp. 87-90), gives Arminian interpretation of 13:48 (p. 110), sometimes is too brief (pp. 113-114), gives considerable background on Athens (pp. 132-136), has no mention of the viper (pp. 192-193).

# Amazingly thin on theology or which coins and inscriptions are no substitute.

\* Blaiklock, E. M. *Acts: The Birth of the Church*. 1980. 282 pages. Paragraph expositions, including his own translations and brief explanations. He dates Acts A.D. 62 (p. 10). He provides much historical background (pp. 18, 72, 82, 93, 118, 138, etc.). Holds to the "meticulous accuracy" of Luke's account (pp. 46, 154), defending Luke over Josephus (p. 49). He mentions that the Dead Sea Scrolls give a Septuagint reading that Stephen quotes (p. 60). Gives careful word studies (pp. 133, 167, etc.). Emphasizes Paul's literary quotations (p. 163). Thinks that Paul's taking a vow was unwise (pp. 180-



181), but stresses that Paul had met Christ—no hallucination involved (p. 224). He interprets the book of Revelation as fulfilled in the first century (Preterist view, p. 274).

\* Blunt, Alfred Walter Frank, *The Acts of the Apostles*. The Clarendon Bible, 1922. 272 pages. Liberal notes with many illustrations and photographs. He disowns verbal inspiration (p. 5), favors Lucan authorship (p. 22), date A.D. 64-75 (p. 26); some miracles would have a more normal interpretation today (p. 37); story of ascension is an accommodation (p. 133); Acts "trembles on the verge of ascribing personality" to the Holy Spirit (p. 145); Sapphira's death adds improbability to the O.T. (pp. 162-163), Paul's phrase "Son of God" does not mean deity as in the later creeds (pp. 172-3); He denies predestination (p. 194), expressed doubt about Paul's stoning (p. 196), Eutychus' raising (p. 230), and the viper (p. 255).

\$ Bock, Darrell L., *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, 2007. Darrell Bock's massive and outstanding two-volume commentary on the Gospel of Luke raised my expectations for his commentary on Acts in the same series. I was not disappointed. This work is equally outstanding. Like the other volumes in this series, it is somewhat technical. Greek words within the body of the text are transliterated, but if the reader does not have some understanding of Greek, it will likely become a bit confusing.

= Boice, James Montgomery, *Acts: An Expositional Commentary*, 1997, 454 pages. Polished messages from a Reformed perspective. He stresses the dominant presence of the living Christ in Acts (p. 17); holds that in the first century everyone considered themselves missionaries (p. 22); urges the practice of obedience to God (p. 32); emphasizes the importance of Christian fellowship (p. 58ff); urges Christian narrowness: Jesus is the only Savior (p. 78); sets forth C. H. Dodd's teaching on the kerygma, "preaching" (p. 239); gives an amillennial interpretation of Acts 15:16-18 (p. 266); holds that Paul was wrong in going to Jerusalem (pp. 355ff).

@ Boucher, Barton, *Manna in the House; or, Daily Expositions of the Acts*. 1858. Superior family reading. *Bouchier* did not write for students, but for households, yet even the more advanced may learn from him.

@ Brewster, John, *Lectures on the Acts*. A sip of Yawsan or Hackett is worth a barrel of these weak and watery prelections.

\* Brown, David. *Acts* in vol. 6 of *A Commentary Critical, Experimental, and Practical*, ed. Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, 1945 (original edition 1871). Pp. 1-190. A conservative exposition. He defends Lucan authorship (pp. iii-v), the ascension (p. 3), the alleged errors in Stephen's speech (pp. 38-44), the events in Paul's conversion (p. 58), predestination (p. 95); holds that Paul was miraculously restored after stoning (p. 99), gives an Amillennial interpretation (p. 105), teaches the reality of demon possession (p. 117), holds that Eutychus actually died (p. 147), that it was a real viper that bit Paul (p. 184).

\* Browne, Laurence E. *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1925. 492 pp. Comments by an Anglican missionary to India; he manifests a wide knowledge of comparative religions. He advocates baptismal regeneration (p. 54), holds to a second Isaiah (p. 70), thinks Ananias and Sapphira died of fright (p. 85), accepts liberal date for Mosaic Law (p. 12), defends the raising of Tabitha (p. 172), holds Peter's deliverance non-miraculous (p. 204), attacks Wesley (p. 215), thinks that Luke put a speech in James' mouth (p. 247), denies demon possession (pp. 266-267), thinks 20:28 is not authentic (p. 343).

! Bruce, Fredrick Fyvie, *The Acts of the Apostles. The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary*. 3rd ed., rev. and enlarged, 1990. 569 pages. This commentary is more technical and refers to Greek grammar more than the author's work on Acts in the *NICNT*. It is briefer, but good. The larger work explains more. The works of this author, one of the foremost NT scholars of the late 20th century, are always exacting in their scholarship. This is a revision and enlargement of the earlier editions, the first in 1951 and the second in 1952. The fruit of scholarly study since those dates is interwoven into the volume's comments. The 96-page introduction has a new section on the theology of Acts.

+ Classic commentary on the Greek text, not helpful for what most people read commentaries for.

! Bruce, F. F. *The Book of Acts*. New International Commentary on the New Testament, 1988. 541 pages. This is a revision of the commentary first issued in 1954. The revision, coming not long before Bruce's death, has a new translation of the Greek text in place of the ASV appearing in the first edition. The documentation in footnotes has been extensively updated. The author has interacted with later studies, arranged comments on fewer verses, and achieved a more lucid style in places. Yet the basic verse-by-verse comments are substantially the same. It is still the finest commentary on the details of Acts. Bruce defers to I. H. Marshall's commentary for detail on Luke's theology. He reflects a fine grasp of pertinent history, a sound explanation of most passages, and insights on many problems.

\*Bruce, Frederick Fyvie. *Commentary on the Book of the Acts*, 1954. Perhaps the best exposition for the pastor. He has helpful comments, careful historical background (p. 481), defends Lucan authorship (p. 19), the resurrection and ascension (p. 40), attacks baptismal regeneration (p. 77), identifies the famine visit of Acts 11 with Gal. 2 (pp. 244, 300), attacks the Premillennial interpretation of Acts 15 (p. 309), holds that Paul's restoration after stoning "has a flavour of miracle about it" (p. 296), holds to the reality of demon possession (p. 332), the reality of Eutychus' death (p. 408), and of the viper bite (pp. 521-522). See also the third edition of Bruce's *Acts of the Apostles* (Eerdmans, 1990), a thorough commentary on the Greek text that reflects his maturest thought on Acts.

*(I am not a fan of Bruce's commentaries. They are not based on the Authorized Version, and he freely changes the text of the Authorized Version on the authority of so-called "Greek scholarship". Bruce offers the standard, new-evangelical, middle-of-the-*

*road expositions. He is the fount for any new-evangelical and modern attacks on the traditional text of Acts. The Bible-believing student can do better.-jc)*

= Cadbury, Henry J. *The Book of Acts in History*, 1955, 170 pages. A study of the historical sidelights in Acts. He charges Luke with writing speeches that were never delivered (p. 4), holds that Pentecost was not exact history (p. 15), denies that the medical language is significant (p. 36); thinks that there is an error in the census (p. 84), cites errors in Stephen's speech (p. 103), doubts the authenticity of Paul's Epistles (p. 126), Lucan authorship is a mere conjecture (p. 148); he does mention some interesting customs: reading aloud was universal (p. 18), birth certificates to prove citizenship (pp. 71-72), the Via Augustus (p. 62), vindicates Luke's geographic knowledge (p. 41).

\* Calvin, John. *Commentary upon the Acts of the Apostles*. 2 volumes 1949, (1st edition 1560). 561, 472 pages. Old, but helpful comments. He defends a universal invitation (pp. 91-92), and God's decrees (p. 97), denies baptismal regeneration; baptism is a seal (pp. 119, 335), often attacks the "Papists" (pp. 120, 138, 150, 172, 206, 212; II, 38, 41, 63, 68, etc.), holds that Paul was "an elect instrument" (p. 380), gives Amillennial interpretations (pp. 384, II, 68), defends raising of Tabitha (p. 401), urges election (pp. 555-7), has good explanation of 20:28 (II, 253-7). Calls 16:31 a "cold and hungry definition of salvation" (p. 121).

\* Carter, Charles W., and Ralph Earle. *The Acts of the Apostles*. The Evangelical Commentary, 1959. 449 pp. A new evangelical commentary, written in two sections technical and expository. They favor a date c. A.D. 60, but acknowledge Harnack as the outstanding exponent of an early date (pp. xiif.), have a good chart of the apostles (p. 14), leave the door open for errors in Stephen's speech (pp. 96, 99), argue that baptism included children (p. 235), have very thorough exposition of Paul's sermon on Mar's Hill (pp. 254-263), hold that Eutychus died (p. 307), that Paul did not disobey God in going to Jerusalem (p. 317), give a fine bibliography of 74 authors of commentaries on Acts (pp. 427-429).

& While the exegetical portion is valuable, the exposition of the text fails to grasp the significance of the transition which is taking place. Surprisingly allows for the possibility of errors in Stephen's speech. Arminian.

\* Carver, William Owen. *The Acts of the Apostles*., 1916. 270 pages. Popular Baptist exposition. He defends Lucan authorship (p. 6), often uses the literal meaning of the Greek (p. 37), allows that Stephen may have made minor historical slips (p. 69), does defend apparent contradictions (p. 93, attacks the Premillennial interpretation (p. 159), defends Paul's journey to Jerusalem (p. 210), considers the possibility that the serpent had no poison (p.263).

= Chase, Frederic Henry. *The Credibility of the Book of Acts of the Apostles*, 1902, 329 pages. He maintains that Acts "gives not an absolutely perfect but a substantially accurate history" (p. 9). He treats four main subjects: the day of Pentecost, the expansion of the church, the witness of Peter, and of Paul. He holds that the tongues of

fire were the sun's rays on the apostles (p. 35), refers to deutero-Isaiah (p. 136), defends the authenticity of the letter in Acts 15 (pp. 93-96), the authenticity of Peter's speeches in Acts (pp. 158-159), and Paul's speeches (pp. 291-292).

\* Chrysostom. *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles* in vol. XI of The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 1956 (preached c. A.D. 400). 1328 pages. Old, but often helpful comments on the Greek text of Acts. His better sermons are on Pentecost (pp. 25ff.), the prayer of the church (pp. 71ff.), Cornelius (pp. 141ff.), Paul at Athens (pp. 232ff.). He does teach baptismal regeneration (p. 45).

*Cloud, David, The Book of Acts, 2003, 184 pages. Expanded notes designed for use in a classroom. Dispensational and based on the Authorized Version. Oddly enough, he applies Acts 2:37-41 to the New Testament plan of salvation, which it certainly is not. Some value here but there are more useful commentaries. Cloud would not be on my "top shelf" of recommended commentators, but probably on my second shelf.*

! Conzelmann, Hans, *Acts of the Apostles*, 1987. 287 pp. Using the RSV, the author supplies frequent assistance as he comments on syntax, background, customs, etc. He is liberal as exhibited in his copious use of redaction-criticism suppositions at various points. He denies the validity of miracles. A discerning pastor or student can derive what is worthwhile from this much-studied scholar immersed in Acts and literature relevant to it and leave behind the parts that are not valid.

#Tied far too tightly to a modified history-of-religions approach.

@ Cook, F. C., *The Acts, with a Commentary*. 1866. Contains many useful notes, instructive to fairly educated readers.

@ Craddock, Samuel, *The Apostolical History*, containing the Acts, Labors, Travels, Sermons, &c., of the Apostles. 1762. Reynolds, Doddridge, and others highly commend the works of this Puritan writer. The style in which the "Apostolical History" is got up is most uninviting; the book is nearly all italics. Many modern works far excel it.

\* Criswell, W. A. *Acts: An Exposition*. 3 vols, 1978. 285, 337, 313 pp. Practical expository sermons on Acts by a famous Southern Baptist. He urges being ready for an imminent coming and a delayed coming (I, 31-32). He uses many S.B.C. illustrations (I, 34, 54, 62, 88, 106, etc.). He commends Billy Graham (I, 81), attacks communism (I, 114ff.), at times refers to the Greek (I, 140). Describes Paul's faith in the deity of Christ (II, 25ff.). Recommends the literal interpretations of Chrysostom (II, 104). He stresses the inerrant nature of Scripture (II, 131). Urges that saving faith is real committal to the Lord Jesus (II, 243f.). He calls upon worldly, materialistic Americans to repent and believe in Christ (II, 288f.). Although no one is saved by baptism, he urges rebaptism by immersion (III, 23-24). He warns against the acceptable churchman who destroys the churches of God (III, 100). Urges kneeling in prayer (III, 111ff.). He recounts Otto Graham's testimony (III, 135).

*Custer, Stewart, Witness to Christ: A Commentary on Acts, 2000, 492 pages. Written by a former professor of Bible at Bob Jones University, where he spent many years attacking the Authorized Version and teaching his students to do the same. Still useful with many helpful footnotes but is a "standard" evangelical-type commentary, usually citing (New) Evangelical authors. Loosely based on the Authorized Version but with many frequent corrections from other English versions. There is a useful annotated booklist in the back of the book.*

@ Denton, W., *Commentary on the Acts*. 2 volumes, 1874. A complete list of all authors upon the Acts will be found in this very learned and exhaustive work. We do not always agree with the author, but he has done his work thoroughly well.

= Dibelius, Martin, *Studies in the Acts of the Apostles*, 1956, 228 pages. A series of essays based on form criticism on Acts. He classifies the forms as "legends" (Tabitha, Cornelius; pp. 12-13), "secular anecdote" (sons of Sceva, p. 19), "a tale" (Elymas, p. 16), etc. Paul could not have written the Areopagus speech (p. 61), Luke instead composed it (p. 71), Luke's account of the Council in Acts 15 is not historical (p. 100), Luke's description of sea voyage is drawn from literature, not from his personal experience (p. 107); Luke also wrote Peter's speech to Cornelius (p. 110). Such skepticism is not inspiring.

@ Dick, John, *Lectures on the Acts*. 1848. Interesting lectures upon selected portions of the Acts.

\* Du Veil, Carolus M. *A Commentary of the Acts of the Apostles*. London: J. Haddon, 1851 (reprinted from 1685). 574 pp. A lengthy exposition by a man converted from Judaism to Roman Catholicism to Anglicanism to the Baptists. He had many quotations from the fathers, defends the resurrection (p. 14), the deity of the Holy Spirit (p. 111), the facts of Stephen's speech (pp. 145, 152, 179), the reality of demon possession (p. 359); he argues for immersion at great length (pp. 58-66, 212-213, 219, 462, etc.), holds that Eutychus died and was raised (p. 426), and that a real viper bit Paul (pp. 546-546).

+ Dunn, James D. G. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Narrative Commentaries, 1996. A readable commentary, stimulating but idiosyncratic.

# Not comprehensive enough to belong to the first rank.

= Eims, Leroy. *Disciples in Action*, 1981, 320 pages. Practical sermons loosely drawn from the 28 chapters of Acts. He notes that mere numbers do not make a good meeting (p. 17). He stresses the need for the ability to quote Scripture (p. 29), and urges seizing all witnessing opportunities (pp. 43ff.). Emphasizes Paul's commitment to Christ (p. 116). Encourages fervent prayer (p. 156). Commends prominent New Evangelicals such as Billy Graham (p. 176), Howard Hendricks (p. 184), and Hal Lindsey (p. 187).

\* Erdman, Charles Rosenbury *The Acts*, 1919. 176 pages. A devotional and practical commentary. He holds that the tongues at Pentecost are foreign languages (p. 29), has

helpful comments on the practical soulwinning of Philip (pp. 75-76), defends Paul's visit to Jerusalem (pp. 142-143), as well as his participation in the temple ritual (p. 145), has a good exposition of Tertullus' charge and Paul's answer (p. 157).

@ Fawcett, John, *Exposition of the Acts*. 3 volumes, 1860. Fine series of expository discourses. Sometimes we differ.

= Fernando, Ajith, *Acts in the NIV Application Commentary*, 1998, 656 pages. A commentary based on the NIV that stresses the contemporary significance of the book. He emphasizes the priority of evangelism (p. 30); provides a detailed chart on the evangelistic preaching in Acts (pp. 32-38); attacks the dead orthodoxy of today (p. 58); stresses the need for prayer in revival (pp. 80f); holds that the greatest contribution of the Pentecostal movement is that it regained a subjective experience of Christ through the Spirit (pp. 92ff); warns against a concern with numbers that may lead to evangelistic bribery (p. 156); praises the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism (p. 188); urges believers to be "winsome radicals" (p. 251); does not believe in the total prohibition of alcoholic beverages (p. 425); commends Billy Graham (p. 543) and E. J. Carnell (p. 571).

\* Findlay, J. Alexander. *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1934. 232 pages. Brief comments on the English Revised Version. He does not feel bound to accept Luke's view of miracles (p. 36), defends Luke as the author (pp. 39-46), date A.D. 64 (p. 54), admits that Paul believed in an infallible Book (p. 21), holds that Peter spoke pidgin Greek (p. 66), that the obscurities in the speeches imply their authenticity (p. 133), often favors the "Western" text (pp. 31, 117, 177, 196, etc.).

+ Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Anchor Bible, volume 3, 1998. A thorough, thoughtful, careful, but not always conservative work from the leading American Roman Catholic NT scholar.

\* Foakes-Jackson, Frederick John. *The Acts of the Apostles*. The Moffatt Commentary, 1931. 256 pages. Hard-line liberal comments. Date before A.D. 90 (p. ix), authorship unproved (p. xi), the speeches may be free compositions (p. xv), 3,000 at Pentecost is an exaggeration (p. 18), narrative of Ananias and Sapphira is "repulsive" (p. 42); he alleges many errors in Acts (pp. 47, 60, etc.), thinks Paul may have been confused about his conversion (p. 80), Paul's stoning contained no miracle (p. 128), holds the Epistle of James not genuine (p. 139), denies the reality of Paul's miracles (p. 179).

& Of little value as a result of the author's theological position, denial of the miraculous, and rejection of the inerrancy and authority of the Scripture.

\* Gaebelein, Arno Clemens. *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1912. 429 pages. Exposition by a strong fundamentalist. He regards Pentecost as the birthday of the church (p. 31), attacks the modern tongues movement (pp. 43-44), holds that the tongues were languages at Pentecost, ecstatic speech elsewhere (pp. 40-41) on 2:38 attacks baptismal regeneration (p. 61), teaches the Premillennial return of Christ (p. 81), holds

that Saul's conversion is typical of the future conversion of Israel (p. 168), maintains that James gives God's plan for the ages in Acts 15 (p. 267).

+ Gaertner, Dennis. *Acts*. The College Press NIV Commentary, 1993. Readable comments from the Restoration Movement.

= Gangel, Kenneth O., *Acts* in The Holman New Testament Commentary, 1998, 484 pages. A popular exposition based on the NIV. He defends Lucan authorship (p. 1); warns to avoid anyone who sets dates for the coming of the Lord (p. 15); discusses cross-cultural problems (p. 89); is indebted to Longnecker's exposition (pp. 1, 44, 97, 235, 278, 323, 468); commends Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (p. 191) and Francis Schaeffer (p. 241).

*Gipp, Samuel, A Practical and Theological Study of the Book of Acts, 1994, 335 pages. A rambling commentary that is not verse by verse but selected topic by topic. Gipp takes a few main truths out of each verse and deals with them. No exhaustive and only selectively useful. Gipp is very much in error in his teachings on repentance in Acts 17. This is still somewhat better than his similar commentary on John.*

@ Gloag, Paton, *Commentary on the Acts*. 2 volumes, 1870. Dr. Hackett says about Dr. Gloag's work: "I have examined it with special care. For my purposes I have found it unsurpassed by any similar work in the English language. It shows a thorough mastery of the material, philology, history, and literature pertaining to this range of study, and a skill in the use of this knowledge, which places it in the first class of modern expositions."

*Greene, Oliver B, The Acts of the Apostles, 4 volumes, 1968. Mainly transcribed from his radio commentary on Acts when he was producing The Gospel Hour radio broadcast. Generally based on the Authorized Version but Greene will not hesitate to correct the Authorized Version with Greek scholarship (he constantly refers to "the Greek" and to "Greek scholars"), although Greene himself had no training in Greek, so he was not in a position to evaluate the criticisms of Greek scholarship to judge how accurate they were. His constant appeal to "the Greek" wears on our nerves after a while. Greene also had a tendency to quote from Albert Barnes without citing him (called plagiarism). Useful, but not very deep but good practical applications. We have difficulty in recommending it.*

@ Gualtherus, Rodulphus, *A Hundred Threescore and Fifteen Homelyes or Sermons vpon the Actes of the Apostles, made by Radulphe Gualthere, of Tigurine, and Translated out of Latine* [by John Bridges, Vicare of Herne]. 1572. Full of Protestantism. The author judged that, as Luke who wrote the Act was a physician, his book was meant to be medicine to the Church.

\* Hackett, Horatio B. *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 1851, 1882. 345 pages. Verse-by-verse comments by a Baptist. He defends Lucan authorship (pp. 13-

15), date A.D. 63 (p. 19), identifies tongues as miraculous speaking in foreign languages (p. 42), emphasizes the second coming (p. 62), refutes the alleged errors in Stephen's speech (pp. 92-102), gives Calvinistic interpretations (p. 162), holds that Eutychus actually died (p. 234), and that a real viper bit Paul (p. 314).

% Haenchen, Ernst. *The Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary*. Translated by Bernard Noble and Gerald Shinn, 1971. Although liberal in bent, it is filled with scholarly details. It is analytical in its approach. A standard scholarly reference.

# Important for the really serious student, but deviously complex reconstructions of Luke's sources and theological interests, but frequently in defiance of hard evidence, makes it an unsuitable starting point for most preachers.

= A commentary on the Greek text by a form critic. He divides the book into 68 sections, thinks that the author deliberately omitted much of what he knew (p. 15); holds that Luke does not mention any preexistence of Jesus (p. 91); believes that Luke composed Peter's speech about Judas (p. 104); thinks there are contradictions between Luke and Acts (p. 145); holds that Luke constructed Peter's speech at Pentecost (p. 185); calls the narrative of Ananias and Sapphira "a cautionary tale" (p. 241); thinks that Stephen's sermon is an "anti-Jewish diatribe" that Luke puts in the mouth of Stephen (p. 290); calls Philips transportation to Azotus "a legend" (p. 316); holds that Luke recorded Paul's conversion three times because he regarded it as "extraordinarily important" (p. 327); thinks that Luke so desired to portray the purpose of God that he reduced men to the "twitching of human puppets" (p. 362); terms Paul's stoning and rising up, not historical, "but a story devised for edification" (p. 434); holds that "James cannot be thought of as the author" of the four commands for Gentiles (p. 471); on the story of the Philippian jailer, he thinks Luke "has pieced together many different materials into a unified narrative" (p. 503).

\* Hanson, Richard Patrick Crosland, *The Acts*. The New Clarendon Bible, 1967. 262 pages. Liberal revision of Blunt's Clarendon volume. He thinks Luke made errors (p. 12), that the Council in Acts 15 is Luke's literary reconstruction (p. 18), that the speeches do not reflect apostolic Christology (p. 42), favors date in the 70s or 80s (p. 50), denies the "Author of life" is a primitive title (p. 73), holds that Gamaliel's speech is Luke's composition (p. 86), lists discrepancies in Stephen's speech (p. 95), has no comment on Paul's stoning (p. 151), Eutychus' raising (p. 201), or on the viper (p. 252); he opposes immersion (p. 172).

\* Harrison, Everett F. *Interpreting Acts: The Expanding Church*, 1975, 1986. 482 pages. A conservative commentary based on the NIV. He dates Acts A.D. 62 (p. 23). Thinks that the ascension occurred on the ridge of the Mt. of Olives (p. 49). Links the "servant" with Isa. 52:13 (p. 81). He argues that Ananias and Sapphira were saved, but there is not enough evidence in the text to say whether Simon was or not (pp. 102, 147). Holds that Stephen referred to the "assembly in the desert" (p. 130). Prefers an Amillennial interpretation of James' speech (pp. 248f.). Notes the worship service on the Lord's day (p. 328). Defends Paul's taking of the vow (pp. 346f.).



& A very readable, conservative exposition that deserves a place in every home. The treatment is clear, and Harrison presents his resume of apostolic history in a most pleasing and acceptable manner. Recommended.

# Was dated before it appeared.

! Hemer, Colin J. *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History*, 1989. 482 pages. This noted author argues for the historical accuracy of Acts on the ground of Luke's correctness in details not essential to the spiritual message (p. 104). His methodology lends itself to good support in some places and reliance on suppositions in others.

@ Hodgson, Robert, *Lectures upon the first Seventeen Chapters of the Acts*. 1845. Deficient in Gospel clearness, and in every other respect, except ardent churchism.

Hole, F. B., *The Acts of the Apostles*, 100 pages. A "Plymouth" Brethren treatment, written in their usual style, which does not lend itself to easy reference or use. One may expect the usual style of Darby dispensationalism.

= Hughes, R. Kent, *Acts: The Church Afire*. 1996, 380 pages. Colorful sermons. He stresses the need for a simple witness for Christ (p. 16) and dependence on the power of God (p. 27); holds that the wind at Pentecost caused their robes to flap wildly (p. 31); urges the need for preparation in Bible study (p. 97); gives the illustration of Paganini playing on one violin string (p. 141); uses so many illustrations that he includes an analytical index of them (pp. 375-380)!

@ Humphry, William Gilson, *Commentary on the Acts*. 1854. Exegetical remarks upon the Greek text. Very good from a philological point of view, but professedly of an elementary character.

& Ironside, Henry Allan. *Lectures on the Book of Acts*, 1965. Expository messages which encourage the systematic study of the Scripture. Devotional.  
*Ironside is useful but seldom deep or challenging.*

% Jensen, Irving L. *Acts: An Independent Study: A Manual on Bible-Study-in-Depth*, 1968. This volume is a study guide full of helpful charts. He provides some background information, but it is primarily designed for helping a student work on his own with the Bible.

+ Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Sacra Pagina volume 5, 1992. Good insights into the theology of the book and the structure of the story.

= Keddie, Gordon J., *You Are My Witnesses*. 1993, 352 pages. Popular conservative expository sermons based on the NIV. He warns against the failure of leadership in the church (p. 21); opposes the present-day exercise of tongues (p. 29); argues that Simon was not a true believer (p. 110); provides an apostolic sermon outline (p. 156); urges

the necessity of changed lives (p. 202); and urges that witnesses go to others who will listen (p. 326).

@ Kelly, William, *Lectures Introductory to the Study of the Acts, Catholic Epistles, and Revelation*. 1870. By a man "who, born for the universe, narrowed his mind" by Darbyism. (*Spurgeon hated "Darbyism" but is not nearly the heresy that Spurgeon made it out to be- jc*).

*I'm sure there is useful information here, but the running narrative format of Kelly's commentaries limit their usefulness. A verse-by-verse format would have been much easier to use. This also goes for most "Plymouth" Brethren commentaries. If they would have formatted their commentaries "verse-by-verse" instead of "paragraph-by-paragraph" or "chapter-by-chapter", they would have been much more useful and easier to use.*

\* Kelly, William. *An Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, 1952 (1st ed. 1890). 398 pages. A popular devotional exposition. He defends the resurrection (p. 10), the Premillennial Kingdom (pp. 11, 33), the deity of the Holy Spirit (p. 54), the accuracy of Stephen's speech (pp. 80-96), stresses God's sovereignty (p. 197), gives a Premillennial interpretation of Acts 15 (p. 215), defends the reality of demon possession (p. 235), and of Eutychus' death (p. 298).

& Kent, Homer Austin, Jr. *Jerusalem to Rome-Studies in Acts*, 1972. In recounting the beginning and expansion of the early church, the writer reveals the personal struggles of those who participated in the events recorded by Luke. The inclusion of discussion questions makes this an ideal volume for adult Bible study groups.

= A popular exposition with a number of photographs of biblical sites. He defends a literal kingdom (p. 23); favors the interpretation that Ananias and Sapphira were Christians who were disciplined (p. 53); thinks that Simon Magus did not have true saving faith (p. 80); maintains the distinction between Israel and the NT church (p. 126).

! Kistemaker, Simon J. *Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*, 1990. 1,010 pp. A detailed commentary follows a 40-page introduction. The explanation comments on the Greek text, exposition, and doctrinal and practical remarks. Kistemaker as an evangelical contributes much in elucidating the flow of the book, goes behind problems, and shows relevance. As a continuation of the Hendriksen New Testament Commentary series, this is one of the better conservative works on Acts.

\* Knowling, Richard John. *Acts* in vol. II of the *Expositor's Greek Testament*, 1907 (reprinted). Pages 1-554. The best, most thorough commentary on the Greek text of Acts. He defends Lucan authorship (pp. 3-11), the ascension (p. 57); observes even the Greek article (p. 59) and conjunctions (p. 164), has an exhaustive treatment of some verses (6:1; 9:2; 17:34, etc.), supplies many solutions to the problems in Stephen's speech (pp. 180-196), holds that Paul did not necessarily die when stoned, but his recovery was God's hand (p. 311), gives an Amillennial interpretation of Acts 15 (p.

321), defends the reality of demon possession (p. 347), of Eutychus' death (p. 425), of the viper bite (p. 539).

& Knox, Wilfred Lawrence. *The Acts of the Apostle*, 1948. A critical work which raises more problems than it solves.

\* Lake, Kirsopp, and Henry J. Cadbury. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Vol. IV of *The Beginnings of Christianity*, ed. Foakes-Jackson and Kirsopp Lake, 1965 (reprinted from 1932). 423 pages. Technical liberal commentary. They hold that the early church put words into the mouth of Jesus (p. 6), that it is doubtful if the early church prayed to Jesus (p. 15), that the apostles regarded themselves as God (p. 51), that there is a "formal contradiction" between 9:7 and 22:9 (p. 101), that there was no famine under Claudius (p. 131), that Peter may have dreamed the imprisonment (p. 136), that the slave girl just thought she was possessed (p. 192), that the raising of Eutychus need not be miraculous (p. 256), that the "viper" need not be poisonous (p. 341). They think Stephen "mistook" the Old Testament (p. 70), and are not sure whether the speech at Athens is by Paul or by Luke (p. 208).

@ Lange, J.P., *Commentary*, from the German of Lechler and Gerock. 2 volumes, 1864. Adds nothing to our knowledge of the Acts; but the homiletical hints are useful.

= Larkin, William J., *Acts*. The IVP NT Commentary, 1995, 422 pages. A New Evangelical exposition. He commends the 1974 Lausanne Congress on World Evangelicalism (p. 41); declares that "Jesus is God" (p. 57); makes "times of refreshing" refer to present forgiveness to believers (p. 68); attacks the NIV note "sea of reeds" for the Red Sea (p. 114f); thinks the NIV translation is inferior at times (p. 162); gives an amillennial interpretation of James' speech (pp. 223f); holds that the present scientific empiricism and pantheistic postmodernism "are remarkably similar" to Epicureanism and Stoicism (p. 251); urges teamwork in pastoring local churches (p. 297); stresses the fourfold proof that Paul presented in his defense (pp. 318-23).

& Laurin, Roy Leonard, *Acts: Life in Action*, 1985, 407 pages. In this topical commentary Laurin brings out practical applications as he shows how these early Christians were filled with the dynamic power of a new life of faith. The chapter outlines are also suggestive of discourses, and these will be particularly useful to pastors.

= Popular sermons from Acts. He defends the Resurrection (p. 27) and ascension (p. 29), rejects Calvinism (p. 68), has no comment on the problems in Stephen's speech, argues for immersion (p. 173), uses many illustrations, some memorable (pp. 246-247, 287, 355, etc.).

\* Lechler, G. V., and Charles Gerok. *Acts in Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, n. d. (first edition 1860). 480 pages. Conservative Lutheran exposition. They defend the ascension and the second coming (p. 15), the reality of Satan (p. 86), and of demon possession (p. 306), teach baptismal regeneration (p. 52), admit that Stephen made a mistake, but the Bible accurately records his words (pp. 114-115), hold to both

election and free will (p. 260), maintain that Eutychus actually died (p. 368), that it was a real viper that bit Paul (p. 467).

*Lee, Witness, Life Studies: Acts, 1986. Commentary by a Chinese teacher, influenced by Watchman Nee. Good material, other material is questionable, some of which may be due to translational issues between Chinese and English, where Lee may not have been clear. This work will require discernment, but I think there is good information here of a more devotional sort.*

\*Lenski, Richard Charles Henry. *The Interpretation of the Acts of the Apostles*, 1934. 1134 pages. A thorough Lutheran interpretation. He defends the inerrancy of Scripture (p. 7), Lucan authorship (pp. 9ff), regularly argues from the Greek text (pp. 20, 22, 27, etc.), teaches baptismal regeneration (p. 106), attacks immersion (p. 113), defends the deity of the Holy Spirit (p. 200), defends Stephen's accuracy (pp. 261, 263, 264, etc.), gives Amillennial interpretations (pp. 609-610), defends the reality of demon possession (p. 663), holds that Eutychus really died (p. 829).

= Liefeld, Walter L. *Interpreting the Book of Acts*, 1995, 141 pages. He gives a half-dozen purposes for Acts (pp. 30-32); analyzes the structure in different ways (pp. 36ff.); discusses Narrative (pp. 49ff.); the speeches in Acts (pp. 61ff.); he stresses, "Luke is the author of Acts and the reader must not rewrite Luke's narrative" (p. 65). He suggests a variety of major themes in Acts (pp. 79ff.): the exalted Christ, the Holy Spirit, prayer, praise, poverty and wealth, eschatology, the sovereignty of God and divine necessity, the people of God, the church and its ministry. He discusses the background of Acts (pp. 99ff.); suggests a path from exegesis to application (pp. 113ff.); and concludes with a thorough bibliography (pp. 129ff.)

@ Lightfoot, John, *Commentary*. 1823. Few now-a-days will care for this author, whose learning ran mostly in Talmudical channels. He was profound, but not always discreet.

\* Lindsay, Thomas M. *The Acts of the Apostles*. 2 volumes 1884 (reprinted). 165 pages Introduction and brief expository notes on Acts. He defends Lucan authorship (pp. 20-21), the ascension (p. 41), the accuracy of Stephen's speech (p. 88), the reality of demon possession (p. 97), lists six different meanings for the "Kingdom of God" (p. 39), holds that Eutychus actually died (II, p. 103), defends the deity of Christ (p. 107).

& An introduction with brief expository notes. Reformed.

% Longenecker, Richard N. *The Acts of the Apostles*. In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 1981. A good treatment of the theology and Jewish backgrounds for the book of Acts. The "notes" sections offer some analytic observations, but overall Longenecker is working with the thought within each unit of the book.

\* A conservative exposition based on the NIV. He argues that ancient historical writers were interested in what actually happened (pp. 212-14). He sees multiple purposes in Acts (p. 217), and stresses the continuity between Luke-Acts (pp. 231ff.). Suggests a date of A.D. 64 (p. 238). He defends Lucan authorship (pp. 238ff.).

Regularly notes the meaning of Greek words (pp. 258, 283, 307, etc.). Gives sidelights from the Dead Sea Scrolls (p. 265). He contrasts the different millennial interpretations (p. 276). Attacks baptismal regeneration (p. 284). He links the reference to "servant" with Isa. 42-53 (p. 296). Thinks that Stephen's "errors" are merely popular language under intense emotion (p. 340). Stresses the supernatural nature of the conversion of Saul (p. 371) and of the deliverance of Peter (p. 409). He holds that the decision of the Jerusalem Council was one of the boldest in history (p. 450). Defends the reality of demon possession (p. 462). He traces the literary quotations by Paul before the Areopagus (p. 476).

\* Luccock, Halford Edward, *The Acts of the Apostles in Present-Day Preaching*. 2 volumes, 1938, 1939, 1973. 177 pages. Liberal comments. He commends H. E. Fosdick's attack on Christ's deity (p. 17), denies demons (p. 135), charges that Orthodoxy does not think (II, p. 43), cries for social reform (pp. 116, 134), defends communists (p. 148).

& Lumby, Joseph Rawson, *The Acts of the Apostles*. Cambridge Greek Testament, 1899. Two works of great value which obviously contain many similarities in content. The latter volume is of particular importance for its handling of syntactical problems. For those who lack a knowledge of Greek, the former work still is helpful.

(As is to be expected with 99.9% of commentaries "on the Greek text", Lumby will use the wrong Greek text, the critical text along the lines of Westcott and Hort).

@ MacBride, John David, *Lectures on the Acts and Epistles*. 1858. This author simply gives a continuous narrative. He has also written on the Gospels. We mention him that the student may not purchase his work as a Commentary.

& Macaulay, Joseph Cordner. *A Devotional Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 1946. A homiletic commentary.

\* Macgregor, G. H. C., and Theodore P. Ferris. *Acts* in volume IX of *The Interpreter's Bible*, 1954. Pages 1-352. A hard-line liberal interpretation. They give a cautious "Yes" to Lucan authorship (20), favor a date of A.D. 80-90 (p. 21), hold that "the truest return of Jesus was in the manifest power of the Holy Spirit" (p. 28); the cloud at the ascension was metaphorical (p. 29), Stephen contradicted the Old Testament (p. 97), we cannot depend on Luke's historical accuracy (p. 105), there are discrepancies in the accounts of Paul's conversion (p. 120), the dispute between Paul and Barnabas was deeper than Luke describes (p. 209), Athens was Paul's failure (p. 238), Eutychus' restoration was no miracle (p. 268), nor was Paul's preservation from the viper (p. 342).

% Maddox, Robert. *The Purpose of Luke-Acts. Studies of the New Testament and its World*. 1982. While one may not agree with all of Maddox's conclusions, he is must reading for grappling with the theological design of the doublework of Luke-Acts.

\$ Marshall, I. Howard, *Acts*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, 1980. For those seeking a good introductory level, non-technical commentary on the book of Acts, the volume by Marshall in the Tyndale series is a good place to start. Like the other volumes in the series, it is simple to read without being simplistic in content.

% This is not a technical commentary. Marshall holds to the historicity of the text and emphasizes the theology of Acts throughout. As with most British scholars, Marshall is amillennial.

= An apologetic exposition focused on the theological meaning, particularly answering the liberal interpretations of Ernst Haenchen (p. 9). He surveys the theology of Acts (p. 23-24); sees Luke as a writer with a pastoral and missionary concern (p. 49); attacks the idea that Christ was made Lord at the resurrection, for He was already the Lord (p. 80); comments in connection with Ananias and Sapphira that a person "might well suffer a fatal shock at the thought of having broken a taboo" (p. 111); thinks that Luke drafted Stephen's speech from source material (pp. 132-133); leaves open the question of whether Simon the Sorcerer was saved or lost (pp. 158-160); attacks Haenchen's rejection of the miraculous element in Scripture (p. 182).

= Marshall, I. Howard. *Luke: Historian and Theologian*, 1970, rpt. 1989, 238 pages. A formal defense of the thesis that Luke is both a good historian and a good theologian.

@ Maskew, T. R., *Annotations on the Acts. With College and Senate-House Examination Papers*, 1847. A handbook to the Acts, viewing it simply as a Greek book; prepared for the use of students passing through the university.

= Maurice, Frederick Denison. *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1894, 348 pages. A series of sermons on Acts by an Anglican rector. He defends the doctrine of the Trinity (pp. 6, 71), the ascension (p. 10), the supernatural character of Paul's conversion (pp. 124-125), the reality of demonic possession (p. 259).

\* McGarvey, J. W. *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 1868. 297 pages. Brief expository comments. He defends the resurrection (p. 11) and ascension (p. 17), gives an Amillennial interpretation of the Kingdom of God (p. 15), argue for immer9ion (p. 39), inclines toward baptismal regeneration (pp. 41-43), attacks infant baptism (pp. 44), will change the text to preserve Stephen from error (p. 83), gives Arminian interpretations (pp. 169-171), holds to the reality of demon possession, attacks "spirit rapping" (p. 206).

@ Mimpriss, R., *The Acts and Epistles, according to Greswell's Arrangement*. 1837. A handy book for teachers.

\* Morgan, George Campbell, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1924. 547 pages. Expository messages on Acts. He has genuinely helpful explanations: "when this sound was heard" (p. 36), the word "despot" (p. 129); defends the deity and humanity of Christ (p. 73), has no comment on the problems in Stephen's speech, gives Arminian interpretations (p. 334), holds that Paul died when he was stoned (p. 344), and that Eutychus actually died

and was raised (p. 470). The book is stronger at the beginning: he covers the first 13 chapters in 337 pages, the last 15 in 210 pages.

& By many regarded as being the most important single expository work for the pastor.

= Morgan, G. Campbell. *The Birth of the Church*, 1968, 189 pages. The record of extempore lectures on the beginning of the church in Acts 2. He holds that Pentecost started in the upper room (p. 24), in later years changed his mind (p. 6), attacks the liberalism of the Shorter Bible (p. 37), has a lengthy discussion of the "tongues" (pp. 48-64), refuses to determine the mode of baptism (p. 157).

\* Munck, Johannes. *The Acts of the Apostles* in volume 31 of The Anchor Bible, 1967. 408 pages. Introduction, translation, and extremely brief comments on Acts. He has notes only on selected verses. He argues that the author, not necessarily Luke, must have known Paul well (pp. xxix-xxxv), sees disagreement between 9:7 and 22:9 (p. 81).

*The Anchor Bible Series is very liberal and unreliable.*

& Neil, William. *Acts*. New Century Bible Commentary, 1981. Based on the RSV This handy commentary does not provide an exposition of the theme but, rather, furnishes readers with perceptive comments on select words or phrases.

# Too brief to give much help where it is most needed.

@ Norris, J. P., *Key to the Acts*, 1871. A well-executed sketch of the Acts of the Apostles, giving the student a clear idea of the run of the book. Like the same author's "Key to the Gospels", it would be most useful in Bible classes.

*North, Gary, Sacrifice and Dominion, an Economic Commentary on Acts, 2000, 2003, 103 pages. Part of North's Economic Commentary on the Bible. Written from a Christian Reconstructionist and Presbyterian viewpoint with strong Calvinist positions, North will be critical of any dispensational approach to any book. Not verse-by-verse but a selective topic-by-topic that stresses the economic material in Acts rather than the theological. It can be useful, if read with discernment and if the reader does not expect too much theological application.*

# Ogilvie, Lloyd, *Acts*, The Communicator's Commentary, 1983. Contains useful material, but is sometimes more interested in communication than in a careful understanding of the material to be communicated.

& Pearson, Arthur Tappan. *The Acts of the Holy Spirit*, 1895. A devotional book which rightly stresses the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the work of the early church.

*Pearson got the title of Acts wrong, as we discuss in our notes on chapter 1.*

\* Plumptre, E. H. *The Acts of the Apostles*. The Layman's Handy Commentary, 1903. 478 pages. A mediocre popular commentary. He teaches baptismal regeneration (p. 158), argues for immersion (p. 54), gives Arminian interpretations (p. 219), claims that

Paul was only stunned when he was stoned (p. 228), holds to Amillennial views (p. 240), admits that Luke recites the restoration of Eutychus as a miracle, but still questions it (p. 335).

\* Polhill, John B. *Acts* in The New American Commentary, 1992. 574 pages. A thorough, technical commentary based on the NIV. He objects to the rationalistic presuppositions of Harnack (p. 34), and defends Luke as a historian (pp. 50f.). He sees the theme of Acts in 1:8 (p. 57). Favors tongues as foreign speech (p. 100). Thinks that Sheol-Hades means merely death (p. 113). He argues that Ananias and Sapphira were not lost (p. 161), but that Simon was (p. 219f.). Sometimes assumes interpretations without giving evidence (p. 181). He stresses the miraculous nature of Paul's conversion (p. 240). Provides choice secondary bibliography: Downey, History of Antioch in Syria (p. 268), Smith, The Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul (p. 513). Mentions that Luke is the only N.T. writer to name Roman emperors (p. 274). Regards Acts 15 as central to the plot of the book (p. 320). He distinguishes his view from dispensationalism (p. 329, n. 91). Stresses that the first person "we" makes Luke an eyewitness (p. 346). Attacks infant baptism (pp. 350-56). He provides good historical background (pp. 382, 408, 465, etc.). He concludes with thorough indexes of subjects, persons, and Scripture references (pp. 549-574).

***Phillips, John, Exploring Acts, 2001, 528 pages. Phillips writes for pastors, Sunday school teachers, and students of the Scripture in a familiar, homey style that emphasizes the practical application of Bible truth. His outlines are usually worth the price of the book. Based on the Authorized Version, dispensational.***

= He defends a literal millennial kingdom yet to come on earth (pp. 19-20); urges that experience must always be tested by doctrine, not doctrine by experience (p. 61); declares that the daughter of Pharaoh who adopted Moses was Hatshepsut (p. 130); holds that Simon Magus was unsaved (p. 156); thinks that if Paul were alive today, he would be evangelizing Hong Kong, Manila, Sao Paulo (p. 250); argues that God will yet restore the millennial kingdom on the earth (p. 296); warns that those who consult mediums contact evil intelligence, demons (p. 325); attacks infant baptism (p. 333).

= Polhill, John B., *Acts* in The New American Commentary, 1992, 574 pages. A thorough, technical commentary based on the NIV. He objects to the rationalistic presuppositions of Harnack (p. 34), and defends Luke as a historian (pp. 50f.). He sees the theme of Acts in 1:8 (p. 57). Favors tongues as foreign speech (p. 100). Thinks that Sheol-Hades means merely death (p. 133). He argues that Ananias and Sapphira were not lost (p. 161), but that Simon was (pp. 219f.). Sometimes assumes interpretations without giving evidence (p. 181). He stresses the miraculous nature of Paul's conversion (p. 240)...Mentions that Luke is the only N. T. writer to name Roman emperors (p. 274). Regards Acts 15 as central to the plot of the book (p. 320). He distinguishes his view from dispensationalism (p. 329, n. 91). Stresses that the first person "we" makes Luke an eyewitness (p. 346). Attacks infant baptism (pp. 350-356). He provides good historical background. He concludes with thorough indexes of subjects, persons, and Scriptural references (pp. 549-574).



@ Pyle, T., *Paraphrase*. 2 volumes, 1795. This pile of printed paper may safely be left on the bookseller's shelves.

\* Rackham, Richard Beiward. *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1901. 639 pages. A most thorough, helpful exposition by an Anglican. He does overemphasize the sacraments and church offices. He defends Lucan authorship (p. xvii), date before A.D. 64 (p. Ili), the ascension (p. 8), Paul's conversion (p. 131), has helpful comments on the Spirit at Pentecost (pp. 14-15), lists 15 different problems in Stephen's speech, gives answers for some (pp. 99-102), holds south Galatian view (pp. 195-198), teaches both predestination and free will (p. 221), identifies Acts 14 with Gal. 2 (pp. 239-247), has an extensive treatment of Paul at Athens (pp. 301-320), believes that Paul was miraculously restored after stoning (p. 235), that Eutychus was raised from the dead (p. 380), that a real viper bit Paul (p. 492); has a thorough index.

& The reissue in an overpriced paperback format of one of the great commentaries on the book of Acts

+ Reese, Gareth L. *New Testament History: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Acts*, 1976. Large compendium of material from other works. Includes the best comments from McGarvey and helpful theological and historical excursuses.

\* Rice, John R. *Filled With the Spirit*, 1963. 555 pages. Verse-by-verse comments by a Baptist evangelist. He defends Lucan authorship (p. 13), verbal inspiration (pp. 1416), Christ's resurrection (pp. 30-31), immersion (p. 36), the Premillennial return (p. 39), the local church (pp. 47-48), miracles (p. 109), the events of Paul's conversion (p. 203); he attacks expository preaching (p. 83), gives some questionable interpretations: Christ did not win a soul until age 30 (p. 29), church did not begin at Pentecost (pp. 62-71), Paul failed at Athens (p. 397), Paul was wrong in going to Jerusalem (pp. 450f.), that he was right in taking one vow (p. 408), but wrong in taking another (pp. 456-460).

*In all honesty, Rice was not a commentator, and his commentaries tend to be rather thin, more like expanded sermons. He wanted to be known and recognized as a scholar and that tended to be his undoing. He can be frustrating to read at times, interpreting everything through the lens of his revivalist hyper-evangelicalism and "soul winning". He is too dogmatic in some areas when he really has no right to be. He denied the church started in Acts 2 since he was not a dispensationalist, or, at best, was a very weak one.*

***Ruckman, Peter, The Bible Believer's Commentary on Acts, 1974. Simply the best commentary out there and is one of Ruckman's better efforts in his Bible Believer's Commentary Series. Ruckman goes after the Charismatics, Calvinists, Hyper-Dispensationalists and Roman Catholics, as well as those who attack the Authorized Version. He spends quite a bit of time critiquing Cornelius Stam and his hyper-dispensational commentary on Acts but Ruckman still has Stam's commentary on his recommended reading list. Strongly dispensational and based on the Authorized Version. He has many practical applications.***

% Ryrie, Charles Caldwell. *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1961. 127 pages. A brief popular exposition that is genuinely helpful. He dates the Book about A.D. 63 (p. 8), defends the tongues at Pentecost as real languages (p. 19), holds that Eutychus died and was raised (p. 105). There are a few slips in fact: it was the praying group, not Rhoda that was slow to believe (p. 71), and Paul spoke of an altar, not a statue, to the unknown god (p. 95).

& Scroggie, William Graham. *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1976. Reprinted from the 1931 edition. This handy volume abounds in helpful outlines and practical insights. Valuable for lay use, and I hope it enjoys widespread circulation.

*I like Scroggie's works, even when I don't agree with him.*

\* Stagg, Frank. *The Book of Acts*, 1955. 281 pages. New-Evangelical exposition. He commends liberals such as Lake and Cadbury (p. vii), de-emphasizes the Holy Spirit (pp. 5-9), dates after A.D. 70 (p. 22), attacks baptismal regeneration (p. 62) and infant baptism (p. 170), thinks Ananias and Sapphira died of shock (p. 83), offers no solutions for difficulties in Stephen's speech (p. 97), argues for Negro rights (p. 124), admits that Ephesians may be written by a Paulinist (p. 200), leaves open whether Eutychus died (p. 211), whether the viper was poisonous (p. 261), etc.

& De-emphasizes the deity and role of the Holy Spirit, and provides relatively few insights into the text and theme of the book.

*Stam, Cornelius, Acts Dispensationally Considered, 1954. A hyper-dispensational commentary but one that is worth reading. You will not agree with everything Stam teaches but he is intriguing and challenging nonetheless. He will not hesitate to correct the Authorized Version text and his arrogance toward the Authorized Version is annoying. His hyper-dispensationalism is also a major problem with his commentary, so much discretion is needed.*

& Stedman, Ray C. *Acts 21-28. Triumphs of the Body*, 1981. Brief studies completing the author's trilogy. Recommended.

& Stedman, Ray C. *Birth of the Body*, 1974. A vibrant recounting of the early church's beginning and witness. The author shows how the power available to the early Christians is available today. The formula is found in Acts 1-12.

& Stedman, Ray C. *Growth of the Body*, 1976. A continuation of the author's exposition of Acts in which he demonstrates from the history of the early church the fallacy of relying solely on man-made programs without making room for the "body life" of believers.

@ Stier, Rudolph, *The Words of the Apostles*. 1869. Devout, scholarly, full of thought. To be used discreetly.

& Examines the public ministry of the apostles and expounds each message with insight and skill. A must for every student of the book of Acts

@ Stock, Eugene, *Lessons on the Acts. For Sunday School Teachers and other Religious Instructors*. 1874. For half-a-crown the teacher may here obtain one of the most useful books known to us. Though produced for members of the Church of England, we recommend it heartily to ministers and others who are preparing addresses to the young.

\* Stokes, George T. *Acts of the Apostles* in The Expositor's Bible, 1903. 904 pp. A wordy Anglican exposition, filled with historical references. He has harsh words for "antinomian" Plymouth Brethren (pp. 133-136), argues for infant baptism (p. 146), admits errors in Stephen's speech (pp. 310, 312f.), warmly recommends prayer to Christ (p. 339), has a great emphasis on baptism (II, p. 288), favors view that Eutychus merely fainted (II, p. 403), at the end, covers many chapters too briefly (Chapters 21-26, pp. 422-449).

\* Stott, John. *The Spirit, the Church, and the World*, 1990. 405 pages. A reformed exposition based on the NIV, subtitled "the Message of Acts." He distinguishes his view from the dispensational (p. 41). Defends the literal nature of the ascension of Christ (pp. 47f.). Holds that the church goes back to Abraham (p. 81). Criticizes John Wimber's Vineyard Fellowship (p. 101). Stresses the sovereign grace of God in Saul's conversion (p. 173). Defends predestination (p. 227). He quotes A. T. Pierson's comments on the "restraints and constraints" of God's guidance (p. 261). Mentions the "pantheon of gods" in ancient Athens (p. 277). Warns against idols as "god substitutes" (p. 291). He argues for the evidence for worship on Sunday (p. 321) and the existence of a pastoral team of "presbyter-bishops" in a church (p. 324). Stresses the cordial relationship between James and Paul (pp. 339f.). Exclaims over the vividness of Luke's description of the sea voyage and shipwreck (p. 385).

! This verse-by-verse evangelical exposition considers key questions such as charismatic gifts, signs and wonders, baptism in the Spirit, etc. After the introduction come four divisions: Jews (1:6`6:7), foundations for world mission (6:8`12:24), the apostle to the Gentiles (12:25`21:17), and on the way to Rome (21:18`28:31). As usual, Stott is very articulate in capturing the message, showing the flow, and letting the text come alive. This is lucid for lay people and also helpful at times for pastors.

# His modeling of the move from exegesis to exposition is *sans pareil*.

% Talbert, Charles H. *Literary Patterns, Theological Themes, and the Genre of Luke-Acts*, 1974, 107 pages. Talbert is very interested in analyzing Luke-Acts from a literary approach. Many of his observations concerning the parallels in Luke and Acts are extremely helpful.

# Too brief and too narrowly focused on the literary structure to command primary attention.

= He organizes the study on the basis of a comparison between Luke and Acts. He takes the commission as the main theme (Acts 1:1-14) and gives the outline:

I. The commission fulfilled: Stage 1 (Acts 1-12)

II. The commission fulfilled: Stage 2 (Acts 13-28)

He sees parallels between Pentecost (Acts 2) and Luke 3:21,22; shows patterns in structure regarding church growth (p. 65); discusses roots and new shoots in the pattern of Acts 18 (p. 76); demonstrates an ABB'A pattern (p. 85).

% Tannehill Robert C. *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts: A Literary Interpretation: Volume Two: The Acts of the Apostles*, 1990. Although Tannehill does not hold to the historicity of the text, his literary approach to the theology of Acts is excellent and thus must reading.

@ Thomas, David, *Homiletic Commentary on the Acts*. 1870. Many of the homiletic outlines strike us as "much ado about nothing "; still, if a man should read this work and get no help from it, it would be his own fault.

\* Fervent examples of the art of expository preaching: 111 sermons on the paragraphs of Acts. He emphasizes the baptism of the Spirit (p. 40), defends the account of Paul's conversion (p. 130), the miraculous raising of Eutychus (p. 340), the reality of the viper's bite (p. 468). There is much homiletic help for the preacher here.

@ Thompson, James, *Exposition of the Acts*. 1854. We fail to see much here of service to a preacher.

**& Thomas, William Henry Griffith. Outline Studies in the Acts of the Apostles, 1956, 555 pages. An extensive series of homiletical outlines.**

***Very useful and recommended. One major flaw is that he makes no study or comments on Acts 7. He also cites other English versions at times.***

= Popular expository outlines. He calls Acts a book of realism (p. 30); holds that Holy Ghost baptism, not water baptism, puts us into the body of Christ (p. 32); thinks that Ananias and Sapphira were stuck dead with no chance of repentance (p. 108)...discusses names for the people of God (pp. 218ff); meditates on Peter's 3 sleeps (pp. 243ff)...commends expository preaching (pp. 403ff).

@ Trollope, W., *Commentary on the Acts, with Examination Questions, for the B.A. Degree*. 1854. Well adapted to accomplish the design indicated in the title.

% Toussaint, Stanley D. *Acts*. In *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty*. 1983. Although this is necessarily a brief commentary, there are many helpful discussions of problem passages, and theological matters.

***Van Ryn, August, The Acts of the Apostles, 1961, 253 pages. Plymouth Brethren exposition on selected portions of Acts. Highly recommended for its format, which is not a full commentary but a collection of seed-thoughts in every verse, which forces the reader to do much of his own expository and expositional work.***

***Such formats will not benefit the lazy reader. We could use more commentaries in this format.***

@ Vaughan, Charles John, *Lectures*. 3 volumes. 1864, Not only does Dr. Vaughan expound his texts in the ablest manner, but he introduces passages of Scripture so aptly that he suggests discourses. Barring his Churchianity, we cannot too highly commend him.

\* Fifty-six sermons preached from 1862-1864 on Acts; they are rich expositions of the text, accompanied by a paraphrase of the Greek text. He defends the ascension (pp. 2-3), the second coming (p. 12), inspiration (p. 59), the resurrection of Christ (p. 64), infant baptism (p. 77), gives Arminian interpretation (p. 106), emphasizes the meaning of Paul's conversion for the person of Christ (II, p. 17).

& Veil, Carolus M. du. *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 1851. Reprinted from the first edition which appeared in 1685. Lengthy exposition by a man whose theological pilgrimage took him from Judaism to Roman Catholicism to Anglicanism and finally to the Baptists. Supports all the cardinal doctrines of the faith. Argues for immersion.

\* Walker, Thomas. *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1965 (1st edition 1910). 586 pages. A thorough exposition by a dedicated missionary. He stresses the vicarious sacrifice (p. 5), defends the ascension (p. 11), inspiration (p. 17), Stephen's speech (pp. 154-160), denies baptismal regeneration (p. 54), uses the best Greek text (p. 219), favors the South Galatian view (p. 278), teaches both sovereignty and free will (p. 301), holds that the slave girl was demon-possessed (p. 351), that Eutychus really died (p. 438), that the viper actually bit Paul (p. 569). He has a warm and fervent style.

\* Williams, Charles Steven Conway. *A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, 1957. 317 pages. A perceptive liberal exposition. He dates Acts either A.D. 64 or c. 85 (p. 15), identifies Acts 11 with Gal. 2 (pp. 26, 30), makes much of the apostolic kerygma (pp. 66, 76, etc.), refers to Luke's inaccuracies (p. 94), the discrepancies in Stephen's speech (p. 104), notes the supernatural in Paul's conversion (p. 123), thinks that Luke may have put events in the wrong order (p. 133), his reference to the seventy may be anachronistic (p. 145), gives an unusual typical connection between Jonah and Peter (p. 152), thinks that there is a "genuinely historical kernel" to Paul's speech at Athens (p. 201).

= Williams, David J., *Acts* in the New International Bible Commentary, 1985, 1995, 493 pages. A conservative exposition by a translator of the NIV, although he does not hesitate to correct it.

\$ Witherington, Ben, III, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 1998, 874 pages. Ben Witherington's series of "socio-rhetorical" commentaries varies in terms of its helpfulness. At over 900 pages, this is one of the largest volumes in the series, and one of the most useful. There is a large amount of information in this commentary that is not found in others, and the extensive bibliography is a plus as well.

# Very good indeed. His “socio-rhetorical” approach, which tends to mean no more than that the author is sensitive both to the world of the first century and to the structure of the text, is particularly suited to this sort of book.

= A commentary that gives special attention to social customs and the rhetorical structure of discourses. He defends Lucan authorship (pp. 58ff); dates the book late 70s, early 80s (p. 62); argues that the Alexandrian text is closest to the original (pp. 65-68); provides a detailed chronology (pp. 81-86); holds that Galatians is Paul’s earliest letter, written before Acts 15 (p. 91); holds that Luke ‘shaped” Peter’s words (p. 115); declares that without Pentecost there would be no worldwide Christian movement (p. 130); shows that Luke applied the name Yahweh to Jesus (p. 149); admits that Luke may have composed some speech material (p. 168, n. 17); points out that Luke did not neglect future eschatology (p. 186); thinks that Luke could have made a mistake about Theudas (p. 238)...argues for identifying the visit in Acts 11:30, 12:25 with Galatians 2 (pp. 442ff); thinks that Paul carried documents proving his citizenship (p. 501); holds that Paul may have found an altar dedicated to a specific unknown god (pp. 521-523)...argues that it is well to be skeptical about modern scholars who think that they know more about geography than Luke did (p. 697, n. 2340; has an appendix dealing with the clues of the earliness of Galatians (p. 817ff).

& Woodbridge, Charles, *A Study of the Book of Acts*, 1955. Challenging messages on each chapter

\* Young, E. S. *Acts of the Apostles*, 1915. 320 pp. A Bible study guide, covering all the paragraphs in Acts. There are study questions and brief explanations. He defends the resurrection of Christ (p. 21), has no mention of the problems in Stephen's speech, gives an Amillennial interpretation of Acts 15, - (pp. 170ff.), teaches the reality of demon possession (p. 185), holds that Eutychus really died and was restored (p. 239).

## Acts Chapter 1

### 1. Luke's Introduction 1:1-3

**1:1 The former treatise<sup>a</sup> have I made, O Theophilus,<sup>b</sup> of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,<sup>c</sup>**

1a This would be the Gospel According to Luke. Luke and Acts make up a two-volume church history. Luke deals with the life and ministry of Christ, Acts deals with the history of the early church.

We have no problem seeing Luke as author because the Holy Spirit said he was. We do not need to go through reams of "scholarly study" to prove something that the Holy Spirit said was so. "What the majority of scholars want you to do is think that THEY proved Lukan authorship by years of investigation and arguing. They will not tolerate the Bible itself proving anything without their approval. The believer can kick off the game by recognizing Luke as the author independently of the entire library shelf of books on the book of Acts written by Felten, Knabenbauer, Wendt, Matthias, Zockler, Zahn, Ramsay, Julicher, Weiss, Bethge, Gilbert, McGiffert, Nosgen, Askwith, Vogel, Nestle, Bousset, Blass, Harnack, Dalman, Hort, and Curtius. If any one of these critics arrived at the conclusion that Luke wrote the book of Acts we may congratulate him for his common sense, but we are no more going to accept this as proof of his ability to understand the Authorized Text than we would if he had never posited an opinion in the first place (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Acts*, page 2)."

1b This name means "**Friend of God**", he was an acquaintance of Luke who had an interest in the Gospel and history of the early church. We know nothing more of this man except this is the same man whom Luke addressed his gospel to.

1c Christ did declare the work of redemption finished on the cross, but the work of establishing the Church, promoting the New Testament truth and the salvation of sinners was just beginning. That work was not finished at the death of Christ.

**1:2 Until the day in which he was taken up,<sup>a</sup> after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:<sup>b</sup>**

2a The ascension (Acts 1:9).

2b Even after His resurrection, Jesus still operated through the Holy Spirit.

**1:3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs,<sup>a</sup> being seen of them forty days,<sup>b</sup> and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:<sup>c</sup>**

3a Luke does not list what these proofs are but two things are mentioned of them:

1. They were many. The Bible lists some but probably not all of them. But the Bible lists enough proofs to convince any open-minded man as to the truth of these historical accounts.
2. They were infallible. They can't be overturned or refuted.
3. The best proof would be the eyewitness accounts of the resurrected Lord, of whom Paul said there were more than 500 (1 Corinthians 15:6). Five hundred would qualify as "many" and it is hard to refute an eyewitness account.
4. Ever since Luke's day, infidels have wasted millions of hours and reams of paper trying to disprove the resurrection and ascension, only to hit a brick wall every time. Many of these critics were even converted as a result of their destructive "scholarship".
5. The Greek word here (Stong's #5039 τεκμηρίοις, used only here in the New Testament) is about as strong as you can get in declaring the truth of something.

Luke makes it clear that the facts of Christ's resurrection were beyond reproof to any honest man who is willing to examine the facts and believe his results.

"Facts about Christ's appearances that prove the resurrection:

a. He appeared many times to the same people. There are at least 13 different appearances recorded over a period of 40 days. Had He appeared only once, it could have been put down as a delusion or mirage of some sort.

b. He appeared to many people at once. Had only one or two people testified of seeing Him, it could have been put down to hysteria or collusion. But He often appeared to 11 and more at once; and on one occasion He appeared to 500 at once (1 Cor. 15:6).

c. He appeared to different people in different places and situations. Had the resurrection appearances occurred in only one place or only at twilight or something like that, it could have been said that it was some sort of illusion or trick associated with that particular place or time. Yet Christ's resurrection appearances were in many different times and places. He appeared in the morning, in the daytime, in the evening, in rooms, on highways, and by lakes.

d. His appearances dramatically changed those who saw Him. Before they saw the risen Christ, the apostles were afraid and had hidden themselves from the authorities; but after they saw Him they were filled with boldness and preached publicly to the very Jews who had crucified Jesus, and they joyfully endured torture and death for His name's sake. (David Cloud, *The Book of Acts*)."

#### AV

#### ESV

#### LSV

3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many <b>infallible proofs</b> , being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things	3 He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.	3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over forty days and speaking about the things
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pertaining to the kingdom of God:		concerning the kingdom of God.
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Many commentators and English versions have the strange need to change “infallible” into some other word or to omit it all together. For example, Stewart Custer has “decisive proof” (*Witness to Christ*, page 2). Kenneth Wuest has “indubitable proofs” (who talks like that?” Several commentaries and English Versions, like the corrupt English Standard Version (referred to as the ESV in this commentary) have just “many proofs”. Were these “many proofs” infallible or not? These men imagine that their changes make the reading of the Authorized Version “clear” and “easier to understand” and that their changes are more accurate to the “Greek text”. But it is nothing more than an attack on the Authorized Version under the guise of “Christian scholarship” falsely so-called. There are no good reasons for these changes.

3b The probation and testing number. Forty days always seemed to preclude some great event:

1. Jacob is embalmed 40 days before he is taken to Canaan to be buried- Genesis 50:3.
2. Moses got the Law after being on Mt. Sinai for 40 days- Exodus 24:18.
3. Moses’ face shone after being with God for 40 days- Exodus 34:28,29.
4. The twelve spies scouted out Canaan for 40 days- Numbers 13:25.
5. Goliath taunted the armies of Israel for 40 days- 1 Samuel 17:16.
6. Elijah travelled for 40 days before meeting God- 1 Kings 19:8.
7. Nineveh’s judgment was averted after 40 days of repentance and fasting- John 3:4.
8. Jesus fasted 40 days before starting His public ministry- Matthew 4:2.

3c The spiritual aspects of the Kingdom. The “Kingdom of Heaven” refers to the literal, political and millennial elements of the Kingdom. They are not referring to the same things. The Kingdom of Heaven comes with outward show, the Kingdom of God does not (Luke 17:20,21). Most commentators make the error of equating them, which causes major interpretative problems. Only a proper dispensational approach will save the student from these kinds of errors.

## **2. Christ’s Command- Remain in Jerusalem 1:4,5**

**1:4 And, being assembled together with [them], commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father,<sup>a</sup> which, saith he, ye have heard of me.**

4a This would be the giving of the Holy Spirit in chapter 2, repeated from Luke 24:49. They were not fit for service until He was given so they were told to wait in Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit and His power. This is always wise advice- wait until the Spirit sends you forth in His power before attempting any service for God. The promise of the Father would include:

1. A baptism (vs. 5).
2. An endowment of spiritual power (vs. 8).
3. A filling of the Spirit (Acts 2:4).
4. The beginning of the Church (John 17:21, 23).
5. The start of a new dispensation (Church Age) (John 14:16, 16:13).

**1:5 For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.<sup>a</sup>**

5a This would take place in chapter 2. Matthew 3:11, about being baptized with fire, has nothing to do with this. Being baptized with fire is a baptism of judgment. Being baptized with the Holy Spirit gets you into the body of Christ. Just look at the next verse, Matthew 3:12 (**“Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”**), and that becomes clear! No one can be baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, especially at the same time. It would be the same as a man getting saved and then judged at the same time. You are baptized with one or the other, but not both. There was no “baptism of fire” in Acts 2:3 as the cloven tongues there were LIKE AS of fire, not literal fire.

### **3. The Question of the Kingdom 1:6-8**

**1:6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?<sup>a</sup>**

6a Most of the commentators ignorantly rip into the apostles here for asking this question in 1:6. The general (mistaken) idea is that Jesus would rebuke them in verses 7 and 8 for asking such a carnal question and instead, they should be worrying about “spreading the kingdom” on earth and “soulwinning” and “building great churches”, something to that effect. But as Jews, they had every right to ask that question about the kingdom. Jesus had promised a kingdom, and they were wondering if Jesus was preparing to usher it in. There is no sin in asking the Lord about the timing of the major theme of the Bible- the Millennial Kingdom. Everyone should be asking that question, both Jew and Gentile. The apostles had just spent 40 days with the resurrected Lord and He was teaching them many new things and granting many new insights on the Scriptures. Why wouldn’t He talk about the kingdom?

The question boils down to “Do you believe in a literal, physical, political Millennial Kingdom or not?” The apostles believed in one. Most of the commentators do not.

**1:7 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.<sup>a</sup>**

7a Verse 7 is not a rebuke. Rather, Jesus is simply telling them that He was not going to reveal when the kingdom would be set up. This is because there would be at least

two “second offers” of the kingdom (in Acts 2 and 7) that, if accepted by the nation, would have started the kingdom then.

But there is a rebuke here for that class of Bible teachers I call “prophecy hacks”. They know all about the Ten Toes, the European Union, who the Antichrist is, Blood Moons etc., but they could never preach a simple evangelistic sermon or teach a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Sunday School class. They are “All Prophecy All The Time”. You see them all over Christian “television” channels. This class of teachers are unbalanced and need to be able to preach and teach the whole counsel of God, not just one chapter from their Systematic Theology books.

**1:8 But ye shall receive power,<sup>a</sup> after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:<sup>b</sup> and ye shall be witnesses<sup>c-d</sup> unto me<sup>e</sup> both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.<sup>f</sup>**

8a Spiritual power, not any kind of political, economic or academic power.

8b In Acts 2.

8c A witness is simply someone who tells what he knows and has seen. He is like a witness in a courtroom. He simply witnesses to the facts. It is not his job to convince the jury. That is the task of the lawyer. In evangelism, it is not our job to “save” that sinner. Conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit. The job of the witness is to provide the information the sinner needs so that he may “**reason together**” (Isaiah 1:18) and make an informed choice as to whether to receive or reject the gospel. The witness only “tells what he knows.”

“Witnesses” even unto death, as the Greek word here is the same word from where we get our word “martyr”. Reliable church histories tell us all the disciples died a martyr’s death except John, but he suffered as a living martyr. Stephen’s death in Acts 7 is the sample fulfillment of this.

8d Ways to witness:

1. By word- verbal preaching and witnessing
2. By work- as a public testimony
3. By writing- books, tracts, sermon transcriptions, etc.

8e Not unto your denomination, theological system or preacher you are following.

8f Four places where the early church was to witness:

1. Jerusalem- their local area (at home)- orthodox Jewish leaders
2. Judaea- their local region (next door)- Jews in general
3. Samaria- more of a nationwide scope (all over town)- half-breed Jews/Gentiles.  
This starts in Acts 8.
4. Uttermost parts- beyond Israel, in foreign countries (everywhere else)- Gentiles.  
This starts in Acts 10 and 13.

It is safe to say that the early church fulfilled this commission.

GOSPEL OUTREACH IN ACTS				
Reference	Center	Chief Person	Gospel to	Evangelism
Acts 1—12	Jerusalem	Peter	Judea and Samaria	Jewish
Acts 13—28	Antioch	Paul	The uttermost part of the earth	Gentile

(Thomas Constable, *Constable's Study Notes on Acts*)

#### **4. The Ascension 1:9-11**

**1:9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud<sup>a</sup> received him out of their sight.**

9a Christ left in clouds, He will return in clouds (Revelation 1:7).

**1:10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men<sup>a</sup> stood by them in white apparel;**

10a Two angels, as if they were providing a double witness of the ascension. But since Moses and Elijah are the Two Witnesses of the Revelation, what are the chances that it could be these two men making an appearance here?

Notice also they were “men”. Angels always appear as men, never as women. And nothing was said about them having wings.

**1:11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus,<sup>a</sup> which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come<sup>b</sup> in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.**

11a **“This same Jesus...shall so come in like manner”** Notice the parallels between the ascension and the second coming:

1. The SAME country will be in power, Rome.
2. The SAME people will be in the land of Israel, the Jews.
3. He will come:
  - A. Visibly
  - B. With clouds
  - C. Personally
4. There will be a universal language, at this time, Greek.
5. He will be attended by “two men...in white apparel”, Moses and Elijah (Revelation 11:3-8).

6. He left from the Mount of Olives (Acts 1:12), He will return here in the second coming (Zechariah 14:4 “**And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.**”), so this place is the focus of both events.
7. Both the ascension and the advent will only be witnessed by those looking for both events. The world in general will be witness to neither.

11b A definite promise of the second coming. First, Christ comes in the rapture, followed seven years later in the advent.

## **5. The Selection of Matthais 1:12-26**

**1:12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey.<sup>a</sup>**

12a About 2/3rds of a mile.

**1:13 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,<sup>a</sup> and Judas the brother<sup>b</sup> of James.<sup>c</sup>**

13a The Zealots, a Galilean sect, were excessively zealous in striving for the Mosaic law.

<b>AV</b>	<b>ESV</b>	<b>LSV</b>
<b>13</b> 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 <i>the son</i> of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and <b>Judas <i>the brother</i> of James.</b>	<b>13</b> And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James.	<b>13</b> And when they had entered <i>the city</i> , they went up to the upper room where they were staying; that is, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James <i>the son</i> of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas <i>the son</i> of James.

13b The ESV and LSV have “son”. “Brother” is in italics in the Authorized Version, though.

13c The list of apostles is also given in Matthew 10:2ff, Mark 3:16ff and Luke 6:14ff. In each list, Peter is listed first, and Judas is listed last. “When we compare the four lists of the apostles in Scripture, we see an interesting pattern. Simon Peter is the first, Philip is the fifth and James of Alphaeus is ninth in all lists. Apparently, the apostles were divided into three groups, led respectively by Peter, Philip and James. The other apostles appear in random order, but always in the same group (Stewart Custer, *Witness to Christ: A Commentary on Acts*, pages 8-9).”

**1:14 These all continued with one accord<sup>a</sup> in prayer<sup>b</sup> and supplication,<sup>c</sup> with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus,<sup>d</sup> and with his brethren.<sup>e</sup>**

14a Human nature being what it is, this unity would not last long and it certainly does not exist today. The Body of Christ is so fractured and divided that only the Judgment Seat of Christ can straighten it out and put it back together.

14b No doubt their prayer life improved dramatically after the resurrection and ascension. No longer were they concerned about calling down fire from heaven to devour those who rejected Christ or striving to see who would be the greatest. Now they were burdened with spiritual matters.

14c “Supplication” is specifically requesting things in prayer.

14d This is the last time Mary is mentioned in Scripture. There is no Biblical account of any role she may have played in the early church and there is not even a hint of the Romanist fable about her supposed “ascension” or “assumption”.

“The Assumption of the Virgin Mary into Heaven, informally known as The Assumption, according to the beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church, Eastern Orthodoxy, Oriental Orthodoxy, and parts of Anglicanism, was the bodily taking up of the Virgin Mary into Heaven at the end of her earthly life. The Roman Catholic Church teaches as dogma that the Virgin Mary “having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory.” This doctrine was dogmatically defined by Pope Pius XII on November 1, 1950, in the Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus* by exercising papal infallibility.” (Wikipedia).

The Lord is careful not to elevate her beyond measure so as not to give the Mary-worshippers in the Church of Rome any scriptural justification for their idolatry,

14e Half-brothers and sisters of the Lord. Mary was no sort of “perpetual virgin” as she had a number of children after Jesus, like any normal Jewish wife. James, the brother of the Lord (Galatians 1:19 **“But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother”**), is the leader in this group and it is one of his brothers (“Judas”—Mark 6:3) who writes the book of Jude.

**1:15 And in those days Peter<sup>a</sup> stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)<sup>b</sup>**

15a The “leader” or “spokesman” (but not “pope”) of the early church.

15b The first “local church” with 120 “members” meeting in rented facilities as there were no dedicated local church buildings until the third or fourth century. The number “120” is three times 40, “40” being the probation number and “3” signifying the trinity, so there may be something here in the number that is obscure but definite. “Forty” is the probation number, so there would be three periods of waiting or testing?

**1:16 Men and brethren, this scripture<sup>a</sup> 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.**

16b Probably from Psalm 109.

**1:17 For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.<sup>a</sup>**

17a Nothing about him being saved in Acts 1:17! You can be a preacher, be a member of a local church, do miracles and walk with Jesus for three years and still be lost and go to your own place when you die!

As Jesus was “**numbered with the transgressors**” although He was not a transgressor (Isaiah 53:12), Judas was numbered with the apostles although he was not a true apostle.

**1:18 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.<sup>a</sup>**

18a Judas’ death is described. This was a very fitting death for Judas, as he certainly did not die the death of the righteous. Judas was hanging on his “tree” (Matthew 27:5) just as Jesus was hung on a tree. As he is hanging over Gehenna, the earthquake hits (Matthew 27:51) and snaps the branch on the tree from which he is hanging, dropping him into the sharp rocks below, ripping his body apart. Peter is very graphic, and it means exactly what it says, no use in sugar-coating it. If you saw Judas’ body after this, it would look like he died in a 6-car pile-up on the interstate at 75 miles an hour.

**1:19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama,<sup>a</sup> that is to say, The field of blood.**

**1:20 For it is written in the book of Psalms,<sup>a</sup> Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishopric<sup>b</sup> let another take.<sup>c</sup>**

20a Quoted from Psalm 69:25 and Psalm 109:8.

20b Old English word for “office”. The word is from “bisceoprice”, from “bisceop” (bishop) and “rice” (realm or province), or the “realm of a bishop”, the area of which a

bishop has control or jurisdiction (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 42).

20c Thus this text provides no support for the view that Christ intended one apostle to succeed another when the first one died. We have no record that when the apostle James died (12:1,2) anyone succeeded him.

**1:21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,<sup>a</sup>**

21a After James was killed in Acts 12:2, there was no attempt to appoint another replacement. After Matthais was chosen, there was no attempt to keep the number of the “main” apostles at 12. Therefore, there is no need today to have “12 apostles” running any church, like the Mormon church has.

**1:22 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.<sup>a</sup>**

22a The requirements to be an apostle are given in verses 21 and 22. Anyone today who claims to be an apostle reveals himself to be a fraud. Peter lays out the requirement to be an apostle that he had to follow Jesus from the baptism of John until his resurrection. Unless a man is 2,000 years old, there is no way anyone in our day would qualify.

Paul was a special case, specifically chosen by the Lord for a unique ministry to the Gentiles. He would not have qualified under Peter’s condition as he did not follow the Lord since John’s baptism. But there can be no doubt that he was an apostle, although one **“born out of due time”** (1 Corinthians 15:8). Paul never claimed to be one of the Twelve anyway.

Requirements to be an apostle (or at least to fill Judas’s place);

1. **“must one be ordained to be a witness”** They knew that they needed a twelfth “disciple” to complete their number. Jesus had selected 12 and as long as there were only 11, they number would be incomplete, and it would be a continual reminder of Judas’ sin. But this was more of a human issue than a divine one as no replacement was made for James when he was martyred in Acts 12.
  - A. When the original Twelve died, no divine commandment was made to replace them to keep the number of the apostles at twelve. When the original apostles were gone, that was it.
  - B. Some groups and cults, like the Mormons, have their “Quorum of the Twelve” that run their organization, but there is no spiritual or scriptural justification for such a group today.
2. To fill Judas’ spot as an apostle, the following would be required:
  - A. He had to be with the disciples since the beginning, from the ministry of John the Baptist.
  - B. He would have had to continue with the disciples through all of Jesus’ public ministry, through His death and resurrection.



C. He must have seen the resurrected Lord.  
D. Under these conditions, Paul would not have qualified as he was not a part of the original disciples and was not baptized by John. The Lord did not directly command this, but it seems He had no problem with it, although it's obvious that the Lord already had Judas' replacement chosen- Paul.

**1:23 And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus,<sup>a</sup> and Matthias.<sup>b</sup>**

23a This man had three names.

23b Both were obviously good men, with a good report among the believers.

**1:24 And they prayed,<sup>a</sup> and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all [men],<sup>b</sup> shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,**

24a Prayer is a major theme in Acts, mentioned in 1:14,24; 3:1; 6:4,6; 8:15; 9:11,40; 10:9,30,31; 11:5; 12:5,12; 13:3; 14:23; 16:13,16,25; 20:36; 21:5; 22:17; 28:8.

24b Part of His omniscience.

**1:25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship,<sup>a</sup> from which Judas by transgression<sup>b</sup> fell, that he might go to his own place.<sup>cd</sup>**

25a The office and ministry of an apostle.

AV	ESV	LSV
25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by <b>transgression</b> fell, that he might go to his own place.	25 to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place."	25 to take the place of this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place."

25b "**transgression**" The word has the idea of stepping over a line, or a transgression, usually done deliberately, with full knowledge and awareness. You saw the "No Trespassing" sign but still walked across that man's lawn. The word is missing in the ESV and LSV.

25c Judas just did not go to hell, but he went to "his own place", a place prepared just for him. This is a very terrifying thought. But this also lends strong support that the Antichrist will be Judas resurrected. We also need to examine the very distinct possibility that the Antichrist (First Beast) will be Judas resurrected. I'm going to

reproduce an article by A.W. Pink, printed in his *Studies in the Scriptures* magazine, where he listed 7 reasons why the Antichrist will be Judas resurrected:

"In Psalm 55 much is said of the Antichrist in his relation to Israel. Among other things we read there, "The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords" (v. 21). The occasion for this sad plaint is given in the previous verse- "He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant". The reference is to Antichrist breaking his seven-year Covenant with the Jews (see Daniel 9:27; 11:21-24). Now if the entire Psalm be read through with these things in mind, it will be seen that it sets forth the sorrows of Israel and the sighings of the godly remnant during the End-time. But the remarkable thing is that when we come to vv.11-14 we find that which has a double application and fulfillment- "wickedness is in the midst thereof; deceit and guile depart not from her street. For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company". These verses describe not only the base treachery of Judas toward Christ, but they also announce how he shall yet, when reincarnated in the Antichrist, betray and desert Israel. The relation of Antichrist to Israel will be precisely the same as that of Judas to Christ of old. He will pose as the friend of the Jews, but later he will come out in his true character. In the Tribulation period, the Nation of Israel shall taste the bitterness of betrayal and desertion by one who masqueraded as a 'familiar friend'. Hence, we have here the first hint that the Antichrist will be Judas reincarnated. And your covenant with Death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with Hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it" (Isaiah 28:18). The "Covenant" referred to is that seven-year one which is mentioned in Daniel 9:27. But here the one with whom this Covenant is made is termed "Death" and "Hell!". This is a title of the Antichrist, as "the Resurrection and the Life" is of the true Christ. Nor is this verse in Isaiah 28 the only one where the Son of Perdition is so denominated. In Revelation 6 a fourfold picture of him is given- the antithesis of the fourfold portrayal of the Lord Jesus in the Gospels. Here he is seen as the rider on differently colored horses, which bring before us four stages in his awful career, and when we come to the last of them the Holy Spirit exposes his true identity by telling us, "and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him" (Revelation 6:8). Now "Hell" or "hades" is the place which receives the souls of the dead, and the fact that this awful name is here applied to Antichrist intimates that he has come from there. Above, we referred to Matthew 12:41-43 to prove that Antichrist will be a super-human being, a fallen and unclean "spirit": we turn to it again in order to show that this coming Incarnation of Satan has previously been upon earth. The history of this "Unclean Spirit" is divided into three stages. First, as having dwelt in "a man"; second, as having gone out of a man, and walking through dry places, seeking rest and finding none this has reference to his present condition during the interval between his two appearances on earth. Third, he says, "I will return to my house". This Unclean Spirit, then, who has already been here, who is now away in a place where rest is not to be found, is to come back again! In John 17:12 we have a word which, more plainly still shows that the

Antichrist will be Judas reincarnated for here he is termed by Christ "The Son of Perdition". But first let us consider the teaching of Scripture, concerning Judas Iscariot. Who is he? He was a "man" (Matthew 26:24). But was he more than a man? Let Scripture make answer. In John 6:70 we read, "Have not I, chosen you twelve, and one of you is a Devil?" It is hardly necessary to say that in the Greek there are two different words for "Devil" and "demon"... Further, in no other passage is the word "devil" applied to any one but to Satan himself. Judas then was the Devil incarnate, just as the Lord Jesus was God incarnate. Christ Himself said so, and we dare not doubt His word. As we have seen, in John 17:12 Christ termed Judas "the Son of Perdition", and 2 Thessalonians 2:3 we find that the Antichrist is similarly designated- "That Man of Sin be revealed, the Son of Perdition". These are the only two places in all the Bible where his name occurs.

Judas was termed by Christ not a "son of perdition", but "the Son of Perdition", and the fact that the Man of Sin is so named prove that they are one and the same person. What other conclusion can a simple and unprejudiced reader of the Bible come to? In Revelation 11:7 we have the first reference to "the Beast" in the Apocalypse: "The Beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit". Here the Antichrist is seen issuing forth from the Abyss. What is the Abyss? It is the abode of lost spirits, the place of reincarceration and torment- see Revelation 20:1-3, and Luke 8:31, "deep" is "abyss" and cf. Matt. 9:28. The question naturally arises. How did he get there? and when was he sent there? We answer. When Judas Iscariot died! The Antichrist will be Judas Iscariot reincarnated. In proof of this we appeal to Acts 1:25 where we are told, "that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place". Of no one else in all the Bible is it said that at death he went "to his own place". Put these two scriptures together: Judas went "to his own place", the Beast ascends out of the Abyss. In Revelation 17:8 we read, "The Beast that thou sawest was, and is not: and shall ascend out of the Bottomless Pit, and go into perdition". This verse is generally understood to refer to the revived Roman Empire, and while allowing that such an application is warrantable, yet we are persuaded it is a mistake to limit it to this. In the Apocalypse, the Roman Empire and its final and satanic Head are very closely connected, so much so, that at times it is difficult to distinguish between them. But in Revelation 17 they are distinguishable. In v. 8 we are told that the Beast "shall ascend out of the Bottomless Pit, and that he shall go into perdition". In v. 11 we are told "And the Beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seventh, and goeth into perdition". Now nearly all expositors are agreed that the Beast of v.11- the "eighth" (head, and form of government of the Roman Empire- is the Antichrist himself; then why not admit the same of v. 8? In both, the designation is the same-"the Beast"; and in both, we are told he "goeth into perdition." We take it, then, that what is predicated of "the Beast" in 17:8 is true of both the Roman Empire and its last head, the Antichrist: of the former, in the sense that it is infernal in its character. Viewing it now as a declaration of the Antichrist, what does it tell us about him? Four things. First, he "was". Second, he "is not". Third, he shall "ascend out of the Bottomless Pit". Fourth, he shall "go into perdition". The various time-marks here concern the Beast in his relation to the earth. First, he "was", i.e.. on the earth. Second, he "is not", i.e. now

on the earth (cf. Genesis 5:24, "Enoch was not for God took him"; that is, "was not" any longer on the earth)."

25d **"His own place"**

1. Judas was a devil.  
A. John 6:70,71 **"Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray him, being one of the twelve."**
2. His title was "the son of perdition".  
A. John 17:12 **"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled."**
3. The "son of perdition" goes to perdition  
A. Revelation 17:8 **"The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is"**
4. Judas owned this place. He was king over it.  
A. Revelation 9:11 **"And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon."**

**1:26 And they gave forth their lots;<sup>a</sup> and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.<sup>b-c</sup>**

26a Some sort of lot was cast, something similar to throwing of dice, or using the "Urim and Thummin" as the High Priest used to help determine the will of God. **"The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD"** (Proverbs 16:33). This was a very Jewish practice. It was not repeated after this anywhere in the New Testament.

26b "Was Peter correct in leading the believers to recognize a twelfth apostle, or did God intend Paul to be the replacement?76 Paul was, of course, an apostle with authority equal to that of the Twelve. However, Paul had not been with Jesus during His earthly ministry. Luke, Paul's friend, spoke of the Twelve without equivocation as an official group (Acts 2:14; 6:2). Furthermore, the distinctly Jewish nature of the future ministry of the Twelve (Matt. 19:28) supports Paul's exclusion from this group. His ministry was primarily to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:9). Paul never claimed to be one of the Twelve, though he did contend that his official apostleship had come to him as a direct commission from the Lord. However, it came from the risen Lord, and he considered himself abnormally born as an apostle (1 Cor. 15:7-8). Finally, there is no hint in Scripture that the decision made on this occasion was a mistake. (Thomas Constable, *Constable's Study Notes on Acts*)."

26c Matthias received no further mention in the New Testament. Legend has it that he died as a martyr in Ethiopia.



## Acts Chapter 2

Acts 2 is probably the most dangerous chapter in the Bible as it is the one chapter where just about every New Testament heresy nests. In this chapter, proof texts are found for the following heresies:

1. Acts 2:38 is the New Testament plan of salvation
2. Baptism is required for salvation.
3. Speaking in tongues is required for salvation or is a gift still necessary for today.
4. The Church did not begin in Acts 2 (usually held by Baptist Briders/Landmarkers in claiming it began in the Gospels or by John the Baptist).
5. Communism

This is why if you are going to study Acts 2, you had better make sure you do so in a dispensational manner, else you will wind up with major doctrinal and practical errors.

