

A
SIMPLIFIED STUDY
OF
THE ACTS
OF
THE APOSTLES

By

THOMAS F. EAVES SR.

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**Soldier of the Cross
Departed to be
with Christ
December 21, 1999**

Appreciation is expressed to Pat Eaves, Ernie and Martha Bentley, Jane Edlin and Mike Glenn for the initial reading of the manuscript in its rough draft format and suggestions before the publisher began his substantive work. To my wife, Lois, for her valuable assistance and to all, thanks for your labor of love. — *Gary Grizzell, the publisher*

Proceeds from the sale of this book will be used to print more materials which were written by the late Thomas Eaves.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

As a former preacher student of the late and beloved **Thomas F. Eaves Sr.**, I was both honored and stricken with a sense of solemnity to be asked by his good wife, sister **Pat Eaves**, to pen this section. Having seen a tribute which I had written, Pat suggested I use the same in the "About The Author" section of this book. Therefore, such is quoted below as is appropriate. This had originally been written to fulfill a request by brother **Garland Elkins**, who at that time was writing a tribute to the recently departed author.

Dear brother Elkins,

I appreciate you having called earlier today . . . Thomas Eaves and I worked together with a program called *Tracts For The Nations* throughout the last two years of his life (1998-1999). Prior to this I had published excellent tract material from Thomas through *Pillars Publications* . . .

Certain of Thomas' tracts and other material were translated into Telegu and over 100,000 copies of our tracts are presently being distributed in India. The 12 (English) tract program of TFTN continues to move forward, seeking to help individuals and congregations to evangelize. Six of these titles were penned by Thomas Eaves.

He once preached to an audience of over 30,000 on a mission trip to India. His work in India will long be remembered.

This following story is of interest. His book, *THE*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH, translated into Telegu actually helped to deter a robbery from taking place (and maybe worse). The January-February 1999 issue of *News From India* reported that brother **Ratnam**, well known native preacher of India, gave Thomas' book to a certain Hindu named **Balachander**. Mr. Balachander was a lecturer associated with a college. The man was carrying Thomas' book along with a Bible in his suitcase. On December 24th of 1998 as he traveled at night, some robbers stopped the bus and asked Mr. Balachander to follow them, showing him a knife. "They took him to a distant place in the fields and threatened him to open the box. He thought that they would kill him after robbing. But when he opened the suitcase, the robbers found the book and the Bible in his box and they studied the headlines on the book, *The Wages of Sin is Death*, written by Mr. Thomas F. Eaves Sr. and they were afraid and left him, even without robbing him. He and his son attended the Open Gospel Meetings at Rampachodavaram on (the) 24th and there were baptized, thanking God that He spared his life for salvation."

Thomas Eaves was a prince of a man, a tireless worker and driven in evangelistic desire. Many sound, balanced tracts flowed from his pen and there are yet others left in my computer at this moment which I have yet to publish through *Tracts For The Nations*. When my loving wife, **Lois**, visited the hospital in Nashville, TN, prior to his death, a telling incident took place. She told Pat (Thomas' beloved wife) that his tracts were continuing to be printed/distributed through my efforts (or words to that effect). Though he was painstakingly conscious, Pat turned to him and diligently sought to relate that information to Thomas.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Pat, who knew him best, knew that would encourage him because this was where his heart was, that is, in his work of preaching the gospel.

The last words Thomas spoke to me were spoken in the emergency room of the hospital in Cookeville, TN. He had suffered the first of two strokes at the time and had been rushed to the hospital. When I heard of this I went directly to him. As he lay flat of his back he told me he could not move his left hand. He then, even in the condition of having suffered a stroke to the left side of his body, wanted to talk about the work of the Lord. I had just returned from the *Annual Denton Lectureship* where I had set up a display of tracts. Thomas, laying flat of his back in that emergency room, wanted to know how it went with the distribution of tracts in Texas. He also wanted to know how things were progressing with regard to the paper, *The Gospel Journal*. (When **Dub McClish** was here in a meeting in October of 1999, Thomas had treated both Dub and myself to lunch at a Cracker Barrel. Thomas was very supportive of the truth and of the new paper). One thing which I shall always remember Thomas saying on that occasion was this, "I've been sick so long, I don't won't to be sick anymore." He was then moved from Cookeville to Nashville where he suffered a second stroke. As hard as it has been to give him up, I will always believe that God knows best and answered his desire not to be sick anymore. For Thomas to live was Christ, and to die was/is gain.

— Gary L. Grizzell

(Tribute to Thomas Eaves, written Tuesday, January 4, 2000).

INTRODUCTION

The church of Christ in India is growing at a very rapid pace. An endless evangelistic effort continues with many baptisms daily. This growth leaves a void of printed materials in the native tongue with which to ground new converts. Brother **Thomas F. Eaves Sr.**, traveled with a mission team to Rampachodavaram, India, in 1998 for a month of preaching and teaching among the 3,000 congregations in that area. He quickly observed the absence of printed material among the Christians. Realizing the capability of the church-owned printing press, he dedicated himself to writing tracts, books and commentaries specifically for the use of the church in India.

Because of the vast range of education levels within the church, brother Eaves designed his writings to be easily understood and with a direct meaning. All of his writings were an instant success among the brethren in India.

This book, *A Simplified Study of the Acts of the Apostles*, is the last writing of brother Eaves as he passed from us soon after its completion. Even though he is dead, he still speaks through his writings. Generations of Christians in India and now in this country will benefit from his wisdom and understanding for this great need. ". . . he being dead yet speaketh" (Heb. 11:4). ". . . Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13).

— Bill Dudney, missionary to India

NAME OF BOOK

This book has been designated by many different titles.

1. Acts
2. The Acts
3. The Acts of the Apostles

These designations can be misleading if one is not acquainted with the book. The book of Acts deals mostly with the activities of Peter and Paul.

The book follows the natural divisions of Acts 1:8, "And ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

1. Jerusalem — Acts 1 - 7
2. Judaea and Samaria — Acts 8-12
3. Unto the uttermost part of the world — Acts 13-28

AUTHOR OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

The same person who wrote Acts wrote the gospel of Luke. Both are addressed to the same person (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). History points to Luke as the writer of Acts. No one has ever claimed its authorship and no one has ever disputed that Luke is not the writer. There are three "we" sections in the book (Acts 16:10-17, 20:5-21, 27:1 - 28:16) which appear referring to the writer and Paul. It

AUTHOR OF ACTS

seems as if the writer was a close companion to Paul and wrote a diary of their travels. Some of Paul's companions who could not have written the book are listed in Acts 20:4-6. The author said, "These departed and waited for **"us."** Luke was a companion of Paul and was with him at Colossae (Colossians 4:14) and when he wrote to Philemon (Philemon verse 24).

The medical language and the interest of the writer of Luke in the healings of Christ seem to point to one who had a knowledge and/or interest in medicine. Luke was a physician (Colossians 4:14). It is interesting to note that when Luke wrote, "For it is easier for a camel to enter in through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:25), that he used the term which designates a surgical needle, whereas Matthew used the word describing a sewing needle (Matthew 19:23). The language of this book is scholarly and it is evident that it was written by one who had an excellent education.

The *Muratorian Canon*, which dates from some time near the end of the second century and gives a list of the New Testament books, names Luke as the author of Acts.

LUKE, THE MAN

Luke is mentioned in Colossians 4:14; Philemon verse 24; II Timothy 4:11. All of these were written from Rome. Luke's name is not mentioned in Luke or Acts. Luke uses the *Septuagint* (a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) as a basis of his quotations.

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Eusebius, the Jewish historian, refers to Luke as, "by race Antiochian" and "physician his trade." **Jerome** in the fifth century said that Luke wrote The Acts of the Apostles and referred to him as a "medical man of Antioch."

DATE OF THE BOOK

The Book of Acts is volume two of Luke's work, which was addressed to Theophilus. It was written about 62 A.D.

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CHRONOLOGY OF PAUL'S LIFE

There are six summary statements in the book of Acts:
6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20 and 28:30.

CHRONOLOGY OF PAUL'S LIFE*

Entrance into public life (in his 30th year) - A.D. 31 or 32

Events culminating in the death of Stephen - A.D. 30-33

Journey to Damascus and conversion - in the year ending
22nd Sept., A.D. 33

First visit to Jerusalem - A.D. 35

Residence in Tarsus etc. - A.D. 35-43

Barnabas brings Saul to Antioch - A.D. 43

The prophecy of Agabus - A.D. 44

The famine in Jerusalem begins with harvest failure
A.D. 45

Second visit to Jerusalem - Winter A.D. 45-46

Return to Antioch - A.D. 46

First journey ordered — About Passover, 29th March

A.D. 47

In Cyprus - Till July A.D. 47

In Pamphylia - July A.D. 47

In Pisidian Antioch - Till winter of A.D. 47

In Iconium - Till summer A.D. 48

In Lystra - Till summer A.D. 48

CHRONOLOGY OF PAUL'S LIFE

In Derbe - Winter A.D. 48-49

Returns by stages through Lystra, Iconium, Antioch
and across Pisidia - February-May A.D. 49

Short stay in Perga - June-July A.D. 49

Return by Syrian Antioch - August A.D. 49

Third visit to Jerusalem — Winter 49-50

Second journey begins - After the feast, 25th March to 1st
April 50

In Galatia - Summer 50

Across Asia to Troas - About October 50

In Philippi - Till about January 51

In Thessalonica - January - May 51

In Berea - May-July 51

In Athens - August 51

In Corinth - September 51 to March 53

Arrival of Gallio - July 52

Fourth visit to Jerusalem - The feast, 22nd-29th
March 53

Short visit to Syrian Antioch - May 53

Third journey begins - About June 53

In Galatia - July and August 53

In Ephesus - October 53 to January 56

In Troas - February 56

In Macedonia - Till late autumn 56

Short visit to Corinth - 56

In Achaia three months - December 56 to February 57

CHRONOLOGY OF PALL'S LIFE

Journey to Philippi - March 57

Start from Philippi for Troas toward Jerusalem —
15th April 57

Fifth visit to Jerusalem: arrives day before Pentecost

28th May 57

Imprisonment in Palestine - June 57 to July 59

Voyage to Rome - August 59 to February 60

In Rome - Until end of 61

Later trials - 62-66

Second trial - 66 or 67

Death (28th of June?) - 66 or 67

* Dates are approximate.

SEGMENT I

ACTS CHAPTER 1 PREPARATION

Verses 1-5 Introduction

(1) The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, (2) until the day in which he was received up, after that he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom he had chosen: (3) to whom he also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God: (4) and, being assembled together with them, he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said he, ye heard from me: (5) for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence.

Verse One - The former treatise that Luke had written to Theophilus was the Gospel of Luke. The name Theophilus means "lover of God." Luke addressed him as "most excellent Theophilus" (Luke 1:3). This was a common title for prominent people (Acts 23:26, 24:3, 26:25). It is possible that he was a high Roman official.

A SIMPLIFIED STUDY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Without a doubt Jesus was "the master teacher" (John 7:46), and one of the characteristics of a successful teacher is that he/she be a doer of the word, then a teacher. The old adage, "Don't do as I do, but do as I say do," is not the philosophy of the successful teacher. If the gospel has not made an impact on our lives, how can we hope to change the lives of others by teaching them the gospel?

Verse Two - "Until the day he was received up" declares the ascension of Jesus as does Acts 1:9-11; I Corinthians 15; and Romans 1:4.

Verse Three - After His resurrection Jesus walked upon the earth for about forty days teaching about the kingdom of God. During this time He appeared to over five hundred individuals (I Corinthians 15:4-8).

Verse Four - The apostles were instructed to remain in Jerusalem to receive the Holy Spirit, which had been promised to them (Matthew 3:11; John 14:18-26; 16:13). It is important to note that this was a promise, not a command.

Verse Five - John baptized with water (John 3:23), but God would baptize them in the Holy Spirit, as had been promised to them.

Verses 6-8 **Commission to The Apostles**

(6) They therefore, when they were come together,

asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? (7) And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority. (8) But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Verse Six - The apostles asked Jesus concerning the kingdom. The Jews misunderstood the type of kingdom which God was going to establish. Expecting an earthly kingdom such as existed in the days of David instead of a spiritual kingdom, the apostles wanted to know if this was the time for the restoration of the earthly kingdom.

Verse Seven - Jesus informed the apostles that it was not important for them to know at what time that kingdom would be established. God would take care of it in due time.

Verse Eight - The apostles would receive power with the coming of the Holy Spirit. Jesus had taught that the kingdom would come with power (Mark 9:1). The Holy Spirit (power) came on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). Therefore, the kingdom (church) came into existence on the day of Pentecost of Acts chapter two.