“The chapter is the battleground for two of the greatest controversies going on in the religious world today. Beyond verse 13 we shall encounter the heresy of baptismal regeneration (Acts 2:38), as it has been taught in the Roman Catholic Church more than thirteen centuries before the “Church of Christ” pushed Alexander Campbell (1786–1866) into the creek. But here, at verses 1–13, we encounter the texts used by the Full Gospel Fellowship (originally the name of Aimee Semple McPherson’s outfit [1890–1944]), and the Glossolalia or “Charismatic” movements which began at the Azusa Street Mission (1904) in Los Angeles. This movement later spread out to Topeka, Kansas (1910–1930), and at present it is associated with the Roman Catholic effort to draw Fundamentalists into union with Rome through a “sharing of experiences.” The two heresies extracted from the passage are:

1. You are not saved (or you are not “sanctified”) until you have the “baptism of the Holyghost.” (That is the way they say it, running all the letters together with the accent on the “holy.”)
2. The initial evidence of the baptism of the “Holy-ghost” is speaking with “other” (or “unknown”) tongues, depending upon who is trying to squirm out of the truth! (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, page 58).”

We also grow weary of the constant cackling of Pentecostals who urge for a “new Pentecost” or “another Pentecost” or that the events of Acts 2 need to be repeated (funny how they never say that the events of Acts 10 in the Gentile Pentecost need to be repeated). We reject these teachings. If Pentecost was designed to get the Holy Spirit into the world and to give birth to the New Testament Church, then all of that was accomplished and there is no need to repeat it. Many neo-Fundamentalists copy the Pentecostals in their interpretation of Acts 2. The current rage is to nag, plead and beg God “for a revival” after reading Acts 2. Yet they do not see that Acts 2 was to occur only once, to give birth to the church. It happened once. It did not need to be repeated. Instead of just plowing forward with a normal brand of Christianity that is not based on emotionalism, these people want to see miracles daily, great numbers of souls saved all

the time and continual revivals. This is "sight-based" and "emotion-based" Christianity and it is very unsafe and unstable.

"But another prominent area of modern interpretation outside the context and characteristics of the times is the popular view of evangelism. Many believe, when they read in the book of Acts of the dramatic numbers of believers and the move of God, that the same thing should be happening now. Many good men become discouraged when they do not see the same thing happening in their ministries as in Acts or even in revival days of church history. While it is true that biblical principles are the same and the Gospel is the same, the numerical results of the book of Acts may not always be the same throughout time.

"There is often given this "guarantee" by certain evangelistic work-shops that "if you follow the principle of Acts, it will bring the same results." But this may not be true because we are not living in the times of the book of Acts. There are several factors that are different. In the book of Acts there had never been New Testament Christianity before; also, there had been no Christian apostasy (although there was Judaistic apostasy). This was new wine being poured into new wineskins. The Church was pure, fresh; there was only one gospel in those early years. God brought His Son's Word to man who was bankrupt naturally and knew it. The Christians then were not facing nor confronting a false Christ or a false Gospel in those early years. The days in which we live are not as in the days of the book of Acts. Therefore, though the Gospel still saves, we are preaching in the time of the Christian apostasy; the institutional churches have become the enemy of the truth of the Gospel. It is harder to declare the gospel today without people interpreting it in the context of the Neo-Christianity. Everyone today is viewed as a Christian no matter what they believe. This was not the case at the outset of the church in the former rain.

"The third area of modern interpretation concerns the concept of revival. As we read of former revivals and awakenings, we tend to believe that they too can be duplicated in our day and time. We tend to look for the same movings and the same results, but each time period in history is different. Again, Bible principles are the same, the gospel message is the same, but every generation is a different group of people with different circumstances and an apostasy that has taken its toll in different ways. Although we may long for a return of the first or second great awakenings or revivals in our generation, revival will not be same. Rather than a revival of great glory as of former days, we must be looking for a revival from God in days of apostasy. The cost for such a revival may even be greater because of what we have accumulated in these days of Laodicean wealth and materialism (H. T. Spence, "Revival in the End Time: Part Two", Straightway, Volume 32, Number 3, May 2004).

There are also many Pentecostal churches that brag that their church is an "Acts 2" church and that they do everything just as they did in Acts 2. That's just another Pentecostal lie.

1. These modern churches don't meet at the Jewish temple in Jerusalem.
2. The Pentecostal church in Acts 2 had no buildings but modern Pentecostal churches do (and often they are very nice buildings).



3. This Pentecostal church of Acts 2 had no church staff- no pastor, bishop, elder, deacon or “worship leader”.
4. No women were recorded as having preached in Acts 2 and many modern Pentecostal churches have women preachers, which is a clear and flagrant violation of Scripture.
5. None of these modern churches ever had 3,000 saved in one day. I don’t believe Jack Hyles did either, as he claimed on May 3, 1998, where he claimed 15,000 were saved and over 5,000 were baptized.
6. No one in these modern churches sell everything they had and put it in a communal “pot” as the early church did in 2:44,45. Can you imagine Benny Hinn or Creflo Dollar doing this?
7. No modern preacher could preach as Peter did to a group of thousands of unsaved Jews and hope for the same reaction.
8. No modern church continues “stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine” as they reject many apostolic teachings (Acts 2:42).
9. Unsaved people have no fear or respect of modern Pentecostal churches (Acts 2:43).and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Instead of having an “Acts 2” church, why not have a “2 Corinthians” church? Or an “Acts 10” church? Or a “Book of Romans Church”?

We believe this passage marks the beginning of the Body of Christ, which we also refer to as the Church Age, which will end at the rapture. There is still a lot of development and transition to take place and we do not see a fully developed and mature church until Acts 13, but the start of it is here.

It could not have started with John the Baptist as Paul had to rebaptize his followers in Acts 19. Besides, he was the last Old Testament prophet as the law and the prophets were “**until John**” (Matthew 11:13; Luke 16:16). The fact that John is called “the Baptist” does not mean he was a modern Baptist! It simply means he was known as a baptizer.

The Lord spoke of the Church in a future context in Matthew 16:18.

The Lord speaks of the Church again in Matthew 18:17 but no time context is in that verse.

It is clear the Lord has the Church in view. We can speak of and plan the operations of an institution before it is established. My secular is corporate research. My company incorporates corporations and limited liability companies. I daily handle documents that lay out the formation of corporate entities and these clients are clearly preparing for the establishment and operation of these entities, but they do not formally exist until the formation documents are filed and approved by the filing office to which they are submitted.

The Holy Spirit had to be given so He could undertake the ministries described in John 14 and 16. He would not be given until Acts 2. This is the primary fact in determining the birth of the Church.

The resurrection had to take place first.

I must admit to a problem of which I have no immediate resolution. I do hold to the Church starting in Acts 2. But I also teach that Israel would receive several “second chances” of the Kingdom until Acts 7. If Israel had accepted the second offer, the Kingdom could have been set up around Acts 8. If that was the case, then why the need of the Church? The Lord naturally knew that Israel would reject any and all second offers and so He had the Church planned from the beginning, but if the offers were made in earnest, and if there was the possibility of the Jews repenting and accepting the Kingdom in Acts, there would have been no need of a Church. This issue (if it is an issue at all- I may be barking at a non-issue) will require more prayer and study.

## **6. The Birth of the New Testament Church 2:1-13**

**2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord<sup>a</sup> in one place.**

1a We don’t know if all of the 120 people of chapter 1 are participating here.

**2:2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven<sup>a</sup> as of a rushing mighty wind,<sup>b</sup> and it filled all the house where they were sitting.**

2a The descent of the Holy Spirit in a physical manifestation.

2b You never see this in modern Pentecostal/Charismatic tongues services. This was not a literal wind but it sounded like a wind.

**2:3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire,<sup>ab</sup> and it sat upon each of them.**

3b This is not any sort of “baptism of fire” as Matthew mentions. Charismatics love to make a big deal about this but it is really much ado about nothing.

3c Not literal cloven tongues of fire but resembling them. This is not any sort of “baptism with fire and the holyghost” as in Matthew 3:11 (typical Pentecostal cliché) as the tongues were LIKE AS unto fire, not literal fire. Also see notes under 1:5.

<b>INSTANCES OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES IN ACTS</b>				
<b>Reference</b>	<b>Tongues-speakers</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Relation to conversion</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
2:1-4	Jewish believers	Unsaved Jews and Christians	Sometime after conversion	To validate (for Jews) God's working as Joel prophesied

10:44-47	Gentile believers	Jewish believers who doubted God's plan	Immediately after conversion	To validate (for Jews) God's working among Gentiles as He had among Jews
19:1-7	Believers	Jews who needed confirmation of Paul's message	Immediately after conversion	To validate (for Jews) Paul's gospel message

(Thomas Constable, *Constable's Study Notes on Acts*).

#### AV

#### ESV

#### LSV

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.	3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.	3 And there appeared to them tongues like fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them.
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The LSV reading makes no sense.

**2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost,<sup>a</sup> and began to speak with other tongues,<sup>b</sup> as the Spirit gave them utterance.**

4a This is the first usage of this term since Bezaleel was said to be filled with the Spirit in Exodus 31:2,3 **“See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship.”** In the Old Testament, the Spirit only filled certain people for temporary periods of time, mainly so they could complete certain tasks. In the New Testament, all believers are filled with the Spirit.

This new filling of the Holy Spirit marks the start of a Church Age, where all believers now receive the Holy Spirit at salvation. They were all filled- without exception. Nothing was “earned” here and no one had to “pray through” to receive the Holy Spirit.

4b **“speak with other tongues”** This occurred only in a few instances in Acts, such as in Acts 10:46 and Acts 19:6.

These tongues were literal languages (not gibberish), and they were all listed (2:6-11). There were no “unknown tongues” as the Charismatics are fixated on. This was the divine enablement to speak a language that was before unknown to the speaker. The tongues were used here so that God could get the gospel out to the greatest number of people in the shortest amount of time. What better opportunity than to have Jews from all over the Empire gathered in Jerusalem? Since they all spoke various languages (not all of them spoke Greek, Latin, Hebrew or Aramaic), these tongues were necessary.

This gift was temporary and situational. There is no indication that the apostles manifested this gift at any other time than here, except in those other specific instances in Acts 10 and 19. We know tongues were being employed in other situations, because Paul had to devote most of 1 Corinthians 14 to correct errors regarding tongues in the church of Corinth.

It appears they all spoke with tongues, not just a few of the most spiritual or the most deserving.

This “sign” is one of the most abused, misunderstood and counterfeited “signs” there are. It is not an exclusive practice to Christianity. “Other religious groups have been observed to practice some form of theopneustic glossolalia. It is perhaps most commonly in Paganism, Shamanism, and other mediumistic religious practices. In Japan, the God Light Association believed that glossolalia could cause adherents to recall past lives. Glossolalia has been postulated as an explanation for the Voynich manuscript. In the 19th century, Spiritism was developed by the work of Allan Kardec, and the practice was seen as one of the self-evident manifestations of spirits. Spiritists argued that some cases were actually cases of xenoglossia (Wikipedia, “Speaking in Tongues”).”.

**2:5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.<sup>a</sup>**

5a Ethelbert Bullinger, in his *Companion Bible*, thinks these were Jews who choose to dwell at Jerusalem in anticipation of the soon coming Messiah.

**2:6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.**

**2:7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilæans?<sup>a</sup>**

7a “Galileans had difficulty pronouncing gutturals and had the habit of swallowing syllables when speaking; so they were looked down upon by the people of Jerusalem as being provincial (cf. Mark 14:70). Therefore, since the disciples who were speaking were Galileans, it bewildered those who heard because the disciples could not by themselves have learned so many different languages. (Richard Longenecker, “The Acts of the Apostles.” In John-Acts. Vol. 9 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*).”

**2:8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?**

**2:9<sup>a</sup> Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,**

9a Nationalities/languages mentioned (acts 2:9-11)

- |              |                            |
|--------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Parthians | 3. Elamites                |
| 2. Medes     | 4. Dwellers in Mesopotamia |

5. Judæa
6. Cappadocia
7. Pontus
8. Asia
9. Phrygia
10. Pamphylia
11. Egypt

12. Libya
13. Cyrene
14. Strangers of Rome, Jews and  
proselytes,
15. Cretes
16. Arabians

This shows that the word of God went into at least 16 national and language groups on this day. In studying the development of the Scriptures from the originals through the copies and translations to the English and the Authorized Version, we see that God's safety net provided that no one language group would have a monopoly on the pure gospel. It came from the original languages through Latin, Syriac, Gothic to the various later translations.

**2:10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,<sup>a</sup>**

10a Gentile converts to Judaism.

**2:11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.<sup>a</sup>**

11a Tongues were used to tell of the "wonderful works of God" in a rapid and efficient manner in languages no one spoke. It was never designed to be used as some sort of "prayer language" or so that someone could show off how spiritual they were. Nor was it ever an "initial evidence of salvation".

**2:12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?**

**2:13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.<sup>a</sup>**

13a Typical reaction. When you can't explain or acknowledge a true act of God, mock it. But how could a man speak in a language which he had no knowledge of if he was drunk? He might babble incoherently but he could not speak in a literal tongue he did not understand. Often, the unbeliever's attempt to explain away an act of God or a miracle often requires more faith to believe than the actual miracle. See how infidels try to explain away the resurrection or in creationism (by the outrageous fairy tale of evolution).

## **7. Peter's Pentecostal Sermon 2:14-36**

**2:14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:<sup>a</sup>**

14a “Ever since C.H. Dodd wrote *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (1936), scholars have looked for a pattern of content for the sermons in Acts. Dodd called the preaching ‘kerygma’ for the Greek word for it. A sample pattern would include the following doctrines:

1. Prophecy fulfilled; the new age is inaugurated by Christ (Acts 2,3,10,13).
2. Christ was born of the seed of David (Acts 2,13; Romans 1:3).
3. He died according to the Scriptures, to deliver us from the present evil age (Acts 2-5,10,13; 1 Corinthians 15).
4. He was buried (Acts 13; 1 Corinthians 15).
5. He rose from the third day according to the Scripture (Acts 2-5,10,13; 1 Corinthians 15).
6. He is exalted at the right hand of God, as Son and Lord (Acts 2,5).
7. He will come again as Judge and Savior (Acts 3,10; Romans 2:16).
8. There is an appeal to receive forgiveness of sins (Acts 2-5,10,13; 1 Corinthians 15) (Stewart Custer, *Witness to Christ: A Commentary on Acts*, page 23).”

**2:15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.<sup>ab</sup>**

15a Peter denies the charge of drunkenness in 2:15. After all, it was only 9 AM!

1. Interesting how being filled with the Spirit is likened to intoxication with wine.
2. Have you ever seen a drunk? He is loud, brash, stupid, but generous. He wants to buy a round of drinks for everyone in the house. The wine has controlled him and has changed his conduct from normal. We ought to allow the Spirit to fill us like that drunk let the wine to fill him. A Christian doesn't stop drinking and filling himself, he simply switches bottles. What about drunks and how can we compare them to Christians in this context?
  - A. He has boldness. A drunk will do things drunk that he would never try to do while sober (being filled with the Spirit gives the Christian unusual boldness).
  - B. The drunk wants to share his bottle (the Spirit makes us desirous to share our salvation with total strangers).
  - C. The drunk becomes very generous with his money (a Spirit filled Christian will not be a tightwad when it comes to supporting the work of the Lord).
  - D. The drunk refuses to shut up but will be very loud and vocal (the Christian is always vocally witnessing and testifying for the Lord and won't shut up about spiritual things). A Spirit-filled man will be a witness. He will not be able to help himself or be otherwise.
  - E. The booze affects your walk (the drunk staggers, the Christian walks in the light). The Holy Spirit will also certainly affect your Christian walk.
3. “Scrupulous Jews drank wine only with flesh, and, on the authority of Ex. xvi. 8, ate bread in the morning and flesh only in the evening. Hence wine could be drunk only in the evening. This is the point of Peter's remark (E. M. Blaiklock, *The Acts of the Apostles*. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, page 58).”

15b With some drunkards, it would make no difference what time of the day it was for them to be drunk!

## **2:16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;<sup>a</sup>**

16a Peter references Joel 2:28-32 in verses 16-21

1. This is a difficult section as it is obvious that Acts 2 was not a complete fulfillment of Joel 2

2. What was prophesied in Joel 2:28-32:

A. Joel 2:28 **I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh**

i. This did not happen in Acts. The Spirit is not “poured out upon all flesh” in the Church Age as the Spirit infills believers. He does not rest upon them. That is Old Testament languages, and this operation of the Holy Spirit will return in the tribulation period, which is a return to a Jewish and Old Testament dispensation.

B. Joel 2:28 **your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:**

i. Some did, but not all  
ii. We do not put the emphases on dreams and visions in the Church Age, but rather on the written revelation of God and upon preaching. This is also Old Testament and tribulational in its application.

C. Joel 2:29 **upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.**

i. This did not happen in Acts

D. Joel 2:30,31 **And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood**

i. There is no record of any such event in Acts.  
a. No wonders in the heaven or the earth  
b. No blood, fire or pillars of smoke  
c. The sun was never turned into darkness  
d. The moon was never turned into blood

E. Joel 2:30 **before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.**

i. These events will take place during the tribulation period  
ii. These events could have taken place in the book of Acts if Israel had responded to the “second offers” of the Kingdom made in chapters 2, 3 and 7. The Kingdom was originally offered by Christ and was rejected. It was offered in Matthew 21 at Christ’s entry into Jerusalem, riding on the foal of an ass. It was rejected by the leaders of the nation when they cried out to Pilate “Away with this man, we have no king but Caesar!” in John 19:15.

a. Peter makes another offer of the kingdom in Acts 3:19,20. Israel rejects it again.  
b. Stephen makes the offer at the end of his sermon in Acts 7. Christ is standing in Acts 7:56 not to “welcome the first Christian

martyr” but to return to earth to establish the Kingdom if these Jewish leaders accepted his message. They murdered him instead, so Christ then sits back down, and the gospel starts to move to the Gentiles starting in Acts 8.

c. The Samaritans get the gospel in Acts 8, the apostle to the Gentiles is called in Acts 9 and the “Gentile Pentecost” takes place in Acts 10. There are no more offers of the Kingdom to Israel from that point on.

3. Joel never says anything about anyone speaking in tongues.

4. **“This is that”** (Acts 2:16)

A. Peter never says that the events of this day were a fulfillment of Joel 2 as Peter does not use the word “fulfilled”.

B. Peter is saying, “I’ll tell you what Joel says; what Joel says is THIS...” What Peter quotes here is not a prophecy of Acts 2:1-6, but rather a prophecy of the other things that Joel said would take place “in the last days” (2:17). Joel was quoted to show the Jews what would take place before the Messiah came to reign on David’s throne, and David’s throne was then connected with a Man whom the Jews had killed (vs. 23).

5. The “last days” begin here but are shunted to the end of the Church Age after the rejections by the nation of Israel of the second offers of the Kingdom.

**2:17 And it shall come to pass in the last days,<sup>ab</sup> saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh:<sup>c</sup> and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:**

17a They technically started with the ministry of John the Baptist, ended with the rejection of the kingdom by Israel in Acts 7 via Stephen’s stoning, and will resume after the rapture and extend through the tribulation to the second coming.

A. It ultimately has to do with the tribulation period, and the days leading up to the Second Coming and it seems to be largely a Jewish term.

B. John announced the King and the Kingdom. It was offered by Christ at the Triumphal Entry. It was rejected by Israel and Christ was crucified. But in the Book of Acts, the Kingdom is offered again, in Acts 3:19-21 and by Stephen in Acts 7 (that’s why Jesus stood up in Acts 7:56- He was preparing to return if Israel had accepted Stephen’s testimony).

17b Biblical presentation of “last days”. The phrase occurs 8 times in the Bible.

1. Genesis 49:1 **“And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days.”**

A. Indefinite

2. Isaiah 2:2 **“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.”**

A. Millennial



3. Micah 4:1 **“But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.”**

A. Millennial

B. Identical to Isaiah 2:2.

4. Acts 2:17 **“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:”**

A. Since the ultimate context of Acts 2 is tribulational (projected ahead to the tribulation), this will have to be tribulational. There would be no need for dreams and visions in the Millennium- indeed, they are forbidden.

i. Zechariah 13:2-5 **“And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the LORD of hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the land, and they shall no more be remembered: and also I will cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to pass out of the land. And it shall come to pass, that when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the LORD: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive: But he shall say, I am no prophet, I am an husbandman; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.”**

5. 2 Timothy 3:1 **“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.”**

A. This is probably dealing with the last days of the Church Age, leading up to the rapture.

6. Hebrews 1:2 **“Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;”**

A. Since we are approaching Hebrews as a tribulational treatise (doctrinally), we will apply the “last days” in Hebrews as a tribulational reference.

B. The author identified the day he was writing in as part of “these last days”.

This would place the “last days” as also extending back to the early church period, especially the transitional period of Acts 2-7, before the rejection of Israel after the stoning of Stephen. This because the Lord could have returned at any time from Acts 2-7 if Israel had repented.

7. James 5:3 **“Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.”**

A. Sounds like a tribulational-type warning for rich Jews.

8. 2 Peter 3:3 **“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,”**

A. This has a similar tone to Paul in 2 Timothy 3:1 **“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.”**

The phrase “last days” can have several applications, but they primarily seem to be future, mainly dealing with the tribulation and the millennium, starting with the tail end of the Church Age. It started at the beginning of the Church Age and had an application to Acts 2-7 but after the “second offer” of the kingdom was rejected, God turned to the Gentiles, so the fulfillment of “these last days” was now extended to our day and beyond, leading up to the millennium.

17c None of the rest of this verse (or in Acts 2:18-20) took place in the Book of Acts, showing that it’s fulfillment is yet future, probably in the tribulation. So many commentators and especially Charismatics and Pentecostals insist that this was a fulfillment of Joel because they are fixated on “signs and wonders” and believe these early verses are fulfilled in our day as well.

**2:18 And on my servants<sup>abc</sup> and on my handmaidens<sup>abc</sup> I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:**

AV	ESV	LSV
18 And on my <b>servants and on my handmaidens</b> I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:	18 even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.	18 EVEN ON MY MALE SLAVES AND FEMALE SLAVES, I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR OUT MY SPIRIT And they shall prophesy.

18a The LSV has an annoying habit of always translating “servants” (Greek “doulos”) as “slaves”, ignoring the context. This is because the driving force behind the Legacy Standard Version is John MacArthur, who never could understand the distinction between a servant, a slave and a son. It was mainly men associated with his seminary who did this unnecessary translation work on the LSV so they followed his instruction regarding how to translate “doulos” and similar words.

18b “Servants or Slaves (from *New Age Bible Versions*, Gail Riplinger, pages 221-223)?”

Billy Graham called attention to the sharp distinction between servants and slaves during his 1988 Denver Crusade, pronouncing, “You are either servants of God or slaves of Satan.”

Webster presents the disparate imagery of ‘servants’ and ‘slaves’.

Slave: . . .a person held in bondage, a thrall. One who has lost control of himself, freedom of action. A drudge.

Servant: . . .one who exerts himself for the benefit of another master. . .as a public servant, an official of a government.

The images of cruel bondage, generated by the word ‘slave’, are alien to our ‘sonship’ motivation expressed in Ephesians 6:6. “. . .but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.”

The prevailing term among New Agers to describe Christians is 'slave'. Scanning the examples to follow reveals the broad range of strange philosophies which have embraced this deprecating term regarding Christians. Confiscated and turned over to the police in Orange, California as part of an investigation into Satanic group crime and ritual killing, this bizarre note calls Christians the "Slaves of Christ" just like the new versions.

The book of Revelation corrects the erring conclusions of this bitter harangue and shows Christians as Webster's "servants, public servants, officials of government." "...and we shall reign on the earth." Revelation 5:10

"...and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Revelation 20:4

"...and they shall reign for ever and ever." Revelation 22:5

New Age leaders say Adam was a "slave" before he ate from the Tree of Life. He was then "emancipated" just like Lucifer, who preferred free will to passive slavery."

18c **"servant"** means a willing servant to Christ. It does not mean "a slave" in our common definition, for that is not the understanding of the relationship that a Christian has with the Lord. Christians are not slaves for slaves receive no compensation for their work besides basic room and board. But servants receive a full reward for their labors of love. And slaves do not love their masters but serve out of compulsion. Servants love their masters and serve because they desire to and their labor is voluntary. Don't ever degrade a Christian by calling him a mere "slave" of Christ when "servant" would be a higher and more noble title. The Christian may consider himself a slave, but God sees him as a servant and a son. God employs no slaves, but He does employ many willing and loving servants.

"Servant" is the more noble term. It is Strong's # 1401 *doulos*; a bondservant. From *deō deō*, "to bind". It also denotes absolute dependence. The emphasis of the word is on the service of the servant and of the dependence of the slave upon his lord. It is never used in a disparaging or contemptuous fashion in the New Testament. Although Christians were not hesitant to consider themselves the "*doulos*" of God, the Rabbis and Pharisees would never apply it to themselves. The term was applied however to those who performed menial service for the rabbis.

"To translate "*doulos*" as slave is not consistent with the New Testament concept of service to God. Christians are servants, not slaves. A slave works out of compulsion as he does not desire such service. He does not love his master. He receives bare minimum wages, if any. But a servant serves from love and because he loves his master (Exodus 21:2-6). He receives good wages and even may be adopted by his master. Thus, there is a world of difference between a "servant" and "slave". In a society where slavery was widespread and freedom was cherished, it was quite something for a man to willingly consider himself as a bondservant or a slave. The concept was not a popular one in Roman culture. Paul willingly adopts such an offensive concept to express his relationship to Christ. While the concept of being a slave was abhorrent to the Greek and Roman mind, Asians saw it as a title of honor as a subject of kings, emperors and God.

"The books of Romans, Philippians, Titus, James, 2 Peter, Jude and Revelation also start off with the authors identifying themselves as "servants". The apostles were

not so much leaders or “bishops” in the modern denominational sense of the word, but servants. The pope likes to style himself “a servant of the servants of Christ”, which would be pathetic if it wasn’t so laughable. The pope is too proud and arrogant to serve anyone, judging by the titles and offices he claims for himself. But a true man of God is humble, does not promote himself, does not attempt to build a personality cult around himself. Beware of any man who tries to do these things or has a proud and haughty attitude, and that goes for in and out of the church.

“Paul also makes it clear that Christians are sons and not servants in Galatians 4:1-7, “Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”

“Differences between servants and slaves:

1. Slaves are bought, sons are born (through the new birth) or adopted (in a Roman sense of the word).
2. Slaves serve out of compulsion, servants out of love
3. Slaves receive no wages, but servants do.
4. Slaves are usually bound for life, servants may go out free (Exodus 21:2-6)
5. Servants tend to love their masters, slaves not so much (John Cereghin,

*Pilgrim Way Commentary on Romans*, remarks on Romans 1:1).”.

**2:19 And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:**

**2:20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:<sup>a</sup>**

20a These are events leading up to and including the Battle of Armageddon and the Second Coming. Verses 17-20 were NOT fulfilled in Acts 2, but they could have been fulfilled in Acts if Israel had repented and accepted the kingdom.

**2:21 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.<sup>ab</sup>**

21a “Calling on the name of the Lord is not a new practice that began with the New Testament. Rather, it began with Enosh, the third generation of mankind, in Gen. 4:26. It was continued by Job (Job 12:4; 27:10), Abraham (Gen. 12:8; 13:4; 21:33), Isaac (Gen. 26:25), Moses and the children of Israel (Deut. 4:7), Samson (Judg. 15:18; 16:28), Samuel (1 Sam. 12:18; Psa. 99:6), David (2 Sam. 22:4, 7; 1 Chron. 16:8; 21:26; Psa. 14:4; 17:6; 18:3, 6; 31:17; 55:16; 86:5, 7; 105:1; 116:4, 13, 17; 118:5; 145:18), the psalmist Asaph (Psa. 80:18), the psalmist Heman (Psa. 88:9), Elijah (1 Kings 18:24),

Isaiah (Isa. 12:4), Jeremiah (Lam. 3:55, 57), and others (Psa. 99:6), all of whom practiced this in the Old Testament age. Isaiah charged the seekers of God to call upon Him (Isa. 55:6). Even the Gentiles knew that the prophets of Israel had the habit of calling on the name of God (Jonah 1:6; 2 Kings 5:11). The Gentile raised up by God from the north also called upon His name (Isa. 41:25). It is God's commandment (Psa. 50:15; Jer. 29:12) and desire (Psa. 91:15; Zeph. 3:9; Zech. 13:9) that His people call on Him. This is the joyful way to drink from the fountain of God's salvation (Isa. 12:3-4) and the enjoyable way to delight oneself in God (Job 27:10), that is, to enjoy Him. Hence, God's people must call upon Him daily (Psa. 88:9). Such a jubilant practice was prophesied by Joel (Joel 2:32) concerning the New Testament jubilee.

In the New Testament, calling on the name of the Lord was first mentioned by Peter, here, on the day of Pentecost, as the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. This fulfillment is related to God's outpouring of the all-inclusive Spirit economically upon His chosen people that they may participate in His New Testament jubilee. Joel's prophecy and its fulfillment concerning God's New Testament jubilee have two aspects: on God's side, He poured out His Spirit in the ascension of the resurrected Christ; on our side, we call on the name of the ascended Lord, who has accomplished all, attained unto all, and obtained all. Calling on the Lord's name is vitally necessary in order for us, the believers in Christ, to participate in and enjoy the all-inclusive Christ with all He has accomplished, attained, and obtained (1 Cor. 1:2). It is a major practice in God's New Testament economy that enables us to enjoy the processed Triune God for our full salvation (Rom. 10:10-13). The early believers practiced this everywhere (1 Cor. 1:2), and to the unbelievers, especially the persecutors, it became a popular sign of Christ's believers (9:14, 21). When Stephen suffered persecution, he practiced this (7:59), and his practice surely impressed Saul, one of his persecutors (7:58-60; 22:20). Later, the unbelieving Saul persecuted the callers (9:14, 21) by taking their calling as a sign. Immediately after Saul was caught by the Lord, Ananias, who brought Saul into the fellowship of the Body of Christ, charged him to be baptized, calling on the name of the Lord, to show others that he too had become such a caller. By his word to Timothy in 2 Tim. 2:22, Paul indicated that in the early days all the Lord's seekers practiced such calling. Undoubtedly, he was one who practiced this, since he charged his young co-worker Timothy to do this that Timothy might enjoy the Lord as he did. (Witness Lee, *Recovery Version of the Bible*, footnotes)."

21b In a tribulational context, saved from the Antichrist and the judgments of the tribulation, which is the primary doctrinal and prophetic thrust of Joel's prophesy. In the Church Age, it involves spiritual salvation through the new birth.

**2:22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth,<sup>a</sup> a man approved<sup>b</sup> 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:**

**22a Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 2:22)**

1. The despised little town! Not “Jesus of Jerusalem” or “Jesus of Athens” or “Jesus of Rome”, but Jesus of a little, backwater, hick town that did not have the best or reputations.
2. **“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:”** (Acts 2:22)
  - A. The miracles Jesus did were signs of the approval of the Father upon Him
  - B. The resurrection was the greatest miracle and greatest proof of the Father’s approval.
3. **“in the midst of you, as ye yourselves know”**
  - A. The historical proof of these miracles were still well-known and could not be denied.
4. **Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain** (Acts 2:23)
  - A. As prophesied in the Old Testament, according to the will of God. None of which happened to Jesus leading up to and including the crucifixion was a surprise to the Lord. It all unfolded exactly as it was supposed to.
5. **ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain** (Acts 2:23)
  - A. Peter lays the blame squarely at the feet of the Jews for the death of Jesus. The Romans would never have crucified Him if not egged on to it by Israel.

22b AV	ESV	LSV
<p>22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man <b>approved</b> 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:</p>	<p>22 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—</p>	<p>22 “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God did through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—</p>

**“approved”** The ESV and LSV have the more difficult “attested”. The Authorized Version reading is better.

**2:23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,<sup>a</sup> ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified<sup>b</sup> and slain:**

23a This counsel must have been determined in a council held by the Trinity before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:20 **“Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,”** and Revelation 13:8 **“And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”**), showing that the Lord’s crucifixion was not an unexpected accident of history but a purposeful fulfillment of the divine counsel and will of God.

**2:24 Whom God hath raised up,<sup>a</sup> having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden<sup>b</sup> of it.<sup>c</sup>**

24a **Whom God hath raised up...** This is a clear declaration of the resurrection, which was a major theme of apostolic preaching. The fact of the resurrection should have made the Jews realize their sin in rejecting and murdering Jesus. If God did raise Him up, then there was something very unusual and unique about Jesus. This verse makes it clear that it was not possible for death to hold Jesus any longer than it was necessary to fulfill Scripture.

24b **“holden”** This word occurs 12 times in Scripture. It comes from an Old English “healdan” (to grasp, contain, retain, posses) and “en” (a preposition). It means “the condition of having been held on to in a certain fashion for a certain period of time”. (Steven White, *White’s Dictionary of the King James Language*, volume 2, pages 295-296).”

24c Christ’s Spirit went back to the Father (Ecclesiastes 3:21 **“Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?”** and Luke 23:46 **“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.”**) while His body went into the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. His soul went into Hell with the “captivity led captive.”

**2:25 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:**

**2:26<sup>a</sup> Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:**

26a Peter cites the prophecy by David from Psalm 16:8-11 (**“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.”**) in verses 25-36 to show that David had revelation about the resurrection and that it could be applied to Jesus.

**2:27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell,<sup>a</sup> neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.<sup>bc</sup>**

27a **“hell”** We naturally expect the critical translations to attack the word:  
**“world of the dead”** Good News Bible  
**“realm of the dead”** New International Version

**“Hades”**. Revised Version (1881), American Standard Version (1901), English Standard Version, Darby translation, New King James Version, New American Standard Version, Legacy Standard Version, Christian Standard Bible, NET Bible, Darby translation

1. Why is “Hades” a better word than “hell?” Afraid to offend delicate ears? This is a filthy and degenerate generation that uses “hell” as a byword continually, so why remove it from your Bible?

**“grave”** Contemporary English Version, Geneva Bible, New Living Translation

**“netherworld”** New American Bible (a Roman Catholic version)

The Tyndale, Bishops, Coverdale Bibles and the Roman Catholic Rheims-Douay version read as the Authorized Version.

27b Christ’s physical body did not see corruption. His soul was not left in hell. Jesus did go to the torments side of hell to deposit our sins there, but He did not stay there! After “dumping the trash” in the flames, He then crossed over to the paradise side of hell, and there He **“led captivity captive”** (Ephesians 4:8-10) in taking the Old Testament saints to heaven.

27c Paul would also quote this passage in Acts 13:35.

**2:28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.<sup>a</sup>**

28a The word comes from a Middle Latin word “continentia”, meaning “the way one restrains himself, as seen in one’s face.” It is a holding together of the face that expresses and attitude or a state of mind. It is used 53 times in Scripture. (Steven White, *White’s Dictionary of the King James Language*, volume 1, page 282). ”

**2:29 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.**

**2:30 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;<sup>ab</sup>**

30a A promise that Jesus would be raised up and would sit on the throne of David to rule and reign in the Millennial Kingdom. Jesus is identified as that King. Peter believed in a literal kingdom and a literal throne of David that Jesus would rule from.

30b **AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according	30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his	30 “And so, because he was a prophet and knew that GOD HAD SWORN TO HIM WITH AN OATH TO SET
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to the flesh, he would raise up <b>Christ</b> to sit on his throne;	descendants on his throne,	<i>one</i> OF THE FRUIT OF HIS BODY ON HIS THRONE,
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The ESV and LSV omit "Christ".

**2:31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.**

**2:32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.<sup>a</sup>**

32a This is one of the requirements to be an apostle, to have seen the resurrected Christ. They were true Jehovah Witnesses.

**2:33 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.**

**2:34 For David is not ascended<sup>a</sup> into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,**

34a By his own power. David would have been taken to heaven along with the other righteous dead at the death of Christ, but he did not ascend the same way Jesus did in Acts 1.

**2:35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool.<sup>a</sup>**

35a Verses 34 and 35 are quoted from Psalm 110:1.

**2:36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.**

## **8. The Response and Promise 2:37-40**

**2:37 Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?<sup>abc</sup>**

37a NOT "what shall we do to be saved?" That question isn't asked until Acts 16:30.

1. No one in Acts 2 is asking about salvation and no New Testament plan of salvation is being given.

2. Peter's sermon brought them under conviction of their sin (especially in the application of Acts 2:36) in both rejecting and murdering their prophesied Messiah and King. Seeing their guilt, they are asking "Seeing we are guilty of such a great sin, what shall we do to find forgiveness and remedy this situation?"

3. The 3 questions of The Acts are:

- A. Israel- "What shall we do?" (Acts 2:37)
- B. The converted sinner- "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6)
- C. The unsaved Gentile- "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30)

37b Oddly enough, David Cloud seems to think this passage can apply to New Testament salvation (pages 26-28 in his commentary *The Book of Acts*). No, no, no, as Peter is NOT giving the gospel here, no one is asking "What must I do to be saved"? and Peter says nothing about faith, belief or the necessity for the blood atonement. Some Fundamentalists, like Cloud, John R. Rice and whoever is currently editing the "Sword of the Lord" are terrified of the teaching that salvation varies according to dispensation, that people did not get saved in the Old Testament the same way they are saved in the New Testament. Their mantra is "salvation is the same in every age, salvation by faith through grace) but that simply isn't true. That is a "safe" position to take as it sounds good and spiritual and it avoids dealing with many difficult dispensational doctrines, but it simply is not accurate.

### 37c THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL. ACTS 2:37-47.

Peter's sermon was in the power of the Holy Ghost, so there were "signs following." There was-

1. Deep Conviction. "When they heard they were pricked in their heart " (verse 37)."
2. Open Confession. "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"
3. Plain Directions. "Repent and be baptized every one of you...and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, for the promise is unto you " (vv. 38-40).
4. Joyful Reception. "They gladly received His Word" (v, 41).
5. Steady Progression. "They continued steadfastly in doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and in prayers" (v. 42).
6. Hearty Co-operation. They were together and had all things common" (vv. 44-45).
7. Great Jubilation. "Gladness of heart; praising God" (vv. 46-47). (*Handfuls on Purpose*, volume 8).

**2:38<sup>a</sup> Then Peter said unto them, Repent,<sup>b</sup> and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for<sup>c</sup> the remission of sins,<sup>def</sup> and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.<sup>gh</sup>**

38a This verse is the greatest land mine the Lord has placed in the Bible. Countless multitudes tripped the mine, and their theology was completely destroyed as a result. It is the primary "proof text" to attempt to teach baptismal regeneration. Many groups will alter the text to make it say what they want it to say.

Mainly the Church of Christ sect and some black Pentecostal groups will use this verse in their attempt to prove the heresy of baptismal regeneration.

38b Notice the stress on "repentance" from Peter in 2:38. Repentance is a requirement for salvation and for repairing one's relation with God after a sin. The first church age

sermon emphasized Israel to repent from their sin of rejecting their Messiah, with the goal of accepting Jesus as their Messiah.

38c Despite any Greek we may cite on this verse (which we do just for the sake of completeness), no amount of study of Greek prepositions is necessary to expound or understand the verse. Peter is simply saying “You Jews who want to repent of the sin of rejecting our Messiah and King, repent of your sin and then demonstrate your repentance by being water baptized in the name of Jesus, thus identifying with Jesus publicly.” What’s so hard about that? And I didn’t need to look into any Greek lexicon to come up with that interpretation. All that is required is a clear reading of the English text. The amount of grammatical wrangling over the verse is unmatched by any other verse in the Bible. No other verse has suffered so much violence at the hands of Greek scholars, Greek grammarians, and the like.

38d “Salvation for a Campbellite is: 1. Repent 2. Believe 3. Confess 4. Be baptized. Closer examination of this “scriptural layout” reveals some interesting things.

1. A devil can repent, believe, confess, and be baptized (Matt. 10:1, 27:3; John 6:70–71) and wind up in the bottomless pit instead of heaven.
2. Pharaoh and Balaam repented and went to outer darkness (2 Pet. 2:15–17; Jude 11, 13; Rom. 9:18).
3. Simon the Sorcerer “BELIEVED” and was “BAPTIZED” and did NOT get the gift of the Holy Ghost, and was not saved in the New Testament sense. (This only makes the Campbellite return to the Roman Catholic position that the believer who is baptized can LOSE salvation: “Simon lost it!” But once this position is taken—contrary to Romans 8, John 5:24, John 10:27–29, 1 Corinthians 1:7–8, and 1 Thessalonians 5:23—300 reams of paper are needed to explain how the “lost Christian” who has “believed and been baptized” gets “RE-MADE” without being “RE-BAPTIZED.” (Peter Ruckman, *The Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, pages 126-127)

38e “During an ecumenical pow-wow, lasting eighteen centuries, verse 38 has been used to justify water baptism as a means of regeneration, water baptism as a vehicle for grace, water baptism as essential to salvation, water baptism as essential to “forgiveness of sins,” and water baptism in the name of Jesus only—not the Trinity, as in Matthew 28:19–20. The verse was used from Ireneaus and Justin Martyr (second and third centuries) to Spellman and Sheen (twentieth century) to sprinkle pagans and then fool them into thinking that sprinkling water was the fulfillment of John 3:5. The verse has been preached to death since the Azusa Street Mission of 1900–1910 by every Pentecostal in the country, and the verse has been the doctrinal “sun” of Alexander Campbell and his followers since 1800, around which their Scriptural solar system revolves; Romans, Ephesians, Galatians, Colossians, Thessalonians, and Corinthians must spin in their orbit around Acts 2:38 if we are to believe the ridiculous Campbellite “elders” who appropriate Romans 16:16—after removing two letters from the word “churches.” There have probably been more people damned to Hell on Acts 2:38 than

on any other verse in the Bible outside of Matthew 7:1,12. (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Acts*, page 125).

38f Reasons why 2:38 cannot be any sort of New Testament plan of salvation:

1. Peter mentions nothing about faith, belief or grace, all of which are necessary for salvation.

A. John 1:12 **"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,"**

B. Acts 16:31 **"And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your house."**

C. Ephesians 2:8,9 **"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, so that no one may boast."**

2. There is no mention of a blood atonement.

3. No mention is made of regeneration or a new birth.

4. The activities of the Holy Spirit were different in the Old Testament than they are in the New Testament.

38h This is a temporary operation, as no one after Acts 8 received the Holy Ghost through water baptism.

What does the **Gift of the Holy Ghost** include?

1. His indwelling

2. His guidance

3. His comfort (John 14,16)

This operation of the Holy Spirit is also repeated at the Gentile Pentecost in Acts 10:45

This does not involve any spiritual gifts as detailed in 1 Corinthians 12.

38i What the **Gift of the Holy Ghost** is not

1. Not the seven sacraments of the Church of Rome

2. Not laying on of hands

A. This is imparted by God in this dispensation, not by man or a manmade religious institution.

B. This took place with the Samaritans in Acts 8:16. For them, it was necessary for them to be prayed for in order for them to receive the Holy Ghost to remind them that salvation was of the Jews, and they had to look to Israel for their salvation. the Lord withholds the Holy Spirit from the Samaritans until His Coming is connected with the apostolic authority from Jerusalem.

3. Not the spiritual gifts of 1 Corinthians 12. Those are gifts- plural. This is gift- singular,

A. Here, the gift is the indwelling presence of the Spirit Himself, not the resulting benefits/gifts that come as a result of that infilling/indwelling.

B. The gift is the Holy Spirit Himself,

C. The gifts are what are listed in 1 Corinthians 12.

4. Not the seven spirits of Isaiah 11:2,3 **"And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick**

**understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:"**

5. It is not involved with tongues

**2:39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off,<sup>a</sup> even as many as the Lord our God shall call.**

39a The promise is the millennial kingdom. Despite Israel's rejection of Christ in the Gospels, the offer on the kingdom had not been withdrawn. This promise is made to those Jews here at Jerusalem at this day, their children and the Jews living in other places in the Roman Empire.

**2:40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward<sup>a</sup> generation.<sup>bcd</sup>**

40a "**untoward**" difficult to guide, manage, or work with, unfavorable, forward, perverse from Middle English, not having inclination" (to or for something), also "difficult to manage, unruly," from un- "not" + toward. It also has the idea of something being "corrupt, unfavorable, unfortunate, improper or perverse (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 349). It is only used once in the Authorized Version. The ESV and LSV have "crooked" and the NKJV uses "perverse".

40b This is good advice in any generation! It requires the practice of personal and ecclesiastical separation.

40c "**untoward generation**" In this context, save yourself from a generation that would murder God in the flesh and would turn down an offer of a millennial paradise.

Can you imagine such a generation which:

1. Hates their Creator so much that they murder Him?
2. Would turn down an offer of a thousand years of a paradise on earth just so its leaders can remain in political power?

40d "Seven times in Acts the apostles are said to "earnestly testify, solemnly bear witness" (the Greek word here):

1. Peter earnestly testified to those at Pentecost- Acts 2:40
2. Peter and John earnestly testified in Samaria- Acts 8:25
3. Peter was commanded to earnestly testify to Jesus as Judge- Acts 10:42
4. Paul earnestly testified that Jesus was the Messiah- Acts 18:5
5. Paul earnestly testified to Jews and Gentiles repentance and faith- Acts 20:21
6. Paul earnestly testified to the gospel of the grace of God- Acts 20:24
7. Paul earnestly testified to the kingdom of God- Acts 28:23 (Stewart Custer, *Witness to Christ: A Commentary on Acts*, page 30)."

## **9. The Results of Pentecost 2:41-47**

**2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized:<sup>a</sup> and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.<sup>bc</sup>**

41a Many of them did obey Peter regarding submitting to water baptism to identify themselves with the Messiah and King that had rejected. This had nothing to do with anyone's salvation. It is a sign of repentance of that sin and identification.

They were baptized that same day. There was no waiting period. All through Acts, we never see any sort of waiting period between a profession of faith and baptism. Almost immediately after salvation, they were baptized. There was no need to complete a 16-week new convert's course or to prove themselves worthy of baptism over a period of time.

Examples would include:

1. Acts 8:37,38, the Ethiopian eunuch
2. Acts 9:18, Saul
3. Acts 10:48, the household of Cornelius
4. Acts 16:33, the household of the Philippian jailer
5. Acts 19:5, disciples of John

41b I have heard those who follow the teachings and practices of Jack Hyles that God cares about the numbers of souls saved and baptisms (which justifies them boasting on their baptisms and salvation "decisions") because God gives a number here- "about 3,000" But this is not an exact number, only an approximation. If God was the record-keeper than some Baptist pastors and evangelists are, He would have given an exact number of both salvation decisions and baptisms, something He does not do here.

41c More people may have become Christians on this one day than did so during the whole earthly ministry of the Lord.

**2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.<sup>a</sup>**

42a The early church may not have had formal services at this point and they certainly did not have church buildings. They probably met in private homes.

1. Their "services" were very simple, consisting of
  - A. Fellowship
  - B. Breaking of bread
  - C. Prayer

The more apostate a church becomes, the further it moves away from such apostolic practices. The more complex the services are, the less orthodox that church is.

**2:43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.<sup>a</sup>**

43a We are still in that transitional period, where the Jewish element is still very strong. Signs and wonders are always associated with Israel more than they are the Church or the Gentiles.

**2:44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;**

**2:45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.<sup>a</sup>**

45a This is a form of “Christian communism” that was NEVER commanded by the Lord, nor did it seem to last very long. It was a simple outgrowth of this early revival, of people helping each other in their needs.

Not a single modern adherent of Acts 2:38 (Pentecostal or “Church of Christ”) practices this sort of “Biblical Communism”. NOT. A. SINGLE. ONE. If Acts 2:38 is so important, wouldn’t it stand to reason that Acts 2:45 would carry the same weight? The early church practices 2:45 after obeying 2:38. No modern adherent does. It is like a Seventh Day Adventist blabbering so much about “keeping the Sabbath” yet they break every Sabbath regulation in the Bible- they travel, they cook, they heat their homes, etc. Not a single Seventh Day Adventist advocates the Biblical penalty for breaking the Sabbath- death! When is the last time you heard of a stoning down at your local Adventist church? The Acts 2:38 crowd is guilty of the same type of hypocrisy.

**2:46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house,<sup>a</sup> did eat their meat with gladness and singleness<sup>a</sup> of heart,**

46a This is not the modern idea of “house to house visitation. This is simply breaking bread from house to house, daily love feasts and fellowship in the absence of any dedicated church buildings. The early church began to move away from centering their activities in the temple area to out in the streets and common places of life- out into the community.

46a They were not double-hearted in their spirituality nor were they double-minded.

**2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people.<sup>a</sup> And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.<sup>b</sup>**

47a “When a man’s ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him” (Proverbs 16:7).

47c The way it should always be. You can do all the legwork and visitation you want (and should) but ultimately, God puts the people into the local churches that He wants there.

“Should” is not used here in a Calvinistic sense of “obligation” but rather of “happenstance”. Those who were saved did join the church.

**AV****ESV****LSV**

47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number daily those who were being saved.

The ESV, LSV and the NKJV have “those who were being saved.” which makes it sound like salvation is a process. They weren’t saved yet but were in the process of being saved. This wording destroys all the meaning of the verse as rendered in the Authorized Version. The modern versions do the same thing in 1 Corinthians 1:18 and 2 Corinthians 2:15.



## Acts Chapter 3

### 10. Healing At The Temple 3:1-11

**3:1 Now Peter and John<sup>a</sup> went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer,<sup>b</sup> being the ninth hour.**

1a Peter and John are often mentioned together, as in Luke 22:8; John 20:2; Acts 3:1-4:13; 8:14. Paul refers to them as “**pillars of the church**” in Galatians 2:9.

1b The early church was still largely Jewish in practice as they frequented the Jerusalem temple to worship and witness. They had not yet started the practice of meeting in private homes for worship and dedicated church buildings were still a few centuries off.

**3:2 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;**

**3:3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.<sup>a</sup>**

3a “**alms**” The word goes all the way back to the Old English “aelmysse” from the Latin “eleemosyna”. We get our English word “eleemosynary”, meaning “charitable”. “Alms” in charitable relief for the poor. (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Verson*, page 12).”

**3:4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.<sup>a</sup>**

4a Look and live!

**3:5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.<sup>a</sup>**

5a He was going to get something better than money. Many sinners come to God for salvation, thinking they are only going to get a ticket to escape hell but instead end up with so much more!

**3:6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none;<sup>a</sup> but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.<sup>b</sup>**

6a This is typical of Bible-believing preachers! But what they did have was worth so much more than any currency. This is something that few Pentecostals, Charismatics and other mega-church preachers cannot say. If you are looking for silver, good or this world's goods, do not look to the ministry. Christ does not promise to those who believe on Him material gain. He had nowhere to lay his head (Matthew 8:20 “**And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son**

**of man hath not where to lay his head.”)** and when He died, all He owned He wore on His back. Usually, it is the poor who listen to and respond to the gospel. Money has value in many ways, but it cannot atone for sin, ease sorrow, or relieve suffering. It can buy a fancy tombstone, but it cannot take the sting out of death or cancel judgment. Peter had no silver or gold, yet he could impart a blessing all the money on earth could not buy- divine healing and eternal salvation. Money is a good servant but a horrible master.

6b “Note the characteristics of this healing:

1. It was instant (Acts 3:7).
2. It was complete (Acts 3:8).
3. It was observable (Acts 3:9).
4. It was public. The apostles never conducted special healing meetings. All of the healings were in the context of their public ministries.
5. It was permanent.
6. It was by an apostle. Compare 2 Corinthians 12:12. (David Cloud, *The Book of Acts*).”

**3:7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ancle<sup>a</sup> bones received strength.<sup>b</sup>**

7a Old English spelling for “ankle”.

7b The healing was a sign to Israel. The Jewish signs and wonders were in evidence in the early church as its early witness was primarily directed toward Israel. As it will later move out to the Gentiles, the signs will gradually diminish.

**3:8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.<sup>a</sup>**

8a A public demonstration of the miracle. Everyone who was a regular at the temple knew this man and his condition, so there was no denying some miracle had taken place.

**3:9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God:**

**3:10 And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple:<sup>a</sup> and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.**

10a There was no denying the miracle as the man was well known to the temple crowd and the fact that he was lame couldn’t have been denied.

**3:11 And as the lame man which was healed held<sup>a</sup> Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch<sup>b</sup> that is called Solomon’s, greatly wondering.<sup>c</sup>**

11a The healed man was still hanging on to Peter and John and wouldn't let them go! Can you blame him?

11b AV

ESV

LSV

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.

11 While he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astounded, ran together to them in the portico called Solomon's.

11 And while he was clinging to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them at the portico called Solomon's, full of wonder.

“porch” changed to the more difficult word “portico” in the ESV and LSV.

11c This account is a type of the salvation of a sinner. The points are below:

1. The sinner is born helpless (Psalm 51:5; Acts 3:2).
2. His mother was connected with this (Job 25:4; Acts 3:2).
3. He is outside the dwelling place of God (Revelation 22:15; Acts 3:2).
4. He is a spiritual beggar (Mark 10:46; Acts 3:3).
5. He expects something from Christians (Acts 3:5). Shouldn't a sinner expect this, especially in the giving of the gospel? He may reject it but he expects to hear it and be witnessed to.
6. He doesn't know his real need (Acts 3:5).
7. Salvation is better than money (Acts 3:6).
8. Any born-again child of God can pass salvation on to others by word of mouth (Acts 3:6).
9. Salvation is instantaneous (Acts 3:7). No praying through or waiting for some feeling, experience or sensation. And there is no connection with baptism or speaking in tongues at all.
10. The new convert must stand before he can walk (Acts 3:8).
11. His testimony should be public (Acts 3:9).
12. His conversation can lead to the conversion of others (Cf. John 4:29; Acts 3:10) (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Acts*, pages 149-150)."

## **11. Peter's Second Sermon 3:12-26**

**3:12 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?<sup>a</sup>**

12a Peter denies that the lame man was healed by the power of the apostles in Acts 3:12. Peter rightly points to the Lord's power to be responsible for the healing, thus giving the Lord the honor that He was due and also witnessing to the power of the

resurrected Christ. How very different from modern Pentecostal “healers” who try to take as much of the credit for themselves (and their “vital, last-days ministries”) for any healings that might take place.

**3:13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son<sup>a</sup> Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go.**

AV	ESV	LSV
13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his <b>Son</b> Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let <i>him</i> go.	13 The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered over and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him.	13 “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him.

13a “**Son**” The ESV, LSV and NKJV have “servant”, attacking the sonship of Christ.

**3:14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;**

**3:15 And killed the Prince of life,<sup>ab</sup> whom God hath raised from the dead;<sup>c</sup> whereof we are witnesses.<sup>d</sup>**

15a “**Prince of Life**” tends to be attacked by modern versions and commentaries.

15b How can you kill the “Prince of Life?” Yet these Jews managed to do just that.

15c Peter again mentions the resurrection, of which they (especially he and John here) were eyewitnesses of.

15d Peter is very specific Who was responsible for the healing- Jesus, Whom they had rejected and crucified in Acts 3:13-15.

1. Titles of Christ used by Peter here:

- A. He was the Son of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their fathers. (Acts 3:13)
  - i. By extension, Jesus is declared to be the Son of God.
- B. He was the Holy One (Acts 3:14)
- C. He was the Just One (Acts 3:14)
- D. He was the Prince of Life (Acts 3:15)

2. He is **“the Way, the Truth and the Life”** (John 14:6) and **“came to give life, and that more abundantly”** (John 10:10). Christ is the Author, Creator and Sustainer of all life.

**3:16 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.<sup>a</sup>**

16a “There is the healed man here and you can’t deny it!”

**3:17 And now, brethren, I wot<sup>a</sup> that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers.<sup>b</sup>**

17a Middle English for “know”

17b Peter does give them an “out” in Acts 3:17, saying they did it in ignorance. But you’d have to wonder just how “ignorant” they were, reading the gospel accounts. Any supposed ignorance would still not absolve them of their guilt in the death and rejection of Jesus and the Kingdom.

Paul says the same thing in 1 Corinthians 2:8 **“Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”** How can they have been ignorant of their actions? They hated the Lord, knew exactly what He was preaching, what He was claiming and the threat He posed to their power. And they killed Him for it. How can they be said to be ignorant, unless they were ignorant of the fact that they were fulfilling prophecy and were being used by Satan?

Look at 1 Timothy 1:13, **“Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief”**, where Paul said that before his salvation, he persecuted the church **“Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.”** Paul persecuted the church because he thought he was doing God a service (John 16:2 **“They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.”**). Paul fully knew who Jesus was and what the Church was and what they were teaching, but in his hatred of Jesus and in his ignorance of the spiritual meaning of the Scripture (since he was unable to understand them despite his education- 1 Corinthians 2:14 **“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”**), he thought he was doing a good thing. Satan and the Sanhedrin are in a similar situation. Satan certainly knows more Scripture than a hundred doctors of theology combined, but he is unable to understand them or accept them since he lacks the wisdom to do so. I’ve heard of atheists who can quote any Scripture from memory you care to give them, yet they understand nothing of what they are quoting. This is probably how these people can do what they do, in full knowledge, yet in ignorance since they lack understanding.

**3:18 But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.<sup>a-b</sup>**

18a Israel missed His First Coming looking for a political kingdom. The Gentiles will miss His Second Coming looking for a spiritual kingdom.

18b These sufferings were the fulfillment of prophecy. There are too many to list.

**3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted,<sup>a</sup> that your sins may be blotted out,<sup>b</sup> when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;<sup>c</sup>**

19a Repentance and conversion are both stressed. The Jews needed to change their minds, ideas and ways with reference to Christ and the Kingdom. This would be necessary on both an individual level with the people and on a national level with the leadership of the nation of Israel.

19b Israel's sins will be blotted out at the Second Coming. Not until then. This takes place at the **times of refreshing** (3:19), which is a clear reference to the millennium.

1. Isaiah 43:25 **"I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."**

2. Isaiah 44:22 **"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee."**

3. Jeremiah 50:20 **"In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve."**

19c Another call to national repentance to Israel is made.

**3:20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:**

**3:21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things,<sup>ab</sup> which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.<sup>c</sup>**

21a The Second Offer of the Kingdom (Millennium) is made in Acts 3:19-21. If the nation would repent and accept Christ, the Father would send them Jesus Christ in Acts 3:20

A good summary of the Second Offer, by J. Sidlow Baxter in *Explore the Book*:  
"Such plain speaking cannot be misunderstood. Had there been a national repentance and acceptance of Jesus as indeed Israel's Messiah-Saviour-King, the return of our Lord in public glory would have happened without further postponement. In other words, the second coming of Christ was contingent upon Israel's reaction to the new message through the apostles. Very clearly, then, we can see why, when the disciples asked, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6), He replied,

"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power." To have known the day and hour in advance would have been to know Israel's reaction before ever the renewed offer of the kingdom was made. Truly, in the words of James: "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18); and it is in the light of His perfect foreknowledge that He preadapts and prearranges and predetermines. Thus, while He never leaves His ultimate purposes at the mercy of human uncertainty, in the outworking of things to the predetermined end He recognizes the free-will of man all through and prearranges according to His foreknowledge of what man will do. Thus, it is that events are allowed in the main to take their natural course, while at the same time God foreknows and overrules all to the fulfilment of His ultimate purpose. Thus, in all genuineness, the renewed offer of the Messianic kingdom was made to the Jews, as recorded in the Acts; and the return of Christ was for the time being contingent upon their reaction. This has a bearing upon the Epistles. In those to the Thessalonians the second coming of Christ is represented as though it might have burst into sudden occurrence in the imminent future. In some of the other Pauline epistles there is a noticeable shift of emphasis: the wondrous hope still gleams ahead, but there is not the same impression of impending fulfilment. This has been a problem to thoughtful readers; but once again, when we see the Acts as distinctively the renewed offer of the kingdom to Israel the problem evaporates. The period covered by the Acts, we repeat, was a suspense-period. So long as the kingdom was being re-offered to the nation the return of the Lord could have happened without any delay upon the fulfilment of the conditions. The offer was real; the promise was true; the crucified but ascended Son of Man was indeed "standing at the right hand of God," ready to descend again in kingdom blessing. Would Israel respond, repent, receive? That was the suspense-point. Now it is in those epistles which were written during this suspense-period of the Acts, when there was still hope of Israel's repentance, that we find the seeming imminence of the Lord's return. Of those epistles, the earliest were 1 and 2 Thessalonians (written A.D. 53). 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, were written four or five years later, when Jewish antipathy was becoming more firmly crystallized, but when to assemblies of believers all over the Roman world the hope of Christ's return was still that which filled the immediate horizon (hence such words as Romans 13:11,12; 1 Corinthians 7:26,29, 15:52,58, 16:22; 2 Corinthians 4:14). When we turn over to Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, however, there is a noticeable new emphasis. The grand prospect of the Lord's return is still there, and still as bright: but there is not just the same sense of impendence. A great new conception swings into commanding prominence, taking the precedence for the time being, and claiming the soul's wonder—that is, the CHURCH as the mystic body and bride and temple of the eternal Son. These epistles were not written until A.D. 64 (or possibly even later), i.e. after the culminating pronouncement of Acts 28:28. We do not say that there is a hard-and-fast division between these two groups of epistles. The hope of the Lord's return is found in both; but there is modification as the later developments recorded in the Acts clarify the situation. Similarly, the Church is found in both; but there is profounder conception of it as the wonderful Divine "mystery" is more fully revealed. We do not say there is a rigid demarcation between the two groups; yet the difference of emphasis is distinctly there; and the explanation is found in a true

understanding of the Acts as the further offer of the kingdom to Israel. Another point on which it is well to be precise is that the two Thessalonian epistles, although they certainly give the impression that the Lord's return was expected in the very near future, do not anywhere actually state that it was thus impending. With that more-than-human genius which everywhere characterizes the Scriptures a fine point of balance is maintained, so that while the sense of expectancy is stressed and even encouraged, there is no actual commitment as to the "day" or the "hour." In this connection it is important to distinguish between what Paul thought and what Paul taught. Maybe Paul himself thought that the Lord's return was close at hand; but he never actually wrote so. We do not claim inspiration and infallibility for all that the apostles thought; but we do claim it for all that they taught. Thus, these two Second Advent letters to the Thessalonians preserve a kind of sensitive poise between an encouraged expectancy on the one hand and a careful indefiniteness as to time on the other. Does this seem unfair to those early believers?

Actually, it was the very opposite. Looking at things from the human side, our Lord's return might have happened then; for as we have seen, it was a contingent prospect. Looking at things from the Divine side (which the now-completed Scriptures permit us to do) there could have been no renewed offer of the kingdom without this contingent promise. Certainly, the further Jewish refusal lay in the foreknowledge of God, but so did His larger purpose through the Church and the eventual return of Christ after the calling in of the Church's elect members. In keeping with this, the great hope was set before those early believers so that they might have—along with all who have followed them—this sanctifying intelligence concerning the eventual consummation."

Don't look for this teaching in most commentaries for they will miss it unless they approach Acts from a dispensational and premillennial viewpoint. The postmillennialist, amillennialist and non-dispensationalist will not see this second offer.

21b **"times of refreshing"** (Acts 3:20) and **"times of restitution"** (Acts 3:21) are both clear references to the millennial kingdom.

21c Summary:

1. All the Old Testament prophets spoke of the Millennial Kingdom (hundreds of verses- too many to list here)
2. Christ offered the Kingdom to Israel and was rejected.
3. The Kingdom is offered again here in Acts 3
4. It will be offered again by Stephen in Acts 7
5. Israel rejects both offers. Christ sits back down at Stephen's death. He arose because He would have returned if the nation had repented at Stephen's message.
6. God now withdraws the offer, and the gospel goes to the Samaritans in Acts 8.
7. The apostle to the Gentiles is saved in Acts 9.
8. The Gentile Pentecost takes place in Acts 10.
9. The first mission to the Gentiles starts in Acts 13.
10. The Jerusalem Conference in Acts 15 defines Gentile salvation.



11. Acts 28:28 wraps up the current state of the “kingdom offer” and the status of Israel up until the rapture and tribulation period.

**3:22 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.<sup>ab</sup>**

22a Peter quotes Deuteronomy 18:15,18 and makes a clear application to Christ. **“The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken...I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.”**

22b Comparisons between Moses and Christ:

1. Both were born of poor parents.
2. Both were born when Israel was under foreign rule.
3. Both were preserved from death while in infancy.
4. Both had humble occupations, Moses as a shepherd, Christ as a carpenter.
5. Both performed miracles.
6. Both fasted 40 days in a wilderness.
7. Both were rejected when presenting their credentials to Israel.
8. Both their faces shone on a mountain top.
9. Both fed multitudes miraculously.
10. Both were meek
  - A. Numbers 12:3 **“(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)”**
  - B. Matthew 11:29 **“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”**
  - C. Matthew 21:5 **“Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.”**

**3:23 And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.<sup>a</sup>**

23a There is great spiritual and even physical danger in refusing to hear and obey this Prophet that Moses foretold and that Christ was the fulfillment of.

**3:24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.<sup>a</sup>**

24a The doctrines of the Kingdom are a major and continual theme of the prophets.

**3:25** 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.

**3:26** Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus,<sup>a</sup> sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

AV	ESV	LSV
26 Unto you first God, having raised up his <b>Son Jesus</b> , sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.	26 God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.”	26 “For you first, God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one <i>of you</i> from your wicked ways.”

26a “**Son**” changed to “servant” in the ESV and LSV.  
“**Jesus**” is omitted in the ESV and LSV.

## Acts Chapter 4

### 12. The Arrest at the Temple 4:1-22

**4:1 And as they spake unto the people, the priests,<sup>a</sup> and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees,<sup>b</sup> came upon them,**

1a Any modern preacher who is preaching the New Birth and the premillennial coming of Christ is familiar with this operation. The first opposition is always from the religious leaders. The government rarely gives any Bible evangelist trouble until the priests begin to complain.

1b **“Sadducees”** They were the same group of Matthew 22:23 and Acts 23:6. Today, they would be your members of the local ministerial association or the National Council of Churches. The Sadducee was a materialist (Acts 23:8) who did not believe in spirits (cherubim, angels, seraphim, archangels, demons, devils) or the resurrection.

They were the more intolerant of the two groups. The Pharisees were a more spiritual group, more concerned about theological issues, and they were willing to talk, discuss and debate. The Sadducees were political, concerned with maintaining their grip on power. A politician is the most intolerant and dangerous man on earth because he will do anything and take any position to stay in power.

**4:2 Being grieved that they taught the people,<sup>a</sup> and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead<sup>b</sup>**

2a The Sadducees saw THEMSELVES as the only true teachers of the people regarding spiritual things, and they were highly upset that these unlettered and unlearned apostates were attempting to usurp that authority they reserved to themselves.

2b Peter and John were soon arrested by the temple police after Peter's sermon. The reason was that the Jewish leaders were **grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead**. Never mind the healing! The Sadducees on the Council were upset that they were preaching “unapproved doctrine”, since they did not believe in any resurrection from the dead, including Jesus'. The sin of the apostles was that they brought Jesus Christ out of the temple and scattering Him all over the community. The truth was getting out into the streets without the benefit of the Sanhedrin.

They also thought that this Jesus fellow and His followers would be put to rest after His death. Now they are back, and with a vengeance, and stirring up trouble just like Jesus did. If this kept up, the Romans might come in and take care of the matter, and the religious leaders might lose their jobs, authority and influence.

**4:3 And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.<sup>a</sup>**

3a They got a free night in the local jail for their good deed.

**4:4 Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.<sup>a</sup>**

4a The result of Peter's sermon were many conversions-5000! Not sure if 5000 more were converted here or if a total of 5000 were converted between the 3000 saved in Acts 2 and here (which would mean 2000 more were saved in Acts 3 and 4).

**4:5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,<sup>a</sup>**

5a There were 71 members of the Sanhedrin and 23 members were required for a quorum. The Sadducees also dominated the Sanhedrin, which made the council more of a political than a spiritual institution.

**4:6 And Annas the high priest,<sup>a</sup> and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.<sup>b</sup>**

6a "Annas, whom Luke called the high priest here (v. 6), was technically not the high priest at this time. He had served as high priest from A.D. 6 to 15, but since A.D. 18 his son-in-law Caiaphas had been the high priest. However, Annas continued to exert great influence (cf. Luke 3:2; John 18:13-24). He was so powerful that Luke could refer to him as the high priest even though he was only the power behind the office (cf. Luke 3:2; John 18:13; Acts 7:1). At this time in Israel's history, the Roman governor of Palestine appointed the high priest. "John" may refer to Jonathan, a son of Annas who succeeded Caiaphas as high priest in A.D. 36. Luke did not mention Alexander elsewhere, and he is presently unknown. (Thomas Constable, *Constable's Notes on Acts*, pages 72-73)."

6b All the religious "big wigs" were in attendance with all their pomp and ceremony, in another attempt to intimidate the apostles.

**4:7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?<sup>ab</sup>**

7a In other words, "Since we did not give you authority for your public ministry and since we did not ordain you and since you did not graduate from our schools, who do you think you are and by what authority do you presume to do these things?" It's a very haughty and arrogant question, asked by haughty and arrogant religious leaders (hypocrites). It all boils down to the question of authority. They will ask Christians "what gives you the right or authority to disobey US?"

7b "**name**" or "By what or whose authority?" "Where did you get your degree? Let's see the signature! What denomination do you belong to? Where did you get your

commission? Is your publishing house reputable? Who ordained you? What school did you attend? Who sent you up there? Who is your pastor? Do you agree with the faculty at BJU? How long have you been in the ministry? Is your seminary accredited? Do you belong to the association? Would the Bishop recommend you? Do you know the “ORIGINAL Greek?” Are you a member of the United Nations? Communist Party? NAZI PARTY? “By what POWER...have ye done this? (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, page 180).”

**4:8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost,<sup>a</sup> said unto them,<sup>b</sup> Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,**

8a The key to Peter’s sermon is in Acts 4:8 “**Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost...**”

8b The last time Peter was “put on the spot”, he muttered, cursed and **swore “I know not the man!”** (Matthew 26:72). Not this time! Peter had learned his lesson and now, filled with the Holy Ghost, is going to more than make up for that failure on the night Jesus was arrested.

**4:9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent<sup>a</sup> man, by what means he is made whole;**

9a “**Impotent**” means “without power or strength, ineffective”. He was not necessarily “crippled”. He may have just had weak legs.

**4:10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ<sup>a</sup> of Nazareth,<sup>b</sup> whom ye crucified,<sup>c</sup> whom God raised from the dead,<sup>d</sup> even by him doth this man stand here before you whole.<sup>e</sup>**

10a Peter clearly credits Jesus Christ, Whom they rejected and crucified, for the healing.

10b “**Jesus Christ of Nazareth.**” Very offensive. Nazareth was a hick town in Galilee which had little respect. The Messiah, King, Son of God, Prince of Life, Holy and Just One came from *there*? Not Jerusalem? We might replace “Nazareth” with “West Virginia” or “Mississippi” (a Canadian would probably use “Newfoundland”) if this took place in modern America.

10c “**whom ye crucified...**” “Not Rome- the Jewish leaders were responsible for the death of Christ.

10d Peter brings up the resurrection again, knowing full well he is twisting the knife in their back by stressing a doctrine they did not believe in.

10e “For them the Messiah was an ideal, not a person, and the Messianic Age was a process, not a cataclysmic or even datable event. Furthermore, as political rulers and

dominant landlords, to whom a grateful nation had turned over all political and economic powers during the time of the Maccabean supremacy, for entirely practical reasons they stressed cooperation with Rome and maintenance of the status quo. Most of the priests were of Sadducean persuasion: the temple police force was composed entirely of Levites; the captain of the temple guard was always a high-caste Sadducee, and so were each of the high priests. (Richard Longnecker, "The Acts of the Apostles." In John-Acts. Vol. 9 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, page 301)."

**4:11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.<sup>ab</sup>**

11a Christ is the Head of the Corner, although He was rejected by the builders. Although Israel rejects Him, He will still establish His kingdom and will rule it as King. It mattered not that Israel rejected Him, the Father had accepted Him.

11b Quoted from Psalm 118:22 **"The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner."**

**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.<sup>a</sup>**

12a Peter makes an exclusive claim here. There is salvation in no other name except Jesus. Not in Abraham, Moses or any of the prophets. Certainly not in Mohammad, the Buddha, Mary or in any pope! Salvation is bound up in a Man Whom they rejected and killed. It's a great salvation verse but one the world would call "exclusive", "intolerant", "bigoted" as Peter makes no room to be saved in any other manner than through the Biblical presentation of Jesus Christ.

1. There is a negative fact here- there is salvation in no other name or person.
  - A. "Did you ever notice the intolerance of God's religion? In olden times the heathen, who had different gods, all of them respected the gods of their neighbors. For instance, the king of Egypt would confess that the gods of Nineveh were true and real gods, and the prince of Babylon would acknowledge that the gods of the Philistines were true and real gods: but Jehovah, the God of Israel, put this as one of his first commandments, "Thou shalt have none other gods besides me;" and he would not allow them to pay the slightest possible respect to the gods of any other nation: "Thou shalt hew them in pieces, thou shalt break down their temples, and cut down their groves." All other nations were tolerant the one to the other, but the Jew could not be so. One part of his religion was, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God;" and as the consequence of his belief that there was but one God, and that that one God was Jehovah, he felt it his bounden duty to call all pretended gods by nicknames, to spit upon them, to treat them with contumely and contempt. Now the Christian religion, you observe, is just as intolerant as this. If you apply to a Brahmin to know the way of salvation, he will very likely tell you at once, that all persons who

follow out their sincere religious convictions will undoubtedly be saved. "There," says he, "are the Mohammedans; if they obey Mohammed, and sincerely believe what he has taught without doubt, Alla will glorify them at last." And the Brahmin turns round upon the Christian missionary, and says, "What is the use of your bringing your Christianity here to disturb us? I tell you our religion is quite capable of carrying us to heaven, if we are faithful to it." Now just hear the text: how intolerant is the Christian religion! "Neither is there salvation in any other." The Brahmin may admit, that there is salvation in fifty religions besides his own; but we admit no such thing. There is no true salvation out of Jesus Christ. The gods of the heathens may approach us with their mock charity, and tell us that every man may follow out his own conscientious conviction and be saved. We reply—No such thing: there is no salvation in any other; "for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" Now, what do you suppose is the reason of this intolerance—if I may use the word again? I believe it is just because there is the truth both with the Jew and with the Christian. A thousand errors may live in peace with one another, but truth is the hammer that breaks them all in pieces. A hundred lying religions may sleep peaceably in one bed, but wherever the Christian religion goes as the truth, it is like a fire-brand, and it abideth nothing that is not more substantial than the wood, the hay, and the stubble of carnal error. All the gods of the heathen, and all other religions are born of hell, and therefore, being children of the same father, it would seem amiss that they should fall out, and chide, and fight; but the religion of Christ is a thing of God's—its pedigree is from on high, and, therefore, when once it is thrust into the midst of an ungodly and gainsaying generation, it hath neither peace, nor parley, nor treaty with them, for it is truth, and cannot afford to be yoked with error: it stands upon its own rights, and gives to error its due, declaring that it hath no salvation, but that in the truth, and in the truth alone, is salvation to be found. (Charles Spurgeon, *The Way of Salvation, New Park Street Pulpit, Sermon #209*)."

B. Salvation is impossible apart from Christ. It is in Christ only.

i. Not in ritual

ii. Not in religion

iii. Not in baptism. "Perhaps I have in my presence this morning some who are trying to gain salvation by ceremonies. You have been baptized in your infancy; you regularly take the Lord's Supper; you attend your church or chapel; and if you knew any other ceremonies you would attend them. Ah! my dear friends, all these things are as the chaff before the wind in the matter of salvation; they cannot help you one step towards acceptance in the person of Christ. As well might you labor to build your house with water, as to build salvation with such poor things as these. These are good enough for you when you are saved, but if you seek salvation in them, they shall be to your soul as wells without water, clouds

without rain, and withered trees, twice dead, plucked up by the roots. Whatever is your way of salvation—for there are a thousand different inventions of men whereby they seek to save themselves—whatever it may be, hear thou its death. knell tolled from this verse.” (ibid)

2. There is a positive fact- where salvation does lie. In Christ and in Christ alone. We may be certain and confident of that.

A. “I know thee, sinner! Thou hast long been trying to find the road to heaven, and thou hast missed it. Hitherto thou hast had a thousand dazzling cheats to deceive thee, and never yet one solid ground of comfort for thy poor weary foot; and now, encompassed about by thy sins, thou art not able to look up. Guilt, like a heavy burden, is on thy back, and thy finger is on thy lip, for thou darest not yet cry for pardon; thou art afraid to speak, lest out of thine own mouth thou shouldest be condemned. Satan whispers in thine ear, “It is all over with thee; there is no mercy for such as thou art: thou art condemned, and condemned thou must be; Christ is able to save many, but not to save thee.” Poor soul! what shall I say unto thee but this—Come with me to the cross of Christ, and thou shalt there see something which shall remove thine unbelief. (Ibid).”

**4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John,<sup>a</sup> and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men,<sup>b</sup> they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.<sup>cde</sup>**

13a Not their love for each other; not their sweet spirit and social manners, not their clean clothes, not their Sunday School or Sunday morning attendance, not their art gallery, not their busses and Christian school, not their knowledge of the original languages or their “scholarship”, not their huge campus- their boldness! Grace will do a drastic work such as this in a short period of time.

AV	ESV	LSV
13 Now when they saw the <b>boldness</b> 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.	13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.	13 Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and comprehended that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they were marveling, and <i>began to</i> recognize them as having been with Jesus.

“**boldness**” The LSV has “confidence”, which is not the same idea. Also in Acts 4:31.

13b This does NOT mean “stupid”. It means they did not have a formal (theological)



education. They did not go to any approved “Christian” or rabbinical school (or any secular school for that matter). I went to two very small Bible colleges/seminaries, both of which probably didn’t have fifty students between them. But I would be willing to stack up my theological training up against anyone else’s, even if they did go to a “big”, “recognized”, “accredited” school.

God is looking for willing and teachable hearts, not educated men. The education comes later.

This is the arrogance of scholarship, whether it be Christian or secular. These “scholars” imagine you can’t do anything for God (or anything else for that matter, even in the secular realm) unless you know Greek and Hebrew and hold a degree from their institution and were taught by their teachers. There is a “cult of (higher) education and it got started back in Genesis 3 with Satan camped under the Tree of Knowledge, attacking the word of God. That is one reason why the “scholars” attack the Authorized Version rendering, since it goes against their education and scholarship.

1. Amplified Version- unlearned and untrained in the schools
2. Common English Version- uneducated and inexperienced
3. Contemporary English Version- ordinary men and not well educated
4. Darby Version- unlettered and uninstructed men
5. ESV- uneducated, common men
6. Good News Translation- ordinary men of no education
7. Holman Christian Standard Version- uneducated and untrained men
8. Phillips Version- uneducated and untrained men
9. Living Bible- uneducated non-professionals
10. New American Standard Version- uneducated and untrained men
11. NET Version and the Legacy Standard Version - uneducated and ordinary men
12. NIV- unschooled, ordinary men
13. New King James Version- uneducated and untrained men
14. NRSV- uneducated and ordinary men
15. RSV- uneducated, common men
16. Rheims-Douay Version- illiterate and ignorant men
17. Adam Clarke- “our translation is very improper”.
18. *Expositor’s Greek New Testament* - “The translation “ignorant” is somewhat unfortunate.”
19. William Kelly (in his commentary on Acts)- unlettered and simple men
20. Matthew Poole has a very strong rendering for “unlearned”- he uses “idiot”!

The pre-Authorized Version renderings:

1. Bishop’s Bible- vnlearned and lay men
2. Geneva Bible- vnlearned men and without knowledge
3. Tyndale and Coverdale Bible- vnlearned men and laye people

13c The requirements to understand Scripture and to have a successful ministry is NOT a formal education. It’s nice if you have it but you can be highly educated and be wrong (see Apollos in Acts 18 and 19). The requirements are a believing heart, a humble spirit

and a willingness to work at your study. The key was that they “had been with Jesus”, NOT that they had been with the alumni society of some religious school. Fellowship and relationship with Jesus is greater than any course of theological study.

13d Usually, two “uneducated rednecks (or hicks) should cower and melt away when confronted by the (over) educated doctors and reverends and the very impressive ecclesiastical display they put on. After all, isn’t scholarship the final authority? These men had no formal education (Acts 4:13) so how could they hope to debate such an august body? Yet the further the interrogation proceeded, the bolder Peter and John got.

13e If they were like Jesus for having been with Him, how should they appear?

1. They would have boldness in speech and would have a fearlessness of man
2. They would have compassion on the lost and the sick
3. They would be generous to the lost and the sick
4. They would have little patience for religious hypocrisy
5. They would have holiness of life and testimony.
6. They would have humility

**4:14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.<sup>a</sup>**

14a It is not that they had no opposition, it was they had no answer for what they had seen and heard and could not come up with a response.

**4:15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,**

**4:16 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*.<sup>a</sup>**

16a If a “notable miracle had been done that healed a lame man and glorified God, why would they want to deny it????? Wouldn’t they want to rejoice in the healing of this man and the manifestation of the power of God and the conversions that resulted from it? Oh, no! The depths of the depravity of the unregenerated human heart, that would fight God tooth and nail just so they can keep their power, influence, money and cushy retirement. If they couldn’t use it, cash in on it, take credit for it or control it, they wanted no part of it.

The Sanhedrin had hoped that by having Jesus executed, they would forever be rid of Him; but now they hear His Name more than ever before and are at wit’s end on what to do about it.

**4:17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly<sup>a</sup> threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.<sup>b</sup>**

17a This word comes from the French “estreit” meaning “narrow”, from the Latin “strictus”, from where we get the English “strict”. To be “strait” is to be narrow, tight, strict or close”. (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 317).”

17c Their solution- threaten Peter and John and order them to cease and desist.

**4:18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.**

**4:19 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.<sup>a</sup>**

19a It didn't work- Peter refused to obey. Although Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2:13-17 were not yet written, the same idea comes into play. The Sanhedrin was the “power that was” in this context. To disobey the government would be the same as disobeying God, wouldn't it? Not if that government or ruling body was ordering you to do something that was clearly in violation to a command of God. The Bible is replete with such examples, such as Elijah confronting Ahab, even Ahab was the king. The principle is that we are to obey the authorities that are placed over us unless that power tries to get us to sin or otherwise disobey God. We must then follow what Peter lays out in Acts 4:19.

See Appendix 3 on the Christian's Relation to the State.

**4:20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.<sup>a</sup>**

20a This is the job of a good witness and it is all the Lord expects of us.

**4:21 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.**

**4:22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.<sup>a</sup>**

22a The healed man's condition was a long-existing malady that everyone knew about.

### **13. The Church Reponse to the Persecution 4:23-30**

**4:23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.**

**4:24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord,<sup>a</sup> and said, Lord,<sup>b</sup> thou *art* God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea,**

**and all that in them is:<sup>c</sup>**

24a Persecution results in prayer and revival. There were no pity parties here or threatening to sue the Sanhedrin over their violation of someone's "civil rights". The Lord warned that persecution would follow so they were prepared for what they received.

AV	ESV	LSV
24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, <b>Lord</b> , thou <i>art</i> God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:	24 And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them,	24 And when they heard <i>this</i> , they lifted their voices to God with one accord and said, "O Master, it is You who MADE THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM,

**"Lord"** The ESV adds "Sovereign" and the LSV gets rid of "Lord" and uses "Master".

24b **"Lord"** is Strong's #1203 δεσπότης despótēs; an absolute ruler, one who possesses supreme authority, despot. It has a bad meaning in the English but not so much in Greek.

24c "Putting the verb 'is' at the end of a sentence is an old Anglo-Saxon habit borrowed from the Germans, who often put the verb at the end of a clause or sentence (Peter Ruckman, *The Ruckman Reference Bible*, page 1435)." English is a Germanic language as well.

**4:25<sup>a</sup> Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage,<sup>b</sup> and the people imagine vain things?**

25a A quote from Psalm 2:1,2 **"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,"**. The "heathen" here are unbelievers, not Gentiles, although the Gentiles would in on the persecution later. There is great anger among the nations (and even Jewish unbelievers) at God and His Christ. They hate Him for His laws and His gospel. They hate Him for punishing sin, especially the sin of sodomy, which continues to spread and become more powerful in this generation. They are angry because God will not allow them to wallow in their sin without judgment. There is a sound of war in this word. This "vain thing" is that man can prevent or delay the establishment of the millennial kingdom, or that man can bring in a millennial kingdom apart from God. This has always been the dream of man, from the Tower of Babel to the establishment of the United Nations in 1945. Man will set up his own kingdom that will last for a thousand years (like Adolph Hitler boasted that his Third Reich would last a thousand years- it lasted for twelve) with the aid of God, which man

does not want. Fallen man demands God leave him alone in his kingdom-building enterprises and he insists that he will not have “this man” (Christ) to rule over him (Luke 19:14).

25b Strong’s #5433 φρυάσσω phryássō, to snort (as a spirited horse), to neigh, stamp the ground, prance, snort, to take on lofty airs, behave arrogantly. They were so mad that they were acting like angry horses, neighing, shorting and pawing the ground. The word is only used here in the New Testament.

**4:26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.**

**4:27<sup>a</sup> 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,**

27a Jesus is:

1. Holy
2. God’s child (or Son)
3. Anointed by God

AV	ESV	LSV
<b>27</b> For of a truth against thy <b>holy child</b> Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,	<b>27</b> for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,	<b>27</b> “For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,

“**holy child**” Both the ESV and LSV have “holy servant”. Also in Acts 4:30.

**4:28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.<sup>a</sup>**

28a The sovereignty of God is mentioned in Acts 4:28. This fits right on with Psalm 2:6 “**Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.**” It makes no difference what the heathen think about anything. God WILL establish His Kingdom at the proper time and He WILL put His Son Jesus Christ on the throne and there is NOTHING the kings of the earth can do about it, despite all of their blustering and threatening.

AV	ESV	LSV
28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy <b>counsel determined</b> before to be done.	28 to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.	28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.

“**counsel determined**” Both the ESV and LSV have “predestined”.

**4:29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,<sup>a</sup>**

29a In the face of this opposition, the church prayers for boldness and courage. This is necessary as the world will roar and threaten and martyrdom stands as a very real possibility.

AV	ESV	LSV
29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy <b>servants</b> , that with all boldness they may speak thy word,	29 And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness,	29 “And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and grant that Your slaves may speak Your word with all confidence,

“**servants**” The LSV continues its error in using “slaves” for “servants”.

**4:30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.**

#### **14. Revival in the Church 4:31-37**

**4:31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, they spake the word of God with boldness.**

31a All of them were filled, not some. They were also filled with joy while the religious leaders were filled with indignation (Acts 5:17).

Joy, power, liberality and communion are all signs of the Spirit’s working and presence.

There was a shaking of the building they were gathered in, probably like a strong wind

There was no mention of speaking in tongues here but they did speak the word with boldness. Filling with the Spirit results in spiritual boldness. Tongues are a sign for nonbelievers (1 Corinthians 14:22 “**Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.**”), so why would tongues be necessary here?

**4:32 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.<sup>a</sup>**

32a There was a great unity in the early church. They were all of one heart and soul. There was a unity of possessions as well (Acts 4:32,34,35). This was a natural outflow of the revival but it was never commanded by God and it did not last that long as Paul had to take up collections for the needy saints in Jerusalem in Romans 15:25,26 (**"But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem."**), 1 Corinthians 16:1-3 (**"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem."**) and 2 Corinthians 8.

There is no parallel to this in either church or secular history. You could view this as a foretaste of what the Millennial kingdom will be like. What a contrast to the self-serving, egotistical and greedy members of the Sanhedrin, who had neither the grace or power of God upon them. We have a view of Kingdom blessings here but a preview of Kingdom curses in chapter 5 with Ananias and Sapphira.

**4:33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus:<sup>a</sup> and great grace was upon them all.<sup>b</sup>**

33a The witness of the Resurrection was the primary theme of the preaching of the early church. They were not Socialists, so they were not preaching Socialism, civil rights, "full employment" or any other political buzz phrases. They were preaching Christ and Him resurrected.

33b Great power and great grace should go together.

**4:34 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,**

**4:35 And laid *them* down at the apostles' feet:<sup>a</sup> and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.<sup>b</sup>**

35a Notice the money was "laid" at the apostles feet in Acts 4:35. Compare with how Judas "cast" his 30 pieces of silver in Matthew 27:3-5.

35b The money was distributed to each as he had a need. There was little fraud or theft at this point, that you usually see in Socialistic/communal situations. The apostles would

also be very careful in how the monies were distributed. No doubt men of high character and wisdom were appointed to oversee this business, if it was not the apostles themselves.

This is a Socialist's dream, but he can't hang his hat on this as no Socialist would set up a "wealth distribution" system like this. After all, no government was involved in this. This was strictly a Church activity.

1. It was the result of a genuine spiritual revival. Socialism and revival have nothing to do with each other.
2. This was voluntary. Socialism, when introduced to a country, is never voluntary. The population is forced to go along with it.
3. When you get right down to it, this resembles NOTHING going on in ANY Socialist or Communist country, as they are godless political, social and economic systems and can make absolutely no claim of being Biblical in any way, shape, manner or form.
4. "The charity and liberality of the church (vss. 33–35) would put J. C. Penney and R. G. LeTourneau to shame. They didn't give God 90 percent; they gave Him the whole thing—lock, stock, and barrel, "kit and caboodle". One is reminded of an Ethiopian woman (1960), near Addis Ababa, who sold herself as a household slave to help put up a church building that would seat less than 100 people. (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Acts*, page 212)"
5. The Church took responsibility for each other and recognized each other as a neighbor (Luke 10:29-37).
6. The Jews were not really known for this kind of liberality, but it became a trademark for the early church.

**4:36 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,<sup>a</sup>**

36a Barnabas is introduced. He is also known as Joses and was from the island of Cyprus. "Barnabas" means "Son of Consolation" he would make himself worthy of that title during this era. He was largely responsible for getting Paul off on the right foot as he started his ministry (Acts 11:25). He also vouched for Paul after his conversion, when the churches were suspicious of him (Acts 9:26,27). He was also a good man and full of the Holy Ghost (Acts 11:24). He also tried to get John Mark back "in the saddle" after he defected in Acts 13 as he and Paul prepared for their Second Missionary Journey, but Paul disagreed (Acts 15:36-39).

AV	ESV	LSV
36 And <b>Joses</b> , who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, <i>and</i>	36 Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus,	36 Now Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means Son of Encouragement),



of the country of Cyprus,		
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**“Joses”** The ESV and LSV have “Joseph”.

**4:37 Having land, sold *it*,<sup>a</sup> and brought the money, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.**

37a Barnabas was a Levite. The Levites were given no “inheritance” with Israel, they could buy individual property (Deuteronomy 18:2 **“Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the LORD is their inheritance, as he hath said unto them.”**) privately. When the revival got to him, he sold it and gave the proceeds to the Church.



## Acts Chapter 5

### 15. The First Instance of Church Discipline 5:1-11

**5:1 But<sup>a</sup> a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,**

1a **“But”** Trouble is brewing in the church. Expect Satan to increase his activity whenever the Holy Spirit is increasing His. A church with no trouble or controversy is a church that is no threat to Satan and a church he takes no notice of or applies no effort in hindering. Why should he waste time and effort on a church that poses no threat to him?

**5:2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy<sup>a</sup> to it,<sup>b</sup> and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles’ feet.<sup>c</sup>**

2a From the French “prive”, meaning “private”. To be privy to something is to have knowledge of private information”. (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 270)."

2b They were in this together and they both secretly conspired with each other to deceive the church. One obviously made no attempt to try to talk the other one out of this plan. One was as spiritually rotten as the other and they deserved each other. If I was to propose a plot like this to my wife and she did nothing to try to talk me out of it, she would be as guilty as I would be.

2c Ananias and Sapphira did the same thing as Barnabas did in Acts 4:37. So what went wrong?

1. Their motivations were wrong

1. Barnabas sold his land and gave the money to the church as a freewill offering. He wasn't trying to impress anyone or to make a name for himself.
2. Ananias and Sapphira did what they did to impress the church and to try to pass themselves off as spiritual believers who gave their all for the Lord.

2. Their testimony was wrong

1. Barnabas wasn't looking to make a name for himself.
2. Ananias and Sapphira lied about the amount the land sold for and the percentage of the proceeds they gave.
3. They were under no obligation to give any money for selling their land. It is admirable that they gave anything at all. The sin came in lying about the amount they gave. If they had been honest and said that they gave 50% of the profit, nothing negative would have been said and Peter probably would have thanked them for the gift (Acts 5:4).
4. The worst hypocrisy is religious hypocrisy because it is played out before God. Do you really think you can fool an omniscient God?

**5:3 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?<sup>a</sup>**

3a Peter was not fooled. Pastors have a way of sniffing out these situations, with help from the Holy Spirit.

Peter first confronts Ananias as he was present at the “presentation”. Sapphira was not present.

Peter then lays the following charges against Ananias:

1. Satan filled his heart (Acts 5:3).
2. He lied to the Holy Ghost (Acts 5:3). The same as lying to God in Acts 5:4.
3. He kept back part of the price of the land (Acts 5:3,4). This was not a sin in itself. The sin was that Ananias lied about the amount of money he claimed to have sold the land for. He sold it for \$100,000 but claimed that he only got \$50,000 and gave \$50,000, claiming that was the full sale price, while keeping the other \$50,000. The church would then applaud Ananias for his liberality.

**5:4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?<sup>a</sup> why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.<sup>b,c</sup>**

4a The Bible supports the idea of private property. They were under no obligation to give any thing and no one could compel them to do so.

4b The issue here is not lying to the church or lying to Peter, but lying to God.

4c Lying to the Holy Ghost is the same as lying to God as the Holy Ghost is God. We see that the Holy Ghost is also a person, not an impersonal force. If God the Father is a person, and if the Holy Ghost is equated with God, then the Holy Ghost must also be a person. How do you lie to an impersonal influence? How can you sin against an impersonal influence?

**5:5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost:<sup>a</sup> and great fear came on all them that heard these things.<sup>b,c</sup>**

5a This is a test of Biblical numerology that the number 5 stands for death. Church discipline that results in two deaths in Acts 5, in Acts 5:5 and in Acts 5:10 (2x5).

I’ve never understood the teachings that “5” stands for “grace” unless it is just commentators and pastors parroting each other or them being afraid to buck this tradition. Some “big name” preacher or popular commentator makes the claim and others just follow along without searching it out for themselves.

5b The result and judgment- Ananias dies. Luke does not say that God killed him, but it is strongly implied. We might call this extreme but lying to God (and man) is a sin and a

lying tongue is one of the sins God especially hates (Proverbs 6:17 **“A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,”**).

5c Great fear came upon everyone who heard about this (Acts 5:5,11). Why shouldn't it? This shows that God takes these kinds of sins seriously and that hypocrites and spiritual pretenders would not be tolerated.

In better days, Baptist churches practiced church discipline far more often than modern churches practice it. If you were to consult church records from these churches, you would see people being disciplined for gossip, not paying bills, lying, bad attitudes, etc, Pastors won't practice it nearly as frequently today because they fear it would cut down on their attendance numbers and “church growth”.

People will “think twice” as a result of this:

1. Believers- they will “think twice” before they try to put on a spiritual show to impress the brethren.
2. Non-believers- they will “think twice” before getting saved or trying to join this church. It is obvious that their God takes sin very seriously!

This is what church discipline is supposed to do. It is supposed to demonstrate to all that sin is serious and the church WILL deal with it.

People may wonder why God would kill two people for a “little” sin like lying?

1. There is no such thing as a “little” sin. All sin is unrighteousness.
2. They lied to God, not man, which showed that had no fear of God in their eyes.
3. It showed that if God was willing to bring judgment against a “little” sin, how would He react against the so-called “big” sins?

**5:6 And the young men arose, wound him up,<sup>a</sup> and carried him out, and buried him.**

6a As we would say today, “that about winds it up!” as he was “wound up” in burial cloths. The burial was done almost immediately, within that three-hour window before Sapphira shows up. Warm climates necessitated hasty burials.

**5:7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.<sup>a</sup>**

7a The second result/judgment- Sapphira dies. She was not present when Ananias died so she did not know what had happened three hours earlier.

She and Ananias had “collaborated” their stories and the amount of the money they would put on their tithe form before this.

**5:8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much?<sup>a</sup> And she said, Yea, for so much.**

8a Peter confronts her- how much did you sell the land for? She gave the same amount as Ananias had. The money Ananias laid at the apostle's feet earlier in the day may still have been there and Peter may have gestured to it as he quizzes Sapphira,

The phrasing of that question should have tipped her off that something was wrong or that Peter suspected something. Did she notice her husband wasn't there?

**5:9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?<sup>a</sup> behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.<sup>a</sup>**

9a This was forbidden in:

1. Deuteronomy 6:16 **"Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted him in Massah."**

2. Matthew 4:7 **"Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."**

9b Peter renders the same judgment against her as he did to her husband.

**5:10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost:<sup>a</sup> and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.<sup>b-c</sup>**

10a She dies in the same manner as her husband and just as quickly. She was guilty of the same sin as her husband, so she received the same judgment.

10b It is possible that the young men who had buried her husband were just returning to where this was taking place. No sooner had they returned that they had another burial run to make. These young men had a busy afternoon.

10c It's a good thing that we aren't living "in the days of the Book of Acts" as many Pentecostals desire. If we were, many churches would be "cleaned out" within a month if God was as swift and as severe as He was here in judging the sins of the saints.

It's "funny" how these "Acts 2" people never want to take a similar stand on Acts 5. I wonder why that is? I know the answer- it was a rhetorical question!

**5:11 And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.<sup>abc</sup>**

11a See notes under Acts 5:5. You can be sure there was fear! Not "godly reverence" but outright fear. Every member of that church had to make sure they were truly saved and serious about living for God and that they weren't being hypocrites about it.

11b Nothing is said about anyone in the church mourning over the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira. How terrible it is to die in such a manner, and for the church not to mourn! There is no record that Peter tried to smooth things over by saying "We have

suffered a terrible loss of a fine couple who got over-zealous...” No, Peter would have said something along the lines of “See what happens when you lie to God?”

11c Oliver B. Greene, in his commentary on Acts (volume 1, page 343), thinks Ananias and Sapphira weren’t saved. Why think that? If you don’t think Christians can’t try to pull off a sin like this, and worse, then you have no experience pastoring Baptist churches or dealing with “the brethren”. Judgment must begin at the house of God and God will judge sin in Christians just as certain as He will in unbelievers, if not moreso (at least on earth). These two, like any saint, has two natures, a divine and a fallen nature. The fallen, sinful nature is not eradicated at salvation, so even Christians may be guilty of such sins.

Saved people can commit these kinds of sins. One common tactic of Christians is that when they fall into a serious sin, they claim they were not saved at the time of the sin, then “get saved” after they get caught. This somehow exonerates them from the sin, especially if it is a “disqualifying” sin for the ministry. When I was teaching in Bible college, one of our ministerial students got caught in a homosexual situation. Once confronted, he declared he wasn’t saved when he fell into that sin, and then got saved after it was brought to light. This is often a method of avoiding spiritual consequences for that sin. It may also stem from a misunderstanding of the Christian’s relation to his sin. Christians still sin and if they backslide far enough or get far out of communion with God, they can commit the same kinds of sins that any unsaved man can do.

## **16. The Church’s Testimony 5:12-16**

**5:12 And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders<sup>a</sup> wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord<sup>b</sup> in Solomon’s porch.<sup>c</sup>**

12a Apostolic signs and wonders are to be expected as the church is ministering largely to Israel at this time that they should the sign gifts that Moses had if they are representing the “Prophet like unto Moses”. The frequency of these gifts will diminish as we move deeper into Acts. (Acts 5:12)

These signs Included healing of the sick in Acts 5:15,16.

12b **“one accord”** But this won’t last as long as we would hope, human nature being what it is.

12c **AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

**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.

**12** Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico.

**12** Now at the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were happening among the people, and they were all with one accord in Solomon's Portico.

**“porch”** The ESV and LSV use the more difficult word “portico”.

**5:13 And of the rest durst<sup>a</sup> no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.<sup>bc</sup>**

13a Past tense of “daring”. No one dared join the church and few were brave enough to do so.

13b The **fear** in Acts 5:11 after the death of Ananias and Sapphira continues in Acts 5:13. Many were afraid to join the church for fear that God could deal as severely with their sins as He did with the sins of Ananias and Sapphira. This is a good thing. It makes people think twice, three, four times before deciding to go on with God, to make sure they are serious and genuine. It also keeps the casual followers, the merely curious and the false teachers OUT of the local congregations, ensuring a pure church.

Yet people were still joining the church in Acts 5:12. There were still many people who wanted in on what was going on in the church.

13c ““There was power to repel. Most people today think that the only power needed by the churches is the power to attract. They are wrong. The church needs also the power to repel--to repel the hypocritical fraternizer, the worldly compromiser, the intriguing insinuator. Oh, the curse of the ‘mixed multitude’ in our churches, whose appetite is for the leeks and garlicks of Egypt! In that first church, the Spirit-charged atmosphere was life to holiness and death to pretense” (J. Sidlow Baxter).

**5:14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)<sup>a</sup>**

14a Luke doesn’t really go into much detail on how they were added. What “methods” were used? Door-to-door cold-call evangelism? Street preaching? One-on-one witnessing? The early church did not have social media or radio or a printing press to use. We assume they used all lawful methods to witness but at the end of the day, it is the Lord who adds to the local church.

**5:15 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.<sup>a</sup>**

15a Nothing is said about Peter’s shadow healing anyone in Acts 5:15

**5:16 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.<sup>a</sup>**



16a “The passage is a perfect summary of the signs and wonders of apostolic authority so woefully missing in the modern “Charismatic-Glossala-Hobble-Gobble-Hubble-Gubble-fellowship.” You will mark that:

1. No “point of contact” is needed for some of the healing any more than Jesus needed a “point of contact” in John 4:50 or Matthew 8:13.
2. People are afraid to join a real, apostolic local church because of the fear of being killed for their sins. Blabbering with “the tongue of angels” and “unknown tongues” has nothing to do with it.
3. There are no “misfires” or short fuses in apostolic healing. All the sick get healed, just like Jesus Christ healed them. There is no tent or church to which to bring them; no offering is taken from them for anyone; no organ is there to put the congregation into a passive state; none of them are told that they have to “have faith to believe” while singing, “Only Believe”! None of them are told to “turn their faith loose” to “keep their healing.” These trappings are the psychological adornments of non-biblical, non-scriptural “Mary-Jo” quacks. Such people have no more power to heal sickness than “Reverend Ike,” Oral Roberts, Rex Humbard, Katherine Kuhlman, or Aimee Semple McPherson (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, pages 224-225).”

## **17. The Second Persecution 5:17-26**

**5:17 Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) <sup>a-b-c</sup> and were filled with indignation,<sup>d</sup>**

17a The Pharisees tend to be presented in a more favorable light in Acts than they were in the gospels, probably because more Pharisees were getting saved than were Sadducees.

17b This persecution was led by the Sadducees. Such persecutions are normal and are to be expected, if your ministry is posing any threat to the devil. A ministry with no Satanic and worldly and religious persecutions is no sort of a Biblical ministry.

17c The Sadducees are called a “sect”. A “sect” is from the Middle English “secte”, from the Latin “secta”, meaning “something to follow, pathway, course of conduct, school of thought”, probably a noun derivative of “sectārī”, to pursue, accompany, wait upon. It is a smaller group split off of a larger group. It is generally not used in a good sense in a religious context. We often refer to unorthodox groups, like the Church of Christ (Campbellites) and Seventh-Day Adventists as “sects” if not cults.

17d **“filled with indignation”** This was for the same reason as in Acts 4:2- the church was preaching Jesus (whom they rejected) and the resurrection (which they denied) despite orders and threats to stop. The church was also continuing to preach without the approval of the Council, and they were in open rebellion against the orders of the Council. The church was ignoring Romans 13 since it was clear that the Council had no authority to interfere in the preaching of the Gospel. We will face this as the opposition

to the gospel grows and the State will make increasing demands on local churches to curtail or stop their ministries. We saw this during the Covid-19 “scamdemic” in 2020 when the State forced churches to shut down and heavily fined those that did not over a virus was that was no more serious than a common flu. Some Christians attacked other Christians for failing to obey Romans 13 and for failure to obey “the powers that be that were ordained by God”. Such attacks clearly ignored the other dozen or so of verses and passages where God blessed those who disobeyed the State in similar situations.

AV	ESV	LSV
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 <b>indignation</b> ,	17 But the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy	17 But the high priest rose up and those with him (that is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy.

“**indignation**” The ESV and LSV have “jealousy”.

**5:18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.**

**5:19 But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth,<sup>a</sup> and said,**

19a A supernatural “escape” after the arrest. This release was for a purpose, so the apostles could continue the work.

This is similar to Peter’s supernatural release from prison and deliverance from certain death in Acts 12.

**5:20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.<sup>a</sup>**

20a The apostles were to go back to the temple and speak “all the words of this life”. You have to have “all” the words if you are to preach “all” the words! And those of us who hold to the Authorized Version of the Bible are sure that we have all the words that God wants us to have.

**5:21 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<sup>a</sup> together, and all the senate<sup>b</sup> of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.**

21a “Councils” have quite a history. The National Council (1970) was formerly called “The Federal Council” (1908), and the first problem that it undertook to solve, before supporting Martin Luther King Jr. and the Black Muslims, was “mistreatment of AFRICAN natives in the Belgian Congo.” These religious liberals met at Andrew Carnegie’s house and got enough of his money to match the money they got later from

The Ford Foundation and Rockefeller. The NCCC (formerly FCCC)—aside from the Communist Party and the Roman Catholic Church—is the greatest hindrance to Biblical truth on the mission fields known to Bible-believing missionaries. (Detailed information is available from Christian Crusade Weekly, Tulsa, Oklahoma, or any of the publications by Carl McIntire, Collingswood, New Jersey.) At the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325) there were “Christian” bishops from North Africa (Alexandria) who thought that Mary was the third person of the Trinity and part of the “Godhead!”

“The Council of Trent (1546)—among other things—pronounced a divine CURSE on Teddy Roosevelt, FDR, Abraham Lincoln, Sammy Davis, Johnny Cash, Ian Paisley, Walt Disney, President Nixon, W. C. Fields, Homer and Jethro, Joe Namath, Cassius Clay, Eisenhower, Martin Luther King Jr., Elizabeth Taylor, Louis Armstrong, Benny Goodman, Bill Cosby, Johnny Carson, Shirley Temple, Billy Graham, Theodore Epp, Billy Sunday, Flip Wilson, Dallas Billington, Bob Hope, Babe Ruth, Herbert Hoover, and Jerry Falwell. The decrees of this Council state that any man who denies baptismal regeneration is accursed, any man who denies the Apocrypha is inspired is accursed, and any man who denies that Italian winoes can be the successors of “Blessed Simon Peter” is accursed. I don’t know of anybody in the list above who believed any of that nonsense. (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, pages 230-231).”

21b **“senate”** A body of high ranking, noble and august men. Our United States Senate was originally designed to be something similar, or at least to be patterned after the Roman Senate, but it has devolved into just another clown show. Here, it wasn’t just the Sadducee “bigwigs” but all the “right reverend doctors” that could be mustered to pass judgment (and to intimidate) the apostles.

**5:22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,**

**5:23 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.<sup>a</sup>**

23a An unpleasant surprise when the jail cells were found to be empty. Behold! The men you arrested and put in jail are back at it again, preaching in the temple! (Acts 5:25) No matter how these religious leaders reacted, the Lord was showing them that they could not hinder the preaching and the spread of the gospel.

The Lord would do this again with Peter in Acts 12:7-11. That time, the jailors were put to death. Fortunately for these men, the Jews had no such penalty.

**5:24 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.<sup>a</sup>**

24a And they were also concerned about their inability to stop the growth of the gospel and in their inability to control the church.

**5:25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.**

**5:26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.<sup>a</sup>**

26a Verse 26 shows how popular the apostles were with the people, which forced the council to “watch their step” in their dealings with them, lest “popular opinion” turn against them. If the disciples had been dragged away with violence, the people would have risen up with violence against the Council.

### **18. Peter’s Second Sermon 5:27-40**

**5:27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,<sup>a</sup>**

27a It’s interesting that the council did not ask Peter and John how they got out of the prison. They probably knew that their release was supernatural, and they did not want to give the disciples a chance to testify to a miracle.

**5:28 Saying, Did not we straitly<sup>a</sup> 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.<sup>bc</sup>**

28a This word comes from the French “estreit” meaning “narrow”, from the Latin “strictus”, from where we get the English “strict”. To be “strait” is to be narrow, tight, strict or close”. (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 317).”

28b The Council demands to know why the apostles disregarded their command to stop preaching back in Acts 4:17,18. They were very offended that the apostles were not obeying them, cowering in fear before them or respecting their authority. Most politicians are like this. But in reality, it was not so much that they were disobeying man (which they were) but they were obeying God first. God is the First Authority we are to obey, even if it means that we must disobey man to do it. Christians are to obey the “powers that be” as far as we can without sin. If it comes to the point where we must disobey, we are to meet with the authorities involved, give our scriptural reasons why we cannot obey, see a compromise and a middle ground and be as reasonable as we can. If all that fails, we “let the chips fall where they may”.

Notice that they said “this man”. They refused to utter the words “Jesus Christ”. Even in Talmudic literature, when the rabbis do refer to Jesus, they refer to him as “Peloni”, meaning “this so-and-so” (Stewart Custer, *Witness to Christ*, page 67).

28c Their fears:

- 1. Ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine**

A. They were furthering a doctrine which they had no answer to or no response to.

B. It was also unapproved doctrine.

C. They couldn't control the spread of this doctrine.

D. The apostles had no fear of them or their threats.

**2. (Ye) intend to bring this man's blood upon us.**

1. The Council feared that the preaching of this doctrine could stir public opinion against the Council and might even result in a violent reaction against the Council if the people came to the conclusion that Jesus was the Messiah and that the Council was responsible for His death.

It also showed how powerless the High Priest and the Council were in stopping the activities of the early church and the spread of their doctrine and influence. Despite all their power, pull and threats, they had been totally unable to intimidate the church or to prevent their ministry. The Council was "losing their grip" over the early church and they knew it.

The Council charged Peter and the Church on trying to "bring this man's blood upon us" but they had already done that themselves. They could not blame the Church for their rejection of Christ, or the consequences of that rejection.

**5:29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.<sup>ab</sup>**

29a Although Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2:13-17 were not yet written; the same idea comes into play. The Sanhedrin was the "power that was" in this context. To disobey the government would be the same as disobeying God, wouldn't it? Not if that government or ruling body was ordering you to do something that was clearly in violation to a command of God. The Bible is replete with such examples, such as Elijah confronting Ahab, even Ahab was the king. The principle is that we are to obey the authorities that are placed over us unless that power tries to get us to sin or otherwise disobey God. We must then follow what Peter lays out in Acts 4:19.

29b "Before the crucifixion, the Lord couldn't shut Peter up, and now the Devil can't shut him up...Here we have the equivalent of a lawyer examining a culprit and saying, "Didn't you get that court order served on you last month?" And the defendant answers, "I didn't feel led to read it. Now you dirty four-flusher, let me tell you something...!" (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Acts*, page 232)."

**5:30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus,<sup>a</sup> whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.<sup>b</sup>**

30a The resurrection mentioned again.

30b This is what the Council was afraid of. Peter was charging the Council for being responsible for the death of Christ. He flat out charges them with murder, even deicide

(the killing of God). If this “caught on” with the people, there was no telling what their reaction would be, although the Council feared it could have been violent.

The Jews “slew” Christ while the Romans were the ones who hung Him on the tree. Peter puts the blame on the Jews more than on the Romans. Peter uses graphic and strong language in saying “slew”. It is Strong’s #1315 διαχειρίζομαι diacheirizomai, to handle thoroughly, that is, lay violent hands upon, kill, slay.

**5:31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour,<sup>a</sup> for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.<sup>b</sup>**

AV	ESV	LSV
31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand <i>to be</i> a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.	31 God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.	31 “This One God exalted to His right hand as a Leader and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

“Him” The LSV uses the New Age term “This One”.

31a Despite the rejection by the Council, the Lord exalted Jesus to be:

1. A Prince. Compare with Daniel 9:26 (“**And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.**”) for this title being applied to Christ.

2. A Saviour.

31b This was in anticipation for the establishment of the Kingdom.

1. Israel must repent of her national sins.

2. If Israel would repent, then God would grant them repentance.

3. This was the burden of John the Baptist- “**repent!**” (Matthew 3:1).

4. Peter’s message to Israel is still being heavily influenced by John the Baptist.

**5:32 And we are his witnesses of these things;<sup>a</sup> and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.<sup>b</sup>**

32a The apostles and early church were the real Jehovah Witnesses, not the magazine peddlers who keep knocking at your door.

32b This shows again that the Holy Spirit is a person, as the masculine pronoun is applied to Him (compare with Acts 5:3,4)

**5:33 When they heard that, they were cut to the heart,<sup>a</sup> and took counsel to slay them.<sup>b</sup>**

33a This is what the word of God, which is sharper than any two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12 **"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."**) is designed to do when it is handled properly! It brings strong conviction and Peter drew (spiritual) blood.

33b They began to consider killing the apostles. What a noble attitude for men of God and religious leaders! Murder other preachers! There is no bloodier murder than a religious murder who murders in the name of his god (I used the lower case on purpose!).

**5:34 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel,<sup>a</sup> a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;**

34a He was a Pharisee and a doctor of the Law and was a man of great reputation. As a Pharisee, he would not have been offended by the preaching of the resurrection of Christ, since the Pharisee's accepted the doctrine of resurrections.

**5:35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.**

**5:36<sup>a</sup> 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.**

36a Gamaliel recounts two recent events:

1. **Theudas** in Acts 5:36

- A. He boasted to be an important person.
- B. He gathered a following of about 400 men.
- C. Yet nothing came of it.

2. **Judas of Galilee** in Acts 5:37

- A. He also gathered a following but all perished in the days of the taxing, probably around Luke 2:1.

**5:37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing,<sup>a</sup> and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.**

**5:38 And now I say unto you,<sup>a</sup> Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work<sup>b</sup> be of men, it will come to nought:**

**5:39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply<sup>a</sup> ye be found even to fight against God.<sup>b</sup>**

39a “**haply**”, old English for “perhaps”. It comes from the Old Norse “happ” meaning “chance or good luck”. For something to occur “haply” is for it to take place by chance or by accident, with no apparent design or intent. (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 317).”

39b His summary was that if this movement is of man, it will perish. If it is of God, you don’t want to be seen fighting God and you can’t overthrow it anyway.

This isn’t exactly true. Many false movements are very successful and long lasting. Arianism started in the third century but continues today in the successful Jehovah Witness cult. Paul condemned legalism in Galatians, but the Seventh Day Adventists are still here today. Mormonism is almost two hundred years old and is still growing. And there are a number of good, solid churches that shut down every year for a variety of reasons.

**5:40 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.<sup>a</sup>**

40a The Council agreed and took Gamaliel’s advice, but that did not prevent them from giving the apostles a good beating and more threats to stop preaching.

## **19. The Disciple’s Reaction 5:41,42**

**5:41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.<sup>a</sup>**

41a The reaction of the church was similar to their reaction in Acts 4:23-31- joy and power! They were not concerned for whatever personal shame they suffered if the Lord got the glory.

<b>AV</b>	<b>ESV</b>	<b>LSV</b>
<b>41</b> And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for <b>his name</b> .	<b>41</b> Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.	<b>41</b> So they went on their way from the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for the Name.

“**his name**” The ESV and LSV have “the name/Name”, which would be a New Age term.

**5:42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.<sup>a</sup>**



42a They continued to ignore the threats from the Council as they return to their public temple ministry

The **in every house** was not the modern idea of “house to house visitation” which is the theological equivalent to “cold calling” in sales, but daily ministry in the houses of the church members, since there was no central church buildings yet.



## Acts Chapter 6

### 20. Appointing of the First Deacons 6:1-6

**6:1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.<sup>ab</sup>**

1a There was a problem in the daily ministration to some of the Grecian believers. It appears the Jerusalem Church was providing some food or financial assistance to some of the poorer members of the church. The Greek believers were complaining that the Hebrews believers were getting priority in having their needs met. There could have been some racial discrimination here, as the Greek believers may have been treated as second-class members. The early church struggled with this at least as late as Acts 11.

These “Grecians” may not have been Gentiles but Gentile proselytes to Judaism who later converted to Christianity.

1b Always expect troubles and murmurings in local church. You can’t get a group of people together, even a Christian group, without some clash of personalities. Trouble always follows a revival. This first “church dispute” started with murmurings.

#### **AV**

#### **ESV**

#### **LSV**

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**.

1 Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution.

1 Now in those days, while the disciples were multiplying *in number*, there was grumbling from the Hellenists against the Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving *of food*.

“**Grecians**” The ESV and LSV make an unnecessary change to “Hellenists”.

“**ministration**” The LSV interprets and does not translate by assuming the “ministration” was “the serving of food”.

**6:2 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.<sup>ab</sup>**

2a There is a need for delegation in the church. A good leader spreads the work around. Bad leaders, who are insecure and suspicious, hoard the work to themselves as they will not trust anyone else to handle these responsibilities. But good leaders are always looking for chances to develop skills and maturity in those under him. The pastor shouldn’t have to “do it all” in the church nor should he have to or want to, no matter how small the church might be.

2b It made no sense for the apostles to leave off prayer and study to wait on tables. It's not that they thought themselves too good to wait on tables, but they had more pressing business to attend to, and if they took to waiting on tables or handling some of these more "petty" issues, it would take away time for the more important tasks of prayer, study and ministry. And those three ministries take time!

**6:3 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.<sup>ab</sup>**

3a The apostles had the congregation search out such men so they could concentrate on the ministry of the word and prayer. These men were not selected by the apostles but by the congregation. The word "deacon" does not appear in this chapter, but it is obvious that these men would be the first deacons selected. The Greek words "diakonia" is used in Acts 6:1,4 and "diakoneo" in Acts 6:2. These words are related to the Greek words for "deacon".

3b Qualifications for deacons

1. Must be men. The Bible knows nothing of women deacons. Phebe was not a "deaconess" in Romans 16:1. She was simply a woman who was doing the work of a deacon, but that did not make her a deacon.
2. Men on honest report
3. Men filled with the Holy Ghost
4. Full of wisdom

Deacons are spiritual ministers (1 Timothy 3) who serve congregations by "**waiting on them**" (Romans 12:7). They have spiritual qualifications, but their ministry is largely physical and practical. With the pastor, they constitute the spiritual backbone of a church; and they assist in prayer, visitation, ministering to the down-and-outers, keeping the building and property clean, distributing gifts and donations that have been voted on by the church, and counseling with the pastor during times of dissension, strife, and persecution.

Cross reference from 1 Timothy 3:8-11 for the expanded qualifications for deacons by Paul.

**1. 3:8 Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;**

1. A deacon is a servant in the church, literally "one who waits on tables" or a "runner through the dust". They do the more menial tasks in the church to free up the preachers/elders so they can concentrate on the actually running of the church, as well as to free them up for more time for prayer and study of the Word. Thus, a deacon has no ruling authority in the church. He is to serve, minister and provide "support" for the church leadership.
2. He must not a hypocrite, not someone who speaks out of both sides of his mouth, but one who means what he says and says what he means.

3. The deacon is not to be “given to much wine”. Again, some usage of wine (not mixed drinks!) might be acceptable (and I say that with much hesitation), the bishop is to be less of a “wine drinker” than a bishop. The reason is that the deacon is not entrusted with ruling authority in the church. The bishop is. The bishop is “on call” 24 hours a day. He cannot afford to be drunk or otherwise incapacitated if a spiritual emergency among his members arises. The deacon, who has no such responsibility, need not to really worry about that.

4. Not greedy of filthy lucre. Greed of money is bad enough but there are other things to be greedy of- numbers, power, recognition, material things, church buildings, etc. If a deacon is greedy for anything except God and the power of God, he is disqualified. If he is greedy of money, then he will do anything to get it, including compromising the truth of God.

**2. 3:9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.**

1. He needs to have the proper respect and appreciation for the great teachings and doctrines of the Bible and have a proper appreciation for them. He needs then to be familiar with these doctrines, so he needs to be a Bible student. And when does hold and receive these doctrines, he needs to do so with right motivations- to glorify God and to instruct God’s people, not to make money from it or to use these doctrines to establish a personality cult around himself.

**3. 3:10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.**

1. A deacon is to be a seasoned man, who is spiritually mature and is not a novice in experience or in things of the faith.

2. He is to be blameless. This is not sinless, for then would no man qualify for the office. But his life is to be clean, with no open or obvious scandal that would bring disgrace to his office and to the church.

**4. 3:11 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.**

1. No requirements are given for the wives of bishops but the wives of deacons have requirements. The reason for this is that deacon’s wives can do the work of a deacon but the bishop’s wives cannot. Anyone can do the work of a deacon, even if they are not a deacon. Anyone can serve. And in some situations, a woman can handle a deacon-type situation better than the deacon can, like assisting women preparing to be baptized. In this case, the wives of the deacons can assist their husbands in their ministries, although they are not officially deacons. But the wives of bishops really can’t help their husbands in the same fashion. And I do not support the modern charismatic idea of “husband-wife” pastoral teams since women are barred from a pastoral office. But there would be some justification for husband-wife deacon teams. But this would not open up an office of a “deaconess” for no such office exists in the New Testament church. It is obvious that the deacon is to be a man, for nothing is said about the husbands of the deaconesses!

2. Phoebe, in Romans 16, was no “deaconess”. Phoebe was not a deacon since no woman can be a deacon. She did a deacon’s work without being a deacon. Wives of deacons do deacon’s work right along with their husband without the

women actually being in the office. Phoebe (and others like her) may have supervised the baptism of female converts and maybe teaching them. They fulfilled an important function in the early church, such as instructing the women and girls. Visiting and ministering to the women in the congregation, maintaining order in the “women’s side” of the congregation during services, among other duties. Most of them were widows and elderly married ladies.

AV	ESV	LSV
3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the <b>Holy Ghost</b> and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.	3 Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty.	3 “Therefore, brothers, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this need.

“**Holy Ghost**” The ESV and LSV just have “Spirit” and omit “Holy”.

**6:4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.<sup>ab</sup>**

4a The most important ministry of the preacher- to pray and to study the Scripture. Anything that takes away from that in the operation of a local church are tasks that deacons should do, to free up the preachers and church leadership for these ministries.

4b It’s a pity that many pastors cannot do this. Their churches may be too small to give them full support. I have been in this situation as a “bi-vocational” pastor since 1998 as my church cannot give me full support needed to fulfill this. How I envy those men who have the privilege to work for God all day long without having to be sidetracked with secular vocations!

AV	ESV	LSV
4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the <b>ministry</b> of the word.	4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”	4 “But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the service of the word.”

“**ministry**.”The LSV has an inferior reading of “service”.

**6:5 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:<sup>ab</sup>**

5b The men selected by the congregation  
1. Stephen

- A. A man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost
- B. He would be martyred in Acts 7.
- 2. Philip
  - A. We'll see him again in Acts 8.
- 3. Prochorus
- 4. Nicanor
- 5. Timon
- 6. Parmenas
- 7. Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:

Stephen and Philip did not murmur when they were asked to serve tables. Stephen did not say, "I am a great teacher and preacher. I see many souls saved each week under my vital, last days ministry. How can you ask me to be a deacon?" Likewise, Philip did not say, "I am an outstanding, nationally known evangelist. My sermons are printed regularly in the Sword of the Lord. Why do you ask me to serve tables?" Instead of murmuring, Stephen and Philip did a good job in serving tables. This proved they were the right men for the job because of their heart attitudes towards this important ministry.

5c The Law of First Mention states that the first time a word is used in Scripture, notice the character of that word. As you follow it through Scripture, that meaning will keep its character and intensify. "Antioch" is used for the first time here and it is associated with deacons, godly men, full of the Holy Ghost, in the context of the first Christian martyr. It is also associated with Bible teachers in Acts 11:26 and 13:1.

Compare the first use of "Alexandria" in Acts 6:9, associated with persecution, murder (of Stephen) and opposition to the truth. Antioch stands for true Biblical Christianity, Remnant Saints and Genuine Bibles. Alexandria, Egypt stands for worldly scholarship, persecution of saints, opposition to truth and corrupt, apostate Bibles and manuscripts.

**6:6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.<sup>a</sup>**

6a The apostles laid hands on the deacons, in acknowledgement and bestowal of authority on them to undertake their new duties. I don't think that they necessarily need to be ordained in the modern sense, but I wouldn't worry too much about it if a local church wanted to ordain their deacons. The Bible really says nothing about ordination, either for pastors or deacons. Ordination is a human practice more than one that God commanded.

## **21. Stephen's Ministry 6:7-15**

**6:7 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.<sup>a</sup>**

7a An increasing number of priests and Pharisees were getting saved, but many of them were having a hard time coming to grips with Gentiles in the church or that the law was no longer binding on Christians (see early verses of Acts 15 and the controversy that triggered that church conference at Jerusalem).

**6:8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.<sup>a</sup>**

8a Was Stephen also an apostle? He is never referred to as an apostle, but he is manifesting the apostolic signs and wonders here.

AV	ESV	LSV
8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and <b>miracles</b> among the people.	8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people.	8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing great wonders and signs among the people.

**“miracles”** Why can’t the ESV and LSV just use “miracle” instead of changing it to “signs”?

**6:9 Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines,<sup>a</sup> and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians,<sup>b</sup> and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.<sup>cd</sup>**

9a Freeman, maybe even Roman citizens.

9b It is never a good sign (spiritually) when Alexandria shows up, as it would be a good type of the world system (as it is in Egypt) in a New Testament context, in opposition to Antioch, which is the true home of Biblical Christianity, as seen in Acts 11:26; 13:1-3. Liberals, modernists, “scholars” and other assorted “Christian” infidels love Alexandria (especially when it comes to Biblical manuscripts). Bible believing remnant saints look instead to Antioch for their spiritual identification.

9c The Jews would give Stephen the same kind of opposition that Paul would become so familiar with in his ministry.

9d Luke does not say that Stephen preached in any of these synagogues as Paul would later do. Luke states that the opposition to Stephen came from the synagogues.

**6:10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.<sup>a</sup>**

10a A Spirit-filled man can confound any number of “learned doctors”. Stephen’s opponents could not answer his preaching, nor could they give any rebuttal to any of the things he said.



**6:11 Then they suborned men,<sup>a</sup> which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.<sup>bc</sup>**

11a Paid them off (bribed them) to be false witnesses against Stephen.

11b What do you do when you can't respond to the witnesses of that pesky street-preacher? Have him arrested on trumped-up charges, which is an age-old trick used against most men of God. That's how you know you are winning- when your opponents want to be arrested and even killed.

11c Notice the order- Moses, then God! They have their priorities all mixed up.

**6:12 And they stirred up the people,<sup>a</sup> and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council,**

12a Stirred up a mob, in the same way they stirred up the crowd in Matthew 27:20 **"But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus."** This isn't hard to do, if "the people" are led by simpletons who are crooked and if they believe everything they hear. The media is very good at stirring up "the people" even today.

**6:13 And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:<sup>a</sup>**

13a But not against God? You can blaspheme God all you want, just don't talk against our church building, denomination, and theological system!

\*\*\*\*\*

**6:14 For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place,<sup>a</sup> and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.<sup>bcd</sup>**

14a Stephen probably repeated the Lord's prophecy of Matthew 24:2 regarding the destruction of the temple, **"And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."**

14b This might have involved Stephen's version of Romans 10:4 (**"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."**), in declaring Christ fulfilled the law and that it was no longer binding on believers. The Jews could not accept the idea of a dispensational shift from Old Testament Law to a New Testament set-up. The Church was also slow in realizing this, if we study Peter's attitudes in Acts 10 and the Church's reaction in Acts 11.

14c “1. As in Christ’s case, his enemies *could not answer* his arguments (Acts 6:10 with Matt. 22:46).  
 2. As in Christ’s case, they hired *false witnesses* to ruin him (Acts 6:11 with Matt. 26:60).  
 3. As in Christ’s case, they accused him of *blasphemy* (Acts 6:13 with Matt. 26:65).  
 4. As in Christ’s case, they *stirred up the people* against him (Acts 6:12 and Matt. 27:20).  
 5. As in Christ’s case, they accused him of not *reverencing the “LAW”* (Acts 6:13 and Matt. 12:2).  
 6. As in Christ’s case, they accused him of forecasting the *destruction of the temple* (Acts 6:14 with Matt. 26:61).  
 7. Caiaphas was a priest on both occasions (Acts 7:1 cf. 4:6 with Matt. 26:57)  
 This same pattern follows Paul’s ministry in Acts 21–26, and it is a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for religious persecution in any age. Every murder of Waldensians, Albigenses, Vaudois, Paulicians, Lollards, Hussites, Brethren, Bogomiles, etc., was accompanied by false accusations, fear of the destruction of material institutions, resentment of the truth, mob disorders, accusations of blasphemy, and (!) the inevitable “**COUNCIL**” (vs. 12)! (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, pages 254-255).”

14d What about the *commandments* that God delivered to you in Deuteronomy 5:22? They’d rather observe customs than commandments, as any religious hypocrite would.

**6:15 And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.**<sup>abcd</sup>

15a The only thing you can do with a man like this is kill him!

15b True Christians see the parallel with Moses in Exodus 32–35. When Moses saw God, his face shone so bright that they had to put a veil over it. While the Jews are blathering about Moses, Stephen is showing a true and better parallel to Moses here. When you are right with God and have a good conscience, your face will shine like this. But neither Moses nor Stephen were aware that their face shone like this.

15c In reality, the Council could no more try Stephen than a criminal can try a righteous man. The Sanhedrin was nothing more than a band of religious criminals. Each time the Council had brought the apostles to trial, they found themselves on the defensive as the apostles had held them responsible for the death of Christ.

15d “When a prisoner enters a court, every eye is naturally drawn towards him, and the judge and jury frequently observe his countenance as a kind of index of his conscious innocence or guilt. All that sat in the council looked stedfastly on Stephen, wishing and hoping perhaps to gaze him into confusion and tremor. But he could bear looking at. They saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. But filled with envy and malice

and fury, and gnashing upon him with their teeth, how did *their* faces appear? (William Jay, *Evening Exercises for Every Day of the Year*, devotion for February 21)."



## Acts Chapter 7

### 22:1 Stephen's Sermon 7:1-50

**7:1 Then said the high priest, Are these things so?**

**7:2<sup>a</sup> And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers,<sup>b</sup> hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our<sup>c</sup> father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,**

2a Stephen now goes into a lengthy historical recounting and summary of God's dealings with Israel starting with the call of Abraham, to show that the church was a part of God's plan and that Israel should accept Jesus Christ as their King and Messiah.

"Confronted with the **"council"** and the high priest, Stephen launches his message with all the gusto of a PT boat on a torpedo run. They are cheering and applauding after verses 4, 7, 8, 10, and 34; but they are as grim and morose as warmed over death after verses 9, 25, and 35. By the time Stephen gets to the "peroration" (vss. 48–50), they are mad enough to skin him alive, and when he gives the "invitation" (vss. 51–53), so many "come to the altar" that they tread on each other. His evangelistic results for the "protracted meeting" are a nameless grave in a stone quarry—and a *crown of glory*. He had no visible results but fury, rage, hatred, and resentment. However! He put one Pharisee under conviction (Acts 7:58), and that Pharisee wound up writing nearly one-third of the New Testament! (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Acts*, page 263)."

His message can be divided into three parts:

1. Historical Exposition Acts 7:2-50
2. Application Acts 7:51-53
3. Invitation- he never got to this third point!

2b Stephen referred to the elders as fathers" despite the Lord's command to call no one on earth you father in Matthew 23:9 **"And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven."**

2c Although he was now a Christian, Stephen still considered himself a Jew and still claimed the Jewish lineage of Abraham.

**7:3 And said unto him, Get<sup>a</sup> thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.**

3a Abram was to get out and forsake his homeland, not just leave it.

**7:4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldæans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he<sup>a</sup> removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.**

4a This is the Lord.

**7:5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so *much* as to set his foot on:<sup>a</sup> 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.**

5a Yet Abraham did buy a burial cave from Ephron the Hittite to bury Sarah in Genesis 23:7-20. But this purchase of land did not count for or against the land portion of the Abrahamic Covenant. God would give Abraham and his seed much more land that just the area of Canaan and Abraham would not need to purchase anything for that land grant to be fulfilled, as God Himself would give the land.

**7:6 And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land;<sup>a</sup> and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat *them* evil four hundred years.**

6a Any country is a “strange land” to the believer as there are no “godly” countries anywhere on earth today.

**7:7 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.**

**7:8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision:<sup>a</sup> and so *Abraham* begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac *begat* Jacob; and Jacob *begat* the twelve patriarchs.**

8a It was given to Abraham and his physical seed, not to Gentiles or to the church.

**7:9 And the patriarchs, moved with envy,<sup>a</sup> sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him,<sup>b</sup>**

**9a AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

9 And the patriarchs, moved with <b>envy</b> , sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him,	9 “And the patriarchs, jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt; but God was with him	9 “And the patriarchs, becoming jealous of Joseph, sold him into Egypt. <i>Yet</i> God was with him,
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“**envy**” The LSV and ESV use “jealousy”.

9b This is what made Joseph the greatest type of Christ in the Old Testament.

**7:10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt;<sup>a</sup> and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.**

10a Like Daniel in Babylon. You may be forced to work in a heathen and ungodly government (like any government in America) but occasionally, God will put a Christian in a high position as a witness to Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar.

**7:11 Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance.**

**7:12 But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt,<sup>a</sup> he sent out our fathers first.**

12a There always seems to be corn in the world while it is barren at the church house. This is a temptation that believers always face- stay in the land where provisions may be lean or go to the world where there are more provisions? Abraham failed that temptation in Genesis 12.

**7:13 And at the second *time* Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh.<sup>a</sup>**

13a Jesus will likewise make Himself known to His brethren at the Second Coming in Zechariah 9-12.

**7:14 Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to *him*, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls.<sup>a</sup>**

14a See Exodus 1:5 and Deuteronomy 10:22. Stephen said there were 75 who came out of Egypt. But there is no contradiction with Moses who listed 70 as there are different standards for counting the number that is listed in Genesis 46:27 and that Stephen mentioned. Moses says 70, Stephen says 75. We do not believe the Bible contradicts itself, so how do we reconcile this?

1. Genesis 46:26,27 **"All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six; And the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten."**

2. Exodus 1:5 **"And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls: for Joseph was in Egypt already."**

3. Acts 7:14 **"Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls."**

The key is in Acts 7:14 and "all his kindred", which accounts for the other five people who were in Egypt already when Jacob and his seventy souls left Canaan. The number seventy-five is arrived at by adding the twelve sons of Jacob, plus four of his wives, plus fifty-nine descendants, which would include Ephraim, Manasseh, Dinah, Serah, Er, and Onan.

There is no contradiction because Stephen is talking about the "seventy" plus the additional five already in Egypt, which Moses does not include.

In summary, there is no discrepancy between Acts 7:14 and Genesis 46:27, for in the Genesis passage those of "the house of Jacob" are referred to, that is, those who "came out of his loins," while in Acts 7:14 it is his "kindred."

**7:15 So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers,**

**7:16 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.**

**7:17 But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,<sup>a</sup>**

17a Egypt was the incubator for the numerical growth of Israel, although it was a hard one!

**7:18 Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.<sup>a</sup>**

18a The start of a new dynasty. The Pharaoh of Joseph's day may have been a foreigner and not an Egyptian. This current Pharaoh was an Egyptian who would have done anything he could to erase any and all policies of the old foreign rulers, which would include anything that Joseph, who was a favorite of the old foreign regime, accomplished.

Trying to identify this Pharaoh is very difficult. The commentators are all over the place in attempting to identify exactly which Pharaoh this is but trying to specifically identify him will prove to be very difficult as we are still not exactly sure as to the exact date of these events in Exodus.

These Pharaohs of this period are never named, although men like Joseph and Moses are. This Pharaoh did not know Joseph. This could mean two things. First, he was truly ignorant of Joseph and the legacy of Joseph was simply forgotten. This is very unlikely. The more likely interpretation is that this new Pharaoh had no use for Joseph or no respect for his memory. Joseph and his history went down the memory hole when the new regime came to power.

**7:19 The same dealt subtilly<sup>a</sup> with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live.**

19a Craftily, skilfully (not always in a good sense). This has the idea of conspiracy.

**7:20 In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months:**

**7:21 And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son.**

**7:22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,<sup>a</sup> and was mighty**



**in words and in deeds.**

22a Fortunately, it didn't ruin him. A college education has destroyed the faith of more people than anything else.

**7:23 And when he was full forty years old,<sup>a</sup> it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.<sup>bc</sup>**

23a The crises, or turning point, in Moses' life. Everybody has one, where the whole direction of their life is changed. Many a "mid-life" crises come on a man when he turns 40.

23b Moses had 80 years of training for 40 years of service.

**23c AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

**23** And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the **children** of Israel.

**23** "When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel.

**23** "But when he was approaching the age of forty, it entered his heart to visit his brothers, the sons of Israel.

**"children"** The LSV does not use "gender-neutral language" (which is so important to liberal Christians) by using "sons".

**7:24 And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote<sup>a</sup> the Egyptian:**

**7:25 For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.<sup>a</sup>**

25a Moses didn't understand that the timing and the method was wrong. He was 40 years too early and God would not have been involved nearly as much as He would be 40 years later. If Moses had delivered Israel here, there would have been no plagues, with the prophecies and typologies that went along with them. He was running ahead of God's timing and not looking for God's methods or help at this time.

When Moses was ready to lead Israel out of bondage, God was not ready. Forty years later, when God was ready for Moses to lead Israel out of bondage, Moses was not ready.

**7:26 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?**

**7:27 But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?**

**7:28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?**

**7:29 Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons.**

**7:30 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.<sup>a</sup>**

30a This is the real national symbol of Israel- a bush that burns but is not consumed. It is a much better symbol than the “star of David” (Acts 7:43). David never had a star.

**7:31 When Moses saw *it*, he wondered at the sight:<sup>a</sup> and as he drew near to behold *it*, the voice of the Lord came unto him,**

31a I’m sure he did! When is the last time you saw a bush that burned but was not consumed?

**7:32 *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<sup>a</sup> not behold.***

32a Past tense of “daring”.

**7:33 Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground.**

**7:34 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.<sup>a</sup> And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.**

34a Exodus 3:8 “And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.”

**7:35 This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge?<sup>a</sup> 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.**

35a Not in Acts 7:27 but here, it was God who made Moses a ruler and a judge over Israel.

**7:36 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.**

**7:37 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,<sup>a</sup> like unto me; him shall ye hear.<sup>b</sup>**

37a Deuteronomy 18:15 (“**The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken;**”), obviously fulfilled in Christ. How could Israel brag about keeping the customs of the law (if not the actual commands) yet reject the Prophet Like Unto Moses?

37b AV

ESV

LSV

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.**

37 This is the Moses who said to the Israelites, ‘God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers.’

37 “This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel, ‘GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME FROM YOUR BROTHERS.’

“**him shall ye hear**” Omitted in the ESV and LSV.

**7:38 This is he, that was in the church<sup>a</sup> in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and *with* our fathers: who received the lively oracles<sup>b</sup> to give unto**

38a In this case, a “called-out (of Egypt) assembly”, which is what a church (*ekklesia* is the Greek word) is. This was obviously not a New Testament local church as that would not start until Acts 2. The New Testament Church and an Old Testament Jewish assembly are not the same thing.

38b **The lively oracles** are the same ones mentioned in Romans 3:1,2 “**What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.**” They are the living words from a living God, spoken by the Lord to the prophets, who then recorded them in writing, preserving them for all generations. Remember, the word of God is quick (living, as in Hebrews 4:12 “**For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.**”).

**7:39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust *him* from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,<sup>a</sup> us:**

39a Here starts the Jewish national apostasy, which continued into Stephen’s day with the dead ritualism and orthodoxy of the Jews. They were dead to spiritual things but

very much alive in persecuting and killing anyone they deemed a threat to their dead formalism and religious power.

**7:40 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<sup>a</sup> not what is become of him.**

40a Old English form of “know”.

**7:41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.<sup>a</sup>**

41a The events of Exodus 32.

**7:42 Then God turned, and gave them up<sup>a</sup> to worship the host of heaven;<sup>b</sup> 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?**

42a Not the “giving up” of Romans 1:24 **“Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves.”** This “giving up” is God letting Israel follow their own ways and lusts since they have forsaken Him and His law. God will eventually give a person, a church or a nation up to its own desires if they make it clear that they want nothing to do with God. When man abandons God, God will abandon him (Jeremiah 6:19 **“Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.”**). Modern man worships the “host of heaven” the same way they did 4,000 years. We have horoscopes (a man’s destiny based on the position of the planets!), astronomy (“Science is God”), space programs, even worshipping the sun (people who insist on taking their vacations in Florida or the Caribbean every year).

42b God had warned about this in Deuteronomy 4:19 (**“And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.”**) and 2 Kings 23:5 (**“And he put down the idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven.”**). God drove apostate Israel into this sin in His judgment.

**7:43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch,<sup>a</sup> and the star of your god Remphan,<sup>b</sup> figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.<sup>c</sup>**

43a As Israel sank into the same heathen idolatry as all the nations round about her.

Moloch had a “tabernacle”, not a temple, which makes us wonder if even the tabernacle worship (later transferred to the temple) had also been grossly corrupted by apostate Israel.

“There were TWO tabernacles in the wilderness, *not ONE* (Num. 16:24, 27; Exod. 33:7, 10–11). You are told that a tabernacle was standing *before* the Tabernacle of Exodus 35–39 was made **“according to the pattern shewed...in the mount.”** Exactly as a good thing can become a bad thing if it is twisted (see **“the brazen serpent”** in 2 Kings 18:4), so the first tabernacle became a symbol of the “god” of 1 Kings 11:7. This “god” (1 Cor. 8:5) continued to be worshipped by the wisest man who ever lived (1 Kings 11:7). Why wouldn’t a Babylonian deity (worshipped by Canaanites) show up in the wilderness wanderings? Every false god listed in 1 Kings 11:1–7 came from the Hamitic people because the first rulers of Babylon, Accad, Ashur, and Shinar were HAMITES, exactly as the EGYPTIANS and CANAANITES were HAMITES (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believers Commentary on Acts*, pages 276-277).”

43b Does the “Star of David” come from this? Israel’s “authorized” national symbols are a *burning bush* (Exodus), a *fig tree* (Jeremiah), and an *olive tree* (Romans). The Bible never authorized a “star” or a “Star of David” for Israel. The closest you can get is a star coming out of Jacob in Numbers 24:17 (**“I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.”**) but that obviously a prophecy of Christ, not a reference to the nation of Israel.

**“Your god Remphan”** speaking of the gross idolatry of the Jews. But who was Remphan? The name does not occur in the Old Testament. Some commentators tie this to Amos 5:26 **“But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves”**. The “tabernacle of Moloch” is mentioned by Amos and “Chiun your images”. What do we have here in Amos that Stephen is quoting?

1. The tabernacle of your Moloch

A. One of the false gods Israel was worshipping at this time.

i. Moloch is associated with Ammon.

a. 1 Kings 11:7 **“Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon.”**

ii. One of the practices of the Moloch cult was to sacrifice their children.

a. This was forbidden in:

(i). Leviticus 18:21 **“And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the LORD”**.

(ii). Leviticus 20:2-5 **“Again, thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever he be of the**

**children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth any of his seed unto Molech; he shall surely be put to death: the people of the land shall stone him with stones. And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people; because he hath given of his seed unto Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name. And if the people of the land do any ways hide their eyes from the man, when he giveth of his seed unto Molech, and kill him not: Then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that go a whoring after him, to commit whoredom with Molech, from among their people.**

(iii). 2 Kings. 23:10 **“And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech.”**

(iv). Jeremiah 32:35 **“And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.”**

b. Many of these sacrifices would take place in the Valley of Hinnom on the southwest of Jerusalem at a site known as Topheth. The worshippers would heat the idol with fire until it was glowing, then they would take their newborn babies, place them on the arms of the idol, and watch them burn to death.

(i). It was a detestable practice, but it shows how low Israel had fallen. It is practiced today by the child sacrifice done thousands of times daily in abortion mills.

2. Chiun your images,

A. Chuin probably corresponds to Remphan.

3. The Star of your god, which ye made to yourselves

A. Worshipping of the stars was both related to the pagan practice of astrology as well as the Jewish idolatry which involved worshipping the whole host of heaven.

43c Not just to Babylon, but beyond Babylon. The ten northern tribes were scattered all over central Asia and even some of the southern tribes ended up almost to India (as seen in the book of Esther). “Beyond” Babylon could also have a spiritual meaning,

showing that the depths of Israel's national apostasy will increase to the point that they will do worse than the heathen. There are already annual "Gay Pride" marches in Jerusalem, the so-called "Holy City". In that regard, Jerusalem is no more holy than New York or Toronto or San Francisco. The Gentiles are making their mad rush "beyond Babylon" and Israel is not too far behind them.

**7:44 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.**

**7:45 Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus<sup>a</sup> into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David;**

45a The Greek rendering of "Joshua", compare with Hebrews 4:8 **"For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day."**

**7:46 Who<sup>a</sup> found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.**

46a AV	ESV	LSV
46 Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.	46 who found favor in the sight of God and asked to find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob.	46 " <i>David</i> found favor in the sight of God, and asked that he might find a dwelling place for the God of Jacob.

The LSV inserts "David" in italics.

**7:47 But Solomon built him an house.<sup>a</sup>**

47a The temple, which God never ordered or commanded to be built (2 Samuel 7:6,7 **"Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar?"**). He did allow it in His "permissive" will. God was satisfied with the tabernacle but man, in his religion, wanted the more impressive temple. The temple that these religious leaders took so much pride in was never in God's perfect will for Israel to begin with. To blaspheme the tabernacle would be one thing as God did command that to be built. To blaspheme the temple was quite something else as that was man's church building. God allowed the various incarnations of the temple to be destroyed and defiled over the years (as the future tribulation rebuilt temple will be in the Abomination of Desolation) but no such indignity ever befell the tabernacle (although the Ark was captured by the Philistines in 1

Samuel 4-7 but it was later returned).

**7:48 Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands;<sup>ab</sup> as saith the prophet,**

48a He certainly was not dwelling in that impressive temple there in Jerusalem. That temple (as all the heathen temples, including the National Cathedral in Washington, the Mormon temples and St. Peter's Basilica in Rome) were all "made with hands". God is not within 50 miles of any of these structures and the "worshippers" there worship Him in vain.

"The "incased god," the "housed idol," the "imprisoned deity," or the "confined spirit" is the center of every pagan religion in the world. If you are able to "box God in," then He won't be able to interfere with politics, business, and pleasure! Man wants a god he can control. This "god" for an International Socialist is Evolution—"controlled evolution" is the aim of modern materialistic science. This god for a Roman Catholic is a wafer which can be picked up, carried around, eaten, digested, and crumbled by a sinner. This "god" for a Bible-rejecting Fundamentalist, who makes a living correcting the Bible, is Christian Scholarship. That is, man wants to be god himself. He wants to keep his "god" under his thumb where he won't get out of hand. As long as "god" is locked up in the "holy of holies" (Exod. 34–39), He can't see what TV program you are watching (Ezek. 8:5–13). If God dwells only in the temple (1 Kings 9:3), he can't control your conduct in the back seat of a parked car. Amen? (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believers Commentary on Acts*, pages 282-283)."

48b Stephen's "attack" on the would be the modern equivalent of a Mormon attacking the temple in Salt Lake City or a Catholic attacking St. Peter's in Rome.

**7:49 Heaven *is* my throne, and earth *is* my footstool: what house will ye build me?<sup>a</sup> saith the Lord: or what *is* the place of my rest?**

49a The universe cannot contain God, so what house of church building are we going to build that would do Him justice? He decorated and designed the glories and the beauties of creation, so what kind of a building can we build that will outdo that? These pastors who build these multi-million dollar campuses ought to consider this. Most of the time, such buildings are built for the glory of the pastor, to give him something to boast in and glory in, rather than to glorify God.

**7:50 Hath not my hand made all these things?<sup>a</sup>**

50a Everyone in this room was a creationist who took the Genesis account seriously. You couldn't find an evolutionist within a light year of Jerusalem if you looked all night.



### **23. Stephen's Martyrdom 7:51-60**

**7:51<sup>a</sup> Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears,<sup>b</sup> ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your<sup>c</sup> fathers *did*, so *do* ye.<sup>d</sup>**

51a Now Stephen begins to make his “application” of the sermon before proceeding to the “invitation”. As he was speaking, he noticed the countenances of the Council. They were getting dark, brooding, and angry. Stephen could tell that they were rejecting his message. No doubt at this point the Holy Spirit moved Stephen to “let them have it” and to hold nothing back as he begins to make a personal application.

51b The spiritual condition of these Jewish leaders:

1. Stiffnecked. They were more stubborn than the most stubborn mule you’ve ever dealt with. The word also carries the idea of “haughty, obstinate, formal, stilted”. This condition seemed to be a constant problem with Israel as Moses made the same charge against the nation in Exodus 33:5 **“For the LORD had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee.”**

2. Uncircumcised in heart and ears. They were unclean and unsaved, having separated themselves from the covenants by their hard heart, stopped-up ears, pride and apostasy.

51c Notice the shift from “our fathers” in verses 2,12,15,19,38,44 and 45 to “your fathers” here. Stephen now disowns these men as having any spiritual relationship with them, as he has no desire to be associated with this pack of murderers.

51d Stephen makes it perfectly clear that the work and influence of the Holy Ghost CAN be resisted and WAS resisted, as plainly evidenced by the heart condition of these religious leaders.

**7:52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?<sup>a</sup> and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One;<sup>b</sup> of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:**

52a They persecuted them all. Just look at Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Every true Old Testament prophet caught “flack” and “grief” from the religious leaders. And this crew sitting before Stephen were worse than their murderous fathers, as they will demonstrate in a few minutes.

52b AV

ESV

LSV

52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers

52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not

52 “And which one of the prophets did your fathers not

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:

persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered,

persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become;

**“Just One”** The ESV and LSV have “Righteous One”.

**7:53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.<sup>a</sup>**

53a Despite their insistent protestations that they had kept the law. Stephens says they never did and still are not now. He just accused all these religious big-wigs as being religious hypocrites.

**7:54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart,<sup>a</sup> and they gnashed on him with *their* teeth.<sup>bc</sup>**

54a Stephen strikes oil. The meaning behind a “sermon” is “to stab” and he certainly draws blood here with the Sword of the Spirit.

54b They lost all sense of reason in their conviction and hatred of Stephen’s sermon. They acted like wild animals here. They were literally chewing Stephen up and spitting him out.

54c Gnashing with the teeth:

1. Psalm 35:16 **“With hypocritical mockers in feasts, they gnashed upon me with their teeth.”**
2. Psalm 37:12 **“The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.”**
3. Psalm 112:10 **“The wicked shall see it, and be grieved; he shall gnash with his teeth, and melt away: the desire of the wicked shall perish.”**

**7:55 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,<sup>a-b</sup>**

55a This was a major turning point for Israel. If these religious leaders had accepted Stephen’s message and had responded properly in repentance, then Christ would have returned right here (see notes under Acts 3:19-21. This is why Jesus was standing. He was not “standing to honour the first Christian martyr” or something like that. He was standing to return to earth to set up the Kingdom if Israel had repented. They did not, so He sits back down and will not “arise” again until the rapture. This marks the point where the “second offer of the kingdom” is now withdrawn. Christ sits back down as He

is not coming back anytime soon now. So now, God begins turning away from Israel. In Acts 8, the gospel goes to the Samaritans (half-breed Jews). In Acts 9, the Apostle to the Gentiles is saved (Saul). In Acts 10 is the Gentile Pentecost. In Acts 13 is the first missionary outreach to the Gentiles. In Acts 15 is the Jerusalem Conference where it is determined that converted Gentiles do not have to keep the law to be saved.

When God does “arise”, it is in judgment against His enemies and to protect His people (Psalm 7:6 **“Arise, O LORD, in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies: and awake for me to the judgment that thou hast commanded.”** And Psalm 9:19 **“Arise, O LORD; let not man prevail: let the heathen be judged in thy sight.”**). It is not always a good thing when a king “arises” for it usually in wrath and judgment (Esther 7:7 **“And the king arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath went into the palace garden: and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen; for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king.”**).

What we have here is a readiness for the Second Coming that would have triggered Daniel’s Seventieth Week if the national response had been repentance (Acts 3:19) and an acceptance of Stephen’s sermon. Deuteronomy 21:1-9 would have gone into action, the Rapture would have taken place, Judas would have come up from the pit (Acts 1:25 **“That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.”**), and the covenant between Rome and Israel would have been signed (Daniel 9:27 **“And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”**). Rome was in place and in power, Nero probably would have been the Antichrist, and the tribulation period and the “time of Jacob’s Trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7 **“Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.”**) would have started at this time. But the nation rejected Stephen here, so the tribulation was put “on hold” and the Church Age would now commence in earnest.

Christ was “sitting” in Mark 16:9 and Acts 2:34 (before this incident) and is said to be sitting again (after this) in Hebrews 8:1.

55b The “right hand” is the position of power, honour and authority.

**7:56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.<sup>a</sup>**

56a He was a gross heretic and blasphemer who has just been condemned by these “godly” men on this “godly” council! He wasn’t supposed to be able to see God! He wasn’t supposed to die like this! The way Stephen died infuriated these men as much as his doctrine as none of them would be able to die with the victory as Stephen did! They were envious of how he died, as he was clearly dying the death of the righteous, something none of them had any hope of doing.

**7:57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,**

**7:58 And cast *him* out of the city, and stoned *him*.<sup>a</sup> and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.<sup>bcd</sup>**

58a With Christ, at least the Council went through the motions of the rule of law. With Stephen, they just killed him with mob violence without any façade of the rule of law.

58b This young rabbi witnessed Stephen's murder and it had a profound impact on him. Saul initially approved of Stephen's murder, but something was bothering him as well. Old Preacher Conscience mounted his pulpit and preached at Saul 24 hours a day "Look at that preacher! He's got the victory! He has more joy under a pile of rocks than you do under a pile of clothes! I bet you can't die like that when your time comes!" This infuriated Saul so much as he tried to drown out his conscience (the inward witness of the Holy Spirit) that he went into overdrive in trying to destroy the church, as we see in the early verses of Acts 9, until Jesus stops him dead in his tracks.

58c Saul's task was to watch the coats of these men while they murdered Saul. Was it his job to make sure that no one stole anyone else's coat? What a noble band of "holy" men- "Watch my coat while I participate in murdering this preacher, and make sure no one steals it!" There is no honour among thieves, murderers or religious hypocrites.

58d Starting with this first mention of Saul, we will start to take up the account of the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul, that will take up most of the narrative of Acts starting in Acts 9, especially after Acts 13.

**7:59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.**

**7:60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.<sup>a</sup> And when he had said this, he fell asleep.<sup>bc</sup>**

60a Stephen forgave his murders as Christ did His while on the cross.

60b Death is always likened to sleep for the saint, as the body rests while the soul and spirit go to God. The (resurrected) body will be reawakened at the resurrection/rapture.

1. John 11:13 **"Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep."**
2. 1 Corinthians 15:20 **"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."**
3. 1 Corinthians 15:51 **"Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,"**
4. 1 Thessalonians 4:14 **"For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."**

60c Stephen becomes the first martyr of the Christian Church, and millions more followed in his train, and many more will, as the roster of martyrs is not yet completed. His name means “crown” and he wins the martyr’s crown.



## Acts Chapter 8

### 24. Saul's Persecution of the Church 8:1-4

**8:1 And Saul was consenting unto his death.<sup>a</sup> And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem;<sup>b</sup> and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles.<sup>c</sup>**

1a Compare this with Acts 22:19,20. Saul never threw a stone but he was in full and complete agreement over the murder of Stephen. He may have been one of the younger Pharisees in attendance, so the task of watching the coats of the men who murdered Stephen fell to him.

1b This persecution was led by Saul, who turned his attention to finishing the work of eradicating the Church once and for all. The Jewish leaders had enough of this group and was determined to stamp it out by force if threads did not work.

Watching how Stephen died made a profound impact on him. He agreed with his death but seeing how that man died put Saul under deep conviction. Instead of responding to the conviction, he fought it by redoubling his efforts to stamp out this young heretical movement. If he could burn every meeting place down to the ground and arrest every believer he could find, then maybe the 24-hour a day voice of Preacher Conscience would finally shut up and give him some peace. Watching Stephen's death made Saul question everything he thought he knew, and no man likes to be put on the spot like that. Most men will react badly were they also in Saul's shoes. But this is usually the first step in salvation- conviction of sin.

1c I don't see this as any sort of disobedience on the part of the disciples. Some commentators think the apostles were disobedient for not going into Judea and Samaria earlier. But before they can start their "missionary program", they have to have the home base secured first. Remember, there was no historical template for them to follow about starting a church, running a church, dealing with rapid growth, church discipline issues and the selection of deacons. They were hit with a lot of issues and problems early. It is true that it was this persecution that drove them out of Jerusalem, but they would have expanded eventually, anyway. We often try to impress 21<sup>st</sup> century solutions to first century problems and you simply cannot do that. Any expansion would have been slower than we would like since:

1. They had no experience
2. They probably had little money
3. Transportation was slow
4. Severe persecution of the church at Jerusalem was occurring

**8:2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial,<sup>a</sup> and made great lamentation over him.<sup>b</sup>**

2a Wicked men murdered Stephen. Godly men buried him.

2b Stephen was a good man, and was greatly missed. Good men lament over the death of good men. Bad men lament over the death of bad men. It is a tragedy when people like Michael Jackson or John Lennon die (a tragedy because they go to hell) but no Christian would lament over them for 5 seconds. It must have been a shock to the early church when he was murdered. It would make the early church realize just how serious their spiritual warfare would be and just how hard Satan would fight them in their attempt to get the gospel message out. Remember the words of Robert Murray McCheyne, "Live, so as to be missed, when gone".

**8:3 As for Saul, he made havock<sup>a</sup> of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.<sup>bc</sup>**

3a "Havock" is still in use today and indicates the disruption, breaking-up, devastating, demolishing, ravaging, or ruining of a work, dragging someone away by force or the rampaging of a wild animal.

3b Saul spared no one and showed mercy on none, no matter how old or young. He would lead house-to-house searches with midnight raids, to see if any of That Way were in the house. He never bothered with a search warrant and thought nothing of dragging women and children out of their house to whatever fate awaited them.

Whatever Saul set his mind to do, he did it with his whole heart. He did nothing halfway. When Saul was persecuting the Church, he did it with great zeal. When he preached the gospel, he displayed even greater zeal. Paul expounds on this in Acts 26:9-11 and in Galatians 1:13 ("**For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:**").

3c Saul was trying his best to destroy the church but he did not succeed. The harder he tried, the more Christians popped up. He learned the lesson that tyrants have learned throughout the centuries, that the Church cannot be destroyed by persecution. The blood of the martyrs is indeed the seed of the church.

**8:4 Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.<sup>a</sup>**

4a What a fool Satan is. He thought to destroy the church by persecution. He only spread the gospel further by forcing them away from Jerusalem and strengthened them. He is still following this same failed game plan 1900 years later. He has learned nothing. He may have super-human intelligence, but he has no wisdom as he does not fear the Lord (Proverbs 1:7 "**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.**"), so he has no way to properly use the things he knows. Instead of destroying the Church, Satan was actually helping to advance it.



## **25. Philip in Samaria 8:5-25**

**8:5 Then Philip<sup>a</sup> went down to the city of Samaria,<sup>b-c</sup> and preached<sup>d</sup> Christ unto them.<sup>e</sup>**

5a One of the deacons of Acts 6.

5b The gospel is now moving away from Jerusalem gradually, and in steps, as the Samaritans get the gospel. Acts 1:8 is now coming to fruition. These people were half-breed Jew and Gentiles, imported into this reason in the Assyrian exile, to replace the Jews of the northern tribes who were removed from the land (2 Kings 17:24-41). They had some knowledge of Judaism but had mixed it with the heathen practices from their homeland.

For Philip, a Jew, to go to Samaria and preach the gospel to the hated Samaritans shows that the gospel was breaking down the old racial barriers, although it was still a slow process (see Peter in Acts 10 and 11).

They literally went “down” as Jerusalem was at a higher elevation than Samaria.

5c “The city” is probably the primary city in Samaria.

5d The word “preaching” occurs seven times in the chapter, and the content of the preaching is “the word” (Acts 8:4), “Christ” (Acts 8:5), “the things concerning the kingdom of God” (Acts 8:12), “the word of the Lord” (Acts 8:25), “the gospel” (Acts 8:25), “Jesus” (Acts 8:35) and the combination of these things (Acts 8:40).

5e **AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.	5 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ.	5 Now Philip went down to the city of Samaria and <i>began</i> preaching Christ to them.
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The ESV has “proclaimed to them the Christ”. This reading has a New Age-Occult smell to it.

**8:6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.<sup>ab</sup>**

6a The apostolic signs were also manifested among the Samaritans since they were partially Jewish.

**6b AV****ESV****LSV**

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

6 And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs that he did.

6 And the crowds with one accord were giving attention to what was being said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs which he was doing.

Both the ESV and LSV usually replace “miracles” with “signs”.

**8:7 For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies,<sup>a</sup> and that were lame, were healed.<sup>bc</sup>**

7a Types of paralysis.

7b The apostolic signs included exorcisms and healings.

7c Notice there is no record of anyone speaking in tongues here.

**8:8 And there was great joy in that city.<sup>ab</sup>**

8a True revivals, where large numbers being saved and manifestations of the power of God, should produce this result.

8b We wonder if the woman of John 4, whom the Lord led to salvation, participated in some way in encouraging the revival.

**8:9 But<sup>a</sup> there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery,<sup>b</sup> and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:<sup>c</sup>**

9a But the revival can't go on forever without the “but”. Satan always manages to throw in a monkey wrench to mess things up. This happens in every revival. In the First Great Awakening, there was the destructive ministry of James Davenport, which I recounted in my book *Nettleton Verses Finney: The Shift in American Evangelicalism 1820-1830* (1995). The Second Great Awakening saw the birth of several cults, like the Latter Day Saints and the rise of the destructive ministry of Charles Finney.

9b Occult practices.

9c He passed himself off as some great and powerful teacher, as evidenced by the “miracles” he could produce. Just because some man has something resembling

spiritual power or miracles is no reason to automatically acknowledge him as a true teacher or prophet. You have to look for two things:

1. Can his doctrine be verified by Scripture?
2. Does he promote himself or God?

AV	ESV	LSV
<p>9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used <b>sorcery</b>, and <b>bewitched</b> the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:</p>	<p>9 But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great.</p>	<p>9 Now there was a man named Simon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city and astounding the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great;</p>

**“sorcery”** The ESV and LSV use “magic”. Also in 8:12.

**“bewitched”** The ESV has “amazed: and the LSV has “astounding”.

**8:10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.<sup>a-b</sup>**

10a You can’t blame the Samaritans for falling for his religious dog-and-pony show. Their knowledge of the Scriptures was limited and imperfect, so they had no real way to verify him.

10b Be careful of men who style themselves as “the great power of God” or “the Man of God” or “Go’s Prophet For these Last Days” or “America’s Premier Evangelist” or “The Second Coming of Billy Sunday” or something along that line. A genuine “man of God” would rebuke anyone who proclaimed those things about him. He would be embarrassed and mortified. He knows exactly who and what he is, a sinner saved by grace and without Christ, he would be nothing. There are far too man preachers, especially in the Charismatic and Independent Fundamental Baptist movements who are all too quick to accept such accolades. The ones who revel in such idolatry are the ones who are the least deserving of it.

AV	ESV	LSV
<p>10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.</p>	<p>10 They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is the power of God that is called Great.”</p>	<p>10 and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, “This man is what is called the Great Power of God.”</p>

The ESV completely butchers the verse. The LSV is better.

**8:11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.<sup>a</sup>**

AV	ESV	LSV
11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.	11 And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic.	11 And they were giving him attention because he had for a long time astounded them with his magic arts.

11a The ESV and LSV have “magic”. This is not the Greek word that has references to drugs (pharmakeia, as in Revelation 9:21 “**Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.**” and Revelation 18:23 “**And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.**”) but is the word “mageia” which would imply more of an occult power or the so-called magical arts that involved invoking evil spirits. This is a stronger word than “magic” for that could imply nothing more serious than doing card tricks.

**8:12 But<sup>a</sup> when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God,<sup>b</sup> and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.<sup>cd</sup>**

12a Now comes the divine “but”. Simon had control over the area, but the preaching of the gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit would challenge his sway over the people.

12b Not “kingdom of heaven”. Philip was preaching the spiritual aspects of the gospel, not about the kingdom that would be preached among the Jews. What interest would the Samaritans have about the Jewish political millennium?

12c Philip had a lot of conversions. He baptized them quickly after their conversions. He did not make them take a 6-week “New Converts Course” nor did he delay in baptizing them. If he was satisfied with their profession, he baptized them.

12d No mention is made of Philip baptizing and babies, as naturally, he did not. No apostle baptized any baby, and no one “baptized” by “pouring” or “sprinkling” as that is not the biblical method of baptism.

**8:13 Then Simon himself believed<sup>a</sup> also: and when he was baptized,<sup>b</sup> he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.<sup>c</sup>**

13a This is the same Greek word (Strong's #4100 *pistis*) that is used for every other example of "belief". Simon's "believed" was the same "belief" that is used for every other genuine conversion, so there is no different Greek word in play here.

13b This is clear- Simon BELIEVED and was BAPTIZED and he CONTINUED. We emphasize this because nearly every commentator will put Simon in hell for what he does in Acts 8:18. Any commentator who refuses to believe that Simon BELIEVED is rejecting the plain declaration of the Scripture in favor of his own religious prejudice. Almost every commentary I have read has Simon as still unsaved and just faking his profession. The Holy Spirit just told you he believed, was baptized, and continued with Philip, and that means he was saved, despite what any commentator says. He, like many young converts, still carried a lot of baggage from the old life and it takes time to shed the old ways. Yes, Peter chewed him out in Acts 8:20 because Simon had a faulty view of the power of the Holy Spirit that needed to be corrected on the spot, else it would carry Simon back into his old life.

13c You have to remember that Simon had been a professional con-artist. He took both a spiritual and a professional interest in studying the signs and wonders he saw. He could have duplicated many of the signs he saw (just like Jannes and Jambres did back in Exodus in copying Moses- for a while). When he saw the true power of God, he took extra special interest in it. And these kinds of men can get saved? Many of the modern commentators speak so loudly for "soul-winning" and then they refuse to acknowledge it when they see it in Scripture.

Stewart Custer tries to appeal to the so-called "church fathers" to argue that they all had very nasty things to say about Simon (page 107 in his *Witness to Christ*) but again, when the Holy Spirit tells you one thing and the "church fathers" (Luther called them the "Church Babies") tell you something else, you always go with the Holy Spirit.

We are not "defending" Simon for no doubt he had a very rough background and had a lot of trouble in the early part of his Christian life. Many Christians have. We are simply saying that we believe what the Holy Spirit is telling us over what the commentators are telling us. So many people expect new converts to be great spiritual warriors a day after they were saved. Ananias and Sapphira weren't. Apollos had a lot of doctrinal errors he had to have corrected even while he was preaching the gospel.

**8:14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:<sup>a</sup>**

14a Peter and John went for "apostolic validation". This was the first time anything like this happened outside of a Jewish context, so the Jerusalem church sent Peter and John to "check things out".

**8:15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:<sup>a</sup>**

15a We are still in a transitional period regarding how the Holy Spirit was given. He was not automatically given at salvation as He is today. In this temporary period, He was given through an apostolic laying on of hands. But He is NOT given in such a manner today.

**8:16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)**

8:16 Not in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (as in Matthew 28:19 **“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:”**). Luke does not explain why the water baptism among the Samaritans was changed. The possibility is that the command to baptize in the name of the Trinity would be geared toward the Gentiles who tended to be polytheists. Since the Jews and Samaritans were monotheists, the Trinitarian was not as necessary as it would be among the Gentile converts.

**8:17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.<sup>a</sup>**

17a “Now, Peter and John are sent to Samaria as instruments through which the Holy Spirit can be given (vs. 17). This has led many of the Holiness people to assume that the Holy Spirit is received by the laying-on of hands. However, this overlooks the fact that the Holy Spirit was given WITHOUT the laying-on of hands in Acts 2 and Acts 10. It also overlooks the fact that there is no “initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost” anywhere in Acts 8, because no one in Acts 8 speaks in tongues—baptized or unbaptized. (As we remarked earlier, these doctrinal variations in the transitional book make it impossible for any Pentecostal preacher, or any Charismatic-Glossalaia preacher, to be “Biblical” in any sense of the word. These groups are Bible-rejecting groups among the Fundamentalists, as also are many of the faculty members of “Christian” schools, professing to teach “the whole Bible” when they cannot even teach one half of the Book.) What is the explanation for the “laying-on of hands”? Jesus Christ didn’t have to lay hands on the apostles to get them to receive the Holy Ghost (John 20:22). How is it that Ananias has to lay hands on Paul (Acts 9:17) to get him “filled,” and Peter and John have to lay hands on the Samaritans to get them to “receive” (Acts 8:17)? This time Cornelius Stam is “in the running,” and he passes the pack while they are still trying to lace up their tennis shoes. The apostles have found out nothing regarding a change in commission (see Acts 1:8), and nothing has been revealed to them other than Ezekiel 37:15–19, Isaiah 2, 11, etc. They are still obeying Acts 1:8, and to all purposes they are headed for “Samaria” after “Judaea.” The Samaritans are half-breeds who rebelled against the authority of Jerusalem by building a rival temple on Mt. Gerizim (John 4:20). To reinforce the ancient authority of Jerusalem as the capitol of Palestine and the ten tribes (see Deut. 14:23 and 1 Chron. 22:1), the Lord withholds the Holy Spirit from the Samaritans until His Coming is connected with the apostolic authority from Jerusalem. This also explains Paul’s peculiar action in Acts 19:1–6 in dealing with converts who had come part way through Matthew 3 to Acts 8 without the revelation of Acts 10:45 or Acts 15:11. No Pentecostal preacher or commentator could

even attempt to approach the reconciliation of these verses. “The Holy Ghost was given” (vs. 18) to the Samaritans by the laying-on of hands, and this is NOT the “gift” of Acts 2:38 nor the outpouring of Acts 10 nor the baptism of 1 Corinthians 12. And if you think it matches them, you are a Bible-rejecting apostate. (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, pages 304-305).”

**8:18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,<sup>abc</sup>**

18a Simon simply did not understand the process here. He wanted the same ability to impart the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands, but he did not understand the issues involved with it. His motivations are not given but Peter takes a negative position as to his heart. It is a good thing to desire to be used of God but what is your motivation for it? Fame? Money? Power? Simon wanted a “short cut” to apostolic power without paying the price. Despite what nearly 100% of the commentators say, I believe Simon was saved but his old nature and the old life take time to tame, especially in a young convert without a complete Bible who lived in a transitional period in church history.

It took a while for Simon to get his “spiritual bearings”. He had been saved from a very wicked and rough background. The deeper the sin, the longer the time it will take the new convert to get his thinking reprogrammed and get pointed in the right direction. None of the commentators cut him any slack or admit any possibility of his salvation. They all treat Simon as if he had been saved 10 years and had spent all that time in a Bible believing church. We rather see him as a confused young convert, trying to reprogram his thinking and having a very hard time of it. I’m sure many similar converts saved out of similar circumstances could sympathize with Simon. Only W. Griffin Thomas appears to give Simon any benefit of the doubt (pages 147-149 in his *Outline Studies in Acts*). People who condemn Simon outright probably haven’t had too much experience in dealing with new converts from very rough backgrounds.

18b This is where the word “simony” comes from, the practice of buying and selling churches offices, usually to powerful families or to the highest bidder. The Church of Rome engaged in this practice for a millennium, including the office of the papacy, which was usually controlled by wealthy and powerful families. Even Baptists do it by choosing deacons who are wealthy or well-connected.

“To understand what Simon was getting at we have to understand something of the atmosphere and practice of the early Church. The coming of the Spirit upon a man was connected with certain visible phenomena, in particular with the gift of speaking with tongues (compare Acts 10:44-46). He experienced an ecstasy which manifested itself in this strange phenomenon of uttering meaningless sounds. In Jewish practice the laying on of hands was very common. With it there was held to be a transference of certain qualities from one person to another. It is not to be thought that this represents an entirely materialistic view of the transference of the Spirit, the dominating factor was the character of the man who laid on the hands. The apostles were men held in such respect and even veneration that simply to feel the touch of their hands was a deeply

spiritual experience. If a personal reminiscence may be allowed, I myself remember being taken to see a man who had been one of the Church's great scholars and saints. I was very young and he was very old. I was left with him for a moment or two and in that time he laid his hands upon my head and blessed me. And to this day, more than fifty years afterwards, I can still feel the thrill of that moment. In the early Church the laying on of hands was like that (William Barclay, *Acts*, in the Daily Study Bible, page 67)."

AV	ESV	LSV
18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the <b>Holy Ghost</b> was given, he offered them money,	18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money,	18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit had been bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money,

"**Holy Ghost**" The ESV and LSV just use "Spirit".

**8:19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.<sup>a</sup>**

19a Why not ask the Lord for it? The power comes from him, not the apostles. Where do you think they got it from?

AV	ESV	LSV
19 Saying, Give me also this <b>power</b> , that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.	19 saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."	19 saying, "Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

The LSV has "authority" for "power".

**8:20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.<sup>a</sup>**

20a Peter delivers the sharp rebuke. Simon needed to be told, in no uncertain terms, that spiritual gifts are not purchased with money.

**8:21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.<sup>a</sup>**

21a Simon's problem was a bad heart. What sinner doesn't have a bad heart? But Peter never accuses him of being lost or unsaved, despite the strong rebuke. Thank God Peter was plain and open with Simon and did what he could to correct Simon's error with a strong rebuke.



**8:22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.<sup>a</sup>**

22a No sort of unpardonable sin is involved here. Simon could be forgiven of his sin. He did need to repent of his wickedness before he could receive any divine forgiveness.

**8:23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.<sup>ab</sup>**

23a You never met a Christian who was in a similar situation?

23b This practice of giving of church offices to the highest bidder came to be known as Simony, a sin the Roman Catholic Church wallowed deeply in during the Dark Ages and through the Reformation.

**8:24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.<sup>a</sup>**

24a Simon responds well, asking for prayer and help to overcome this besetting sin. We request prayer from other believers all the time when we are in difficult circumstances, so Simon's request was no different than any other Christian requesting prayer from other believers.

Why didn't Simon pray for himself or go to the Lord himself to seek forgiveness? It was Peter, an apostle, who "lowered the boom" on Simon, so naturally Simon, as a young convert, thought Peter would be the instrument of his judgment so he naturally asked for Peter to pray for him to get out of this condemnation. We do that all the time, asking for prayer from more experienced saints, when we have been confronted in our sins.

Simon ASKED for prayer, help and forgiveness in the light of the judgment Peter laid down. That's a very good sign that Simon was cut to the heart in conviction. A false professor probably wouldn't care.

It is also possible that Simon was aware what Peter did to Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5, so he knew that if Peter pronounced this kind of judgment, it would probably come to pass.

**8:25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem,<sup>a</sup> and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.**

25a Peter and John put their apostolic "stamp of approval" on Philip's ministry here.

## **26. Salvation of the Ethiopian 8:26-40**

**8:26 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.<sup>abc</sup>**

26a This seems to make no sense. Why take the evangelist away from the revival, to send him into the desert? The Lord explains nothing to Philip, but he obeys. A Spirit-filled preacher goes where he is sent (Acts 8:27), does what he is told to do (Acts 8:29), says what he is supposed to say (Acts 8:35), and returns rejoicing (Acts 8:39), **“bringing his sheaves with him”** (Psalm 126:6).

There was a man whom the Lord would direct Philip to, who would be instrumental in carrying the gospel into Africa. And although he is only one man, “Handpicked fruit is always the best...So also it may be said that individual work for Christ is often more productive and permanent than a general appeal made by preaching or teaching (W. Griffin Thomas, *Outline Studies on Acts*, page 150).”

It should also be noted that the revival continued after Philip left, showing that this was a genuine work of God and that it was not just the product of one man’s personality or ministry. Philip could not take any credit for the revival, and he wouldn’t have anyway.

And why choose Philip for this and not one of the apostles? Again, the Scripture gives us no insight as to the move of God here.

26b The angel never explains to Philip why he is to toward Gaza and there is no record of Philip asking- he simply obeyed, knowing the Lord had a reason for this, even if He would not immediately reveal it to Philip. God usually does not come out and fully reveal the reasons for His commandments when He gives them. As Lord and Master, He is under no obligation to do so, but it is our obligation as servants to obey such commands in faith.

26c If you were pastoring a dynamic, growing church and the Lord told you to leave and take a small, struggling church in the middle of nowhere, would you do it?

**8:27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians,<sup>a</sup> who had the charge of all her treasure,<sup>b</sup> and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,<sup>c-d</sup>**

27a **“Candace”** was a dynastic name, not a personal name. All queens of Ethiopia were called “Candace”.

27b He was a high government official and he must have been a trusted man in the government. His pilgrimage to Jerusalem reminds us of the one taken by the Queen of Sheba in 1 Kings 10.

“The Ethiopian king was a ‘child of the sun’, far above such mundane matters as running the secular affairs of a kingdom. Such menial duties were the responsibility of

the Queen Mother, who bare the title of Candace (John Phillips, *Exploring Acts*, page 159)."

27c Was he a Jewish proselyte? He went up to Jerusalem to worship, but it appears he came away as empty as he arrived. The deadness of the Jew's religion did nothing for his soul. He had gone up to Jerusalem, hoping to find some good for his soul, but came away disappointed. Instead of a holy city, all he saw was spiritual deadness, hypocrisy, sectarianism, intolerance and materialism. It was like the trip Martin Luther took to Rome before his conversion, while still a monk. He had taken a business trip to Rome and was expecting to find a holy city, filled with prayer and holy men. Instead, he saw prostitutes on every corner, drunken priests saying the mass, crass religious materialism and dozens of other vices. Thus, he saw the truth of the proverb of his day "If there is a hell, Rome is built over it". It might do a Mormon some good to go to Salt Lake City if he ever got the chance and see just how "holy" he really is. I've been Salt Lake City in 1975 and 2014 and came away spiritually unimpressed each time.

27d We will see the first of three remarkable conversions. In chapter 8 we have the conversion of an Ethiopian, a black, a representative of Ham. In chapter 9 we have the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, a Jew, a representative of Shem. In chapter 10 we have the conversion of Cornelius, a Roman centurion, a representative of Japheth. The three great racial families are now made one in the family of God.

### **8:28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.<sup>a-b</sup>**

28a He was reading from an Isaiah scroll. "This eminent nobleman is reading. That is a commendable occupation: reading is in itself somewhat of a hopeful sign. In these days we need hardly exhort young men to read. "Give attendance to reading," said the wise apostle Paul, and that was excellent advice for Timothy. Let all Christian men be reading men. But, then, Philips question contains these words, "what thou readest," and that suggests a necessary enquiry. I am afraid much that is read nowadays had far better be left unread. Multitudes of books are fruits of an accursed tree—the tree of evil knowledge, which is watered by the rivers of perdition. The fruits of this upas-tree will yield no benefit to the minds that feed thereon, but much of solemn damage; by perverting the judgment, or polluting the imagination. Souls have been ruined to all eternity by reading a vile book. Count it no trifle to have heard bad language; but count it a more serious evil to have read a bad book which has wounded your soul, and left a scar upon your conscience. The writer of an evil book is a deliberate poisoner, secretly pouring death into the wells from which men drink. The printers and publishers of such works are accomplices in the crime. Young men, you will read—who among us would wish you to do otherwise?—but take heed what you read! As one who has read more greedily than most men all sorts of books, I bear my testimony that the best of reading is the reading of the best of books. The more we read the Bible and volumes that lead up to the understanding of it, the better for us. I do not like to see in a lending-library all the works of fiction needing to be bound two or three times over, while the books of sober fact and solid teaching, and the works that speak of eternal things, have never been

read, since they have not even been cut. I fear that this is the general if not the universal rule. "Understandest thou what thou readest?" is a question I should hardly put until a man has made up his mind that he will not read mere rubbish and falsehood, but will with deep attention read that which is accurate, truthful, devout, and ennobling. Read; take heed what you read; and then seek to understand what you read. Charles Spurgeon, "Understandest Thou What Thou Readest"? sermon 1792, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*).