Verses 9-11

Ascension of Christ

(9) And when he had said these things, as they were

looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. (10) And while they were looking steadfastly into heaven as he went, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; (11) who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven.

Verses Nine through Eleven - As Jesus ascended into heaven the apostles received the angelic message: Jesus is coming again! The apostle Paul speaks of this in I Thessalonians 4:13-18. (Note carefully verse 17).

Verses 12-14

Waiting for The Promise

(12) Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is nigh unto Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey off. (13) And when they were come in, they went up into the upper chamber, where they were abiding; both 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. (14) These all with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

Verses Twelve through Fourteen - The eleven apostles returned from mount Olivet to Jerusalem which is about a Sabbath day's journey (2,000 cubits; 1200 yards; seven

tenths of a mile). Arriving in Jerusalem they entered into an upper chamber where they continued steadfastly in prayer. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was with them. This is the last reference to Mary in the New Testament.

Verse fourteen gives us information which destroys the doctrine of the "Perpetual Virginity of Mary" (that Mary never had children after Jesus' birth). Mary was with the disciples in the upper room with Jesus' brethren. (Other passages which declare the same truth, Matthew 12:46, 13:55; Mark 6:3; John 7:1-5).

Verses 15-26

Choosing of Matthias

(15) And in these days Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren, and said (And there was a multitude of persons gathered together, about a hundred and twenty), (16) Brethren, it was needful that the scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was guide to them that took Jesus. (17) For he was numbered among us, and received his portion in this ministry. (18) (Now this man obtained a field with the reward of his iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. (19) And it became known to all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch that in their language that field was called Akeldama, that is, The field of blood). (20) For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be made desolate, And let no man dwell therein: and, His office let another take. (21) Of the men

therefore that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, (22) beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of his resurrection. (23) And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. (24) And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show of these two the one whom thou hast chosen, (25) to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas fell away, that he might go to his own place. (26) And they gave lots for them; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Verse Fifteen through Seventeen - In the midst of about one hundred and twenty disciples, Peter announced that Judas Iscariot was to be replaced according to prophecy.

Verses Eighteen through Twenty - Matthew 27:3-10.

Verse Twenty-One - Qualifications are given for the one who is to replace Judas:

1. Being associated with Jesus from the time he was baptized until the day he ascended into heaven.
2. Being a witness of the resurrected Jesus.

Those who claim to be successors to the apostles today certainly do not possess these qualifications.

Verses Twenty-Two through Twenty-Six - The scriptures clearly point out that Judas was an apostle,

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having been numbered among the twelve (1:17) and having received his portion in the ministry of the apostles (1:17). Verse twenty-five states that Judas fell away from the ministry and apostleship. It is possible for an individual to separate himself from the grace of God.

God chose Matthias to replace Judas. While the disciples gave lots for the two men, the choice was made by God in answer to their prayer (Verse 24). Matthias joined the eleven, making twelve apostles.

Paul, who was an apostle, was a chosen vessel (Acts 9:15-16), one who was born out of due time (I Corinthians 15:8). He also was privileged to see the resurrected Christ (I Corinthians 15:8).

SEGMENT II

ACTS CHAPTER 2

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH

Verses 1-4

Arrival of The Holy Spirit

(1) And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. (2) And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. (3) And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each

one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Verse One - Pentecost (along with the Passover and Feast of Tabernacles) was one of the annual feasts of the Jewish nation. Four names are given this feast which took place at the end of the barley harvest:

1. Feast of Harvest (Exodus 23:16).
2. Feast of First Fruits (Leviticus 23:17; Numbers 28:26).
3. The Feast of Weeks (Deuteronomy 16:10; Exodus 34:22).
4. Pentecost (Acts 2:1).

Pentecost was basically an agricultural celebration when the firstfruits of harvest were offered to God. Pentecost came fifty days after the Sabbath day of the Passover and fell on the first day of the week (Leviticus 23:15-16).

Much discussion has taken place concerning the identification of the "they" who were altogether in one place. Some say that the about 120 of Acts 1:15 were baptized in the Holy Spirit, while others say that the twelve apostles were the recipients of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. A very careful study of the context indicates that the "they" of verse one refers back to the eleven apostles of 1:26. The "they" of verse two, the "them" of verse three, and the "they" and "them" of verse four refer to the twelve apostles. (Matthias was added to the eleven making twelve). In Acts 2:12-13 it indicates that the twelve were

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the ones speaking in tongues. This was the result of being baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Verses Two and Three - The Holy Spirit came upon the apostles as a sound of a rushing of a mighty wind, which filled the house where they were sitting. There were tongues like as of fire which sat upon each of them. Note that Luke does not say there was a mighty rushing wind and tongues of fire, but that there was a sound LIKE or AS a mighty rushing wind. He does not say that tongues of fire sat upon each of them, but they were LIKE or AS tongues of fire.

Verse Four - At this time the twelve were filled with the Holy Spirit. The purpose of the coming of the Holy Spirit was fivefold:

1. To serve as a comforter for the apostles (John 14:16).
2. To teach the apostles all things (John 14:26).
3. To bring to the apostles' remembrance all that Jesus had said to them (John 14:26).
4. To declare unto the apostles all things that were to come (John 16:13).
5. It gave the apostles the ability to speak in languages they had never studied, perform miracles, and to pass the power of the Spirit to others by the laying on of their hands (Acts 19:6, 8:17-19).

The immediate result was that the apostles began speaking in tongues. The tongues that the apostles spoke in were languages (Acts 2:6, 11). These were languages

which they had never studied.

Verses 5-13

The Day of Pentecost and The Results of The Coming of The Holy Spirit

(5) Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. (6) And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speaking in his own language. (7) And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying, behold, are not all these that speak Galileans? (8) And how hear we, every man in our own language wherein we were born? (9) Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia in Judaea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, (10) in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, (11) Cretans and Arabians, we hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God. (12) And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What meaneth this? (13) But others mocking said, they are filled with new wine.

Verses Five through Ten - Jews from every nation under heaven had gathered in Jerusalem to observe this great feast. Some sixteen nations are listed as being present, yet each group heard in the "language wherein we were born." Since all of these languages were spoken by men who were Galileans, it had a profound effect upon the hearers. The result was that they:

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1. Were confounded (v. 6).
2. Were amazed (vv. 7 and 12).
3. Marveled (v. 7)
4. Were perplexed (v. 12).
5. Asked, "what meaneth this?" (v. 12).

Some, instead of listening to the message of the apostles and profiting from it, dismissed it as being words from drunken men.

Verses Eleven through Thirteen - The message of the apostles was, "The mighty works of God." Every message proclaimed from our heavenly father should center around God and His mighty works. Some of His mighty works are His:

1. Creation (Genesis 1).
2. Love for mankind (John 3:16).
3. Provisions for man's salvation (Romans 5:8-9)
4. Revelation of His word to man (The Bible).
5. Longsuffering toward man (II Peter 3:9).

Verses 14-36 **Peter's Sermon**

(14) But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spake forth to them, saying, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and give ear unto my words. (15) For these are not drunken, as ye suppose; seeing it is but

the third hour of the day; (16) but this is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel: (11) *And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh: And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, And your young men shall see visions, And your old men shall dream dreams:* (18) *Yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days Will I pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heaven above, And signs on the earth beneath; Blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke:* (20) *The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the day of the Lord come, That great and notable day:* (21) *And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.* (22) **Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; (23) him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay; (24) whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. (25) For David saith concerning him, *I beheld the Lord always before my face; For he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: (26) Therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; Moreover my flesh also shall dwell in hope: (27) Because thou wilt not leave my soul unto Hades, Neither wilt thou give thy Holy One to see corruption. (28) Thou madest known unto me the ways of life; Thou shalt make me full of gladness with thy countenance. (29) Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David, that he both died and was***

buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day. (30) Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne; (31) he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. (32) This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. (33) Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. (34) For David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself, *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.* (36) Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.

Verses Fourteen through Twenty - Being charged with drunkenness, the twelve stood up and made their defense. On this occasion we have Peter's comments recorded for our benefit as well as the benefit of those present on the day of Pentecost. Peter appeals first to the common sense of his hearers by pointing out that it was too early in the day (third hour of the day, or nine o'clock in the morning) for men to be drunk.

Peter's explanation of this event was that it was the fulfillment of a prophecy made by the prophet Joel many years ago. What do we learn from Joel's prophecy?

1. It had reference to the last days (this is that).

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Therefore Peter, as well as we, are living in the last days.

2. The Spirit was to be poured out upon all flesh.

How many does all flesh include? Is it limited in any way? From studying God's word we know that not all Christians or all human beings nor animals had the Spirit poured out upon them (I Corinthians 15:39). While it is true that a Christian is the temple of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 6:19), all Christians did not have the power to perform the miraculous. To whom did all flesh refer? This gift of the Holy Spirit would not be given to Jews alone, to men alone, or to one class of society, but to representatives of all people.

Those who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit included:

1. The Jews (Acts 2:1-4).
2. The Gentiles (Acts 10:45 - 11:18).

The Holy Spirit was given to others by the laying on of the apostles' hands:

1. The Samaritans (Acts 8:17).
2. Sons (Acts 2:17).
3. Daughters (Acts 21:9).
4. Young men and old men.
5. Servants and handmaids.

Those who received the Holy Spirit would:

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1. Prophecy (Acts 21:9).
2. See visions (Acts 7:55).
3. Dream dreams (Acts 10:10)

The wonders of the heavens or the signs from the heavens were used to describe the judgment of God. This same terminology was used by Isaiah to describe God's judgment against Egypt (Isaiah 19:1) and Babylon (Isaiah 13:1 and 9-10). This speaks of the fact that He has complete control over the works of His hands. Three times in the New Testament this same type of language is used:

1. At the crucifixion (Matthew 27:45-56).
2. The day of Pentecost (Joel 2:28-32, Acts 2).
3. The destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:29-31).

Not all of the prophecies of Joel chapter two were fulfilled on the day of Pentecost. Some were fulfilled later in the last days. Daughters prophesied later (Acts 21:9), and the Spirit was not poured out upon the Gentiles until later (Acts 10 and 11).

Verse Twenty-One - "Whosoever shall call on the Lord shall be saved." Calling on the Lord is more than a verbal statement (Matthew 7:21). It is taking God at His word and being obedient to it. Matthew makes it clear that the "Doer," not the "Sayer," will be accepted by Jehovah God. Belief blesses only when it leads to obedience to God's word (James 2:14-26). Note later that Peter told those who accepted Jesus to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38).

Verse Twenty-Two - In this verse we have the beginning of the first gospel sermon (Salvation through Jesus Christ) preached in the history of the world. Peter preaches unto them Christ. In his sermon Peter gives four lines of proof to prove that Jesus Christ is the Son of God:

1. The miracles of Jesus (v. 22).
2. Testimony of fulfilled prophecy (vv. 24-28).
3. The resurrection of Jesus (vv. 29-31).
4. The testimony of the miraculous (v. 33).

The miracles of Jesus affected all areas of life. He healed the blind, lame, lepers, those who had fever, and lunatics. He raised the dead and stilled the sea, showing complete authority over the elements. Characteristics of the miracles of Jesus were:

1. Instantaneous (Matthew 12:13).
2. Made perfect or complete (Matthew 12:13).
3. Public (Matthew 12:9).
4. Acknowledged by His enemies (Matthew 12:22-24).
5. There were no failures.
6. They were used to support truth (John 11:42).

The miracles of Jesus were performed to prove that Jesus was who he claimed to be, the Son of God (John 14:11).

Verse Twenty-Three - Peter places the responsibility of Christ's death upon the guilty Jews, but pointed out that God raised Him from the dead.

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Verses Twenty-Four through Thirty-Three - This was prophesied by David in Psalms 16:8-11. (The interpretation of David's prophecy is given in Acts 2:29-32). David had died and his tomb was in evidence to all who lived in Jerusalem, so he could not have been referring to himself. Peter stated that David was a prophet and he knew that one out of his loins (a descendant) would sit upon his throne (Matthew 1:6-16), and that David spoke of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus was not left in the realm of Hades (the place for departed spirits, Luke 16:19-24), but was brought forth from the dead by the power of God. His flesh did not see corruption, that is, His flesh did not decay. Peter declares that he and the other apostles were witnesses of the resurrected Christ.

Verses Thirty-Three through Thirty-Five - Further proof of the resurrected Christ was the fact that from His exalted position on the right hand of God, He had sent the Holy Spirit which they saw and heard. David could not have been speaking of himself because he had not ascended into heaven.

Verse Thirty-Six - Peter concluded his sermon by once again fixing the guilt of the death of Jesus Christ upon the Jews (Acts 2:23).

Verse Thirty-Seven - Being pricked in their hearts (convicted of sin), they asked what they needed to do. Without a doubt the question, "What must I do to be saved?," is the greatest question that man can ask. What makes it so great? It involves:

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1. The **greatest** love ever shown (John 3:16).
2. The **greatest** gift ever given (John 3:16).
3. The **greatest** sacrifice ever offered (Romans 5:8-9).
4. The **greatest** opportunity offered to man, the opportunity to become a child of God (John 1:12).
5. The **greatest** reward, eternal life with God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 25:34).

Verse Thirty-Eight - Peter and the other eleven apostles did not tell these Jews who had crucified Jesus to, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," rather Peter told these believers to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins. Repentance is a change of mind which results in a change of life (Matthew 21:28-31, Note verse twenty-nine).

Baptism is the uniting of the believer (who has repented and confessed Jesus as the Son of God) with the blood of Jesus Christ. Baptism is into the death of Jesus Christ where He shed His blood (Romans 6:3-4; John 19:34; Revelation 1:5). In baptism sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ (Acts 22:16). After their baptism they were promised the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit dwells in the Christian (I Corinthians 6:19). This is not equal to the Holy Spirit given by the laying on of hands of the apostles, which enabled those who received it to do miraculous signs.

Verse Thirty-Nine - The promise of salvation was to the Jews, their descendants and to the Gentiles who were afar off (Ephesians 2:11-13), and as many as God shall call

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unto Him. God calls all men (Mark 16:15), through the gospel of Jesus Christ (II Thessalonians 2:14).

Verse Forty - Peter exhorted them further, encouraging them to save themselves. Man has a responsibility for his salvation, in that he must accept the invitation extended by Jesus (Matthew 11:28-30), and obey His will (Romans 6:16-17).

Verse Forty-One - This verse informs us how individuals became Christians. About 3,000 on Pentecost accepted God's word by following Peter's instructions. They were obedient.

Verse Forty-Two - The new Christians engaged in worship to God:

1. There was a teaching of God's word by the apostles.
2. Breaking of bread.
3. Prayers.
4. Fellowship with God and fellow Christians.

There are two references in Acts two concerning the breaking of bread, verses 42 and 46. Verse forty-two is speaking of worshipping God. They had fellowship with one another in the Lord's supper. Remember that Pentecost fell on the first day of the week and it is on that day that God's children meet to partake of the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7). In verse forty-six the saints engaged in a common meal for physical sustenance.

Verses 43-47

Conduct of The Church

Verse Forty-Three - The wonders and signs done by the apostles created a sense of fear (awe and reverence) for the divine (spiritual things).

Verses Forty-Four through Forty-Seven - These verses record a remarkable example of fellowship among Christians. They were together, shared their goods and some even sold their possessions to meet the needs of their brethren. They were together day by day and partook of their food with thanksgiving. What makes this such an outstanding incident is that they were not commanded to sell their property but did it out of the generosity of their hearts.

Verse Forty-Seven - Literally, translated from the Greek this passage states, "And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."

1. Those on Pentecost were saved (2:41).
2. Others were added to them (2:47).
3. Peter gave the terms of this salvation (2:38).
4. They were not voted on to see if they should be added to the body of the saved (2:38)
5. God did the adding, not man (2:47).

SEGMENT III

ACTS 3:1 - 4:31

GROWTH AND FIRST PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH

Verses 1-10

Healing of the Lame Man

(1) Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. (2) And a certain man that was lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; (3) who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked to receive an alms. (4) And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. (5) And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them. (6) But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. (7) And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and immediately his feet and his ankle-bones received strength. (8) And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk; and he entered with them into the temple, walking and leaping, and praising God. (9) And all the people saw him walking and praising God: (10) and they took knowledge of him, that it was he that sat for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and

amazement at that which had happened unto him.

Verse One -The hour of prayer. The regular hours of prayer seem to be three in number:

1. The first coincided with the morning sacrifice at the third hour of the morning (9:00 A.M.).
2. The second was at the sixth hour or at noon and may have coincided with the thanksgiving for the chief meal of the day.
3. The third hour of prayer coincided with the evening sacrifice at the ninth hour of the day (3:00 P.M.).

It is said that the influence of these hours of prayer upon the development of the religious spirit is incalculable.

Verse Two - The beautiful gate is described by **McGarvey** in his commentary as follows:

The beautiful gate of the temple, so-called because of its magnificent folding doors, fifty feet high and forty wide, covered with gold and Corinthian brass, was the favorite pass-way into the temple.

Verses Three through Six - The crippled man asked Peter and John for an alms. Expecting silver or gold, he received something far greater; he was healed of his lameness. Peter, invoking the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, commanded him to walk.

Verses Seven through Ten - Peter lifted him up and he began walking, leaping, and praising God. The people in the temple recognized him as the one who "sat for alms at the beautiful gate," and they were filled with wonder and amazement. This miracle furnished Peter with an opportunity to preach his second sermon.

Verses 11-26
Peter Explains and Preaches
on Solomon's Porch

(11) And as he held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. (12) And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this man? or why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk? (13) The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Servant Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he had determined to release him. (14) But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, (15) and killed the Prince of life; whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. (16) And by faith in his name hath his name made this man strong, whom ye behold and know: yea, the faith which is through him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. (17) And now, brethren, I know that in ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. (18) But the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his

Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. (19) Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; (20) and that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus: (21) whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of his holy prophets that have been from of old. (22) Moses indeed said, A prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me; to him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever he shall speak unto you. (23) And it shall be, that every soul that shall not hearken to that prophet, shall be utterly destroyed from among the people. (24) Yea and all the prophets from Samuel and them that followed after, as many as have spoken, that also told of these days. (25) Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. (26) Unto you first God, having raised up his Servant, sent him to bless you, in turning away everyone of you from your iniquities.

Verses Eleven through Fifteen - The people were amazed at the healing of the crippled man and they gathered on Solomon's porch. Solomon's porch had a double row of columns twenty-seven feet high and was covered with cedar shingles. This porch ran along the Eastern wall in the court of the Gentiles.

Peter makes it clear to the crowd that the power to

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make the crippled man whole came not from them, but from the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Matthew 22:32). This God had glorified His son Jesus whom they had:

1. Delivered up to His enemies.
2. Denied.
3. Desired a murderer over Him.
4. Killed.
5. Matthew 26:47 - 27:66.

Death was not victorious over Jesus because God raised Him from the dead. In His resurrected state Jesus appeared to many (I Corinthians 15:8-14) as He walked upon the earth forty days (Acts 1:3).

Verses Sixteen through Seventeen - The faith of the apostles in the power of God had made the cripple whole. **McGarvey** in his commentary makes this statement,

We must locate the faith, therefore, in the apostles; and in this we are sustained by the fact that the exercise of miraculous power, by those in possession of spiritual gifts, was always dependent upon their faith; Peter was empowered to walk on water; but, when his faith wavered, he began to sink, and Jesus said, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Nine of the apostles, once, having failed to cast out a demon, asked Jesus, "Why could we not cast him out?" He replied, "because of your unbelief (Matthew 17:20).

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In answer to their prayers, also, many miracles were wrought, but it was only "the prayer of faith" which could heal the sick.

Peter said that they crucified Jesus in their ignorance as did their rulers. Their ignorance was inexcusable because they had the scripture which spoke of Him (John 1:45, 5:46; Luke 24:44).

All that God had spoken through the prophets concerning the suffering of Jesus was fulfilled.

PROPHECY FULFILLED

The following are just a few of the prophecies concerning the sufferings of Jesus:

Isaiah 53:3 — Despised and Rejected — John 1:11-12

Matthew 27:1-2

Psalms 2:1-2 — Despised and Rejected — Acts 4:25-26

Isaiah 49:7 — Hated — John 15:24-25

Isaiah 28:16 — A Stumbling Block — Romans 9:32

Isaiah 53:3-4 — A Man of Sorrows — John 11:35

Luke 19:41

Isaiah 53:4-5 — Beaten for Our Sakes — Matthew 27:26

Verse Nineteen - After Peter told his audience that they had killed the Prince of life, he further instructs them to, "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out." This verse is equal to Acts 2:38. (*See chart on next page*):

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ACTS 2:38



Repent Be Baptized For Remission of Sins

ACTS 3:19



Repent And Turn Sins To Be Blotted Out

In both cases godly sorrow led them to repent (II Corinthians 7:10), which is a change of mind which leads to a reformation of life. The turning again or being converted is being baptized for the remission of sins. The remission or blotting out of sins follows the act of being baptized into the death of Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3-4).

Verses Twenty and Twenty-One - God will send Jesus back to claim His own (Hebrews 9:28), but until that time He will reside in heaven until the fulfillment of the prophecies made by God through the prophets.

Verses Twenty-Two through Twenty-Three - In these verses Peter applies the prophecy of Deuteronomy 18:18-19 to Jesus Christ. God would:

1. Raise up a prophet like Moses.
2. Put His words in his mouth.
3. Cause the prophet to speak His commandments.
4. Destroy them that did not obey.

The great truths that Jesus taught while He was on earth came from Jehovah God (Matthew 16:18; Mark 16:16 and

many other scriptures).

Moses and Jesus compared:

1. Both were sought by a king who sought to destroy them.
2. Both were law givers.
3. Both were leaders who led God's people to a promised land. (Moses to Canaan; and Jesus to heaven).
4. Both were spokesmen from God.

Verses Twenty-Four through Twenty-Six - The prophets from Samuel on had testified of these things, and being sons of the prophets they were knowledgeable of the covenant that God had made with Abraham (Genesis 12:3, 22:18, 26:4, 28:14).

God's promises to Abraham:

1. Would bless him.
2. Would make from his seed a great nation.
3. Would give his descendants Canaan.
4. Through his seed, "All nations of the earth would be blessed."

Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the promise, "All nations of the earth shall be blessed."

These people should have expected and prepared for the coming of the "Prince of life" (Acts 3:15), instead they

rejected Him. Jesus came for the purpose of turning them from their iniquities (sins). Knowing all of this they still crucified Him.

ACTS CHAPTER 4

Verses 1-4

Peter and John Cast Into Prison

(1) And as they spake unto the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, (2) being sore troubled because they taught the people, and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. (3) And they laid hands on them, and put them in ward unto the morrow: for it was now eventide. (4) But many of them that heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about Ave thousand.

Peter, no doubt, preached the gospel (Romans 1:16), and the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The doctrine of the resurrection would have been upsetting to the Sadducees because they did not believe in it (Acts 23:8). Those upset were the priests, Captain of the temple (probably the head of the temple police or the commander of the guard of the Levites who stood guard in the temple, II Chronicles 26:17-18), and the Sadducees.

Peter and John were cast into prison. Paul states that those who live godly will suffer persecution (II Timothy 3:12). Many believed and the *disciples* numbered about

five thousand men. This is the last number (count) given for Christians in the book of Acts.

Verses 5-12

Peter and John Before The Rulers

(5) And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers and elders and scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem; (6) and Annas the high priest was there, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest. (7) And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, by what power, or in what name, have ye done this? (8) Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders, (9) if we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man, by what means this man is made whole; (10) be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in him doth this man stand here before you whole. (11) He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner. (12) And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.

In these verses the Jewish leaders gathered and asked Peter and John by what power or in what name they had healed the lame man. Peter makes it very clear that it was by the power of Jesus Christ that the man was made whole. Peter again makes it very clear (as he did in Acts

2:36, 3:15), that they were guilty of the blood of Jesus, for they had crucified him by lawless hands. Furthermore, Peter tells them that Jesus was the cornerstone which they had rejected and that there is salvation in none other than Jesus Christ. He is **T H E** savior of the world and there is none other.

Verses 13-22

Peter and John Are Threatened and Released

(13) Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. (14) And seeing the man that was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. (15) But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, (16) saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been wrought through them, is manifest to all that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. (17) But that it spread no further among the people, let us threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. (18) And they called them, and charged them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. (19) But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: (20) for we cannot but speak the *things* which we saw and heard. (21) And they, when they had further threatened them, let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people; for all men

glorified God for that which was done. (22) For the man was more that forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was wrought.

It is interesting to note that the Jews had the evidence (Acts 4:14, 16) to prove that Jesus Christ was God's Son (Acts 4:10), but they rejected it. It takes a hardened heart to deny plain observable evidence. In an attempt to stop the preaching of Peter and John they threatened them and released them. The response to their threat was, "For we cannot but speak the things we saw and heard."