28b It was unusual for a Gentile to possess a personal copy of the Old Testament. Scrolls were expensive, but the Eunuch could afford one. Perhaps he was able to do so because of his high government position.

**8:29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.<sup>a</sup>**

29a Philip might have been intimidated to do this. After all, he is one man on foot and the Lord tells him to approach this royal carriage. It would be like a street preacher being told to walk to the motorcade of the President and offer him a tract. The security detail around the Ethiopian might not have appreciated this stranger approaching the royal carriage.

**8:30 And Philip ran<sup>a</sup> thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias,<sup>b</sup> and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?**

30a The king's business requires haste (1 Samuel 21:8 **"And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste."**).

30b The Scriptures were usually read aloud.

**8:31 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.<sup>a</sup>**

31a He was a good man with a good heart, who wanted to know what the Scripture said, but like an unsaved man, was having trouble figuring it out. The prospect was "ready" and was just waiting for someone to "reel him in". The Eunuch perceived that this stranger had knowledge of this prophecy that he wanted, hence the invitation to Philip to join him.

We all need someone to guide us in our understanding of Scripture. This is usually our pastor, but it can be any godly Christian.

**8:32 The place of the scripture<sup>a</sup> 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:<sup>b</sup>**

32a This “scripture” was a translation. The Ethiopian did NOT have the originals of Isaiah yet Luke calls his copy/translation “scripture”, showing that an accurate copy or an accurate translation into another language is as much “scripture” as the originals would be.

32b “Having become a proselyte to the faith of Israel, the eunuch made a long and perilous journey to Jerusalem. After he had enjoyed the solemn feast, he returned; and while he traveled along, he read the word of God. The book of the prophet Isaiah was the portion chosen for his meditation. Does it not strike you as being remarkable that he should be reading at that moment the best text that Philip could have selected? He had reached a portion of Scripture from which, without the slightest digression, the evangelist preached unto him Jesus as the slain lamb, the willing sacrifice for guilty men. The like conjunction of providence and the Holy Spirit constantly occurs in conversions. What the man has read in the book, the preacher is often moved by the Spirit of God to declare from the pulpit, for God has servants everywhere, and his secret directions are given out, so that all these servants, though they are little aware of it, are led to work together for the same predestined end. How often have the talks of young men by the wayside been reproduced by the preacher, and such singular coincidences have struck their attention, and been the means of impressing their hearts! God grant there may be something of that kind to-night—I know there will be. Into this hall years ago there strayed a wild young man; he heard me preach, he believed in Jesus, and he has long been an honored deacon of a suburban church. Are there not other men here to whom the like salvation shall come? (Charles Spurgeon, “Understandest Thou What Thou Readest”?, sermon 1792, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*).”

**8:33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.<sup>ab</sup>**

33a He was reading Isaiah 53:7,8

“1. In the two figures given in Isaiah 53 it is a male LAMB at a slaughter and a female SHEEP at the shearing.

2. In Acts 8:32 it is “a SHEEP to the slaughter” and a male LAMB at the shearing.

Contradiction? “Yes,” in the minds of the “majority of Conservative meatheads.”

But this time, instead of consulting these self-inflated wind bags, how about consulting a SHEEP HERDER? The sheep herder says that a male lamb and a male sheep will remain silent at a shearing, and so will a female sheep; but a female LAMB will not. All four figures then (in the AV, 1611) are correct, and there was no cause whatsoever for altering the Hebrew text of Isaiah 53:7 to read “lamb” (Septuagint) for a “sheep” in the Old Testament passage, for that sheep was a FEMALE (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, pages 317-318).”

33b Many commentators assume this is a quote from the so-called Septuagint, but there is no reason to believe that, as there was no sort of Septuagint until the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.

**8:34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?<sup>a</sup>**

34a A good man will ask good questions. He was not asking smart-aleck questions such as “But where did Cain get his wife?” He was honest and sincere in his questions. With an opening question like that, Philip “can’t miss” if he simply “preaches Jesus” as he will do.

**8:35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.<sup>a</sup>**

35a You can preach to one man as well as to a thousand. And you can’t do any better than preaching Jesus. A good soulwinner can take any text and run it straight to the cross. Phillip saw the prophecy of the death of Christ in this prophecy and used it to lead this man to the Lord.

AV	ESV	LSV
35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and <b>preached</b> unto him Jesus.	35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.	35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he proclaimed the good news about Jesus to him.

“**preached**” There is no preaching in the ESV or LSV. The ESV just has Philip telling the eunuch about Jesus. The LSV is better but still weaker with “proclaimed”.

**8:36 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?<sup>a</sup>**

36a He had an understanding of baptism and desired it. This showed a good heart, a holy desire and a genuine conversion.

**8:37<sup>ab</sup> 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.<sup>c</sup>**

37a This verse is one of the most attacked in the New Testament but no true Bible believer would question the validity of the verse.

Verse 37 is considered by many modern versions to be a "minority reading" since it is not found in the majority of remaining Greek texts, nor in Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, A or C. Manuscript D is missing the whole section from Acts 8:29b through 10:14, so it is of no help one way or the other. There is in fact a great deal of historical and manuscript evidence for the inclusion of this entire verse.

The evidence in favor of including this verse is quite massive. It is found in the Greek texts of Erasmus, Stephanus 1550, Beza 1598, Elzevir 1633 and Scrivener 1894.

It is in manuscripts E, 4, 36, 88, 97, 103, 104, 242, 257, 307, 322, 323, 385, 429, 453, 464, 467, 629, 630, 913, 945, 1522, 1739, 1765, 1877, 1891, and others.

Acts 8:37 is in the Byzantine Greek text used by the Orthodox Greek Churches all over the world today.

It is also in the Modern Greek Bible and in the Modern Hebrew Bible.

It is also the reading found in Old Latin manuscripts from the textline that predates any Greek manuscripts, including the Old Latin texts of ar, c, dem, e, gig, h, l, m, ph, r, t, w. Even the notes in critical text editions tell us that this verse existed in the Old Latin copies, the Coptic Middle Egyptian version, the Ethiopic, Georgian, and Slavonic, Lamsa's 1933 translation of the Syriac Peshitta and Armenian early Bible versions. It is also found in the Vulgate Clementine.

Early church fathers who witness to it's being a part of inspired Scripture and quoted or referred to Acts 8:37 are Irenaeus, Cyprian, Chromatius, Tertullian, Ambrosiaster, Pacian 310-391 A.D., Ambrose 340-397 A.D., Augustine and Theophylact. Many church fathers who lived before anything we have in the way of Greek copies directly quote this verse, including Irenaeus 178 A.D., Tertullian 220, Cyprian died in 258, as well as Ambrosiaster 384, Ambrose 397, Augustine 430, and Venerable Bede of England in 735.

Cyprian (200-258 A.D.) supports the inclusion of verse 36-37 Textus Receptus when he says, "In the Acts of the Apostles Treatise 12:3: Lo, here is water; what is there which hinders me from being baptized? Then said Phillip, If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest." (The Treatises of Cyprian)

Irenaeus (115-202 AD), Against Heresies 3.12: "Philip declared that this was Jesus, and that the Scripture was fulfilled in Him; as did also the believing eunuch himself: and, immediately requesting to be baptized, he said, I believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God."

Augustine (354-430 AD), Sermon 49: "The eunuch believed on Christ, and said when they came unto a certain water, See water, who doth hinder me to be baptized? Philip said to him, Dost thou believe on Jesus Christ? He answered, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Immediately he went down with him into the water."

The entire verse stands in a multitude of Bible versions both old and new, English and foreign. It is found in Wycliffe 1395, Tyndale 1525, Coverdale 1545, the Great Bible (Cranmer) 1540 - "Philip sayde vnto him: If pu beleue with all thyne hert, thou mayest. And he answered, and sayde: I beleue that Iesus Christ is the sonne of God.", Matthew's Bible 1549, the Bishop's Bible 1568, the Douay-Rheims of 1582, the Geneva Bible 1599, Mace N.T. 1729, Wesley's translation 1755, Whiston's Primitive N.T. 1745, Webster's translation 1833, Murdock's Translation 1851 of the Syriac, Worsley Version 1770, the Amplified Bible 1987, the NKJV 1982, Young's 1898, Green's Modern KJV 2000, the KJV 21st Century Version 1994, the Third Millennium Bible 1998, Knox Bible 2012, the Aramaic Bible in Plain English of 2010, the Orthodox Jewish Bible 2011, The Voice 2012, latest Catholic translation, called the Catholic Public Domain Version, of 2009 and the 2012 Natural Israelite Bible - "Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Yah'shua the Messiah is the Son of Yahweh."

Many commentators in times past have confessed their belief that Acts 8:37 is inspired Scripture and belongs in the Bible. Among these are the Westminster Confession, John Calvin, Dean Burgon, Matthew Henry, John Gill, Theodore Beza, John Owen, John Dick, Charles Hodge, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Charles G. Finney, John Charles Ryle, Abraham Kuyper and Jonathan Edwards. It is also quoted in the Westminster Confession, Chapter XXVIII, Of Baptism, Section IV.

The whole verse is included in the following modern foreign language versions: The Latin Clementine Vulgate, the Afrikaans Bible 1953, the Arabic Life Application Bible 1998, Albanian, Bulgarian 1940, Chinese Traditional and Union versions, Dutch Staterling, Luther's German Bible 1545, and other German Bibles like the Schlachter Bible of 2007, the Danish, Dutch Staten Vertaling, Finnish 1776, the French La Bible de Geneva 1669, the French Martin 1744, the Louis Segond 1910 and 2007, the French Ostervald 1996, the French La Bible du Semeur 1999, the Haitian Creole Bible, Hungarian Karoli and the Hungarian New Translation of 1990, the Italian Diodati 1649, the Riveduta of 2006 and the 1991 New Diodati, Japanese JKUG, Korean (in brackets), Latvian, Maori Bible, Modern Hebrew Version New Testament and the Modern Greek Version. It is also the reading found in the Nederlands Handelingen 1988, the Norwegian Norsk 1930 and the 1978 En Levende Bok, the Portuguese Almeida of 1681 and the modern Almeida, and the A Biblia Sagrada em Português, Rumanian, Romanian Cornilescu and the Romanian Nouă Traducere În Limba Română of 2007, Russian Synodal 1876 and Zhuromsky N.T., the Polish Nowe Przymierze of 2011, the Spanish Reina Valera 1909, 1960, 1995, Spanish Biblia de las Américas 1997 (Lockman Foundation), Contemporánea of 2011 and the 2010 Reina Valera Gomez bible, the Russian Synodal Bible and the Russian Easy to Read Version of 2007 - "the Tagalog Ang Salita ng Diyos 1998, Turkish N.T. 1994, Ukrainian Bible and Easy to Read Ukrainian Bible of 2007, the Somali Bible of 2008, the Vietnamese Bản Dịch Bible of 2011, the Chinese Union Traditional and the Chinese Contemporary Bible of 2011 put out by the International Bible Society.

The NIV, ESV, RSV, ISV, NET, NASB and Holman Christian Standard versions unite in omitting this entire verse, which results in the Ethiopian eunuch asking a question to which Phillip gives no answer. The LSV has it in brackets.

The Catholic versions are in their usual disagreement one with another. The older Douay-Rheims of 1582 and the Douay of 1950 both contain the entire verse, but the more modern UBS based versions like the 1968 Jerusalem Bible, the St. Joseph New American Bible and the 1985 New Jerusalem (all based on the United Bible Society ever changing critical text) omit the verse, but the 2009 Catholic Public Domain Version puts it back in.

Thomas Holland, in his book *Crowned with Glory*, deals with the evidence for the inclusion of Acts 8:37. Further along in his article - which can be seen in its entirety at this site:

[http://av1611.com/kjbp/faq/holland\\_ac8\\_37.html](http://av1611.com/kjbp/faq/holland_ac8_37.html) - he asks: "If the text were genuine, why would any scribe wish to delete it? In his commentary on the book of Acts, Dr. J. A. Alexander provides a possible answer. By the end of the third century it had become common practice to delay the baptism of Christian converts to assure that they had truly understood their commitment to Christ and were not holding to one of the various



heretical beliefs prevalent at that time. It is possible that a scribe, believing that baptism should not immediately follow conversion, omitted this passage from the text, which would explain its absence in many of the Greek manuscripts that followed. Certainly, this conjecture is as possible as the various explanations offered by those who reject the reading." (edited from an article by Will Kinney, <http://brandplucked.webs.com/acts83724682829.htm>)

It has been shown that the Greek Orthodox Church may be the guilty party in removing the verse in order to preserve its heresy of baptismal regeneration. "For over 1900 years the correct reading was missing in Hebrew Bibles, but preserved in the Latin Bible. The unbelieving Jews could not bare this verse's witness about the Messiah they rejected. Likewise, the Greek Orthodox church, which teaches baptismal regeneration, could not bear Acts 8:37 so they removed it from most Greek manuscripts. It has been preserved in the Latin and other vernacular editions. The text of the Bible has not been given to one or two language groups, but to all. By destroying certain verses, the Jews and the Greek Orthodox church could be compared to wicked Athaliah. She thought she had "destroyed all of the seed royal." (The Bible is called the "royal law" 2 Kings 11:1, James 2:8). Yet God hid one son and preserved the kingly line. Likewise, God preserved his words in Bibles other than those of the corrupt Greek Orthodox church and Hebrew nation, when those language groups destroyed certain readings for sectarian reasons. Charges that the KJB wrongly followed the 'Latin' in a verse are only made by those who do not understand the history of Bible preservation (Gail Riplinger, *Greek and Hebrews Study Dangers*, page 470).".

"Hills (5) p 201, (38) p 197, explains that the verse is absent from most Greek manuscripts because the practice of delaying baptism following profession of faith had become common before the end of the 3rd century. However, the verse is found in uncial E (6th-7th centuries), the Old Latin (2nd century) and the Vulgate (5th century) and is cited by Irenaeus (180 AD) and Cyprian (250 AD) (Alan O'Reilly, 'O *Biblios*, page 56)."

There should be no question that Acts 8:37 is a genuine verse and must not be removed. Only heretics and apostates would insist on removing the verse. Trust no translation or commentary that attacks it or removes it. We are not convinced or impressed with attacks on the verse.

In my library, the line-up of who accepts the text and who rejects it is:

ACCEPTS ACTS 8:37	REJECTS ACTS 8:37	UNCERTAIN
Peter Ruckman	John R. Rice	Cornelius Stam
David Cloud	John MacArthur	J. A. Alexander
Common Man's Reference Bible	Darrell Bock	Warren Wiersbe
Theodore Beza	Chalmer Faw	
John Gill	A. T. Robertson	
Gail Riplinger	W. Graham Scroggie	
Thomas Holland	ESV Study Bible	
	Ethelbert Bullinger (The Companion Bible)	

	Adam Clarke	
	Harry Ironside	
	R. C. H. Lenski	
	Numerical Bible	
	Recovery Version	
	Jameison, Fausset and Brown Commentary	

## AV

## ESV

## LSV

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.

37 [And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."]

The verse is omitted in the ESV and questioned in the LSV.

37b It should be obvious why Bible rejecters attack the verse. Phillip is clearly indicating that a profession of faith is required before water baptism. Since the doctrine of baptism was corrupted in the early church to infant baptism by pouring, this verse would not support such a practice, since no infant can give any sort of profession of faith before his salvation. I was born into a Roman Catholic family, and I was "baptized" by an Air Force Catholic Chaplin in December 1964. I obviously do not remember any of it, and I didn't get saved until February 1978. I was not scripturally baptized until October 1985 when the preacher asked me if I had accepted Christ as my Savior and I clearly indicated that I had. Phillip clearly makes it a requirement that the Ethiopian "believe with all his heart" before he can be baptized.

37c You can't do much better than this for a profession of faith! It satisfied Phillip enough that he baptized the Ethiopian.

**8:38 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.<sup>a</sup>**

38a He was obviously baptized by full immersion in water upon a clear profession of faith. Both Philip and the Ethiopian would have been Baptists in this regard. This is clearly the Bible way to baptize- full immersion upon a confession of faith, which excludes any form of infant baptism. They both went into the water in verse 38 and both came out of the water in verse 39. This would not have been necessary if Phillip just poured water over his head. Why get wet for no reason?

**8:39 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:<sup>a</sup> and he went on his way rejoicing.<sup>b-c</sup>**

39a A type of the rapture! Also see Ezekiel 11:1 (**"Moreover the spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto the east gate of the LORD'S house, which looketh eastward: and behold at the door of the gate five and twenty men; among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people."**) and 2 Kings 2:16 (**"And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure the Spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send."**)

39b Phillip had no chance to disciple him for he never saw him again. This is the hardest thing in soulwinning- did the convert really get saved? Will he end up in the right kind of church? Many times, we cannot follow-up with new Christians, so we simply must commit them to the Lord. Maybe Philip would have been willing to follow him to Ethiopia and preach there, but that was not God's will, so this "rapture" was used to put Philip where God wanted him next.

We may be sure that Philip's sole convert here paid off with more eternal dividends than 99% of the converts at a Billy Graham crusade or a Binny Hinn healing crusade.

God may have taken Philip away to prevent him from maybe going to Ethiopia to preach. That was not God's will for Philip and that was not to be his ministry.

39c Observations about baptism:

1. The eunuch asked to be baptized.
2. Philip asked for a profession of faith which the eunuch gave.
  - A. The eunuch was an adult who fully understood what he was asking for.
  - B. Infant Baptist is totally unscriptural.
3. Philip baptized him by immersion.
  - A. Baptism by sprinkling is unscriptural.
4. There was no delay in baptizing him.

**8:40 But Philip was found at Azotus:<sup>a</sup> and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cæsarea.<sup>b-c</sup>**

40a Halfway between Joppa and Gaza.

40b Having saved Ham in Acts 8 (the Ethiopian), the Holy Spirit prepares to save Shem in Acts 9 (Saul/Paul), before saving Japheth in Acts 10 (the Centurion, in Acts 10, with "10" being the number of the Gentiles).

40c The next time we see Philip, he is in Caesarea, with four daughters (Acts 21:8,9 **"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. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy."**).

### Summary- Philip's Example of Soulwinning

1. He was obedient to the will of God, even if he didn't understand it
  - A. The Lord may send you to odd places and put you in unusual situations in order to give a witness.
  - B. He was to go where he was sent.
2. He was willing to witness to whom he was sent
  - A. Must be willing to witness to anyone, high or low.
  - B. You must overcome laziness, fear and indifference to go- it takes energy and work!
3. He was not intimidated to witness to a high ranking official.
4. He was able to use the Scripture.
  - A. A soulwinner must be able to start at any verse and make his bee-line toward the cross.
5. Philip preached Jesus.
  - A. Not religion, politics, sports, morality...
6. He must obviously know the plan of salvation well enough to be able to answer any questions.
  - A. You must be able to willingly answer any sincere and specific questions the person may have, and not just "brush them off" as unimportant. The prospect has many questions about what he is hearing, and he deserves direct and honest answers.
7. The eunuch was being prepared by the Lord.
  - A. He had been to Jerusalem for to worship.
  - B. He was left unsatisfied by the religion he witnessed and was looking for something genuine.
  - C. He was reading Scripture.
  - D. He was willing to learn and to be instructed.
    - i. He asked questions but in a good heart and with a good spirit.
8. His salvation proper
  - A. An obvious heart change was done.
  - B. He offered no public prayer.
  - C. Philip asked for a verbal profession, and he received.
    - i. Romans 10:9-13 **"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."**
  - D. He asked for baptism immediately upon his profession.
  - E. He went on his way rejoicing afterwards.

## **Acts Chapter 9**

### **27. The Salvation of Saul 9:1-19**

**9:1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,<sup>a</sup>**

1a Saul was a busy man “about his father’s business” when he was saved. God usually calls busy men first to salvation and then to service:

1. Moses (Exodus 2-4)
2. Matthew (Matthew 9:9)
3. Peter (Luke 5:11)

Few conversions have had such a lasting effect as Saul’s- half of our New Testament was written by him, dozens of churches were started and multitudes saved. Saul/Paul had an impact on the Church as no other man.

Where Saul’s teacher Gamaliel might have urged a policy of tolerance toward the church in Acts 5, Saul believed there could be no peaceful co-existence between Israel and the Church, so he came to the conclusion that the Church must be destroyed. Jesus was dead, so Saul couldn’t persecute Him. Instead, he went after His followers.

**9:2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way,<sup>a</sup> whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.<sup>bc</sup>**

2a The early name for the church before they were called Christians in Acts 11:26.

2b Any arrested Christians in Damascus would be hauled off to Jerusalem, where they would receive a fair trial before they would be punished or executed, sort of like in the old Soviet Union. The Sanhedrin in Jerusalem had authority over the Jewish Diaspora, and even Rome recognized it and allowed them some freedom to regulate their own internal religious affairs.

2c It is about 150 miles from Jerusalem to Damascus, about a 6-day walk. But distance meant nothing to Saul in his zeal to destroy these churches.

**9:3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:<sup>abc</sup>**

3a The Lord has waited long enough and was tired of waiting for Saul to respond to the conviction that was driving him to persecute the church even more, so He takes a drastic means of action to get Saul’s attention. People aren’t usually saved like this so no sinner should really expect a similar experience.

What would happen in the next few verses would be a greater miracle than the raising of Lazarus. God raised a dead man in John 11. Here, He will change the hardest thing in the universe- a human heart. To save a man like Saul would require

the Lord Himself. Philip may lead the Ethiopian to salvation and Peter may do that for Cornelius, but neither could have dealt with Saul- that would be a task the Lord Himself would have to undertake,

3b Conversions often occur “suddenly”, although the conviction may have lasted for months, or even years. But when the dam breaks, it does so with little warning.

3c Saul was not blinded by the sun, but by a light from heaven that was brighter than the noonday sun.

**9:4 And he fell to the earth,<sup>a</sup> and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?<sup>b</sup>**

4a The conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch was in a chariot; the conversion of Saul of Tarsus was down in the dust. God brought the proud and haughty rabbi down low, lower than He did to that teachable Gentile.

4a When you persecute the Lord’s people and His church, you persecute the Lord. Like any human enemy of God, Saul would have gladly killed Jesus if he had been able to get at Him. Since he could not, Saul channeled his hatred and persecutions toward His people.

**9:5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord?<sup>a</sup> And the Lord said, I am Jesus<sup>b</sup> whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.<sup>cd</sup>**

5a Saul knew exactly Who this was.

5b The hated name, the name that Saul was doing everything in his power to destroy had just handcuffed him.

5c This is why Saul was reacting so violently against the church- he was under deep and strong conviction. He would not give in to it so he was fighting it as hard as he could. The Lord was goading Saul with conviction in the same way a farmer would goad a sluggish ox with a sharp stick.

5d There are 4 times the Lord appeared to men in His glory:

1. At the Mount of Transfiguration- Matthew 17:2
2. To Stephen at his death- Acts 7:55
3. To Saul at his conversion- Acts 9:3-7
4. To John at Patmos- Revelation 1:13-17

**AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord

5 And he said, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said,

5 And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” And He *said*, “I

said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: <b>it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.</b>	"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.	am Jesus whom you are persecuting,
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"it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" is omitted in the ESV and LSV.

**9:6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?<sup>a</sup> And the Lord said unto him,<sup>b</sup> Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.**

6a The first question of the new convert, where:

1. He acknowledges that Jesus is Lord
2. He surrenders to the Lordship of Christ
3. Asks for orders

The Lord now ruins Saul/Paul for this life (Galatians 6:14 "**But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.**") and equips him for the life to come (Colossians 3:1-3 "**If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.**").

AV	ESV	LSV
<b>6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?</b> And the Lord <i>said</i> unto him, <b>Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.</b>	<b>6 But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do."</b>	<b>6 but rise up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do."</b>

6b The ESV and LSV omit "**And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him**". The first question of a new convert, asking for orders from the Lord, is removed!

**9:7 And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice,<sup>a</sup> but seeing no man.**

7a They heard a voice but not the words, which none of the others present could discern. The Lord was not speaking to them but to Saul. This was between Saul and the Lord. While Saul hears the exact words and identifies the speaker (Acts 9:4), those with him (Acts 22:9; 26:14) hear only a noise (Acts 9:7) without being able to locate a speaker or understand the words.

**9:8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man:<sup>a</sup> but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus.**

8a He was struck blind. This will humble a proud man as nothing else.

**9:9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.<sup>a</sup>**

9a He had too much on his mind to be bothered with eating or drinking! These events moved Paul to undergo an unplanned three-day fast. The events surrounding his salvation are so momentous that Paul continually looked for opportunities to give his testimony (Acts 22, 26; 1 Corinthians 15:3-10; Galatians 1:11-24). You may not think yourself very good at giving a sinner the plan of salvation, but anyone can give his testimony and that can be an effective tool in witnessing. Just tell them what happened to you! People will argue theology all day, but no one can argue with a changed life.

"Let us look at Saul's conversion once more as follows:

1. Captured. He was apprehended by divine love. He persecuted men to death; love pursued him to bring him life eternal. Instead of putting others to death, Paul's Saviour and ours was put to death for the sins of others. Love puts its hand on Saul of Tarsus and says: "I arrest you; you are henceforth the Lord's prisoner; a captive of love."

2. Conquered. Many a criminal in prison has been captured; not so many are conquered. Their wills are still unyielded. But Paul could say: "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." Like His Lord he too could say: "I delight to do Thy will."

3. Captivated. Paul's heart was won. His whole soul became engrossed with the loveliness of Him who saved him. All he once boasted in he now counted but loss for Christ. He found in Jesus not only the super excellency of knowledge that challenges the mind, but a love that satisfied every craving of his ransomed soul.

4. Controlled. The love of Christ constrained him hence forth not to live for himself but unto Him who died for him and rose again. That he might bring honor and glory to Christ became his consuming passion (August Van Ryn, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 87-88).".

**9:10 ¶ And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias.<sup>a</sup> And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.**

10a He was a Gentle convert, as seen in Acts 22:12. This would get Saul's attention. As a "Fundamentalist" Pharisee, he would have hated the Gentiles. Now it will be a Gentile convert first to Judaism and later to the hated Way who would be the one who would impart the Holy Spirit and receive his sight.

**9:11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,<sup>a-b-c</sup>**



11a The first, and best, practice of a new convert. Saul said and read his prayers as a religious man, but how, for the first time in his life, he is truly praying. And you can be sure heaven took notice of the first prayers of such a convert as this. But earth would also take notice of such a change in a man who just a few days prior, was trying his best to destroy all mention of this God to whom he now prayed to. Ananias was certainly amazed by this announcement by the Lord. The fact that Ananias was told that the former persecutor and terror of the Church was now in prayer to Jesus would have calmed any fears he would have about this being some sort of trick by Saul to catch more Christians and to reassure him of his own safety. No, this was no ploy by Saul. Ananias was assured this was a genuine conversion.

11b “Saul’s formal education is over; he never went back to school a day after his conversion. He went right straight to the Author of the Bible and asked for orders. If you updated it, he probably asked the Lord Jesus the same questions the control tower asks any plane coming near the airport:

1. What is your serial number? (Heb. 1:6).
2. What is your position? (Eph. 1:20–21).
3. What is your altitude? (2 Cor. 12:1–4).
4. What is your intention? (Eph. 3:16–20).

In less than a week Paul had all four questions answered, (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, page 334).”

11c Not “behold he preacheth”. Preaching is good but prayer is better. Saul could still be a deceiver and preach. Many an unregenerate man clogs our pulpits in this day. But no sinner would pray such a prayer that heaven noticed in this fashion.

**9:12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.<sup>a</sup>**

12a God never sends an angel to do a man’s job.

**9:13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:<sup>a</sup>**

13a Saul had quite the (negative) reputation among the brethren, and for good reason.

**9:14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.<sup>a</sup>**

14a You can’t blame Ananias for being uncertain regarding Saul, knowing his reputation.

**9:15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel<sup>a</sup> unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles,<sup>b</sup> and kings,<sup>c</sup> and the children of Israel:<sup>de</sup>**

15a Saul appears as:

1. An unclean vessel (Acts 9:1)
2. A destructive vessel (Acts 9:1)
3. A broken vessel (Acts 9:4)
4. An empty vessel (Acts 9:6)
5. A chosen vessel (Acts 9:15)
6. A useful vessel (Acts 9:16)
7. A vessel unto honor (2 Timothy 2:21 **"If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."**).

15b He would become the Apostle to the Uncircumcision.

1. Romans 11:13 **"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office:"**
2. Galatians 2:7 **"But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;"**

15c He would stand before Agrippa and Caesar.

15d Paul would initially direct his ministry towards the Jews, and would still maintain his burden to Israel (Romans 9-11). Paul never got over his burden for his brethren, even while hip-deep in his ministry to the Gentiles.

15e Paul's Threefold Ministry- he would minister to:

1. Gentiles
2. Kings
3. The Children of Israel

**9:16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.<sup>ab</sup>**

16a And he would, even unto death. Also see 2 Corinthians 11:16-33. Ananias need not fear Saul causing him to suffer, for it would be Saul who would do the suffering from now on.

16b God showed Saul the great things he would suffer for the name he once hated- and Saul still was saved! He didn't back out or make excuse or change his mind when told what he would have to suffer to be a Christian. If, when you were saved, God showed you that you would be jailed, but on the rack, lose your family or be exiled or even killed if you became a Christian, would you still have gotten saved? If you were confronted with a witness that started "God loves you and He has a wonderful plan for your life", you can immediately recognize a non-Biblical plan of salvation.

The Lord lets the men he calls know that the ministry ahead of them will be tough, with much tribulation. Jeremiah and Ezekiel were warned ahead of time. In 2 Corinthians, when writing about the ministry, Paul uses words like **"anguish,**

perplexity, devour, smite, bondage, weak, forsaken, faint, persecuted, sorry, grieved, down, perish, burden, cast down, groaning, poor, chastened, hunger, beaten, perils, pain, infirmity, stoned, reproaches, offended, weariness, mourning, trembling, fear, poverty, affliction, despair, necessities, imprisonments, distressed, destruction, tumults, killed, tribulation, dying, suffering, terrified.” Are we as honest with the young men in our Bible colleges and institutes in laying before them what a true Biblical ministry is all about? Many of them think it is pasting 500 people in a nice building, with a nice study and “winning souls”. That is NOT what the ministry is about! It’s the greatest work in the world but it is also the most difficult and discouraging work there is.

**9:17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul,<sup>a</sup> 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.<sup>b</sup>**

17a “Brother Saul” shows that Saul is saved before his baptism. And there is no record that Saul ever spoke in tongues at any time in Acts 9.

17b A laying-on of hands this time not to impart the Holy Spirit but to receive the filling of the Holy Spirit.

**9:18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.<sup>a</sup>**

18a Results of Saul’s conversion:

1. Saul was water-baptized (Acts 9:18).
2. Saul joined himself with other believers (Acts 9:19).
3. He immediately preached Christ and witnessed (Acts 9:20-22).
4. He had understanding of the Scriptures (Acts 9:22). Saul knew the Scriptures well, having been a Pharisee, but he did not understand the Scriptures until he was born again.
  - A. 1 Corinthians 2:14 **“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”**
  - B. 2 Corinthians 3:14-16 **“But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.”**
5. He was persecuted (9:23). Those who live godly will suffer persecution.
  - A. 2 Timothy 3:12 **“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”**

For a Jew to receive Christian baptism would often result in his family declaring him to be dead. It would cut all ties between the Jewish convert to Christianity and his Jewish

family. It was a drastic step that demanded a heavy price. By being baptized, Saul demonstrated the fruit of his conversion by cutting himself from his old life and career totally- no going back, no retreat.

**9:19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.**

## **28. Saul's Early Ministry 9:19-31**

**9:20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.<sup>a</sup>**

20a It did not take him long to get to the work! The new convert gets right into the vineyard. Usually this might not be a good idea as the convert does not have the knowledge, experience or maturity to handle such public ministries, but Saul was unique in that he was able to get into the work at a very early stage in his Christian life.

AV	ESV	LSV
20 And straightway he <b>preached</b> Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.	20 And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."	20 and immediately he <i>be-gan to</i> proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."

No preaching in the ESV and LSV, just "proclaiming".

**9:21 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?<sup>a</sup>**

21a You can argue with Saul's theology all you want (and they did!) but there is no arguing a changed life, especially with a change as dramatic as was Saul's change.

**9:22 But Saul increased the more in strength,<sup>a</sup> and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.**

22a Very rapid spiritual growth and an understanding of Christian doctrine by Paul, enough to confound the best Jewish theologians he encountered. This reminds us of Apollos in Acts 18:24-28. Due to his training as a Pharisee, Paul was too well schooled in the Old Testament Scriptures for his opponents to refute his arguments proving that Jesus was the Messiah.

AV	ESV	LSV
22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and	22 But Saul increased all the more in strength, and	22 But Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding

<p>confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.</p>	<p>confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Christ.</p>	<p>the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this One is the Christ.</p>
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The LSV uses the New Age term “One” in referring to Jesus.

**9:23 ¶ And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:<sup>a</sup>**

23a The persecutor is now the persecuted. Saul was probably expecting this. After all, he used to think the same way- if you can’t convert them or shut them up, kill them!

**9:24 But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.**

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**9:25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.<sup>a-b</sup>**

25a “Over The Wall In A Basket” would have been one of Saul’s favorite “preacher stories” or illustrations to use in his messages! It may have been the size of a modern clothes hamper. The hunter has now become the hunted.

25b “The escape was not miraculous. In this way the Lord has often delivered his servants; and in this way he is continually able to deliver them. But he never needlessly multiplies miracles. We cannot see how Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego could have been saved out of the midst of the fiery furnace, or Daniel from the lion’s den, without a miracle. A miracle was also called for to release Peter from prison...the night before his intended execution. But here the deliverance could be effected by human means (William Jay, *Evening Exercises for Every Day of the Year*, December 17).”

**9:26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed<sup>a</sup> to join himself to the disciples:<sup>b</sup> but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.<sup>c</sup>**

26a “**assayed**” comes from the French “assaier”, from “assai”, a variation of “essai”, “trial”. From which we also get “essay”, “a literary composition”. To “assay” can mean to examine, analyze, test, prove or attempt (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 21).

26b He wanted to join the church at Jerusalem. It is natural for a new Christian to want to join a local group of believers. Something is very wrong with a professing Christian who demonstrates no such desire.

26c Can you blame them for reacting this way? The worst enemy of the church shows up on your church doorstep one Sunday morning and claims he has been saved and that he wants to attend your service. Your first reaction is “this is a trap to get information on our congregation and eventually arrest all of us!” To appreciate the scene one would have to imagine Torquemada or Loyola suddenly showing up at a gathering of Waldenses or Huguenots and claiming to be a Bible-believing Christian, or Gestapo or KGB agents showing up at a prayer meeting during the days of Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union. The believers were sure that Saul was a spy or an informer.

Saul is caught between two worlds and is the loneliest man on earth right now. The Jews, his former associates, were trying to kill him and the Christians didn’t trust him.

**9:27 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.<sup>a-b</sup>**

27a Saul needed a friend and he found one in Barnabas . The Jews were trying to kill him and the Christians didn’t trust him. But the “Son of Consolation” vouches for Saul to the Jerusalem church, bringing them up do date regarding his conversion, early ministry and how he was now Public Enemy Number One to his former companions.

27b Barnabas pointed out three indications that Saul's conversion was genuine for the benefit of the skeptics in the churches.

1. Saul had seen the Lord
2. Saul had talked with the Lord
3. Saul had witnessed boldly for the Lord in Damascus

AV	ESV	LSV
27 But Barnabas took him, and brought <i>him</i> 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 <b>preached</b> boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.	27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus.	27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and recounted to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus.

There is no preaching in the LSV, just “spoken out boldly”.

**9:28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.**

**9:29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.<sup>a</sup>**

29a Some of the Greek Jews or proselytes, and Saul irritated them as much as he did the Jews in Damascus, with a similar result- more death threats. This is the Standard Response and Reaction. Mordecai Ham was threatened at pistol point. Sam Jones had his barn burned. Billy Sunday had a man hit him with a bull whip. Bob Jones Sr. dealt with more than one assassination plot. Martin Luther was threatened with burning at the stake all of his life. John Huss was lied to by the Catholic authorities who “guaranteed his safety” and then was burned at the stake. Harry Ironsides was stoned for preaching on the street; John Bunyan was thrown in jail. Roger Williams was exiled into the New England wilderness in the middle of winter. George Fox was jailed a dozen times; John Wesley and George Whitefield were stoned and mobbed. J. Frank Norris had his church burned from under him, mobs gathered to lynch him and was threatened with a gun. How different than men like Billy Graham or Rick Warren, who get invited to the White House!

AV	ESV	LSV
29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.	29 And he spoke and disputed against the Hellenists. But they were seeking to kill him.	29 And he was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic <i>Jews</i> , but they were attempting to put him to death.

“Grecians” The ESV and LSV use the harder “Hellenists” while the LSV adds “Jews” in italics.

**9:30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.<sup>a</sup>**

30a Back to Saul’s hometown.

**9:31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria,<sup>a</sup> and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.**

31a Since Saul was no longer persecuting them, the persecutions died down, at least for a while.

AV	ESV	LSV
31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judæa and Galilee	31 So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had	31 So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria was having

and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the **comfort** of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.

peace, being built up. And going on in the fear of the Lord and in the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, it continued to multiply.

**“comfort”** The LSV makes an unnecessary change to “encouragement”.

## **29. The Healing of Aeneas 9:32-35**

**9:32<sup>a</sup> ¶ And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.**

32a The chapter ends with a shift back to some of the activities of Peter, how he was used in a healing of Aeneas in Acts 9:32-35 and the raising of Dorcas in Acts 9:36-42.

**9:33 And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.**

**9:34 And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.**

**9:35 And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord.<sup>a</sup>**

35a This sign-miracle had the desired effect.

## **30. The Raising of Dorcas 9:36-43**

**9:36 ¶ Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas:<sup>a</sup> this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.<sup>b</sup>**

36a “Tabitha” is the Aramaic of the Greek name “Dorcas”. She may have been a widow (Acts 9:39).

36b Christianity in action, as James would exhort in his epistle. She was not a great teacher, preacher or missionary, but she did what she could- she made clothes for the poor saints, and that is as good as going to the mission field.

**9:37 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.**

**9:38 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.**



**9:39 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.<sup>a</sup>**

39a “Live, so as to be missed, when gone”- Robert Murray McCheyne. Dorcas was not a great church planter or preacher or teacher. It would appear she had a very humble ministry- making clothes for the poor saints. But even such a ministry can be greatly used and appreciated, and such a person would be missed when gone.

**9:40 But Peter put them all forth,<sup>a</sup> 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.**

40a Why did Peter do this? The Lord did it in Mark 5:40 and Luke 8:54 but those were scoffers and the Lord would not do a miracle before them. But these widows were mourners, not scoffers, so why did Peter feel the need to put them out before he raised Dorcas?

**9:41 And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.<sup>a</sup>**

41a “The only thing peculiar about the text is the vast silence on the part of 100 percent of the commentators about Dorcas’ experience from her own standpoint. If she was dead (and she was!), was she “absent from the body and present with the Lord” (Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:8)? She must have remembered something about Heaven if she went there—Paul did (2 Cor. 12:1–5)! If Lazarus didn’t, why should he? Lazarus was on the other side of the finished work of Christ on Calvary; when Dorcas dies, the veil has been rent (Matt. 27:51), and the tomb (Luke 24) is empty.

“The answer to these questions is found in the Old Testament, and for that reason 100 percent of the major commentators refused to make an intelligible comment. Observe in Genesis 35:18 that in a normal death the soul leaves the body. Now notice in 1 Kings 17:21–22 that a soul in the Old Testament can leave and return to a dead body without any sensation other than having slept (1 Sam. 28:15). Samuel was “disquieted” when he came up, and Lazarus (Luke 16:23) never answered a word to the rich man’s prayer. The Old Testament saints did sleep, but Pastor Russell and Judge Rutherford were tragically mistaken in thinking that this condition existed for the LOST man in the Old Testament. Now notice that no soul returns to the dead boy of 2 Kings 4:33–37. His soul stays in him until he begins to breathe again. This is the case with Dorcas, and it is the case that often appears in medical history where the man is “declared dead” and then he revives. Dorcas’ soul is not in the third heaven before Peter’s visit. When God takes her soul home, it goes, and until He takes it home, it stays (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, page 348).”

**9:42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord.<sup>a</sup>**

42a The raising was used as a good public testimony in Joppa.

**9:43 And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.**

## **Acts Chapter 10**

Although the Church Age started in Acts 2, it really gets “off the ground” in Acts 10 when Peter uses his keys to open the door of salvation to the Gentiles.

### **31. Cornelius’ Vision 10:1-8**

**10:1 There was a certain man in Cæsarea<sup>a</sup> called Cornelius, a centurion<sup>b</sup> of the band called the Italian band,<sup>c-d</sup>**

1a This was a Gentile city and the headquarters of Roman power in this area. It was a very important seaport city. It was built by Herod and the Roman governor lived here. Philip also preached here (Acts 8:40) and lived here later (Acts 21:8). Maybe Cornelius had heard Phillip’s preaching?

1b In charge of 100 soldiers. Think of a “century” being 100 years. It is a similar rank to a modern captain. There are six centurions mentioned in the Scripture, and every one of them appears as a man of integrity and character (Matthew 8:5–10; Mark 15:39; Acts 27:43;; Acts 22:25,26, 24:23; and the one here). By comparison, a tribune was over a cohort (1,000 men) and a legate was over a legion (6,000 men).

1c A band or “cohort” at this time contained 555 infantrymen and 66 calvary-men, although there were grades of prestige among the bands, and some of them numbered 1,105 infantry and 132 calvary.

1d He may have been a member of-the great Cornelia Gens (House of Cornelia) one of the most distinguished houses of Rome, for Julian the Apostate names him as one of the few persons of distinction (among the Romans) to become a follower of Christ.

**10:2 A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.<sup>a</sup>**

2a Not a bad testimony for a Gentile. Unlike many other Roman soldiers stationed in this part of the world, Cornelius took an interest in the better aspects of Judaism and it made a positive impact on him.

Cornelius was:

1. A devout man
2. He feared God
3. He influenced his house for good. He was a man who was able to command the loyalty of his family and his house by the power of his example.
4. He gave alms
5. He prayed to God always. It was a habit with him, a way of life.
6. Was open to spiritual truth
7. Was looking for spiritual truth

This is not to say that Cornelius was saved at this point, but he was about as good as an unsaved religious man of character can get. He obviously was lacking revelation, which is why he was told to send for Peter, who would “fill in the blanks” for Cornelius and lead him to a full New Testament salvation. Nothing is said about him being a proselyte to Judaism, so he was saved as a full-bore Gentile.

He was a “heathen” man but he obviously had some knowledge of God. The “heathen” are not as ignorant of God as you might think.

The Bible speaks of his faith, his family (who were also influenced for good by the example and leadership of Cornelius) and his fervor.

**10:3 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.<sup>a</sup>**

3a Cornelius is looking for light and he gets it. Many Gentiles rejected whatever light God granted them and they went off into spiritual darkness (Romans 1:21,24 **“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened... Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:”**). Even a good moral and religious man like this needed a full revelation of Christ.

**10:4 And when he looked on him, he was afraid,<sup>a</sup> and said, What is it, Lord?<sup>b</sup> And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.<sup>c</sup>**

4a An angelic visitation frightened this hardened veteran.

4b Although he was dealing with an angel, Cornelius understood that he was really dealing with God.

4c It would be a great joy for anyone to be told that heaven was paying special attention to their fastings and prayers! The verse explains how God deals with the heathen who have not heard the gospel. When the heathen follow their conscience (Romans 2:15 **“Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;”**), it leads them to Jesus Christ, exactly as the law was a schoolmaster for a Jew (Galatians 3:24 **“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”**). God knows the heart (Romans 2:15), and when the heart of any man turns to Him, he is “accepted with him” in the sense that God will give that man an opportunity to receive Christ.

**10:5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter:<sup>a</sup>**

5a His “second name” or surname. Cephas was his primary name. It is not unusual for people to have several names. Even today, most people have three or four names, a first name, middle name(s), last names and even nicknames.

**10:6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.<sup>a</sup>**

6a The angel was not permitted to tell Cornelius about the gospel or spiritual things. It must be another man to do that. For an angel to show a sinner the way of salvation would mean nothing for no angel is qualified to undertake such a task. But let a sinner tell another sinner where to find bread, that carries weight and value. If Cornelius wanted more light, God was telling him where to find it and who to inquire of. The rest was up to Cornelius.

AV	ESV	LSV
<b>6</b> He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: <b>he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.</b>	<b>6</b> He is lodging with one Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea.”	<b>6</b> he is lodging with a tanner <i>named</i> Simon, whose house is by the sea.”

“he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do” is omitted in the ESV and LSV.

**10:7 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;**

**10:8 And when he had declared all these things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.**

### **32. Peter’s Vision 10:9-18**

**10:9 ¶ 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:<sup>a</sup>**

9a Housetops were like prayer-closets, a good place for some privacy to pray. Most oriental homes had flat roofs that served as a porch would in a modern house. Most Jews prayed twice a day, but more pious Jews also prayed at noon, a third time of prayer.

1. Psalm 55:17 **“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.”**
2. Daniel 6:10 **“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.”**

**10:10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,**

**10:11 And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great<sup>a</sup> sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:**

11a A large sheet, showing the future extent of the Church and the outreach to the Gentiles. Eventually, the Church would reach a world-wide scope. The great sheet suggests the vast outreach of the gospel of God's grace in this day, wherein millions have been won to Christ. Knit at the "four corners" suggests that God's grace goes out world-wide. (August Van Ryn, *Acts*, page 94).

**10:12 Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.<sup>a</sup>**

12a The linen sheet is a tablecloth and "dinner is served" but Peter has no appetite for what is offered to him. Peter had never eaten pork, lobster, crab, clams, oysters, catfish or scallops in his life; and he was not about to butcher a hog or eat a ham sandwich. He had not yet received the revelation that the dietary laws were no longer binding on Christians and that he could have eaten anything he wanted. Such a change was in operation even if it had not yet been revealed or even understood by the Church. There was a mix of clean and unclean animals in the sheet, reflecting the universal make-up of the Church racially.

**10:13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.**

**10:14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord;<sup>a</sup> for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.<sup>b</sup>**

14a If the Lord commanded you to do something, and if He is the Lord, then why the protest? Did Peter think he was holier than the Lord, or more spiritual? The Lord told him to do one thing but Peter's religion forbade it. What should Peter do?

"Not so, Lord" reminds us of Peter "rebuking" the Lord in Matthew 16:22 ("**Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.**") "Not so" and "Lord" are flat contradictions. If Jesus is Lord, you cannot say "No" to His commands.

14b This would represent the Gentiles, whom the Jews considered unclean. There was still a lot of Jewish prejudice against the Gentiles, which would have to be dismantled as the Gentiles would be brought into the Church later and would become dominant. Peter was just as bigoted as an Jew was against the Gentiles. Peter probably had Leviticus 20:25 in mind, "**Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean: and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast, or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that**

**creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean.”** Such animals were unclean under the Law, but the Law had been fulfilled in the death of Christ (Romans 10:4 **“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”**) and God had cleansed the unclean, so now no one was to make any judgments regarding clean or unclean (Colossians 2:16 **“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:”** and 1 Timothy 4:4 **“For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:”**).

**10:15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.<sup>a</sup>**

15a Do not slander a people whom God was going to cleanse and bring into His program of the Church. God had cleansed all people at Calvary by the blood of Christ, and that included the Gentiles. Racial discrimination has no place in the Body of Christ for we are all equal at the cross.

**10:16 This was done thrice:<sup>a</sup> and the vessel was received up again into heaven.**

16a This reminds us of the three times Peter denied the Lord and the three times the Lord asked Peter if he loved Him in John 21:16,17 (**“He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.”**).

 God dealt with Peter in sets of threes.

**10:17 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 inquiry for Simon’s house, and stood before the gate,<sup>a</sup>**

17a The answer to Peter’s questions was downstairs at the gate.

**10:18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.**

### **33. The Gentile Pentecost 10:19-48**

**10:19 ¶ While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.**

**10:20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.<sup>ab</sup>**

20a There was no doubt Peter was doing a lot of doubting and questioning, as he would be requested to go to a Gentile's house, one who was a Roman centurion no less. It was seldom good to have soldiers at your door, asking for you by name, so Peter would naturally be quite concerned at this summons.

20b It was from Joppa that Jonah was sent by God to preach to the Gentiles in Nineveh. It was from Joppa that Peter was sent by God to preach to the Gentiles in Caesarea.

AV	ESV	LSV
20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.	20 Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them."	20 "But rise up, go down and accompany them without taking issue at all, for I have sent them Myself."

The LSV reading is very clunky.

**10:21 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?**

**10:22 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<sup>a</sup> of thee.<sup>b</sup>**

22a Not Charismatic-style signs and wonders. Cornelius wanted to HEAR the WORDS of life. He wanted a sermon and solid teaching, not the cheap signs-and-wonders entertainment by some Pentecostal clown. He also did not want to hear some modern-style "Independent Fundamental Baptist"/Jack Hyles "sermon" that was long on personal stories and illustrations but short on theological content. The Jews may require a sign but not Gentiles.

22b "The three men from Cornelius' house show up (vs. 19), and Peter goes down and talks with them (vss. 20–21). They say, "Ah, pardona us lika you wanta, ah? We coma from Cornelius' housa, whata isa gooda one man (vs. 22). Heesa go to da churcha, he saya hees prayers, Mamma Mia! He saya hees rosary, he taka da stations of da cross; heesa do alla dat! But whadya thinka, aah? You thinka hees happy? No! He do whatta da holy papa tells heem to do, but he still a no know wherea he going whena he die! Santa Maria! Whatsa he gonna do, aah? Heesa good Italiano—he eatta hees pastrami, hees lasagna, hees spaghetti, hees raviola, and he steel donna know where he goin' whena he die!"... (Now, it may not have been exactly like that, gentle reader, but if you think the "meat" of Acts 10 is in Bruce, Robertson, Knowling, Clarke, Arndt, Gingrich, Abbott, Hobart, Dillistone, Hastings, or Dummelow, you ought to contact Alex Dunlap [Conversion Center] or Avro Manhattan and find out where the stockyard is.) (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Acts*, pages 360-361)."



**10:23 Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.<sup>a</sup>**

23a He took witnesses, as Peter knew he would be “called on the carpet” by “the brethren” for doing into a house of a Gentile. There were six of these brethren Acts (11:12). Including Peter and the two men Cornelius sent, we get 10 men, and 10 is the Gentile number.

**10:24 And the morrow after they entered into Cæsarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.<sup>a</sup>**

24a He invited anyone and everyone he could to come hear Peter. This shows a genuine desire not only to hear the word of God but that others would hear it as well.

**10:25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him.**

**10:26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.<sup>a</sup>**

26a Peter was no sort of a “pope”!<sup>1</sup> All modern popes EXPECT and DEMAND people to fall at their feet, kiss their ring and big toe and worship him as some sort of “vicar of Christ”. But Peter would have none of that. Beware of anyone who demands or expects this sort of worship, or who does not rebuke his followers when they do it. Millions of Roman Catholics have since then bowed at the feet of him whom they claim is Peter’s successor the Pope but now, as then, without Peter’s consent. To venerate and adore religiously a human being is idolatry, and Peter would have none of it.

**10:27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.**

**10:28 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;<sup>a</sup> but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.<sup>b</sup>**

28a A long-winded way of saying “Gentiles”. Peter may have been choosing his words carefully as he was in the household of a Roman centurion, surrounded by his friends and associates.

28b Was this really necessary? Peter is saying “Normally, I wouldn’t associate with you Gentile dogs but God told me to come, so what do you want?”

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1 Of course, the Bible knows nothing about any Romanist “pope”. It is a completely non-Scriptural office.

**10:29 Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying,<sup>a</sup> as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?**

29a Peter says “gainsaying”, meaning he came at his own expense, without looking for any gain or advantage. He came because God had told him to, no other reason or motivation.

**10:30<sup>a</sup> And Cornelius said,<sup>b</sup> Four days ago I was fasting<sup>c</sup> until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,<sup>d</sup>**

30a Like a disciplined military man, Cornelius is brief, direct and to the point. If you can get a man like this saved, you’ll have a useful Christian, as military men know something about self-discipline, self-denial and following orders.

30b He is ready for the MAN (vs. 5) with the MESSAGE (vss. 39–40) of a MISSIONARY (vss. 19–20) who will tell him about a MEDIATOR (vs. 43) and give him a MODEL (vss. 27, 47–48) to follow (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, page 365)."

30c **AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was <b>fast-ing</b> until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,	30 And Cornelius said, “Four days ago, about this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing	30 And Cornelius said, “Four days ago to this hour, I was praying in my house during the ninth hour; and behold, a man stood before me in shining garments,
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“**fasting**” is removed in most modern versions. What do they have against fasting?

30d The angel is identified as a man without wings in bright clothing.

**10:31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.**

**10:32 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.**

**10:33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come.<sup>a</sup> Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.**

33a As a military man, Cornelius would appreciate someone who knew how to take orders, human or divine.

AV	ESV	LSV
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.	33 So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord."	33 "So I sent for you immediately, and you have been kind enough to come. Now then, we are all here present before God to hear all that you have been ordered by the Lord."

The ESV and LSV have Cornelius saying that Peter was "kind enough to come". Can you imagine a military man using language like that? Instead, he says "You are here and you've done well to obey and come so quickly". That is how a military man, especially an officer, talks.

**10:34<sup>a</sup> ¶ Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:<sup>b</sup>**

34a "We might note once more the difference between this Gentile Pentecost and the Jewish Pentecost of Acts 2. Here, unlike there, there is no mention of "repent"; no telling them to be baptized; no promise of the Holy Ghost. In Acts 2 the Jews were told to repent in view of their guilt in the crucifixion of their Messiah; they were told to be baptized, as an outward proof of their repentance, and consequent to those two actions they were promised the Holy Spirit. In Acts 10 on the contrary the Holy Spirit falls on these believers without any promise of His coming being given, and baptism is not here the evidence of repentance but of "faith." (August Van Ryn, *Acts*, page 98)."

34b He respects races, even if He doesn't respect persons.

**10:35 But in every nation<sup>a</sup> he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.**

35a Even Gentiles! God's working is now moving beyond Israel.

**10:36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)<sup>a</sup>**

36a The sovereignty of Christ is affirmed, above even Cornelius' "Commander and Chief", Caesar. But Cornelius did not object to Peter's use of this phrase.

**10:37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judæa, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;<sup>a</sup>**

37a Peter is referring to the baptism of John the Baptist.

AV	ESV	LSV
37 That word, <i>I say</i> , ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John <b>preached</b> ;	37 you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed:	37 you yourselves know the thing which happened throughout all Judea, starting from Galilee, after the baptism which John proclaimed.

**“Preached”** The ESV and LSV water this down to “proclaimed”.

**10:38 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.**

**10:39 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:<sup>a</sup>**

39a Peter continues to put the blame for the death of Christ squarely on Israel. Seeing he was preaching to a household of Romans, Peter may have not wanted to aggravate anyone by mentioning that the Romans did the actual dirty work for the Jews in the death of Christ.

**10:40 Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;<sup>a</sup>**

40a This is a clear reference to the resurrection and the post-resurrection appearances of Christ.

**10:41 Not to all the people,<sup>a</sup> but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.<sup>b</sup>**

41a Only believers saw the Lord after His resurrection. The last time the unbelieving world saw Him was on the cross, and they won't see Him again until the Second Coming in Revelation 19.

41b See Luke 24:42 for an example, **“And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.”**

**10:42 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<sup>a</sup> and dead.<sup>b</sup>**

42a Living, alive.

42b In the commissions of Matthew 28 and Acts 1.

AV	ESV	LSV
42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God <i>to be</i> the Judge of quick and dead.	42 And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.	42 “And He commanded us to preach to the people, and solemnly to bear witness that this is the One who has been designated by God as Judge of the living and the dead.

The LSV used “the One” in referring to Christ, which is a New Age term. The ESV does not capitalize “One” but it has the same idea.

**10:43 To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission<sup>a</sup> of sins.**

43a The Holy Spirit interrupts Peter here. Peter may have been intending to preach the same message he preached in Acts 2:38, but that would not work here. Acts 2:38 was a call to national repentance to Israel for killing their King. No Gentile nation would have to repent of that, not even Rome. The Romans didn’t reject and kill their Messiah, Israel did, so there was no need to reproach Acts 2:38 to a Gentile crowd.

**10:44 ¶ While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.<sup>b</sup>**

44a Similar, but not identical to Acts 2. There was no call to repentance here as Peter was preaching to Gentiles, not Jews. The Jews rejected their Messiah and so Peter called for national repentance in Acts 2:38. The Gentiles were guilty of no such sin as neither the Messiah nor the Kingdom was offered to them, so they did not have that sin to repent of as Israel did.

**10:45 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.**

**10:46 For they heard them speak with tongues,<sup>a</sup> and magnify God. Then answered Peter,**

46a As in Acts 2, but why? In Acts 2, there were many nationalities represented in Jerusalem and they spoke a number of different languages. Here, it is likely that everyone spoke the same language, so why would tongues be necessary here? It may be to show that the “Gentile” Pentecost is on the same level as the “Jewish” Pentecost. If tongues were manifested in Acts 2, then they should also be manifested in Acts 10 to

prevent anyone from claiming that the “Gentile” Pentecost was inferior to the Jewish one.

The Jews also require a sign (1 Corinthians 1:22). For the Jews to accept the “Gentile Pentecost” as valid, the same sign of tongues (which are given as a sign [albeit to nonbelievers] in 1 Corinthians 14:22 **“Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.”**) must be evident here as they were in Acts 2.

“Tongues are the initial evidence given in the two places in the Bible where the Holy Spirit initiated His work in this age—Acts 2 and Acts 10. There is no evidence that the gift of tongues to the Corinthian church was an “initial evidence” of anything. This fact is perfectly clear from the verses in 1 Corinthians 12, 13, and 14 which state that although ALL Christians have been baptized by the Spirit, not all of them talk in tongues. “The INITIAL evidence” about which we hear so much is little more than the initial evidence of a traumatic state produced by psychological means. (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, page 374).”

**10:47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?<sup>a</sup>**

47a No reason at all, except maybe for racial or religious prejudice. There was no delay either. As soon as they gave a credible testimony of salvation, they were water baptized, just like the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8. No “waiting period” was involved. I can understand the fear of a cheap or insincere profession, but there is no record of water baptism being withheld or delayed from anyone who made a credible testimony of their faith in Christ.

**10:48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.<sup>a-b</sup> Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.**

48a Those who promote infant baptism assume that there must have been \*some\* infants in Cornelius’ household to have been baptized, but Luke is absolutely silent on it. Knowing the position of the early church on the qualifications for baptism, we may safely say that if there were any infants present, they would not have been water baptized,

48b They were baptized in the name of “the Lord”, not in the name “of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost” (Matthew 28:19) or “in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 2:38). We are not told in what name Phillip baptized the Ethiopian in Acts 8:38,39.

““THE LORD” (vs. 48) is the only “NAME” that will match all three members of the Trinity, and after all, Simon Peter was commanded to baptize GENTILES in “THE NAME” of the Trinity—see Matthew 28:18–20 and comments. The confounding of the baptismal formula of Matthew 28:19–20 with that of Acts 2:38 is inexcusable then, unless the apostate who is distorting the word of God is a man who believes in baptismal regeneration and wishes to force Acts 2:38 on GENTILES. (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, page 375).”

## Comparison Between Jewish Pentecost in Acts 2 and Gentile Pentecost in Acts 10

	<b>JEWISH- Acts 2</b>	<b>GENTILE- Acts 10</b>
<b>Peter- present at both and preached at both</b>	With the Church	Alone
<b>Location</b>	Jerusalem	Cæsarea
<b>Location</b>	At the temple	In a private home
<b>Audience</b>	Thousands present	Probably only about 25 people present (estimated)
<b>Preparation</b>	None	Peter received a vision beforehand, preparing him for this
<b>Preaching</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Tongues</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Water Baptism</b>	Yes, in the name of the Lord Jesus- 2:38	Yes, in the name of the Lord- 10:48





## Acts Chapter 11

Acts 11:1-18 is a review of the events of Acts 10, the reaction of the Jerusalem church to Peter's association with Gentiles, his defense and the reaction of the church after Peter explained the events of the Gentile Pentecost.

### 34. Peter Called To Account 11:1-18

**11:1 And the apostles and brethren that were in Judæa heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.**

**11:2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,**

**11:3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.<sup>a</sup>**

3a A Gentile would have trouble understanding the depth and degree of Jewish racism against the Gentiles. These old prejudices against the Gentiles were slow to die among the Jewish believers. It still was not known what God was going to do in the Church, in bringing together both Jewish and Gentile believers into one body. Paul would later write about that mystery. Never mind so much that the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit. They were more concerned about Peter eating with Gentiles!

**11:4 But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning,<sup>a</sup> and expounded it by order unto them, saying,**

4a Peter knew he was going to be in trouble "with the brethren". On the long trip back to Jerusalem, he had plenty of time to formulate and rehearse his defense.

**AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

**4 But Peter rehearsed *the matter* from the beginning, and expounded *it* by order unto them, saying,**

**4 But Peter began and explained it to them in order:**

**4 But Peter began *speaking* and *proceeded* to explain to them in orderly sequence, saying,**

The ESV and LSV leave out the words that indicate that Peter "**rehearsed the matter from the beginning.**"

**11:5 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:**

**11:6 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.**

**11:7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.**

**11:8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.**

**11:9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.**

**11:10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.**

**11:11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Cæsarea unto me.**

**11:12 And the Spirit<sup>a</sup> bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me,<sup>b</sup> and we entered into the man's house:<sup>c</sup>**

12a Peter will be careful to say that it was the Spirit expressly told him to go, despite his misgivings. This would be further emphasized in Acts 11:17. Peter was simply acting in obedience to what the Holy Spirit told him to do. Peter would not have gone to Cornelius' house unprompted.

12b There were six witnesses to these events, as Peter was very careful to have lots of witnesses to confirm his account of these matters.

12c Peter does not mention Cornelius by name, nor the fact that he was a Roman centurion.

**11:13 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;**

**11:14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.<sup>a</sup>**

14a This seems to be added from Acts 10:6, as there is no record of this kind of "household salvation" language in the message the angel gave to Cornelius. But in this case, his whole house was saved, as was the household of the Philippian jailer in Acts 16, which language Paul used.

**11:15 And as I began to speak,<sup>a</sup> the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning.**

15a More accurately, as Peter was getting ready to make his application of that sermon (see notes under Acts 10:43).

**11:16 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.<sup>a</sup>**

16a Acts 1:5.

**11:17 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?<sup>a</sup>**

17a “Don’t blame me! I was only doing what the Lord told me to do! What would you rather have me to do, disobey God?” No one could argue with that logic.

AV	ESV	LSV
<b>17</b> Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as <i>he did</i> unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, <b>that I could withstand God?</b>	<b>17</b> If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"	<b>17</b> “Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as <i>He gave</i> to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could prevent God’s way?”

“that I could withstand God?” The LSV reading is clunky.

**11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.<sup>a-b</sup>**

18a Once they heard Peter’s presentation, they were satisfied. They judged too hastily (1 Corinthians 4:5 “**Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.**”) but when everything was explained, they realized they had no basis to criticize Peter. This is why we should avoid jumping to spiritual conclusions regarding situations like this until we heard the matter in its entirety.

18b Repentance that leads to life through salvation.

### **35. More Good Reports 11:19-22**

**11:19 ¶ Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch,<sup>a</sup> preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.<sup>b</sup>**

19a The first mention of Antioch, which is in a positive light. The Law of First Mention states that the first time something is mentioned in Scripture, it will maintain the initial presentation (for good or bad) and it will continue with that presentation and intensify as

the topic progresses through Scripture. See notes under Acts 11:26 for a further development of a Tale of Two Cities: Antioch and Alexandria.

19b The persecution that started in Acts 8 may have seemed like a bad thing but the gospel was getting out and people were getting saved, so the Lord was using the wrath of man (and Satan) to please Him and to further His purposes.

**11:20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch,<sup>a</sup> spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.**

20a As a city, Antioch did not have a good moral reputation, like any city. Antioch was the third largest city in the Roman Empire, after Rome and Alexandria, and it was a business and commerce center. Antioch was about 15 miles inland from the Mediterranean Sea on the Orontes River and 300 miles north of Jerusalem. It was the capital of the Roman province of Syro-Cilicia, north of Phoenicia, and was one of the most strategic population centers of its day. It contained between 500,000 and 800,000 inhabitants about one-seventh of which were Jews.<sup>495</sup> Many Gentile proselytes to Judaism lived there.<sup>496</sup> Antioch was also notorious as a haven for pleasure-seekers. Yet it was in such a city the strongest church during this period was planted and grew.

AV	ESV	LSV
20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, <b>preaching</b> the Lord Jesus.	20 But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who on coming to Antioch spoke to the Hellenists also, preaching the Lord Jesus.	20 But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and <i>began</i> speaking to the Greeks also, proclaiming the good news of the Lord Jesus.

“preaching” The LSV has “proclaiming”.

**11:21 And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.<sup>a</sup>**

21a No water baptism, tongues or Acts 2:38-type stuff is associated with or mentioned in connection to these conversions.

### **36. Barnabas’ Continuing Ministry 11:22-25**

**11:22 ¶ 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.**

**11:23 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.<sup>a</sup>**

23a He was living up to his reputation as a Son of Consolation.

**11:24 For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith;<sup>a</sup> and much people was added unto the Lord.**

24a Live in such a way that they will put this on your tombstone.

**11:25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:<sup>a</sup>**

25a Barnabas did not want to “hog” the blessings but wanted others to get in on it, especially Saul. It would do him good to see the power of God at work like this. Maybe Saul was down or discouraged or “stuck” spiritually in terms of seeking the will of God. Getting in on this blessing would have been a major encouragement for him. But some preachers are hesitant to share the blessing (and the credit) if there was a revival in their town. They would love to have their names associated with such a move of God and be the ones to benefit from it primarily. Barnabas was a better man than that.

### **37. Antioch 11:26**

**11:26 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<sup>a</sup> first in Antioch.<sup>b-c-d-e-f</sup>**

26a “Christ-ones” or “Christ-followers”. The name was not necessarily given in derision.

26b Of course, there were Christians before this, but the believers were not called “Christians” until here, and were called this referring to the believers in the local church in Antioch. This is important. The believers were not first called Christians in Jerusalem or Damascus or Athens or Rome or in Alexandria (Egypt). Antioch is the spiritual mother of Bible-believing churches and Christians. Beware of any man who exalts Alexandrian, Egypt over Antioch, for any reason.

26c “The names that are associated with Antioch are a “sight different” than the names associated with Alexandria and Rome. Slapping the name “Peter” on Rome and the name “John Mark” on Alexandria is like slapping the name “Billy Sunday” on Treblinka or the name “Sam Jones” on Vietnam. Someone (A.D. 100–150) made a noble attempt to justify the Western and Hesychian “bibles” by associating Peter and Mark with these cities, but the historical facts would frustrate the attempt. The names connected with ANTIOCH are:

1. Chrysostom (A.D. 407): whose “Bible” matches the AV (1611) 98 percent of the time.
2. Ignatius (A.D. 110): eaten by lions in the arena.
3. Theodoret (A.D. 466): a Conservative commentator in the truest sense.

4. Diodorus (A.D. 394): a commentator who takes the plain literal sense of the Scriptures first, instead of the “allegorical sense.”
5. Basil (A.D. 379): a soulwinning preacher
6. The two “Gregories” (A.D. 390): who were soulwinning preachers and Bible commentators. Both of them used the mixed Western-Syria text found in the King James 1611 Bible.
7. Nestorius (A.D. 451): who refused to call Mary “the mother of God.” Nestorius is often listed as a “heretic” in the church histories, but those of us who have as much experience in PRACTICAL theology as in “Systematic Theology” know how this “heretic bit” works. The man who doesn’t agree with the majority of Conservative dead-heads is a “heretic.”
8. Lucian (A.D. 400): a great Bible teacher.
9. Arius (A.D. 336): who called Origen to account on his nonsense about Psalm 2:7 taking place in eternity. Even though Arius was technically wrong in this thinking, the people called “Arians” (Goths, Vandals, Huns, et al.) by the Catholic Church had access to a Gothic Bible (Ulfilas) which reads as the King James Bible in John 1:18. The “ARIAN” reading of John 1:18 was found in the Alexandrian manuscripts of Athanasius (!), the “hero of Nicaea,” and these manuscripts are preserved in the NASV (Peter Ruckman, *The Bible Believers Commentary on Acts*, page 387-388)."

#### 26d Comparing Alexandria and Antioch:

1. In Acts 13:9, Saul becomes Paul and is a member of the church at Antioch. (Acts 13:1). Barnabas was also a member of this local church.
2. The first missionary enterprise to the Gentiles is started from Antioch (Acts 13).
3. What does God think of Egypt (where Alexandria was located)?
  - A. It is a place where they'll kill you and will take your wife.
    - i. Genesis 12:11,12 **"And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive."**
      - a. This is the first mention of Egypt in Scripture and it is negative.
  - B. It is a place of slavery.
    - i. Exodus 1:11-14 **"Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel. And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour:**

**And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour."**

C. God calls it "the house of bondage."

i. Exodus 20:2 **"I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."**

D. God calls it "an iron furnace"

i. Deuteronomy 4:20 **"But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day."**

E. It is a place with which God commands his people that their future king is not to conduct any commercial trade. He specifically warns them not to buy horses there, nor even to go that way again.

i. Deuteronomy 17:16 **"But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way."**

F. Spiritually, it is the place in which the Two Witnesses are murdered in the tribulation.

i. Revelation 11:8 **"And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."**

4. What does God think of Alexandria? There are only four occurrences in Scripture;

A. It is a place where people disputed with and killed the first Christian martyr, Stephen (Acts 6:9) This first mention is negative.

B. It is a place where bad bible teaching comes from. Apollos was learned in the Scriptures but had only partial knowledge and revelation, knowing only the baptism of John). Aquilla and Priscilla, non-Alexandrians, had to explain the way of God to him more perfectly (Acts 18:24).

C. Paul, was taken to Rome by a ship from Alexandria. (Acts 27:6)

D. Paul, after surviving a shipwreck and snake bite on Melita, is taken to Rome, by another ship from (once again) Alexandria. (Acts 28:11)

5. What does God think of Antioch?

A. It is a place - the only hometown mentioned - from which a man of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom came, Stephen (Acts 6:3-5). This first mention is positive.

B. It is a place where the first great awakening of the Gentiles occurred. The persecution following Stephen's death scattered the Christians, who went preaching wherever they went. At Antioch, they preached to the Grecians and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord (Acts 11:19-21)

C. It is a place where much people were added unto the Lord. It is also where the people were glad, and were exhorted to purpose in their heart

to cleave unto the Lord. Barnabas was sent to Antioch and these things resulted. (Acts 11:22-24)

D. It is the place where God established the headquarters of His New Testament church. Barnabas sought Saul and brought him to Antioch (Acts 11:25,26).

E. It is the place where believers were first called "Christians" (Acts 11:26)

F. It is the place to which God moved his prophets, signifying his blessing on Antioch, while the world was plagued with dearth. (Acts 11:27,28)

G. Relief was sent to other churches from Antioch. (Acts 11:29,30)

H. The first missionary outreach to the Gentiles was organized from Antioch. (Acts 13:1-3)

I. It is the place to which two envoys traveled from Jerusalem; each made a decision that had consequences. One, (Judas) returned to Jerusalem; the other, (Silas) stayed in Antioch and became a missionary partner of Paul. (Acts 15:23-27)

J. It is the place from which the second missionary journey began, with Paul and Silas as the missionaries. (Acts 15:40,41)

## 26e **"History of Alexandria**

Located on the Mediterranean Sea in the country of Egypt on the continent of Africa, Alexandria is still an active city today. This great seaport is in the area known scripturally as the "land of Ham" (Ps.105:23). Alexander the Great founded the city in 332 BC during his conquest of the world. It rapidly developed into the greatest metropolis of the ancient world, reaching an estimated population of one million by the first century BC. At the time of Christ, the city was superseded only by Rome.

Under the rule of the Egyptian Ptolemies, Alexandria became the literary and scientific center of the world. Its university molded much of the philosophical thought of the time. The famous library of Alexandria contained half a million or more books and rolls. Vigorously pursued were the studies of mathematics, astronomy, poetry, and medicine. Alexandria was a Greek city by founding and thought; but because of the city's open-mindedness, it became a city known for its cosmopolitan collection of the religions and philosophies from the known world. It was in this environment that the Jewish theologian Philo first combined Judaism with Platonism to establish the allegorical approach to the Old Testament.

## **School of Alexandria**

In practice, Philo (b. 20 BC) was more of a Greek philosopher than a Jewish theologian; hence his greatest influence was not in the Jewish realm. He desired to use the Old Testament to support his Greek philosophy. Therefore, he established a system of allegorical interpretation (spiritualizing of scripture) to make the scripture mean anything he desired. He taught that the hidden, deeper meaning of a passage of scripture was far superior to the plain, literal meaning. His allegorical interpretation became a wealth of ideas for the Alexandrian school of Christian thought of the second and third centuries.



This theological school was established in Alexandria in the second century after Christ by a man named Pantaenus and was continued by Clement of Alexandria. The School elevated Greek philosophy and emphasized the allegorical interpretation of scripture. The school became known for its scholarship and philosophy and was later brought into great prominence by a man named Origen (lived 185-254 AD).

### **Influence of Origen**

In most church histories, Origen is praised as one of the greatest Bible scholars of all time. In this book, Origen's mental genius and religious fervor are not questioned, only his knowledge of Biblical truth and his spiritual relationship with God. Origen possessed only one coat and no shoes, rarely ate flesh, never drank wine, devoted much of the night to study and prayer, and slept on the bare floor. This certainly demonstrates religious fervor and devotion. On the other hand, because of his doctrine, Origen is certainly unworthy of his reputation as a great Bible scholar. He taught that the Father is the originating cause of the Son, and that the Holy Spirit was subordinate to and created by the Son. He believed in the necessity of baptism for the remission of sins and approved of the baptism of little children. He taught that even the damned and devils would be brought into voluntary subjection to Christ after they were sufficiently punished. Origen developed a formal method of interpreting the New Testament scriptures by applying Philo's allegorical interpretation. In this way, he was able to support all of the above doctrines and more.

Theologians and scholars who reject Origen's method of allegorical interpretation and doctrinal conclusions often claim that his abiding merit lies in his work in textual criticism. He is famous for his labors to produce a correct text of the Greek Bible. Is it possible, however, that Origen's false doctrines affected his Biblical criticism? Two examples should suffice. While editing the New Testament text, Origen removed the word carpenter from Mark 6:3 because he did not think it should be there. He also removed the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," from the passage of Matthew 19:16-22 because he could not logically explain its presence and said it therefore must have been added. How many times Origen applied this method of Bible correction only God Himself knows.

The Greek text which was being formed at Alexandria during the time of Origen came to be known as the Alexandrian Text. This text is represented mainly by two Greek manuscripts: the Sinaiticus (found by Tischendorf in 1844 in a Greek Orthodox monastery at the base of Mt. Sinai) and the Vaticanus (discovered in the Vatican library in 1481). These manuscripts are the basis for the majority of the subtractions made in the English bibles since 1611. Because Origen supported the readings which make up the Alexandrian text, scholars look to him as one of the most important witnesses to the corrupted text which is used for modern translations of the Bible. After Origen's death, Alexandria continued to have great influence on the text of the New Testament. Even today, the Alexandrian Text is accepted by the majority of scholars as that which is closest to the originals.

## **Alexandria in Scripture**

Alexandria is very rarely mentioned in the Bible, but these references tell the Bible student much about the direction the city would take. Its commerce and shipping trade are evident in the fact that the ships which took Paul from Caesarea to Rome for trial were ships of Alexandria (Acts 27:6; 28:11). Alexandria's opposition to true doctrine is demonstrated by the Alexandrian Jews which were found in the temple disputing with Stephen (Acts 6:9). But the most revealing passage about Alexandria is found in Acts 18:24 where, "a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus." Here was a man who was eloquent in speech and very knowledgeable in the scriptures, but who knew, "only the baptism of John" (v.25). For this reason, Aquilla and Priscilla, converts of the apostle Paul, "took him unto then, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (v.26). The high degree of training and superior knowledge of Apollos confirms the emphasis on scholarship in his home town. However, his gaps in Biblical knowledge and errors in Biblical doctrine also point to the characteristic problems of Alexandria. These problems were to continue in Alexandria through the early church history period. The old copies of manuscripts of the New Testament which were influenced by the Alexandrian scholars are characterized by their omitting of important doctrinal phrases and verses. These omissions are not mistakes--scholarship always subtracts from the Word of God.

For an example of their subtractions, let us examine the passage of Mark 16:9-20. This passage is missing in both the Sinaitic and the Vatican manuscripts. Therefore, in most recent versions, it is either omitted, or marginal notes question its place in the divine text. However, these verses are found in all the Greek manuscripts except the two noted above and in all the Latin manuscripts but one. The Sinaitic and Vatican manuscripts were written between 325-350 AD But approximately 150 years before Mark 16:9-20 was deleted by these manuscripts, the passage was quoted as scripture by several writers: Justin Martyr (c. 150), Tatian (c. 175), Irenaeus (c. 180) and Hippolytus (c. 200). Thus the evidence of the majority of witnesses and the evidence of greatest antiquity both overwhelmingly support the passage. Why then do the scholars still prefer to omit the verses? Evidently because they still desire to follow Alexandrian scholarship.

## **Conclusion**

Alexandria became the world center of education and scholarship. Here both Judaism and Christianity tried to merge their thought with Grecian Platonism. Soon, human wisdom took place over the words of the Bible, and scholars leaned upon allegorical interpretations to derive from the Bible what they already accepted as truth. However, this was not enough. The science of textual criticism had to be developed to remove from the scriptures phrases which were offensive to their own doctrine. Hence, Alexandria became the place known for her subtraction from the Word of God.

## **History of Antioch**

### **Historical Importance**

Antioch was located in Syria on the Asian continent. The native inhabitants of Antioch descended from Shem, one of the sons of Noah, through Aram (Gen. 10:22).

Please notice that God did not use the Japhethites of Europe or the Hamites of Africa to preserve His Word. He used the Shemites of Asia of whom Noah prophesied, "Blessed be the LORD God of Shem" (Gen. 9:26). This scripture shows that God is going to use the Shemites throughout history in a special way. He established His chosen nation, the nation of Israel, through Abraham who was a descendent of Shem. He offered salvation to mankind through the Jews, for Christ declared, "salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22). He also revealed Himself to mankind in the Bible which was written by Jews and given to Jews (Rom. 3:1-2). If God's chosen people, His offer of salvation, and His written Word all came through the children of Shem in accordance with the prophecy of Noah, why then would God not use the children of Shem to preserve His book? The Syrians of Antioch were the Shemites which God used to preserve His New Testament during the first centuries after it was written.

Antioch has a great influence in the area of Asia Minor as well as in Syria. These areas were the early locations of the greatest revivals and most extensive evangelism. Most of the New Testament books were either written or received in this part of the world. By His wonderful providence, God had placed Antioch in a special place of importance. Antioch became the early center for Bible-believing Christians and Bible preservation.

Much is revealed about a Bible teacher or Christian group by examining their approach in interpreting scripture. The same is true in the study of Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch. Rome took the approach of ecclesiastical interpretation. In other words, the past traditions of the church and church theologians determine the meaning of the passage. The approach of Alexandria was that of allegorical interpretation. Scripture was to be spiritualized by scholars to make it conform to their philosophical beliefs. Only Antioch took the literal approach to Biblical interpretation. According to this approach, the Bible means what it says and says what it means. There is no need to change or manipulate scripture because the Word of God is already perfect. Now who do you want to copy your next Bible manuscript: the traditionalists from Rome, the scholars from Alexandria, or the literalists from Antioch?

### **Biblical Mention**

No matter how much we know about a place historically, the bottom line is still, "What saith the Scripture?" The city of Rome is mentioned nine times in the New Testament and is characterized as a place of persecution (II Tim. 1:15-17). Although only mentioned three times by name, Alexandria is clearly a place of false doctrine according to scripture (Acts 6:9; 18:24-26). But our greatest amount of Biblical information is reserved for the city of Antioch. It is mentioned by name nineteen times and has great importance for us today. In fact, the church at Antioch is the greatest example of Biblical Christianity in the entire New Testament.

The founding and early ministry of the church at Antioch are described in Acts 11:19-30. Acts 13:1-4 narrates the calling and sending of the first missionaries out of Antioch: Barnabas and Paul. From these two passages we learn seven basic characteristics of the church at Antioch. First, the church at Antioch was a preaching church (Acts 11:20,23). Second, it was a witnessing church (Acts 11:21,24). Third, it was a teaching church (Acts 11:26; 13:1). Fourth, the church at Antioch was a serving

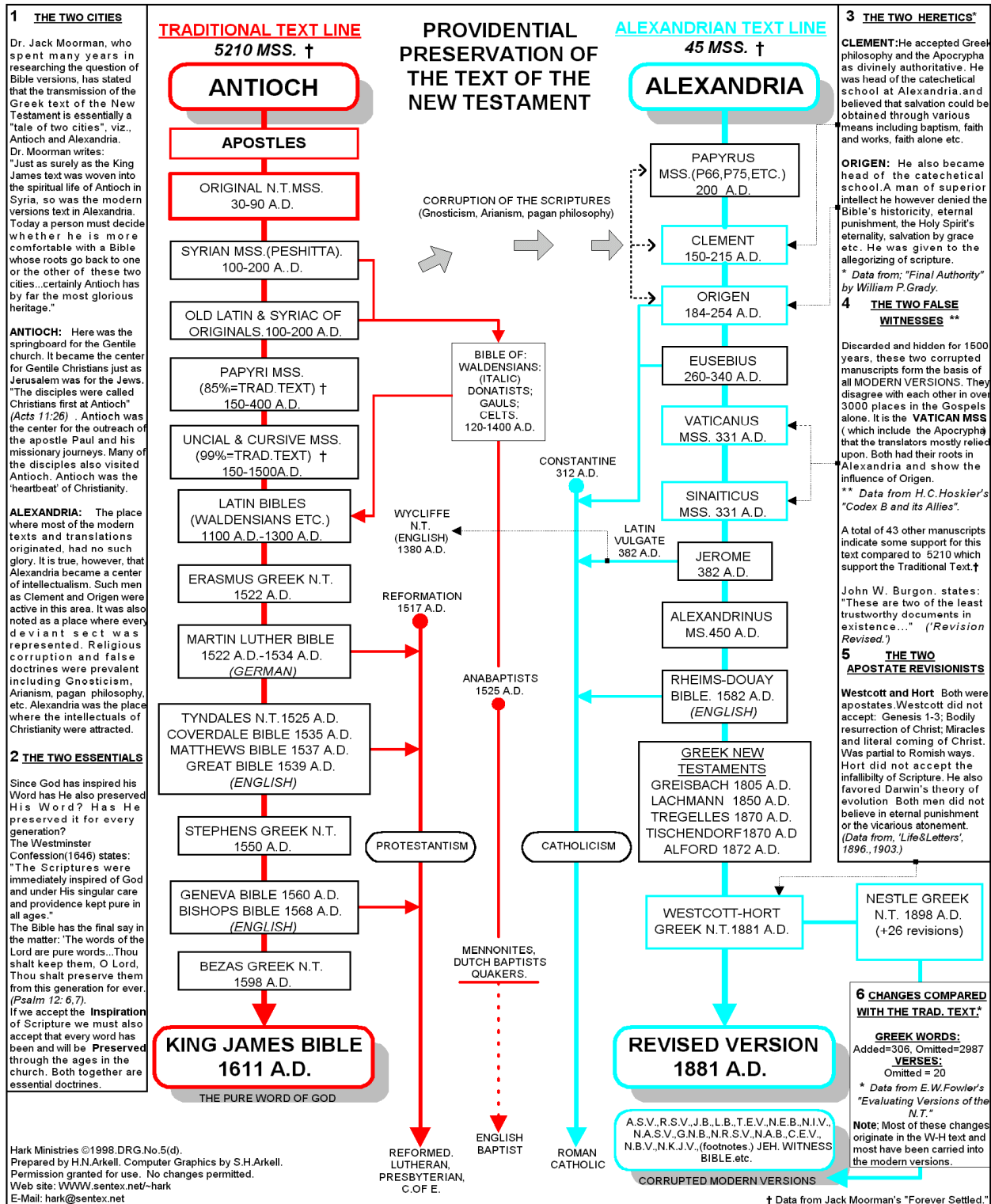
church: "The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch" (Acts 11:26). Fifth, it was a giving church (Acts 11:29-30). Sixth, it was a praying church (Acts 13:2-3). And seventh, the church at Antioch was a missionary church (Acts 13:3-4). Being founded on these principles, the church at Antioch continued in its Biblical ministry for several centuries. Why then should any one think it strange that God would use the influence of Antioch in the preservation of scripture? That is exactly what He did.

### **New Testament Preservation**

There are about 4,000 or 5,000 existing manuscripts of the New Testament. They have been classified according to their characteristic readings by various scholars and divided into families. Although all divisions of manuscripts are manmade and therefore subject to dispute, one of the most accepted divisions separates the manuscripts into three families. These families are called the Western, the Alexandrian and the Syrian. The Western Text is related to Rome, the Alexandrian Text is related to Alexandria and the Syrian Text is related to Antioch. The Western and Alexandrian Texts are represented by a minority of manuscripts and corrupt the pure Word of God. The Syrian Text represents the great majority of manuscripts and, as a whole, preserves the pure Word of God. This pure text is still preserved for us today in the English of the King James Version of 1611.

Book after book has been written in the last hundred years on both sides of the issue of textual differences. But the real question is whether God preserved His Word or not. If He did, He could have used anyone in any way, although history definitely points to Antioch. If He did not, then our Bible is corrupted beyond repair, and we are left without any final authority for truth. We are left blind in a world blackened by sin and rebellion toward God. But we do have the pure and preserved words of God. Open up your King James Version of 1611 and read, study, teach, and preach it. Its words are without error and without mistake. Therefore, we can proclaim its message without apology. ("A Tale of Three Cities", David Reagan)."

26f There is also the issue of the two lines of Bible manuscripts that came from both cities. The following chart summarizes it well:



There are two streams of manuscripts, the traditional Antiochian line and the corrupt Alexandrian line. The Antiochian line included the original manuscripts and the preserved, highly accurate copies of those originals, and the later translations of those

manuscripts into the various languages of the world. The Alexandrian manuscripts began to appear by the 4<sup>th</sup> century and represented the various corruptions of those traditional manuscripts.

**The Antiochian line of manuscripts and translation include:**

The Syrian manuscripts in Asia Minor (A.D. 100–200)

The Old Latin and Old Syriac of the originals (A.D. 100–200)

Waldensian translations (mainly in Romanish languages and the other languages they spoke)

Erasmus' Greek New Testament

Beza's Greek New Testament

Stephanus' Greek New Testament

Elivizer's Greek New Testament

Early Welsh translation

Luther's German Bible

The line of English translations from Tyndale to the Great Bible, leading up to the Authorized Version of 1611.

Equivalent translations of the tradition translations into other languages, such as the Reina Valera into Spanish, Olivitan into French, Diodati into Italian.

The Gothic Bible of Ulfilas (310)

The Bibles of the Albigenses (1300–1500) and Lollards (1382–1550)

The Russian, French, Norwegian, Spanish, Italian, Bulgarian, Rumanian, Swiss, Swedish, Austrian, and Czech Bibles that came from Luther's Version (1540–1900)

The Chinese, Burmese, Malayan, Indian, Japanese, African, Persian, Arabic, Hebrew, American, and other Bibles that came from the Authorized Version.

The remnant number of churches, Bible colleges and Christian universities that hold to the old Authorized Version.

**The corrupted Alexandrian line would include:**

Translations made by Eusebius, which include the Vaticanus and Aleph manuscripts ("B" and "Aleph")

Jerome's Latin translation

All Roman Catholic translations

All English translations since 1611

The Apocrypha (300–50 B.C.)

Philo (20 B.C.–A.D. 50)

Clement of Alexandria (150–215)

Origen of Alexandria (184–254)

Marcion the Heretic (120–160)

Valentinus (125–160)

Hesychius of Alexandria (250–300)

Eusebius of Caesarea (260–340)

Pamphilus (270–309?)

Irenaeus (130–202)

Augustine of Hippo (354–430)

All the Popes (Leo 440 to Francis)  
 J. J. Griesbach (1774)  
 Carl Lachmann (1842)  
 Tregelles (1857)  
 Casper Gregory (1881)  
 Tischendorf (1869)  
 Westcott and Hort (1881)  
 Weiss (1901)  
 Eberhard Nestle (1898)  
 The majority of Bible Colleges and Christian universities that use and hold to modern translations.

### **38. Agabus' Prophecy 11:27-30**

**11:27 ¶ And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.<sup>a</sup>**

27a Luke does not mention the reason as to why there was this relocation, unless it became clear that the “center” of future church activity would now be Antioch rather than Jerusalem, notwithstanding the Jerusalem Conference of Acts 15.