The man on whom the miracle was performed had been a cripple for forty years (Acts 3:2, 4:22).

Verses 23-31

Peter and John Report Back to Their Brethren

(23) And being let go, they came to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said unto them. (24) And they, when they heard it, lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, O Lord, thou that didst make the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: (25) who by the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of our father David thy servant, didst say, *Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples imagine vain things?* (26) *The kings of the earth set themselves in array, And the rulers were gathered together, Against the Lord, and against his Anointed:* (27) for of a truth in this city against thy holy Servant

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Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together, (28) to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel foreordained to come to pass. (29) And now, Lord, look upon their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness, (30) while thou stretchest forth thy hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of thy holy Servant Jesus. (31) And when they had prayed, the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

When Peter and John reported to their brethren what had happened, they all raised their voices and praised God. In their praise they quoted a prophecy made by David in Psalms 2:1-2 and applied it to the happenings of their day. One certain way that we know the meaning of prophecy is by the interpretation of those who were inspired by the Holy Spirit.

They asked the Lord for strength that they might speak His word with boldness. The Lord answered by filling them with the Holy Spirit.

SEGMENT IV

A C T S 4:32-5:16

GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

Verses 32-37

Unity of The Disciples

(32) And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. (33) And with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. (34) For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, (35) and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need. (36) And Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is being interpreted, Son of exhortation), a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race, (37) having a field, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Verses Thirty-Two through Thirty-Seven - These verses speak of the disciples' love and concern for each other and their unity is declared by their actions. As we study about the community of goods we need to note:

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1. Community of goods did not exist till there was a need.
2. Division of goods was made according to need, not quantity.
3. It appears that this action was limited to the church at Jerusalem to meet the need of the saints there.
4. There is no evidence that this action was commanded.
5. There is evidence in later chapters of the book of Acts that Christians possessed private property (the mother of John Mark, Acts 12:12; Simon, a tanner, Acts 10:6).

Concerning this passage **McGarvey** wrote,

In reality this church was setting an example for all other churches in all time to come, by showing that true Christian benevolence requires that we shall not let our brethren in the church suffer for food, even if those of us who have houses and lands can prevent it only by the sale of our possessions.

CHAPTER FIVE

Verses 1-11

Ananias and Sapphira

(First Sin in the Church)

1) But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, (2) and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a

certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. (3) But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? (4) While it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. (5) And Ananias hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost: and great fear came upon all that heard it. (6) And the young men arose and wrapped him round, and they carried him out and buried him. (7) And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. (8) And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much. And she said, Yea, for so much. (10) But Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to try the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them that have buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out. (10) And she fell down immediately at his feet, and gave up the ghost: and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her by her husband. (11) And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things.

In these verses we have recorded the first sin which occurred in the New Testament church. Sin is a transgression (lawlessness) of the will of God (I John 3:4). Sin can be the sin of omission (the failure to do what God has commanded to be done) or the sin of commission (doing what God has asked us not to do). Lying is the sin of commission, disobeying God's instructions to be truthful (Colossians 3:9). Heaven is closed to the liar (Revelation

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21:8, 21:27). Perhaps the sin which motivated Ananias and Sapphira to lie was covetousness or the love of money.

Note the following:

1. Ananias and Sapphira did not have to sell their possession (Acts 5:4).
2. After they sold it, it was still theirs to do with as they wished (Acts 5:4).
3. The language implies that the part that they gave was represented as being the total price (Acts 5:2, 3, 8, 9).
4. The scripture indicates that they were "partners" together in this sin (Acts 5:9).

In their deception they were guilty of lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3), and to God (Acts 5:4). As a result of their deception they both died (Acts 5:5, 10). This is one of the few cases where a miracle was involved in causing harm in the life of an individual (see also Acts 13:11).

The result of the discipline which was administered by God was that great fear came upon the church and all who heard about it.

Another important truth set forth in this section of the book of Acts is a characteristic of the Godhead (commonly referred to as the Trinity by the denominational world). To lie to the Holy Spirit is to lie to God (Acts 5:3-4). The Godhead consists of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these three personalities make up the Godhead.

A SIMPLIFIED STUDY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Note from the scripture:

1. There is one God (Ephesians 4:6).
2. His name appears in the plural form (Genesis 1:1, 26).
3. The Godhead is one in creation as the creation is attributed to all three.
 - a. God (Genesis 1:1-2).
 - b. Jesus (John 1:1-3).
 - c. The Holy Spirit (Hebrews 1:2-10).

All three personalities are referred to as God.

1. God the Father (I Corinthians 8:6).
2. God the Son (John 1:1; Philippians 2:5-6; Hebrews 1:8).
3. God the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4).

On several occasions Jesus is referred to as God.

1. He is "Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23), which is interpreted as, "God with us."
2. Isaiah 40:3 quoted in Matthew 3:3.
3. John 20:28; Titus 2:13.

The Son was not inferior to God the Father because He possessed the same attributes (characteristics) as the Father. (John 14:7-9). The Son did take the form of a servant that man might have a means of forgiveness (Philippians 2:4-11). "In Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9).

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All three (Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit) were present at the baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-22; Luke 3:21-22).

Sinners who have faith, who have repented and confessed Jesus Christ, are baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38).

All three are mentioned by Paul in Romans 15:30 and II Corinthians 13:14.

Some question how God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit can be three and yet are one. Jesus said that man and woman become husband and wife and in so doing become one (Matthew 19:5). A wood craftsman cuts down a tree and from the wood he fashions a chair, table, and a bed. There is a difference between the three products but all three are of the same substance, wood. The same is true of the Godhead. While they are three, they are of the same divine substance.

Verses 12-16

Teachings, Signs and Healings

(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. (13) But of the rest durst no man join himself to them: howbeit the people magnified them; (14) and believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women: (15) insomuch that they even carried out the

sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that, as Peter came by, at the least his shadow might overshadow some of them. (16) And there also came together the multitude from the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folk, and them that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

Verses Twelve through Sixteen - The apostles continued to show the power of God with signs and wonders. By the hand of God Ananias and Sapphira dropped dead and the apostles did signs and wonders. The result of this was the disciples and multitude did not approach the apostles with the familiarity which had marked their former association with them. (See Luke 5:8; Acts 5:11).

This does not mean that the people did not come to hear the gospel for, "believers were the more added to the Lord" (Acts 5:14).

The sick were carried into the streets on beds and couches, and from cities round about Jerusalem the sick were carried to the apostles. Luke said, "And they were healed every one" (Acts 5:16). In our day those who claim to heal the sick choose those with whom they will work. In most cases they pick those who have ailments which can't be verified (headaches, back problems, and other similar afflictions). Not so with the apostles, due to their truly having the power of God, they healed ALL who were brought to them.

The purpose of miracles in the days of Jesus and the

apostles was to confirm the word of God (Hebrews 2:3-4; John 11:42).

SEGMENT V

ACTS 5:17-42

GROWTH OF THE CHURCH AND SECOND PERSECUTION

Verses 17-21A

Apostles Arrested Liberated by an Angel Continued Teaching

(17) But the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with jealousy, (18) and laid hands on the apostles, and put them in public ward. (19) But an angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them out, and said, (20) Go ye, and stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this Life. (21 A) And when they heard this, they entered into the temple about daybreak, and taught.

The apostles were imprisoned by the high priest and the Sadducees, not for what they did or said but because of jealousy (intolerance of rivalry). The people were listening to the apostles and obeying the gospel (Acts 5:14). The fact that the high priest and the Sadducees were

losing influence among the people created jealousy on their part. The apostles were cast into prison but this was not God's plan for them. An angel of God opened the doors of the prison, released the apostles with the charge to go and preach. They immediately complied with the angel's instructions, entering the temple about dawn and once again taught the people (Acts 5:25).

Verses 21B-26

Apostles Recaptured

(21B) But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison-house to have them brought. (22) But the officers that came found them not in the prison; and they returned, and told, (23) saying, The prison-house we found shut in all safety, and the keepers standing at the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within. (24) Now when the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were much perplexed concerning them whereunto this would grow. (25) And there came one and told them, Behold, the men whom ye put in the prison are in the temple standing and teaching the people. (26) Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them, but without violence; for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned.

The high priest and those with him called a meeting of the council and sent for the apostles who had been cast into prison. The officers who had been sent to bring the apostles before the council returned and reported that the

prison-house was empty. This fact alone should have been sufficient to convince the council that they were not dealing with the ordinary. They were perplexed, but still they remained in their unbelief. Word then came to them that the apostles were in the temple teaching the people.

Verses 27-32

The Apostles Before The High Priest

(27) And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, (28) saying, We strictly charged you not to teach in this name: and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. (29) But Peter and the apostles answered and said, We must obey God rather than men. (30) The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging him on a tree. (31) Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. (32) And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

The apostles were brought before the high priest and reminded of the charge which they had been given (not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:18). Even though so instructed, the apostles filled Jerusalem with their teachings. The Jewish council introduced yet another aspect of the apostles' teachings, that is, "you intend to bring this man's blood upon us" (Acts 2:36, 3:14-15). The Jews were guilty of the blood of Jesus but wanted to escape that responsibility.

The apostles' answer gives us a principle which is to govern God's people in every age, "we must obey God rather than men." Regardless of the teachings of men, God's word must always be first; there is no exception!

Peter repeats the message he had already proclaimed.

1. You killed the Son of God.
2. God raised Him up.
3. God exalted Him to be Prince and Savior.
4. Remission of sins is through Jesus.

(Compare Acts 2:22-29).

Witnesses of these facts were two-fold: 1) the apostles, and 2) the Holy Spirit.

Verses 33-39

Gamaliel's Advice

(33) But they, when they heard this, were cut to the heart, and were minded to slay them. (34) But there stood up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in honor of all the people, and commanded to put the men forth a little while. (35) And he said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves as touching these men, what ye are about to do. (36) For before these days rose up Theudas, giving himself out 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 dispersed and came to nought. (37) After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the enrolment, and drew away some of the people after him: he also perished; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered abroad. (38) And now I say unto you, refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will be overthrown: (39) but if it is of God, ye will not be able to overthrow them; lest haply ye be found even to be fighting against God.

The result of Peter's preaching was that the Jews were pricked in their hearts, that is, they were convicted of sin (Acts 2:37), and desired to kill them. The Jews should have realized that the apostles were mere messengers of Jehovah God and spoke the words of God (Matthew 10:19).

Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, who was held in honor by the people, offers his advice to the council. He reminds them of Theudas and Judas of Galilee who led people in rebellion against the Jews. Gamaliel said that both of these men perished and their followers were scattered. Gamaliel reasoned that if the works of the apostles were of God they could not overthrow it. On the other hand, if it was the works of men it would be overcome or come to nought. The fallacy of Gamaliel's reasoning is obvious. If the work is of God Christians should support it. If it is the works of men it should be opposed (Matthew 15:9; Ephesians 5:11; Jude 3).

We wonder what it would have taken to convince the

Jews that the works of the apostles were from God.

1. They had healed all the sick which were brought to them.
2. They had been miraculously released from prison.

This should have been sufficient to prove that God was working among the apostles and that their message was from God.

The Jews agreed with Gamaliel, called the apostles unto them, beat them and again charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus. The apostles had already responded to this charge (Acts 5:29).

Verses 40-42

The Apostles Are Warned

Beaten and Released

(40) And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles unto them, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. (41) They therefore departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name. (42) And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ.

The beating of the apostles had the opposite effect than that which the Jewish counsel desired. The apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor

for the name of Jesus and taught and preached daily in the temple and at home, Jesus as the Christ.

SEGMENT VI

ACTS CHAPTER 6:1-7

CHOOSING OF THE SEVEN

Verses 1-6

(1) Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. (2) And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables. (3) Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. (4) But we will continue steadfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word. (5) And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus a proselyte of Antioch; (6) whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them.

The Bible teaches us that the church is to care for the widows (1 Timothy 5:4; James 1:27). In the church in

Jerusalem there arose a disagreement between the Jews with a Grecian background and the Jews of the Hebrew community. (Grecian Jews, Hellenists, were those who affiliated themselves with the Greeks or imitated Greek manners; also, a Jew who used the Greek language as his mother tongue). The Grecian Jews claimed that their widows were being neglected. The difficulty was resolved when the apostles told them to, "look ye out therefore seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" to be appointed over the work of caring for the widows.

The seven were not given this responsibility to encourage them to be faithful, but rather they were given this responsibility because they were faithful or responsible individuals.