**11:28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus,<sup>a</sup> and signified by the spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world:<sup>b</sup> which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar.**

28a The same Agabus of Acts 21:10?

28b Many of the commentators want to limit the extent of this famine just to Israel, where Luke plainly says “throughout all the world.” Josephus is supposed to have mentioned this famine, which took place about A.D. 44-48. (Claudius reigned from A.D. 41–54). But when the word “all” is used, should assume it means “all” in the comprehensive sense, especially in salvation, as we believe that Christ died for “all” men, not just “all of the elect”.

#### **AV**

#### **ESV**

#### **LSV**

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.	28 And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius).	28 And one of them named Agabus stood up and indicated by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the <i>reign</i> of Claudius.
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**“Caesar”** Missing in the ESV and LSV.

**11:29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judæa:**

**11:30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.<sup>a</sup>**

30a Two men who could be trusted with the money! Not every preacher or missionary can.



## **Acts Chapter 12**

This is the last chapter where Peter is presented as a central figure. The narrative will switch to and concentrate on Paul starting in chapter 13. “This is the last chapter in Acts where Simon Peter appears as the central figure. From here on the Holy Spirit not only “robs Peter to pay Paul,” He deliberately ignores Peter and magnifies Paul. It is Paul who writes to the Roman church, not Peter. It is Paul who goes to Rome, not Peter. It is Paul who is the “Prince of the Apostles” where the Gentiles are concerned (Rom. 15:16–20), not Peter (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, page 391).”

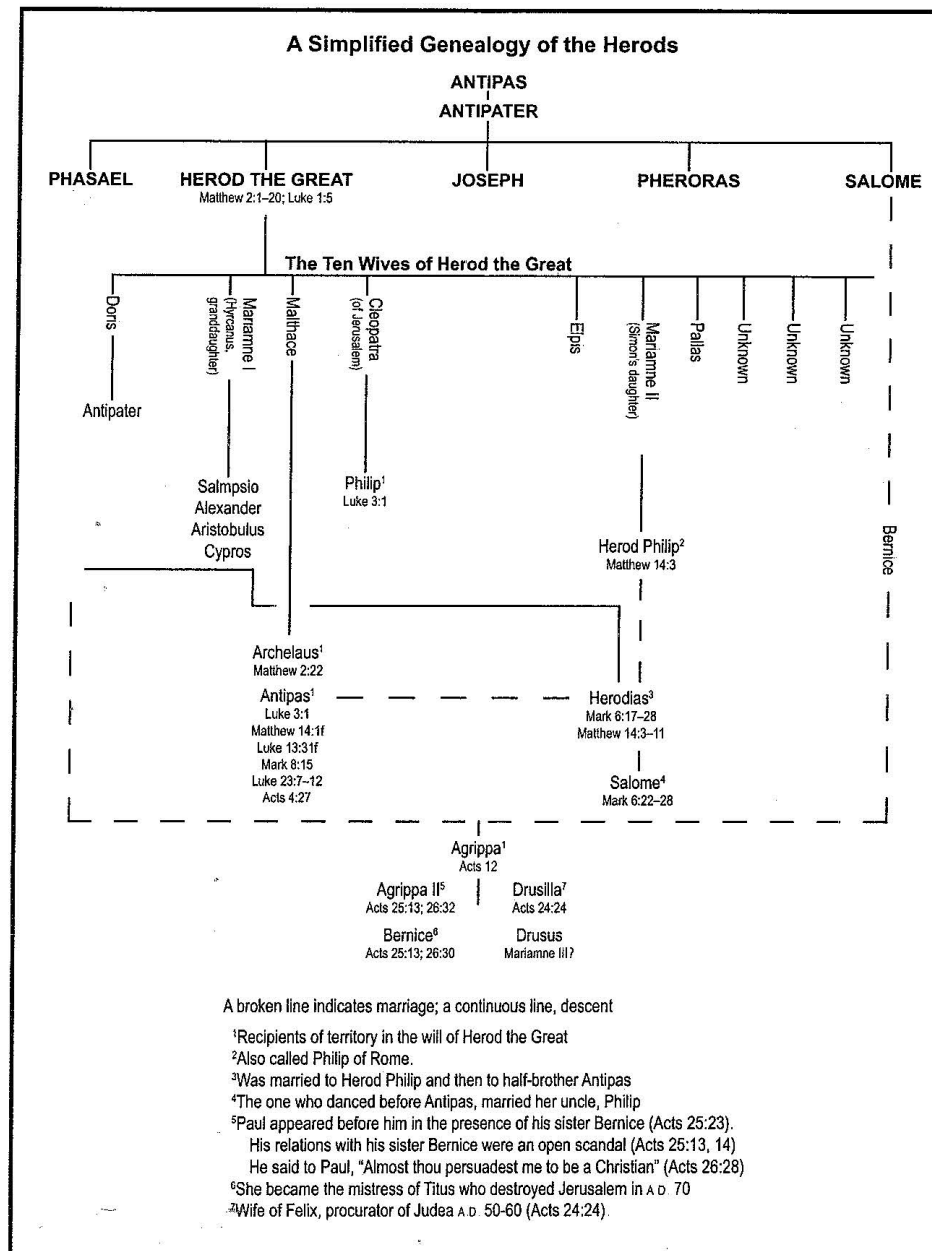
### **38. The Persecution Under Herod 12:1-19**

**12:1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.<sup>a</sup>**

1a Luke does not say what prompted Herod to start a persecution against the church at this time, unless his reasons were political and an effort to increase his popularity among the Jewish leaders, as in Acts 12:3.

This “Herod” is Herod Agrippa I, the son of Aristobulus (who was the son of Herod the Great). He was king over Palestine from A.D. 42-44.

Keeping track of all the Herods in Scripture can be confusing so below is a chart from *The Canon of Scripture* by H. T. Spence, page 151:



**12:2 And he killed James the brother of John<sup>a</sup> with the sword.<sup>bcd</sup>**

2a The last mention of John in Acts.

2b Luke does say why James was targeted, unless he was an easy target at this time. He was a leader in the early church at Jerusalem, so Herod might have hoped that killing James would deal a crippling blow to the growth of the church, but that always has an opposite effect. Was he beheaded?

2c This was not James, the Lord's half-brother, but James Zebedee, John's brother. When James was killed, the Lord made no provision for a replacement. The tally of the "original apostles" is shrinking and will eventually fall to zero when John dies. And the Lord replaced none of them, showing that He has little use for any sort of Roman Catholic-style "apostolic succession". The Church has gotten on just fine for 2,000 years without this kind of succession". Our authority is in the Scripture, not in a group of ecclesiastical leaders.

2d To the rabbis, death by the sword was secondly only to crucifixion in dishonorable ways to be put to death.

2e Stephen's death is described in some detail but James' martyrdom is given in only a few words. Antipas' death in Revelation 3 is mentioned in even briefer detail.

**12:3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also.<sup>a</sup> (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)**

3a Killing James could have been something of a "test case" for Herod, to see what the Jewish reaction would be. Seeing the Jewish leaders responded favorably, Herod decides to go after the big fish- Peter.

**12:4 And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers<sup>a</sup> to keep him; intending after Easter<sup>b</sup> to bring him forth to the people.**

4a A band of 4 soldiers, so Peter had 16 soldiers committed to him, to guard him and to ensure he could not escape or be rescued. Sixteen soldiers to guard one preacher! Herod was obviously afraid that something supernatural could happen to Peter so he took every human precaution he could think of.

"**Quaterion**" is related to the word 'quarter'. It is from the Latin 'quaternion' from 'quaterni' 'a set of four things'. Four quaternions of soldiers would be 16 soldiers (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 277)."

4b Oh the weeping and wailing now begins from the faculty smoking lounges at your local "Christian" university! "Easter!!!" An error in the Authorized Version! Didn't those

poor Authorized Version translators know that this was supposed to have been translated “Passover???”

There is no error here. Easter and Passover occur at nearly the same time every year. Herod, as a Gentile, would not have observed Passover but as a pagan, he would have circled “Easter” on his calendar. Easter is a heathen term, derived from the Saxon goddess Eastre, the same as Astarte, the Syrian Venus, called Ashtoreth in the Old Testament. What Bible believing Christian would celebrate such a “holiday”? This is why Bible-believers prefer to use the term “Resurrection Sunday” rather than “Easter” to commemorate the Sunday of the Lord’s resurrection (which still is not correct on our calendars. It should fall the Sunday after Passover every year, not according to the complex date-setting the Church of Rome imposed regarding the movable date of “Easter”.) No Bible-believing Christian would observe “Easter” with its bunnies and eggs. This is why the Holy Spirit was careful to associate it with Herod.

“The reason every English translation up to the AV retained the reading ‘Easter’ (except for the Geneva Bible, which is “outside” the stream of pre-Authorized Version translations-jc) here is because the translation ‘Passover’ would have been a bald-face lie and a real contradiction...’Easter’ here occurred during the ‘days (plural) of unleavened bread (vs. 3). It was not the ‘day (singular) of unleavened bread’ which was the Passover (Luke 22:7; Matthew 26:17); it was the ‘seven days’ of ‘the feast of unleavened bread’ (Leviticus 23:6; Exodus 12:15-18) which followed Passover (Leviticus 23:5). Passover was over and done with by verse 3. The ‘Easter’ of this verse is a pagan feast named after Ashtaroath (Judges 2:13; 10:6; 1 Samuel 7:3; 1 Kings 11:5; 2 Kings 23:13), also known as Ashtarte, Ishtar and Eostre. It was a feast observed by Herod (vs. 1) who was a Roman Idumean (Edomite) (Peter Ruckman, *Ruckman Reference Bible*, page 1452).”

#### AV

#### ESV

#### LSV

4 And when he had apprehended him, he put <i>him</i> in prison, and delivered <i>him</i> to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after <b>Easter</b> to bring him forth to the people.	4 And when he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out to the people.	4 When he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out before the people.
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A survey of the versions and commentators and where they stand on the issue:

#### Bibles

##### EASTER

Authorized Version  
Bishops Bible  
Coverdale Bible  
Luther’s German Bible  
Tyndale Bible

##### PASSOVER

Darby Translation  
English Standard Version  
Geneva Bible  
English Revised Version  
American Standard Version  
Rheims Douay

New International Version  
New Living Translation  
New American Standard Version  
Holman Christian Standard Version  
NET Bible  
Legacy Standard Version

## **Commentaries**

### **EASTER**

Peter Ruckman  
Matthew Poole  
Cornelius Stam  
David Hoffman, *Common Man's  
Reference Bible* note  
People's New Testament

### **PASSOVER**

Scofield Reference Bible notes  
Treasury of Scripture Knowledge  
Marvin Vincent  
John Gill

Harry Ironside  
Thomas Scott  
A. T. Robertson  
John Trapp  
E. W. Billinger, *Companion Bible*  
Albert Barnes  
Adam Clarke  
Thomas Constable  
Pulpit Commentary  
Jamieson Fausset Brown

The Authorized Version did not “create” the reading of “Easter”, it simply followed the translations that came before it.

It is true that the Greek word is “pascha” that generally refers to the Passover supper or the Passover lamb that was sacrificed at this time. The word is used 29 times and 28 times it is translated as Passover, except here. The context led the Authorized Version translators to render it as Easter, as they would not have associated Passover with Herod, as Herod would not have observed it.

**12:5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.<sup>a</sup>**

5a We are not told exactly what they were praying for regarding Peter's situation, but at least they were praying! They may have been praying for his deliverance but were also careful to pray that he would not compromise or falter, like he did the night of the Lord's betrayal. Notice they are praying to God, not the Virgin Mary, as the Romanists would try to make us believe. No true Christian has ever prayed to Mary for anything in 2,000 years.

**12:6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping<sup>a</sup> between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.<sup>b</sup>**

6a Sleeping? On the eve of your martyrdom? Here is a man at peace with himself and his God. Peter was probably snoring like a freight train. If this was you, how soundly would you sleep in a similar situation? Peter failed miserably on the night when he denied the Lord three times, but Peter had learned from that failure and had moved beyond it. He was confident that he would not fail the Lord again and that assurance gave him the ability to sleep so peacefully on the eve of his death.

6b There were two layers of security here, the 16 guards and the keepers by the door. But the Lord had no trouble with any of them.

**12:7 And, behold, the angel of the Lord<sup>a</sup> came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side,<sup>b</sup> and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.<sup>c</sup>**

7a In the Old Testament, the “angel of the Lord” is usually a reference to an appearance of the pre-incarnate Christ.

“The angel fetched Peter out of prison, but it was prayer that fetched the angel (Thomas Watson).”

7b Peter was sleeping so soundly, the angel had to give him a good whack to wake him up!

7c Peter had already experienced something like this back in Acts 5:23.

**12:8 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.<sup>a</sup>**

8a Although a supernatural deliverance was taking place, Peter still had to obey and do certain things. The angel was not about to carry Peter out of the prison as long as he was able to walk.

**12:9 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.**

**12:10 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:<sup>a</sup> and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.**

10a Like an automatic door at your local supermarket.

**12:11 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.<sup>a-b</sup>**

11a Peter misses out on his martyr's crown here, although he will get it later.

11b "Now, in all of this we find powerful illustrations of the salvation of the sinner. Not even in Adam Clarke's commentary (or the work of Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown) do we find any mention of these marvelous similitudes, while Ladd, Robertson, Bruce, and Knowling do TDY again and pretend that the "deeper things" lie in straightening out the AV text. Morgan and Matthew Henry comment briefly on this important message.

A. The sinner is trapped by the Devil "at his will" (2 Tim. 2:26) and is in "prison" just like Peter (Luke 4:18).

B. He is asleep to spiritual things (Eph. 5:14) and is bound (Prov. 5:22).

C. He is appointed to die (Heb. 2:15, Prov. 24:11).

D. He needs light and deliverance (Isa. 42:6).

E. Instantaneous salvation is available (vs. 7).

F. He should then put on the armour of God and follow Christ (vss. 7–8).

G. He should "come to himself," like the prodigal (Luke 15:17), and see what God has done for him (vs. 11), and then...!

H. He should go and tell the Body of Christ about it (vs. 12). Preferably on a prayer-meeting Wednesday night! (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Acts*, pages 398-399)."

**12:12 And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary<sup>a</sup> the mother of John, whose surname was Mark;<sup>b</sup> where many were gathered together praying.**

12a This is obviously not the same Mary, the mother of Jesus.

12b This is probably the same John Mark who would start out on the first missionary journey in Acts 13.

**12:13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda.**

**12:14 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.**

**12:15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel.<sup>a</sup>**

15a What exactly were they praying for in Acts 12:5? If they were praying for Peter's release, then why this unbelief when the answer to the prayer was standing at their

door? Or maybe they were praying for something else, like for Peter not to renounce the Lord (again).

**12:16 But Peter continued knocking:<sup>a</sup> and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were astonished.**

16a Matthew 7:7 **"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you".**

**12:17 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.<sup>a</sup>**

17a In their desperation to somehow get Peter to Rome, some Romanist writers have used this as a proof text to show that this "other place" was Rome! Of course, there is absolutely no Biblical justification that supports Peter ever being with 500 miles of Rome.

Romans 1:16 shows that Peter was not at Rome when Paul wrote to the Roman church. **"I am ready to preach...at Rome"** If Peter was in Rome, reigning as the first pope, wasn't he preaching the gospel? If Peter was in Rome at this time (as the Roman Catholic Church insists that he was), then why did Paul feel that he had to go to Rome to preach? If Peter was there, reigning as the first pope, wasn't he preaching? Or did Paul believe Peter's preaching to be inferior or doctrinally incorrect that he had to go and correct Peter (which he did in Galatians 2:11-13 **"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation."**)? The answer is clear- Peter never got within 500 miles of Rome, since he was the apostle to the circumcision and Rome was the center of Gentile world power in this day. The last time we see Peter, he is in Babylon, in the eastern part of the Empire (1 Peter 5:13 [**"The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son."**]), which is NOT a cryptic reference to the city of Rome as the Roman Catholic church and other apologists for Rome try to make it to be).

Also consider Romans 16. Throughout that entire chapter, Peter's name is not mentioned. Roman Catholic traditions state he was "reigning" as pope from A. D. 42-67 and thus should have been in Rome as Paul wrote. Why did then Paul not mention him unless Peter was not in Rome at the time of this writing. Imagine a missionary writing a letter to a local church and greeting 30 members by name and yet not mentioning the pastor! Of course, any Bible believing Christian will reject the assertion by the Church of Rome that Peter was ever in Rome at all, and we certainly reject any idea that he was ruling as the first "pope" during these years. Scripture lends absolutely no support for this false teaching.



**12:18 Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers,<sup>a</sup> what was become of Peter.<sup>b</sup>**

18a Since it meant sure death for the jailers and soldiers if Peter was not found. There would have panic among these men in trying to locate Peter. They had better find Peter, or else! It was also an embarrassment to Herod, who planned to make Peter's execution a party event.

18b And thus the miracle, that Peter could walk right out of locked cell without disturbing 16 trained soldiers, or anyone else.

**12:19 And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death.<sup>a</sup> And he went down from Judæa to Cæsarea, and there abode.**

19a The Lord saved one preacher at the expense of the lives of 16 men. This was the usual punishment in these cases, but Herod was quite irritated that his party plans had been ruined.

### **39. The Judgment on and Death of Herod 12:20-23**

**12:20 ¶ 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<sup>a</sup> their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's country.<sup>b</sup>**

20a A "chamberlain" was one who was over the bedchamber, an official charged with the management of the living quarters of a sovereign or member of the nobility, an official who receives rents and revenues, as of a municipal corporation; treasurer, the high steward or factor of a member of the nobility, a high official of a royal court. (Dictionary.com). He would be a very trusted man and his master would depend heavily upon him.

20b Provided food and other similar supplies.

**12:21 And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel,<sup>a</sup> sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.<sup>b</sup>**

21a Josephus says he was clothed in a robe entirely made of silver.

21b The usual political nonsense is going on. Herod is going to deliver his annual "State of the Union" address and is "dressed to kill" and tries to outdo Belshazzar (Daniel 5) in pomp and circumstance, not to mention liquor and music.

**12:22 And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.<sup>a</sup>**

22a And Herod seemed to agree! If Twitter had existed in this day, he would have re-tweeted this praise of others and would have attached a selfie to that tweet. Beware of any preacher who loves to let it be known how much other people “love” him and who advertises every compliment given him. Herod could have saved his life if he had stopped his oration and rebuked his audience, but he didn’t because he didn’t want to! Like any politician, he gloried in human glory while refusing to acknowledge the glory of God.

**12:23 And immediately the angel of the Lord smote<sup>a</sup> him, because he gave not God the glory:<sup>b</sup> and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.<sup>c-d</sup>**

23a Both Peter and Herod were smitten by angels in this chapter- one was smitten in deliverance to life, the other smitten in judgment of a horrible death.

23b “Refusal to give God the glory is what cost Moses his life (Deut. 3:26), and if the Lord were as hard on twentieth-century Christians in America and Europe as he was on Herod and Moses, the Sword of the Lord would be publishing an obituary column right alongside, “With the Evangelists.” Taking credit from God is a standard practice among 90 percent of the leading Christian celebrities who profess to be giving God the credit. It is true that they give Him a passing notice with their LIPS (i.e., “We give all the glory to God for what He has done.”), but practically, they take as much glory as possible; a fact which is evident by their writings and speeches, for “out of the abundance of a man’s heart his mouth speaks.” These celebrities brag about their records and “attendance” until it runs out your ears; they promote their ministries until you would think that God had nothing to do in this age but use them; and they slander or lie about every person who disagrees with their work or hinders their ministries (or uses the Bible to point out their errors). (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, pages 406-407).”

23c A graphic description of a fast and painful death, that was a fitting judgment for such a man. What kind of “worms” these were and how they killed something is something Luke does not go into detail about, even if he was a physician.

23d “Josephus recorded this incident in more detail than Luke did. He added that Herod appeared in the outdoor theater at Caesarea. He stood before the officials from Tyre, Sidon, and his other provinces on a festival day dressed in a silver robe. When the sun shone brilliantly on his shiny robe some flatterers in the theater began to call out words of praise acclaiming him a god. Immediately severe stomach pains attacked him. Attendants had to carry him out of the theater, and five days later he died. Doctor Luke saw Herod’s attack as a judgment from God and gave a more medical explanation of his death than Josephus did. One writer suggested Herod suffered from appendicitis that led to peritonitis complicated by roundworms. Another diagnosed him as having a cyst caused by a tapeworm. More important than the effect was the cause, namely, Herod’s

pride (cf. Isa. 42:8; Dan. 4:30) (Thomas Constable, *Constable's Notes on Acts*, page 172)."

#### **40. The Result: Continuing Spread of the Gospel 12:24,25**

**12:24 ¶ But the word of God grew and multiplied.<sup>a</sup>**

24a Wicked men drop like flies but the word of God goes on.

**12:25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark.**



## **Acts Chapter 13**

Starting from here to the end of Acts, the book turns into a “Life of Paul” as he takes center stage and that is the burden we will follow in the rest of this commentary. The Holy Spirit does not focus on Peter’s work among the Jewish populations in the eastern empire but rather focuses on Paul’s work among the Gentiles in the western part of the empire. This is logical since the Church Age is largely a Gentile dispensation and church doctrines and practices need to be recorded and expounded for the Gentile believers and local churches.

This chapter starts the mission outreach to the Gentiles and the unfolding of a New Testament/Pauline type of ministry. We wonder with the groups that make so much fuss over Acts 2, why don’t they pay that kind of attention to Acts 13 and beyond?

### **41. The Calling of Paul and Barnabas: The Start of the First Missionary Journey 13:1-3**

**13:1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch<sup>a</sup> certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas,<sup>b</sup> and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen,<sup>c</sup> which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch,<sup>d</sup> and Saul.<sup>ef</sup>**

1a Antioch, not Alexandria, is associated with the first missions movement in Church history.

1b Barnabas’s name is listed first, Saul’s last. Barnabas, although probably not the past of the church, was the most prominent leader, and Saul was the least prominent of this group. Saul truly did “start at the bottom” but he got his promotion very quickly.

1c Manaen was the foster brother of “Herod the tetrarch” (son of Herod the Great) who ruled Galilee and Peraea from 4. B.C. to A.D. 39. This is the man who had John the Baptist beheaded.

1d They grew up together.

1e Here is where Acts 9:15 begins to be fulfilled with Paul, in bearing witness of Christ’s name before the Gentiles.

1f This looked like a very cosmopolitan church, with a membership and leadership from all parts of the Roman Empire.

**13:2 As they ministered to the Lord,<sup>a</sup> and fasted,<sup>b</sup> the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.<sup>c</sup>**

2a God calls busy men.

2b God calls spiritual men.

2c The Holy Spirit does the calling to service and ministry. He speaks and commands with the same authority as the Father or the Son, since the Spirit is part of the same Trinity, with equal authority.

**13:3 And when they had fasted and prayed,<sup>a</sup> and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.<sup>b</sup>**

3a These are always good activities for preparation before starting any ministry.

3b If Peter was the “head of the church” as the “first pope” as the Church of Rome insists, where is he here? Peter was not in Antioch and he had no part to play in the calling, “ordaining” and sending away Paul and Barnabas on their mission. Peter was in another part of the empire (or maybe still in Jerusalem) with his own ministry, which was directed more toward the Jews.

Now starts the First Missionary Journey, from Acts 13:4-14:27.

VERSES	LOCATION	PERSONALITIES	EVENTS
13:4	Antioch		
13:4	Selucia		
13:5	Salimis		Preached in the synagogue. John Mark was their minister
13:6-12	Paphos	Elymas Sergius Paulus	Confrontation with Elymas Saul now known as Paul and takes the leadership of the mission team- 13:9 Elymas struck blind Sergius Paulus converted
13:13; 14:25	Perga		John Mark returns home Preached 14:25
13:14-51; 14:24	Antioch in Pisidia		Preached in the synagogue for 2 weeks Paul's sermon 13:16-41

			Many conversions 13:43
			Opposition by the Jews 13:45
			Paul and Barnabas turn from the Jews 13:46-49, 51
			Paul and Barnabas expelled 13:50
13:51:14-5,21	Iconium		Preached in the synagogue
			Great multitude believed, of Jews and Greeks 14:2
			The city divided 14:4
			Opposition 14:5
			Fled to Lystra and Derbe 14:6
14:6,20,21	Derbe		Preached the gospel- 14:21
14:6-21	Lystra	Unnamed crippled man	They preached the gospel
			Healing of the crippled man 14:8-10
			Attempt by the locals to worship Paul and Barnabas 14:11-18
			Paul stoned 14:19
			Left with Barnabas for Derbe 14:20
14:24	Pamphylia		
14:25	Attalia		
14:26-28	Antioch		Reported to the church
A.D. 47	Acts 13:3-14:26 The First Missionary Journey: Barnabas, Paul, and picked up John Mark who turned back home. (The Eastern Journey)		
Acts 13:1	Antioch in Syria		
Acts 13:4	To Seleucia		

Acts 13:5 To Cyprus (Salamis) John Mark  
 Acts 13:6 To Cyprus (Paphos) A Jew Bar-jesus  
 Acts 13:8 Sergius Paulus  
 Acts 13:8 Elymas, the Sorcerer  
 Acts 13:9 Saul's Name Changed to Paul  
 Acts 13:13 To Pamphylia (Perga) John Mark Returns to Jerusalem  
 Acts 13:14 Antioch in Pisidia (Paul's Sermon Acts 13:16-41) (accepted)  
 Acts 13:44 The Next Sabbath Back in Antioch in Pisidia  
 Acts 13:46 (Rejected) "We turn to the Gentiles"; Gentiles Receive and Rejoice  
 Acts 13:48 The Jews Raise Persecution, Acts 13:50  
 Acts 13:51,52 To Iconium. Preaching in the Synagogue in Iconium  
 Acts 14:1-5 Sought to Stone Them  
 Acts 14:6a To Lystra  
 Acts 14:6b To Derbe (cities of Lycaonia)  
 Acts 14:8 At Lystra - Healing of Crippled Man; Paul Preaches; Called "gods"  
 Acts 14:19 Men Come from Antioch in Pisidia and Iconium to Stone Paul  
 Acts 14:20 At Derbe  
 Acts 14:21 Returned Again to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia  
 Acts 14:22 Confirming the Saints  
 Acts 14:23 Ordained Elders  
 Acts 14:24 Pisidia to Pamphylia  
 Acts 14:25 Perga to Attalia. Ten places named in the First Missionary Journey  
 Acts 14:26 Returned to Antioch in Syria  
 Acts 14:27 Ministry in Antioch in Syria (14:26-15:35)





#### 42. Seleucia, Cyprus, Salamis, Paphos 13:4-12

13:4 ¶ So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

13:5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews:<sup>a</sup> and they had also John to their minister.<sup>b</sup>

5c If you were looking for a group of people who would be in a religious frame of mind, the best place you would go is into a synagogue, as these people would have some familiarity with the prophets and the prophecies of Christ. This would be Paul's standard practice. Since Paul was an ex-Pharisee, he would go into the synagogues in his rabbi robes and the ruler of the synagogue would invite the "visiting rabbi" to bring a message. Then Paul would have an open opportunity to preach the gospel.

5d This would be John Mark, who was the "gofer" for Paul and Barnabas, helping out in every and any way he could.

**13:6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus:<sup>a</sup>**

6a "Son of Jesus". Was he trying to cash on in the stir regarding the death and resurrection of Jesus, passing himself off as either a literal son of Jesus or His chosen successor? How much did he know about the person and work of the Lord? Either way, he was a false teacher who used occultic practices to pass himself off as some great spiritual power.

**13:7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus,<sup>a</sup> a prudent man;<sup>b</sup> who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.**

7a He was a proconsul of Cyprus at this time, which was a very powerful position.

7b AV	ESV	LSV
7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a <b>prudent</b> man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.	7 He was with the pro-consul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God.	7 who was with the pro-consul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God.

**"prudent"** The ESV and LSV have him as an "intelligent" man.

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**13:8 But Elymas the sorcerer<sup>a</sup> (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.<sup>bcd</sup>**

8a AV	ESV	LSV
8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to	8 But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the	8 But Elymas the magician (for so his name is translated) was opposing them, seeking

turn away the deputy from the faith.	proconsul away from the faith.	to turn the proconsul away from the faith.
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**“sorcerer”** The ESV and LSV have him as a “magician.”

8b There is no greater sin than this- trying to prevent a man from getting saved. This is soul murder. This is why Elymas’ judgment was so severe.

8c “The truth of the matter is that nearly every time you try to lead a man to Christ, some “Bar-jesus” will show up on the spot (or shortly thereafter) and try to talk the convert out of knowing he is saved, or even getting saved. We shall discuss this in more detail in Acts 15:1-6... The trick that all of these rascals try to pull off is to convince the sinner that simply trusting in the completed atonement of Christ (dying in the sinner’s place) is not enough to do the job.

The Jew will yell, “Circumcision!”

The Campbellite will scream, “WATER!”

The Catholic will holler, “The Sacraments!”

The Pentecostal will yell, “The initial EVIDENCE!”

The Mormon will scream, “The true church!!

The Seventh-day Adventist will bawl, “Keep the Commandments!”

And the Jehovah’s Witness will bellow, “Study the Bible!”

And the pitiful truth of it is that there has never been one man in any of those “religious rigs” who had any more assurance of eternal life than Thomas Aquinas or Joe Smith. (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, pages 416-417).”

8d His name means “magus” or “wise man” (in an occult sense).

**13:9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,)<sup>a</sup> filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,<sup>b</sup>**

9a With the name change, Paul takes charge of the missionary team. Luke has chosen this place to insert the Gentile name by which Paul was to be known for the rest of his life. The reason for it evidently is the occasion, for Paul’s first Gentile convert is named “Paulus (German and Latin for Paul). It also shows the shift in Paul’s ministry toward the Gentiles, as he is now known by his Gentile name. If Paul is going to be the “Apostle to the Gentiles”, he must now go by his Gentile name, which he may have been given (or that he chose) when he obtained his Roman citizenship.

9b Staring at him intently, glaring at him. Elymas had Paul’s full and undivided attention! And not in a good way.

**13:10 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?<sup>a</sup>**

10a He was no “Bar-Jesus” or “Son of Jesus” but was rather called out as a tool of Satan. All such perverters of the “right ways of the Lord” and who seek to prevent people from getting saved fall under this description.

**13:11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season.<sup>a</sup> And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.<sup>b</sup>**

11a Paul’s first miracle. The severity of the judgment goes along with Mark 9:42, where it is better to hang a millstone around your neck and then go swimming in the ocean than to be a stumbling block to one trying to get saved.

11b Elymas became as blind physically as he was spiritually. How long did this blindness last? Was it temporary or permanent? Paul says “for a season” so it was temporary. When he got his eyesight back, did it change Elymas at all? There is no record that he was ever saved.

**13:12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.<sup>a</sup>**

12a An example of judgment and the power of God brings a conversion. The blindness of Elymas opened the eyes of the deputy. He saw that the Gospel was more powerful than occult power. This blinding was a divine vindication of Paul’s message. Compare with how Peter dealt with Simon in Acts 8. After the “rearing out” by Peter, Simon repented and asked for prayer. There was no such response from Elymas.

#### **43. The Departure of John Mark 13:13**

**13:13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.<sup>abc</sup>**

13a We are not told why John Mark left but we do see later in Acts 15 that Paul was very irritated by it. John Mark’s decision could have been for any number of reasons:

1. He was upset with Paul for usurping the lead of the missionary team from his uncle Barnabas.
2. When he saw this demonic activity, he got scared and came to the conclusion that he wasn’t ready for “front-line duty” yet.
3. Maybe he just got homesick?
4. John Mark was a strong Jerusalem Jew, so maybe he had trouble with the concentrated outreach to the Gentiles? It was clear that Paul would focus his ministry toward the Gentiles, possibly to the exclusion of the Jewish outreach, and John Mark may have had the same issues as the “brethren” did in Acts 11. If this is the case, then we are dealing with a practical and theological disagreement. Barnabas did not seem to have any such issue with the Gentile outreach.

5. Mark's ministry got off to a rough start and on the wrong foot, like so many young preachers can testify. When you started preaching, how many mistakes did you make? Ever feel tempted to quit, for whatever reason? My former pastor, who pastored his church for 55 years, said that preached with his resignation letter in his pocket on more than one occasion. It takes a while for a man to get his "footing" in the ministry and mistakes will be made. In that regard, Mark is no different than any other preacher.

At the beginning of the second tour in Acts 15:37,38, Barnabas wanted to take John Mark again, but Paul would have none of it. Paul did not forgive John Mark for leaving as he did here and was in no mood to bring him back, thinking him to be unreliable. This would later cause the split between Paul and Barnabas at the end of Acts 15. But John Mark managed to prove himself in later years, so that Paul would eventually say that John Mark was "useful to him" in the ministry in 2 Timothy 4:11 ("**Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.**"). But we'll talk more about this in Acts 15.

Everyone fails at some point in their life, and no one is immune to it. Consider this list of Bible failures:

1. Adam
2. Noah got drunk
3. Abraham lied about his wife, twice
4. Isaac lied about his wife
5. Jacob swindled his brother and lied to his father
6. Moses killed a man
7. Joshua failed to ask counsel of God before attacking Ai
8. King Saul was disobedient
9. David murdered and committed adultery
10. Jeremiah was discouraged and wanted to quit the ministry
11. Peter denied the Lord three times
12. Paul disobeyed the will of God and went to Jerusalem.

And this list can be greatly expanded. When it comes to restoration, see our remarks under Acts 15:37.

13c Mark's departure is given in chapter 13 verse 13. The ill-omen of the number "13" strikes again.

#### **44. Paul's Sermon in Antioch Pisidia 13:14-43**

**13:14<sup>a</sup> ¶ But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.<sup>b</sup>**

14a Verses 14-41 is the text of a sermon Paul preached in Antioch in Pisidia, on the Sabbath in their synagogue. Paul used the same format Stephen did in Acts 7 (which Paul heard and helped lead to his conversion) in summarizing the history of Israel and

God's dealings with the nation, leading up to their rejection of the Messiah, with application at the end.

This is the fifth major sermon recorded for us in Acts (Peter Acts 2, Peter Acts 3, Stephen Acts 7, Peter Acts 10) and the first of Paul's three sermons recorded in Acts. As with most of his recorded sermons, Paul wanted to prove to these Jews and Gentile proselytes that Jesus is the promised and prophesied Messiah.

1. He proved it with John's testimony (Acts 13:24,25).
2. He proved it with the witnesses to the resurrection (Acts 13:30,31).
3. He proved it from Scripture (Acts 13:33-37).
  - A. From Psalm 2:7 (Acts 13:33)
  - B. From Isaiah 55:3 (Acts 13:34)
  - C. From Psalm 16:10 (Acts 13:35)

This sermon is very similar to Peter's sermon in Acts 2:14-40 and Stephen's in Acts 7:2-53. It was divided into three parts (the usual three-part outline that most preachers use even today):

1. Preparation for the coming of Messiah (Acts 13:16-25)
2. The rejection, crucifixion, and resurrection of Messiah (Acts 13:26-37)
3. The application and appeal (Acts 13:38-41).

14b Paul followed this pattern in every town he went to that had a synagogue. He did not do it in Athens.

**13:15 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.<sup>a</sup>**

15a It would be these "open invitations" that Paul would always take advantage of to preach the gospel. The normal synagogue service began with the Shema ("Hear, O Israel,..") and the Shemoneh Esreh (a liturgy of benedictions, blessings, and prayers). Then leaders would read two passages from the Old Testament aloud, one from the Mosaic Law and a related section from the Prophets section of the Hebrew Bible. Then some competent person whom the synagogue rulers designated would give an address. The service would conclude with a benediction. On this occasion the synagogue leaders, who were local Jewish laymen, invited Paul and Barnabas to give an address if they had some encouraging word to share.

**13:16 Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with his hand<sup>a</sup> said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God,<sup>b</sup> give audience.**

16a This was something most orators and public speakers did to get the attention of the audience and to let them know the speech was about to begin.

16b Gentile proselytes to Judaism.

**13:17 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<sup>a</sup> brought he them out of it.**

17a A strong and mighty arm, with many public miracles and demonstrations of divine power.

**13:18 And about the time of forty years suffered<sup>a</sup> he their manners in the wilderness.**

18a And “suffered” is certainly the right word! The Lord put up with a lot from Israel.

**13:19 And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot.**

**13:20 And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet.**

**13:21 And afterward they desired a king:<sup>a</sup> and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.**

21a See 1 Samuel 8. This was requested by Israel in rejection of the priest/judge system that God had established.

**13:22 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.<sup>a</sup>**

22a Such men are rare in any age. D. L. Moody said once that it remains yet to be seen what God can do with one man who is totally dedicated to Him.

Much is written how “will” is plural in the Greek, so this should have been translated “wills”. We will not fuss as the Authorized Version rendering, but even if it is “wills”, these “wills” of God all resolve into a singular “will” of God. There are many “wills” within the overall “will of God”.

**13:23 Of this man’s seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:**

**13:24<sup>a</sup> When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.**

24a Paul then skips from David all the way to John the Baptist.



**13:25 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.**

**13:26 Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God,<sup>a</sup> to you is the word of this salvation sent.**

26a Gentile proselytes.

**13:27 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,<sup>a</sup> they have fulfilled them in condemning him.<sup>b</sup>**

27a But how many people listen and really pay attention?

27b Paul puts the blame for the death of Christ on the Jews and the religious leaders at Jerusalem, not on the Romans.

**13:28 And though they found no cause of death in him, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.**

**13:29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.**

**13:30 But God raised him from the dead:<sup>a</sup>**

30a You knew Paul was going to mention the resurrection eventually! He also mentions it in Acts 13:33 and 37.

**13:31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.**

**13:32 And we declare unto you glad tidings,<sup>a</sup> how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,**

32a A definition of the gospel.

**13:33 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.<sup>a</sup>**

33a This is quoted from Psalm 2:7 ("I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee."). This is a very clear Old Testament declaration that God has a son. Compare this with Proverbs 30:4 ("Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his



**fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?”).**

This shows again that Islam and Christianity are two totally incompatible religions and that we do not worship the same God. In Islam, it is asserted that their god “Allah” does not beget nor is he begotten”. “Allah has no son” is their common refrain. Yet it is clear that God has a Son from this text.

Christ is the “only begotten” of the Father (John 1:14,18; 3:16,18). This verse is also quoted in Acts 13:33. This phrase refers to physical birth of Christ, and this birth took place on a certain day in history at a certain hour in time, not in eternity. Without this Virgin Birth there would have been no “first begotten of the dead” or “only begotten.”

**13:34 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.<sup>a</sup>**

34a A reference to 2 Samuel 7:1-12, Psalm 89:20-30 and Isaiah 55:3. These “sure mercies” were given to his seed (Psalm 89), which is a type of Christ even where it was partially fulfilled in Solomon (2 Chronicles 9:1-12).

AV	ESV	LSV
34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, <i>now</i> no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the <b>sure mercies of David.</b>	34 And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, “I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.”	34 “ <i>But</i> that He raised Him up from the dead, no longer to return to corruption, He has spoken in this way: ‘I WILL GIVE YOU THE HOLY <i>and</i> FAITHFUL <i>lovingkindnesses</i> OF DAVID.’

**“the sure mercies of David”** The ESV and LSV just have to change this phrase and their changes are inferior to the Authorized Version reading.

**13:35 Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.<sup>a</sup>**

35a This is quoted from Psalm 16:10 (“**For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.**”). The body of Jesus saw no corruption for the 3 days it was in the tomb, since there was no sinful pollution in His body to start the corruption process. See also Acts 2:27,31 where Peter quoted the same passage.

**13:36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God,<sup>a</sup> fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:<sup>b</sup>**

36a This is what every Christian does. We cannot serve previous generations or even future ones, as we are not products of those generations. But we can serve our present

generation, which we understand the best. Neither Paul nor David could effectively minister to the early 21<sup>st</sup> century as neither was born and raised on television, radio, the internet, etc. Noah also served his generation (Genesis 6:9 **"These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God."**) by being perfect and by living a righteous life.

How do you serve your generation? (Ezekiel 33:10 **"Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?"**)

1. By being saved.
2. By starting a family
  - A. Have a marriage that honors God
  - B. Raise godly children
    - i. Psalm 127:3 **"Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward."**
3. Be a good citizen
  - A. Pay your taxes
    - i. **Matthew 17:24,25** **"And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? "**
    - ii. Jesus rendered unto Caesar, despite the fact that Rome was not a godly empire- **Matthew 22:21** **("They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.")** The Lord was no tax dodger or protester. If He said to pay the taxes to a heathen ruler like Caesar, then we are to pay our taxes to the even more wicked IRS.
      - a. The key here is "lawful". When rulers start making unlawful demands, our obligations to them cease.
      - b. You are to pay your taxes, but you are also free to try to get the taxes lowered by lawful means. You also can refuse to support a tax hike if you have a chance to vote on it. In Delaware, we still have the ability to approve or disapprove tax hikes by the various school districts. I always vote against tax hikes, not because I am anti-education (although I am anti-public education) but because my attitude is "what right do I have to raise my neighbor's taxes?"
  - B. Obey the law
    - i. It is a good testimony to be a good citizen.
    - ii. There are times and places where we may have to disobey the law. Romans 13 is not a blanket commandment to obey every law on the books if that law goes contrary to the law of God, Rebellion

against government is forbidden except under certain circumstances, when obeying it would result in sin, or would pit the State against God, or if we are forced to choose between the State and God. God does not expect us to obey every government and every law it passes without any reservation. Examples of such resistance:

- a. Abram refusing to recognize the King of Sodom- Genesis 14:21-24
- b. The Hebrew midwives disobeying Pharaoh in his order to kill the Hebrew baby boys at birth, and God approving of it in Exodus 1:15-21.
- c. Moses opposing Egyptian slavery in Exodus 4-13.
- d. Resistance to tyrants in the book of Judges by:
  - i. Othniel (Judges 3:8-11)
  - ii. Ehud (Judges 3:12-30)
  - iii. Shamgar (Judges 3:31)
  - iv. Deborah and Barak (Judges 4)
  - v. Gideon (Judges 6-8)
  - vi. Jephthah (Judges 11,12)
  - vii. Samson (Judges 13-16, especially see Judges 15:11).
- e. Elijah before Ahab and Jezebel. Elijah was actively opposed to their rule. See 1 Kings 17-19.
- f. Elisha had no respect for Jehoram in 2 Kings 3:14 (**“And Elisha said, As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee.”**) although he did respect Jehoshaphat. He also had no respect for Ahaziah in 2 Kings 1:9-13.
- g. Rebellion against wicked Queen Athaliah by Jehoiada in 2 Chronicles 22:10-23:15.
- h. Daniel had no respect for Belshazzar in Daniel 5 and disobeyed Darius’ foolish edict against prayer in Daniel 6.
- i. Esther and Mordecai resisting Haman, who was acting under approval of the king to kill all the Jews in the Book of Esther.
- j. Amos did not stop preaching, despite orders to go preach elsewhere in Amos 7.
- k. Jeremiah was in constant conflict with the civil authorities during his ministry.
- l. The Lord constantly disobeyed the sabbath laws imposed by the Pharisees during His earthly ministry.
- m. The early church was in constant conflict with the Jewish religious leaders in Acts 4 and 5. **“We ought to obey God rather than man”** Acts 5:29.

4. Be a witness for Christ
  - A. In evangelism
  - B. In society and culture (in the marketplace)
    - i. Witness for the good
    - ii. Witness against the evil
5. Leave something behind for the next generation
  - A. Poems, hymns, books, a legacy of godliness...
6. Be the best possible person you can be
  - A. Contribute solutions, don't be the one who causes problems.
7. Get involved in politics
  - A. Christians may serve in an ungodly State without sin. In this case, I believe the old Anabaptist groups were wrong when they opposed any Christian serving in the government for any reason. Their reason was that no Christian should serve a government that was involved in religious persecution (namely against them) and they had a good point. But overall, it is no sin for a Christian to serve in a government.
    - i. Nehemiah- Media/Persia
    - ii. Esther- Media/Persia
    - iii. Daniel- Babylon and Media/Persia
    - iv. Cornelius- Rome
  - B. Offices may be held by Christians as long as sin or unfaithfulness to God is required
    - i. See Daniel 1,3,4,6
  - C. How long a Christian can remain faithful in such an ungodly environment will depend on the circumstances. Every situation will be different.
  - D. You can be sure the godless and the apostate Christians will be very involved in politics!
  - E. Some Christians think it is dirty business.

36b David saw corruption as he had sin in his body. Christ saw no corruption as there was no sin in His body.

**13:37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.<sup>a</sup>**

37a This is because:

1. Jesus was God
2. Jesus had no sin in His body
3. To fulfill prophecy

**13:38 ¶ Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man<sup>a</sup> is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:**

38a John 14:6, as "this man" Jesus, is the Way, the Truth and the Life, so salvation is impossible without going through Him. Salvation is not through the Law or the Prophets

but is only through Him. Salvation is also in a “man”, “THIS MAN”, not in a denomination, church or theological system.

**13:39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.<sup>ab</sup>**

39a The successful work of Christ on the cross accomplished what the Law was unable to do, as it was never designed to bring salvation. People get in trouble with the Law as they do not understand its purpose and use it for what it was not intended. This involves belief, not works, rites or rituals. We are seeing the first distinct declarations of salvation by grace plus nothing. This “justification from all things” is by belief without the Law.

39b It is interesting to compare the end of Peter’s first Pentecostal sermon and the end of Paul’s first recorded sermon:

1. Peter- Acts 2:38, Repent and be baptized...

2. Paul- Acts 13:38,39, believe on This Man for the forgiveness of sins. Paul makes no mention of baptism at all, even with dealing with salvation in Acts 13:39, as water baptism had no role in dealing with New Testament salvation. It had a role in the national repentance of the nation in Acts 2 but the offer of the kingdom had now been withdrawn and God was now turning toward the Gentiles, who had no national sins of rejecting Christ to atone for or to be baptized for.

**13:40 Beware therefore,<sup>a</sup> lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;**

40a Here comes the warning for the rejection of this message.

**13:41 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.<sup>a</sup>**

41a This is quoted from Habakkuk 1:5 “**Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you.**”. Israel would see these signs (Acts 2-7) and what God was wanting to do with the nation in establishing the kingdom, yet they would not believe and would not respond.

**13:42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles<sup>a</sup> besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.<sup>b</sup>**

42a Not the Jews, although many of them also responded well to the sermon in verse 43. But it will be the Gentiles from this point forward who will respond to the Gospel more than the Jews will.

42b What an interesting week this must have been, leading up to the follow-up sermon.

AV	ESV	LSV
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.	42 As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath.	42 And as Paul and Barnabas were leaving, the people kept pleading that these words might be spoken to them the next Sabbath.

The LSV simply butchers the verse.

**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.**

AV	ESV	LSV
43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and <b>religious proselytes</b> followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.	43 And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.	43 Now when <i>the meeting of</i> the synagogue had broken up, many of the Jews and of the God-fearing proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, were urging them to continue in the grace of God.

“**religious proselytes**” The LSV adds “God-fearing”. The ESV defines what a “religious proselyte” was in this context.

#### **45. The Result of the Sermon 13:44-52**

**13:44 ¶ And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.<sup>a</sup>**

44a There must have been a lot of talk at the diner and barber shop all week by the locals about what happened at the synagogue last Saturday and everyone in town was interested in these preachers and this new message they were preaching. Most of these would be Gentiles, and this synagogue had a “record high attendance” the next Saturday, which most of the Gentiles in town in attendance.

**13:45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy,<sup>a</sup> and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.<sup>b</sup>**

45a This is usually where the trouble starts. The Jews could never hope to attract such a crowd but Paul and Barnabas swing into town, preach one message, and the whole town comes out to hear them again! Envy is what made a killer out of Cain. It turned Lucifer into Satan. It motivated his brothers to sell Joseph into slavery. It is what put Korah, Dathan, and Abiram in the pit. It is what turned Saul against David and is what prevented Michal from having children. It is what caused Jesus Christ to be delivered to Pilate by the Jewish religious leaders. **“Who is able to stand before envy?”** (Proverbs 27:4). The Jews were “filled with envy” here but the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Ghost in Acts 13:51.

45b If you won’t join them, then beat them, usually by talking against them and spreading rumors and lies. They may have heckled Paul in the synagogue while he was preaching and during the after-service “follow up” session that no doubt followed.

**13:46 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,<sup>a</sup> lo, we turn to the Gentiles.<sup>b</sup>**

46a Reject this message and you reject eternal life and you wind up condemning yourself.

46b If the Jews won’t respond, then to the Gentiles they will go. Paul would say the same thing in frustration in Acts 18:6 and will say this again in Acts 28:28.

**13:47 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.<sup>ab</sup>**

47a In so many words, Paul and Barnabas said “You Jews had first shot at accepting this Good News. If you aren’t interested in it, we’ll turn to the Gentiles instead, who will receive it. You had your chance!” Paul and Barnabas obeyed the “to the Jew first” mandate (as the early church did earlier, see also Romans 1:16), but when that didn’t work, they began to concentrate on the Gentiles.

47b Isaiah 49:6 **“And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.”**

**13:48 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.<sup>a</sup>**

48a Don’t try to read in the error of Calvinistic “unconditional election” here. “Ordination” is not “election”. Election is a Biblical doctrine but not the way John Calvin and his followers taught it. The Calvinistic teaching is that if God preordained you to get

eternal life, you would get it. If you were not so ordained, you couldn't and wouldn't get saved since you were not part of "the elect".

"Here we should only note that the word "ordain" (Greek: tetagmenoi) never fixes anything absolutely. The word is used in Luke 7:8; Romans 13:1; Acts 28:23; and Matthew 28:16. But the English Bible's use of the word makes the meaning even clearer; as a matter of fact, the word is so clear in the English that you would have to go to "the Greek" to get confused. In 1 Corinthians 7:17, Paul "ordained" some things, and that no more meant they were absolutely fixed to come to pass than if he hadn't used the word. In Romans 13:1 we are told that "the powers that be are ORDAINED of God"; but if you think that has anything to do with the directive will of God, according to what He WANTS, you never studied the lives of Nero, Caligula, Ted Kennedy, FDR, DeGaulle, Pope Leo I, Pope John XXIII, Lucrecia Borgia, Bloody Mary, Stalin, Genghis Khan, Baibars, Hannibal, Mohammed, or President Nixon. The meaning here, obviously, is that given in Romans 2:7... Those "**ordained to eternal life**" were those who *obeyed Romans 2:7*, and not one man there believed who had not been following Romans 2:7. God doesn't "ordain" any Gentile to eternal life until he has followed his conscience and is willing to hear the word (vss. 42, 48). "**Hearing**" in this case (Rom. 10:17) is *believing*. (Peter Ruckman, *The Bible Believer's Commentary on Acts*, page 441)."

AV	ESV	LSV
48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were <b>ordained</b> to eternal life believed.	48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.	48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they <i>began</i> rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

"**ordained**" The ESV and LSV has "appointed".

**13:49 And the word of the Lord was published<sup>a</sup> throughout all the region.**

Not necessarily in a written form but rather that it was made known throughout all that region.

**13:50 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.**

**13:51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.<sup>a</sup>**

51a A sign of contempt and rejection.



**13:52 And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.<sup>a</sup>**

52a Compare with the Jews being filled with envy in Acts 13:45.



## **Acts Chapter 14**

### **46. Iconium 14:1-7**

**14:1<sup>a</sup> 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.**

1a The usual order of events repeats itself in Iconium. Paul goes into the synagogue. He preaches. The Gentiles are glad, the Jews are mad, persecution results. Rinse and repeat.

**14:2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.**

**14:3 Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord,<sup>a</sup> which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.<sup>b</sup>**

3a For how long we are not told.

3b The apostolic signs were manifested in Iconium by both Paul and Barnabas.

**14:4 But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles.<sup>a</sup>**

4a The gospel will usually split the congregation right down the middle. The gospel does not unite, it divides.

**14:5 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,**

**14:6 They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about:**

**14:7 And there they preached the gospel.<sup>a</sup>**

7a This is the primary ministry of any missionary.

### **47. Lystra 14:8-20**

**14:8 ¶ And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple<sup>a</sup> from his mother's womb, who never had walked:**

8a He probably had crooked legs.

**14:9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,<sup>a</sup>**

9a “Verse 9 has been a lifesaver for more than a century to healers who had misfires and “duds” in their healing lines. The verse carries with it the implication that if a man is NOT healed, it is because he doesn’t have enough “faith to be healed” (vs. 9). All of this comes in real handy when the crippled, maim, lame, and blind fail to get healed! Roberts, Branham, Coe, Ewing, Ike, Allen, Terall, and Swaggart evidently never read Mark 6:5 where we were told that lack of faith accompanies healing, and that where there is “lack of faith” all that folks can do is GET healed (Mark 6:6). The man before us (vs. 9) is a Gentile who got faith through hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17) as Paul preached it, and Paul does it on the spot to demonstrate the power and authority of his message; he gets results (vss. 11-14)...There is no microphone, no organ, no flood lights, no chanting of African music, and no long preamble where the victim is worked into a state of psychotic shock. (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, pages 447-448).”

AV	ESV	LSV
9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,	9 He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well,	9 This man listened to Paul as he spoke, who, when he fixed his gaze on him and saw that he had faith to be saved <i>from being lame</i> ,

The LSV botches the reading. Why couldn’t it just say “healed”?

**14:10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.<sup>a</sup>**

10a An instantaneous healing.

**14:11 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.<sup>a</sup>**

11a The locals were impressed! Since this was being cried out in the local language, Paul and Barnabas may not have known what was being said and didn’t realize what was going on until they saw the worship procession coming toward them.

**14:12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter;<sup>a</sup> and Paul, Mercurius,<sup>b</sup> because he was the chief speaker.**

12a Barnabas may have been a big, burly man (compared to Paul, who may have had a smaller body-type), with a commanding physical presence. Since he was also older than Paul, he got tagged with Jupiter.

12b Mercury was the Roman messenger of the gods.

**AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.

12 Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker.

12 And they *began* calling Barnabas, Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker.

The Authorized Version uses the Roman names of these gods, the ESV and LSV use the Greek names.

**14:13 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.<sup>ab</sup>**

13a A crook, or a false prophet, with dollar signs in his eyes, could have really taken advantage of this situation.

13b For a similar situation, read about Paul on Melita in Acts 28:4-6.

**14:14 Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,<sup>a</sup>**

14a They are doing their best to prevent anyone making a “god” out of them.

**14:15 And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you,<sup>a</sup> 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:<sup>bc</sup>**

15a They were just men!

15b They were trying to turn the people of Lystra from their idolatry and here, they were ready to sacrifice to them. All idolatry is vanity as it amounts to nothing and accomplishes nothing.

15c Paul is not going to cite much Old Testament in this sermon since these people would know little or nothing about it.

**14:16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.<sup>a</sup>**

16a But now, He will hold these nations responsible, with payment to be made in the tribulation period. God allowed idolatry on the part of the great masses of the heathen nations, even though He gave them witness time after time that it was vanity and foolishness. It is God who giveth “rain from heaven”, not some wooden stick, as God tried to impress upon these peoples. God tolerated idolatry in Gentile nations but not in Israel. But now, even among the Gentile nations, that divine allowance was over.

**14:17 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.**

**14:18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.<sup>a</sup>**

18a “The Mardi Gras (or “the Fiesta of Five Flags”) has started. All the community organizations have their “floats” going down the streets. The Chamber of Commerce is beating the drum for Lystra to attract “trade” and “industry.” Miss Lystra is shaking her belly and thighs around for the camera. All the priests are holding candles, marching down the street, and they are about to slay an ox (look out for words that end in “X”!), when Paul and Barnabas go tearing through the parade yelling and waving their hands: “Stop it! Cut it out! We’re not gods! We’re sinners saved by grace! Stop it, you fools; stop it!” (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, page 454).”

**14:19 ¶ And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium,<sup>a</sup> who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.<sup>b-c</sup>**

19a The same crowd from Acts 13:14 and Acts 14:1.

19b How fickle the people are! One minute, they want to worship you. Before you know it, they are stoning you. The Lord knew something about this. The crowd that shouted “Hosanna to the Son of David” on Sunday was singing a different tune (Matthew 27:25 **“Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.”**) just a few days later. Since Paul himself said he wasn’t a god, why not stone him? Where was Barnabas? Why wasn’t he also stoned?

19c Is this where 2 Corinthians 12:1-6 comes in? If Paul was the man who was caught up into the third heaven, then it probably took place here.

**14:20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city:<sup>a</sup> and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.<sup>b</sup>**

20a “Now, here we need to take a breather and time to take stock of our assets, for Paul’s sudden return into a murderous environment is left unexplained by the commentators. Robertson said he got out the next day (vs. 20) because it wasn’t safe to

stay *longer* than one day. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown remark “what intrepidity!” (*Oh, brother!*)

But the disciples are “**round about him**” (vs. 20), and every time he had it “tough” until here, he LEFT—*look at Acts 13:51 and 14:5*. Why the sudden change in “manner of life”? What would possess a man who has fled persecution (Acts 9:25) to suddenly SEEK IT? Well, to start with, we should make up our minds if an answer is found, it will not be found in the writings of any man who sat around beefing about the Authorized Text.

The “answer” to Paul’s erratic behavior can only be found in 2 Corinthians 12:1–6. In this passage Paul was caught up into the third heaven...In “**paradise**” (2 Cor. 12:2–3) Paul was shown some things that he could not write about or speak (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, pages 456-457).”

20b Derbe was the easternmost city Paul visited in Galatia. To go any further east would mean leaving Galatia.



#### **48. The Trip Back to Antioch 14:21-28**

**14:21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch,**

**14:22 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.<sup>a</sup>**

22a As the hymn says, “It’s not an easy road, we are travelling to glory!” Paul will repeat this idea in 2 Timothy 3:12, in that all who live godly in Christ Jesus SHALL suffer persecution. If you claim to be a Christian and have never suffered any persecution, then you are doing it wrong. Your examples here are not Billy Graham or Joel Osteen, but Paul, John, Luther, Wesley, Patton, et al. If you are facing no resistance on your pilgrimage to the New Jerusalem, then you are on the wrong road.

When he put his hands to his head in amazement, he found his head wasn’t there (2 Cor. 12:2–3). This caused him to look down at his feet, and all he saw was a cloud bank. Trying several times to scratch his head or fold his hands, he soon discovered that the “**spiritual body**” (1 Cor. 15:44) is something with which to reckon. Paul knew he could see, hear, feel, speak, smell, touch, and think (like the rich man in Hell still could—Luke 16:24), but whether he was “**in the body...or...out of the body**” he could not tell, for there was no “physical body” (1 Cor. 15:44) there to deal.

Paul’s eyes nearly come out of his head (2 Cor. 12:1, 4), and he says, “Glory to God, look at that! And look at THAT! And there’s that Christian couple that we killed before I got saved, and there’s *Stephen! HEEEEEEY, STEVE!*”

“Time’s up,” says the Lord. “Back down you go.”

“*Back down you go?*” cries Paul.

“Yes, Paul, I just thought I’d give you a sneak preview so you wouldn’t get too discouraged. Moses was in your shoes once, and I had to show him My glory, or he never would have lasted the forty years. The ‘saints’ get to be a REAL DRAG at times. You’ll find that out when you get dealing with Demas, John Mark, and Hymeneaus. Well, *back down*, Paul!”

“Now, wait a minute, Lord,” says Paul. “Can’t we work out something here? I mean this is a long way from that camel road outside of Lystra. How about a year up here? Okay? Just *one year* and then I’ll—”

“Sorry, Paul. No go.”

“Well, how about *six months*? I mean, who wants to go back down to that garbage scow of a world after seeing THIS?!”

“Sorry, Paul, it is needful for you to abide in the flesh (Phil. 1:24) a little longer and bear fruit for Me. *Step down*. Time’s up.”

“But Lord, just a *month*? A *week*? How about a week, huh? How about just ONE week, Lord?”

“Sorry, Paul. The New Jerusalem Express is boarding right now. Down you go, and if you don’t get a move-on I’ll have Gabriel pitch you back out.”



“Okay, Lord, *okay*. Oh me, what a sight! How will I ever get used to that mess down there after this? Yes, *I’m going, Lord*. One more thing; can I write about it when I get down there (1 Cor. 2:9)?”

“No, Paul, for you it is *unspeakable*. And besides that, I’m saving that revelation in writing for John!”

Now, we realize, gentle reader—beloved of God, most holy brethren, etc.—that such an exposition will never satisfy the highfalutin demands of the scholastic twerps who resent the AV (1611) text, but since when did that bunch of reactionary bigots ever have enough sense to expound a passage like this to start with? You aren’t going to get anything “up-to-date” in any *Living Bible* unless that Bible is ALIVE. *The LIVING Bible is the one I hold in my hand*, and it was here before Brother Taylor’s great-great grandmother was born. (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, pages 457-458).”

**14:23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church,<sup>a</sup> and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.<sup>b</sup>**

23a These churches were pastor-led but had a plurality of elders, or leadership. A good pastor should always seek to surround himself with mature, seasoned men to guide him, assist him and advise him in matters of church operation.

23b Eventually, you have to do this with your converts and the churches you have started. You can’t stay there forever and babysit these believers. You are going to have to turn them over to the watch-care of the Lord so they can learn to stand (and walk) on their own two feet, just like any parent has to do with their children. The Lord can take better care of them than we can.

**14:24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.**

**14:25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia:<sup>a</sup>**

14:25 An important harbor but there is no record that Paul did anything here.

**14:26 And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.**

**14:27 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.<sup>a</sup>**

27a I’m sure God’s moving and working in the Gentiles was still a source of uncertainty to some of the Jewish believers, as the old prejudices would take a long time to die.

**14:28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.**

27a Reporting to their sending church, like any good missionary should do, either physically by visiting them or by regular correspondence.

## **Acts Chapter 15**

This is the last chapter where we see Jerusalem as the center of the New Testament Church. After this chapter, there is no real “center” of the Church, as it is more decentralized. This is especially true today. Rome is not the “headquarters” of any New Testament Church, but neither is Nashville, Pensacola, Greenville or Salt Lake City. The Church knows nothing of any kind of controlling board, of a human head, or any other official set-up. The Lord Himself is the Head of the Church; the Holy Spirit the operating and guiding Power. In Acts 15 we have the last “official” act of the Apostolic Church.

### **49. The Jerusalem Conference 15:1-35**

**15:1 And certain men which came down from Judæa taught the brethren,<sup>a</sup> and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.<sup>b</sup>**

1a False prophets like to style themselves a “Bible teachers”. They “came down” from Jerusalem to Antioch and began to spread (with some success) this false doctrine. They were probably travelling teachers, which were very common in the early church. John talks about such teachers in 2 John 10 and what to do with them (“**If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:**”)

1b These are Judaizers (Pharisees, from Acts 15:5), who never got (or accepted) the divine memo that the Gentiles were not (and never were) under any obligation to the Law to be saved. They were teaching that the Gentiles had to become Jews in order to be saved, despite the fact that 1) no Jew ever kept the Law (so why would they expect the Gentiles to be able to keep it?) and 2) Christ fulfilled the Law on the cross (Romans 10:4).

These would be the Galatians that Paul would deal with in that epistle, and the modern Seventh Day Adventists, who preach a gospel of “saved by faith, kept by works”. This is the root of the two universal heresies in the history of mankind:

1. You have to DO something in order to get saved.
2. You will have to do something in order to STAY saved.

In this context, the issue was:

1. **A man had to be circumcised to be saved.** This same idea is embodied in Covenant Theology which incorrectly tries to replace circumcision with infant baptism. Baptizing your babies put the baby into a so-called “Covenant of Grace” (an unbiblical term) just as circumcision put a Jewish boy into the Abrahamic Covenant. This theological system doesn’t make any sense. If New Testament baptism is the counterpart of Old Testament circumcision (and there is no verse that makes such a statement), then how can a girl “get into the covenant of grace?” No girls were circumcised in the Old Testament, yet they are supposed to be baptized to get into the “covenant of grace.” Doesn’t this break the type? If

an Old Testament girl didn't (and couldn't) have to be circumcised, then why does she have to be baptized?

2. **A man also had to keep the law of Moses in order to be saved.** Seventh-Day Adventists and other legalistic, law-keeping groups promote something similar. They teach that your observance of the Law of Moses (especially the Jewish weekly Sabbath) proves you are saved and that you love God.

All false teachings fall into one (or both) of these categories. This teaching is a mixture of work and faith. You are saved by faith, but you need to accept Old Testament circumcision in order to be saved. Mixing works with faith invalidates the faith for you cannot have faith and works co-existing. Salvation is either all or works, all of faith or not at all.

**15:2 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.<sup>a</sup>**

2a Paul would naturally confront such a false teaching in a very aggressive manner. This demonstrates the need to “**earnestly contend for the faith**” (Galatians 2:5; 5:12; Jude 3). Paul would say in Galatians 2:2 that he went up to Jerusalem “**by revelation**”. The debate up to this point was still hot and heavy, with the Judaizers trying to sneak in their legalism “unawares”. They pressed their contention that Christians were under obligation to the Law. Paul took the other position, saying the Law had no claim on Christians because of the fulfillment of its demands by Christ on the cross. This was one topic Paul had no intention of compromising on whatsoever. If the Jerusalem Council or Paul had compromised on any point of doctrine with the Judaizers, they would have taken the compromise and blared it all over the Empire, saying that the Council had conceded this point to them, thus magnifying their stature. Paul charged the Judaizers of desiring to bring Christians back under the bondage of the Law after they had been set free from it in Christ. They loved the bondage of the law and hated the liberty that is in the gospel. Paul knew from practical experience that this sort of legalism would not accomplish any spiritual good. If the Law had not done any spiritual good for the Jews, then what sort of good could be expected for Gentiles if they put themselves under that sort of bondage? Paul's position was clear- Christians are freed from the demands and penalties of the Law and from Jewish ceremonialism.

These “false brethren” excel in sneaking in unawares into local churches and sowing this kind of discord. See the “sneaks/creeps” of Jude 4. They desire to spy out our liberty in Christ and to bring us into some form of spiritual bondage. It is their “life's call” and “ministry.” Even the apostles couldn't keep false teachers out of the church. How much harder do we have to work in our day, with the apostasy that much more advanced? These false teachers creep into the church in much the same way as a snake would slither into a building. They come in with stealth, and unawares and catch their prey by surprise. They are spiritual snakes! They came in under false pretense, flying false colors of a false profession of godliness and orthodoxy. False teachers do not operate openly as a true man of God would. We have nothing to hide but they hide

everything. Think of Seventh Day Adventists. They never tell you who they are. They never identify themselves in their literature or on their radio and television broadcasts. They don't want you to know who they are until it is too late, and you have been ensnared in their trap. False teachers hide their true intent and position and misrepresent themselves to gain the confidence of their victim. And they came in unawares. No one saw them come in, just as no one saw the snake slither under the door, until it was too late. The threat they pose calls for diligence and spiritual discernment to watch all of the openings, to make sure that the creep does not creep in. If he manages to get in, he must be expelled at once before he can work his mischief. Some people may need to be thrown out of a local church if they qualify as a false teacher, operating as a creep.

Nor did they come in boldly, pounding their chests and declaring their error for all to hear. Apostates are seldom so bold since they know such an approach would give time for their intended victims to raise their defenses. No, they always work "undercover", in secret, with ulterior motives. They are not the bravest souls around, at least not publicly.

**15:3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles:<sup>a</sup> and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.**

3a Conversion of the Gentiles accomplished WITHOUT the works of the Law.

**15:4 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.**

**15:5 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.<sup>a</sup>**

5a If these "believing Pharisees" were saved according to the formula, then they were lost, despite any "belief" they might have had, as their belief was in a false and impotent "gospel". Salvation is by faith, but you must be believing in the right "gospel". You can be sincere in believing a false gospel, but that faith will not save. Luke calls these Pharisees a "sect", which means they were deliberately trying to sow this theological discord in the hopes splitting the fellowship so they could create their own following, and eventually, their own group. They "believed" but in the same way any false teacher would "believe"- they believed enough gospel to perhaps be saved but they did not accept enough doctrine to make them orthodox and reliable guides.

They waited until Paul and Barnabas had finished their report to the church before they made their move. Paul and Barnabas would have stressed how the Gentiles were saved without the Law by the things they saw on their recent missionary trip. Seeing such a report would undermine their position, they rose up and stated their doctrine. If they could have "played their cards close to the vest" and were not forced to

publicly state their position as they were here, they would have preferred that. But Paul and Barnabas forced their hand and made them come out of the bushes. False teachers hate that.

This marks the first real attempt of the Jews to corrupt the doctrine and practice of the church. Before, they used overt opposition and persecution, but that heavy-handed tactic was not working. If the church couldn't be stopped from without, maybe it could be corrupted from within. This was the first salvo, but it certainly would not be the last. The attack was in the church's plan of salvation- was it of works and ritual or by grace without works? The leaven of works, introduced here, was initially rejected by the church but it eventually won the day, as many denominations and all the cults preach some form of works-based salvation, while only a remnant of Bible-believing groups preach salvation by grace without the works of the law.

**15:6 ¶ And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.<sup>a</sup>**

6a This is the second recorded "business meeting of the church". The first one was in Acts 6 to select deacons. The second one is to deal with a theological controversy. The meeting was held in Jerusalem, but other churches were represented.

This meeting was held in Jerusalem, not necessarily because Jerusalem was the "Mother Church" or the most important church, but because the Judaizer heresy seemed to have started around Jerusalem and was centered there. It would be from Jerusalem it was spreading out to infect other areas, so the meeting was held at Jerusalem to deal with the false teaching "at the source".

**15:7 And when there had been much disputing,<sup>a</sup> Peter rose up,<sup>b</sup> 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.<sup>c</sup>**

7a And no one can dispute better than Christians, especially Baptists. Theological controversy, though usually undesirable, does serve a useful purpose in helping the church hash out theological questions and to establish true doctrine in addition to identifying false doctrine and teachers. The early church had several such controversies arose which took similar councils to deal with.

The Judaizers were given their opportunity to present their case, so they would have been given a fair hearing, with rebuttals following.

7b The Judaizers may have hoped for an ally in Peter, seeing how Paul was so strong against them, but any such hopes were dashed here.

7c The events of Acts 10. Cornelius and his household received the Holy Spirit (and got saved) with no works and no circumcision. Every last one of them probably also ate bacon, sausage and ham for breakfast daily.

**15:8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;**

**15:9 And put no difference between us and them,<sup>a</sup> purifying their hearts by faith.<sup>bc</sup>**

9a Comparing Acts 2 with Acts 10 shows that God gave the Holy Spirit to both Jews and Gentiles the same way- without works. What Peter witnesses in the conversion of Cornelius and his house made quite the impression on Peter.

9b Not by water or works (or even wafer!). Peter was in full agreement with Paul here.

**15:10 Now therefore why tempt ye God,<sup>a</sup> to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?<sup>b</sup>**

10a Why provoke Him but promoting false doctrine and practice? What is the point in that?

10b If the Jews couldn't keep Law, why on earth made them think that the Gentiles could? Why enslave the Gentiles with burdensome rules and regulations, most of which were totally unnecessary? Why strip them of their Christian liberty? This is what the Judaizers wanted to do- bring the Gentile converts into spiritual bondage.

**15:11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.<sup>a</sup>**

11a That is about as plain as it gets, for both Jews and Gentile. Peter described New Testament salvation in 19 words, and he does not mention works or water baptism at all.

If Peter was the "first pope" as all Roman Catholics believe, then why don't they follow what Peter taught here? Salvation is by belief and Peter mentions no works at all.

**AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus <b>Christ</b> we shall be saved, even as they.	11 But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will."	11 "But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are."
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"**Christ**" is omitted in the ESV and LSV.

**15:12 ¶ 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.<sup>a</sup>**

12a Recounting the events of their first missionary journey of Acts 13 and 14.

**AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

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.

12 And all the assembly fell silent, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.

12 And all the multitude kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.

“**miracles**” is changed to “signs” in the ESV and LSV.

**15:13 ¶ And after they had held their peace, James<sup>a</sup> answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:**

13a The Lord’s half-brother (Galatians 1:19). He seems to be the one who was “in charge” of this meeting, not Peter. So much for Peter being the “first pope” if he was not presiding over a gathering like this.

**15:14 Simeon<sup>a</sup> hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.<sup>b</sup>**

14a I’m assuming this is Peter but why is he called “Simeon” instead of “Simon”? Could it be someone other than Peter?

14b This started in Acts 10 and would continue through the church age.

**15:15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,**

**15:16<sup>a</sup> After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David,<sup>b</sup> which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:**

16a Verses 16-18 is a free quotation from Amos 9:11,12. Many of these quotations are in this format.

16b Interesting that the “tabernacle” of David is mentioned, not the “temple of David”. This phrase appears in Isaiah 16:5 and Amos 9:11, both references being Millennial. David did “pitch” a tabernacle in 2 Samuel 6:17. And the tabernacle is referred to as a “temple” in 1 Samuel 1:9.

What we have here is the prophecy that the literal, physical, visible temple of Solomon will be rebuilt (Revelation 11:1–3) at Jerusalem (Ezekiel 40-48) and David’s millennial throne (Matthew 19:28) is a literal, physical, visible, earthly throne (Matthew 25:31) that God will “set up” after it was “torn down” by the Romans in A. D .70 and after the rebuild tribulation temple was defiled by the Antichrist.



**15:17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles,<sup>a</sup> upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.**

17a The promise that the “residue” or “remnant” of men would seek after the Lord and all the Gentiles. What is this referring to? It is connected with the rebuilding of the temple in the tribulation and again in the Millennium. There will be a remnant of believing men who will seek the Lord in the tribulation in opposition to the Antichrist. This probably refers to after the abomination of desolation and the second half of the tribulation period. The converts of the 144,000 are probably all dead by the midpoint of the tribulation so any men who are still seeking the Lord after the midpoint of the tribulation will probably be numerically small. We would have two “callings-out” of Gentiles: one in the church age (Acts 15:14) and one in the Tribulation and in the Millennium (Acts 15:17).

**15:18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.**

**15:19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:<sup>a</sup>**

19a Not to trouble them with forcing them to keep the Law. The world will trouble the believer enough. There is no need for other believers to trouble them.

**15:20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.<sup>a</sup>**

20a The only “law” that the Council advised regarding the Gentile believers was:

1. They should avoid idolatry. This included all pagan temple practices, such as eating things sacrificed to idols (1 Corinthians 8:1-13).
2. They should avoid fornication. Most pagan temples had prostitutes “for religious purposes”. As the converts were to avoid the pagan temples, they should also be able to avoid participating in their immoral practices.
3. They should abstain from eating or drinking blood- a prohibition the Roman Catholic Church violates every time one of their “priests” “celebrates” “mass”.
  - A. Leviticus 17:10-14 talks about blood being “eaten” in undercooked meats while Romanists “drink” blood in the mass. There is really no difference here as blood is not to be ingested. Also in Deuteronomy 12:23,24.
4. They should not eat anything that was strangled. This was a common Gentile practice that the Jews did not observe. The Jews would slaughter animals for food, not strangle them.
  - A. This would include both eating and drinking blood.

That was it. Notice nothing is said about water baptism, church membership, tongues or any other of the favorite contemporary works that certain denominations add to grace.

AV	ESV	LSV
20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and <i>from</i> <b>fornication</b> , and <i>from</i> things strangled, and <i>from</i> blood.	20 but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood.	20 but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from sexual immorality and from what is strangled and from blood.

“**fornication**” is changed to “sexual immorality” in the ESV and LSV. Also in Acts 15:29.

**15:21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.**

**15:22 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:**

22a These men would take these decisions to the Gentile believers and churches to teach them that they were not under any obligation to the Law, despite what the Judaizers would attempt to say and teach to them.

**15:23 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:<sup>a</sup>**

23a Paul and Silas would go to Syria and Cilicia to start the Second Missionary Journey (Acts 15:41).

**15:24 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:<sup>ab</sup>**

24a So anyone- ANYONE- who teachers similar doctrine is guilty of:

1. Troubling the believers, causing unnecessary controversies and anxieties.

Woe be to

anyone who troubles the souls of these believers, especially young converts!

They would be the ones who cause offense, of whom the Lord said it would be better for them to have a millstone hung around their neck (Matthew 18:6).

2. Subverting the souls of the believers. This has the idea of undermining a foundation that has already been laid.

False teachers and cultists do both, but so do the promoters of modern, critical-text Bible versions, which do nothing but water down the scripture, and cause division and confusion among the brethren. It is not those who hold to the old Authorized

Version and its kindred translations and manuscripts that are causing division and confusion within the Body of Christ, it is those who reject these translations and manuscripts and who push the corrupt and weak modern versions who are doing the damage to the Church, and they will be judged for that at the Bema Seat (assuming they are saved!).

24b No apostle during this time taught anything such doctrine and no true teacher or preacher ever will. The Judaizers may have claimed that the church at Jerusalem (and by extension, the apostles) really agreed with their position. If so, the church at Jerusalem shot that lie down quickly.

**15:25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord,<sup>a</sup> to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,<sup>b</sup>**

25a The ideal situation for any church.

25b Barnabas is still mentioned first here.

**15:26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>a</sup>**

26a During the first missionary journey of Acts 13 and 14.

**15:27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas,<sup>a</sup> who shall also tell you the same things by mouth.**

27a Paul's team was not the only one going from city to city, planting churches and teaching the brethren. There were probably several such teams.

**15:28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us,<sup>a</sup> to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;**

28a The church and the Holy Spirit were in agreement here.

**15:29 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.**

**15:30 So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:**

**15:31 Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.<sup>a</sup>**

31a The Judaizers no doubt mourned at this official rejection of their errors. That wouldn't stop them or discourage them for long. They would redouble their efforts to

spread their doctrines, to increase their influence and to make proselytes with or without the blessing of the Council.

**15:32 And Judas<sup>a</sup> and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.**

32a We don't know much about him.

AV	ESV	LSV
32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed <i>them</i> .	32 And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words.	32 And both Judas and Silas, also being prophets themselves, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with a lengthy message.

"many words" does not necessarily mean a "lengthy message" as in the LSV.

**15:33 And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles.**

**15:34<sup>a</sup> Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.**

34a AV	ESV	LSV
34 Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.		34 [But it seemed good to Silas to remain there.]

This verse - ἔδοξε δὲ τῷ Σιλᾷ ἐπιμεῖναι αὐτοῦ - is found in numerous Greek manuscripts including 5,6, 33, 36, 88, 94, 180, 307, 323, 326, 383, 431, 441, 453, 467, 610, 614m 619, 621, 623,808, 915, 1162, 1175, 1270, 1297, 1409,1501, 1595, 1609, 1678, 1729, the Old Latin c, the Syriac Harkelian and Syriac Peshitta, Coptic Sahidic, Armenian, Ethiopian, and Slavonic ancient versions. It is also quoted by early church writer Theophylact.

The context of Acts 15 itself supports the idea that Silas DID chose to remain in Antioch along with Paul and Barnabas, since "some days after" Barnabas chose John, whose surname was Mark, and Paul chose this same Silas to go on a missionary journey. See verses 15:35-41.

This entire verse omitted in most modern versions that are based on the UBS, Nestle-Aland/Vatican critical text, including the ESV, NIV, NET, Holman.

The NASBs can't seem to make up their minds. The NASBs of 1963, 1972, 1973 completely omitted the verse from their text, but then in 1977 and again in 1995 the NASB "scholars" decided to put the entire verse back in their text but this time in brackets, indicating doubt - "[But it seemed good to Silas to remain there.]"

Neither can the NIV's apparently make up their minds either. Though the English version of the NIV omits all of Acts 15:34 from the text, yet the Portuguese translation of the NIV, Nova Versão Internacional 1999, contains it and not even in brackets - "mas Silas decidiu ficar ali."

However the entire verse is found in the following Bible translations: Wycliffe 1395, Tyndale 1525 - "Not with stondynge it pleasyd Sylas to abyde there still.", Coverdale 1535, the Great Bible 1540, Matthew's Bible 1549, the Bishops' Bible 1568, the Geneva Bible 1587 - "Notwithstanding Silas thought good to abide there still.", Mace N.T. 1729, Whiston's N.T. 1745, John Wesley's N.T. 1755, Worsley Version 1770, Thomas Hawels N.T. 1795 Murdock's 1852 and Lamsa's 1933 translation of the Syriac Peshitta - "Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.", Webster's Bible 1833, the Living Oracles 1835, Young's 1890, New Life Version 1969, New Berkeley Version in Modern English 1969, the NKJV 1982, American Bible Union N.T., Montgomery N.T., the Amplified Bible 1987 - "However, Silas decided to stay on there.", Green's Literal Translation, the Third Millennium Bible 1998 and the Jubilee Bible 2000.

The brand new International Standard Version is interesting in that it reads: "But it seemed good to Silas to remain there, and Judas went back alone."

Numerous foreign language Bibles contain Acts 15:34 including the 1569 Spanish Sagradas Escrituras - "Mas a Silas pareció bien el quedarse allí.", Cipriano de Valera 1602, the Spanish Reina Valera 1909 -2011 and Reina Valera Gómez 2010 - "Mas a Silas le pareció bien el quedarse allí aún." Luther's German Bible 1545 and the 2000 Schlachter Bible - "Es gefiel aber Silas, daß er dableibe.", the French Martin 1744, Louis Segond 1910-2007 and French Ostervald 1996 - "Toutefois, Silas jugea à propos de rester." the Italian Diodati 1649, La Nuova Diodati 1991 and Italian Riveduta 1927-2006 - "Ma parve bene a Sila di dimorar quivi.", the Portuguese A Biblia Sagrada and the Almeida Actualizada - "Mas pareceu bem a Silas permanecer ali.", the Dutch Staten Vertaling Bible - "Maar het dacht Silas goed aldaar te blijven.", Finnish Bible 1776 - "Niin Silaan kelpasi siellä olla.", the Tagalog Ang Bible 1905 and the Tagalog 1998 Ang Salita ng Diyos - "Ngunit minabuti ni Silas na magpaiwan doon." the Chinese Union Traditional Bible - "惟有西拉定意仍住在那裡。", the Norwegian Det Norsk Bibelselskap - "Ma parve bene a Sila di dimorar quivi.", the Romanian Cornilescu Bible and 2009 Fidela Bible - "Totuș Sila a găsit cu cale să rămână acolo.", the Afrikaans Bible 1953 - "Maar Silas het besluit om daar te bly.", the Hungarian Karoli Bible - "De Silásnak tetszék ott maradni.", the Russian Synodal Version - "Но Силе рассудилось остаться там.", the Modern Greek Bible - "Εἰς τὸν Σίλαν ὁμῶς ἐφάνη εὐλογον νὰ μείνῃ ἐπὶ αὐτοῦ." and the Modern Hebrew Bible - "וַיֵּטֵב בְּעֵינֵי סִילָא לִשְׁבֹּת שָׁם."

We see the usual confusion among the Catholic versions. The early Douay-Rheims of 1582 contained the words -"But it seemed good unto Silas to remain there", then the 1950 Douay kept them in the text but [in brackets]. And then the 1970 St. Joseph NAB and the New Jerusalem Bible 1985 omitted this verse entirely, just like the ESV, NIV, NASB, Holman, Jehovah Witness New World Translation and NET. But once again in 2009 the online Catholic Public Domain version as put the words back into the text - "But it seemed good to Silas to remain there." and not in brackets. (Will Kinney)"

**15:35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.**

#### **50. The Separation of Paul and Barnabas 15:36-41**

**15:36 ¶ 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.<sup>a</sup>**

36a The Second Missionary Journey would be to re-visit the churches planted during the First Journey, to make sure they were doing okay and to confirm them. As any good missionary, he is eager to get back to the field. This may have been Paul's initial plan but the Holy Spirit had different ideas, when He forbade them to preach in Asia and instead redirected them into Europe (in the so-called "Macedonian Call" of Acts 16:9).

**15:37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.<sup>a</sup>**

37a Barnabas wanted to give Mark a second chance. He had repented of his leaving early during the first trip and wanted to redeem himself and to "get back into the game". Barnabas was the kind of man who would be willing to give anyone a second chance. He was a man who lived up to his nickname of being a "Son of Consolation".

Many are so critical of Mark for leaving as he did. People like to beat themselves on the chest and demonstrate how spiritual they are by comparing themselves to the "quitter" Mark. But despite that failure, he wants to get right back into the saddle here. All men fail and there is not a preacher on this planet who is batting a thousand. The important thing is what do you do after you fail? Do you wallow in your failure, or do you pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and get back at it?

The steps to restoration (Galatians 6:1 "**Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.**") would include:

1. Acknowledge the failure.
2. Own the failure. Don't blame it on anyone or on other circumstances.
3. Confess it before the Lord.
4. Swallow your pride. When some people fail, they are too embarrassed to attend church for fear of what others will say or think.
5. Seek ways to re-enter the work.
6. Increased prayer, Bible reading and devotional work.

**15:38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them,<sup>a</sup> who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.**

38a Paul wasn't quite as ready to rely on Mark as Barnabas was. Paul was harder to please and took longer to forgive. He may have thought Mark needed more time to prove himself before working with him again, as Paul did not want the work to be

disrupted again if Mark didn't pan out again. But how many of us have appreciated a second chance after a failure?

**15:39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other:<sup>ab</sup> and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;<sup>cd</sup>**

39a Two Spirit-filled but strong-willed personalities refused to budge, where we have an irresistible force meeting an unmovable object. Both were convinced they were in the right and refused to compromise or even to consider the possibility that they were wrong. But there is no indication that they broke fellowship or got on internet message boards or Twitter and chewed each other out. Pastors tend to be like this, especially older men, where they are willing to break fellowships that have lasted for decades because the other man doesn't agree with them on something. The issue isn't always doctrinal but sometimes deals with personality or practice. I've seen it happen and it is a tragedy when it does.

39b "If the truth were known, one state could not hold Bob Jones Sr., W. B. Riley, J. Frank Norris, Art Wilson, Dr. DeHaan, Lee Robertson, Theodore Epp, and Charles Fuller. Just because Paul and Barnabas are both "filled with the Spirit" and able to work miracles doesn't mean they are able to stand the sight of each other four hours a day. If you put Percy Crawford, Jack Wyrzten, Billy Graham, Frank Norris, John Rice, John Rawlings, Dallas Billington, B. B. Crimm, J. Harold Smith, John Wesley, Martin Luther, Ian Paisley, Sam Jones, Billy Sunday, Jack Van Impe, and Hubmaier in one room, there would be blood running out under the door in less than an hour. You see, men who have convictions about the "fundamentals" or the Book or the ministry have convictions about responses, attitudes, manners, money, dress, sleeping habits, politics, and speech... Every Christian has an Achilles' heel, and if you ever make the mistake of thinking any "bishop" meets all the requirements of 1 Timothy 3:1-9, the Lord will change your theology before you can take another step down the race track. Where a church demands a batting average of 1.000 from a "bishop" they are usually batting under 300 themselves. Norris blasted Truett; Rice blasted Graham; Luther blasted Erasmus; Munster blasted Luther; Bob Jones Jr. blasted Rice; Sunday blasted Gladden; and the Fundamental scholars have blasted the King James Bible so many times that it's a miracle that the great and good Book is still with us....The biggest hypocrites in the crowd always begin the same way: "Yes, I know Brother So-and-so is a great preacher, and he knows the Bible, BUT...." Then they proceed with scalpel and laser beam until you couldn't find enough of the man's character left to write on a parking ticket. Some of them are experts at it. They proceed in the following fashion: "My dearly beloved brother in Christ, I write this to you under a great burden of grief, God knowing how much your ministry has meant to me and to thousands. I HAVE ALWAYS prayed for you daily, and I want you to know that as I write I am now asking God to bless this and speak to your heart. What I write I write in a spirit of love and compassion, so if you will just tip back your head a little further, I'll slit your gullet clean open from ear to ear!" (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Acts*, pages 493-495)."

39c Since neither was willing to compromise or back down (or admit to the possibility that they were wrong!) Paul and Barnabas could only agree to go their separate ways. Barnabas would take Mark even if Paul didn't think it was a good idea. But this is the last time either one appears in the narrative of Acts and Luke focuses on Paul's ministry. It matters not how spiritual you are or how greatly the Lord is using you, you still have an old nature and your feelings can still be offended,

39d "It would be folly to water down such a passage as this in order to exempt either party from blame. No justification whatever is offered for this heated quarrel. Unquestionably it was improper and wrong, and by it, Paul and Barnabas proved exactly what they had said to the Lystrians: "We also are men of like passions with you" (Acts 14:15). Characteristically, the Scriptures state the facts frankly for our learning and good. We emphasize this because, when we magnify Paul's office, as the Scriptures do (Rom. 11:13) there are always some who accuse us of exalting Paul personally... There were perfectly natural circumstances leading up to the quarrel between Paul and Barnabas. First, the failure of Mark, Barnabas' cousin,<sup>4</sup> so early in their first journey had had its effects. Then too, Paul had probably begun losing confidence in Barnabas himself since he (Barnabas) had been "carried away" in the "dissimulation" at Antioch (Gal. 2:13).

On the other hand, Barnabas may well have been irked at having been involved in Paul's rebuke of Peter. Indeed, Barnabas may have felt that Paul was personally indebted to him, because he had been the one to bring him to the apostles in Jerusalem and then to the work at Antioch. Also, Barnabas had once ranked first among the prophets at Antioch (See Acts 13:1, where Saul is mentioned last) and the two had frequently been spoken of as "Barnabas and Paul." This had been so even as recently as the council at Jerusalem (Acts 15:12, 25). Yet, little by little, Paul had been coming to the fore, leaving Barnabas in the background. This, of course, was God's will, but it may have been difficult for Barnabas to recognize it as such. (Cornelius Stam, *Acts Dispensationally Considered*)."

#### **15:40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.<sup>a</sup>**

40a The church seemed to be more supportive of Paul than Barnabas in this controversy, as Luke does not mention a similar blessing granted to Barnabas and Mark. Paul would have stressed spiritual dedication and discipline, which he believe Mark lacked. Barnabas would have stressed his family ties with Mark and his attitude of a "second chance". Both men were right, but Paul probably had the stronger position. The Christian life is likened to a warfare in 2 Timothy 2 and Mark had deserted. An army usually shoots deserters. Paul also considered it a serious matter. It would take years for Mark to regain Paul's trust, which he eventually did. Paul eventually reconciled with Mark in 2 Timothy 4:11 (**"Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry."**) and in Philemon 24 (**"Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers."**), but we have no record that Paul and Barnabas ever "patched it up".



But some good came out of this quarrel, as we now have two church planting teams rather than just one.

**15:41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia,<sup>a</sup> confirming the churches.<sup>b</sup>**

41a By going into Syria and Cilicia, Paul gave Barnabas a “wide berth”. This would cut down on any conflict, but it would end up doubling the areas reached. The Lord ends with two missionary teams now, but it wasn’t the best way to do it. This is the way it is in most towns, especially “down South” in the so-called “Bible Belt”. Most towns start up with one or two Baptist churches “planted from scratch” that then proceed to split three ways four times. I was in Memphis, Tennessee in 1990 and one day, I took a phone book and started counting Baptist Churches (all types). I stopped counting at 600. You can’t tell me that six hundred church planters “had a burden” for Memphis. It was maybe ten church planters and their churches split and then split again. I actually saw in one town “Friendship Baptist Church” on one side of the street and then directly across the street from it was “New Friendship Baptist Church.” It is Paul and Barnabas repeated over and over again.

41b Strengthening and deepening the churches.



## Acts Chapter 16

Starting here is the Second Missionary Journey, from 16:1-18:23

VERSES	LOCATION	PERSONALITIES	EVENTS
16:1-3	Lystra	Timothy	Calling of Timothy
16:4,5		Churches revisited and strengthened	
16:6-10	Galatia, Mysia, Troas		Macedonian Call
16:11-40	Philippi	Lydia Devil-possessed girl Jailer	Meeting with Lydia 16:14,15,40  Devil-possessed girl and her healing 16:16-18  Beating, arrest 16:19-24  Salvation of the jailer and his family 16:25-39
17:1-9	Thessalonica	Jason	Mob violence
17:10-13	Berea		More civil unrest
17:14-34	Athens		Paul preached at the Areopagus
18:1-17	Corinth		Paul spends about a year and half here. While in Corinth, he writes 1 and 2 Thessalonians.
18:18	Syria		Paul has his head shorn in Cenchrea, because of a vow.

18:19-21      Ephesus

18:22,23      Antioch

Reporting to the church  
at Antioch, end of  
second journey

A.D. 55

Acts 15:36-18:22 The Second Missionary Journey: Paul and Silas: (The Western Journey); Barnabas and John Mark to Cyprus (The Eastern Journey)

Acts 15:41 To Syria and Cilicia

Acts 16:1, 2 To Derbe and Lystra: Met Timothy (Timotheus: Jewish mother; Greek father). Well reported of by brethren at Lystra and Iconium.

Acts 16:1-3 Paul takes Timothy with him; circumcised him.

Acts 16:4 Delivered decrees to keep; ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

Acts 16:5 Churches established; increased in number daily.

Acts 16:6-8 Having gone through Phrygia, Galatia, forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach in Asia. Mysia, Bithynia, the Spirit suffered them not; and passing through Mysia to Troas.

Acts 16:9 A vision appears to Paul in the night. "Come over into Macedonia and help us."

Acts 16:11 Loosing from Troas, they came to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis.

Acts 16:12 Thence to Philippi, chief city of Macedonia. A Prayer Meeting at the river side.

Acts 16:14 Lydia, a seller of purple, of Thyatira. She is baptized and her house.

Acts 16:16 A damsel possessed with a spirit of divination.

Acts 16:20 Paul and workers brought to the magistrates: cast into prison.

Acts 16:25 At midnight, Paul and Silas sang; prison shakened.

Acts 16:30 The jailor saved and his house.

Acts 16:35 Released with apology from magistrates.

Acts 16:40 Went into the house of Lydia.

Acts 17:1 Passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia to Thessalonica. (Jewish opposition)

Acts 17:10 Paul and Silas sent by night unto Berea, a more noble group.

Acts 17:13 Enemies from Thessalonica come to Berea to stir up trouble.

Acts 17:15 While Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea, Paul conducted to Athens.

Acts 17:22 Paul's sermon at Mars Hill; converts at Athens (v. 34).

Acts 18:1 Paul comes to Corinth; meets Aquila and Priscilla. Continues there 1 1/2 years. 1 and 2 Thessalonians written at Corinth.

Acts 18:12 Paul before Gallio, deputy of Achaia.

Acts 18:17 Paul beaten; yet after that Paul tarried there yet a good while.

Acts 18:18b Paul and brethren sail to Syria, with Aquila and Priscilla. Paul has his head shorn in Cenchrea, because of a vow.

Acts 18:19 Paul and party come to Ephesus; they desired him to tarry long, but Paul

consented not; he had to be in Jerusalem at the feast.

Acts 18:22 Paul sails from Ephesus to Caesarea; he then went on to Antioch in Syria.  
There are 23 places named in The Second Missionary Journey



### **51. Calling of Timothy 16:1-3**

**16:1 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:<sup>ab</sup>**

1a Timothy was a “half-breed”, with a Gentile father (who apparently was not saved) and a godly Jewish mother and grandmother. This kind of “religious mixed marriage” was generally not allowed in Israel but there may have been more latitude if a man married a Gentile than if a Jewish woman did.

1b Timothy’s father was dead, but it is not necessary to “correct” the Authorized Version and retranslate this as “his father was being a Greek” or “his father had been a Greek”. as some of the so-called “scholars” do. My father has been dead for seven

years as I write this but I still was saying “my dad was a boxer”, not “my dad was being a boxer” or “my dad had been a boxer”. This is theological nitpicking.

**16:2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.**

**16:3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him;<sup>a</sup> and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.<sup>b</sup>**

3a With the bad experience he had with John Mark, Paul was looking for a young man he could train and he found such a young man in Timothy. There must have been something in his character that impressed Paul, for we know that Paul was not an easy man to impress!

3b Everyone knew Timothy was a half-Jew and since he would be working among Jews, Was he a real Jew? Paul thought it necessary to have Timothy circumcised. The fact that he was not circumcised may show that Timothy was living more as a Gentile than a Jew, but to eliminate any “rock of offense” among the Jews, Paul had him circumcised. Paul did not do this with Titus, who was a full-blood Gentile, as there would have been no reason at all to have him circumcised.

## **52. Churches Strengthened 16:4,5**

**16:4 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.<sup>a</sup>**

4a The decisions reached in Acts 15, delivered to these largely Gentile churches, and taught to them, for the no doubt had many questions. The Judaizers were busy among them and there was a lot of confusion.

**16:5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.<sup>a</sup>**

5a For those hyper-evangelicals who believe that this is a standard thing for all churches in all places and in all ages, ask Adoniram Judson about it, who waited 7 years for his first convert, and only saw a trickle of converts even in years after that. To have people being added to your church daily is a great thing, but there are times and places where you simply will not see this, especially on some mission fields.

## **53. The Macedonian Call 16:6-10**

**16:6<sup>a</sup> 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,<sup>b</sup>**

6a Paul's original purpose was to revisit the churches in all the cities where he had previously labored in the first missionary trip but verses 6 and 7 of our chapter show God had other plans. The so-called "Macedonia Call" here is a missionary looking for direction where he should go next. Paul reached Mysia but had no clear direction about where he should go next. Paul considered Bithynia but the Spirit clearly told Paul "no". They went down to Troas, but still had no clear direction, until Paul got a vision of a man in Macedonia asking for help. Paul then took that as the clear direction for Paul to go. God would send Paul west, into Europe.

This shows that God intends the gospel to travel from east to west. The gospel starts in Jerusalem, goes into Europe, then into the Americas, and then works its way back into Asia and eventually back to Jerusalem by the end of the age. Asian Christians call this the "Back to Jerusalem" movement, where we will see the greatest workings of God in Asia and the Middle East as we approach the rapture. The West has had its day, and America, Canada and Europe are definitely "post-Christian" at this stage of history.

I would not suggest a prospective missionary or other Christian seeking the will of God wait for such a call, as none of us were engaged in so important a ministry as Paul was, nor are any of us trying to decide whether to plant churches in Europe or Asia. But God will reveal His will to us if we are seeking it, just not in such a dramatic manner.

6b Modern Asia Minor, taking up most of the current country of Turkey.

**16:7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.**

**16:8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.**

**16:9 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.<sup>a</sup>**

9a What kind of help did they want? Not money, aid, workers, military hardware or anything carnal. The gospel is the best help we can send any nation. If a nation would embrace the gospel, every compartment of that people would be drastically improved. As this was a "Man of Macedonia", this was probably a Gentile man, confirming Paul's call to be the Apostle to the Gentiles.

**16:10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us<sup>a</sup> for to preach the gospel unto them.**

10a Luke is now with Paul and Silas.

**AV**

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.

**ESV**

10 And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

**LSV**

10 And when he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to proclaim the gospel to them.

“**preach**” The LSV has “proclaim”.

#### **54. Paul at Philippi 16:11-40**

**16:11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we<sup>a</sup> came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;**

11a One of the “we” sections of Acts starts here, showing that Luke was present at this time and is writing from a first-hand, eye-witness account.

**16:12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony:<sup>a</sup> and we were in that city abiding certain days.**

12a Philippi was a Roman colony, something of a military town, that was largely Gentile with only a small Jewish population.

**16:13 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.<sup>ab</sup>**

13a Tradition said that it took ten Jewish men to organize a synagogue. As there was apparently no synagogue in Philippi, the Jews would simply congregate together by the river on the Sabbath for worship and fellowship. Luke says only women were present here. It is also possible that they were enough.

13b Synagogues were often located near bodies of water due to the number of rituals that involved cleansing with water.

**16:14 ¶ 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.<sup>abcd</sup>**

14a Paul’s first European convert was a woman. As a “seller of purple”, she may have been a woman of some means and income. But how humbly did the gospel bear its first fruit in Europe, with the conversion of a woman and those in her house by a river! A feeble crowd in the eyes of the world but great works spring from humble beginnings.



Her conversion was by ordinary means. Paul preached, she listened and responded. There was no earthquake as in the later conversion of the jailor in this city. The vast majority of conversions are rather “ordinary” affairs, unaccompanied by great and dramatic outward manifestations, yet they are never to be despised. The jailor must be saved in the manner he was as a Gentile man like him would never have resorted to the river side with a few women to hear a foreigner preach! Nor would a woman like Lydia be found in a dungeon. Each conversion is unique to the heart of the listener and the geography and circumstance he finds himself in.

14b This “opening of the heart” is the Lord’s work in conversion. It matters not your oratory or your education, it goes in vain if the Lord does not first open the heart of the hearer. There is also no record that she “prayed the sinner’s prayer” or any prayer in her salvation. She heard the gospel and believed in her heart. That is how she got saved.

14c The “man” of the Macedonian Call turned out to be a woman!

14d It generally took ten Jewish men in Philippi to establish a synagogue but they had not been able to build a building for some reason. There may not have been enough Jewish men in the city to establish a synagogue.

**16:15 And when she was baptized, and her household,<sup>a</sup> she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there.<sup>b</sup> And she constrained us.<sup>c-d</sup>**

15a This cannot be used to justify infant baptism as no infants are mentioned (as in Acts 16:33). For all we know, everyone in Lydia’s household was a grown adult.

15b A good, initial fruit of her conversion- she became burdened for the missionary work and the missionaries.

15c Naturally there had to be some men in Lydia’s household as Paul, Silas and Timothy would not have put themselves into an awkward situation where three single men were staying in the home of single woman! The Christian must always avoid all appearance of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22 “**Abstain from all appearance of evil.**”).

15d “This is the fifth conversion to God, detailed for us in the book of Acts. First that of the Ethiopian eunuch a black man; then of Saul of Tarsus the Jew; next of Cornelius the Gentile; in this chapter that of Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened the first convert in Europe being a woman; and now that of this rough prison warden, suddenly changed from a heartless, cruel man into a humble follower of the lowly Jesus. (August Van Ryn, *Acts of the Apostles*, page 212).”

Lydia’s conversion

1. She was religious to begin, attending a prayer meeting
2. She was teachable

3. The Lord opened her heart
4. She believed what Paul preached
5. She was baptized
6. She helped Paul's party by providing lodging
7. She made no public prayer

**16:16 ¶ And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us,<sup>a</sup> which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying.<sup>bc</sup>**

16a This kind of devilish activity was very widespread in the apostolic era.

16b By fortune-telling, tarot card reading, palm-reading, picking winners at the local race-track, etc. She had access to this occultic information due to the possession by Satanic powers. This is real and is not to be dismissed simply because you imagine yourself to be "intelligent" because you have a college education. I have personally dealt with such devil possessed people and I can testify to the reality of such situations.

"A spirit of divination' (vs. 16) is responsible for "soothsaying." The "spirit of divination" is the spirit of prophecy, and the Greek word (Greek, "Puthonos") indicates a boa constrictor (Python)—like the one that crawled in Jeanne Dixon's bed and "looked into her eyes with love and wisdom," etc. (Eve had the same problem!) Apollo is connected with the Pythian god of a shrine in central Greece, and the name Python was the name given to a serpent (Isa. 27:1–2) that Apollo slew (Gen. 3:15). All Greek and Roman mythology counterfeits the Bible. When "Apollo XI, XII, XIII, etc.," went up to the moon, there wasn't a man aboard who knew that he was riding the ship named after "the angel of the bottomless pit": his name is "APOLLYON" (Rev. 9:11). That is, the wisdom-giving serpent (Gen. 3:1–4) who can tell the future (Num. 24:17) and who is always religious (Mark 1:24) and FUNDAMENTAL (James 2:19). There are no demon-possessed ATHEISTS in the Bible, and there are no demons who reject the Virgin Birth or the Deity of Christ when faced by Christ Himself. Jeanne Dixon believes everything about the person of Jesus Christ that is stated in the creed for students at Bob Jones University. Bloody Mary believed in the Virgin Birth, the Blood Atonement, the Bodily Resurrection, and the Second Coming; so did Lee Oswald, Napoleon, Franco, Juan Peron, John R. Rice, and Origen. (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Acts*, page 507)."

16c Truth-saying.

**16:17 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.<sup>a</sup>**

17a She told the truth under Satanic influence. Devils certainly have an accurate grasp of doctrine. They were servants of the most-high God and they were showing the way of salvation. So what is the problem? Why not accept some free advertising for the revival meetings? Paul did not want his ministry associated in any way, shape, manner

or form with a woman whom everyone knew was under the control of Satan. If Paul had not distanced himself from her, then people would have associated the gospel of Jesus Christ with the Satanic “spirit of divination”. Separation was absolutely necessary to keep the gospel presentation pure. To accept any promotion or endorsement from the world or the devil (or the government) will always backfire. The root of the issue is that the Jews would apply Matthew 12:24 to Paul if devils and unclean spirits were connected with his ministry, and the Gentiles would assume that the Spirit of Python was the same spirit as the Holy Ghost. The unequal yoke (2 Corinthians 6:14) would damn the Gentiles, for they would think that devils and the occult were part of Biblical Christianity.

Application? The Roman Catholic Church never destroyed the pagan systems of worship in ANY country which it conquered or proselyted. In most of them (Philippines, Mexico, Haiti and Ireland) folklore and fetishism were encouraged and still is. Catholicism in Mexico is quite different from Catholicism in New York City. The heathen in those countries think that “Christianity” includes “signs of the cross,” “masses,” “holy water,” “rosaries,” “papal blessings,” “priests,” “nuns,” and “sacraments.” In Haiti and some African countries, voodoo is so wrapped up with “Christianity” that it would take a hundred missionaries a century to unravel it.

#### AV

#### ESV

#### LSV

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.	17 She followed Paul and us, crying out, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.”	17 Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, “These men are slaves of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.”
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The LSV persists in its error in translating “servants” as “slaves”.

**16:18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved,<sup>a</sup> turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he<sup>b</sup> came out the same hour.<sup>c</sup>**

18a That’s it. Paul had enough of her and it was time to put an end to this nonsense once and for all.

18b Devils are always identified as masculine.

18c This is part of the apostolic ministry and authority

**16:19 ¶ And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone,<sup>ab</sup> they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,**

19a That “ties the rag on the bush”. Insult a man’s mother or his wife and he may shrug it off. Hit him in his wallet and watch “all hell break loose”!

“After all, when you get right down to it, the main god of any civilized country is its pocketbook. The great gods of America, (Money, Sex, and Education) don’t differ greatly from the gods of ancient Macedonia, Galatia, Phrygia, and Greece. Commerce has never been the friend of the Gospel, and in this respect, Capitalism is just as much the enemy of God as is Communism or Catholicism. Catholicism is a political system which hides behind a church; it seeks absolute world domination, exactly as the International Socialists seek it. Capitalism is a system of free enterprise where NEED and WANT are exploited to the limits by the entire system. Commerce thinks nothing of church, state, the Bible, or Sunday. There are individual business men who regard these things but Commerce, as an entity, is interested in one thing—profit.

“Commerce molds our customs, our ideas, and our laws. It consolidates for selfish ends; it teaches a broadminded pantheism so as not to offend any customer. Commerce can excuse all of its sins on the grounds of “well meaning,” “community interest,” “for the good of all,” etc. Commerce is the cause of apostasy in the churches to a large extent, for it is the selling gimmick that leads apostates to keep “making” and “revising the Bible.” (The Bible has always had a market.) Commerce has the same law that Darwin ascribed to the jungle—the survival of the fittest; and if you think the AV reading of 1 Timothy 6:10 is wrong, you’d better have your glasses checked. The men who altered this to “a root of all kinds of evil” inserted an article right here in Acts 16:17 where they would NOT insert one in 1 Timothy 6:10! Be not deceived. No Bible published since 1880 was printed with any other motive in mind than ENVY, and no other goal in mind than to sell.

“Most of the Christian bookstores in America would lose their shirts if the King James Bible assumed its rightful place on their shelves, but you needn’t worry—it never will. After all, their business is PROFIT—not promoting the living words of the living God. (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, page 512).”

19b Before, her owners had a slave girl with a gift of fortune-telling. Now they just had an ordinary slave girl. Her value to her owners dropped immensely and immediately.

**16:20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews,<sup>a</sup> do exceedingly trouble our city,<sup>b-c</sup>**

.20a Some anti-semitism here? This was designed as an insult.

20c A devil-possessed girl and her handlers are fine, upstanding citizens but three preachers “exceedingly trouble” the city. See how it works? People will tolerate all manner of sin and evil in their town as long as they can profit from it, but they will NOT tolerate any Bible preaching it if threatens the income (or the tax base). But this is the usual charge people bring against Christians when their incomes are threatened. This is the same old lying fraud that one finds all through the Bible. Jeremiah has trumped-up charges brought against him (Jeremiah 38:4). Ahab accuses Elijah of “troubling Israel” (1 Kings 18:17). Christ is slandered (Luke 23:1,2); Stephen is misrepresented (Acts

6:13). What we have here is just one more case of businessmen hollering about “street meetings” or “open air services” to the town fathers. It will “lower property values” or offend atheists and Muslims or some other excuse. See Matthew 8:34 for a similar response made of the Lord after doing good (“**And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts.**”)

In reality, who really is troubling your city? Politicians, businessmen, pornographers, liquor stores, “civil right leaders”, atheists, pimps and their prostitutes, union leaders, the media, rock, county and hip-hop radio stations, drug dealers, public school teachers and administrators, lawyers, evolutionists, street rioters, Antifa, “Black Lives Matters” racists, etc. And then they have the nerve to complain about three preachers?

20d Notice how they word it- these foreigner “Jews” are disturbing the peace of “our” city.

AV	ESV	LSV
20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,	20 And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, “These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city.	20 and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, “These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews,

This is another inferior reading by the LSV,

**16:21 And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.<sup>a</sup>**

21a Romans were not allowed to observe Jewish customs? But it was good and proper for Romans to tolerate the occult and Satanic activity in their city? They may not have known that Paul was a Roman citizen and a Christian, so that argument would have fallen flat. Introducing new religions into Roman areas was a practice that was generally frowned upon and illegal in many places, which could have resulted in persecution and even death.

**16:22<sup>a</sup> And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.<sup>b</sup>**

22a No indication that Paul was allowed to offer any defense, and he would use this to his advantage in Acts 16:37. Sometimes, you need to know when not to insist on your “rights” and when to keep quiet.

22b The handlers of a devil-possessed woman were never treated nearly as harshly as Paul and his party.

**16:23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them,<sup>a</sup> they cast them into prison,<sup>b</sup> charging the jailor to keep them safely:<sup>c</sup>**

23a See 2 Corinthians 11:23, where Paul speaks of receiving “**stripes beyond measure**”.

23b Even if the charge of “disturbing the peace” was true, did it merit such a draconian response? A beating, whipping and jail?

23c Was the jailor the same one who administered the whipping?

**16:24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust<sup>a</sup> them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.<sup>b</sup>**

24a This shows the continued rough treatment Paul and Silas had at the hands of the jailer.

24b “Maximum security”.

**16:25 ¶ And at midnight<sup>a</sup> Paul and Silas<sup>b</sup> prayed, and sang praises unto God:<sup>c</sup> and the prisoners heard them.<sup>d</sup>**

25a The darkest hour of the night. You can’t help but wonder if Paul was having “second thoughts” about that “man from Macedonia”! Paul obeys what he believes is a clear manifestation of God’s will and here he sits, whipped, beaten, with his feet in the stocks! If Paul wasn’t questioning that vision, you can be sure Silas was!

25b Where was Timothy? Why wasn’t he put in prison? Was he whipped too, or did his youth protect him from such treatment? What about Luke? How did he manage to stay out of jail or avoid the whipping post?

25c You can knock (or beat) the shout out of Spirit-filled men, even in such a situation. Until now these walls have heard only groans, curses and vile outbursts: Now they are hearing prayers and songs. Their untreated wounds probably prevented them from sleeping anyway, so instead of stewing about your situation, why not sing about it and praise God?

25d What a witness! Instead of whining, cursing, complaining, demanding their “rights” or calling for their lawyer, the preachers have a midnight camp-meeting. If the gospel can do that for a man, then it is something worth considering! This “hearing” by the prisoners no doubt influenced them not to make a run for it when the earthquake hit in verse 26 as they were listening attentively. Why wouldn’t they? These other prisoners had never heard anything like this under these circumstances!

**16:26 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.<sup>a</sup>**

26a There are three miracles here:

1. The earthquake loosed everyone's bands. So what if history and the geologists did bear witness that earthquakes were frequent in that area, which they are? It would still be a miracle that one should take place just then and do just that -- including even the loosing of every one's bands.

2. The fact that none of the prisoners tried to escape! This is a much greater miracle than an earthquake, for what convict wouldn't try to escape at the first chance he got? But there was there something about the conduct and witness of Paul and Silas that made them want to stay and learn more of the gospel?

3. What kind of an earthquake is powerful enough to shake the whole building yet does no damage to the building, other than opening all of the doors? We would have expected the building to collapse, endangering those who were inside.

**16:27 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.<sup>a</sup>**

27a He didn't even bother to check. He naturally assumed that all the prisoners had escaped and that he was a dead man, as the jailer was often put to death if any of the prisoners under his watch escaped (see Acts 12:19). Suicide, he thinks, is better than disgrace and a cruel execution. Suicide would be better than the mode of death he would receive from the Romans.

**16:28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.<sup>a</sup>**

28a Why would Paul care for this man? This jailor was responsible for much of the physical misery he was in and the jailor probably cared nothing for Paul. But here we see Christian compassion in action, to pray for those who spitefully use you, and witness to them!

**16:29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,<sup>a</sup>**

29a He was impressed! Was he under any conviction? He may have been the one who whipped Paul and Silas and afterward, observed their conduct while being roughly treated. It may have made an impression on him, as the usual prisoner would curse, yell, complain and behave violently under similar circumstances.

**16:30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?<sup>ab</sup>**

30a He probably heard enough of Paul's preaching to know what to ask.

30b 1. **It is a practical question.** It is the most practical question any human being will ever ask. Apart from the rapture, every man who breathes will die and face judgment. This question is eminently practical and deserves our attention before any other question brought up by opportunists, educators, socialists, news reporters, scientists, or skeptics.

2. **It is a personal question.** The problem is YOU; not your brother, your mother, the hypocrite in the church, the money-grabbing preacher, the cigar-smoking deacon or anyone else. You will do business personally with God, either now or at the Great White Throne and this means you must deal with Him personally about your personal sins.

3. **It was a polite question.** "SIRS, what must I do...." None of this light sarcastic froth that came from Pilate's lips "What is truth?" None of this trifling wit and philosophical questioning that college educated fools offer when confronted by the gospel.

4. **It is a pertinent question.** It cuts right through all the religious, moral and philosophical fog (and interference) and gets straight to the heart of the matter. "I am a sinner. I want to be saved. How can I be saved?"

5. **It is a powerful question.** Only the asking of this question (to the right person!) and getting the right answer can save the soul. No other question can do this.

**16:31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>a</sup> and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.<sup>bcdefghi</sup>**

31a AV

ESV

LSV

31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus **Christ**, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

31 And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

31 And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your house."

**"Christ"**. Modern versions omit "Christ". Who are you supposed to believe on for salvation?

31b The greatest answer to the greatest question. It is also the correct answer. If you are going to allow anyone to ask you this question, you had BETTER have the right answer, else your ignorance and unfaithfulness will grease the skids to hell for that seeking sinner. It is the greatest privilege, and the greatest responsibility, for one sinner to lead another sinner to salvation.

31c Notice what Paul said: Believe and you will be saved. It means just what it says, as it stands; and any attempt to run to Hebrews, James, Matthew, or Acts 2:38 will only result in theological disaster and false plans of salvation.



Notice what Paul did NOT say:

1. Be water baptized. The jailor and his house were baptized in 16:33, but they all BELIEVED first.
2. Join a church.
3. Wear holy underwear (Mormons)
4. Peddle magazines door-to-door (Jehovah Witnesses)
5. Keep the Sabbath and the dietary laws (Seventh Day Adventists)
6. Join the "one true church that Jesus founded" (Roman Catholics)
7. Speak in tongues (Pentecostals)
8. Follow Acts 2:38 (repent and be "buptized"- Church of Christ). Paul never paid two minutes worth of attention to Acts 2:38 when dealing with someone evangelistically. The answer to Acts 16:30 is NOT Acts 2:38, it is Acts 16:31. In Acts 2:37, the nation asks, "What shall **we** do?" Here, the jailor asks, "What must **I** do to be saved?" If you can't see the difference, then you have no business teaching the Bible to anyone.
9. Invite "Christ into your heart" (that is not scriptural language). No one ever got saved by doing this.
10. Paul never gave an invitation, nor told the jailer to "read this prayer on the back of this tract", nor said "With eyes closed and heads bowed, if you prayed that prayer, raise your hand".

Paul never used any of the modern evangelistic gimmicks to inflate his numbers so he could claim "five people got saved on visitation." I was recently at a funeral where the preacher gave an invitation like this: "If you would like to be saved, pray this prayer (and he prayed a prayer audibly). Now, if you prayed that prayer and meant it, that means you were saved! With every eye closed and every head bowed, if you prayed that prayer and meant it, would you let me know by looking me in the eye?" Two or three people supposedly looked the preacher in the eye. That was supposed to mean two or three people got saved and the preacher gave them some assurance from the pulpit. But what kind of follow-up was there? Any? Did the preacher seek out these "new converts" to make sure they really believed and repented? They heard a 15-minute sermon with an invitation tacked on. How can sinners with little or no knowledge of the gospel get saved in 15 minutes at a funeral? Were their names and addresses recorded for future follow-up visits? No. The preacher will claim that three people got saved at the funeral he preached. This is the error of "quick prayerism".

I would not do this, which is one reason why I can't claim too many conversions under my ministry. First of all, the Biblical "plan of salvation" is not "pray this prayer". It is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul taught that salvation is "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). No prayer is recorded from the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8. No prayer is recorded from Lydia in Acts 16. There is no record of this jailer praying to get saved. They believed in the Lord from the heart. This is not as dramatic as a sinner praying some prayer. You can't see someone believe. This is why most preachers get the sinner to make some kind of prayer. And you have to give time for the law to do its work in the heart of the sinner. It takes time to bring a new baby to birth (nine months). Yet we expect to see a sinner saved, after

probably hearing a gospel presentation for the first time in his life, to “get saved” after a 10-minute presentation. This is because we are impatient and results-oriented in our witness. We want a fast and quick procedure to get someone saved. You’ll get a lot of professions, but most will be false, or weak. But it makes the preacher look good and make him seem to be a real “soulwinner” who gets results, and that is the most important thing in the modern church.

What we look for is fruit and results (2 Corinthians 5:17 **“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”**). This is how we know that someone really got saved. Are they bearing any fruit (John 15)? Are they coming to the church services? Any change in their dress and appearance? Are they starting to read their Bible? Are they praying? Do they ask about these things? Is there an interest in spiritual things? If not, then they did NOT get saved no matter what they may have said or done. The modern church is guilty of giving so many sinners a false sense of security. They are lost but think they are saved. If you give them a strong and genuine gospel presentation, they will claim they are saved because the “prayed a prayer” or were water baptized or because some preacher told them they were, and they will reject any further witness. “For years I have observed the sad fruit of this technique: multitudes of false professions, confusion about salvation, indifference to biblical truth, agnosticism, reprobate living, failure to practice church discipline, and blasphemy against God. In many communities across the land a large percentage of the population has prayed a sinner’s prayer under the ministry of churches practicing quick prayerism. Vast numbers of these have never been born again and they are now almost inoculated against biblical salvation. When challenged about their lifeless spiritual condition, they commonly reply, “I have done that,” meaning they have prayed a prayer and have been given assurance of eternal life. Since they were not told that God requires that they repent of their sin and idolatry, they are comfortable and self-assured that they have a ticket to Heaven. Those who observe these things are made to think that salvation means little or nothing in relation to one’s manner of life (David Cloud, *Repentance and Soul Winning*, page 8).”

I don’t count the publican in Luke 18 as that took place in an Old Testament dispensation. Yes, he prayed “God be merciful to me a sinner”. But was it the text of that prayer that saved him or the condition of his heart that moved him to pray that prayer? But again, that was in the gospels. We are looking for examples from Acts 2 and beyond.

If we are told to **“prove all things”** in 1 Thessalonians 5:21, then that includes evangelistic techniques and methods. This means also judging even the most well-known “soulwinners” and the methods and results.

What would be a Biblical outline of salvation that should be preached and presented to every sinner?

1. God is holy and righteous and hates sin.
2. All men have sinned and are therefore under God’s righteous judgment.
3. God has provided for man’s salvation through the atonement of His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not simply a salvation from hell, but also a salvation from sin.

4. This redemption is received as a free gift by faith in the finished work of Christ and by calling upon Him for salvation.

This is only an outline. We would have to put some meat on these bones with the proper scriptural references.

31d “The trouble is that Paul’s answer is too simple. It has no appeal for intellectuals because it is too primitive; it contains no terms like “communicative,” “corroborate,” “histrionic,” “chauvinistic,” “ecumenical,” “affirmatively,” “embryonic,” “resilience,” “galvanic,” or “euphonius.” It is utterly without form, and there is no comeliness in it that we should desire it! Paul’s answer has no appeal to religious sacramentalists. He said nothing about the “church that Christ founded,” and he altogether omitted any reference to confirmation, penance, purgatory, contrition, or holy orders. Paul’s answer is much too simple for the do-gooders. He forgot the Golden Rule; he forgot the Ten Commandments; he forgot “treating folks right”; and he forgot “living it.” His answer will never satisfy the Health, Education, and Welfare psychiatrists, for there is no “adjustment” to make, and there are no “meaningful experiences” to “share.” There are no “toleration levels” or “holistic approaches” or “sublimations and compensations,” and the answer is woefully lacking in “drives, tensions, releases, and motivation. To be blunt about it, Paul’s answer always has been and always will be unacceptable to 90 percent of the professing Christians in any age (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, page 523).”

31e What does it mean to believe “on” Christ? When you believe on someone, you trust them and turn yourself over to them (Zephaniah 3:2). You can believe in a doctor, in his skill, training and education, but when you let him operate on you, you show that you believe on him. This it is important to note that the ESV has “believe IN the Lord Jesus” while the traditional reading has “believe ON the Lord Jesus”. The ESV reading is weaker and inferior.

31f Regarding “thy house”. Just because someone gets saved does not automatically mean that the whole family will get saved. For one family member to get saved may be an open door for others in that family to be saved. In this case, the jailor getting saved would open the door to the rest of his family getting saved, which happened. This may have been a unique situation that Paul observed regarding this family that allowed him to offer this promise to the jailor. Paul doesn’t use such language again in his recorded ministry. He is simply saying “this promise applies to everyone in your house, too.”

31g “Note that Paul’s answer refutes many heresies:

(1) Paul’s answer refutes the heresy of baptismal regeneration. Paul did not say anything about baptism in his reply to the man’s question pertaining to how to be saved. In his first epistle to Corinth, Paul taught that baptism is not the gospel (1 Cor. 1:17). The gospel is faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

(2) Paul’s answer refutes the heresy of sacramentalism. Paul did not tell the man he had to trust Christ and also continue in the “sacraments” of the church.

(3) Paul's answer refutes the heresy of legalism. Paul did not tell the man he had to trust Christ plus do good works.

(4) Paul's answer refutes the heresy of Arminianism. Paul did not tell the man that he had to trust Christ and then hold out faithful until the end in order to be saved. Rather he promised the man that if he would put his faith in Jesus Christ he would be saved. Period. No question about it; no uncertainty. (David Cloud, *The Book of Acts*)."

31h What about repentance? Paul does not mention it here, so the hyper-evangelists (the followers of Jack Hyles and the *Sword of the Lord*) will use Acts 16:31 as a proof-text in their claim that repentance is not necessary for salvation, only a profession of belief. They claim this while ignoring the other verses that state repentance is necessary for salvation. They take this position to inflate their numbers of supposed conversions in order to make themselves look like great "soulwinners" that you should follow.

"Here repentance is included in believing. Sometimes the Bible mentions repentance alone (i.e., Acts 2:39; 3:19; 11:18; 17:30; 26:20). Sometimes the Bible mentions believing alone (i.e., Acts 16:31). Sometimes it mentions both (Acts 20:21). Both are necessary for salvation, but to properly repent involves believing in Christ and to properly believe involves repentance. How odd that Jack Hyles, Curtis Hudson and their crowd changed the classical definition of repentance that was taught by men like John R. Rice and Lester Roloff.

"Repentance is included in believing. Howbeit, repentance is not faith, nor faith repentance. 'He that believeth,' implies repentance. 'Repent and be converted,' involves faith. 'The hand that clutches the assassin's knife must open 'ere it can grasp the gift its intended victim proffers; and opening that hand, though a single act, has a double aspect and purpose. Accepting the gift implies a turning from the crime the heart was bent on, and it was the gift itself that worked the change. Faith is the open hand, relatively to the gift; repentance is the same hand, relatively, not only to the gift but more especially to the dagger that is flung from it'" (James Stewart, *Evangelism*, 1948, cited by David Cloud, *The Book of Acts*, pages 103-104)."

31i You must believe on the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Paul mentions all three elements. You must believe on the LORD. If He is not Lord and God, the He is no Saviour. You cannot believe on Jesus without acknowledging Him as Lord. You cannot split Jesus. He is a package unit. You take all three "parts" or you take none at all. You cannot have Him as Savior without having Him as Lord. There is a popular heresy today that you can take Jesus was your Savior but not take Him as your Lord. That is supposedly something called "Lordship Salvation" and supporters of this heresy claims that demanding a new convert acknowledge Jesus as both Lord and Savior is adding works to grace. After all, "believe" occurs 99 times in John's gospel but the word "repent" does not, whatever that is supposed to prove. This is a way to multiply converts on the part of these hyper-evangelicals. Paul told the jailor he must believe on the LORD. And why wouldn't he want to do so? Why this hesitancy to acknowledge the Lordship of Christ in this rebellious and degenerate age? Is it because people want to be "saved" yet still live their own life and follow their own wills, without submitting to the will of God?

**16:32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.<sup>a</sup>**

32a A similar situation to Peter preaching to Cornelius' house in Acts 10. After the jailor got saved, he brought Paul and Silas home so they could preach to everyone in his house. By all appearances, they all got saved. This was probably a rather "rough" family as prison guards in this day were callous and cruel men, and their families may have been no better.

**16:33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized,<sup>a</sup> he and all his,<sup>b</sup> straightway.**

33a Like the eunuch in Acts 8, they were all baptized upon a profession of faith, with no waiting period. The fruit and evidence of his conversion is also seen as he now treated kindly the very men that he treated roughly just hours earlier.

33b Compare the notes on Acts 16:15. Reformed commentators naturally assume there MUST have been some infants in the house who also got saved, as there MUST have been in Lydia's house, thus "proving" infant baptism. But that is reading too much into both accounts and assuming far too much.

**16:34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them,<sup>a</sup> and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.**

34a Earlier in the day, he had (probably) whipped them and treated them harshly in the prison. He now is feeding them and taking care of their wounds. The best evidence of the new birth is a changed life.

**16:35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants,<sup>a</sup> saying, Let those men go.<sup>a</sup>**

35a AV

ESV

LSV

35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the **serjeants**, saying, Let those men go.

35 But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, "Let those men go."

35 Now when day came, the chief magistrates sent their policemen, saying, "Release those men."

**"serjeants"**. Both the ESV and LSV use "policemen". "serjeant" or sergeant, is a rank used in many armies, police forces, and other uniformed organizations, from the Latin word "serviens", meaning "one who serves". From Strong's word 4465 "ῥαβδοῦχος, meaning "one who holds the rods" (the standard of an office), a Roman constable or executioner. "The duty of these officials was to attend Roman magistrates to execute their orders, especially administering punishment by scourging or beheading; they carried as their sign of office the fasces (whence "Fascist"), a bundle of rods with an axe inserted (W. E. Vine, *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*)." It may

have been these men who beat Paul and Silas, not the jailor, or they at least would have supervised it.

35b The town fathers figured that Paul and Silas had learned their lesson, and they would now leave town and not return.

**16:36 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.<sup>a</sup>**

36a “We hope you learned your lesson. Now beat it and never come back, or else!”

**16:37 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?<sup>a</sup> nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.**

37a This is why Paul never said anything during his whipping. He would have the Philippi officials over a barrel. They beat a Roman citizen, which was a major transgression. If Paul pushed the matter, all the town officials would be in major trouble. In order to keep Paul quiet and happy, they were now ready to do anything Paul asked! He now has an “open door” in Philippi and can do what he wants for as long as he wants with a minimum of hassle from the town police. Paul used the law to his advantage. His enemies had used it in the hopes of stifling Paul’s ministry. But Paul, in his wisdom and “craftiness”, used it to the advantage of the gospel. We must also be able to “turn the tables” legally and lawfully on our enemies when confronted with similar circumstances. Use the law in a lawful manner to help the spread of the gospel.

Paul also did this in Acts 23:6 when he managed to split the opposition at his trial in Jerusalem. This is what the Lord recommended in Matthew 10:16, about being as wise as serpents while at the same time being as innocent as doves.

Paul would assert his Roman citizenship again in Acts 21:39, 22:25 and 25:10,11.

**16:38 And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.<sup>a</sup>**

38a Roman citizenship- The rights available to individual citizens of Rome varied over time, according to their place of origin, and their service to the state. They also varied under Roman law according to the classification of the individual within the state. Various legal classes were defined by the individual legal rights that they enjoyed. However, the possible rights available to citizens with whom Roman law addressed are:

1. The toga was the characteristic garment of the Roman male citizen, and statues of emperors (here Antoninus Pius) frequently depict them togatus
2. *Ius suffragiorum*: The right to vote in the Roman assemblies.
3. *Ius honorum*: The right to stand for civil or public office.
4. *Ius commercii*: The right to make legal contracts and to hold property as a Roman citizen.

5. *Ius gentium*: The legal recognition, developed in the 3rd century BC, of the growing international scope of Roman affairs, and the need for Roman law to deal with situations between Roman citizens and foreign persons. The *Ius gentium* was therefore a Roman legal codification of the widely accepted international law of the time, and was based on highly developed commercial law of the Greek city-states and of other maritime powers. The rights afforded by the *Ius gentium* were considered to be held by all persons; it is thus a concept of human rights rather than rights attached to citizenship.
6. *Ius connubii*: The right to have a lawful marriage with a Roman citizen, to have the legal rights of the *paterfamilias* over the family, and to have the children of any such marriage be counted as Roman citizens.
7. *Ius migrationis*: The right to preserve one's level of citizenship upon relocation to a polis of comparable status. For example, members of the *cives romani* maintained their full *civitas* when they migrated to a Roman colony with full rights under the law: a *colonia civium Romanorum*. Latins also had this right, and maintained their *Ius Latii* if they relocated to a different Latin state or Latin colony (*Latina colonia*). This right did not preserve one's level of citizenship should one relocate to a colony of lesser legal status; full Roman citizens relocating to a *Latina colonia* were reduced to the level of the *Ius Latii*, and such a migration and reduction in status had to be a voluntary act.
8. The right of immunity from some taxes and other legal obligations, especially local rules and regulations.
9. The right to sue in the courts and the right to be sued.
10. The right to have a legal trial (to appear before a proper court and to defend oneself).
11. The right to appeal from the decisions of magistrates and to appeal the lower court decisions. Paul would do this in Acts 25:9-12.
12. A Roman citizen could not be tortured or whipped, nor could he receive the death penalty, unless he was found guilty of treason.
13. If accused of treason, a Roman citizen had the right to be tried in Rome, and even if sentenced to death, no Roman citizen could be sentenced to die on the cross. This also applied to Paul in Acts 25:9-12 and explains why he was beheaded and not crucified or sent to the lions.
14. Roman citizenship was required in order to enlist in the Roman legions, but this was sometimes ignored. Non-citizens joined the *Auxilia* and gained citizenship through service. (Wikipedia)

**16:39 And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city.<sup>a</sup>**

39a "Why sure Paul! Sorry about that misunderstanding! You can pass out tracts at the mall anytime you like! No problem!"

**16:40 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.<sup>a</sup>**

40a They did not immediately leave Philippi but stayed long enough to help establish the new church there.



## Acts Chapter 17

### 55. Paul in Thessalonica 17:1-9

**17:1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:<sup>a</sup>**

1a There was a larger Jewish population than in Philippi, as evidence by the existence of a synagogue,

**17:2 And Paul, as his manner was,<sup>a</sup> went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,<sup>b</sup>**

2a Paul went to the synagogue on the Sabbath not because he was still keeping the Jewish Sabbath (a frequent claim on the Seventh Day Adventists), but because he knew that there would be a gathering of Jews and Gentile converts who had familiarity with the Old Testament whom he could initiate his work with in that area. Paul would enter the synagogue as a (former) Pharisee and he would usually be invited to speak by the master of the synagogue. Paul would then use that opportunity to preach on Christ.

2b Paul did not yell, holler or berate the Jews. He sat down, with open scrolls (or Bible, as we would do today) and reason with them (Isaiah 1:18). They had questions and Paul answered them. We must be willing to do this with the unsaved who have genuine and legitimate questions. We are supposed to always be ready to give account of the faith that lies with us (1 Peter 3:15). This means you had better know enough scripture to answer such questions and have the patience to deal with seekers.

**17:3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead;<sup>a</sup> and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.<sup>b</sup>**

3a This is what the Jews were NOT expecting. They were expecting a mighty military Messiah who would deliver from Roman and Gentile oppression, not Isaiah's suffering servant who died on a Roma cross.

3b This was the basic text of Paul's synagogue messages.

AV	ESV	LSV
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 <b>Christ</b> .	3 explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ."	3 explaining and setting before them that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and <i>saying</i> , "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is that Christ."

**“Christ”** Why do the ESV and LSV have to add something before “Christ”? The ESV adds “the” and the LSV adds “that”.

**17:4 And some<sup>a</sup> 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.<sup>b</sup>**

4a Not even the Lord ever batted a thousand. We shouldn’t expect to do so, either.

4b This was the usual result- he would have some response, from both Jew and Gentile. The preached word never came back void.

**17:5 ¶ But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy,<sup>a</sup> took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort,<sup>b</sup> and gathered a company,<sup>c</sup> and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.<sup>d</sup>**

5a This was the motivation behind the Jewish persecution of Paul- envy, just as in Acts 13:45. Paul could have more results after one sermon than these dead-orthodox Jews could muster in a year. Paul was “outdoing” the Jews in attention and converts, so he had to be stopped.

5b When you have to employ this sort of rabble, then you know you have a very weak spirituality and no power!

5c Got a mob together, which is the specialty of “lewd fellows of the baser sort”. They can be useful idiots for enemies of the gospel.

#### AV

#### ESV

#### LSV

<b>5</b> But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain <b>lewd fellows of the baser sort</b> , 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.	<b>5</b> But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd.	<b>5</b> But the Jews, becoming jealous, taking along some wicked men from the marketplace, and forming a mob, set the city in an uproar. And attacking the house of Jason, they were seeking to bring them out to the assembly.
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**“lewd fellows of the baser sort”** The other versions simply cannot improve on the reading of the Authorized Version!

5e Not really sure who Jason was, except he may have been the local man who was promoting Paul's ministry and may have been housing Paul's party during his stay in Thessalonica (see Acts 17:7).

**17:6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city,<sup>a</sup> crying, These that have turned the world upside down<sup>b</sup> are come hither also;<sup>c</sup>**

6a For some reason, the mob couldn't find Paul or his party so they took out their frustrations on Jason and certain other brethren, blaming them for the mess that Paul had nothing to do with.

6b Just imagine! The early church did this without radio, television, internet or a printing press. They were just ordinary people spreading the gospel by word-of-mouth. Never underestimate the power of simple witnesses by simple people using simple means. This was not meant as a compliment but given as a complaint about the early Christians being trouble-makers and upsetting the usual flow of things wherever they went. The world has always been complaining about the trouble the world causes. Recently the local newspaper printed an article that the town of Clayton, Delaware was "concerned" over religious solicitation, which involved a local Mennonite church leaving tracts in the doors of local houses. Of course, this was a "major issue" that needed to be addressed by the local police force and town council. Never mind about the booze flowing like water, the pornography, the rock and rap music, the garbage on television, the broken homes and and wayward children- we are "concerned" about some Christians distributing literature! Eventually, all tract distribution and door-to-door visitation will be outlawed for the good of "public order". Roman persecutions of the church were also based on this idea. Acts 28:22 shows the common attitude of the Roman Empire of the church as it was everywhere spoken against. It gave Nero the excuse he needed to send Christians to the arena or to use them as living torches. The Communists did this, as did the Roman Catholic Church in the Dark Ages, complaining how the Bible-believing preachers were threatening the "purity" of the one holy and apostolic church. Muslims use this tactic today as do Hindus in India. The man or church that actually gets things done for God will always be so attacked. It happened to use when men from our Bible College preached on the street at the University of Delaware. There were complaints about us but hardly a word for the real troublemakers in town. We are in the same boat as Elijah was in 1 Kings 18:17 when Ahab accused him of troubling Israel when it was really Ahab and Jezebel who were causing more trouble in Israel than a million believers could.

How did they turn the world upside down?

1. Through preaching, centering on the resurrection
2. Through witnessing
3. Through bold confrontation with the Powers That Be and no compromising with them or shirking away from them
4. Through a willingness to suffer for the name of the Lord
5. Through cultivating the heart through prayer and communion with God

6c The reputation of the Christians were spreading through that part of the Empire.

**17:7 Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.<sup>a</sup>**

7a This is the key sticking point. Rome could have tolerated Christianity as just another religion among many if it was willing to tolerate Roman religion. But since Christianity is an exclusive religion that brooks or acknowledges no rivals, Rome rightly understood that it would have to be either Caesar or Christ. It could not be Caesar and Christ. The Christians maintained that Christ was higher than Caesar. The Christians were willing to acknowledge Caesar as a lawful king, but he would be recognized as being inferior to Christ, who was a Greater King. This the Caesars, who saw themselves as divine, were unwilling to accept. The Christians must be willing to acknowledge Caesar over Christ or they were be persecuted. The Church refused, thus there were almost 400 years of state-sponsored persecution.

Any preacher who teaches a physical pre-millennial Jewish Kingdom with Jesus Christ at the head is preaching the same doctrine the early church was. We preach that all the kingdoms of this world (including the United Nations, NATO, NAFTA, the European Union, the United States Congress, etc.) are all grossly inferior to the Kingdom that Jesus will establish at Jerusalem after the Second Coming and that no political ruler (including your favorite president or politician) can be mentioned in the same breath as Jesus Christ. That kind of preaching will open you up to charges of “treason” or that you are not being patriotic, or a good citizen and a similar form of persecution could result. You cannot preach about a pre-millennial kingdom without getting into trouble politically.

**17:8 And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.<sup>a</sup>**

8a The last thing the town fathers wanted was for the Romans to come in and put down a suspected rebellion by force, which would mean that everyone on the town council would probably lose their jobs.

**17:9 And when they had taken security of Jason,<sup>a</sup> and of the other, they let them go.**

9a Jason had to post a bond that would be forfeited if any more trouble broke out that could be traced back to him. Yet it was not Jason that was responsible for the trouble in the city, but the envious Jews. They should have been the ones posting this bond. But justice is often in short supply when you are suffering for the gospel’s sake.

## **56. Berea 17:10-13**

**17:10 ¶ And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea:<sup>a</sup> who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.<sup>b</sup>**

10a This was for their own safety. Paul often had to leave town “under the cover of darkness”. The mob at Thessalonica was nasty enough to do bodily harm to Paul and Silas. Contemporary writers stated that Berea was “off the beaten track” and this city may have been chosen to allow Paul to “slip off the radar” for a while and work without interruption, but any sort of respite from the Jews was short-lived (Acts 17:13).

10b Paul did not change his Standard Operating Procedure.

**17:11 These were more noble<sup>a</sup> 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.**

11a Strong’s #2104 εὐγενής, meaning “well born, high in rank”. This word then refers to their social class, not necessarily their spirituality. But they were “noble” in the sense in that they were willing to search the Scriptures and not just to take Paul’s word for it. Paul would introduce a doctrine and the Bereans would go to their copies of the Scripture to “check up” on Paul, to verify his doctrines. This is a good practice, one that any preacher should welcome and encourage. Beware of any preacher who tells you to “close your Bible” as he preaches. Jack Hyles was known to do this. Any preacher who resents you verifying his doctrines from Scripture or who discourages any questions about his preaching is a false prophet who should be shunned and avoided at all costs.

**17:12 Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.<sup>a</sup>**

12a Since they were Bible students and were converted through the ministry of the Scripture, their conversion would be strong and sure, unlike those who were “saved” through emotions or miracles.

**17:13 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.<sup>a</sup>**

13a The envy and hatred of the Jews from Thessalonica didn’t stop at the town line. Once they heard that Paul was in Berea and was having a good deal of success, they undertook their own missionary journey to give Paul as much grief as they could. They could not rest knowing that Paul (and the gospel) was being well-received, even if it was taking place in another town.

## **57. Paul in Athens 17:14-34**

**17:14 And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.**

**17:15 And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens:<sup>a</sup> and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.**

15a Athens was one of the more influential cities of Paul's day for its association with Greek philosophy and education. It would be similar to any college or university town today in terms of morals, intellectual snobbery and arrogance and a general ignorance of all things Christian. Paul no doubt wrote 1 Corinthians 1 and 2 with Athens still fresh in his mind. Athens was the city of the famous philosophers Aristotle, Plato, Pericles, Demosthenes, Socrates, Zeno, Epicurus, and Euripides. It was the seat of learning and art in Paul's day. Athens got its name from the prominence given to the worship of the goddess Athena (also known as Minerva). The city was totally given over to idolatry and pagan religion in the days of Paul. It is said that there were more statues in Athens than in all of the rest of Greece.

**17:16 ¶ Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.<sup>a</sup>**

16a Paul tried to just wait for Silas and Timothy to arrive and it appears he didn't really try to do much ministry in Athens initially. But as Paul wandered the city and saw the idolatry, his spirit was stirred in him to do something about it. Athens was the most idolatrous city he had ever seen. This shows that despite the high intellectualism of the city, it was still full of idolatry. Education does not better a man morally or spiritually. Education merely takes an ignorant sinner and turns him into a more education (and more dangerous) sinner. It has been well said that if you take a boy who is stealing apples off the train and send him to college, he will end up stealing the railroad.

Some cities are wholly given over to homosexual perversion (Sodom) or commerce or pleasure. Athens was given over wholly to religious idolatry. High culture and education did nothing to improve the morality or spiritual condition of the Athenians. Like all men, the Athenians were seeking after God, but their education was of no help in locating the true God as He cannot be found by human wisdom. One thing to see is that they were not atheists. Even in their folly, they were too smart to accept the idea that there was no God! They knew there was a God, and that atheism was irrational, but they did not where to find Him.

**AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

16 Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was

16 Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him

16 Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens,

stirred in him, when he saw the city <b>wholly given to idolatry</b> .	as he saw that the city was full of idols.	his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols.
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A city that is “full of idols” is not the same as a city that is “**wholly given to idolatry**.”

**17:17 Therefore disputed<sup>a</sup> he in the synagogue with the Jews,<sup>b</sup> and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.<sup>c</sup>**

17a AV	ESV	LSV
17 Therefore <b>disputed</b> he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him.	17 So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there.	17 So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing <i>Gentiles</i> , and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be present.

“**disputed**” The ESV and LSV have “reasoned”. No! You “reason” with reasonable people. You “dispute” with unreasonable people. Paul was dealing with the most unreasonable people on the planet- proud, over-educated fools. He “disputed” which means the “reasoning” sometimes got “hot and heavy” and very animated.

17b The Jews were not in a much better spiritual condition than the Athenians were. They may have been infected with Athenian philosophy more than other Jews.

17c Paul worked in both the synagogue, where he witnessed to the Jews, and in the marketplace, where he witnessed to everyone else..

**17:18 Then certain philosophers<sup>a</sup> of the Epicureans,<sup>b</sup> and of the Stoicks,<sup>c</sup> encountered him.<sup>d</sup> And some said, What will this babler say?<sup>e</sup> other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods:<sup>f</sup> because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.<sup>g</sup>**

- 18a
- “1. There are only two basic human philosophies from God’s point of view, and the four main branches of Philosophy (Naturalism, Idealism, Realism, and Pragmatism) come from these two basic philosophies. This crosses the grain of every man making his living erecting the great superstructure of Educational Philosophy, a Philosophy of Art, a Philosophy of Religion, a Philosophy of Government, etc., etc.; and it would erase about forty “trade terms” used by the tradesmen which range everywhere from “Monadism” to “Existentialism.”
  2. Educated Greek philosophers are all SUPERSTITIOUS (vs. 22).
  3. They are AGNOSTIC when it comes to Theology, “God knowledge” (vs. 23).
  4. They are IGNORANT when it comes to real worship (vs. 23).

5. They are basically FEMININE in their approach to life (vs. 21), even where they profess to be looking for the summum bonum.

6. Above all, they have to have something “NEW” every time they turn around (vs. 21).

They can, therefore, be spotted in any generation by the constant reoccurrence of that “archaic” word. (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, page 548).”

18b A flesh-centered, hedonistic philosophy that taught “Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die”. Paul referred to this in 1 Corinthians 15:32. This philosophy was founded by Epicurus (340-272 B.C.). It taught that there is no future existence, and that pleasure was the chief thing in this life. The Epicureans say that there is no Creator or Provider. Since there is no God, judgment, or afterlife, live it up now!

“In his preaching in Acts 17 Paul seemed to be saying to the Epicureans, “There is a Creator, and He is the Provider who gives to all life, breath, and all things. You are God’s offspring, for you were produced of Him and derive your human life from Him. Because you have a human life, you live, move, and have your being in Him. You also need to know that there will be a judgment in the future. This future judgment is related to the resurrection of the Man Jesus. God has designated Jesus to be the One to judge everyone, and He has furnished proof of this by raising Him from among the dead. In the past God allowed you to go your own way. But He has sent me here to tell you that you now need to repent.” Paul’s word must also have been unveiling to the pantheistic Stoics. How marvelous was Paul’s preaching to the Athenians! (Witness Lee, *Life Study of Acts*).”

“Disciples of Epicurus, B.C. 342-271, who abandoned as hopeless the search by reason for pure truth, cf. John 18:38 seeking instead true pleasure through experience. (*Scofield Reference Bible*).”

18c A fatalistic philosophy, teaching “stiff upper lip, old chap, and all that sort of rot.” This philosophy was founded by Zeno (360-260 B.C.). It taught self-mastery and hardness and promoted self-righteousness and pride of intellect. Four of the chief leaders committed suicide -- Zeno, Cleanthes in Greece and Cato and Seneca in Rome. “Disciples of Zeno, B.C. 280, and Chrysippus, B.C. 240. This philosophy was founded on human self-sufficiency, inculcated stern self-repression, the solidarity of the race, and the unity of Deity. Epicureans and Stocis divided the apostolic world. (*Scofield Reference Bible*).”

18d Paul got the attention of the university professors.

18e The idea is that of a little bird picking up seeds, hence one who picks up and retails scraps of news in the market place. It was a term of contempt for Paul’s supposed lack of intellectualism. He was a Christian after all! All educated people know that Christians are hicks, and no intelligent person believes the Bible!

18f It is not that Paul was preaching “foreign” gods but “strange” ones, ones that they did not understand. “Foreign” gives the idea that they simply did not know about these



gods, that they were simply new or that they were unfamiliar with them. But what Paul was preaching was above their understanding and they simply couldn't figure it out.

18g Paul's message remained consistent, no matter where or with whom he was dealing with. The resurrection remained a central focus in his preaching. But what a strange and foreign concept the idea of a resurrection is to the ears of overeducated philosophers, wedded to materialism, who believe that man has no spirit and soul and that death ends all.

**17:19 And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus,<sup>a</sup> saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?<sup>b</sup>**

19a By force? Areopagus was Mars' Hill, the seat of the ancient and venerable Athenian court, which judged the most solemn problems of religion.

19b God cannot be known through human philosophy and natural human wisdom (Acts 17:18-22). Athens represented the best in man's wisdom. It boasted the world's most acclaimed thinkers. But man's natural wisdom is corrupt because his heart is corrupt. Where human learning most flourished, idolatry most abounded.

**17:20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.<sup>a</sup>**

20a They had an intellectual curiosity, but at least they were willing to listen, which is more than most sinners are willing to do.

**17:21 (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.)<sup>ab</sup>**

21a This beats working for a living. Most college professors are the laziest people around. They teach a few hours a week and have their teaching assistants do most of the heavy work. This frees them up to sit around and shoot the bull in the faculty smoking lounge all day. Karl Marx never had a callous on his hands from manual labor a day in his life.

21b People love "new things" and quickly tire of the "old": New ASV, New King James Version, new and improved peas, new orthodoxy, "new hit music!", New International Version, New Evangelicalism (started by Charles Finney, not Harold Ockenga), etc. But there are some things that are new but good: the New Testament, New Jerusalem, the "new song" (Psalm 40:3), a "new name" (Revelation 2:17), new heaven and earth, the new birth, new creatures in Christ, etc.

Christians are like this. They get bored with and familiar with the "old truths" and are looking for something new to gain their attention in their restlessness. This is why they are so easy targets to false teachers who present some new spin on truth or who

claim they are recovering some lost, ancient truth, or that they found some doctrines that “no one else has ever found before”.

**17:22 ¶ Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars’ hill, and said,<sup>a</sup> Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.<sup>b</sup>**

22a This had to be one of the hardest and most frustrating congregations Paul ever preached to.

22b **AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

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**.

22 So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious.

22 So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects.

The modern versions hate to think that their false religions were “superstitious”. The ESV, LSV and NKJV have “very religious”. No, the correct word is “superstitious”. A “superstition” is defined as “the belief in supernatural causality—that one event causes another without any natural process linking the two events—such as astrology, religion, omens, witchcraft, prophecies, etc., that contradicts natural science (Wikipedia).” Voodoo would be a good example. Paul goes right for the jugular before he even reads his text, accusing these educated fools that intellectually and spiritually, they are no better than an uneducated man living in a shantytown, as they both worship the same kinds of gods.

Athens was fully given over to idolatry, so naturally, “superstition” was at the root of their problem. It makes no difference how educated you are, that is no preventative against “superstition”. Some of the most superstitious places you’ll even visit are university campuses.

What were some of the superstitions that these over-educated philosophers believed in back then, as well as today?

1. Evolution, that life evolved from rocks, goo, etc.
2. Humanism, that “man is the measure of all things”. If that is the case, then you are using a short and crooked ruler!
3. Socialism/statism, in believing that the State is God and that it can do no wrong.
4. Materialism, the philosophy of the Epicureans, “eat drink and be merry” for this life is all that there is and there is nothing beyond death, as death ends all.
5. Fatalism, as in the teachings of the Stoics. Suffering is caused by desire, something that Buddhists and Hindus teach.
6. Intellectualism, in that “science” can solve all man’s problems and lead him into a “golden age”.

**17:23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.<sup>a</sup> Whom therefore ye ignorantly<sup>b</sup> worship, him declare I unto you.<sup>c</sup>**

23a They thought they had all the known gods accounted for, but just in case they missed one, they posed this.

23b Paul wasn't ignorant of Him! He met Him on the Damascus Road in Acts 9 and knew more about the True God than all these Athenians put together. One hillbilly from the mountains of North Carolina would have a similar spiritual advantage as compared with the entire faculty of Harvard "Divinity" School.

23c The NKJV adds "the One whom you worship..." As Gail Riplinger demonstrated in her book *New Age Bible Versions*, "the One" (capitalized) is a term used by those in the occult, and it is not good Biblical terminology.

**17:24 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;<sup>a</sup>**

24a And He is certainly not chained to such a building. Some religions thought that their god never left the temple built for him, which meant he couldn't interfere with your life, and sin.

Some Baptist mega-church pastors need to learn this truth. They may build buildings left and right but that does not mean that God is any closer to them or that they are any more godly than a smaller minister with fewer or more humble buildings.

**17:25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;<sup>b</sup>**

25a God will accept your worship but it is not as if He needs it. He existed from eternity past without the worship of any man, as man has only been around for 6,000 years.

25b The school of Aristotle in Athens taught that matter is eternal. The school of Epicurus taught that everything evolved.

**17:26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men<sup>a</sup> for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;**

26a "Men should not hate and look down upon other nations. See 1 Cor. 4:7. Racial pride and hatred has been the common error of mankind of all languages and colors. Even today there is Black racism ("Black power"), White racism (Nazism and Arianism), Islamic racism, Hindu racism (the caste system), Asian racism (i.e., the Japanese before World War II), you name it. The same was true in Athens. The Athenians boasted that they sprung out of their own earth were aborigines, and nothing akin by

blood to any other nation, which proud conceit of themselves the apostle here takes down” (David Cloud, *The Book of Acts*).”.

**17:27 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:**

**17:28 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.<sup>a</sup>**

28a You can’t use this as a doctrinal statement since it was spoken of by “certain...of your own poets”, not an inspired man. Liberals will try to use this as a proof text or universal salvation, universal fatherhood of God, etc.

**17:29 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.**

17:29 God is not a creation of human imagination or religion and cannot be depicted by idols.

AV	ESV	LSV
29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the <b>God-head</b> is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man’s device.	29 Being then God’s off-spring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man.	29 “Being then the off-spring of God, we ought not to suppose that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the craft and thought of man.

“**Godhead**”. The ESV has “divine being” and the LSV has “Divine Nature”. Both readings are suspect as they have New Age and heathen overtones.

**17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at;<sup>a</sup> but now commandeth all men every where to repent:<sup>b</sup>**

30a God allowed this idolatry and tolerated it for a season, based on the ignorance of these Gentile nations. But that time was up, Christ had come, the gospel was going out, so it was now time for all men and nations to repent of their idolatry. Ignorance was no longer an excuse.

30b Repentance is required and is definitely commanded by God. We have many so-called Baptist preachers (influenced by Curtis Hutson, Jack Hyles, Bob Gray, Steven Anderson, et al.) who attempted to re-define repentance and weaken it to multiply their number of professions. But God is very strong on repentance and demands it for salvation.

“Repentance means to turn, to change directions. It is a change of mind that results in a change of life. The Greek word is “metanoein” and it means “to turn right about and do it now” (Robertson). The Prodigal Son repented when he turned from his profligate life and returned to the father (Lk. 15:17-20). The idolaters at Thessalonica repented when they turned to God from idols and served the living and true God (1 Thess. 1:9). Repentance is necessary for salvation. Compare Lk. 13:3, 5. Those who preach the gospel but do not preach repentance in a plain manner are not following the biblical pattern. Preaching repentance is part of the Great Commission (Lk. 24:44-48). (David Cloud, *The Book of Acts*).”

See appendix 2 for a study on repentance.

**17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness<sup>a</sup> by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.**

31a For the unsaved nations, at the Great White Throne judgment in Revelation 20:11-15. The Judgment of the Nations may also come into play here (Matthew 25:31-46.)

**17:32 ¶ And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead,<sup>a</sup> some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.<sup>b</sup>**

32a The doctrine of the resurrection was what offended them. They simply couldn't accept it or handle it. Part of the reason was they did not understand the nature of the resurrection. They thought that we would return to our old bodies after death and who would want that? They did not understand that we would be given a new and better body at the resurrection.

32b Delay. They weren't sure of this doctrine, so they decided to put off further consideration of it until a later time. Unfortunately, that “later time” seldom arrives and those who delay usually end up rejecting the Gospel due to neglect and indifference.

**17:33 So Paul departed from among them.<sup>a</sup>**

33a Paul realized that he had done all he could do, and Athens was not ripe soil. Few university towns are. He had a few converts but was unable to get a church started here. Of course, that doesn't mean that someone else couldn't have gotten a church started in Athens after Paul left.

**17:34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.<sup>a</sup>**

34a There is no record of Paul, or anyone else, starting a church in Athen



## **Acts Chapter 18**

### **58. Corinth 18:1-17**

**18:1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;<sup>ab</sup>**

1a "Though Corinth was quite different in character from Athens, it also boasted its subtle and accomplished reasoners, skilled in the art of sophistry and given to abstruse and metaphysical argument. There were "the disputers of this world," whose "wisdom," however, was "foolishness with God" (I Cor. 1:20; 3:19). The gymnasium, the stadium, the races, the boxing and wrestling matches are all alluded to in Paul's epistles. From what we have thus far observed it will naturally be concluded that Corinth was a wicked city. A city with two ports and the amusement center of a heathen population could not be otherwise. Nor would its "higher learning" stem the tide of sin. But the most appalling aspect of Corinthian life was its religion.

In Corinth lasciviousness was not merely condoned but encouraged and actually "consecrated" as worship to Aphrodite, the "goddess of love." There stood her great temple along with smaller ones, where, history tells us, a thousand "sacred" harlots, enriched her coffers with offerings derived from licentious "visits" with men worshippers." Little wonder Chrysostom called Corinth "the most licentious city of all that are or ever have been." There was no city on earth more profligate. The very name Corinthian in Paul's day was synonymous with immorality, so that one who "played the Corinthian" had fallen into immoral wickedness, and a "Corinthian banquet" was a drunken revel. Little wonder Paul had to remind the Corinthian church that "neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind ... shall inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 6:9,10). This was Corinth; celebrated for its wealth, luxury and dissipation: "the Paris of antiquity." In its crowded streets the apostle found himself surrounded by all sorts of people: Roman freedmen, slaves, businessmen on the look-out for gain, travelers out to see the world, sailors from two seas, sports enthusiasts, gamblers, pleasure seekers - and a large proportion of them away from home...Doubtless Paul made his way to Corinth, hoping to establish headquarters for the gospel in Achaia, as Thessalonica had been for Macedonia. Doubtless too, he trusted that from this center of travel the good news would spread (Cornelius Stam, *Acts Dispensationally Considered*)."

1b This is the city which sprouts a church of such importance that Paul's epistles to that church are larger than any of his other New Testament works. First and 2 Corinthians take up more room than Romans and 1 and 2 Thessalonians combined. Corinth was a major center of commerce with a strategic location, so it was a natural location to start a church.

**18:2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla;<sup>a</sup> (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.<sup>b</sup>**

2a Both of these people are found again in Romans 16:3 and 1 Corinthians 16:19. They may have started two house churches, mentioned in They started at least two churches in their home, mentioned in the verses above.

2b The Jews in Rome were a troublesome lot, so they were ordered out of Rome to help maintain order and keep the religious controversies (and the political rebellion they could spawn) at a minimum.

**18:3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.<sup>a</sup>**

3a Paul had no regular source of income. He lived on gifts and support from churches and individuals. When that dried up, as it sometimes did, Paul fell back to the trade his father would have taught him, tentmaking. Paul was not too big or important to take some secular work to meet his own needs. And it is a good idea of a preacher had a secular trade he could fall back to if he was between ministries or if he was pastoring a church that would be too small to support him full-time. Today, we would call Paul “bi-vocational”, which refers to preachers who work a secular job while they minister. Their ministries may be too small to give them full support, so they work on the outside to make up the difference. Most pastors are in this situation. This is why it is good for a preacher to have a secular vocation to fall back on for those times when ministerial support gets low, or if he finds himself between ministries.

**18:4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.<sup>a</sup>**

4a Paul maintained his usual procedures.

**18:5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.<sup>a</sup>**

5a More than usual. Something really pressed Paul to have extra boldness and passion in preaching this message.

**18:6 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.<sup>a</sup>**

6a Paul had enough from these Jews and his frustration boiled over. They were blind, stubborn, and totally unreasonable, and Paul had run out of patience. If they wanted to reject the truth, fine. It's your funeral. The Gentiles are responding so why waste any more time with you? I'm going to the Gentiles! And you certainly can't blame Paul for reacting like this.

This was the second time Paul said this to the Jews. The first time was in Acts 13:46 and the last time was in Acts 28:28.



**18:7 ¶ 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.<sup>a</sup>**

7b Justus lodged Paul, whose house was attached to the synagogue.

AV	ESV	LSV
7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain <i>man's</i> house, named Justus, <i>one</i> that <b>worshipped God</b> , whose house joined hard to the synagogue.	7 And he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. His house was next door to the synagogue.	7 Then he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a God-fearer, whose house was next to the synagogue.

**“worshipped God”** The LSV has a weird reading with “a God-fearer”.

**18:8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house;<sup>a</sup> and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.<sup>b</sup>**

8a A notable conversion, which helped other Corinthians in getting saved.

8b But Paul didn't keep track of the number of his baptisms in 1 Corinthians 1:16 **"And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other."** How unlike the modern Independent Baptist pastor or evangelist who glories in his number of baptisms and trumpets that number every chance he gets!

**18:9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:<sup>a</sup>**

9a Paul was frustrated, discouraged, irritated. Paul was human and he needed a word of encouragement from the Lord to keep on what he was doing and not to quit. We all need this occasionally.

**18:10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.<sup>a</sup>**

10a Paul may have been getting death threats, something he was used to, probably by the Jews. God gave him promises of protection.

**18:11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.<sup>ab</sup>**

11a This was one of Paul's longest tenures in one place. He moved around frequently in his church-planting ministry. He must have had a very successful ministry for him to

stay so long in Corinth. Paul probably wrote 1 and 2 Thessalonians here, if he did not write them while in Athens.

11b “Following the foolproof plan of God for missionary work, Paul gets them saved, gets them baptized, and then TEACHES them (vs. 11). This plan has never been improved upon by anyone, and if you want to cut to the heart of the trouble in American Christianity—at least where new converts are concerned—you can get to it without an automatic carver. The trouble that has overtaken our country is simple, at least regarding new converts and obeying the Bible. We have thousands getting saved. If you totaled the professions of faith in Billy Graham’s crusades, plus the professions recorded on Sunday morning in 500 independent Baptist churches, they would run over 5,000 a week. But there is still no real revival. Furthermore, there will be no revival until the THIRD part of the work is obeyed. As long as “teaching the converts” consists of dumping thirty-five versions in their hands, plying them with prizes to get them to come back to church, disciplining them to worship an educational institution, getting them to join fellowships that avoid “sound doctrine,” or causing them to trust the scholarship of some egotistical flapjack who thinks that Greek and Hebrew knowledge equipped him to spit on the Bible, there will be no real “revival.” Don’t look for one; it isn’t coming.

The Corinthian church has time to get “gifts” (1 Cor. 12) and exercise them in dealing with the unbelieving Jews (1 Cor. 14:22). This explains the tongues which are discussed in 1 Corinthians 14. Note: the “sign” of tongues is for an unbelieving Jew (Isa. 28:11), and the Jew is here (vss. 2, 4, 8, 12). The most gifted church (1 Cor. 12) was also the most CARNAL church, and although they had “knowledge” (1 Cor. 8:1) from nearly two years of Bible teaching by the greatest Bible teacher who ever lived, they still moved and lived in an environment quite similar to that in any city in America today with a population over 80,000. In this fleshy atmosphere the carnal qualities rose up pretty quickly—“strife, and divisions” (1 Cor. 3:3). (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, pages 585-586).”

**18:12 ¶ And when Gallio was the deputy<sup>a</sup> of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat,**

12a Gallio was the brother of Seneca, the famous statesman, philosopher and Greece. Seneca wrote of Gallio with great affection and described him as an amiable and gracious character, easy to get along with. Doubtless the Jews knew of his reputation and hoped he would accede to their demand that Paul be punished.

**18:13 Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.<sup>a</sup>**

13a So why would that be considered a civil crime that had to be brought to a secular court? They tried to make a spiritual, religious appeal against Paul, but it would not fly with a man like Gallio.

**18:14 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:**

**18:15 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.**

15a As no Roman or local laws were being violated, Gallio had no interest in this case and would take no action. The case is clear in dealing with religious matters. No Christian should be taking other Christians to courts that are manned by the unsaved, as that results in a lousy testimony. First Corinthians 6:1-8 makes this very clear. Such matters that involve brothers or issues that do not violate the law are to be handled internally. Apparently, this was a major issue in the Corinthian church, and it showed that they were so carnal that they were unable to resolve these matters among themselves. Jews and Moslems have religious courts to handle such disputes and Christians should as well. If the matter involves multiple churches, then a local church council could be called to resolve the matter.

Consider the below regarding Baptist Church Councils, from Kevin Bauer at <https://sharperiron.org/article/faq-baptist-church-councils>, which is as good a treatment as any:

### **What Is a Church Council?**

A church council is a representative body of pastors and messengers, invited from fellowshiping churches, called by a particular congregation to advise it on matters of organization, ordination, or resolution of disputes.

### **Who Calls a Church Council?**

Only a local church can call a council. It then invites pastors and messengers from churches of like faith and order. Typically, each church is asked to send a pastor and two brothers, but this is usually regarded as a suggested number. Individuals may be invited, but this should be the exception rather than the rule. All of the pastors and messengers gather at the stated time and place.

### **How Is a Council Organized?**

The council organizes itself. Sometimes the inviting church will supply a temporary chairman and clerk, but most times the council itself will elect the temporary chairman and clerk. Once this is done, the temporary clerk will call the roll of invited pastors and messengers. A motion will be entertained to seat the council, and the members of the council will vote. Once seated, the members of the council will elect a permanent chairman and clerk. At this point, the council can proceed with its business.

### **Should the Inviting Church Choose Its Own Moderator?**

The whole point of the council is for the inviting church to solicit advice from churches of like faith and order. Therefore, it should avoid any action that gives the appearance of attempting to sway the council's business. Though the council is called

by the church, it is not an agency of the church. It must be free to transact its own business, including the election of its own moderator and clerk. Unless there are mitigating circumstances, the host pastor should avoid chairing a council his church has called. The church council is intended to provide an independent source of advice for the inviting church.

### **What Business Does a Council Transact?**

A church council must address only the business for which it was called into existence.

### **What Authority Does a Council Have?**

The only authority that a church council can exercise is the authority to offer advice. The church that calls a council wants advice in a particular area. The council asks whatever questions it must to give good advice, but it has no authority to interfere in the affairs of the church. Among New Testament churches, no entity outside of the local congregation can usurp the congregation's authority under Christ.

### **Must the Church Take the Council's Advice?**

The authority of a church council is purely advisory. It is the choice of the church to follow or ignore the council's advice. The local church cannot rightly surrender its prerogatives to any party outside of itself. The council's advice is never binding upon the church.

### **Can One Side in a Church Dispute Call a Council?**

This procedure is known as an *ex parte* council. Such a council advises only one side in a church dispute. The problem with *ex parte* councils is that they hear only one side of the story, and therefore they are not in a position to offer complete advice. Usually, if pastors and messengers know that a council is *ex parte*, they will refuse to attend.

### **How Is a Council Conducted?**

The council itself will determine the process it is to take. While customs dictate some form, as in the case of ordinations, the council may proceed in any direction it desires within the limits of the church's request. At an ordination council, the candidate will be examined for his Christian experience, his call to ministry, and his beliefs. At a recognition council, the members of the council will examine the governing documents of the church. When a council is called to mediate a dispute, the council will listen to all sides of the argument. Once the council has examined the evidence, it will generally go into executive session and then render its advice.

### **What Is Executive Session?**

The members of the church are normally welcome to observe most of the council's proceedings. When all evidence has been examined, however, the council needs a period during which the pastors and messengers are able to discuss the matter privately. At this point, everyone who is not actually a member of the council is

dismissed from the room. This private conversation is called the “executive session.” This is the conversation from which the council’s advice will be offered.

### **How Does the Council Give Its Advice?**

The council renders its advice in the form of recommendations that are adopted during the executive session. These recommendations will be read to the church and its leaders by the council’s clerk at the end of the council. Written copies of all recommendations will be supplied to the church.

### **How Does the Council Dissolve?**

The last business that the council transacts is to vote itself out of existence. This vote usually occurs after the recommendations have been read. When the council has given its advice, its reason for existence is complete.

### **What Does the Council Do After Dissolution?**

By definition, the council has no power to act after it is dissolved. That particular council will never exist again. The clerk and moderator, however, are usually charged to ensure that the results of the council are properly published. This will include sending copies of the council’s minutes to all council members and, upon request of the church, sending notices of the main recommendations to relevant publications. In some cases, ensuring that the results of the council are properly published may include offering assistance to the church in announcing future events such as the ordination or the constituting of the church.

### **Why Are Councils Important?**

Councils are the main venue through which autonomous local churches are able to counsel one another. At the practical level, councils become the main filtering mechanism for ensuring that the convictions of fellowshiping churches do not become diluted or distorted over time. Councils are the arena in which the pastors and messengers of churches are able to remind one another of their most important beliefs.

### **18:16 And he drave them from the judgment seat.<sup>a</sup>**

16a Probably by force!

### **18:17 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.<sup>a</sup>**

17a “This was one bird that no Catholic priest or Jewish Rabbi or atheist or “leading Fundamentalist” could have moved an umpteenth of an inch. If he had been a Congressman, you could no more have gotten him to give public tax money to parochial schools than to give his wrist watch to a giraffe. Gallio was the kind of man who would tolerate a radio station (50,000 watts, clear channel) broadcasting programs by Catholic priests, Gay Liberation, Black Muslims, Women’s Lib, Communists, Minute Men, Weathermen, Fundamentalists, Rabbis, Hindus, Satanists, and the NAACP twenty-four

hours a day. And as long as they didn't kill each other (vs. 17), he wouldn't have raised a hand. Gallio figured if you didn't have any more sense than to get into a fist fight over a religious matter, you ought to have your nose bloodied anyway: good thinking.

They've got Paul up there, and they are calling him everything but white (see Acts 24:5-6 and comments). They are unrolling and rolling up scrolls like a window-shade demonstrator, yelling verses of Scripture at the top of their lungs, shouting Roman laws that no one has enforced in fifty years, and pointing fingers at Paul while cursing and spitting. Gallio yawns, pops a few grapes in his mouth, and after they have run out of gas he says laconically: "Got any charges?" Pandemonium breaks loose again, and they sputter and fume for fifteen minutes. After "order in the court" has been restored Gallio scowls and says languidly: "Any charges? Murder? Adultery? Malfeasance in office? Corrupting minors? Hit-and-run? DWI? Breaking and entering? You got any charges?"

"This man is splitting churches! He is dividing the saints! He is an extremist—a fanatic! He is a hell-raiser and a rabble-rouser—a trouble maker. He writes hate literature! He's uncouth. He speaks against others people's faith! He's a schismatic—a radical!"

"AWAY WITH HIM!"

"Shad AP!" yells Gallio. [Yankee for "hush up!"] The court settles down, and the attorneys shuffle around in their brief cases like they were looking for an important document. The "judge" leans forward, folds his hands on the "bench," and after two minutes, he is contained enough to speak slowly. "Now if you gentlemen have any criminal charges to bring against this street preacher, file them with the clerk after the court is adjourned. If you don't have any, then get the - - - - outta here and quit wasting the time of this court. I've had enough of you religious nuts to last me for a lifetime—now, GIT!!"

"And he drave them from the judgment seat." (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Acts*, pages 591-592)."

## **59. Ephesus 18:18-21**

**18:18 ¶ And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while,<sup>a</sup> 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.<sup>b</sup>**

18a Gallio's refusal to intervene at the request of the Jews made it safer for Paul to remain in Corinth for an extended period.

18b In his burden for the Jews, Paul here tried to be a Jew so that he might win the Jews (1 Corinthians 9:20). The fact that there was a large Jewish population in Corinth and in the Corinthian church may have re-ignited Paul's burden towards his countrymen after he just about disowned them in Acts 18:6. A year and a half in such an environment will change a man's perspective and his attitude toward a group of people that he had earlier grown frustrated with. Since Paul had spent so much time among the Gentiles, this vow was an attempt to rebuild a rapport with the Jews. This was

probably a Nazarite vow. For the duration of the vow, his hair was allowed to grow long. When the vow was completed, his hair was shorn. According to Acts 18:18, Paul's vow was completed in Cenchrea with the cutting of his hair.

**18:19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.<sup>a</sup>**

18:19 Paul's standard practice.

**18:20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;**

20a Paul enjoyed some success in Ephesus and the converts there wanted him to remain but he thought he needed to get to Jerusalem, as in Acts 18:21. Paul had tried to get to Ephesus earlier (in Acts 16:6) but was not allowed by the Holy Spirit. When he finally did arrive, he could only stay for a short time.

**18:21 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.<sup>a</sup>**

21a Paul turned down an invitation to establish the kind of long-term presence in Ephesus as he had in Corinth in his burden to make it back to Jerusalem in time for the Passover.

AV	ESV	LSV
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.	21 But on taking leave of them he said, "I will return to you if God wills," and he set sail from Ephesus.	21 but taking leave of them and saying, "I will return to you again if God wills," he set sail from Ephesus.

The ESV and LSV omit the material about going to Jerusalem to keep the feast.

## **60. Paul Back in Antioch 18:22-23**

**18:22 And when he had landed at Cæsarea, and gone up,<sup>a</sup> and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.**

22a Did Paul go to Jerusalem here? The vow had to be consummated at the temple in Jerusalem so he would have to go there eventually,

**18:23 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.<sup>a</sup>**

23a Most commentators put the start of Paul’s third missionary journey here. This trip through Galatia gave Paul a chance to revisit some of those churches from his earlier missionary tours and to see how the churches were doing and to visit some old friends.

## 61. Apollos 18:24-28

**18:24 ¶ And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty<sup>a</sup> in the scriptures,<sup>bc</sup> came to Ephesus.**

24a **AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, <i>and</i> <b>mighty</b> in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.	24 Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures.	24 Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, arrived at Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures.
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The ESV has that Apollos was merely “competent” in the Scriptures. What an insult to Apollos, from being “mighty” in the Scriptures to only being “competent”! He was “mighty” in his oratory, but he had some doctrinal errors that needed to be ironed out.

Apollos seemed to be destined to be just another dead-orthodox apostate:

1. He was from Alexandria, a city known for spiritual corruption.

2. He was highly educated, a graduate of a “state” university where the Bible was attacked 24 hours a day.

3. His name is derived from “Apollo” and “Apollyon” (the Destroyer)

But God can overrule a bad background such as this, if he has a desire to be used.

24b “This is a rare combination. The men who were “mighty in the scriptures” were very rarely great preachers. Chrysostom, Luther, Haldemann, and J. Frank Norris are a few of them; but generally the scholars overestimate their ability to preach, and the preachers overestimate their “might” in the Scriptures. Pember and Clarence Larkin ran as far ahead of Robertson, Knowling, Rendall, Wuest, Thieme, and Zodiates in the “scriptures” as Jim Ryun or Glenn Cunningham would outrun Jackie Gleason. When it came to eloquence, Talmadge, Whitefield, and Billy Sunday would keep up with any of them (although Billy—as Sam Jones—was given to fits of “billy goat language” at times, which is excellent!), but many of the orators (R. G. Lee, Beecher, Whitefield, Ward, Bob Jones II, Criswell, et al.) were about as “mighty in the scriptures” as is Mickey Mouse. What Scripture they did learn, they learned from books written by men who sat at the feet of Bullinger, Larkin, Pember, Pieters, Kemp, Scofield, Darby, Cronin, Biederwolf, and Calvin. John Calvin was mighty in the Scriptures for his day and age, but his hobbyhorse (T.U.L.I.P.) made his work of very little value with the passing of time. If Paul was “eloquent,” his enemies did not give him credit for it (2 Cor. 10:10), and he did



not profess it himself (2 Cor. 11:6). (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Acts*, page 603)."

24c Apollos was mighty in the truth, as far as he knew it.

**18:25 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.**<sup>abc</sup>

25a What Apollos was preaching was accurate but was also outdated and was missing many key components. He was missing the latest developments regarding the death and resurrection of Christ and the opening of the doors to the Gentiles, as well as salvation by grace without the works of the law. His situation was similar to the situation of the disciples of John in Acts 19:1-8. Many preachers and Christians are living with the full knowledge and correct view of the Gospel, which leads to incomplete and defective Christian lives.

25b This means that Apollos would have known nothing about the resurrection of Christ as that was not part of John's message, so that was a crucial omission that needed to be corrected as soon as possible.

25c "Oh, how shallow do professing Christians live today! How often we hear individuals make claims of Christianity yet show little evidence of it in their lives. Is this shallow living all there is to Christianity? Is a Christian simply a soul saved from hell? Is the power of Christ's death on the cross limited only to forgiving sins? There must be more to the Christian life than what we are witnessing in the churches today! How often the preached message of the cross brings the sinner only to the point of the new birth. Most evangelists summarize the message of Christ's death as work to save us only from hell. We are reminded of the words concerning Apollos, who "taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John" (Acts 18:25)...Apollos needed deeper insight concerning this way-this great redemption of Christ. We then read in Apollos' story, "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" (18:26). So many know "the way" through Jesus Christ but have never come to the way "more perfectly." It was following the exhortations of Aquila and Priscilla that Apollos went on to Achaia and gave to the disciples this deepened knowledge of Christ (H. T. Spence, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, pages 11-12)."

#### AV

#### ESV

#### LSV

25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught **diligently** the

25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught

25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the

things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.	accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John.	things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John;
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**“diligently”** The ESV and LSV have Apollos teaching “accurately”, which is commendable, but they ignore that was a “diligent” and a careful student of Scripture, even if he only was informed up to John’s ministry.

**18:26 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.<sup>a</sup>**

26a Apollos, educated and eloquent, was willing to be instructed by two uneducated tentmakers! He had humility about him as well as a teachable spirit. His desire to know the truth overrode any intellectual ego he may have had. Don’t we all have holes and “blind spots” in our understanding of the Scripture? No man knows it all and none of us have attained. We all have need of an Aquila and Priscilla in our lives who can help us and steer us on the right path and correct any deficiencies we may have.

As they heard Apollos preach, they recognized him as a truly great teacher of the scripture, but as he continued teaching they noticed that he got no further than the baptism of John.

**18:27 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:**

**18:28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publickly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.<sup>a</sup>**

“As might have been expected, however, some at Corinth began to prefer Apollos to Paul. Unlike Paul, they contended, Apollos had come with “letters of commendation” (II Cor. 3:1).<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, Apollos was an orator while Paul was not, for “his letters,” said they, “are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible” (II Cor. 10:10). Thus, Apollos unintentionally became involved in division and rivalry in the church at Corinth. One party boasted of him and another of Paul. There were others, but Apollos was chiefly involved, for after mentioning four such divisions (I Cor. 1:12) Paul deals mainly with his own and Apollos’ connection with the case (I Cor. 1:13; 3:4-6).

But neither Paul nor Apollos condoned, much less fostered this party spirit among the Corinthians. Indeed, it is touching to witness the humility of these two great men and their mutual consideration for one another.

In writing to the Corinthians about it later Paul does not ask: “Was Apollos crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Apollos?” He rather makes little of himself, and asks: “Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of

Paul?" (I Cor. 1:13). Indeed, such confidence did Paul have in Apollos that he strongly urged him to return to Corinth just when the party rivalry was so great, and such consideration did Apollos have for Paul that in spite of Paul's urging he would not go. In Paul's words: "As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you . . . but his will was not at all to come at this time. . ." (I Cor. 16:12).

Evidently the experience brought these two great men of God closer together, for in Titus 3:13 the apostle writes most solicitously of Apollos with regard to a forthcoming journey, to make certain that he will be well cared for and will want nothing. (Cornelius Stam, *Acts Dispensationally Considered*)."

AV	ESV	LSV
28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, <i>and that</i> publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.	28 for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.	28 for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

Couldn't the LSV just use "**Christ**" instead of "the Christ"?