The apostles did this that they might continue in the ministry of the word (verses 2 and 4). Not only did this allow the apostles to continue preaching, it also gave others the opportunity to serve. The seven who were chosen are named in verse five.

Verse 7

Summary of Growth

(7) And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

It is worthy to note that a number of priests obeyed the gospel. (Compare with John 12:42). When the word of God falls on good and honest hearts, conversion is the result.

SEGMENT VII

ACTS 6:8-8:1

STEPHEN'S ACTIONS

Verses 1-15

(8) And Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people. (9) But there arose certain of them that were of the synagogue called the synagogue of the Libertines, and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen. (10) And they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake. (11) Then they suborned men, who said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. (12) And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and seized him, and brought him into the council, (13) and set up false witnesses, who said, This man ceaseth not to speak words against this holy place, and the law: (14) for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us. (15) And all that sat in the council, fastening their eyes on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an

angel.

Verse Eight - Verse eight tells us of the many wonders and signs which Stephen did among the people (see Acts 6:5-6).

Verse Nine - The synagogue of the Libertines. (The Libertines were Jews who had been in slavery and had by one means or another obtained their freedom). Those identified in verse nine were not able to withstand the wisdom of Stephen. While we today do not have the laying on of the apostles' hands, we can through a knowledge of God's word stop the mouths of false teachers. Jesus put to flight Satan by quoting God's word (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10). This should teach us how important it is to have a knowledge of God's word.

Verses Twelve through Fifteen - The elders and scribes, determined to have their way, set up false witnesses who made four charges against Stephen. They accused him of:

1. Speaking against this holy place.
2. Speaking against the law.
3. Quoting Jesus as saying he would destroy the temple (see John 2:19-22).
4. Changing the customs which Moses had delivered to them.

It is the behavior of some to lie or hire someone to lie to obtain their desires (see I Kings 21:1-16).

7:1-60

Stephen's Actions

(1) And the high priest said, Are these things so? (2) And he said, brethren and fathers, hearken: The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran (Genesis 11:31), (3) and said unto him, Get thee out of thy land, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee (Genesis 12:1). (4)Then he came out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Haran: and from thence, when his father was dead, God removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell (Genesis 12:5): (5) and he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: and he promised that he would give it to him in possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child (Genesis 12:7, 17:19). (6) And God spake on this wise, that his seed should sojourn in a strange land, and that they should bring them into bondage, and treat them ill, four hundred years (Genesis 15:13). (7) And the nation to which they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place (Exodus 3:12). (8) And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob, and Jacob the twelve patriarchs (Genesis 17:10, 21:2-4, Genesis 29:31 - 30:5). (9) And the patriarchs, moved with jealousy against Joseph, sold him into Egypt: and God was with him (Genesis 37.18-36), (10) and delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favor and wisdom before

Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house (Genesis 39:21, 41:40-46). (11) Now there came a famine over all Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance (Genesis 41:54). (12) But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent forth our fathers the first time (Genesis 42:2). (13) And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's race became manifest unto Pharaoh (Genesis 45:1-4). (14) And Joseph sent, and called to him Jacob his father, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls (Genesis 45:9). (15) And Jacob went down into Egypt; and he died, himself and our fathers (Genesis 46:5), and they were carried over unto Shechem, and laid in the tomb that Abraham bought for a price in silver of the sons of Hamor in Shechem. (17) But as the time of the promise drew nigh which God vouchsafed unto Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt (Exodus 1:7), (18) till there arose another king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph (Exodus 1:8). (19) The same dealt craftily with our race, and ill-treated our fathers, that they should cast out their babes to the end they might not live (Exodus 1:10). (20) At which season Moses was born, and was exceeding fair; and he was nourished three months in his father's house (Exodus 2:2): (21) and when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son (Exodus 2:5). (22) And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; and he was mighty in his words and works. (23) But when he was well-nigh forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel (Exodus 2:11). (24) And seeing one of

them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, smiting the Egyptian: (25) and he supposed that his brethren understood that God by his hand was giving them deliverance; but they understood not. (26) And the day following he appeared 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 (Exodus 2:13)? (27) But he that did his neighbor wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? (28) Wouldest thou kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian yesterday? (29) And Moses fled at this saying, and became a sojourner in the land of Midian, where he begat two sons (Exodus 2:15). (30) And when forty years were fulfilled, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush (Exodus 3:2). (31) And when Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold, there came a voice of the Lord, (32) I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob. And Moses trembled, and durst not behold (Exodus 3:6). (33) And the lord said unto him, loose the shoes from thy feet: for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. (Exodus 3:5). (34) I have surely seen the affliction of my people that is in Egypt, and have heard their groaning, and I am come down to deliver them: and now come, I will send thee into Egypt (Exodus 3:7, 3:10). (35) This Moses whom they refused, saying, who made thee a ruler and a judge? him hath God sent to be both a ruler and a deliverer with the hand of the angel that appeared to him in the bush (Exodus 3:2-5). (36) This man led them forth, having wrought wonders and signs in Egypt,

and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years (Exodus 12:41, 33:1). (37) This is that Moses, who said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall God raise up unto you from among your brethren, like unto me (Deuteronomy 18:15; Acts 3:22). (38) This is he that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel that spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received living oracles to give unto us (Acts 7:53): (39) to whom our fathers would not be obedient, but thrust him from them, and turned back in their hearts unto Egypt (Exodus 32:1, 23), (40) saying unto Aaron, make us gods that shall go before us: for as for this Moses, who led us forth out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. (Exodus 32:21-24). (41) And they made a calf in those days and brought a sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their hands (Exodus 32:4-6). (42) But God turned, and gave them up to serve the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets:

"Did ye offer unto me slain beasts and sacrifices Forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? (43) And ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, And the star of the god Rephan, The figures which ye made to worship them: And I will carry you away beyond Babylon" (Amos 5:25).

(44) Our fathers had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness, even as he appointed who spake unto Moses, that he should make it according to the figure that he had seen (Exodus 25:8). (45) Which also our

fathers, in their turn, brought in with Joshua when they entered on the possession of the nations, that God thrust out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; (46) who found favor in the sight of God, and asked to find a habitation for the God of Jacob. (47) But Solomon built him a house (I Kings 8:20). (48) Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in houses made with hands; as saith the prophet,

(49) *The heaven is my throne,
And the earth the footstool of my feet:
What manner of house will ye build me?
saith the Lord:*

Or what is the place of my rest? (Isaiah 66:1)

(50) Did not my hand make all these things? (51) Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye. (52) Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? and they killed them that showed before of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers; (53) ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not. (54) Now when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. (55) But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, (56) and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. (57) But they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their

ears, and rushed upon him with one accord; (58) and they cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. (59) And they stoned Stephen, calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. (60) And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

(Note: The Old Testament references to the events mentioned by Stephen are given in parentheses at the end of the verse).

In these verses Stephen gives a condensed history of the Jewish people. The audience gives attention to his message until verse fifty-two when he accuses them of betraying and murdering the Righteous One.

Verse Thirty-Eight - Luke speaks of the church in the wilderness. The word *church* describes those who are called out. The children of Israel were called out of Egyptian bondage, thus they were the church in the wilderness. In the New Testament Jesus promised to build His church (Matthew 16:18). Sinners are called out of the world of sin by the gospel of Christ (II Thessalonians 2:14), and then are added to the church (Acts 2:47), or God's called out. The church is separate from the world (Romans 12:1-2).

Verse Fifty-Four - The audience was convicted of sin. Their reaction was different than the multitude on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41).

A SIMPLIFIED STUDY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Verse Fifty-Six - This is the only reference in the New Testament which refers to Jesus as "standing" on the right hand of God. Other passages refer to him as sitting on the right hand of God.

Verse Fifty-Seven - The crowd "stopped their ears" as if that would remove their guilt.

Verses Fifty-Eight and Fifty-Nine - Stephen was stoned to death because he was bold enough to preach the truth.

Verse Sixty - The forgiving spirit of Stephen reminds us of Jesus (Luke 23:34).

SEGMENT VIII

ACTS 8:2-8:40

PHILIP PREACHES IN JUDAEA AND SAMARIA

Verses 1-3

Persecution Against The Church

(1) And Saul was consenting unto his death. And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. (2) And devout men buried Stephen, and made great lamentation over him. (3) But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them

to prison.

Verse One - A - Saul, the Pharisee, was consenting (approving) to the death of Stephen. Saul was the Jewish name of this great persecutor of the church. His Gentile name was Paul. The scriptures tell us that Paul was:

1. A Jew (Acts 22:3).
2. Of the stock of Israel (Philippians 3:5).
3. Of the seed of Abraham (II Corinthians 11:22).
4. From the tribe of Benjamin (Philippians 3:5).
5. An Israelite (II Corinthians 11:22).
6. A Hebrew of Hebrews (Philippians 3:5; II Corinthians 11:22).
7. A Pharisee (Acts 23:6; Philippians 3:5; Acts 26:5)
8. A son of a Pharisee (Acts 23:6).
9. Educated in the city of Jerusalem under Rabbi Gamaliel (Acts 22:3).
10. Advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of his own age (Galatians 1:14).
11. Touching the righteousness within the law found blameless (Philippians 3:6).
12. Concerning zeal, persecuting the church (Philippians 3:6).
13. Born in Tarsus of Cilicia (Acts 22:3).
14. His family was faithful to the Jewish religion (II Timothy 1:3).
15. His family consisted of at least one sister (Acts 23:16).
16. By trade a tentmaker (Acts 18:3).
17. In his earlier years a persecutor of the church of

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Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:13; I Corinthians 15:9; Acts 8:3; 9:1, 22:4, 26:10-11).

18. Paul carried this bitter experience with him for many years (I Corinthians 15:9; I Timothy 1:13-16).
19. One who had a deep and abiding love for his fellow Jews (Romans 9:3).
20. One who considered himself a debtor to all men (Romans 1:14).
21. A humble man (II Corinthians 4:7, 12:5).
22. One who loved books (II Timothy 4:13).
23. Wrote fourteen books of the New Testament, if Hebrews is included.
24. Was born a Roman citizen (Acts 21:39, 22:3, 16:35-40, 22:22-29).
25. Was one who was dedicated to preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 9:16; Romans 1:16).

His conversion is recorded in Acts chapters 9, 22, 26, and his concept of Christianity is beautifully stated in his epistles to the Philippians (1:21), and Galatians (2:20).

Verse One - B - Great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem and the saints were forced from their homes. We must keep in mind that when we think of the church being persecuted we are talking about loving, morally pure, dedicated, honest, humble, sacrificing, obedient children of God suffering for their faith in Jesus Christ.

Verses Two and Three - The saints were scattered throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria. That the

gospel would be preached in Judaea and Samaria was foretold by Jesus (Acts 1:8), and is described in Acts 8:1 - 12:15.

Stephen was buried and great lamentation was made for him. This suggests the type of character Stephen had and his influence in the community.

Saul laid waste (devastated, ruined) the church, putting both men and women in prison.

Verses 4-8

Philip Seen Teaching and Healing

(4) They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word. (5) And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ. (6) And the multitudes gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken by Philip, when they heard, and saw the signs which he did. (7) For from many of those that had unclean spirits, they came out, crying with a loud voice: and many that were palsied, and that were lame, were healed. (8) And there was much joy in that city.

Verse Four - Those who were scattered because of persecution went abroad preaching the word. One might have expected these persecuted children of God to go about murmuring and complaining about what they were suffering for the cause of Christ; not so! They went everywhere preaching the saving gospel of Jesus Christ.

Verses Five through Eight - Philip went to Samaria and preached unto them Christ (See also 8:35). The multitudes gave heed to the preaching of Philip and saw the miracles which he did. One of the problems we have in our present religious society is that religious people will give heed to most anyone except Christ. Salvation is only through Jesus (Acts 4:12; John 12:48).

There was much joy in the city because the palsied, lame and those who were possessed of unclean spirits were healed.

Verses 9-13

Samaritans Were Baptized, Even Simon

(9) But there was a certain man, Simon by name, who beforetime in the city used sorcery, and amazed the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: (10) to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is that power of God which is called Great. (11) And they gave heed to him, because that of long time he had amazed them with his sorceries. (12) But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. (13) And Simon also himself believed: and being baptized, he continued with Philip; and beholding signs and great miracles wrought, he was amazed.

Verses Nine through Eleven - In these verses we are introduced to Simon the sorcerer. A sorcerer was one who

practiced magic. Simon through his hypnotism, ventriloquism, and other acts of magic which CLAIMED the power of casting spells, communicating with the spirits of the dead, claimed to be a great one. The people gave heed to Simon because he claimed to be "some great one" and the people thought he had the power of God. The people were amazed at the works of Simon.