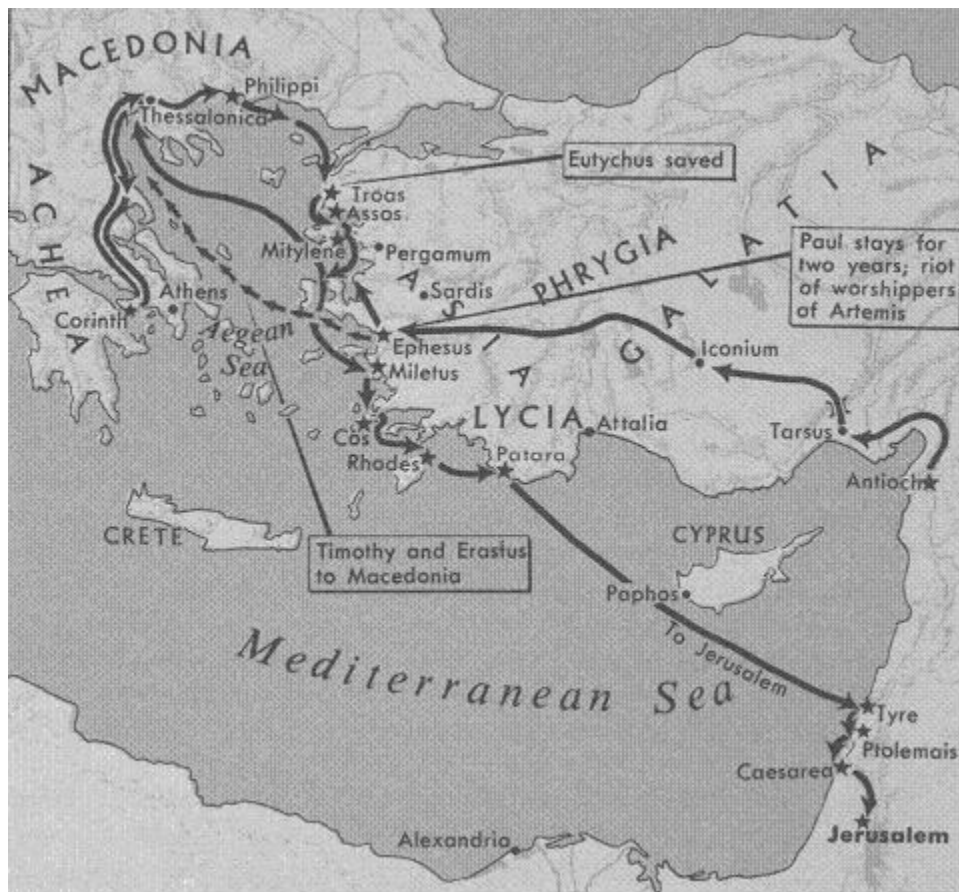


## Acts Chapter 19

### The Third Missionary Journey

Paul's third missionary journey was different from the first two. On the first two journeys, Paul reached into new areas where he preached the gospel and planted churches. On the third journey, Paul visited no new areas, but went to strengthen believers in cities where he had already been (compare Acts 18:23).

On the second missionary journey the Holy Spirit directed Paul away from Asia (Acts 16:6) because God wanted him to spend most of his time in Europe (Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, Athens, etc.). On the third missionary journey, most of Paul's time was spent in Asia, in the city of Ephesus.



### 62. Paul Dealing With John's Disciples 19:1-7

**19:1** 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,<sup>a</sup>

1a Disciples of John the Baptist.

**19:2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?<sup>ab</sup>  
And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any  
Holy Ghost.<sup>c-d</sup>**

2a Many Pentecostals will use this question as a basis for their teaching that you can be saved and not receive the Holy Spirit until sometime after your New Birth. It usually involves needing to speak in tongues or have some other "experience" with God before you can say that you have received the Holy Spirit. Yet they ignore several things:

1. Paul is dealing with a group of John's disciples who missed the updated revelation regarding the Holy Spirit and how and when He is received.
2. What about Romans 8:9? If any man have not the Spirit of God, he is none of his" (last half of the verse). The second part of this verse is an important one doctrinally regarding the Spirit of Christ, which must be another title for the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God dwells in us or else that man is not a Christian. Every Christian enjoys the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, regardless of the spiritual maturity of that Christian. If a man does not have the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, he is not saved. Such truth refutes several errors, especially in the Pentecostal and Charismatic camps. This refutes the Charismatic teaching of a "second blessing"- being saved and then, later, receiving the Holy Spirit (being baptized with the Holy Spirit). They teach that a man accepts Christ but does not receive the Holy Spirit at conversion. He must earn his own "baptism of the Holy Spirit" where he receives the Spirit. In such theological systems, it would be possible to be saved but not have the Holy Spirit. But not according to Paul.

The confusion may be between a conversion experience and a crises experience. Christians, at some point in their life, reach the level of spiritual puberty when they must make an "adult" decision. For the years of their spiritual babyhood, they must decide what they want to do with the rest of their Christian life. Will I serve God or self? Will fulfilling the will of God in my life be all important or will I serve God when I have time to? Will I follow after holiness or live my own way? Christians who come out of this crisis will develop into Spirit-filled Christians who are totally sold out. Charismatics confuse this with receiving the Holy Spirit, but such is not the case. For these Christians, they simply have reached a point where the Holy Spirit has become all-important in their life. They have gone from living a nominal Christian life to living a normal one. They had the Holy Spirit before the crises, now He is simply more real in their life and He controls them more fully than He did before. Even a few non-Pentecostal Fundamentalists, like R. A. Torrey, D. L. Moody and John R Rice (who followed such men almost to the letter in these issues) held to this "second blessing" of being endued with the Holy Spirit at specific times for soul-winning power. They confused the baptism of the Holy Spirit with power for soul winning, which of course it is not. We do need Holy Spirit power to do any work for Christ, but we do not receive any re-baptisms whenever we witness to someone. They unsuccessfully attempted to mix Bible truth with Pentecostal error and came out with this doctrine which fed the hyper-evangelism errors promoted by Rice and those who followed his teachings and the Sword of the Lord.

Every Christian (even the carnal ones) have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12) at the moment of their salvation. There is no (nor is there a need of) a "second baptism". We all receive the Holy Spirit at conversion, never to lose Him. We may grieve Him and quench Him, but we never lose Him. It is clear that in order to be a Christian, you must have been baptized with the Holy Spirit at salvation and have the Holy Spirit indwelling you. If the Holy Spirit is not in you then you are not saved. To teach that one can be a Christian but has not been baptized with the Holy Spirit or that the Holy Spirit does not indwell some Christians is a Pentecostal heresy that we dealt with above. All Christians, who have been truly born again, have been baptized by the Holy Spirit at salvation and all Christians have the Holy Spirit indwelling them, although this certainly does not mean that all Christians are currently filled with the Spirit or are living a Spirit-filled life. Such a spiritual state has nothing to do with salvation but rather with sanctification.

These disciples had not received the Holy Ghost "since" they believed, for they were in the same position that the Samaritan converts were in Acts 8. They could not be saved "Baptists" as how could you be saved (and be a Baptist!) without even knowing anything about the Holy Ghost, and having not received Him? John's baptism did not impart the Holy Spirit as John had not received Him as New Testament saints do today.

2b Paul asks if they have received the Holy Ghost since they believed. They had believed, so have they now received the Holy Ghost? Did they know about Him and His ministry? They replied in the negative, showing the defects which came from their lack of an updated knowledge of these doctrines. Most of the commentators and versions attack "since" and retranslate it as "when". This is a classic example of someone retranslating the Bible to fit their own theological system or preconceived doctrines instead of taking the Authorized Version at face value and building their theology around the Scripture.

2c They were disciples of John and probably Apollos but were not disciples of the Lord. They did not have the Holy Spirit as they had not believed on Christ (John 7:39) since they did not know enough about Him and His ministry to believe on Him. Acts is a transitional book, and the Lord would allow a "grace period" for folks who did not have the entire or up-to-date revelation. Peter didn't have it in Acts 10 and the church didn't have it in Acts 11 but the Lord worked through their ignorance and it was not fatal. But after the completed revelation is available (as it is today), the Lord will no longer wink at the times of men's ignorance (Acts 17:30). No man can rightly claim any ignorance of spiritual things today, especially in America with a church on every corner and with the wide availability of the Bible.

2d Like Apollos in Acts 18, they wouldn't have known about the resurrection of the Lord, so they were missing that vital piece of theological revelation they would have needed to get a full and complete understanding of the gospel.

AV	ESV	LSV
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.	2 And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."	2 And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they <i>said</i> to him, "No, we have not even heard if the Holy Spirit is <i>being received</i> ."

The LSV botches the meaning of the verse.

**19:3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.<sup>a</sup>**

3a What they knew was true but was now outdated, superseded by later revelations, which they did not know.

**19:4 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.<sup>a</sup>**

4a Paul now gives them the updated revelation which they accept.

AV	ESV	LSV
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 <b>Christ Jesus</b> .	4 And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus."	4 Then Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is, in Jesus."

The ESV and LSV omit "Christ".

**19:5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.<sup>a</sup>**

5a Here is an issue that the "Baptist Briders" have. They claim that John was a Baptist, and that his baptism was a Baptist, New Testament baptism. They also say that John started the first Baptist church. They also claim that Paul was a Baptist (in the modern sense). We have one Baptist preacher re-baptizing the converts of another Baptist preacher, which would be the "unpardonable sin" among Baptists. Of course, this issue is easily solved by observing:

1. John was not a Baptist.
2. John's baptism was not a Baptist, New Testament baptism.



3. Paul was not a Baptist preacher (in the modern sense).
4. The Church started after John's ministry.
5. John's baptism was a Jewish "baptism unto repentance" in connection with the Kingdom of Heaven (the millennial kingdom) being "at hand". Since the Kingdom was offered and rejected, John's baptism would not be valid in the Church Age. Anyone baptized with John's baptism would need to be rebaptized according to the New Testament/Church Age model.

Since these disciples were not saved (they hadn't even heard about the Holy Ghost!), Paul leads them to faith in Christ and they are thus saved.

The question then also arises "When did the church start?" as was dealt with back in Acts 2 and the Day of Pentecost. Your options are:

1. The church started in the Garden of Eden, or there was no real "start" to the church. John R. Rice held to this view, not taking a dispensational view of the church. He just lumped everything together in one body, Old and New Testament saints, without any discrimination. We naturally reject this view.
2. With John the Baptist. Those who say that John's baptism was a New Testament baptism (in this text) would have to take this position, that the church started with John since his baptism was the same baptism we baptize with today. We would reject this view. Landmark Baptists take this position.
3. Sometime in the gospels, usually around John 20:22 when Jesus breathed on the disciples and said "receive ye the Holy Ghost". But there is no evidence that the Holy Spirit came down in John 20 and nothing similar to the events in Acts 2 took place in John 22 so we would reject this view.
4. Acts 2, at the Day of Pentecost, the position we take because that is when the Holy Spirit was given.
5. Acts 9, 12, 15, 28, or beyond, which is the position of the hyper-dispensationalists, who cannot agree among themselves.

**19:6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues,<sup>a</sup> and prophesied.**

6a The third instance of tongues, after Acts 2 and 10. As always, these tongues are a sign for Israel. Since these were Jewish disciples of John, they get the sign of tongues here.

**19:7 And all the men were about twelve.<sup>a</sup>**

7a That can't be a coincidence but the Bible does not expand on the significance of the number in this context.

### **63. Two Years in Ephesus 19:8-12**

**19:8 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.**

**19:9 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.<sup>a</sup>**

9a Paul “settled in” as a “resident teacher” in this school run by Tyrannus. He may not have been a believer, but allowed Paul to use his facilities, seeing as Paul was a “teacher” and Paul could probably pay the rent. Tyrannus would have his lectures in the morning and would probably rent out his facilities to Paul for him to use at other times.

This is the only mention of a “school” in the Bible, and it is associated with a non-Christian institution.

**19:10 And this continued by the space of two years;<sup>a</sup> so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.**

10a This was a longer time that Paul spent in Corinth. As he did in Corinth, Paul used Ephesus as a “base of operations” during this third missionary trip.

**19:11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:<sup>a</sup>**

11a These are “special miracles” from a special man (Acts 19:6) with a special ministry (Acts 9:15-16). Paul must still have working among many Jews as the apostolic signs they seek (1 Corinthians 1:22 **“For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:”**) are still being provided. We are not told what set these “special miracles” apart from his other miracles.

**19:12 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.<sup>a</sup>**

12a This is where the Charismatic/Pentecostal practice of peddling “specially anointed prayer cloths (most of which are made in Mexico or China)” and “branches from the Land of Palestine” and “water from the Jordan River” to unsuspecting thousands comes from. This is called “fetishism” and it is used in pagan and heathen religions, that you need some object to focus or channel either your faith or the power of God. The Church of Rome is as guilty with its use of statutes, scapulars, rosaries, holy pictures, etc.

#### **64. A Failed Exorcism 19:13-17**

**19:13 ¶ Then certain of the vagabond Jews,<sup>a</sup> exorcists,<sup>b</sup> 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.<sup>c</sup>**

13a What a description! They were shiftless, unsteady, unreliable but they figured if Paul, this wretched false teacher, could case out devils, then they, as good law-observing Jews, should be able to as well. If they could do it, using Paul’s formula and

techniques, it would show everyone that there was nothing special about Paul. This attitude is similar to the attitude Jannes and Jambres had toward Moses back in Exodus 7,8.

13b The Catholic Church still has a special class of “exorcists” and some Pentecostals will specialize in this sort of ministry. They can have it. I dealt with a devil-possessed woman once and I hope I never have to do so again.

13c Calling on God in a second-hand fashion. They did not believe in Jesus as Paul preached Him, so why did they think Jesus would assist them as He did Paul? They were exorcists and probably had some success (or at least claimed to) in the past using whatever forms and formulas they had. Now here comes Paul using the name of Jesus to cast out devils and it was working for him 100% of the time, with no misfires or duds. Would it work for them? Why not?

**19:14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests,<sup>a</sup> which did so.**

14a Sceva is chief of a group of priests in Ephesus and this would indicate that it is a false priesthood, not a true Jewish priesthood that would have been recognized in Jerusalem.

**19:15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?<sup>a</sup>**

15a What a testimony for Paul! He was known in hell, right alongside of Jesus. But these fakirs, hell took no notice of them. Why should they? They were false teachers, men of no power who offered to threat to Satan or his kingdom. The evil spirit thus insulted these men as being no threat to them or Satan’s kingdom. But you can be sure Satan had taken notice of Paul and was very aware of his activities. This leads to be obvious question “Are you known in hell?” There may be a lot of big shots running all over the church today who make quite a name for themselves here that hell takes no notice of.

**19:16 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.<sup>a</sup>**

16a A very public and obvious failure. These men had no power, and they couldn’t borrow Paul’s name of Jesus and the power of His name to do their exorcisms.

**19:17 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.<sup>a</sup>**

17a These men unwittingly helped spark a revival.

## **65. A Book Burning 19:18-20**

**19:18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.<sup>a</sup>**

18a Marks of a revival, where sinners:

1. Believe
2. Come to the truth
3. Confess their sins
4. Show their deeds, which probably involves some sort of public repentance and restitution.
5. Burn and abandon the trappings of their old life.

**19:19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men:<sup>a</sup> and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.<sup>b</sup>**

19a A good old fashioned book burning! We should see more of these, especially when someone gets saved. He needs to burn everything in his life that would prevent him from going on with the Lord- books, CDs, magazines, clothes, etc. If he doesn't burn them here and now, he may see them burning at the Bema Seat later! America will not see anything close to a revival until we see more burnings of bad books, bad bibles, bad music and bad clothing. These were books on the occult and eastern mysticism. Now that these people had been saved, they realized that the Scriptures (Old Testament in this case) would be sufficient for any spiritual needs they had, so they no longer had need for such books. They also knew what these books represented- the occult, devil-worship and ultimately, Satanism, so they totally rejected them by burning them, even though it meant that many of them suffered a major financial loss in so doing.

19b They lost a lot of money in this but here is a test of a true conversion- was getting the victory over their sins worth taking a financial hit? Would they be willing to "count the cost"?

**19:20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.<sup>a</sup>**

20a Despite all obstacles and attacks.

## **66. Paul Purposes To Go To Rome 19:21,22**

**19:21 ¶ 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.<sup>ab</sup>**

21a Yes he must, as the Holy Spirit also intended for Paul to go to Rome. The question is whether Paul went in the manner that the Holy Spirit wanted him to go and at this time. Paul ended up going under Roman guard and (free) transport after a two-year delay. If Paul hadn't gone to Jerusalem (after being warned about it twice times by the Spirit, in Acts 21:4,11,12), he would not have been arrested and would have been at liberty to go to Rome on his own terms. But he went up to Jerusalem anyway, got arrested, hauled to Rome and lost two years of ministry in his appeal to Caesar. We cannot say if the way Paul did it was the best way, but that's the way he choose and what happened, happened. It really isn't very profitable to engage in "what-if" scenarios. Paul's ministry in Ephesus was starting to wind down, and he was not about to go into a settled ministry but was determined to press into other areas that had not yet heard the gospel. Rome continued to beckon as Paul's ultimate destination. Rome would be a good springboard to western Europe and Spain.

1. Romans 15:24,28 **"Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company... When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain."**

21b The time of Acts 19:21 was both a difficult time and a time of great opportunity for Paul. It was a difficult time because the Jews were severely opposing him and even seeking to kill him. But it was an exciting time in that the door had been opened for Paul to minister to many for the Lord. Concerning this time, Paul says, **"I will remain in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a great door and effectual is opened to me, and there are many adversaries"** (1 Corinthians 16:8,9).

**19:22 So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.**

#### **67. The Ephesian Riot 19:23-41**

**19:23 And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.<sup>a</sup>**

23a The world always accuses the Christians of being the "troublemakers" but who started this riot, and every other riot in the book of Acts? It wasn't the Christians! But a Biblical ministry will always "stir the pot" in a community. Both saints and sinners will be stirred, for good or bad.

**19:24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana,<sup>a</sup> brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;**

## 24a AV

## ESV

## LSV

24 For a certain *man* named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;

24 For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen.

24 For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, was bringing no little business to the craftsmen;

She was called Diana by the Romans and Artemis by the Greeks. She had many other names, such as Lucina, Proserpine, Trivia, Luna, Meni, and Hectate. She was also akin to Astarte and Ashtoreth and other female goddesses. She was depicted in various ways. She was sometimes represented as a huntress with a crescent on her head and a bow in her hand. At other times she was depicted with three faces and holding instruments of war and torture. In this incarnation, she is much like the Hindu goddess Durgha. At other times she was depicted with many breasts. Her worship was often associated with gross immorality and hideous vice.

**19:25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation,<sup>a</sup> and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.<sup>bc</sup>**

25a A union, or guild meeting.

25b The Christians were threatening this income as more of the former Diana-worshippers were getting saved and abandoning their idols, thus hitting the “bottom line” of these silversmiths. It would be like a great number of former Roman Catholic getting saved and no long buying rosaries and “St. Christopher medals”.

25c Wars have also been started over similar lusts for money. Before the American Civil War, someone asked Abraham Lincoln why he wouldn’t let the Southern States leave the Union. His response was that if he let the Confederate States leave, “What shall I do for my revenue?”

**19:26 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:<sup>a</sup>**

26a Paul’s preaching against idolatry was so successful that a meeting was called down at the local union hall to try to figure out what to do about it.

**19:27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought;<sup>a</sup> 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.<sup>bcd</sup>**

27a Follow the money. **“The love of money is the root of all evil”** (1 Timothy 6:10).

27b Oh yeah, the worship of Diana would also be hurt! This was added as an after-thought, after the wailing about the loss of income. But they had to make it sound spiritual! Would they have cared so much about Diana's glory if they weren't making a nice living off of her?

27c Temples to Diana were found all over the ancient world.

27d This temple was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. The theater seated 56,000 people and hosted gladiatorial combats as well as plays, readings, debates, etc. The original "shrine" of Diana took twenty years to build, and it was 425 feet long, 220 feet in breadth and had 127 columns. This "Diana" was worshipped by Romans as well as Greeks and Asiatics, and this Diana was a world-wide fertility symbol with far greater religious significance than the "huntress" who was connected with the moon and chastity. To the contrary, "Diana of the Ephesians" was the goddess of the sun and of the moon and the source of all life: she was the mother-goddess who matches Ishtar, Ashtoreth, Venus, Juno, Vesta, Minerva, and Cybele (the mother of the gods).

**19:28 And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.<sup>a</sup>**

28a I doubt they had any real love of Diana, her worship or her worshippers. They may have well been crying "Great is our income, which Paul is threatening!"

**19:29 And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus,<sup>a</sup> men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.**

29a If they can't take their frustrations out on Paul, they will grab any of Paul's associates they could and deal with them instead.

**19:30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.<sup>a</sup>**

30a Paul probably showed up after the riot was in full swing and was prevented from trying to deal with the people. The brethren rightly feared he would have been "strung up" right then and there.

**19:31 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.**

**19:32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.<sup>a</sup>**

32a Some people showed up for the riot only because there was a riot, but they had no idea what the riot was about. In every age, there are professional rioters who exist only to start trouble.

**19:33 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.<sup>a</sup>**

33a They were angry at Paul, but poor Alexander was seized by the mob and was not able to make a defense.

**19:34 But when they knew that he was a Jew,<sup>a</sup> all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.**

34a The general anti-semitism of the day only inflamed the mob more when they found out Alexander was a Jew. Always blame the Jews! Gentiles will take any excuse to blame the Jews.

**19:35 And when the townclerk<sup>a</sup> 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?<sup>b</sup>**

35a The ‘town fathers’ now have to step in to calm the riot.

35b A cute religious fable, like evolution, global warming of the “Holy House of Loreto”. Is this “Jupiter” the Roman god or the planet referenced here? Peter Ruckman assumes it is the planet in his *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts* (page 640) but that is not necessary, as it could have been a reference to the god Jupiter, in which no “outer space” reference would be necessary. Was it maybe a meteorite that was fashioned into some sort of an idol, with the claim that it fell down from Jupiter?

**AV**

**LSV**

**ESV**

<b>35</b> And when the town-clerk had appeased the people, he said, <i>Ye</i> 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 <i>image</i> which fell down from <b>Jupiter</b> ?	<b>35</b> And when the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, “Men of Ephesus, who is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Artemis, and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky?	<b>35</b> Now after calming the crowd, the city clerk <i>*said</i> , “Men of Ephesus, what man is there after all who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of the <i>image</i> which fell down from heaven?
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“**Jupiter**” is omitted from the LSV and ESV.



**19:36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.<sup>a</sup>**

36a This is something mobs and religious fanatics are not prone to do. It is more fun, satisfying and profitable to be irrational.

**19:37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches,<sup>a</sup> nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.**

37a The modern versions have “temples”. Pagan religions who believe in a mother goddess do have “churches”. They were not always called “temples”. I don’t see it to be necessary to make this an “advanced revelation” as Peter Ruckman does in his *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts* commentary.

AV	ESV	LSV
37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are <b>neither robbers of churches</b> , nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.	37 For you have brought these men here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess.	37 “For you have brought these men <i>here</i> who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess.

“robbers of churches” The ESV has “sacrilegious” and the LSV has “robbers of temples”.

**19:38 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.<sup>a</sup>**

38a Mob violence will solve nothing but it gets a lot of attention and it terrifies politicians. If any laws had been broken, they were to proceed lawfully. This is straight out of Gallio’s “finding” in Acts 18:15. The clerk was putting the blame for the riot and the responsibility for resolving the problem on Demetrius, not Paul.

**19:39 But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.<sup>a</sup>**

39a If anyone was going to do anything, it must be done according to law, in a court of law. The Romans detested “mob” rule, especially if that “mob rule” is caused by a religious disagreement. If these people really had a “beef” against Paul and his followers, they were told that they must file a legal complaint and go to court to present their case,

**19:40 For we are in danger to be called in question for this day’s uproar,<sup>a</sup> there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.**

40a The Romans would hear about it and then a real, lengthy and messy investigation could result, and no one would be happy about that.

**19:41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.<sup>a</sup>**

41a It is not easy to “dismiss” a mob. Here, the “mob” is called an “assembly”.

## **Acts Chapter 20**

### **67. From Ephesus to Troas 20:1-6**

**20:1 And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.<sup>a</sup>**

1a The Ephesian riot of Acts 19 may have spelled the end of Paul's ministry in Ephesus. He was now too divisive a figure and his continued presence would only cause more trouble. It was time for him to move on.

**20:2<sup>a</sup> And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,**

2a By this time, Paul has written 1 and 2 Thessalonian epistles, Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians; and probably Romans. We are somewhere near the years A.D. 55–57.

**20:3 And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him,<sup>a</sup> as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.<sup>b</sup>**

3a Paul is still not out of danger of an assassination attempt by the Jews. This would be a constant danger for quite a while to come.

3b A change in route to avoid the Jewish threat.

**20:4 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.**

**20:5 These going before tarried for us<sup>a</sup> at Troas.**

5a Luke is writing in the first person again, having rejoined Paul's team.

**20:6 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.**

### **68. An Early Church Service 20:7-12**

**20:7<sup>a</sup> And upon the first day of the week,<sup>b</sup> when the disciples came together<sup>c</sup> to break bread,<sup>d</sup> Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.<sup>efg</sup>**

7a This is the only example of a New Testament church service we have recorded in the New Testament. This is really the only transcript of such a service we have. I think this is because the Holy Spirit did not want to set down a hard-and-fast pattern for

church services. He allowed a lot of liberty within that law, as local churches exist and operate in a myriad of circumstances. What one local church does may not necessarily be ideal for another church to do.

7b Local churches met on Sunday, not Saturday. They were not Sabbath-keepers or Seventh Day Adventists. They like to rail against Sunday services, claiming worshipping on Sunday is “the Mark of the Beast”. If that was the case, then Paul was a lost man. Sunday worship and meetings started in John 20:19, right after the resurrection. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 16:2 that offerings were to be collected on the first day of the week.

7c Community-based worship for fellowship, encouragement and identification.

7d Fellowship usually involves a lot of food, or at least a meal. Not sure of this indicates that the Lord’s Table was observed every week. This was not “the Eucharist” as Marvin Vincent claimed in his *Word Studies*.

7e The church normally met on the evening of the first day, because the members worked during the day.

7f “Some preachers preach by the calendar—not “by the clock.” But a good stirring up from a Bible-believing man who has prayed and studied before entering the pulpit is rarely tedious to listen to. The time killers who make you think you’ve been there an hour (after only ten minutes of preaching) are the dead-orthodox Conservatives who refer continually to “the original Greek” while they paste you with sermon outlines from Spurgeon’s Treasury or illustrations from Matthew Henry’s Commentary. Nothing is deader than dead-orthodoxy. (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, pages 647-648).”

7g This was a special visit by Paul and was his last night with them, so he wanted to give them as much instruction as possible. This explains why Paul was so long in preaching this night. This was probably not his usual style.

**20:8 And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.<sup>a</sup>**

8a It was no so much that the church met at night in secret for fear of the Jews or the authorities. If that was the case, there would not have been so many lights, which could have easily be seen and the service location given away. It is more probable that many of these believers worked during the day, so the evening was the only time they had to gather for a service. The early church met at night on Sunday. The current tradition of a 11 AM service on Sunday morning is not scriptural, as it may have its roots in the Babylonian mystery religion services.

**20:9 And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus,<sup>a</sup> being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft,<sup>a</sup> and was taken up dead.**

9a Stewart Custer, in his *Witness to Christ*, page 289, says “Eutychus” was a common slave name, so he may have worked hard all day and then went to hear Paul on his own time in the evening. He may have been so weary in his work that he fell asleep during the service.

9b You really can’t blame him. Paul may have been preaching for 3-5 hours and by midnight, most of the congregation was probably nodding off as well. He may have been sitting in the window due to a lack of seating in the room- it may have been that full that no other seating was available.

AV	ESV	LSV
9 And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long <b>preaching</b> , he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.	9 And a young man named Eutychus, sitting at the window, sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer. And being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead.	9 And there was a young man named Eutychus sitting on the windowsill, sinking into a deep sleep. And as Paul kept on talking, he sunk into that sleep and fell down from the third floor and was picked up dead.

No “preaching” in the ESV and LSV.

**20:10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.<sup>a</sup>**

10a Was he really dead or presumed to be dead? If anything, he at least was seriously injured but was still okay in verse 12.

**20:11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread,<sup>a</sup> and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.**

11a Probably the Lord’s table or a fellowship meal. It is certainly no sort of a Roman Catholic “eucharist” or “mass”.

**20:12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.**

#### **69. Sailing With Paul 20:13-16**

**20:13 ¶ 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.**

**20:14 And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.**

**20:15 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.**

**20:16 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.<sup>a</sup>**

16a Paul did not want to make a long stop in Ephesus, as tempting as that would have been, as he had many friends here and a growing church. But he was on a timetable to make to Jerusalem before Pentecost and did not want to risk any delays in that plan. He may also have been afraid that the Ephesian brethren may have tried to talk him out of going to Jerusalem. But he did stay long enough to give a short message to the elders in the Ephesian church, as recorded in verses 17-38. Paul was really supposed to go to Rome rather than Jerusalem. If Peter was the apostle to the circumcision, it would have been better for Peter to go there.

#### **70. Paul's Message to the Ephesian Elders 20:17-38**

**20:17 ¶ And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.<sup>a</sup>**

17a Paul did not stay long in Ephesus but he stayed long enough to hold a mini "pastor's school" to exhort and warn the elders in Ephesus.

**20:18 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,<sup>a</sup>**

18a First Thessalonians 2:1-12 gives a good description of Paul's ministerial conduct at Thessalonica, which would probably also apply to his work at Ephesus.

**20:19<sup>a</sup> Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations,<sup>b</sup> which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:<sup>c</sup>**

19a How Paul served in Ephesus:

1. With humility of mind, a rare quality in many preachers, who tend to be proud, arrogant, loud and self-promoters and empire-builders.

2. Many tears. Pastors understand this, with people who reject the clear teaching of Scripture, who refuse to be dealt with, who refuse to conform to Scriptural teachings, and who walk away from the church and go back into the world.

3. Temptations. This involves not only the usual personal moral temptations, but also ministerial temptations, such the temptation to cut corners on the preaching or the

standards in order to draw a crowd and to increase attendance, temptations to trim the message to cut down on opposition and to develop a better reputation in the community, or the temptations to “go along to get along” with other preachers in the area.

4. Paul was not in it for the money (Acts 20:33,34) but was willing to work at a secular vocation to provide for his needs.

19b Paul did a lot of crying (Philippians 3:18 **“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:”**) and a lot of trembling (1 Corinthians 2:3 **“And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.”**).

19c As in Acts 20:3.

**20:20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you,<sup>a</sup> but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house,<sup>b</sup>**

20a Even if it was “hard” or unpopular. If they needed to hear it, Paul said it for their benefit.

20b Not necessarily a proof-text for the modern “house-to-house (or door-to-door) visitation” that is the Holy Grail for hyper-evangelicals and Sword of the Lord-type fundamentalists (along with the bus ministry), although there is nothing wrong with such a ministry. But if you are going to find a verse to justify it, this is not that verse. Here, Paul is “teaching” from house to house, not witnessing or “soul winning”. Since local churches met in private homes in this day, Paul was teaching and “holding services” in these private homes that made up the church at Ephesus. And he did so “publickly”, not in a corner or under cover. What Paul preached and taught was public for all men to hear and analyze. No masonic-type “private” or “secret” teachings.

**20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks,<sup>a</sup> repentance toward God,<sup>b</sup> and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>c</sup>**

21a Paul was still ministering to both groups.

21b The necessary doctrine for salvation, even if it was attacked and neglected by Jack Hyles and his followers. Paul preached it.

21c Since salvation is by faith and repentance. This is the evangelistic part of Paul’s ministry.

**20:22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem,<sup>a</sup> not knowing the things that shall befall me there:<sup>b</sup>**

22a I am not sure about this, as the Spirit told Paul three times not to go to Jerusalem (Acts 21:4,11,12). But his burden for the Jews was so strong, he rationalized it and justified it by saying the Holy Spirit was driving him to go to Jerusalem.

22b Paul was warned that he would be bound (arrested) in Jerusalem (Acts 20:23; 21:11), and worse would follow.

**20:23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.**

**20:24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy,<sup>a</sup> and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.**

24a Paul started well in Acts 9. Now he desired to finish his course well, as he did in 2 Timothy 4:6-8 **"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."**

**20:25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God,<sup>a</sup> shall see my face no more.**

25a The spiritual elements of the kingdom.

**20:26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.<sup>a</sup>**

26a Can any of us really say this? I think all of us can think of opportunities missed or wasted and witnesses not given. The warnings to the watchman in Ezekiel 3 and 33 enter into play here and we will hit this at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Paul is saying that he witnessed every time he had the chance and never trimmed or compromised the message at any time to anyone for any reason.

**20:27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.<sup>a</sup>**

27a A balanced ministry is best. Some men only preach on prophecy, soulwinning, politics, faithfulness or some other hobby horse. But we need to preach on all doctrines, from all portions of Scripture and not neglect any. This includes the "unpopular" doctrines like hell and judgment.

**20:28 ¶ Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock,<sup>a</sup> over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers,<sup>b</sup> to feed the church of God,<sup>c</sup> which he hath purchased with his own blood.<sup>d</sup>**



28a The preacher needs to take heed to himself first, regarding his spiritual state and walk with God, before he can take heed to others. He needs to make sure his own vineyard is trimmed before he can work in someone else's vineyard (Song of Solomon 1:6 **"Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept."**).

28b The nature of the pastoral office and ministry- shepherding sheep.

28c Also the teaching ministry, which is a requirement (1 Timothy 3:2 **"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;"**). If a man cannot teach, then he cannot pastor. And he cannot teach unless he is first a hard student of the Scriptures.

28d The sinless blood of Christ. This is the price of redemption, the most expensive currency in creation. We are not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver or gold, but by the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18 **"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;"**). And God has blood, in the person of Jesus Christ in His human body. God the Father nor the Holy Spirit have blood since they are a Spirit (John 4:24 **"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."**).

**20:29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.<sup>a</sup>**

29a First danger, an external threat- false teachers shall enter the flock, seeking to devour the lambs. It is the job of the under-shepherd to warn against the wolf, educate about his doctrine and tactics, and beat the wolf off when he makes his charge. The Lord warned against these wolves in Matthew 7:15 (**"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."**). No matter how careful the pastor may be, this threat always exists. Paul had to deal with, so we must as well.

**20:30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.<sup>a</sup>**

30a A second danger, an internal threat- false teachers arising from within the church that will seek to draw away followers after them. The under-shepherd also needs to monitor what people in his congregation. The purpose of the wolves is to draw away the disciples after themselves. Their intention is to draw away the saints to form another "flock." When it does happen, and the false teachers cannot be convinced of their errors, they are to be turned out of the church.

**20:31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.<sup>a</sup>**

31a Very passionate warnings as Paul cared deeply for the Ephesian church and it broke his heart to realize that some of the brethren would be lost to false teaching.

**20:32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God,<sup>a</sup> and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up,<sup>b</sup> and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.**

32a Eventually, the preacher has to give up his converts to God and trust that He will nurture them, teach them, protect them, and that will be able to function without him.

32b The word of God is likened to:

1. Milk

A. Hebrews 5:12 **"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."**

2. Meat

A. Hebrews 5:12 **"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."**

3. Bread

A. Luke 4:4 **"And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."**

4. Honey

A. Psalm 119:103 **"How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"**

5. Apples

A. Proverbs 25:11 **"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."**

6. Water

A. Ephesians 5:26 **"That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,"**

**20:33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.**

33a Paul was not a crook after the money of his converts, as so many false teachers and prosperity preachers are.

**20:34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.<sup>a</sup>**

34a Paul was willing to work his secular vocation of tentmaking when he needed to, so as not to be a financial burden to young churches (1 Thessalonians 2:6 **"Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ."**). Pastors who DEMAND that their church support them with total financial support are hirelings, especially when the church might not be able to provide full support. In those situations, the preacher must be willing to work an outside job to provide for his needs and for the needs of his family. Paul had written to the Corinthians reminding them that it is only right that the congregation should see to the financial support of its pastor (1 Corinthians 9:7-14) since a true pastor gives far, far more than he receives. Paul stressed the point that **"so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel"** (1 Corinthians 9:14). But he also explained how sometimes they must forego such financial support and he reminded them of his own example of financial self-reliance.

**20:35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak,<sup>a</sup> and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.<sup>b</sup>**

35a Especially those in our own congregations.

35b Not recorded in the gospels. Where did Paul get this? Maybe from Peter during one of Paul's earlier visits from him? Or John Mark, as Peter had relayed it to him?

**20:36<sup>a</sup> ¶ And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.<sup>b</sup>**

36a "This is the last paragraph mark in a King James Bible, so it is a clear indicator there are no more "right divisions" in this age for "rightly dividing the word of truth." The Holy Spirit—overruling the opinions of every scholar before or since 1611—draws the line at Acts 20:35... and fixes "present truth" at Acts 20:36 through the mouth of the apostle to the Gentiles. (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Acts*, page 677)."

36b At no point in this message does Paul even hint at any sort of "apostolic succession" for such a teaching is foreign to the teaching and spirit of the New Testament.

Regarding the question as whether or not Paul should have gone to Jerusalem, Cornelius Stam (*Acts Dispensationally Considered*) listed the pros and cons of the question, which we reproduce below for study:

#### THE ARGUMENTS FOR PAUL'S GOING TO JERUSALEM AT THIS TIME

1. Paul's plans were not made "according to the flesh" (II Cor. 1:15-17).
2. Later, standing before the Sanhedrin, and still later, in a letter to Timothy, he declared that from his youth he had served God with a clear conscience (Acts 23:1; II Tim. 1:3).

3. He declared his determination to continue the journey to Jerusalem that he might finish his course and his ministry "with joy" (Acts 20:24).
4. When his friends could not dissuade him from his purpose, they said: "The will of the Lord be done" (Acts 21:14).
5. After Paul had reached Jerusalem the Lord, rather than rebuking him, encouraged him saying: "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (Acts 23:11).
6. Shortly before his death Paul wrote: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith," (II Tim. 4:7) which, it is alleged, he could not have said had he been out of the will of the Lord in making this journey to Jerusalem.

#### THE ARGUMENTS AGAINST PAUL'S GOING TO JERUSALEM AT THIS TIME

1. Paul went to Jerusalem at this time, among other things, "to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24) but long before this God had commanded Paul to leave Jerusalem, explaining: "for they will not receive thy testimony concerning Me" (Acts 22:18).
2. There is no record that he testified "the gospel of the grace of God" on this visit to Jerusalem. He certainly did not do so by subjecting himself to a Jewish ceremony.
3. There is no record that the Lord Jesus or the Holy Spirit directed Paul to make this visit to Jerusalem (Ctr. Gal. 2:2). If he had been so directed, surely it would have been so stated, in view of all the warnings and pleas against his going.
4. While on the way, he received several warnings from the Spirit as to what would befall him if he went up to Jerusalem (Acts 20:23; 21:10,11) and it is distinctly stated that the disciples at Tyre "said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem" (Acts 21:4).
5. He was taken from Jerusalem to Rome as "the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles" (Eph. 3:1). He was also a prisoner for Christ, but in this connection, he was the prisoner of Christ for the sake of the Gentiles.
6. I believe it was God's intention for Paul to go to Rome and beyond, and Paul eventually get there at Roman expense, but he got there "soaking wet" after having lost over 2 years of ministry in custody. This was not God's perfect will in getting Paul to Rome, but He worked out according to His permissive will.

I would have to conclude that Paul was not supposed to go to Jerusalem, but rather toward Rome in his office as the Apostle to the Gentiles. It is clear that he allowed his burden for Israel override his following the clear, revealed will of God. Paul was not sinless and not everything he did was right or best, just like any other preacher. In this case, God's permissive will is still His will, and although it may be "good" or "acceptable" (Romans 12:2), it is not the "perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2). But God made it "work together for good" (Romans 8:28).

So why did Paul go if he had no direct leading from the Lord? It was his intense burden for his own countrymen as he laid out in Romans 9-11. He knew his call was to the Gentiles, but he could never get his own people out of his mind or heart. As a

Benjamite from Judea (Philippians 3:4-6), he cannot overcome his desire to do at Jerusalem what he did at Corinth. His move is a fleshy move against the direct will of God, but God overrules it (Acts 23:11) with Romans 8:28, as He does all moves of the Christian—especially where the heart and motive is right, and Paul's motive for going was love.

We must also avoid the temptation to believe that Paul never made any mistakes in his ministry of that he never disobeyed the Lord in anything. Paul was a great man and a great apostle who wrote under divine inspiration, but he was still a man, a fallible human being with a fallen nature who still sinned. It is not being disrespectful or "holier than thou" to study the mistakes of Paul as well for we are every bit as liable to make them as he did. The best of preachers make mistakes, go off in their own will, and mistake what they believe to be the call of God. No man is perfect and all men, even the best of them, err. I believe Paul made a mistake in going to Jerusalem at this time and in the manner he did. And now he was going to have to live with the consequences of that decision.

**20:37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,**

**20:38 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.**



## **Acts Chapter 21**

### **71. Paul's First Warning Not To Go To Jerusalem 21:1-5**

**21:1 And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we<sup>a</sup> came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara:**

1a Luke is writing from his eyewitnesses vantage point again.

**21:2 And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth.**

**21:3 Now when we had discovered<sup>a</sup> Cyprus, we left it on the left hand,<sup>b</sup> and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.**

3a Spotted Cyprus. They didn't "discover" it in the literal sense!

3b Probably sailed south, or "under" Cyprus.

**21:4 And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.<sup>a</sup>**

4a The first warning by the Holy Spirit not to go to Jerusalem, at least not at this time and not under these circumstances. Paul's ministry was to the Gentiles, and he belonged in Rome (or some other Gentile city), not Jerusalem. It was his crushing burden for his own countrymen that drive him to go to Jerusalem again, even though the Holy Spirit clearly told him not to go.

**21:5 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.**

### **72. Paul's Second Warning Not To Go To Jerusalem 21:6-14**

**21:6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again.**

**21:7 And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted<sup>a</sup> the brethren, and abode with them one day.**

7a Greeted.

**21:8 And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Cæsarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven;<sup>a</sup> and abode with him.**

8a The same deacon and evangelist we saw in Acts 6:5 and 8.

**21:9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.<sup>a</sup>**

9a Women can preach and prophesy, but only under specific conditions, as long as they are not in a leadership position or usurping authority over the men. Women do prophesy according to 1 Corinthians 11:5 and 14:34-40, although they are told to keep silence in the assembly and are forbidden to step into pastoral-type leadership roles in the local churches.

**21:10 And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judæa a certain prophet, named Agabus.<sup>a</sup>**

10a The same Agabus of Acts 11:28?

**21:11 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.<sup>a</sup>**

11a The second warning from the Holy Spirit not to go to Jerusalem. Agabus does what any good preacher would to get his point across- he used a sermon illustration with Paul's own girdle.

**21:12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.**

**21:13 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.<sup>a</sup>**

13a But wouldn't it be better to remain free within the will of God and enjoy a wider a freer ministry? After his arrest, Paul would lose two years of ministry while in custody that we could have spent in a wider ministry. Wanting to be arrested and even martyred can be a selfish and unhealthy desire if we rush out looking for a martyr's crown if the Lord clearly wants us to avoid it. If we get arrested and killed within the will of the Lord, then that is no issue. But if the Holy Spirit clearly told Paul NOT to go to Jerusalem, then his arrest was not within the will of God. He allowed his burden for the Jews to override the revealed will of God. The Lord allowed Paul to go and used his imprisonment anyway for His glory but how much more could Paul have done if he had kept going west instead of back to Jerusalem?

It may have been Paul's hope that if he returned to Jerusalem as a devout Jew and undertook the required rituals, vows and sacrifices, then it might defuse some of the



hostility of the Jews against him, but in Jerusalem and on the Gentile mission field. But such hopes would prove to be vain.

Before criticizing Paul too strongly, which one of us has not been guilty of this as well, allowing our burden to override a clear manifestation of the will of God?

**21:14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.<sup>a</sup>**

14a They gave up trying to convince Paul not to go to Jerusalem, as Paul could be very stubborn in such matters. His permissive will, certainly not His perfect will.

### **73. Arrival at Jerusalem 21:15-25**

**21:15 And after those days we took up our carriages,<sup>a</sup> and went up to Jerusalem.**

15a Baggage or luggage. The collection for the Jerusalem saints could have been in one of those “suitcases”.

“From ‘carry’ = ‘to convey from one place to another’ + ‘age’ = ‘that which pertains to the root’ (see English suffix ‘-age’). The idea of a ‘carriage’ being a wagon with wheels was first introduced in 1560, but only became popular in the 1700s. Thus, ‘carriage’ is that which is carried (as in ‘valuables or stuff’, similar to how we might say ‘baggage’ or ‘luggage’) (Steven J. White, *White’s Dictionary of the King James Language*, volume 1, page 209).”

**21:16 There went with us also certain of the disciples of Cæsarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.<sup>a</sup>**

16a A frequent practice for saints to provide lodging for other traveling saints.

AV	ESV	LSV
16 There went with us also <i>certain</i> of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.	16 And some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us, bringing us to the house of Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge.	16 And <i>some</i> of the disciples from Caesarea also came with us, taking us to Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple with whom we were to lodge.

Mnason was a “old” disciple, yet the ESV and LSV have him as an “early” disciple, as one of the first or a disciple for a long time.

**21:17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.**

**21:18 And the day following Paul went in with us unto James;<sup>a</sup> and all the elders were present.**

18a The Lord's (half) brother, moderator of the Jerusalem Conference of Acts 15. Peter was not present in Jerusalem at this time.

**21:19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.**

**21:20 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:<sup>a</sup>**

20a It is great that so many Jews were saved but there was a problem that they were zealous for a law that had been completed in Christ (Romans 10:4 **"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."**). The Judaizing element in the church, especially around Jerusalem, was as strong as it was back in Acts 15. It was not as strong away from Jerusalem, in the Gentile churches Paul had planted (except in Galatia). James didn't seem to really have a problem with this.

**21:21 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.<sup>a</sup>**

21a Why would the Jews expect these Gentile Christians to follow Jewish customs such as circumcision or keep the Sabbath?

**21:22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.**

**21:23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them;**

**21:24 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.<sup>a</sup>**

24a But Paul HAD been teaching was he was accused of in Acts 21:21. Was he going to renounce it now just to keep the brethren in Jerusalem, and James, happy? Paul was strong against the Galatian heresy, but would be "go along to get along" in Jerusalem? Going to Jerusalem like this put Paul between the spiritual rock and hard place. Would he compromise his opposition to the Judaizers while in Jerusalem so he could keep his foot in the door with the Jews, while he condemned these same Judaizers while writing to Gentile churches? Paul was in a tough situation, but he had no one to blame but himself since the Holy Spirit told him NOT to go to Jerusalem.

Paul was evidently not under a vow at this time, but they had four men who were, and Paul could join publicly with them in their vow by purifying himself and paying for the sacrifices marking the consummation of their vow—a considerable amount, since two doves or pigeons, one he-lamb, one ewe lamb and a ram had to be offered for each of the four (Num. 6). This procedure was evidently not uncommon at that time. Indeed, Josephus tells how Agrippa I courted Jewish favor by thus financing Nazarite vows (Ant. XIX, 6,1). James and the elders evidently wished Paul to leave with them any questions he might have about this, urging him: "Do therefore this that we say unto thee" (Ver. 23). And to induce him further to yield, they reminded him that they had "written and concluded that [the Gentiles] observe no such thing"<sup>10</sup> (Ver. 25). (Cornelius Stam, *Acts Dispensationally Considered*)." Stam sees a real friction between Paul and James in this chapter. Paul had to do what many preachers have to do at one time or another—comprise. No preacher is able to do everything he really wants to do because of "the brethren". None of us are sovereign in that regard. We sometimes have to yield to peer pressure to do something or go somewhere that normally we would not do, but we yield for whatever reason. None of us are as strong or as dogmatic as we like to make ourselves out to be. We do this mainly to keep down trouble, to stay out of trouble or to get along with the "brethren".

**21:25 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.<sup>a</sup>**

25a Repeated from Acts 15:29. But this would eventually apply to the Jewish believers as well.

AV	ESV	LSV
25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written <i>and</i> concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from <i>things</i> offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from <b>fornication</b> .	25 But as for the Gentiles who have believed, we have sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality."	25 "But concerning the Gentiles who have believed, we wrote, having decided that they should keep from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from sexual immorality."

**"fornication"** The ESV and LSV use "sexual immorality".

#### **74. Paul's Arrest 21:26-40**

**21:26 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.<sup>a</sup>**

26a “Suppose Paul had decided not to go to the temple but simply to stay with the brothers in the house of Mnason, with whom Paul and his companions were to lodge in Jerusalem. Let us further suppose that Paul had said to the brothers, “I do not care for the temple, because God is finished with it. Brothers, did the Lord Jesus not tell us that God has forsaken the temple? I am practicing the Lord’s word concerning us. The priesthood and all the sacrifices are also over. Therefore, I cannot go back to the temple to have any share in the offerings and the priesthood. Brothers, I would like to stay here to have fellowship with you.” Would not the situation have been very different if Paul had decided not to go to the temple and instead had spent his time having fellowship with the brothers? To be sure, the situation would have been very different (Witness Lee, *Life Study of Acts*).”

**21:27 And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple,<sup>a</sup> stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,**

27a Busted! Some of the Asian Jews recognized Paul as they had dealings with him earlier, and raised the alarm that an apostate was in the temple.

**21:28 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:<sup>a</sup> and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.<sup>bc</sup>**

28a The Asian Jews understood Paul’s message very well, no matter how much Paul might have tried to “smooth it over” with the Jews in Jerusalem. But Paul had never spoken against the law or the temple in a contemptable fashion. He had stated that the gospel was superior to the law and that the works of the law could not save, so he was accused of being against both the law and the temple. If that was the case, then why was Paul at the temple?

This is similar to the charge that was made against Stephen back in Acts 6:13.

28b This was a lie, as in Acts 21:29. They happened to see an Ephesian in the temple compound at the same time and assumed he was with Paul. Paul denied this charge in Acts 24:12,18-20.

28c The Jews would have stoned any Gentile caught in the temple (and anyone who would have brought a Gentile in there). “Excavations of the Palestine Exploration Society (Report for 1871, P. 132) have brought to light a slab of stone with an inscription, deciphered by M. Clermont Ganneau, which illustrates the horror with which the Jews looked upon the profanation by Gentiles of that inner portion of the temple grounds sacred to Jews alone. The inscription reads: “NO MAN OF ALIEN RACE IS TO ENTER WITHIN THE BALUSTRADE AND FENCE THAT GOES ROUND THE TEMPLE. IF ANY ONE IS TAKEN IN THE ACT, LET HIM KNOW THAT HE HAS

HIMSELF TO BLAME FOR THE PENALTY OF DEATH THAT FOLLOWS." (Cornelius Stam, *Acts Dispensationally Considered*)."

**21:29 (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)<sup>a</sup>**

29a The Jews wouldn't even walk with a Gentile in public but Paul did. The Jews assumed that if Paul associated with Gentiles, then he would also bring Gentiles into the temple, but Paul knew better than to try that, knowing the trouble it would cause.

**21:30 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.<sup>a</sup>**

30a This would prevent a trouble-maker from rushing into the temple to either do damage to the holy place or seek sanctuary within the holy place. This would also prevent any Gentiles from entering the holy place in the confusion.

**21:31 And as they went about to kill him,<sup>a</sup> tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.**

31a They would have stoned Paul on the spot, without a trial. This was as good an opportunity Satan would have to kill Paul, but Paul survived, and Satan never had a real good chance to do it again after this, except possibly for the events leading up to the shipwreck on Melita in Acts 27 and 28.

**21:32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain<sup>a</sup> and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.<sup>b</sup>**

32a This may be Lysias from Acts 23:26.

32b A blessing in disguise. This uprising had hindered Paul from offering the sacrifices he was about to make, which would largely have nullified his anti-Judaizer testimony. He would never have the chance to go back to the law in this regard, and this would allow him to be more consistent in his teaching and activities.

**21:33 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.**

**21:34 And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult,<sup>a</sup> he commanded him to be carried into the castle.**

34a Complete chaos. The captain couldn't make anything out.

**21:35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people.**

**21:36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.<sup>a</sup>**

36a The very words used by the mob to Pilate when they chose Barabbas in preference to Jesus (Luke 23:18). Paul will hear it again from this same crowd in Acts 22:22.

**21:37 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?<sup>a</sup>**

37a A question sometimes asked by over-educated Greek scholars when challenged by Bible-believing “hillbillies” who never went to Bible college or just attended a Bible institute. These scholars tend to look down their noses as uneducated and “unqualified” Christians and preachers who challenge them on their errors. Textual critics do this with Bible believers when confronted with the facts on Bible versions. One very bad book to read is *From The Mind of God to the Mind of Man*, edited by J. B. Williams and promoted by Bob Jones University, which took a dismissive and insulting attitude toward “unqualified” pastors who dared to disagree with the Party Line on modern Bible versions. John R. Rice, founder of the *Sword of the Lord*, used to take the same attitude when challenged or when someone dared to disagree with him on just about anything. If you can’t “speak Greek”, then you are cast into outer darkness by the “scholars” and wanna-be scholars.

**21:38 Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?<sup>a</sup>**

38a The captain mistook Paul for a Egyptian trouble-maker and was surprised when Paul spoke to him in Greek.

**21:39 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.**

**21:40 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,<sup>a</sup>**

40a This is the only chapter in the Authorized Version that ends in a comma.

## **Acts Chapter 22**

### **75. Paul's First Defense 22:1-24**

**22:1 Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence<sup>a</sup> which I make now unto you.**

1a The Greek word is “apologia” from where we get our word “apology”. The word means to make a defense in a court. The modern meaning of to be sorry or regretful is not the classical definition of the word.

**22:2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)<sup>a</sup>**

2a Speaking in Hebrew showed Paul was a Jew and still had respect for his nation and former religion. “Thomas Walker, a missionary to India, mentions how the use of a Sanskrit phrase can arrest the attention of an Indian audience. There is a national pride that people feel in their own language (Stewart Custer, *Witness to Christ, a Commentary on Acts*, page 316),” This is true, which is why Bible translation work is so important.

**22:3<sup>a</sup> 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,<sup>b</sup> and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.<sup>c</sup>**

3a Paul now launches into his testimony, something he would give several times during his incarcerations. Nothing is more forceful, and a testimony and people always enjoy hearing a good story that they can relate to.

3b The man of Acts 5:34. Sitting at his feet was literal, as the rabbi would teach from a raised chair or platform, with his hearers below him.

3c No one, not even his harshest enemies, could argue with Paul's credentials or dedication to Judaism, not even the High Priest (Acts 22:5).

**22:4<sup>a</sup> And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.**

4a Paul would give his salvation testimony any chance he could. It is a good way to evangelize, for everyone likes to hear a good story.

**22:5 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.<sup>a</sup>**

5a Paul “put his money where his mouth was”. Not only did he hate the name of Christ and the Church but did everything he could to destroy it. He did more to destroy the early church than any ten of his adversaries ever did.

**22:6<sup>a</sup> 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.**

6a We are now in the events of Acts 9.

**22:7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?**

**22:8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth,<sup>a</sup> whom thou persecutest.**

8a That hated name that Paul was raised and train to despise and destroy.

**22:9 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.<sup>a</sup>**

9a Only Paul heard the voice of Christ, His companions saw the light but did not hear or understand the voice Paul was hearing.

**22:10 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.**

**22:11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light,<sup>a</sup> being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.**

11a Paul had been blinded at this point.

**22:12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,**

**22:13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.**

**22:14 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.**



AV	ESV	LSV
<p>14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that <b>Just One</b>, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.</p>	<p>14 And he said, ‘The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth;</p>	<p>14 “And he said, ‘The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from His mouth.</p>

“**Just One**” The ESV and LSV use “Righteous One”.

**22:15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.**

**22:16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.<sup>a-b</sup>**

16a This is a verse that people who wrongly insist on baptism being necessary for salvation cling to like a drowning man would to a life-jacket, while ignoring every other verse that clearly states that water baptism is NOT required for salvation. It never has been and it never will be. This verse with Acts 2:38 and one quarter of 1 Peter 3:21 (and Galatians 3:27 taken out of the context) forms the “bedrock” for the teaching of the Campbellite (“Church of Christ”) sect.

Peter Ruckman, in his *Bible Believers Commentary on Acts* (pages 705-706), does as good a job as anyone dismantling this Campbellite “proof text”:

A. The purpose of the baptism was connected with purification—“wash away thy sins,” not REGENERATION (vs. 16).

B. All orthodox Jews “according to the law” (vs. 13) connected water with purification (John 2:6), not REGENERATION.

C. All orthodox Jews associated water with a physical birth, not spiritual birth (Gen. 1:20; Prov. 5:15–18; John 3:3–4).

D. Ananias, as a Jewish proselyte, was orthodox (vs. 12) and had not had any revelation of Acts 8:35 or Acts 13:39–40 or Acts 10:15. Why wouldn’t he connect water baptism with purification?

E. The man he is telling to get “washed” was washed with “the washing of REGENERATION” (Titus 3:5) three days before he saw any water anywhere (1 Cor. 15:8), and this is Paul’s own testimony about the experience (1 Cor. 15:8), no matter how fouled-up the Campbellites get trying to swim through Hell in a bathtub. Paul was “born again” three days before Ananias mentioned “baptism” (vs. 16).

F. In Acts 15 the man who preached Acts 2:38 said that purification of the heart was by FAITH (15:11), NOT WATER And the man who said that saw God alter Acts 2:38 with Acts 10:44 right in front of his face while he was preaching.

Moral: if every Church of “Christ” elder in the world agreed on Acts 2:38 as a means of the New Birth, they would be just as wrong as Bloody Mary who believed that she ate Christ’s corpse on Sunday morning. Once an infidel, always an infidel.

16b "I don't understand why a Campbellite would ever pry into the conversion of Saul to seek justification for his doctrine. But as the moth is drawn to the light, the Campbellite is irresistibly drawn to the water that is mentioned. Where there is water, you can be certain the Campbellites will have been there long before anyone else. They may have to go around mountains of grace to get there, but they will make it.

"The Campbellite contention on Acts 22:16 is that sins are literally washed away in baptism... 'You meet the blood in the water'. In this regard, Campbellism parallels Romanism. Romanism says the blood of Christ is in the wine; Campbellism says it is in the water. The only difference between the Romanist and the Campbellite is the kind of liquid used... The Romanist will drink the liquid of wine in order to reach the blood, while the Campbellite will be immersed in the liquid of water in order to reach the blood.

"Prior, this statement by Ananias to Paul, what was characteristic of Paul?

Notice:

1. He was a chosen vessel- Acts 9:16.
  2. He had been separated from birth- Galatians 1:15.
  3. He was born out of due time- 1 Corinthians 15: 8.
  4. He had both seen and heard Christ, while others didn't- Acts 22:14.
  5. He had repented- Acts 9:6.
  6. He had believed- Acts 9:6.
  7. He had Christ as his Lord- Acts 9:6.
  8. He was called to preach -Acts 26:15-18. This really kills Campbellism. In the first place, they don't believe in God calling men to preach. Secondly, even if they did believe in the call to preach they wouldn't believe that God would call an unbaptized man to preach. But Paul was called to preaching prior to his baptism!
  9. He obeyed- Acts 9:6-9, 26:19. Paul was definitely accepted before he was baptized.
  10. He prayed- Acts 9:11: But the Campbellites do not believe that God hears an unsaved man's prayer, quoting in this regard John 9:31: **"God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth."** Paul was a worshipper of God, calling Christ "Lord" and then doing His will.
  11. He was ordained to suffer- Acts 9:16. Campbellites often refer to the words in Acts 9:6 which say, "it shall be told thee what thou must do." Then they jump over to chapter 22 and insert baptism as the "must." However, if they would just read the whole story in Acts 9, they would see that suffering for Christ was the "must" in Paul's life. Nowhere is baptism said to be the "must;" but in verse 16 of the same chapter we read: "For I will shew him how great things he **MUST** suffer for my name's sake."
  12. He was a "brother" to Ananias- Acts 9:17. Campbellites quibble back that this was "customary" for one Jew to speak thusly to another and Ananias did not mean to call Paul a brother in Christ. In the light of the text, Paul was a brother in the faith, knowing Christ as his Lord, the same Lord of Ananias.
  13. He did God's will- Acts 9:6-8, 26:19.
- All these things characterized Paul before baptism.

"Now how did baptism "wash away" Paul's sins? It couldn't do this literally, for Christ literally "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26). The language in Acts 22:16 is similar to the statement of Christ when He took the bread and said, "This is my body." The bread was actually only the emblem of His body. Baptism is the emblem of the washing away of sins by the death of Christ. Every time a believer is immersed, he washes away his sins in the same sense Paul did: not literally, but ceremonially, pointing to the death of Christ by which sins were actually washed away. (Bob Ross, *Campbellism: It's History and Heresies*, pages 97-100)."

**22:17<sup>a</sup> 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;**

17a Verses 17-21 would take place toward the end of Acts 9, not too long after Paul's conversion.

**22:18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.<sup>a</sup>**

18a The Jews never would, either in Acts 9, Acts 22 or even today.

**22:19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:**

**22:20 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.<sup>a</sup>**

20a Paul never got away from this and from his own sense of guilt over the stoning of Stephen. He never threw a stone at Stephan but would have been willing to if he had been given the chance. He counted himself as guilty of the blood of Stephan as any of the men who did directly take part in the stoning.

**22:21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.<sup>a</sup>**

21a As the Apostle to the Gentiles. We believe Paul made it to Spain (Romans 15:24). Traditions say he may have made it as far as the British Isles before his second imprisonment. Seeing this is the case, it just verifies that Paul was wrong to be here in Jerusalem at this time when he should have been in Rome, or points further west. These Jews really wouldn't appreciate Paul relating the Gentile part of his commission as they still had a strong hatred of and a prejudice against the Gentiles.

**22:22 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.**

**22:23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,<sup>a</sup>**

23a The mob would have killed Paul on the spot if the Romans hadn't stepped in.

**22:24 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.<sup>a</sup>**

24a A brutal form of interrogation, where the victim is flogged until he "fesses up" what his crime is.

#### **76. Paul's Roman Citizenship Invoked 22:25-30**

**22:25 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?<sup>a</sup>**

25a Paul did this back in Acts 16 at Philippi too, where he allowed himself to be beaten, although as a Roman citizen, it was done illegally. Paul allowed it so he would have the town fathers "over a barrel".

Paul does it again here. He could have spoken up at any time and pulled out his Roman citizenship to prevent being bound but he waits until he is bound to notify the soldiers that he is a Roman citizen. This would force the soldiers to be extra nice to Paul, lest he report them for binding a scourging a Roman citizen who has not been condemned.

**22:26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.**

AV	ESV	LSV
26 When the centurion heard <i>that</i> , he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.	26 When the centurion heard this, he went to the tribune and said to him, "What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen."	26 And when the centurion heard <i>this</i> , he went to the commander and reported to him, saying, "What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman."

The Authorized Version has the impression that the centurion is warning his men about how they treat Paul since he is a Roman citizen. The ESV and LSV have it as the centurion doesn't know what his men are going to do to Paul.

**22:27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.<sup>a</sup>**

27a Paul also saved the captain's neck, for he would have been in a lot of trouble if he allowed a Roman citizen to be scourged in this manner. It would do no good to make a false claim to be a Roman citizen because there was a registry of citizens available in most Roman political centers which could easily be checked. If a man was found to be an imposter, he would be put to death.

**22:28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born.<sup>ab</sup>**

28a There were several ways to obtain Roman citizenship:

1. Buy it but that was very expensive
2. Be born a citizen, as Paul was
3. Have it awarded to you for extraordinary service to the empire

28b How could Paul prove he was a Roman citizen? Anyone could have made such a claim to escape this kind of punishment. There must have been some sort of record of citizens that was on file in the public records in all major Roman cities and governmental centers that could have been verified. Or did Paul carry a copy of his citizenship papers on him?

**22:29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid,<sup>a</sup> after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.**

29a The captain had very good reason to be afraid, if word got back to his superiors about his mistreatment of a Roman citizen.

**22:30 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.**



## Acts Chapter 23

### 77. Paul Before the Council 23:1-11

**23:1 And Paul, earnestly beholding the council,<sup>a</sup> said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.<sup>bc</sup>**

1a Paul is now before the Sanhedrin. This is the same bunch who opposed every prophet and preacher from the return of the Babylonian exiles to the book of Acts. They have learned nothing and have made no spiritual progress in their relation to the truth. Religious councils have quite a bloody and anti-Christian history, up to the modern day, and the Bible-believer needed to beware of them.

1b Said in a defiant tone, despite the charge to the opposite by the priests and elders? This may be why Paul was slapped in Acts 23:2.

1c Conscience is from two Latin words “con”, with and “science”, knowledge. It is the build-in, internal knowledge or right and wrong that all people have. It is left over from the Fall. It is the internal witness of our hearts and of the Holy Spirit that lets us know if we have sinned or are living poorly or are in the wrong concerning an issue.

The word “conscience” only appears in the New Testament and is used 31 times. Below is a presentation of “conscience” using Biblical theology:

1. Older people seem to be affected by it more than younger people
  - A. John 8:9 **And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.**
2. You can live in good conscience and have a good conscience.
  - A. Acts 23:1 **And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.**
  - B. 1 Timothy 1:5 **Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:**
  - C. 1 Timothy 1:19 **Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:**
  - D. Hebrews 13:18 **Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.**
  - E. 1 Peter 3:16 **Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.**
  - F. 1 Peter 3:21 **The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:**
3. You can have a conscience “void of offence”.
  - A. Acts 24:16 **And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.**

4. Conscience bears witness, either good or bad.  
A. Romans 2:15 **Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;**
5. The Holy Spirit is associated with the conscience.  
A. Romans 9:1 **I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,**
6. We are to do certain things for the sake of our conscience.  
A. Romans 13:5 **Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.**
7. Weak consciences can be defiled  
A. 1 Corinthians 8:7,10,12 **Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.**  
B. Titus 1:15 **Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.**
8. Should we be judged according to another man's conscience?  
A. 1 Corinthians 10:25, 27-29 **Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake...If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake. But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that shewed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience?**
9. We commend ourselves to every man's conscience.  
A. 2 Corinthians 4:2 **But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.**
10. You can have a pure conscience.  
A. 1 Timothy 3:9 **Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.**  
B. 2 Timothy 1:3 **I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;**
11. The conscience can be seared.  
A. 1 Timothy 4:2 **Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;**
12. A perfect conscience



A, Hebrews 9:9 **Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;**

13. The conscience can be purged from dead works.

A. Hebrews 9:14 **How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?**

B. Hebrews 10:2 **For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.**

14. An evil conscience

A. Hebrews 10:22 **Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.**

15. Conscience toward God

A. 1 Peter 2:19 **For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.**

**23:2 And the high priest Ananias<sup>a</sup> commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.<sup>b</sup>**

2a Ananias was thoroughly cruel, corrupt, insolent and a thief who openly cooperated with Rome to further his own interests.

2b It was illegal under Jewish law for a man to be physically assaulted like this while being examined or on trial.

**23:3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall:<sup>a</sup> for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?<sup>bc</sup>**

3a "You hypocrite!" Compare with the Lord's estimation of these people in Matthew 23:27,28 **"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."**

3b I can't blame Paul for reacting like this. Jesus opened not His mouth under similar circumstances but Paul was not in the same league as Jesus was here (who is?). Paul had enough pride and ego to react like this when wronged.

The "whited wall" charge was a charge of hypocrisy, a strong accusation to make against the High Priest to his face.

3c "Paul's mind works on a flying saucer basis. It can move at top speed, turn, reverse, stop, go, or climb at a second's notice. Verse 3 is thrown out to see if anybody is going

to go “according to the Law.” The retort of verse 4 shows that the council is not going to pay any attention to proper legal procedure. They do not answer his question; they try to harness Paul with another question. So Paul picks up the harness, puts it on his back, takes the bit in his teeth, lowers his head to the whip, and then deftly pulls the whole wagon off the side of a cliff. This is the principle of Kung Fu and true Judo. You yield with the blow, move in line with the force, and then kill your opponent. “For it is written....” Then he piously quotes the regulation which all of them have in mind. For one moment they think that he has submitted to their authority; they accept his “apology.” While they are smiling and nodding, saying “Amen, so be it,” Paul’s eyes run across the council; he knows not only the high priest, but also who the Pharisees are and who the Sadducees are (vs. 6). (And you are supposed to be dumb enough to think he didn’t recognize Ananias!!) (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, page 724).”

**23:4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God’s high priest?<sup>a</sup>**

4a Paul didn’t and wouldn’t, but the question was whether Ananais really was “God’s High Priest” now after Calvary and the start of the Church Age. Paul’s True High Priest was Jesus Christ, and he would not revile Him.

**23:5 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.<sup>a</sup>**

5a “Sorry, I didn’t know he was the High Priest- he sure wasn’t acting like it!” No one would have mistaken a man like Ananias as any sort of spiritual man. Paul’s remark was sarcastic and cutting. He knew it was against the law to speak ill of the rulers, but this High Priest certainly wasn’t acting like God’s High Priest by commanding that Paul be smitten for speaking his mind and saying the truth. Paul knew full well who the High Priest was. He also now was serving a different High Priest, a divine one in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, so Ananias really wasn’t God’s High Priest any longer and was obsolete.

**23:6 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.<sup>ab</sup>**

6a Paul saw a way out. He realized that the audience was partially Pharisee and the other part Sadducee. As a former Pharisee, Paul could appeal to them against the rival Sadducees and split the Council right down the middle. Paul does two things:

1. Remind the Council he is a Pharisee. This would generate sympathy on the part of the Pharisees when they realized one of their own was being mishandled by the Sadducees.
2. He was being called in question regarding the resurrection, which was true, as Paul, and the early church, focused on the resurrection of Jesus. The Pharisees

could have accepted this, but the Sadducees denied any idea of a bodily resurrection.

I'm sure Paul hadn't planned this in advance. This is where Mark 13:11 comes in: **"But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."** When faced in a situation where we have to witness and give a reason for the faith that lies within us in the face of persecution, the Holy Spirit will direct us how to respond and what to say, which is what He did for Paul here.

6b Paul had to cry out as there was probably a very loud argument going on.

**23:7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.**

**23:8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit:<sup>a</sup> but the Pharisees confess both.**

8a The Sadducees were the theological liberals of the day. The Pharisees were more theologically orthodox.

**23:9 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.<sup>a</sup>**

**23:10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them,<sup>a</sup> commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force<sup>b</sup> from among them, and to bring him into the castle.<sup>cd</sup>**

10a Literally!

10b Same Greek used to describe the rapture, which is, by definition, a quick and violent seizing of the saints by force from Satan's dominion, which will take place at the end of the Church Age.

10c It was the responsibility of the soldiers to secure the safety of any Roman citizen who was in a threatening situation like this.

10d Paul is in prison again, but unlike Acts 16, he is alone. There is no singing, no miracle, no earthquake and no one getting saved this time.

**23:11 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.<sup>a</sup>**

11a Paul did well and is commended and encouraged by the Lord. His safety is also assured by God telling him that he must also bear witness in Rome, which meant that Paul would make it to Rome alive, although there was no promise that it would be a quick or easy ride!

### **78. The Plot Against Paul 23:12-23**

**23:12 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.<sup>ab</sup>**

12a Paul would understand this level of hatred as he once felt it before he was saved. This was the standard reaction of the Jews against Christians or any group they could control- destroy it and kill its leaders!

12b I guess these men eventually starved or died of thirst unless they found a way to release themselves from this curse. They realized that Rome would protect Paul since he was a Roman citizen. If they were going to kill Paul, they would have to do it themselves.

**23:13 And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.**

**23:14 And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse,<sup>a</sup> that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.**

14a They bound themselves with the strongest curse they could think of.

**23:15 Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.<sup>a</sup>**

15a Planning the ambush.

**23:16 And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.<sup>a</sup>**

16a God always has small and weak instrumentalities to foil the best laid plans of men. Paul's nephew overheard this plotting and went and told Paul about the danger. The conspirators did not know that their well-laid plans for murder were totally undone by a boy.

**23:17 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.**

**23:18 So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner<sup>a</sup> called me unto him, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee.**

18a An honorable title if you are a prisoner for the Lord!

**23:19 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?**

**23:20 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 inquire somewhat of him more perfectly.**

**23:21 But do not thou yield unto them:<sup>a</sup> 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.<sup>b</sup>**

21a A boy telling a Roman officer what to do! There was a sense of urgency in his voice.

21b The Captain may have been irritated to learn that the Jews were planning to deceive him for a chance to murder a Roman citizen under his care and responsibility.

**23:22 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.**

**23:23 And he called unto him two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Cæsarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;<sup>a</sup>**

23a Two hundred soldiers and 70 horsemen to protect one preacher, who just happened to also be a Roman citizen. This would effectively put Paul out of the reach of the Jews and would guarantee his safety until he got to Rome. This is how the Elector of Saxony got Martin Luther to safety when his life was in imminent threat from the Catholics- a very similar situation.

#### **79. Lysias' Letter to Felix 23:24-30**

**23:24 And provide them beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor.**

**23:25 And he wrote a letter after this manner:**

**23:26 Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix<sup>a</sup> sendeth greeting.**

26a Felix was your typical politician; untrustworthy, not good at any other career, corrupt and always “on the take”.

**23:27 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.<sup>a</sup>**

27a This is Standard Operating Procedure, to make himself look as good as he can to his superiors. Lysias dresses up his report to make him look as good as possible fore Felix. Of course, Lysias leaves out the point where he had Paul bound and about to be whipped in Acts 22:29. Lysias “came” because “Jerusalem was in an uproar” (Acts 21:31), and he didn’t even know anyone was to be “rescued” (Acts 21:27), let alone a Roman citizen. Furthermore, he didn’t know Paul was a Roman citizen even after he rescued him (Acts 21:39).

**23:28 And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council:**

**23:29 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.<sup>a</sup>**

29a This part is true. Paul was guilty of breaking no Roman laws. The controversy was a religious one, something Rome would not want to get involved in for the same reason police don’t like to get involved in domestic disputes and why no nation should meddle in the civil war of another nation.

**23:30 And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man,<sup>a</sup> I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what they had against him. Farewell.**

30a Referencing the assassination plot against Paul and why it was necessary to use so many soldiers to transport one prisoner to Felix.

#### **80. Paul Sent to Felix 23:31-35**

**23:31 Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought him by night to Antipatris.**

**23:32 On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle:**

**23:33 Who, when they came to Cæsarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.**

**23:34 And when the governor had read the letter, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that he was of Cilicia;**

**23:35 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come.<sup>a</sup> And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.**

35a A man always has a right to face his accusers. It was true in Rome just as it is today.

**AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

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**.

35 he said, "I will give you a hearing when your accusers arrive." And he commanded him to be guarded in Herod's praetorium.

35 he said, "I will give you a hearing after your accusers arrive also," giving orders for him to be kept in Herod's Praetorium.

**"judgment hall"** The ESV and LSV use the more difficult term "Praetorium"





## **ACTS CHAPTER 24**

### **81. Paul Before Felix 24:1-23**

**24:1 And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and with a certain orator named Tertullus,<sup>a</sup> who informed the governor against Paul.**

1a The Jews bring out the big rhetorical guns against Paul. If you can't impress them with substance, just throw more baloney at them. Most of the speeches given on the floor of the United States Senate would be similar to this.

**24:2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness,<sup>a</sup> and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence,<sup>b</sup>**

2a Hardly! All the social, military, political and religious problems of the day would fill a book. Felix was anything but a man of peace. Like many politicians of his day, he was a cold-blooded killer and would qualify as a mass-murderer for all the graveyards he filled.

2b Like how Abe Lincoln dragged us into a Civil War? How Woodrow Wilson got us into World War I, how FDR got us into World War II or how Eisenhower and Kennedy dragged us into Vietnam? Tertullus flatters a wicked man like Felix and then demonizes a godly man like Paul, which is par for the course for men of this world, Sinners would rather exalt Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela or Bill Clinton before they would praise William Carey, John Patton or D. L. Moody.

**24:3 We accept it always, and in all places, most noble Felix,<sup>a</sup> with all thankfulness.<sup>b</sup>**

3a "The judge before whom they were to make their complaint was anything but a man of justice or integrity. Historians tell us that he was a former slave, elevated to his present position as governor of Judaea only through the influence of his brother Pallas, a favorite of the Emperor, but was recalled and tried at Rome for maladministration, finally to be acquitted by Nero only, again, because of his brother's intercession. Josephus tells of his injustice and cruelty and Tacitus says that "in the practice of all kinds of lust and cruelty he exercised the power of a king with the temper of a slave" (Hist. V, 9) This all agrees with what the Scriptures tell us about him (Cornelius Stam, *Acts Dispensationally Considered*)." Felix lost his position as governor in A.D. 60, was brought to trial in Rome and barely escaped death. After that he was exiled in disgrace

3b All Tertullus is missing is a jar of mustard to spread on all the cold cuts he is serving up. But politicians enjoy being flattered.

**24:4 Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee,<sup>a</sup> I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words.**

4a After a 15-minute “butter up”, Tertullus says he didn’t want to be tedious!

**24:5 For we have found this man a pestilent<sup>a</sup> fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:<sup>b</sup>**

5a A pest.

5b The usual inflating of the charges, to make Paul appear to be a worse character than he really was. The Jews would make three charges against Paul:

1. Sedition, against Roman law
2. Heresy against Hebrew law
3. Sacrilege, against both.

**24:6 Who also hath gone about to profane the temple:<sup>a</sup> whom we took, and would have judged according to our law.**

6a A flat-out lie. Paul did no such thing, nor did he have any such intention.

**24:7 But the chief captain Lysias came upon us, and with great violence took him away out of our hands,<sup>a-b</sup>**

7a Waa! We were getting ready to murder Paul on the spot until that nasty old Lysias came and broke up our party! But Lysias was only doing his job- protecting a Roman citizen, so this charge certainly wouldn’t fly in any court. The Jews even attacked a Roman soldier for doing his job. This would not have gone over well well to the ears of a Roman governor.

7b What about the “great violence” the Jews were going to inflict upon a Roman citizen?

AV	ESV	LSV
7 But the chief captain Lysias came <i>upon us</i> , and with great violence took <i>him</i> away out of our hands,		7 “But Lysias the commander came along, and with much violence took him out of our hands,

This verse is missing from the ESV. Some of it is rolled into verse 6 but material is still missing, such as any mention of Lysias.

**24:8 Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him.**

**24:9 And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.**

9a Of course they would. For once, these false witnesses had no trouble keeping their stories straight.

**24:10<sup>a</sup> 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:**

10a Paul's defense is polite and respectful (Acts 24:10), cheerful (Acts 24:10), factual (Acts 24:11,12), honest (Acts 24:14,15), and legally proper (Acts 24:18,19). He avoided the empty flattery of Tertullus.

**24:11 Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship.**

**24:12 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:**

**24:13 Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.<sup>a</sup>**

13a There were no eyewitnesses who saw Paul causing any trouble in Jerusalem or of bringing Gentiles into the temple.

**24:14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy,<sup>a</sup> so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:**

14a God calls it truth, but dead religion considers it a heresy against their teachings and traditions. You can always spot a real heretic, for they have to use coercion, litigation, slander, political power, force, violence, or persecution to obtain his objectives.

Heresy refers to schism and false teaching.

1. The word "heretic" is used only one time in the Bible, in Titus 3:10,11 **"A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself."**

2. The term "heresy" is used four times:

A. Acts 24:14 **"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:"**

B. 1 Corinthians 11:19 **"For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."**

C. Galatians 5:20 **"Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,"**

D. 2 Peter 2:1 **“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”**

3. The same Greek word, “hairesis”, is translated “sect” in Acts 5:17; 15:5; 24:5; 26:5; and 28:22. It refers to any religious sect or part. It also refers to false teachers and doctrinal error (Titus 3:9-11; Galatians 5:20; 2 Peter 2:1).

4. Both terms heretic and heresy refer to a willful choosing of false doctrine, a willful alignment with error.

**24:15 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.**

**24:16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.<sup>a</sup>**

16a Paul wasn't about to apologize for anything nor recant anything in relation to his ministry or his life from Acts 9. He was in the will of God, doing the will of God in God's way. Why should he have to apologize to anyone for it? And how many men can honestly say they have such a conscience?

**24:17 Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.**

**24:18 Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult.<sup>a</sup>**

18a Paul was near the temple, being peaceful and minding his own business. It was his enemies who were the trouble-makers. The first rule of anarchists is to accuse your enemies of the crimes that you are guilty of.

**24:19 Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me.<sup>a</sup>**

19a A man has a right to face his accusers, but none of the Jews who started the trouble against Paul in the temple on that day were present.

**24:20 Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council,**

**24:21 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.<sup>a</sup>**

21a Paul continues to make the resurrection the focal point of his defense.

**24:22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way,<sup>a</sup> he deferred them,<sup>b</sup> and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.<sup>c</sup>**

22a He had a good knowledge of the Old Testament.

22b He made no decision but put it off, just like he would do in Acts 24:25. Felix was not a man of action. He delayed important decisions as long as he could, hoping things would “work out” by themselves.

22c There is no indication that Lysias ever showed up for this hearing.

**24:23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty,<sup>a</sup> and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.**

23a Paul would not be put in prison but would be “free on bail”, although he would have a Roman soldier with him at all times. This was another benefit of his Roman citizenship.

## **82. Felix’s Rejection of the Gospel 24:24-27**

**24:24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess,<sup>a</sup> he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.**

24a “It was about this time that the wicked Felix, with the aid of Simon, a magician from Cyprus, succeeded in enticing the beautiful Drusilla away from Azizus, king of Emesa, whom she had some six years previous, married at the age of fourteen. Now about twenty, she already had an infamous past. She was the daughter of Herod Agrippa I (of Acts 12) the sister of Herod Agrippa II (of Acts 26) and was a little girl at the time her father had accepted worship as a god and had been suddenly stricken dead (Acts 12:22,23) (Cornelius Stam, *Acts Dispensationally Considered*).” Drusilla was the third wife of Felix, the youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa I and sister to Harod Agrippa II and to Bernice. Tradition says Felix and Drusilla both perished in the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79. Drusilla was only about 41 years old, but her beauty perished instantly in that disaster.

**24:25 And as he reasoned<sup>a</sup> of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,<sup>b</sup> Felix trembled,<sup>c</sup> and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.<sup>d-e</sup>**

25a Come now, let us reason together, as in Isaiah 1:18. Evangelism is trying to reason with the sinner of his spiritual need and the cure of the gospel, to make him see it and to accept it. Salvation is not based on a blind, irrational faith, but after the right use and exercise of the sinner’s reason and intelligence.

25b Paul's Three Point Outline to Felix:

1. **Righteousness.** He showed Felix from the Scriptures that he was unrighteous before God and how he could obtain righteousness before God.
2. **Temperance.** "In case you are trying to match *your righteousness* with *God's righteousness*, there are some things you had better check up on! Do you *overeate*, Felix? Do you *undereat*? Do you *oversleep*, Felix? Do you *undersleep*? You see, Felix, there is more to being "righteous" than abstaining from adultery, drinking, lying, fornication, killing, cheating, stealing, etc. Do you really need more money than you have, Felix? Isn't \$50,000 a year enough to live on? "**Having food and raiment let us therewith be content**" (1 Tim. 6:8)! Do you overdrink, Felix? Are you *intemperate* in your criticisms of Divine Revelation? Are you intemperate in your dress and appearance? Then what makes you think you can match your righteousness against the righteousness of a sinless man? (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Acts*, page 753)."
3. **Judgment to come.** "God "hath appointed a day" (Acts 17:31) in which He will judge "the secrets of men" (Rom. 2:16), whether they "be good or...evil" (Eccl. 12:14); and God, "who knows the secrets of the heart" (1 Cor. 4:5) and the "imagination of the thoughts" (1 Chron. 28:9), will give you your dues (Rom. 6:23)! Every idle word, Felix! Every word on your tongue (Psa. 139:4), Felix, old buddy! That means all the dirty jokes, all the slander and gossip, all the secret plots and schemes, all the blasphemous cuss words, and all the whining and complaining! Judgment to come, Felix! "Everyone of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12). "By the works of the law no flesh shall be justified in His sight" (Gal. 2:16). "Who can say...I am pure" (Prov. 20:9)? YOU—Felix?! How will you stack up in that day when the heavens and earth melt with a fervent heat (2 Pet. 3) and "the dead, small and great" (Rev. 20:12) "stand before God" and the books are opened (Dan. 7:10)?! You are judging me now, Felix, but some day you'll be in the docket, and a sinless Judge will dish it out to you: He won't have any bias or prejudice other than sinless Holiness! Do you have a sinless Saviour, Felix? Or are you counting on the filthy rags (Isa. 64:6) of your self-righteousness to deliver you when your "day in court" comes?! (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer's Commentary on Acts*, pages 753-754)." This day of judgment was coming and there would be no escape from it or appeal to it.

Felix is "almost persuaded" but he fights it off. He comes close to salvation but never takes the final step and never completes the transaction. Almost saved is totally lost.

25c Felix was under strong conviction, but he shook it off. Who wouldn't tremble under this kind of sermon? Felix just heard an evangelistic sermon "waist high and over the plate". Paul spoke of sin, hell, judgment, repentance, and a changed life. No "caring and sharing". No psychological altar calls. No pretty flannelgraphs. He PREACHED. Paul preached a sermon that no personality on Trinity Broadcasting Network could ever hope to preach. Could you imagine Creflo Dollar or Binny Hinn or Joel Osteen preaching this sort of sermon to anybody, let alone a Roman governor? They wouldn't have the spiritual manhood to do it. Paul did not try to flatter Felix or to get on his good

side to scheme his way to release. He preached the truth to the man who could have freed him- or who could have continued his confinement. But the need to get the truth to this man outweighed any personal consideration Paul had for his own safety. He would leave his welfare in God's hands while he fulfilled his own personal call, commission and responsibility. And Felix trembled because he was guilty of these sins Paul listed and he knew it. He might be able to convince others that he was okay and better than most other men, but he would not be able to convince his own hear of that.

25d Alas, this "more convenient season" never comes. If you hear the gospel once and reject it (by failing to accept it), you have no guarantee that you'll ever get another chance. If the gospel is rejected, then it becomes that much more difficult to respond to it if you do hear it again. We have no record that Felix ever did receive the gospel. For Felix, today was inconvenient. But tomorrow didn't get any better. And when it is convenient to die to your old life and start a totally new life, abandoning your old life and everything that goes with it?

25e Did the fact that Felix had an unbelieving Jewish wife influence his decision to reject the gospel, to keep her happy? There were certainly political issues to consider, as it might not look good for a Roman governor to become a Christians. His superiors in Rome wouldn't have appreciated it and the Jews would have made a lot of trouble for him, too.

AV	ESV	LSV
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.	25 And as he reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, "Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you."	25 But as he was discussing righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and answered, "Go away for the present, and when I find time I will call for you."

The LSV has Felix being "frightened" instead of being under conviction.

**24:26 He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul,<sup>a</sup> that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.<sup>b</sup>**

26a Felix was hoping for a ransom, but none was ever offered for Paul. Most of the Christians were poor and Paul may have discouraged any of the brethren to try to bail him out anyway. Felix hoped the longer he kept Paul under arrest, the better the chances that someone would ransom him.

26b Felix kept calling for Paul and talking with him and Paul kept witnessing him and reasoning with him. Felix would hear the gospel multiple times from Paul but there is no indication that he ever received it to the salvation of his soul.

**24:27 But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.<sup>a</sup>**

27a Politics kept Paul in custody for two full years, wasting away, out of commission and circulation and probably forgotten.



## **ACTS CHAPTER 25**

### **83. Paul Before Festus 25:1-8**

**25:1 Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Cæsarea to Jerusalem.<sup>a</sup>**

1a Literally, as Jerusalem was at a much higher elevation than was Caesarea, which was a coastal city. When you went to Jerusalem, you always went “up”. Festus was the new proconsul and went up to Jerusalem to meet the local rulers and to acquaint himself with their needs and concerns. One of his responsibilities would be to resolve and legal disputes Felix had left him.

**25:2 Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him,<sup>ab</sup>**

2a It looks like Paul had been “forgotten” by Festus until the Jews stirred up trouble again. Since they got nowhere with Felix, they tried their hand with Festus, to see if they could get another crack at killing Paul.

2b “It must have been unusual for the high priest in person to attend trials at Caesarea, nearly seventy miles distant, but he had a personal interest in the prosecution of the man who had called him a “whited wall. (Cornelius Stam, *Acts Dispensationally Considered*).”

**25:3 And desired favour against him,<sup>a</sup> that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him.<sup>bc</sup>**

3a Since Festus would have wanted to start off on the right foot in his dealings with the Jews, they hoped he would do them a favor concerning their desires against Paul.

3b The Jews decided to try to get to Paul again through Festus. The Lord was behind this as Paul may have “fallen through the cracks” with the change in administration between Felix and Festus. By the Jews trying to get to Paul again, Festus becomes aware of Paul’s situation.

3c By trying to get Paul transferred to Jerusalem for another trial, the Jews hoped to ambush Paul. Two years did nothing to lessen the Jews’ hatred for Paul.

**25:4 But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Cæsarea,<sup>a</sup> and that he himself would depart shortly thither.**

4a Festus saw no good reason to transfer Paul to Jerusalem and he probably suspected the Jews would try something if Paul was transferred. Festus may have

been surprised at the fierceness of the Jewish accusations against Paul, a Roman citizen, so he wanted to tread carefully in this case.

**25:5 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.<sup>a</sup>**

5a Festus sounds like Gallio here (Acts 18:13-15).

**25:6 And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Cæsarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought.<sup>a</sup>**

6a There would be no private interviews with Paul as Felix had done numerous times.

**25:7 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.<sup>a</sup>**

7a If Paul was such a reprobate as the Jews claimed, it should have been easy to produce the evidence to support their charges. When they could provide none, it would be apparent to any honest man that the Jews had no case against Paul. The Jews had many charges but still no proof.

**25:8 While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar, have I offended any thing at all.**

#### **84. Paul Appeals to Caesar 25:9-12**

**25:9 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?<sup>a</sup>**

9a Like Felix, Festus suggests Paul go up to Jerusalem, in order to pacify the Jews. This was not his original position (Acts 25:4) but Festus started “feeling the heat” as soon as he took office. But when Paul turned down Festus’ offer and decided to go over his head to Caesar, did it leave a bad taste in Festus’ mouth, to be disrespected by Paul?

**25:10 Then said Paul, I stand at Cæsar’s judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.<sup>a</sup>**

10a Paul knew that if he was shipped to Jerusalem, it would be a death sentence. Paul probably wouldn’t have made it to Jerusalem, even under a heavy Roman guard.

**25:11 For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die:<sup>a</sup> but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Cæsar.<sup>b</sup>**

11a Paul believed in capital punishment for certain crimes, as any good Bible believer would, since it is Biblical for a certain number of crimes.

A list of capital crimes in the Bible:

1. Murder, Exodus 21:12,14
2. Smiting parents, Exodus 21:15
3. Kidnapping, Exodus 21:16
4. Cursing parents, Exodus 21:17; Leviticus 20:9
5. Causing a miscarriage, Exodus 21:22,23
6. Negligence that results in a death, Exodus 21:29
7. Witchcraft, Exodus 22:18; Leviticus 20:7
8. Bestiality, Exodus 22:19, Leviticus 20:15,16
9. Sacrificing to idols, Exodus 22:20
10. Oppressing widows or orphans, Exodus 22:24
11. Sabbath breaking, Exodus 31:14
12. Offering children to Moloch- Leviticus 20:2
13. Adultery- Leviticus 20:10
14. A man lying with his father's wife- Leviticus 20:11
15. A man lying with his daughter-in-law- Leviticus 20:12
16. Homosexuality- Leviticus 20:13
17. A man who marries a woman and her mother- Leviticus 20:14
18. The daughter of a priest who plays the whore- Leviticus 21:9
19. Blasphemy- Leviticus 24:16
20. Rebellious children- Deuteronomy 21:21
21. Pretending to be a virgin (women only)- Deuteronomy 22:21
22. Rape- Deuteronomy 22:25

11b As a Roman citizen, Paul has this right. This was the only option Paul had to avoid going to Jerusalem. This takes Paul out of the hands of the Jews once and for all. This would also get Paul to Rome, where God intended him to go all along. Although Rome will now pay the expenses for Paul trip to Rome, Paul has wasted two years so far and more time would pass when he got to Rome, awaiting the trial there.

**25:12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar shalt thou go.<sup>a</sup>**

12a This delivers Paul from the hands of the Jews once and for all, but it places him under the jurisdiction of the Roman Empire and its current Caesar.

## **85. Festus' Report to Agrippa 25:13-22**

**25:13 And after certain days king Agrippa<sup>a</sup> and Bernice<sup>b</sup> came unto Cæsarea to salute Festus.**

13a Agrippa is the son of Herod Agrippa (Acts 12:1), and he is thoroughly Roman with very little sympathy for the Jews.

“Who was Agrippa?

(1) He was the son of Herod Agrippa I, who killed James the brother of John and was then eaten of worms (Acts 12:23). He was a grandson of Herod the Great who tried to kill the infant Jesus.

(2) He was the brother of Drusilla, the adulterous wife of Felix.

(3) He was a king and a governor over Judea, Samaria, Galilee, and other parts.

(4) Bernice was his sister, but there is testimony from history that he lived with her in an immoral relationship. (David Cloud, *The Book of Acts*, page 155).”

13b **Bernice** was first married to her uncle Herod (King of Chalcis), and she went to live with her brother Agrippa before marrying Polemo, King of Cilicia. Rumor had it that she lived a life of incest with Agrippa, and more rumors involve her with Titus Vespasian. She had the morals of a harlot.

**25:14 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:**

**25:15 About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed me, desiring to have judgment against him.**

**25:16 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.<sup>a</sup>**

16a Always a fair practice, and this is a basis for American jurisprudence. An accused man should always have a right to face his accusers and make his defense. The Romans were great for their legal theories, but in practice, they usually fell short of their ideals.

**25:17 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.**

**AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

17 Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the

17 So when they came together here, I made no delay, but on the

17 “So after they had assembled here, I did not delay, but on the next day took my seat

<b>judgment seat</b> , and commanded the man to be brought forth.	next day took my seat on the tribunal and ordered the man to be brought.	on the judgment seat and ordered the man to be brought before me.
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There is no “judgment seat” in the ESV.

**25:18 Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed:**

**25:19 But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.<sup>a</sup>**

19a Paul continues to emphasize the resurrection of Jesus. Festus’ use of the phrase “one Jesus” showed he had no familiarity with Jesus, His crucifixion, or the background of the church.

AV	ESV	LSV
<b>19</b> But had certain questions against him of their own <b>superstition</b> , and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.	<b>19</b> Rather they had certain points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who was dead, but whom Paul asserted to be alive.	<b>19</b> but they had some points of disagreement with him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, a dead man whom Paul asserted to be alive.

“**superstition**” The ESV and LSV use “religion”. But it makes more sense for a unsaved Roman to use “superstition” than “religion”.

**25:20 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.**

**25:21 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 Cæsar.**

**25:22 Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.**

#### **86. Festus’ Introduction 25:23-27**

**25:23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp,<sup>a</sup> 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.<sup>b</sup>**

23a Why is the world always trying to impress and intimidate God’s people with its pomp and circumstance? One day, the Christian will witness divine pomp and

circumstance that no earthly king could ever hope to match. “Present with the “great pomp” are some of the world’s worst; this is always true where there is “great pomp.” Queen Victoria’s reign (1837–1901) came about as close to having “great pomp” without lasciviousness as any ruler who ever lived, and because of this, “Mid-Victorian” has been the standard epithet used since that day by college professors, libertines, perverts, whoremongers, evolutionists, and Communists whose moral standards are ANIMAL. Paul is about to preach to several homosexuals, a couple of lesbians, four or five embezzlers, two or three swindlers, a dozen people involved in blackmail operations, twenty or thirty politicians, a couple of astrologers, a dozen cursing army officers, four dozen crap-shooting enlisted men, a score of drunkards, and nine or ten men who would steal the eyeteeth out of a hen for the price of a compliment. (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, pages 768-769).”

23b Paul is now witnessing before kings, as the Lord said he would (Acts 9:15).

**25:24<sup>a</sup> 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.**

24a “Festus reviews the case again briefly (vs. 24). He admits that he is unable “to signify the crimes” (vs. 27) laid to Paul’s charge, and so he is bringing Paul out to let Agrippa examine him, in the hopes that Agrippa will be able to write out some kind of formal charges (vs. 26) and send them on to Caesar (vs. 26). Festus will mess himself up good if he sends a prisoner to take up Nero’s time with no charges telling the Emperor of what the culprit is guilty. Being what he was, Nero would just as soon have burned Festus in his palace garden as some “Bible thumper.” (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, page 768).”

**25:25 But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death,<sup>a</sup> and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.**

25a Festus rightly understood that Paul’s case was not a capital one. The charges against him were religious, not legal.

**25:26 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.**

**25:27 For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes laid against him.**

## **ACTS CHAPTER 26**

### **87. Paul's Defense To Agrippa 26:1-32**

**26:1 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself.<sup>a</sup> Then Paul stretched forth the hand<sup>b</sup> and answered for himself:**

1a Never give the preacher permission to “speak for himself” as you may not like what he has to say!

1b A common practice of orators.

**26:2 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:**

**26:3 Especially because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews:<sup>a</sup> wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.**

3a Paul also knows to “butter up” the judge.

**26:4 My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews;**

**26:5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.<sup>a</sup>**

5a Paul was a “fundamentalist” in that regard.

**26:6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:<sup>a</sup>**

6a The hope of a messiah. This is also a reference to the ultimate hope of the Millennial Kingdom. This is still true among observant Jews today.

**26:7 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.**

**26:8 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you,<sup>a</sup> that God should raise the dead?<sup>b</sup>**

8a Paul makes it personal now...“YOU”. A good evangelistic sermon will always be personal and demand a response from the hearer. “Never once does Paul adopt this pussy-footing, panty-waist, boot-licking, cowardly, cringing “first person PLURAL” (“WE”) that we hear whimpered over every major Christian FM broadcast (and telecast) in this country (1950–2000). Imagine what a stench it is in the nostrils of God to hear

one of His “ministers” saying, “If WE accept Christ as OUR Savior, then WE don’t have to worry, do WE?” What’s the matter there, junior? Are you lost too? What is the “we” for? (“WE” had an expression in the army for a man who kept saying “we,” but “we” can’t repeat it now!) (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, page 772).”

8b Good question. If there was a God, He should have power to raise the dead. It is seen occasionally among the Greek and Roman myths. So why was it everyone seemed to go berserk whenever someone preached on it?

**26:9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.<sup>a</sup>**

9a This is the name of His humility, Jesus of that despised and obscure little town of Nazareth.

**26:10 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.<sup>a</sup>**

10a We don’t know if Paul actually put anyone to death by his own hand, but he in agreement with the practice and cooperated where he could, as he did in the case of Stephan in Acts 8:1.

**26:11 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.<sup>a</sup>**

11a Places where Paul wouldn’t or shouldn’t have had authority or jurisdiction to operate, but that didn’t stop him from his reign of terror.

**26:12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,**

**26:13<sup>a</sup> 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.**

13a Paul recounts the events surrounding his conversion. A good personal testimony is an effective tool to use in evangelism, as everyone likes a good story and to hear about how someone else got saved shows the unsaved person that it they can also be saved.

**26:14 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.**



**26:15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.**

**26:16 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;**

**26:17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,**

**26:18<sup>a</sup> 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.**

18a Paul's commission included the following:

1. To open the eyes of lost men (2 Corinthians 4:1-4). You have to wake them up as so many church goers are sound asleep, spiritually, totally dead and insensitive to things around them or the spiritual state they are in.

2. To turn from darkness to light (John 1:4-12). Jesus is the light (John 1:8,9), and the Bible is the light (Psalm 119:105), so a Biblical ministry relies on both of these things to get the gospel out and nothing else.

3. To turn men from the power of the Devil to God (Acts 26:18). The condition of mankind is said to be "without hope," "without strength," "without excuse," and "without God" (Romans 1:20; 5:6; Ephesians 2:12) who have been taken captive by the Devil "at his will" (2 Timothy 2:26).

4. It is so that men can obtain "forgiveness of sins" (Acts 26:18) through the new birth.

5. It is to give them an inheritance (Acts 26:18) in the Millennial kingdom.

**26:19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:<sup>a</sup>**

19a "It came from God, and I obeyed. What else could I do?" Paul is also saying "I obeyed the heavenly vision Agrippa- will you?"

**26:20 But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.**

**26:21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.**

**26:22 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:**

**26:23 That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead,<sup>a</sup> and should shew light unto the people,<sup>b</sup> and to the Gentiles.**

23a The resurrection again, the main theme of apostolic preaching and the one doctrine that caused more trouble than any other.

23b The Jews. The gospel goes to the Jew first (Romans 1:16 **“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”**).

**26:24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.<sup>abc</sup>**

24a Someone was getting under conviction! Felix shrugged it off, but Festus had to make an open verbal attack, especially when the resurrection was mentioned. Felix and Agrippa were under conviction in a good way- they were seriously considering what Paul was saying, although both ended up rejecting it. But Festus is under conviction in a bad way as he is fighting Paul tooth and nail, with every word he says.

Three reasons why Festus burst out as he did here:

1. Festus is under conviction. He has been with Paul before (Acts 24:27, 25:1-12). He had talked with Felix about Paul’s beliefs (Acts 24:27, 25:14). The doctrine of a risen Christ was nothing new to Festus—look at 26:26! Do you think there was a Roman king, governor, centurion, or tetrarch in Palestine who hadn’t heard about the mess that Herod and Pontius Pilate got into?! If Roman Jews had heard about it (Acts 28:22), don’t you know that Festus had gotten some “scuttlebutt”?

2. Festus is losing a friend and a supporter. Until now he could count on Agrippa to resist the Bible with him; but Agrippa’s eyes are getting glassy, his mouth has dropped open, and he is listening too carefully for Festus’ liking.

C. Festus is no longer the center of attention. Until Paul starts, Festus is the big shot (Acts 25:4-9, 14-17). Agrippa had been listening to him. But once Paul starts preaching, everyone forgets Festus!

24c For some men, this is true. When they go to Bible College, they are young Bible Believers, zealous for the truth. When they get out 4-8 years later, they have abandoned the Authorized Version, the premillennial coming and evangelistic zeal. They have been turned into dead orthodox apostates due to (too) much learning ruining them.

**26:25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus;<sup>a</sup> but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.**

25a Although he was insulted, Paul responds politely. He remembers Romans 13:1-4 in dealing with the “powers that be”.

**26:26 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.<sup>a</sup>**

26a There is nothing secret about the gospel as all the truth is plain and laid out for all to see. If anything that styles itself as “Christian” has secret doctrines not made available to the church in general or made available for all to see, it is apostate.

**26:27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.<sup>a</sup>**

27a The audacity! Presuming to tell a king what he believes!

**26:28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.<sup>a</sup>**

28a Like Felix. Both came close but neither man completed the transaction. And they will curse themselves for all eternity as they realize how close they actually were to eternal life. Hell is full of people who were “almost persuaded”.

There will be three types of response and conviction with the preaching of the gospel.

1. Felix- interested but never responded. He called for Paul multiple times to hear him but there is no record that he ever responded to salvation.
2. Festus- an active opposition. He is under conviction but reacts badly.
3. Agrippa- he listens and agrees with Paul says, and almost accepts the gospel, but does not take that final step. Agrippa was closer to salvation than Felix was.

**26:29 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.<sup>a</sup>**

29a **“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 “**

“How about those stone bruises (2 Cor. 11), Paul?”

“Sure, I wish they had them too.”

“How about the whip marks (Gal. 6), Paul?”

“Sure, they’re fine!”

“How about the fact that you have no family, land, house, car, regular income, pension, bank account, Social Security, insurance, church, or school?”

“Fine! ‘ALTOGETHER such as I am, except these bonds!’”

“Do you mean to tell us, Paul, that the only thing you can’t recommend to a king is your chains?”

“Yes.”

“Do you mean to say, Paul, that everybody in the courtroom should be exactly as YOU ARE?”

“That’s what I said.”

“Man! How narrow-minded can you get!!?”

Imagine the nerve of that Jew saying that everybody in that courtroom should be a single male with no possessions, half-blind and half-beaten to death, with no assurance of staying alive twenty-four hours! Imagine the nerve of that “nut”! Paul says “ALTOGETHER such as I am, except for these bonds” (vs. 29), and raises his manacled hands to rattle the chains before the royal visage (Peter Ruckman, *Bible believer’s Commentary on Acts*, pages 793-794).”

**26:30 And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them:**

**26:31 And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.**

**26:32 Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.<sup>a</sup>**

32a But Paul really had no option- he had to appeal to Caesar.

## ACTS CHAPTER 27



### 88. Paul's Trip to Rome Begins 27:1-8

**27:1** And when it was determined that we<sup>a</sup> should sail into Italy,<sup>b</sup> they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners<sup>c</sup> unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.

1a Luke is on-board with Paul now.

1b The plan was to sail as directly from Caesarea to Rome, across the Mediterranean, but the winds and storms would make that impossible.

1c Was this a prison ship, to transport prisoners to Rome? Jesus was crucified with two thieves and Paul was shipped to Rome with a boatload of prisoners, most were probably violent.

**27:2<sup>a</sup>** And entering into a ship<sup>b</sup> of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.<sup>c-d</sup>

2a Locations listed during this ocean trip:

1. Sidon (Acts 27:3)
2. "Under" Cyprus (or probably around the south side of the island) (Acts 27:4)

3. Sea of Cilicia (Acts 27:5)
4. Pamphylia (Acts 27:5)
5. Myra, a city of Lycia (Acts 27:6)
6. "Over against" Cnidus (Acts 27:7)
7. "Under" Crete, same as "under" Cyprus (Acts 27:7) and then "close by" Crete in Acts 27:13.
8. "Over against" Salome (Acts 27:7)
9. The Fair Havens (Acts 27:8)
10. Lasea (Acts 27:8)
11. Claudia (Acts 27:16)
12. Adria (Acts 27:27)
13. Melita (Acts 28:1)
14. Syracuse (Acts 28:12)
15. Rhegium (Acts 28:13)
16. Puteoli (Acts 28:13)
17. Appii forum (Acts 28:15)
18. The Three Taverns (Acts 28:15)
19. Rome (Acts 28:16)

2b "It is a mistake, however, to suppose that these primitive vessels were necessarily small in size. The ship in which the apostle sailed from Myra to Melita accommodated 276 passengers and crew besides her cargo, and the next ship sailing from Melita to Italy, accommodated all these 276, besides her cargo and her own passengers and crew. Indeed, Josephus refers to a ship on which he sailed with 600 passengers aboard. Many ancient merchant vessels, then, were large sea-going craft, capable of carrying heavy cargoes and hundreds of passengers. (Cornelius Stam, *Acts Dispensationally Considered*)."

2c Some people think Paul may have written Hebrews (if he did write Hebrews) during this trip, which would account for the numerous nautical terms found in that epistle.

2d As a Roman citizen, Paul was allowed to take others with him, maybe two slaves (if he had any). Luke probably volunteered to go with Paul.

**27:3 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.<sup>a</sup>**

3a Paul enjoyed a good relationship with his guards on the whole trip. The fact that he was a Roman citizen no doubt helped.

**27:4 And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.<sup>a</sup>**

4a Wind-driven vessels would be dependent on the wind blowing in the right direction in order for them to reach their destination.

**27:5 And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, a city of Lycia.**

**27:6 And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.<sup>a</sup>**

6a Was this a private, hired ship? There may have been no official ship of the Roman navy heading toward Jerusalem available at this time. See Acts 27:11 where this ship had an "owner".

**27:7 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;**

**27:8 And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.**

#### **89. Paul's Warning 27:9-13**

**27:9 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous,<sup>a</sup> because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them,**

9a This was during the stormy season. For example, it was usually not wise to sail the north Atlantic from June-October because of hurricanes, especially is days before radars, satellites and radio.

**27:10 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.<sup>a</sup>**

10a Paul was not a sailor but he had some experience with sailing on ships. It must have been the Holy Spirit who gave Paul this warning.

**27:11 Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.<sup>a</sup>**

11a Can you blame him? Who would you believe- an experienced sailor or a preacher?

**27:12 And because the haven was not commodious to winter in,<sup>a</sup> 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.**

12a Ships would stay in port or in a safe harbor to avoid the winter storms on the Mediterranean Sea. They did not want to have to spend the next three months or so in Lasea.

#### AV

#### ESV

#### LSV

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 <b>Phenice</b> , <i>and there</i> to winter; <i>which is</i> an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west.	12 And because the harbor was not suitable to spend the winter in, the majority decided to put out to sea from there, on the chance that somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, facing both southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there.	12 And because the harbor was not suitable for wintering, the majority reached a decision to set sail from there, if somehow they could arrive at Phoenix, a harbor of Crete facing southwest and northwest, to spend the winter <i>there</i> .
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“Phenice” rendered as “Phoenix” in most modern versions.

**27:13 And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, loosing thence, they sailed close by Crete.**

#### **90. Euroclydon 27:14-38**

**27:14 But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.<sup>a</sup>**

14a Such storms are common in the Mediterranean. Think of it as a violent and long-lasting Nor'easter. Tropical-like storms, called “Medicanes” also form in the Mediterranean.

“Mediterranean tropical-like cyclones, often referred to as medicanes (a portmanteau of Mediterranean hurricanes) but sometimes also as Mediterranean cyclones or as Mediterranean hurricanes, are meteorological phenomena observed over the Mediterranean Sea. On a few rare occasions, some storms have been observed reaching the strength of a Category 1 hurricane. The main societal hazard posed by medicanes is not usually from destructive winds, but through life-threatening torrential rains and flash floods.

The occurrence of medicanes has been described as not particularly rare. Tropical-like systems were first identified in the Mediterranean basin in the 1980s, when widespread satellite coverage showing tropical-looking low pressures which formed a cyclonic eye in the center were identified. Due to the dry nature of the Mediterranean region, the formation of tropical, subtropical cyclones and tropical-like cyclones is infrequent and also hard to detect, in particular with the reanalysis of past data. Depending on the search algorithms used, different long-term surveys of satellite era and pre-satellite era data came up with 67 tropical-like cyclones of tropical storm



intensity or higher between 1947–2014, and around 100 recorded tropical-like storms between 1947 and 2011. More consensus exists about the long term temporal and spatial distribution of tropical-like cyclones: they form predominantly over the western and central Mediterranean Sea while the area east of Crete is almost devoid of tropical-like cyclones. The development of tropical-like cyclones can occur year-round, with activity historically peaking between the months of September and January, while the count for the summer months of June and July is the lowest (Wikipedia).”

AV	ESV	LSV
14 But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called <b>Euroclydon</b> .	14 But soon a tempestuous wind, called the northeaster, struck down from the land.	14 But before very long there rushed down from the land a violent wind, called Euraquilo;

“Euroclydon” left untranslated in the ESV, rendered as “Euraquilo” in the LSV.

**27:15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive.<sup>a</sup>**

15a The winds and seas made navigation impossible so the crew just let the storm carry the ship wherever it would until they were able to regain control.

**27:16 And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat:<sup>ab</sup>**

16a The boat is the boat of Acts 27:32, and it signifies a small skiff or lifeboat towed behind the main vessel.

16b Notice the “we”. Were Luke and Paul helping to work the rigging during the storm?

**27:17 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.**

AV	ESV	LSV
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.	17 After hoisting it up, they used supports to undergird the ship. Then, fearing that they would run aground on the Syrtis, they lowered the gear, and thus they were driven along.	17 After they had hoisted it up, they used supporting cables in undergirding the ship. Fearing that they might run aground on <i>the shallows</i> of Syrtis, they let down the sea anchor and in this way let themselves be carried along.

The ESV and LSV add material about “the Syrtis”.

**27:18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship;<sup>a</sup>**

18a Non-essential cargo was thrown overboard to lighten the ship and make it easier to handle.

**27:19 And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.**

**27:20 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.**

**27:21 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.<sup>a</sup>**

21a “See! I told you so!” Sometimes, you are better listening to a Spirit-filled man than to the “experts”.

**27:22 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.<sup>a</sup>**

22a Paul knew this because God told him so (Acts 27:23,24).

**27:23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God,<sup>a</sup> whose I am, and whom I serve,**

23a Satan may have been trying to kill Paul here to end his ministry and to prevent him from making it to Rome. God assures Paul that despite these trials, he would make it to Rome and that he would stand before Caesar.

**27:24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.**

**27:25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.**

**27:26 Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.<sup>a</sup>**

26a Fulfilled in Acts 27:41.

**27:27 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;**

**27:28 And sounded,<sup>a</sup> and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms.**

28a Determined the depth of the water at that spot. Twenty fathoms= 120 feet, fifteen fathoms= 90 feet.

**27:29 Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.**

**27:30 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,**

**27:31 Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.<sup>a</sup>**

31a A good preacher could preach an effective evangelistic sermon from this verse. Many of the crew were seriously considering jumping ship and hoping they would be able to swim to shore, but Paul warned them against that. Anyone who stayed in the ship would be saved, even if they suffered some injury. Anyone who took to his own devices and tried to save himself would be lost. The evangelistic application is obvious. A sinner must sail to heaven on the "Old Ship of Zion" although the trip will be rock and stormy at times and he must have faith that going to heaven God's way is the only way he can get there, despite what his reason may tell him. A man who tries to "swim" to the shore under his own power and resources will be lost every time.

**27:32 Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.<sup>a</sup>**

32a The boat of Acts 27:16. They cast it off to further lighten the load of the ship and in an attempt to increase any chance of bringing the ship back under control. It was obvious that they would have no need of this boat as no one would be using it to "go ashore". They would all be "going ashore" the hard way- by shipwreck.

**27:33 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.<sup>a</sup>**

33a Who would want to eat in a situation like this? Seasickness would be a major issue but the crew was exhausted from 14 days of struggling with the ship and with eating little, if any, food. With the conditions on board during the storm, it would have been impossible to prepare any cooked meals, so if they did eat at all, it would have been the provisions that did not require cooking.

**27:34 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.**

**AV****ESV****LSV**

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.

34 Therefore I urge you to take some food. For it will give you strength, for not a hair is to perish from the head of any of you."

34 "Therefore I encourage you to take some food, for this is for your salvation, for not a hair from the head of any of you will perish."

**"health"** The LSV has "salvation", which is not a good reading in this context.

**27:35 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.**

**27:36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat.**

**27:37 And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.<sup>a</sup>**

37a This is 276 people.

**27:38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.<sup>a</sup>**

38a They would not have been able to eat this wheat as they would have had no way to prepare it or to do anything with it.

**91. Shipwreck on Melita 27:39-28:10**

**27:39 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.<sup>a</sup>**

39a They were hoping that the bottom in this inlet would be sandy instead of rocky.

**27:40 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.**

**27:41 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.**

**27:42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.<sup>a</sup>**

42a These soldiers were responsible for these prisoners and if any escaped, the punishment could be severe, even death. Better to kill them, claiming they were “shot while trying to escape.”

**27:43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose;<sup>a</sup> and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land:<sup>b</sup>**

43a This is because:

1. Paul was a Roman citizen who was scheduled to stand before Cesar and it was the duty of this soldier to make sure Paul got to Rome.
2. The soldier probably thought very favorably of Paul and wanted to keep him as safe as he could.

43b It is every man for himself at this point.

**27:44 And the rest, some on boards,<sup>a</sup> and some on broken pieces of the ship.<sup>b</sup> And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.**

44a Some churches are crippled by many “boards” - a deacon “board”, an elder “board”, a “Sunday School “board. The only board you see in the New Testament is washed up on shore here!

Looking at the chapter from the practical standpoint of a believer, one can find:

1. Life is like a sea voyage. Your VESSEL (2 Tim. 2:20) is the ship.
2. Life is like a sea voyage; the *Lord Jesus Christ* is the ship, as in Genesis 6:14!
3. Most Christians will not get home in the ship they are in before it falls to pieces (2 Cor. 4:16), and if this ship is the Lord Jesus Christ, He must DIE (Heb. 9:28) before you can arrive “**safe to land.**”
4. In real troubles and disasters the man who believes God and prays is always more reliable than the professionally trained technicians who “specialize” in the “fields of their choice.” One Bible-believing, praying saint in time of war and famine (2 Kings 6–7) is worth twelve armed men with recoilless 75mm rifles. One God-fearing, praying saint can save a nation (Gen. 6:8; 2 Kings 19:35) that couldn’t be saved if every sinner in it had an I.Q. of 150 and thirty years of formal education.
5. Trouble comes alike to saint and sinner (John 16:33), but the saint has someone “on board” with him (Acts 27:23) who will see him through (Dan. 3:25).
6. Most of our worries are interest paid on trouble, for most of them never materialize, and where they do, God is still above to see us through them.
7. A Christian witness is always appropriate in the worst situations. (During a gale at sea when a boat was foundering, someone began to scream “Oh, my God, we’re sinking! Somebody do something *religious*! Quick!” Whereupon one distracted soul began to pass his hat around for an offering!)

8. For the sake of the saints (vs. 24), God will often spare a church, family, nation, or school; and if it were not for this handful of Bible-believing people (vs. 25), America would have “gone under” after the Civil War.

9. You will eventually have to commit yourself to God’s providence (Rom. 8:28) to get to land, and even if it is the sea and the wind that take you there (Matt. 14:32), they are in His control (Psa. 104:25–30).

10. Not every saint arrives in Heaven on a Baptist “board” (vs. 44). Some of them get a Presbyterian *Plank*, some get a Methodist *Mainstay*, or a Lutheran *Log*, and they have been known to wash up on the beach holding a Catholic *Casket*. (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, pages 829-830).

44b Paul mentions suffering three shipwrecks in 2 Corinthians 11:25. We have one here. When were the other two? Paul had made previous sea voyages in Acts 13:4,13; 14:26; 16:11; 18:18,19,21; 2 Corinthians 2:12,13.

## **ACTS CHAPTER 28**

**28:1 And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.<sup>a</sup>**

1a Modern-day Malta, about 150 miles from the Italian mainland.

**28:2 And the barbarous<sup>a</sup> 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.**

2a Uncultured, non-Greek and/or Roman. The Greek understanding of a “barbarian” was one who stammered (he was a bar-bar-bar-barbarian) and/or spoke a language you couldn’t understand.

**28:3 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.<sup>a</sup>**

3a Paul was NOT having a snake-handling meeting and this passage cannot be used to justify snake-handling! Many snake-handlers will use this and Mark 16:18 (“**They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.**”) as justifications to take up serpents “to show your faith”. But it is a sin because it is tempting God (Matthew 4:7 “**Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God**” also Luke 4:12). Mark 16:18 is merely a promise of supernatural protection while engaged in the Lord’s service, as here with Paul. The heat of the fire attracted the snake and Paul simply had his hand in the wrong place at the wrong time. The snake was probably also the same color as the sticks and looked like a stick, so Paul had not noticed it. It may have been sluggish due to the cold but when the bundle of sticks was placed near the fire, the snake revived.

**28:4 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.<sup>a</sup>**

4a They assumed Paul must have been some sort of criminal on the run (wasn’t he on a prison ship, under Roman guard?). If the sea couldn’t get him, then the gods would send a viper to finish him off. Even the heathen have a sense of sin and divine justice.

**28:5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.**

**28:6 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.<sup>a</sup>**

6a How their tune changed! Paul must have been some sort of a god if even a poison snake couldn't kill him. This is a similar situation as what occurred in Acts 14:11-13. This is another use of Mark 16:18, when applied properly. Paul could (and probably did!) use the situation to preach a good evangelistic message.

**28:7 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.**

**28:8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux:<sup>a</sup> to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.**

8a This could have involved fever and dysentery. Luke is with Paul and Luke probably did all he could do here but when he had "shot his wad", he then lets Paul take over.

**28:9 So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:**

**28:10 Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary.<sup>a</sup>**

10a The apostolic gifts demonstrated in Acts 28:8,9 open the door for a good gospel witness. But there is no record of Paul preaching here or of a church being established.

## **92. The Last Leg of the Trip 28:11-15**

**28:11 And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.<sup>a</sup>**

11a Shipping companies usually have a logo to identify them and to make them stand out. This is the meaning here. Castor and Pollux were also the patron saints for sailors, although of these twins, only Pollux was a god. Castor was mortal.

**28:12 And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days.**

**28:13 And from thence we fetched a compass,<sup>a</sup> and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:**

13a Made a circuit or completed a circle. The ship could not sail to Rhegium as it is found on the maps, but had to go around a body of land to get there.

**28:14 Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.**



**28:15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns:<sup>a</sup> whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.**

15a This was about 30 miles south of Rome.

### **93. Paul in Rome 28:16-31**

**28:16 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.<sup>a</sup>**

16a Paul was still able to avoid a jail cell. He was allowed to rent a house and remain there under a form of “house arrest”, guarded by soldiers. He must have been a very easy prisoner to guard, but the guard was probably witnessed to constantly by Paul.

**28:17 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.<sup>a</sup>**

17a Paul is trying to defuse any static he was expecting from the local Jewish leaders. Since he was under house arrest, he was unable to attend any of the Roman synagogues, so he asked their leaders to visit him.

**28:18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me.**

**28:19 But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of.**

**28:20 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.<sup>a</sup>**

20a Was Paul wearing a literal chain here? Or was he speaking figuratively?

**28:21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judæa concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee.<sup>a</sup>**

21a Paul rehearsed the reasons for his arrest and trip to Rome, but the local Jewish leaders knew nothing of Paul’s situation or the reason why he was there.

**28:22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.<sup>a</sup>**

22a But they had heard of the Christians and wanted to know what Paul knew about it and what he thought about it. No doubt Paul was only too happy to oblige! When asked about the faith, Paul is in a similar situation Peter was in back in Acts 10 with Cornelius, but Paul wouldn't enjoy the same results that Peter did that day.

**28:23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging;<sup>a</sup> 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.<sup>b</sup>**

23a Paul's rented lodging, which was far superior to any Roman dungeon he could have been in.

23b An all-day meeting. Paul was known for his long preaching sessions (Acts 20:9).

**28:24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.<sup>a</sup>**

24a The usual response with the Jews when presented with the gospel. No one bats a thousand in evangelism, not Paul, not even the Lord.

**28:25 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,<sup>a</sup>**

25a This passage from Isaiah 6:9,10 is quoted four times in the New Testament, in Matthew 13:14,15; John 12:40; here and in Romans 11:8.

**28:26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:**

**28:27 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.**

**28:28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.<sup>a</sup>**

28a Paul would get a better reception among the Romans than he would among these Jews.

**28:29<sup>a</sup> And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.**

**AV**

**ESV**

**LSV**

29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

29 [When he had spoken these words, the Jews departed, having a great dispute among themselves.]

29a This verse is missing in the ESV and is in brackets in the LSV. All these words are found in the majority of all Greek texts, as well as in such ancient versions as the Old Latin copies of ar, c, gig, p, ph, w, the Syriac Peshitta translation of Lamsa, the Syriac Harkelian, Armenian, Ethiopian, and Slavonic.

English Bible translations that include this whole verse are the following: Wycliffe 1395, Tyndale 1525, Coverdale 1535, the Great Bible 1540, Matthew's Bible 1549, the Bishops' Bible 1568, Geneva Bible 1599, the Douay-Rheims bible 1582, Wesley 1755, Worsley Version 1770, Living Oracles 1835, Darby 1890, Youngs 1898, the NKJV 1982, the Amplified 1987, New Life Bible 1969, World English Bible, Hebrew Names Bible, Complete Apostolic Bible, New Heart English Bible 2003, Orthodox Jewish Bible 2011, the KJV 21st Century 1994, the Aramaic Bible in Plain English 2010, Jubilee Bible 2000, the Third Millennium Bible 1998, the Holman Standard 2009, and the 2014 Natural Israelite Bible.

Acts 28:29 is also included in both the Modern Greek Bible "Και αφού ειπε ταυτα ανεχωρησαν οι ιουδαιοι εχοντες πολλην συζητησιν προς αλληλους." and in the Modern Hebrew Bible - יהי בדברו זאת הלכו מאתו היהודים ויתוכחו הרבה איש עם רעהו:

This verse is also found in both the Modern Greek Bible Και αφού ειπε ταυτα ανεχωρησαν οι ιουδαιοι εχοντες πολλην συζητησιν προς αλληλους. and the Modern Hebrew Bible - יהי בדברו זאת הלכו מאתו היהודים ויתוכחו הרבה איש עם רעהו:

Some of the new versions that often omit hundreds of words from the New Testament because of Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, have now gone back to including this verse in their texts; these include the 2003 Holman Standard, the 2006 ISV (International Standard Version) and The Voice of 2012.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown comment: "the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves -- "This verse is wanting in many manuscripts [and omitted by several recent editors], but certainly without reason. Probably the words were regarded as superfluous, as they seem to tell us what we were told before, that Paul "departed" (see Ac 28:25). But in Ac 28:25 it is the breaking off of the discourse that is meant, here the final departure from the house."

But as is so typical among the "every man for himself versionists", Daniel Wallace's NET version omits the whole verse and then he tells us: "Some later mss include 28:29: This verse is almost certainly not a part of the original text of Acts, as it lacks the best credentials."

Instead of "Some later mss. include", Dr. Dan would be far more accurate if he were to say: "Most Greek texts, several ancient versions, and several church Fathers

quote this verse (Chrysostom, Euthallus, Cassiodorus, Theophylact), but primarily because of Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, we choose to SOMETIMES omit it in the multitude of conflicting modern versions."

In its now familiar fickle fashion, the NASBs from 1963 to at least 1973 chose to omit the whole verse from its text, but then in 1977 and again in 1995 they "scientifically" decided to place the verse back in the text, but this time in brackets. The NASBs now bracket some 40 entire verses in their N.T. just so you won't get too comfortable with the idea that you might in fact have the true words of God in Book form.

The NIVs can't seem to make up their minds either. The NIV English versions omit the verse entirely from the text, but the NIV Portuguese version, the Nova Versão Internacional 1999, contains the whole verse - "Depois que ele disse isto, os judeus se retiraram, discutindo intensamente entre si."

The footnotes are also misleading in many versions. The NASB brackets the verse but then tells us: "early manuscripts do not contain this verse." However, the previous ASV of 1901 also omitted the verse, but they told us in their footnote: "Some ancient authorities insert" the verse. Do you see how they have now downgraded the evidence from "some ancient authorities insert" to "early mss. do not contain"? The newer NASB footnote is a half lie - half truth. The fact is that many early manuscripts DO contain the whole verse.

Also the Nestle-Aland footnotes are misleading as well. They tell us that the Syriac Peshitta omits the verse, yet both Lamsa's and Murdock's translation of the Peshitta, as well as the online Aramaic Peshitta versions all contain the verse in question. The Aramaic Peshitta is the text that was published by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1905 and is now in the Public Domain. The Aramaic Bible in Plain English has the complete verse in it, saying: "And when he had said these things, the Jews went forth and many were debating among themselves."

Other modern versions that omit the entire verse from their text are the RSV, ESV, NIV, the Jehovah Witness New World Translation, Common English Bible and a slew of modern paraphrases like the Message and the TNIV.

### The Catholic Connection

Likewise, the Catholic versions are in disarray with the previous Douay-Rheims 1582 and Douay 1950 include the verse, but now the St. Joseph NAB and the New Jerusalem bible 1985 omit it from their texts. Jerome's Vulgate omitted it; the Clementine Vulgate included it and the newest Latin edition has now put it back in as well as the 2009 Catholic Public Domain Version - "And when he had said these things, the Jews went away from him, though they still had many questions among themselves."

Among the foreign language Bible translations that DO contain the entire verse are the following: Afrikaans 1953, Albanian, Arabic, Aramaic Peshitta, Armenian, Basque, Bulgarian 2005, Cebuano, Chamorro, Chinese Contemporary Bible 2011, Czech BKR, Danish, Dutch Staten Vertaling Bible, Esperanto, Estonian, Polish Gdanska Bible, Finnish 1992, French Martin 1744, French Louis Segond 1910 and 2007, French

Ostervald 1996 - "Lorsqu'il eut dit cela, les Juifs s'en allèrent, discutant vivement entre eux.", the Modern Greek Bible, Modern Hebrew, Luther's German Bible 1545 and the 2000 Schlachter Bible - "Hungarian Karoli Bible, Norwegian Det Norsk Bibelselskap, Haitian Creole, Indonesian, Italian Diodati 1649, La Nuova Diodati 1991 and Italian Riveduta 2006 - "Quando ebbe detto questo, i Giudei se ne andarono discutendo vivamente fra di loro.", Japanese, Korean, Latvian, Maori, Portuguese Sagrada Biblia, Almeida and O Livro 2000, the Norwegian, Romanian Cornilescu, Spanish Sagradas Escrituras 1549, Cipriano de Valera 1602, Spanish Reina Valera 1909 - 2011, Swahili, Russian Zhuromsky, Tagalog Ang Dating Biblia 1905 and Tagalog Ang Salita ng Diyos 1998, Turkish 1994, Thai, Ukranian P. Kulish 1871, Uma, Wolof, Vietnamese and Xhosa.

The Modern Hebrew Bible contains this entire verse, reading: "וְהָיָה בְּדִבְרֵי זֶה הָלְכוּ מִתּוֹכָם הַיְּהוּדִים וַיְתוּכְחוּ הִרְבֵּה אִישׁ עִם רֵעֵהוּ: (Will Kinney, website "Another King James Bible Believer" <http://brandplucked.webs.com>)

**28:30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house,<sup>a</sup> and received all that came in unto him,**

30a Paul may have been under some form of house arrest, which was much better than sitting in a Roman prison.

**28:31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.<sup>a-b</sup>**

31a Paul writes Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon from this imprisonment. The next time he returns to it (around A.D. 67), he completes Titus and 2 Timothy. In the interim (A.D. 63–66), it is quite possible that Paul made the trip to Spain (Romans 15:24 **"Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company."**), and he might have made a trip to Wales or England.

31b "The Acts of the Tribulation Saints" (Dan. 11) are yet in the future; "The Acts of the Church Fathers" and "The Acts of the Reformers" are behind us. Those of us who have gone to work in the vineyard at 5:45 P.M. have been promised the same reward as the apostles (Matt. 20:12) who enlisted at 6:00 A.M. and carried out the book we have just studied: "The Acts of the Apostles." Our job is clear. We are to harvest before the shades of night fall, and in the last few minutes of "gathering grapes," we should not waste too much time observing the wind or the clouds (Eccl. 11:4–5). While Communism and Catholicism cluster in thunderheads on the horizon our duty is clear; we are working for the Master (Eph. 6:9) in His vineyard (Matt. 21:28), and He who causes the seed to bear fruit after its kind (Gen. 1:11–12) controls the elements (Matt. 14:32). We do not have to compromise on evolution to please the Communists, and we do not have to compromise on manuscript evidence to please the Catholics. "Our Rock" is not "their rock" (Deut. 32:31), our Vine is not "their vine" (Deut. 32:32), and our Holy

Bible is not—nor ever shall be—the leavened corruption of Alexandria, Egypt. Our Bible is the “living word of the living God,” and it will be just as infallible and immovable after the disintegration of the Solar System as it was the day that God delivered it to the church who KEPT it (Rev. 3:8). “This is the way, walk ye in it!” (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Commentary on Acts*, page 847).”

## **Appendix 1- The Preaching of the Resurrection in the Book of Acts**

**Acts 2:24-32 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. 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: Therefore did my heart rejoyce, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. 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. 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 seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.**

**Acts 3:15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.**

**Acts 4:10 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.**

**Acts 5:30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.**

**Acts 10:40,41 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. 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.**

**Acts 13:30-37 But God raised him from the dead: And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, 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. 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. Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. 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: But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.**

**Acts 17:31,32 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. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.**

**Acts 23:6 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.**

**Acts 24:15,21 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... 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.**

**Acts 25:19 But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.**

**Acts 26:8,23 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?... 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.**



## Appendix 2: Outline of the Doctrine of Repentance

All verses relating to repentance, faith and salvation must be interpreted in context and in relation to other verses. We cannot isolate one verse and build a doctrine around it.

The doctrine that a mere prayer saves sinners, even if they evidence no repentance in their lives is a great error in our day.

One reason why so many converts in Independent Fundamental Baptist churches are so spiritually weak is because they “believed” a plan of salvation that left out repentance and a changed life. They simply “believed” but without any instruction that the life needed to reflect the reality of a heart change, if there was one. But with this manner of evangelist, the “soul-winner” got them to quickly recite a prayer or give some verbal assent that “they wanted to go to heaven when they died”. A quick prayer was made and then the ‘soul-winner’ left the new “convert” with no charge, challenge or instruction about repentance and a change of life as described in 2 Corinthians 5:17 and 1 Thessalonians 1:9.

Quotes from men who hold an incorrect view of repentance for salvation. (Many of these quotes taken from David Cloud’s works *Way of Life Encyclopedia, Repentance and Soulwinning*).

1. “What makes the wrath of God abide on a person? Believing not! So, from what must a person repent in order to be saved? He must repent of that which makes him lost. Since ‘believing not’ makes him lost, ‘believing’ makes him saved. The repentance there is a turning from the thing that keeps him from being saved to the thing that saves him. So, yes, there is a repentance from unbelief in order to believe. It is simply a change of direction. It means a turning around. You are going away from believing, and you decide to turn around and believe. You change your direction; you change your mind. With your will you believe and rely upon Christ to save you. In order to believe, you have to repent of unbelief. That which makes a man lost must be corrected” (Dr. Jack Hyles, *Enemies of Soulwinning*, 1993).

2. “10,446 professions of faith in 1995. ... Repentance is not a doctrine. The word ‘repent’ is not even found in the book of John. It is obviously assumed by God that ‘repentance’ is a part of ‘believing.’ ... Repentance is not turning from your sins. ... Repentance is to change one’s mind from unbelief to belief in Christ” (Bob Gray, “A Message from the Pastor,” *The Soulwinner*, January 1996, Longview Baptist Temple, Longview, Texas).

3. “Repentance is not a prerequisite to salvation; for if repentance is required, salvation is based, at least in part on works. ... We would suggest to you from the Word of God that repentance is included in believing. It is not a separate act which conditions salvation, but rather it is included in the act of believing” (Dwight Pentecost, *Things Which Become Sound Doctrine*, 1965, pp. 70, 71).

4. “The emphasis upon repentance has created confusion among preachers young and old. It has been a source of discouragement to soulwinners. ... I have two choices. I can follow those who wear their soulwinning pins and carry New Testaments,

or I can follow those who are critical of leading people to Christ. May the critics repent and may the soulwinners realize that we are on the same team" (Brent Neal, "Is Repentance an Attack on Soulwinning?" *The Baptist Contender*, June 1996).

5. "The many false conditions of salvation [include] water baptism and repentance" (Dr. Fred Afman, "The Way of Salvation," Sunday School class, Highland Park Baptist Church, Chattanooga, Tennessee, May 1996; quoted from Chris McNeilly, *The Great Omission*, pp. 25,26; Dr. Afman was a teacher at Tennessee Temple).

Definitions of repentance and the references where the word is used in our English Bible

1. English

A. To turn from sin and dedicate oneself to the amendment of one's life, to feel regret or contrition, to change one's mind (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

2. Hebrew

A. shub, turn back (Hebrew)

1. 1 Kings 8:47 Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;

2. Ezekiel 14:6 Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.

3. Ezekiel 18:30 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

3. Greek

A. ametameletos (Strong's #278), "not repented of, unregretted", signifies "without change of purpose"

1. Romans 11:29 For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.

2. 2 Corinthians 7:10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

B. metamelomai (Strong's #3338), meta, and melo, "to care for," "to regret, to repent oneself,"

1. Matthew 21:29 He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.

2. Matthew 21:32 For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

3. Matthew 27:3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

4. 2 Corinthians 7:8 For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.

5. Hebrews 7:1 (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)

C. metaneo (Strong's #3340), "to perceive afterwards" (meta, "after," implying "change," noeo, "to perceive"; nous, "the mind, the seat of moral reflection"), in contrast to pronoeo, "to perceive beforehand," hence signifies "to change one's mind or purpose," always, in the New Testament, involving a change for the better, an amendment, and always, except in Luke 17:3, 4, of "repentance" from sin.

1. Matthew 3:2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (Mark 1:15 adds: repent ye, and believe the gospel.)

2. Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

3. Matthew 11:20,21 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. (Luke 10:13; 11:32)

4. Matthew 12:41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

5. Mark 6:12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

6. Luke 13:3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. (Luke 13:5)

7. Luke 15:7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

8. Luke 15:10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

9. Luke 16:30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

10. Luke 17:3,4 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

11. Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

12. Acts 3:19 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;

13. Acts 8:22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

14. Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

15. Acts 26:20 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.

16. 2 Corinthians 12:21 And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.

16. Revelation 2:5 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 candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

17. Revelation 2:16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

18. Revelation 2:21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

19. Revelation 2:22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

20. Revelation 3:3 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.

22. Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

23. Revelation 9:20,21 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

24. Revelation 16:9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

25. Revelation 16:11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

5. metanoia (Strong's #3341), "afterthought, change of mind, repentance," repentance," is used of "repentance" from sin or evil.

1. Matthew 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

2. Matthew 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

3. Matthew 9:13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

4. Mark 1:4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of

repentance for the remission of sins.

5. Mark 2:17 When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

6. Luke 3:3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

7. Luke 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

8. Luke 5:32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

9. Luke 15:7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

10. Luke 24:47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

11. Acts 5:31 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.

12. Acts 11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

13. Acts 13:24 When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

14. Acts 19:4 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.

15. Acts 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

16. Acts 26:20 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.

17. Romans 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

18. 2 Corinthians 7:9,10 Now I rejoyce, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

19. 2 Timothy 2:25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

20. Hebrews 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

21. Hebrews 6:6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.
22. Hebrews 12:17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.
23. 2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

#### Repentance:

- A. Is a change of perception in the mind
- B. A change of direction of the life
- C. A change of allegiance that will lead to a change of heart (H. T. Spence, *A Catechetical Study for the Remnant*, page 75),

#### Categorization of verses on repentance (mainly New Testament verses)

##### 1. Verses about Israel repenting of their national sins

- A. 1 Kings 8:47 Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and **repent**, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;
- B. Ezekiel 14:6 Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.
- C. Ezekiel 18:30 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.
- D. Jonah 3:5-8. The word repentance is not used in this passage, but in Matthew 12:41 Jesus said they repented. The repentance of the people of Nineveh was witnessed in their actions. True repentance is always observable by a change in one's manner of living.
- E. Luke 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.
- F. Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
- G. Acts 3:19 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;
- H. Acts 5:31 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.
- I. Acts 13:24 When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of

repentance to all the people of Israel.

## 2. Example of Personal Repentance

A. Job 42:6 Wherefore I abhor *myself*, and **repent** in dust and ashes.

## 3. Examples of Preachers Preaching Repentance

### A. John preaching repentance

1. Matthew 3:2 And saying, **Repent** ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
2. Mark 1:4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of **repentance** for the remission of sins.
3. Luke 3:3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;
4. Acts 13:24 When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.
5. Acts 19:4 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.

### B. Jesus preached repentance

1. Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, **Repent**: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
2. Matthew 9:13 But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to **repentance**.
3. Mark 2:17 When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.
4. Luke 5:32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

### C. The Disciples preaching repentance

1. Mark 6:12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

### D. Peter preaching repentance

1. Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
2. Acts 3:19 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;

### E. Paul preaching repentance

1. Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent".
2. Acts 20:20,21 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.
3. Acts 26:20 But showed 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.

4. Repentance has evidences for it (2 Corinthians 5:17)

A. Matthew 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for **repentance**:

B. Matthew 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto **repentance**: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire:

C. Mark 1:4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

D. Luke 3:3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

E. Luke 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

F. Acts 13:24 When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

G. Acts 19:4 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.

H. Acts 26:20 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.

5. Repent and believe, showing repentance and belief are separate things

A. Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: **repent** ye, and believe the gospel.

6. Repentance accompanies belief, can't have one without the other

A. Matthew 3:2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

(Mark 1:15, adds : repent ye, and believe the gospel).

B. James 2:19- the devils "believe" but without repentance

7. Associated with the Kingdom of Heaven

A. Matthew 3:2 And saying, **Repent** ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

B. Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

8. Associated with the Kingdom of God

A. Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

9. Commands to repent

A. Ezekiel 18:30. Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all



your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

B. Matthew 3:2 And saying, **Repent** ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

C. Matthew 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

D. Matthew 9:13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

E. Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

F. Mark 2:17 When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

G. Mark 6:12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

H. Luke 5:32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance

I. Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

J. Acts 3:19 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;

K. Acts 8:22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

L. Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

M. Acts 26:20 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.

N. Revelation 2:5 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 candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

O. Revelation 2:16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

P. Revelation 3:3 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.

Q. Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

10. You will perish if you do not repent

A. Luke 13:3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye **repent**, ye shall all likewise perish.

B. Luke 13:5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye **repent**, ye shall all likewise perish.

11. Heaven rejoices when a sinner repents

A. Luke 15:7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no **repentance**.

12. Self-righteous men will not repent

A. Luke 15:7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

13. Men will not necessarily repent if they saw a miracle

A. Luke 16:30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will **repent**.

14. If someone sins against us and then repents, we are to forgive

A. Luke 17:3,4 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he **repent**, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I **repent**; thou shalt forgive him.

15. Repentance preached in the name of Christ

A. Luke 24:47 And that **repentance** and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

16. Repentance to be preached to all nations

A. Luke 24:47 And that **repentance** and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

17. Baptism follows repentance

A. Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, **Repent**, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

18. Repent first, then sins are blotted out/forgiven

A. Acts 3:19 **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;

B. Acts 5:31 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.

19. God grants repentance

A. Acts 11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted **repentance** unto life.

B. 2 Timothy 2:25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

C. Hebrews 6:6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

20. Repentance toward God

A. Acts 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, **repentance** toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

21. Gentiles should repent

A. Acts 26:20 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.

22. Repent and turn to God

A. Acts 26:20 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.

23. The goodness of God leads to repentance

A. Romans 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to **repentance**?

24. Sorrow works repentance

A. 2 Corinthians 7:9,10 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to **repentance**: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh **repentance** to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

25. Repentance is impossible for some

A. Hebrews 12:17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of **repentance**, though he sought it carefully with tears.

26. God desires all to come to repentance

A. 2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to **repentance**.

27. Refusal to repent brings judgment

A. Matthew 11:20 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:

B. Revelation 2:5 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 candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

C. Revelation 2:22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they **repent** of their deeds.

28. Repentance toward God is a fundamental doctrine and is absolutely necessary

A. Hebrews 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

29. Verses where repentance is associated with salvation

A. Luke 13:3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye **repent**, ye shall all likewise perish.

B. Luke 13:5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye **repent**, ye shall all likewise perish.

C. 1 Thessalonians 1:9 For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;

Steps in salvation

A. Conviction -- where sin is admitted. Man must see himself as a lost, ruined, guilty, desperately wicked sinner without hope or help, in danger of hell. In repentance, a sinner not only sees himself as a sinner, but he recognizes the fact that he has sinned against a righteous and holy God.

1. The message that Paul preached was: "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). In repentance, there will be confession of sin to God (Psa. 32:5; 51:1-4).

B. Contrition -- where sin is abhorred. When one sees himself as he appears before God, he is brought to a place where there is godly sorrow for his sin and hates it altogether.

1. "For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin." (Psa. 38:18);

2. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of ..." (2 Cor. 7:10).

3. To hate sin is to love God. In true repentance, there is not only the desire to escape the consequences of sin, but to be rid of sin itself as a thing displeasing to God.

C. Conversion -- where sin is abandoned. Repentance involves the forsaking of sin:

1. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:7);

2. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Prov. 28:13).

Bible Examples of Repentance

A. The Prodigal Son coming to himself, confessing his sin against God and his father, and returning home. Luke 15:17-20.

B. The Thessalonians believers turning to God from idols to serve the living and true God. 1 Thessalonians 1:9.

C. Zaccheus turning from corruption to uprightness. "And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as

he also is a son of Abraham” Luke 19:8,9.

D. Nebuchadnezzar humbling himself before God. “Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase” Daniel 4:37.

E. The Philippian Jailer running from his sin to Jesus Christ and becoming a helper of Christians. Acts 16:33-34.

F. The Jews at Pentecost turning to Christ. “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. ... Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” Acts 2:38-42.

G. It is Job, repenting and abhorring himself in dust and ashes- Job 42:6:

H. It is Manasseh repenting of his sins after God’s judgment fell on him- 2 Chronicles 33:12-19.

I. It is Paul, turning from a life as a persecutor of Christians to the life and ministry of an apostle- Galatians 1:23

J. David repenting of his sin with Bathsheba in Psalm 51.

Objections of the Biblical doctrine where both faith and repentance are necessary for salvation generally comes from the “hyper-evangelicals”, the neo-Independent Fundamental Baptists (followers of the Sword of the Lord and Jack Hyles) and the self-styled “New IFB” (followers of Steven Anderson):

### **1. Objection 1 “Repentance is not found in the Gospel of John”**

A. Since “repentance” is not found in John’s Gospel, it is not necessary for salvation. “Believe” is used 99 times in John.

B. Other doctrines relating to salvation are also not mentioned in John- redemption, justification, propitiation, substitution, etc. Since they are not mentioned in John’s Gospel, do they also have no bearing in salvation? We are given four Gospels so that we will have a complete picture of Christ’s person, work, and message; and the fact remains that repentance is mentioned 27 times in the Gospels alone and 59 times in the New Testament. That is a heavy emphasis.

C. John’s Gospel emphasizes faith, but why make it mutually exclusive from repentance? Is it mentioned anywhere in John that repentance has no role in salvation?

D. Why ignore the other verses where repentance is associated with salvation?

### **2. Objection 2- Repentance is wrapped up in faith and are the same thing- “The word ‘repent’ is not even found in the book of John. It is obviously assumed by God that ‘repentance’ is a part of ‘believing’” (Bob Gray).**

A. If repentance and faith are the same, why did Paul make such a plain distinction between them? “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).

B. Repentance and faith are two separate things that come together for salvation, but they act together as one thing.

C. If repentance and faith are the same, why did the Jesus say that repentance is a part of the Great Commission? “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47).” Both repentance and faith are to be preached. While these doctrines are intimately connected, they are not the same. Biblical salvation involves both: “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).

### **3. Objection 3- The Philippians Jailor in Acts 16:31- Paul never mentions repentance**

A. Paul made no mention of repentance, only “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ”.

B. It is obvious that the jailor was already under deep conviction and had heard Paul and Barnabas preach. He was probably already familiar with their calls to repent.

C. Just one chapter later, in Athens, Paul clearly mentioned repentance (Acts 17:30). His message at Athens was probably no different that what he preached at Philippi.

D. The word “repent” is not necessary in every Gospel appeal (Acts 16:31) in the same way that the word “believe” is not necessary in every Gospel appeal (Acts 3:19).

E. The reason why verses such as John 3:16 and Acts 16:31 don’t mention repentance is that proper saving faith includes repentance and proper repentance includes faith. Repentance and faith are sometimes spoken of in Scripture as both being necessary for salvation (i.e., Acts 20:21; Heb. 6:1), while at other times only one or the other is said to be necessary.

1. Salvation is referred to as coming to repentance with no mention of faith in Matthew 9:13; 11:20-21; 21:32; Mark 1:4; 2:17; 6:12; Luke 15:7; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 11:18; 26:20; 2 Corinthians 7:10; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; 2 Timothy 2:25; and 2 Peter 3:9.

2. In other passages, such as John 3:16 and Acts 16:31, salvation is referred to as believing and repentance is not mentioned.

### **4. Objection 4: This is Lordship Salvation**

A. “Lordship Salvation” can be defined as “John MacArthur, whose book *The Gospel According to Jesus* lays out the case for lordship salvation, summarizes the teaching this way: “The gospel call to faith presupposes that sinners must repent of their sin and yield to Christ’s authority.” In other words, a sinner who refuses to repent is not saved, for he cannot cling to his sin and the Savior at the same time. And a sinner who rejects Christ’s authority in his life does not have saving faith, for true faith encompasses a surrender to God. Thus, the gospel requires more than making an intellectual decision or mouthing a prayer; the gospel message is a call to discipleship. The sheep will follow their Shepherd in submissive obedience. (<https://www.gotquestions.org/lordship-salvation.html>)

B. Such teachings are abhorrent to the hyper-evangelicals as it tends to reduce the number of conversions and lengthen the time and process for a sinner to truly be saved.

1. They try to associate a negative connotation of such words and

phrases, like “lifestyle evangelism” to scare people away from acceptance of any methodology or theology that goes counter to their own definition and practice of so-called “confrontational soulwinning”.

C. It is not necessary to adopt any form of “Lordship Salvation” to insist in repentance as a part of salvation, as the Scriptures plainly teach it.

**5. Objection 5: This is works for salvation**

A. Not if the Lord commanded it

B. Repentance is no more a work than believing is

C. Repentance is never called a work

D. Romans 4:5 separates works and belief. If any of these men believe that repentance and faith are the same thing, then why don't they also separate repentance from works?

**6. Objection 6- The only sin that needs to be repented of is unbelief. “There is only one sin that the lost man is to repent of and that is the sin of unbelief” (Bob Gray). “There are those who say we have to repent of our sins in order to be saved. No, we have to repent only of the thing that makes us unsaved, and that is unbelief” (Jack Hyles).**

A. What about other sins?

1. If I “believe” but deliberately sin constantly, am I saved?

2. In Luke 3:10-14, the people asked John what they should do in light of his message. He never tells them to repent of their unbelief. He lists specific sins as sharing, helping people, not stealing, being content with your wages, do no violence.

B. What about sin in general?

C. What about our sin nature?

D. It is not only unbelief that sends a man to Hell; it is all of his sin. Romans 5:12 says that it is the sin of “one man” which has resulted in death. Adam's sin was not merely unbelief; it was disobedience.

E. Revelation 20:12-15 tells us that unsaved men will be condemned by their works and cast into the lake of fire. They will not be condemned only by the one sin of unbelief.

F. Revelation 21:8 tells us that unbelief is only one of the sins which cause men to be outside of the eternal city of God. “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

G. “Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they REPENT OF THEIR DEEDS” (Rev. 2:22).

H. “And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and REPENTED NOT OF THEIR DEEDS” (Rev. 16:11).

I. If the only sin that sends men to hell is unbelief, then why do we have Ten Commandments? There would only be one commandment, “That Shalt Believe”

**7. Objection 7- How can a sinner repent of all of his sins if he can't remember them all? Must he repent of every single sin?**

A. We do not have to repent to every single sin but repent of that fact that we

have sinned, he have transgressed and that we have rebelled against God.

B. There is a difference in repenting from “sin” and repenting from “sins”.

**8. Objection 8- Repentance is merely a change of mind**

C. Curtis Hutson, former editor of the *Sword of the Lord*, wrote a 1986 booklet “Repentance: What Does the Bible Teach?” Hutson denied that repentance means to turn from sin (p. 4). He denied that repentance is sorrow for sin (p. 8). He even denied that repentance means “a change of mind that leads to a change of action” (p. 16). He claimed that repentance simply is “to change one’s mind” and that it did not necessarily result in a change of life. But how can one change his mind regarding sin and god and have no change in the life? This is because Hutson was trying to cover the failure in Sword-type evangelism that relied on a mere verbal assent to the gospel with no correspondent change of life. So many of their converts would make a profession but then not follow through with that profession. How to explain so many spiritual “misfires”? They can claim that mere belief is sufficient but no corresponding change of life was required, so all of their “converts” who “prayed” or who “bowed their head” were really saved, even if they never set foot in a church afterwards or demonstrated any other fruits stemming from their “decision”.

**9. Objection 9- This is a new doctrine. “‘Who in the world would have thought that Independent Baptist preachers would try to redefine Bible ‘repentance’? ... Repentance is not turning from your sins” (Bob Gray, Longview, Texas).**

A. Quotes from the past. We do not base the authority of our understanding on repentance on men but it is interesting to see how so many Sword/Hyles “Independent Fundamental Baptists” refuted the teachings of their “mentors” whom they claim to respect so much. (most quotes cited in *Way of Life Encyclopedia*, by David Cloud)

1. John R. Rice

a. “To repent literally means to have a change of mind or spirit toward God and toward sin. IT MEANS TO TURN FROM YOUR SINS, earnestly, with all your heart, and trust in Jesus Christ to save you. You can see, then, how the man who believes in Christ repents and the man who repents believes in Christ. The jailer repented when he turned from sin to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ” (*What Must I Do to Be Saved?* 1940).

b. “What do I mean by repent? I mean to TURN YOUR HEART FROM YOUR SIN. Turn from sin in your heart and start out to live for God. ... A penitent heart that TURNS FROM YOUR SIN and turns to Jesus” (John R. Rice, “Repent or Perish,” *Sword of the Lord*, March 3, 1971).

c. “There ought to be plain preaching against sin. People ought to be taught TO TURN FROM SIN in genuine repentance” (John R. Rice, *Dr. Rice, Here Are More Questions*, Vol. II, p. 425, 1973).

2. Harold Sightler, “Recognizing his guilt, there is a TURNING FROM SIN. There is a turning to God. The actual word ‘repentance’ means a turning completely around: a change of course; a change of mind. ... TO THINK



OF REPENTANCE THAT DOES NOT CAUSE THE SINNER TO TURN GLADLY FROM HIS SINS IS IMPOSSIBLE. ... I know that we have a shallow religious movement in our times that will allow men to profess faith in Christ and at the same time continue to live in the world. Such a shallow religious faith is not real. These are mere professors and have no part with God in salvation" (*Chastening and Repentance*, 1963).

3. B.R. Lakin, "Repentance toward God -- that's TURNING AWAY FROM ALL YOUR SIN and everything you know to be wrong, and TURNING RIGHT ABOUT FACE, then trusting Jesus Christ as your complete Redeemer" (*Prepare to Meet Thy God*, 1964).

4. Lester Roloff, "Repentance is a godly sorrow for sin. REPENTANCE IS A FORSAKING OF SIN. Real repentance is putting your trust in Jesus Christ so you will not live like that anymore. Repentance is permanent. It is a lifelong and an eternity-long experience. You will never love the devil again once you repent. You will never flirt with the devil as the habit of your life again once you get saved. You will never be happy living in sin; it will never satisfy; and the husks of the world will never fill your longing and hungering in your soul. Repentance is something a lot bigger than a lot of people think. It is absolutely essential if you go to heaven" (*Repent or Perish*, 1965).

5. Oliver B. Green, "True repentance is sorrow for sin committed against a holy God and not only sorrow for sin, but TURNING FROM SIN, FORSAKING SIN AND TURNING TO GOD. Sin nailed the Savior to the cross and certainly that fact alone is sufficient reason why ALL WHO HAVE GENUINELY REPENTED HATE SIN AND FORSAKE SINFUL WAYS" (*Commentary of Acts of the Apostles*, Acts 2:37-38, 1969).

6. J. Frank Norris "Baptists preach the gospel of repentance for sin. They preach and practice the very same gospel of repentance, of salvation, of baptism, as the first Baptist preacher we have any record of whose name was John and who came from God" (J. Frank Norris, *Lectures on Romans*, c. 1947).

7. Leon Maurer "A rotely memorized prayer or some repeated statement without true repentance and faith never saves anyone. He must be very serious about it and really mean it. ... Consider a case where the person being dealt with is going to repeat a prayer after the soul winner as he calls on the Lord to save his soul. Here is a pattern which can be followed merely as an example: 'Lord, I realize I am a sinner. I am lost in my sin. I TURN FROM MY SIN. I repent of my sin. Right here and now I do trust the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour...' (Leon F. Maurer, *Soul Winning: The Challenge of the Hour*, 1970).

8. "The preacher who leaves out repentance commits as grave a sin as the one who leaves out faith. I mean he must preach repentance just as often, and with as much emphasis, and to as many people as he preaches faith. To omit repentance, to ignore it, to depreciate it, is rebellion and treason. Mark its relative importance: You may make a mistake about

baptism and be saved, for baptism is not essential to salvation. You may be a Christian and not comprehend fully the high-priesthood of Jesus Christ (He. 5 :11), but 'Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.' So said the Master Himself. Repentance is a preparatory work. For thus saith the Lord: 'Break up your fallow ground and sow not among thorns.' I submit before God, who will judge the quick and the dead, that to preach faith without repentance is to sow among thorns. No harvest can be gathered from an unplowed field. The fallow ground needs to be broken up. The most striking instance on record of repentance as a preparatory work was the ministry of John the Baptist. He was sent 'to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.' He did it by preaching repentance, and Mark says his preaching was 'the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.' Here is the true starting point. Whoever starts this side of repentance makes a false beginning which vitiates his whole Christian profession. When true repentance was preached and emphasized, there were not so many nominal professors of religion. To leave out or minimize repentance, no matter what sort of a faith you preach, is to prepare a generation of professors who are such in name only. I give it as my deliberate conviction, founded on twenty-five years of ministerial observation, that the Christian profession of today owes its lack of vital godliness, its want of practical piety, its absence from the prayer meeting, its miserable semblance of missionary life, very largely to the fact that old-fashioned repentance is so little preached. You can't put a big house on a little foundation. And no small part of such preaching comes from a class of modern evangelists who desiring more for their own glory to count a great number of converts than to lay deep foundations, reduce the conditions of salvation by one-half and make the other half but some intellectual trick of the mind rather than a radical spiritual change of the heart. Like Simon Magus, they believe indeed, but 'their heart not being right in the sight of God, they have no part nor lot in this matter. They are yet in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.' Such converts know but little and care less about a system of doctrine. They are prayerless, lifeless, and to all steady church work reprobate" (B.H. Carroll, 1889).

So-called "Repentance Blacklist", men who hold to the Biblical definition of repentance, from an anti-repentance website affiliated with Stephen Anderson, <http://repentanceblacklist.com/blacklist/> These men are called "Certain Sons of Belial" for preaching that repentance is necessary for salvation. Anderson, like many of the Jack Hyles-type of hyper-evangelicals, holds to an "easy believism" in that a mere outward profession without any signs of repentance was sufficient for salvation. Anderson is a major leader in the self-styled "New IFB" and their influence is growing.

John Calvin  
Martin Luther

Charles Spurgeon  
Billy Sunday

D.L Moody  
Mother Teresa

Billy Graham  
John Piper  
Paul Washer  
Ray Comfort  
John McArthur  
J.I Packer  
T.D Jakes  
Kenneth Copeland  
Jessie Duplantis  
Eric Hovind  
Oral Roberts  
Richard Roberts  
Kenneth Hagin Sr.  
Kenneth Hagin Jr.  
Frederick Price  
Creflo Dollar  
Rodney Howard Browne  
Jack Van Impe  
Rinehard Bonnke  
Morris Cerullo  
John Kilpatrick  
Clarence McClendon  
Rick Joyner  
Hal Lindsey  
Charles Capps  
Robert Tilton.  
David Platt  
Jan Boshoff  
Levi Price  
Joseph Prince  
Joel Osteen (as weak as  
he is on any doctrine,  
this is doubtful)  
Rick Warren  
J.C Sproul  
John Hagee  
Brother Nathaniel  
Benny Hinn  
Joyce Meyers  
James White  
A.Z Tozer (should be A.  
W. Tozer)  
John Graf  
Francis Chan  
Robert Lyte

Southern Baptist  
Convention  
The Fellowship Tract  
League  
Chick Publications  
Bearing Precious Seed,  
Lansing, MI  
God Save America  
Conferences  
Local Church Bible  
Publishers, Lansing, MI  
Moody Bible Institute  
Way of Life Publications  
Way of the Master  
A Voice in the  
Wilderness Ministries  
Answers in Genesis  
Creation Ministries  
International  
Search the Bible  
Ministries  
Word for the World  
Masters Baptist College  
- Fargo, ND  
James Beller  
Kirk Cameron  
David Cloud  
Dennis Corle  
George Eager  
Doug Fisher  
Keith Gomez  
William Grady  
John Graf  
Don L. Green  
Oliver B. Greene  
Al Lacy  
Chris McNeilly  
E.Y. Mullins  
W.D. Nowlin  
Lester Roloff  
Jack Schaap  
Gerald Sutek  
Randy Taylor  
Jim Vineyard  
Bryan Denlinger

Andy Bloom  
Dan Botterbrodt  
John E. Britt  
Paul G. Burbidge  
Travis Burke  
Ivan Casteel  
David Coe  
Chuck Cofty  
Beau Comeaux  
Matthew Conrad  
Pastor Cooley  
Eric Damron  
Dennis Deneau  
Art Dunham  
Randy Engesetter  
Tim Fellure  
Leroy Goodman  
Kent Gossmeier  
George Gray  
John Hallman  
Andrew Hammack  
Dino Hatem  
Joshua Joscelyn  
Craig Ledbetter  
James Lyman  
Keith McIntyre  
Scott McIntyre  
Stan McIntyre  
Jerry H. Matson  
Bobby Mitchell  
Daniel Morgan  
Chuck Mosher  
Bob Nappier  
Abe Partridge  
Steven Pawley  
Al Pihringer  
Ron Robey  
Tony Scheving  
Gary Schwer  
Daniel Walton  
Gary Webb  
Jerry Wilhite  
Jon Zwingel

They could have added:

John R. Rice  
Harold Sightler  
Harry Ironside  
B. R. Lakin  
J. Frank Norris

References,

Cloud, David, various reports and articles by David Cloud at [wayoflife.org](http://wayoflife.org) as well as  
*The Way of Life Encyclopedia*, Repentance and Soulwinning and  
Spence, H. T., *A Catechetical Study For The Remnant*

Appendix 3:  
**Romans Chapter 13:1-7; The Christian's Relation to the State**  
**Excepted from The Pilgrim Way Commentary on Romans**

The burnt offering life also involves being a good citizen and having a right relationship with and understanding of human government. This is part of the practical elements of the Christian life that can only be fulfilled after a personal burnt offering of the life has been made.

This is one of the most important chapters in the Bible in a practical sense since it deals with our relationship with the State. Human government is usually anti-Christian and evil, yet we Christians must live under such governments. How do we? How do we deal with an evil government? Is resistance to the State ever justified? If so, under what circumstances? When can we disobey government without sinning?

There are many Christians who, when confronted with dealing with an oppressive government, just bleat out "Romans 13! Romans 13! We have to obey our government in everything because of Romans 13!" These people show:

1. They have never studied Romans 13.
2. They have never considered the dozens of examples in Scripture of believers opposing the king and the government and God approving of their actions.
3. They are not good students of Church History, which gives us an almost unlimited sources of examples of resistance against civil authorities.
4. They have not read anything regarding Christian political philosophy.

We could outline this section as follows:

1. Human government established by God 13:1
2. Our relationship to human government 13:2,5-7
3. Government's obligation toward us 13:3,4

**A Summary of 13:1-7 regarding Christian Political Theory:**

1. Civil government is ordained by God and is supported by Him. Thus, government in and of itself is not evil as it comes from God. It was initiated after the Flood in Genesis 9 when capital punishment was mandated, a penalty that is executed by the State. Government usually degenerates into a evil when it forgets its ordained role and responsibility and when it forgets to acknowledge God.
2. Government is one of the three spheres of human activity:
  - A. Home. This is the highest as it was the first one established, in the Garden of Eden when Eve was created.
  - B. Government, which was next instituted after the Flood.
  - C. Church. You can include the synagogue or tabernacle/temple services here, as we will not limit this only to the New Testament church.
3. Fallen man must have some form of government. Man cannot rule himself without law. The book of Judges illustrates what happens when "there is no king in Israel" and when "every man does that which is right in his own eyes". The depravity of fallen man guarantees that any form of self-rule will end in failure.

Fallen man has enough difficulty ruling over himself. How much more these difficulties if he was left to his own devices and was made a law unto himself.

4. God ordains government, both good and bad (as He often gives people the kinds of government they deserve, such as the last 5 American presidents and just about every Congress)

A. Pharaoh and Egypt- Romans 9:17

B. Old Babylon in the book of Daniel

C. Darius/Cyrus of Persia- Isaiah 44:28; 45:1

D. The Philistines oppressing Israel.

E. The various Canaanite nations oppressing Israel in the book of Judges.

F. The Assyrians, who carried the Ten Northern Tribes captive

G. The Roman Empire

i. At no time did either Jesus or Paul ever suggest that the Roman Empire was not a legitimate government, nor did either one advocate revolution of that the Church attempt to overthrow Rome. Neither of them got involved with the politics of the day. The closest the Lord ever got to it was when He was asked whether it was lawful to give tribute to Caesar. Even then, He did not initiate the discussion.

a. Christians are to be in submission to the civil authorities for as long as they are able to. We are not to be looking for a fight or excuses to rebel. Generally, those reasons will soon manifest themselves if we are living under an unscriptural government.

ii. Christ did acknowledge Rome's ruling authority in Matthew 22:21, "They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

iii. Peter wrote in 1 Peter 2:17, "Honour the king." The "king" to whom Peter referred was Nero. He was one of the worst emperors Rome ever had. He certainly was no friend of Christians. But Peter commanded the Christians of his day to give him his necessary honor.

5. Rebellion against government is forbidden except under certain circumstances, when obeying it would result in sin, or would pit the State against God, or if we are forced to choose between the State and God. God does not expect us to obey every government and every law it passes without any reservation. Examples of such resistance:

A. Abram refusing to recognize the King of Sodom- Genesis 14:21-24

B. The Hebrew midwives disobeying Pharaoh in his order to kill the Hebrew baby boys at birth, and God approving of it in Exodus 1:15-21.

C. Moses opposing Egyptian slavery in Exodus 4-13.

D. Resistance to tyrants in the book of Judges by Othniel (Judges 3:8-11), Ehud (Judges 3:12-30), Shamgar (Judges 3:31), Deborah and Barak (Judges 4), Gideon (Judges 6-8), Jephthah (Judges 11,12) and Samson

(Judges 13-16, especially see Judges 15:11). Every one of the rebelled against the “powers that be” in their day.

E. Samuel had to oppose Saul after Saul’s disobedience in 1 Samuel 15.

F. David respected Saul even as Saul was trying to kill him, but David did not “obey” Saul by turning himself in to be executed. Later, David refused to submit to Absalom’s revolution (2 Samuel 16-18).

G. Elijah before Ahab and Jezebel. Elijah was actively opposed to their rule. See 1 Kings 17-19.

H. Elisha had no respect for Jehoram in 2 Kings 3:14 although he did respect Jehoshaphat. He also had no respect for Ahaziah in 2 Kings 1:9-13.

I. Rebellion against wicked Queen Athaliah by Jehoiada in 2 Chronicles 22:10-23:15.

J. Daniel had no respect for Belshazzar in Daniel 5 and disobeyed Darius’ foolish edict against prayer in Daniel 6.

K. Esther and Mordecai resisting Haman, who was acting under approval of the king to kill all the Jews in the Book of Esther.

L. Amos did not stop preaching, despite orders to go preach elsewhere in Amos 7.

M. Jeremiah was in constant conflict with the civil authorities during his ministry.

N. The Lord constantly disobeyed the sabbath laws imposed by the Pharisees during His earthly ministry.

O. The early church was in constant conflict with the Jewish religious leaders in Acts 4 and 5. “We ought to obey God rather than man” Acts 5:29.

P. Christians are to resist the “prince of This World”, who is Satan, who controls and rules this age in John 14:30; James 4:7).

Q. There was a time when Christianity was illegal in the Roman Empire, yet the Church ignored that law and continued their activities. It is obvious in this case that the State over-stepped its authority. This would be repeated throughout modern Church History, as the Roman Catholic states and later some of the Protestant states during the Reformation would outlaw (Ana)Baptist activities. We would even see this in Colonial Massachusetts. Did they have a Biblical right for forbid Baptist churches or activities in their colony? What about in Virginia, where the Anglican Church State required Baptist preachers to be licensed? What shall we say of the Underground Churches in the old Soviet Union, where it was illegal for them to even exist?

i. Baptists were ordered, by law, to have their children baptized in Massachusetts in the 17th and 18th centuries. They disobeyed in Massachusetts and in European countries that were under the control of either Catholic or Protestant authorities. Were these (Ana)Baptist people justified in their opposition?

ii. Baptists were ordered to obtain a license to preach from Anglican authorities in colonial Virginia. They did not, believing that no Anglican

authority had any authority in licensing a Baptist ministry. Were the Virginia Baptists justified in opposing an unjust law from the "higher powers"?

iii. Also throw in the American Revolution. Was it Biblical under Romans 13? It was the preachers that led the drive for independence. If they had followed this incorrect interpretation of Romans 13, we would still be British subjects today.

a. It has often been the preachers and the pulpits that have been the most active and most effective agents of liberty. Why abandon that in the 21st century?

iv. Many Southerners supported succession in 1861 from the Union. There was talk of the New England states leaving the Union in 1814 because of their opposition to the War of 1812. Would this have been supported by Romans 13?

v. The Civil Rights movement of the 1960s was an uprising against the powers that were in that day.

R. Our Baptist forefathers (Donatists, Albigenes, Lollards, Waldensians) suffered greatly because they refused to obey the civil authorities and the popes in their attempts to regulate and control the church.

S. Should Christians in Communist or Islamic countries obey the laws designed to prevent or severely limit Christians and their church activities? They didn't in the Soviet Union. The Underground Church operated for the full 70 years of Soviet Communism, in opposition to the anti-Christian laws that they were under. Were they right or wrong in disobeying their governments?

T. How many martyrs went to the stake because they could obey the unjust laws regarding worship?

U. God makes it clear that He does not recognize as His "ordinance" or as His "minister" every magistrate that sits upon a throne, for in rebuking the northern kingdom of Israel for their wickedness, He declares: "They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not" (Hosea 8:4).

6. We are to obey the State in all lawful commands (where do not have to sin in giving such obedience), including paying taxes.

A. For example, If the state asks you to install so many fire extinguishers in your building to meet the fire code, that is something legitimate and should be obeyed. 4

B. Jesus rendered unto Caesar, despite the fact that Rome was not a godly empire- Matthew 22:21. The Lord was no tax dodger or protester. If He said to pay the taxes to a heathen ruler like Caesar, then we are to pay our taxes to the even more wicked IRS.

i. The key here is "lawful". When rulers start making unlawful demands, our obligations to them cease.

ii. You are to pay your taxes, but you are also free to try to get the taxes lowered by lawful means. You also can refuse to support a tax hike if you have a chance to vote on it. In Delaware, we still have the ability to approve or disapprove tax hikes by the various



school districts. I always vote against tax hikes, not because I am anti-education (although I am anti-public education) but because my attitude is “what right do I have to raise my neighbor’s taxes?”

7. Christians may serve in an ungodly State without sin. In this case, I believe the old Anabaptist groups were wrong when they opposed any Christian serving in the government for any reason. Their reason was that no Christian should serve a government that was involved in religious persecution (namely against them) and they had a good point. But overall, it is no sin for a Christian to serve in a government.

- A. Nehemiah- Media/Persia
- B. Esther- Media/Persia
- C. Daniel- Babylon and Media/Persia
- D. Cornelius- Rome
- E. Offices may be held by Christians as long as sin or unfaithfulness to God is required.

- i. See Daniel 1,3,4,6

- ii. There may arise a problem if the taking of an oath is required. This would also involve serving in the military, where one must swear an oath to the Constitution, despite the fact that the American Constitution is not a Christian document. Christians are forbidden from swearing such oaths (Matthew 5:34-36; James 5:12).

- iii. How long a Christian can remain faithful in such an ungodly environment will depend of the circumstances. Every situation will be different.

8. Characteristics of a Godly, Biblical State

- A. Built on Biblical law

- B. Godly leaders

- i. Exodus 18:21 Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers.

- a. Able (qualified)

- b. Fear God

- c. Men of truth

- d. Hate covetousness. This is not just coveting money but also coveting power and position.

- ii. He is to be a diligent student of the Law of God. Deuteronomy 17:14,15,18,19 When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother. . . . And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law

in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them. . . .

iii. 2 Samuel 23:3 The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.

a. Must be just

b. Must rule in the fear of God.

iv. Isaiah 10:1 Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed.

v. The civil ruler is supposed to be a minister “for good” in Romans 13:4. If he is being a minister for evil, then he forfeits any divine authorization he has to rule.

C. Acknowledges Lordship and Kingship of Christ (this the United States does not do as there is no acknowledgment of God whatsoever in the Constitution. The mention of “nature and Nature’s God” by Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence is so vague that it could apply to any “god”).

D. Punishes evildoers

E. Keeps the peace

F. Requires its magistrates to be good ministers of God

9. If it comes to the point where we as Christians and the Church must take a public stand against our governments, we must make sure we do so with much prayer, fear and trembling, discerning the mind of God if we are right or not. We must consider our public testimony and watch our attitudes, that we do not suffer as a wicked man but for righteousness’ sake. We must also keep a respectful attitude, even in front of those who would take away our rights and even who would kill us. Notice Jesus in His trials- always respectful, and He never got nasty.

A. Our position is not to necessarily actively rebel against the State but to resist, to refuse to obey sinful laws, not to overthrow the State. God set them up, God will take them down. It is our spiritual duty to respectfully decline to obey and law or decree that would go contrary to the revealed revelation of God or that would cause us to sin.

i. The key idea is resistance, not rebellion.

B. We have a responsibility to our rulers, but our rulers also have a responsibility toward us.

i. Their responsibilities include:

a. Maintaining order

b. Punishing wrongdoers

c. Protecting the lawful citizens

d. Advocating and promoting Biblical law

e. Let us alone so we may enjoy a quiet and peaceable life.

- i. 1 Timothy 2:2 “For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.’
- ii. When government fails in its responsibilities, then we have the right to resist and to attempt to peaceably change it.
- iii. Our responsibilities include:
  - a. To submit and obey all lawful decrees
  - b. To pay our taxes
  - c. To pray for those in authority

“A Christian must resist all unlawful commands of the civil magistrate (whether the one issuing the command is a lawful king or an unlawful tyrant): “We ought to obey God rather than men” Acts 5:29.

It is the duty of Christians both to testify against tyrannical civil government and to affirm the moral duties of civil magistracy and subjects under God's law. Civil reformation within a nation cannot occur without a faithful proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. For it is the truth of Jesus Christ that sets people free from sin, from ignorance, and from tyranny. Thus, the position of civil government espoused and defended herein strongly affirms that the primary resistance offered by Christians against tyranny in civil government is by means of moral persuasion accomplished in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Christians should resist tyrannical civil governments by earnestly praying that God would destroy the throne established by wickedness, that He would be pleased to convert unlawful magistrates who presently are His enemies, and that He would hasten the day when righteousness would shine forth from the scepter of the civil magistrate... It is affirmed by our reformed forefathers that resistance by means of force in cases of self-defense is not contrary to biblical commands which call Christians to be subject to lawful magistrates (and not to resist them), or biblical commands which call Christians to suffer patiently under harsh rulers. Samuel Rutherford has faithfully expounded such biblical passages (as those found in Romans 13:1,2 and 1 Peter 2:13-20), and clearly demonstrates that these passages cannot be made to contradict the rest of God's Word (where resistance by means of force in self-defense is approved), and that these texts themselves do not contradict biblical resistance (whether resistance without force or resistance by means of force). (Greg Price, *Biblical Civil Government Verses the Beast*, pdf version, pages 24-26).

The more I consider it, the more cynical I become about human government under fallen man and (especially) political parties, and that includes the pseudo-Christian and pseudo-conservative “Republican” party. The Republican Party is really a Progressive/Socialist Party, if you study its history from 1912 and Theodore Roosevelt onward. So many Christians give almost an idolatrous allegiance to the Republicans because they are under a mistaken impression that it is both conservative and Christian, when in reality, it is neither. I gave up on the Republicans after the 1996 presidential election as they are not a Christian or a truly “conservative” party. They are little different than the very liberal Democratic Party. There are not too many places for the Bible-believing

Christian to put his support when it comes to politics, especially party politics. I have always said that the Republicans treat Christian voters the same way Democrats treat Black voters, both parties take these groups for granted. Christians in other countries will find themselves in a similar, if not worse, predicament. What is a Canadian or a German Christian to do with regards to participation in his country's politics? When it comes to presidential elections, I haven't voted for a "winner" since 1992 since I mainly vote third party now, when I vote at all.

### **Archaric Words Defined**

“alms” The word goes all the way back to the Old English “aelmysse” from the Latin “eleemosyna”. We get our English word “eleemosynary”, meaning “charitable”. “Alms” in charitable relief for the poor. (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 12).”

“assayed” comes from the French “assaier”, from “assai”, a variation of “essai”, “trial”. From which we also get “essay”, “a literary composition”. To “assay” can mean to examine, analyze, test, prove or attempt (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 21).

“bishopric” Old English word for “office”. The word is from “bisceoprice”, from “bisceop” (bishop) and “rice” (realm or province), or the “realm of a bishop”, the area of which a bishop has control or jurisdiction (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 42).

“carriages” “From ‘carry’= ‘to convey from one place to another’ + ‘age’ = ‘that which pertains to the root’ (see English suffix ‘-age’). The idea of a ‘carriage’ being a wagon with wheels was first introduced in 1560, but only became popular in the 1700s. Thus, ‘carriage’ is that which is carried (as in ‘valuables or stuff’, similar to how we might say ‘baggage’ or ‘luggage’) (Steven J. White, *White’s Dictionary of the King James Language*, volume 1, page 209).”

“countenance” The word comes from a Middle Latin word “continentia”, meaning “the way one restrains himself, as seen in one’s face.” It is a holding together of the face that expresses and attitude or a state of mind. It is used 53 times in Scripture. (Steven White, *White’s Dictionary of the King James Language*, volume 1, page 282).”

“haply” old English for “perhaps”. It comes from the Old Norse “happ” meaning “chance or good luck”. For something to occur “haply” is for it to take place by chance or by accident, with no apparent design or intent. (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 317).”

“holden” This word occurs 12 times in Scripture. It comes from an Old English “healdan” (to grasp, contain, retain, posses) and “en” (a preposition). It means “the condition of having been held on to in a certain fashion for a certain period of time”. (Steven White, *White’s Dictionary of the King James Language*, volume 2, pages 295-296).”

“privy” From the French “prive”, meaning “private”. To be privy to something is to have knowledge of private information”. (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 270).”

“Quaterion’ is related to the word ‘quarter’. It is from the Latin ‘quaternion’ from ‘quaterni’ ‘a set of four things’. Four quaternions of soldiers would be 16 soldiers (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 277).”

“straitly” This word comes from the French “estreit” meaning “narrow”, from the Latin “strictus”, from where we get the English “strict”. To be “strait” is to be narrow, tight, strict or close”. (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 317).”

“untoward” difficult to guide, manage, or work with, unfavorable, forward, perverse from Middle English, not having inclination" (to or for something), also "difficult to manage, unruly," from un- "not" + toward. It also has the idea of something being “corrupt, unfavorable, unfortunate, improper or perverse (Laurence Vance, *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version*, page 349).

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## **About the Author**

Dr. John Cereghin was saved on February 9, 1978 at the age of 13 after being raised in the Roman Catholic church. He was saved after listening to a program on missionary shortwave radio station HCJB from Quito, Ecuador. He left the Catholic church in 1983 and joined Maranatha Baptist Church in Elkton, Maryland in 1985. In 1986, she transferred from the University of Maryland to Maryland Baptist Bible College, earning their first doctor's degree in 1995. Dr. Cereghin also earned his Master of Theology degree from Foundations Theological Seminary in 1994.

Dr. Cereghin's ministry background includes working at Radio Station WOEL in Elkton, Maryland (1986-1998), teaching in various capacities at Maryland Baptist Bible College in Elkton, Maryland from 1988-1998, also serving as Dean of Men, Registrar and Academic Dean, and pastoring Queen Anne's Baptist Church, Centreville, Maryland (1989-1990), Charity Baptist Church, Mebane, North Carolina (1994-1995) and Grace Baptist Church in Smyrna, Delaware (1998-present). He and his wife Teresa have four children and three grandchildren.