Verses Twelve and Thirteen - When the people heard the preaching of Philip they believed and were baptized; they became Christians. Today, if people would believe, they would not hesitate to obey the gospel and become children of God.

Simon also believed and was baptized and continued with Philip. When he saw the power of God in the signs and miracles performed by Philip, he was amazed. When the works of Simon were compared with the works of Philip, Peter and John, there was no doubt where the real source of power was.

Verses 14-24

Simon Tries to Buy The Power to Pass on The Holy Spirit

(14) Now when the apostles that were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: (15) who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: (16) for as yet it was fallen upon none of them: only they had been baptized into

the name of the Lord Jesus. (17) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. (18) Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, (19) saying, give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit. (20) But Peter said unto him, thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money. (21) Thou has neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right before God. (22) Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray the Lord, if perhaps the thought of thy heart shall be forgiven thee. (23) For I see that thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. (24) And Simon answered and said, Pray ye for me to the Lord, that none of the things which ye have spoken come upon me.

The apostles, upon hearing that Samaria had received the word of God, sent Peter and John unto them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. The Samaritans had received the Holy Spirit when they became Christians (Acts 2:38), but as yet the Spirit had not "fallen upon them." The miraculous powers of the Holy Spirit resulted from the laying on of the apostles' hands (consider Philip, Acts 6:5, 6; 8:6, 7, 13). In verse eighteen Peter and John laid hands on the Samaritans who received the Holy Spirit.

Simon, witnessing the acts of Peter and John, offered to buy this power, "that on whomsoever I lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Spirit." Simon sinned by trying to buy the power of God with money (Acts 8:20). Simon was

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told that he had neither "part nor lot" in this matter and his heart was not right in God's sight. Guilty of sin, Simon needed to repent and pray for forgiveness because he was in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.

To become a Christian one must believe that God is (Hebrews 11:6), and that Jesus Christ is His only begotten Son (John 8:24). The believer must repent (a change of mind which leads to a reformation of life, Acts 2:38), and confess that Jesus Christ is God's Son (Acts 8:37). This repenting and confessing sinner must then be baptized into the death of Jesus Christ according to Romans 6:3 in order to be cleansed by the blood of Jesus (Revelation 1:5), and forgiven of all sin (Acts 2:38).

When one is a Christian and sins he/she is to confess that sin and ask for prayers that his/her sins might be forgiven (8:22-24). This is referred to as God's second law of pardon, that is, pardon for the sinning Christian.

Those who claim that it is impossible for a child of God to sin and be lost (the doctrine of "once-saved-always-saved") maintain that Simon was not really saved but he feigned belief. This concept is to be rejected because:

1. Simon did the same thing that the Samaritans did.
2. Peter would have known that his conversion was not genuine and would have told him the same thing he told those on Pentecost to do to be saved (Acts 2:38), and not to repent and pray (God's law of pardon for the sinning child of God).
3. Luke, the inspired writer, would have known that

Simon's conversion was not genuine.

4. To maintain that Simon did not become a child of God is to know the heart of an individual who lived over 1900 years ago.

Verse Twenty-Five - The gospel was preached in many villages.

Verses 26-40

The Conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch

(26) But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza: the same is desert. (27) And he arose and went: and behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem to worship; (28) and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. (29) And the Spirit said unto Philip, go near, and join thyself to this chariot. (30) And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, understandest thou what thou readest? (31) And he said, how can I, except some one shall guide me? And he besought Philip to come up and sit with him. (32) Now the passage of scripture which he was reading was this,

*He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;
And as a lamb before his shearer is dumb,
So he opened not his mouth:*

*(33) In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: His generation who shall declare?
For his life is taken from the earth.*

(34) And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other? (35) And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus. (36) And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, behold, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? (37) And Philip said, if thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. (38) And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. (39) And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing. (40) But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached the gospel to all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

The eunuch was a very important man (a eunuch of great authority), being the treasurer of Queen Candace. It is interesting to note that:

1. Reading the scriptures had led the eunuch to Jerusalem to worship God (v. 27).
2. He was not ashamed of the scriptures (v. 28).
3. He desired to know more about the word of God (vv. 30-31).

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4. He desired to rightly divide the word of God (v. 34).
5. He received the message of Jesus (v. 35).
6. He was willing to obey (v. 36).

Without a doubt the eunuch was very honest and sincere.

Verse Twenty Six - The scriptures teach that baptism is a burial (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12). Those who oppose baptism as immersion will many times note that there would not have been sufficient water for Philip to immerse the eunuch because it was desert. **McGarvey** in his commentary makes this statement,

The term *desert* is not here to be understood as meaning a barren waste; for no such waste ever existed between Jerusalem and Gaza; but as meaning that part of the way which leads through a comparatively unpopulated district.

The feeding of the five thousand men (plus women and children) took place in a desert place (Matthew 14:15; Mark 6:31), yet there was green grass for the people to sit on (Matthew 14:19; Mark 6:39).

It is interesting to note that God did not speak directly to the eunuch but sent a preacher to him with the message of salvation (vv. 29-30). The eunuch was reading from Isaiah 53 and asked Philip, "of whom speaketh the prophet *this?*" *Philip began with this passage and preached unto*

him Jesus. It is worthy to note that immediately following his instructions about Jesus the eunuch requested baptism (v. 36). Upon his confession that Jesus Christ was the son of God (Acts 8:37), they (both Philip and the eunuch) went down into the water and Philip immersed the eunuch. (The amount of water had to be sufficient for both Philip and the eunuch to go down into the water and for Philip to immerse the eunuch). After his baptism the eunuch went on his way rejoicing. Philip continued his preaching "to all the cities, till he came to Caesarea."

SEGMENT IX

ACTS 9:1 -9:31

SAUL'S CONVERSION

Verses 1-9

Saul's Vision

(1) But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, (2) and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. (3) And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: (4) and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? (5) And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he

said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: (6) but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. (7) And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man. (8) And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing; and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. (9) And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink.

The power of the gospel (Romans 1:16) can be seen in the conversion of those who crucified Christ (Acts 2:36, 38), and Saul who was a dedicated persecutor of the church of Jesus Christ (Acts 9:1, 22:4). There is no sin that God will not forgive if man will meet His conditions. Paul was on his way to the city of Damascus to seek out Christians and bring them bound to Jerusalem when he saw Jesus Christ in a vision (Acts 22:5).

Verses 10-19A

Saul's Stay at Damascus and His Baptism

(10A) Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said unto him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. (11) And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth; (12) and he hath seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight. (13) But Ananias

answered, Lord, I have heard from many of this man, how much evil he did to thy saints at Jerusalem: (14) and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon thy name. (15) But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel: (16) for I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake. (17) And Ananias departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou earnest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. (18) And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized; (19) and he took food and was strengthened.

The conversion of Saul is recorded in detail in Acts chapters nine, twenty-two, and twenty-six. When these three chapters are harmonized the events read as follows.

Saul was a persecuter of the church of Jesus Christ (Acts 9:1, 22:4, 26:9). He imprisoned many Christians and when they were put to death, he gave his vote against them (Acts 26:10). Punishing them in all the synagogues in an attempt to make them blaspheme, and being exceedingly mad against them he persecuted them even unto foreign cities. He obtained permission from the high priest to persecute the Christians in Damascus (Acts 9:1-2; 22:5, 26:10). The purpose of the trip to Damascus (Acts 9:2; 22:5). As he traveled to Damascus, about noon he saw a great light from heaven above the brightness of the sun

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(Acts 9:3; 22:6; 26:13). A voice spake unto him in Hebrew saying, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks (Acts 9:4; 22:7; 26:14). Saul replied, who art thou Lord (Acts 9:5; 22:8; 26:15)? I am Jesus whom thou persecutest (Acts 9:5; 22:8; 26:15). What shall I do Lord? Arise and go into Damascus and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do (Acts 9:6; 22:10). That Saul saw the Lord is clearly stated by Ananias (Acts 9:17), Barnabas (Acts 9:27), and Saul himself (I Corinthians 15:8). Saul was to be a witness of Jesus Christ before the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; 22:21; 26:16-18). The men traveling with Saul heard the voice but saw no one (Acts 9:7). Chapter twenty-two states that the men with Saul saw the light but heard not the voice (Acts 22:9). Saul was led by the hand, blind, into the city (Acts 9:8; 22:11). For three days he did not eat or drink (Acts 9:9). During this time Saul was praying (Acts 9:11). God sent Ananias to Saul and he received his sight and was baptized (Acts 9:18, 22:16). He preached both to them of Damascus first, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judaea, and also to the Gentiles (Acts 9:20; 26:20). Several things are very interesting and important in the harmonized account of Saul's conversion.

In Acts 9:2 and 22:4 Saul is spoken of as persecuting those of the Way. Those of the Way were the disciples of the Lord (Acts 9:1). This should remind us that Christianity is not something one gets, but is a way of life. Christianity among other things is:

1. The way of redemption (Acts 4:12).

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2. The way of righteousness (Romans 1:17)
3. The way of life (Romans 12:2).
4. The way of eternal life (John 14:1-4).
5. The way to the eternal Father (John 14:6).

To persecute the church is to persecute Jesus Christ. The church is the spiritual body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23), of which Jesus is the head (Colossians 1:18). Saul was persecuting the church of God (I Corinthians 15:9; Acts 9:13), therefore he was persecuting Jesus Christ.

In Saul's conversion to Christ we are once again reminded of the purpose of baptism.

1. Mark 16:16 - To be saved.
2. Acts 2:38 - For remission of sins.
3. Acts 22:16 - To wash away sins.

Baptism is an act of obedience which brings one into contact with the blood of Jesus Christ, which washes away sins (Romans 6:3-4; Revelation 1:5).

Is there a contradiction between Acts 9:7, "And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, HEARING THE VOICE but beholding no man," and Acts 22:9, "And they that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they HEARD NOT THE VOICE of him that spake to me." There is no contradiction between the two passages. The same word is used in I Corinthians 14:2 where it is translated "understand." It is possible to hear a voice but not understand it. Such is the meaning of these verses. The Greek language makes this distinction.

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1. The Greek word for "hearing" is AKOUO, with the genitive case and means to hear *without* understanding (Acts 9:7).
2. The Greek word for "heard" is AKOUO, with the accusative case and means to hear *with* understanding (Acts 22:9).

Both verses mean the same thing, the men who traveled with Paul did not understand what the voice said to Saul.

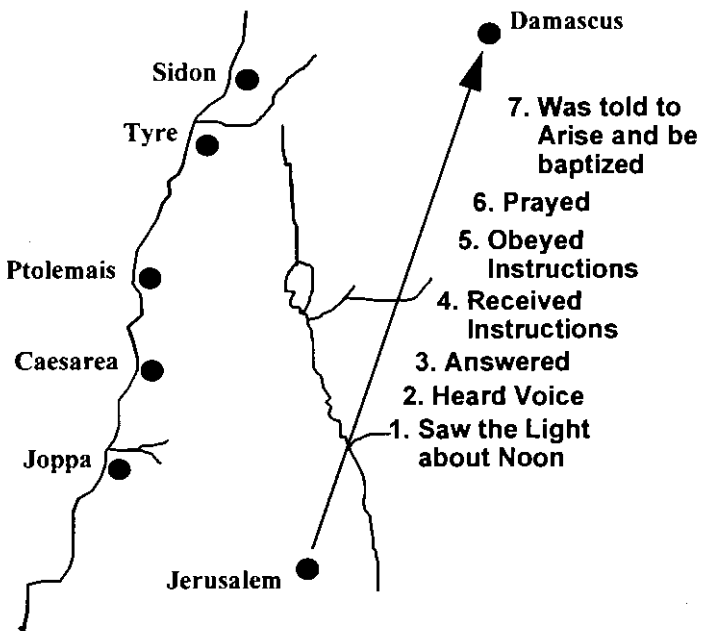
Saul was a chosen vessel (Acts 9:15), one born out of due season (I Corinthians 15:8), who was to go to the Gentiles with the gospel.

Of great importance to us is the answer to the question, when did Saul receive the remission of sins, or when did Saul become a Christian? Some maintain that Saul was saved on the road to Damascus when:

1. He saw the light, or
2. He heard the voice, or
3. He answered the voice, or
4. He received instructions, or
5. He obeyed the instructions, or
6. He prayed.

If Saul was saved on the road to Damascus he was saved in his sins and such is not possible. Ananias was sent to Saul even after he had prayed, with God's message for him, "And why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on His name" (Acts 22:16). Saul was not forgiven of his sins until he obeyed

Saul's Conversion



Ananias' instructions to be baptized for forgiveness (to wash away his sins).

Ananias, a devout man, one which was well reported by all, a disciple, was sent by God to Saul with the message of salvation. Ananias uses the word *saint* to refer to Christians for the first time in the New Testament (Acts 9:13).

Verses 19B-22

Saul Preaches

(19B) And he was certain days with the disciples that were at Damascus. (20) And straightway in the synagogues he proclaimed Jesus, that he is the son of God. (21) And all that heard him were amazed, and said, Is not this he that in Jerusalem made havoc of them that called on this name? and he had come hither for this intent, that he might bring them bound before the chief priests. (22) But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews that dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is the Christ.

Saul, after his conversion, began immediately to devote all his energies to building up what he had been tearing down. Think of the power of his preaching:

1. He saw the Lord, positive proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
2. He had proof of the light and the events on the road to Damascus by his traveling companions.

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1. He saw the Lord, positive proof of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
2. He had proof of the light and the events on the road to Damascus by his traveling companions.

3. The events on the road to Damascus could not be explained as an optical illusion because of his resulting blindness.
4. All of this proved the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

The conversion of Saul also defines repentance for us. He was a persecutor of the church, but had a change of mind which brought about a change of life; he became a preacher for the church he once tried to destroy. His conversion also shows us the character of Saul in that he changed from that which he knew to be wrong to that which he knew to be right.

The subject of Saul's preaching was that Jesus was the Son of God and this amazed and confounded the Jews.

Verses 23-25

Saul's Escape

(23) And when many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel together to kill him: (24) but their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates also day and night that they might kill him: (25) but his disciples took him by night, and let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket.

Paul's preaching and stand for the truth was so powerful that after many days the Jews plotted to kill him. When the plot of the Jews became known to the disciples they lowered Saul over the wall to safety.

Verses 26-30

Saul's Visit to Jerusalem

(26) And when he was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. (27) But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. (28) And he was with them going in and going out at Jerusalem, (29) preaching boldly in the name of the Lord: and he spake and disputed against the Grecian Jews; but they were seeking to kill him. (30) And when the brethren knew it, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

When Saul came to Jerusalem he was accepted by the disciples only after Barnabas had recommended him. After Barnabas had brought Saul to the apostles and recounted his conversion Saul worked with them in preaching Jesus. He spake and disputed with the Grecian Jews who were seeking his life. When the brethren learned of the Jews' plan, they sent Saul to Tarsus. It is worthy to note the subject of the early preachers.

1. Philip preached unto them Christ (Acts 8:5).
2. Philip preached unto him Jesus (Acts 8:35).
3. Saul spoke *proving that Jesus was the Christ* (Acts 9:22).
4. Saul preached boldly in the name of Jesus (Acts 9:27).

5. Saul preached boldly in the name of the Lord (Acts 9:29).

It is not hard to determine that Jesus Christ was the center of early preaching. This is appropriate because it is in Christ that man enjoys salvation (John 1:29; Acts 4:12).

Verse 31
Growth of The Church
Second Summary Statement

(31) So the church throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied.

SEGMENT X

ACTS 9:32-11:18

CORNELIUS CONVERTED

ADMISSION OF THE GENTILES

PETER'S DEFENSE

Verses 32-35

Peter Heals Aeneas

(32) And it came to pass, as Peter went throughout all parts, he came down also to the saints that dwelt at Lydda. (33) And there he found a certain man named

AENEAS, who had kept his bed eight years; for he was palsied. (34) And Peter said unto him, AENEAS, Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed. And straightway he arose. (35) And all that dwelt at Lydda and in Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

In this passage the word "saints" is used for the second time in reference to Christians. Lydda was located south-east of the seacoast city of Joppa. Peter met a man by the name of AENEAS who had been bedfast for eight years. Peter announced to AENEAS, "Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise and make thy bed." Straightway AENEAS arose. This miracle resulted in many turning to the Lord. The word of God was confirmed by this miracle (Hebrews 2:3-4), and precious souls believed and obeyed the gospel.

Verses 36-43

Peter Raises Tabitha

(36) Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. (37) And it came to pass in those days, that she fell sick, and died: and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upperchamber. (38) And as Lydda was nigh unto Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men unto him, entreating him, Delay not to come on unto us. (39) And Peter rose and went with them. And when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and the garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

(40) But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat up. (41) And he gave her his hand, and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. (42) And it became known throughout all Joppa: and many believed on the Lord. (43) And it came to pass, that he abode many days in Joppa with one Simon, a tanner.

Tabitha (which is by interpretation Dorcas) lived in Joppa. Tabitha was full of good works and almsdeeds (verse 39). She fell sick and died. Peter was called from Lydda and went into the upper chamber where the body of Tabitha lay. Peter raised her from the dead and presented her alive to the saints and widows. The result of this miracle was that "many believed on the Lord." (Same result when Peter healed Aeneas.)

ACTS CHAPTER 10

Verses 1-8

Cornelius' Vision

(1) Now there was a certain man in Caesarea, Cornelius by name, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, (2) a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always. (3) He saw in a vision openly, as it were about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in unto him, and saying

to him Cornelius. (4) And he, fastening his eyes upon him, and being affrighted, said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thy alms are gone up for a memorial before God. (5) And now send men to Joppa, and fetch one Simon, who is surnamed Peter: (6) he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side. (7) And when the angel that spake unto him was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; (8) and having rehearsed all things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

The Bible points out that Cornelius was:

1. A Centurion (a military officer in charge of one hundred soldiers).
2. Of the Italian band.
3. A devout man.
4. One who feared God.
5. One who gave much alms to the people.
6. One who prayed to God always.
7. A righteous man (Acts 10:22).
8. One who was well reported by all the nation of the Jews (Acts 10:22).

Cornelius was a good moral man but he was not a saved individual for Peter would speak unto him words, "whereby thou shalt be saved" (Acts 11:14). Today those who trust in their morality (being a good person) to save them should study the conversion of Cornelius very carefully.

The conversion of Cornelius is recorded in Acts 10:1-48 and is repeated again in Acts 11:1-18 where Peter recounts the events in making his defense before the Jews in Jerusalem. These two chapters should be read together to fully understand the conversion of Cornelius. An angel appeared unto Cornelius about the ninth hour (as he kept the ninth hour of prayer, Acts 10:30), and gave him instructions to send men to Joppa and bring Peter to Caesarea. Cornelius obeyed the heavenly instructions.

Verses 9-16

Peter's Vision

(9) Now on the morrow, as they were on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour: (10) and he became hungry, and desired to eat: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance; (11) and he beholdeth the heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth: (12) wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts and creeping things of the earth and birds of the heaven. (13) And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. (14) But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean. (15) And a voice came unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common. (16) And this was done thrice: and straight-way the vessel was received up into heaven.

Peter had been faithful to the dietary laws of the Jewish law and had never eaten that which was unclean. Moses,

in Leviticus chapter eleven, lists the animals that the Jews could not eat.

Verses 17-23 A

Peter Receives the Messengers

(17) Now while Peter was much perplexed in himself what the vision which he had seen might mean, behold, the men that were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood before the gate, (18) and called and asked whether Simon, who was surnamed Peter, were lodging there. (19) And while Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. (20) But arise, and get thee down, and go with them, nothing doubting: for I have sent them. (21) And Peter went down to the men, and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come? (22) And they said, Cornelius a centurion, a righteous man and one that feareth God, and well reported of by all the nation of the Jews, was warned of God by a holy angel to send for thee into his house and to hear words from thee. (23A) So he called them in and lodged them.

Peter was perplexed about the vision he had seen. Later, when he came into the presence of Cornelius he understood the message of the vision (Acts 10:28, 10:34). Peter went with the messengers to the house of Cornelius.

Verses 23B-33
Peter Goes to Cornelius
and Cornelius Explains

(23-B) And on the morrow he arose and went forth with them, and certain of the brethren from Joppa accompanied him. (24) And on the morrow they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius was waiting for them, having called together his kinsmen and his near friends. (25) And when it came to pass that Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. (26) But Peter raised him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. (27) And as he talked with him he went in, and findeth many come together: (28) and he said unto them, Ye yourselves know how it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to join himself or come unto one of another nation; and yet unto me hath God showed that I should not call any man common or unclean: (29) wherefore also I came without gainsaying, when I was sent for. I ask therefore with what intent ye sent for me. (30) And Cornelius said, Four days ago, until this hour, I was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in my house; and behold, a man stood before me in bright apparel, (31) and saith, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. (32) Send therefore to Joppa, and call unto thee Simon, who is surnamed Peter; he lodgeth in the house of Simon a tanner, by the sea side. (33) Forthwith therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore we are all here present in the sight of God, to hear all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord.

A SIMPLIFIED STUDY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

The next day Peter (with certain of the brethren from Joppa) went unto the house of Cornelius. There he found Cornelius with his kinsmen and near friends waiting. Cornelius wanted these to hear what Peter had to say and arranged for them to be present. When Peter entered, Cornelius fell down at his feet and worshipped him. Peter makes it clear that men are not the proper objects of worship (Acts 10:26), even as angels are not the proper objects of worship (Colossians 2:18; Revelation 19:10).

Many had come together to hear Peter preach. Peter indicated that it was an unlawful thing for a Jew to join or come unto one of another nation. (See also John 4:9; Luke 9:51-56). Peter indicates that God had revealed to him that he was not to call any man common or unclean.

When asked why he had sent for Peter, Cornelius tells of the vision which he had seen (Acts 10:1-8; 23-33), and indicated that he was ready to hear a message from God. It is too bad today that many are not willing to hear a message from God. If they would, their lives would be blessed and they would live with the hope of eternal life.

Verses 34B-43

Peter Preaches to Cornelius

(34B) Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: (35) but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him. (36) The word which he sent unto the children of Israel, preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all) (37) that saying ye yourselves know, which

was published throughout all Judaea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; (38) even Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. (39) And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the country of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom also they slew, hanging him on a tree. (40) Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest, (41) not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. (42) And he charged us to preach unto the people, and to testify that this is he who is ordained of God to be the Judge of the living and the dead. (43) To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins.

Peter begins his sermon to the Gentiles with the truth that God is no respecter of persons. As God is not a respecter of persons, neither should His children be (James 2:1-13). The gospel is for all (Mark 16:15). One is not acceptable unto God because of *who* he is but because of *what* he is (Acts 10:35).

Again, as before (Acts 2), Peter preaches the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. Concerning Jesus, Peter said:

1. God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and power.
2. Jesus went about doing good.

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3. Jesus healed all that were oppressed of the devil.
4. God was with Him.
5. God raised Him from the dead.
6. After his resurrection He was made manifest (appeared) unto those who ate and drank with Him.
7. He will judge the living and the dead.
8. The prophets bear witness of Him.
9. Through His name everyone who believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins (Acts 2:36-47).
10. Jesus is Lord of all.

In view of number nine above, what is involved in believing on Jesus? There is a significant difference in believing that there was a historical Jesus (John 12:42; James 2:19), and having acceptable faith in Jesus (Romans 5:1). Acceptable belief (faith) is that which is obedient to God's instructions (Hebrews 11). The *American Standard* translation of the New Testament renders John 3:36 as, "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." When one studies the conversions in the book of Acts and one will see that the subjects were always obedient to the instructions given by the preacher or teacher.

Verses 44-48

Holy Spirit Falls on Cornelius

and He and His Household Are Baptized

(44) While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word. (45) And they of

the circumcision that believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. (46) For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, (47) Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? (48) And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

While Peter was preaching, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word. Those of the circumcision (Jews) were amazed because the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Gentiles. Peter said that the Holy Spirit fell on them even as on us (the apostles) at the beginning (Acts 11:15; 2:1-4). This is the second (**and final**) time that God baptized humanity with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came upon the Gentiles not by the laying on of the apostles' hands, but came directly from God (Acts 11:15). The Gentiles began speaking in tongues and magnifying God.

Peter commanded those who had received the Holy Spirit (as the apostles, Acts 10:47; 11:17), to be baptized. Several things should be noted carefully:

1. Cornelius was to send for Peter who would tell him words, "whereby thou shalt be saved" (Acts 11:14).
2. Peter commanded Cornelius to be baptized (Acts 10:48).
3. Therefore, baptism is essential to one's salvation.

A SIMPLIFIED STUDY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

What was the purpose of the Holy Spirit coming upon Cornelius? It was not for salvation because Peter was to speak words to lead Cornelius to salvation. After Peter had recounted what had happened to the Gentiles, the Jews in Jerusalem realized, "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life." This event was a partial fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28). **The Holy Spirit came upon Cornelius to show the Jews that the gospel was to be preached unto the Gentiles.** Peter was submissive to God's approval of the Gentiles (Acts 10:48, 11:17). The inclusion of the Gentiles into God's plan of salvation broke down the division between the Jews and the Gentiles. Under Christianity all had the opportunity to become children of God (Ephesians 2:13-22, 3:6). Today, we do not have the authority to decide who will hear the Gospel. God has already made this decision, ALL MEN (Mark 16:15).

ACTS CHAPTER 11

Verses 1-18

Peter Defends His Actions

(1) Now the apostles and the brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. (2) And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, (3) saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. (4) But Peter began, and expounded the matter unto them in order, saying, (5) I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, a certain vessel descending, as it

were a great sheet let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even unto me: (6) upon which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw the fourfooted beasts of the earth and wild beasts and creeping things and birds of the heaven. (7) And I heard also a voice saying unto me, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. (8) But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath ever entered into my mouth. (9) But a voice answered the second time out of heaven, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common. (10) And this was done thrice: and all were drawn up again into heaven. (11) And behold, forthwith three men stood before the house in which we were, having been sent from Caesarea unto me. (12) And the Spirit bade me go with them, making no distinction. And these six brethren also accompanied me; and we entered into the man's house: and he told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, Send to Joppa, and fetch Simon, whose surname is Peter; (14) who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house. (15) And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on us at the beginning. (16) And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit. (17) If then God gave unto them the like gift as he did also unto us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I, that I could withstand God? (18) And when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life.

When Peter returned to Jerusalem the Jews contended

with him because he went in to uncircumcised men (Gentiles) and ate with them. Peter explained what had happened and the Jewish brethren glorified God that the Gentiles had received the opportunity to be Christians.

SEGMENT XI

ACTS 11:19-30

CHURCH AT ANTIOCH

Verses 19-21

Preaching to Jews and Gentiles

(19) They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews. (20) But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. (21) And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord.

Verse Nineteen - This verse takes us back to Acts 8:1 where Christians, under persecution, went everywhere preaching the gospel. Yet, they had preached *only* to the Jews at that time (that is, the time mentioned in Acts 8:1).

Verse Twenty - Some from Cyprus and Cyrene preached also to the Greeks. It is possible that there is a lapse of

time between verse nineteen and verse twenty. The first group spoke only to the Jews. They were there because of the affair of Stephen. The group who spoke to the Greeks (Gentiles) could have come after salvation was offered to the Gentiles (Acts 11:18).

Verse Twenty-One - God was with them and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.

Verses 22-26

Jerusalem Sends Barnabas

(22) And the report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas as far as Antioch: (23) who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord: (24) for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. (25) And he went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul; (26) and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the church, and taught much people, and that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

Verses Twenty-Two through Twenty-Three - The church at Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch where he exhorted the new Christians to cleave unto the Lord. There is a very important Bible principle found in this action. When precious souls have obeyed the gospel they are babes in Christ and must be nourished (established in the

A SIMPLIFIED STUDY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

faith, Romans 16:25; I Thessalonians 3:2; II Peter 1:12). Preachers and teachers who baptize those who have obeyed the gospel, should make sure that some type of follow-up work is conducted to teach the new Christians about the type of life they are to live for Christ.

Verse Twenty-Four - The character of Barnabas is given. This reminds us that to be an effective teacher one must first be a faithful Christian (a doer of the word of God, Acts 1:1; James 1:22-23).

Verses Twenty-Five through Twenty-Six - Barnabas goes to Tarsus, finds Saul and brings him to Antioch where they labored in the Lord's work (taught much people) for one year. The disciples (followers of Jesus Christ) were first called Christians in Antioch. The name, "Christian," appears three times in the New Testament:

Acts 11:26 - and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the church, and taught much people, and that the disciples were called **Christians** first in Antioch.

Acts 26:28 - And Agrippa [said] unto Paul, With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a **Christian**.

I Peter 4:16 - but if [a man suffer] as a **Christian**, let him not be ashamed; but let

him glorify God in this name.

Verses 27-30
Goodness of Disciples of Antioch
and Jerusalem to Judaea

(27) Now in these days there came down prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. (28) And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be a great famine over all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius. (29) And the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judaea: (30) which also they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

Verses Twenty-Seven through Thirty - The announcement of the prophet, Agabus, that there would come a great famine over the world, stirred the Christians to send relief to their brethren in Judaea. The same benevolent spirit which was manifested in Acts **2:45** and **4:32** is shown here.

Before the word of God became available to God's creatures, there were men who were given certain gifts by the power of the Holy Spirit; which was given by the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts **8:14-17**; I Corinthians **12:7-11**; Ephesians **4:11**). These gifts were given to direct the church in its infancy until "we all attain the unity of the truth" (Ephesians **4:13**), and until "that which is perfect is come" (I Corinthians **13:1-10**, especially verses

9 and 10). Agabus was one of these prophets.

SEGMENT XII

ACTS 12

PERSECUTION OF HEROD

Verses 1-5

Herod Kills James and Puts Peter in Prison

(1) Now about that time Herod the king put forth his hands to afflict certain of the church. (2) And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. (3) And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. And those were the days of unleavened bread. (4) And when he had taken him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to guard him; intending after the Passover to bring him forth to the people. (5) Peter therefore was kept in the prison: but prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him.

Verses One through Five - Herod begins a persecution of the church. This Herod is identified by **McGarvey** in his commentary on Acts, as follows:

This Herod was a namesake of Agrippa; the noted minister of Augustus Caesar whose life by Tacitus is one of the noblest of Latin classics, and he was commonly called Agrippa. He was the grandson of

Herod by whom the infants of Bethlehem were slaughtered, and a nephew of Herod the Tetrarch by whom John the Baptist was beheaded. He grew up in Rome, where he wasted what fortune he had inherited in princely extravagance; but while doing so he contracted an intimacy with Caius Caesar, afterward the notorious emperor Caligula.

First, Herod kills James the brother of John. James was only one of the many who died for their faith in God (Hebrews 11:36-38; Revelation 2:13). Herod was a people pleaser. When he saw that his activities as a persecutor pleased the Jews, he put Peter in prison intending to bring him before the people after Passover.

While Peter was in prison, prayer was made earnestly (sincere, intense) by the church unto God for him. Prayer is a powerful tool in the hands of God's children (I Thessalonians 5:17; James 5:16). It has been said that more things are wrought by prayer than the human mind can conceive. Note the characteristics of acceptable prayer:

Pray to God (Acts 1:24), the eternal and Holy Father (John 17:11).

Pray according to God's will (I John 5:14-15; Matthew 6:10). Remember Isaiah 55:8-9.

Pray with sincerity (Matthew 6:5). Prayer offered for man's approval is not acceptable to God. The Christian prays to God, not to be

heard by man.

Pray from an obedient, dedicated, and pure life, one which is dedicated to serving God (Proverbs 28:9; I Peter 3:12; I John 3:22; Romans 12:1-20).

Pray with the spirit of humility (Luke 18:10-14).

Pray earnestly (Acts 12:5).

Pray fervently (James 5:17; Colossians 4:12).

Pray with understanding (I Corinthians 14:15).

Pray in the name of Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:17; John 14:14). He is our advocate (I John 2:1), and mediator (I Timothy 2:5).

Pray persistently (Luke 11:5-10, 21:36).

Pray with watchfulness (Luke 21:36; Mark 13:33; Colossians 4:12).

Pray believing (Matthew 21:22; James 1:6; Ephesians 3:20).

Pray without ceasing (I Thessalonians 5:17).

Verses 6-11

Peter Escapes

(6) And when Herod was about to bring him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and guards before the door kept the prison. (7) And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shined in the cell: and he smote Peter on the side, and awoke him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. (8) And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And he did so. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. (9) And he went out, and followed; and he knew not that it was true which was done by the angel, but thought he saw a vision. (10) And when they were past the first and the second guard, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth into the city; which opened to them of its own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and straightway the angel departed from him. (11) And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent forth his angel and delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

Herod made sure that Peter was securely kept in prison:

1. Peter was between two soldiers.
2. Bound with two chains.
3. Guards before the doors.

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There was nothing more that could have been done to make sure that Peter did not escape. An angel of the Lord appeared unto Peter and told him to rise up quickly. His chains fell off and he was instructed to follow the angel. They went past the first and second guard, and the iron gate which led to the city opened unto them of its own accord. The angel straightway departed from him.

Peter thought that he had seen a vision (Acts 12:9), but came to himself and realized that God had sent forth his angel and delivered him from the hand of Herod (Acts 12:11).

Verses 12-17

(12) And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together and were praying. (13) And when he knocked at the door of the gate, a maid came to answer, named Rhoda. (14) And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for joy, but ran in, and told that Peter stood before the gate. (15) And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she confidently affirmed that it was even so. And they said, It is his angel. (16) But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened, they saw him, and were amazed. (17) But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him forth out of the prison. And he said, Tell these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went to another place.

Peter went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark. Given the opportunity to speak he declared unto them how the Lord had delivered him out of prison. He instructed them to tell these things to James (probably the Lord's brother) and the brethren.

Verses 18-19

Herod Looks for Peter

(18) Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter. (19) And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the guards, and commanded that they should be put to death. And he went down from Judaea to Caesarea, and tarried there.

Peter's escape, after he had been made secure in the prison house, created a real stir (commotion) among the soldiers. There were only two explanations for Peter's disappearance:

1. The soldiers conspired together and released Peter.
2. A notable miracle had been performed, and of course Herod would never admit that God's hand was in the release of Peter.

Peter was guarded by four quaternions of soldiers. There were four soldiers to a quaternion, making a total of sixteen soldiers who were executed by Herod.

Leaving Judaea, Herod went to Caesarea.

Verses 20-23

Herod's Death

(20) Now he was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: and they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, they asked for peace, because their country was fed from the king's country. (21) And upon a set day Herod arrayed himself in royal apparel, and sat on the throne, and made an oration unto them. (22) And the people shouted, saying, The voice of a god, and not of a man. (23) And immediately an angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

Dressed in royal apparel, Herod came before the people and was declared to be a god. Because he gave not God the glory, an angel of the Lord smote him and he died. Christians need to glorify God for all of His blessings and what can be accomplished through His children's lives. Sometimes it is easy to take credit for something accomplished, when in reality it was God who brought it about through His providence.

Verse 24

Third Summary Passage

(24) But the word of God grew and multiplied.

This verse is the third summary passage given in the book of Acts. The word of God grew and multiplied, that is, the cause of Christ increased.

Verse 25
Barnabas and Saul Return

(25) And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their ministration, taking with them John whose surname was Mark.

After they had completed their mission in Jerusalem, Barnabas and Saul took John Mark and returned to Antioch.

SEGMENT XIII

ACTS 13-14

PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Verses 1-6
Barnabas and Saul Go to Cyprus

(1) Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was [there], prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. (2) And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. (3)

Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. (4) So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. (5) And when they were at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John as their attendant.

The prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch are named as they ministered to the Lord and fasted. The Holy Spirit chose Barnabas and Saul for a special assignment in the Kingdom of God. The church fasted, prayed, laid their hands on Barnabas and Saul and sent them on their mission.

Fasting is not commanded of the Christian, but is an act of devotion. If a Christian makes the decision to fast and give himself/herself to prayer and meditation, well and good, but do not bind your decision on other children of God. Fasting should not be something to brag about as it was with the hypocritical Pharisees (Luke 18:11-12; See also the principle recorded in Matthew 6:2-6).

The brethren laid their hands on Barnabas and Saul as an act of encouragement and fellowship in their new endeavor (see I Timothy 4:14 for different purpose).

Barnabas and Saul left Antioch for Seleucia, which served as a seaport for the city of Antioch. Leaving Seleucia they sailed to the Island of Cyprus. Because of her wealth of natural resources and position on the Asia Minor - Egypt trade route, Cyprus came under the rule of

many nations (Assyria, Egypt, Persia, Greece, Egypt a second time, and the Roman empire).

Cyprus was the homeland of Barnabas (Acts 4:36), and the stepping stone to Asia Minor. This very well may be the reason they started their work on this island. Barnabas and Saul landed at the seaport city of Salamis where they preached in the synagogues. Nothing is said about converts or additional information of their preaching in Salamis. We are told that John Mark assisted in the work.

Verses 6-12

Work on Cyprus and in the City of Paphos

(6) And when they had gone through the whole island unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesus; (7) who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of understanding. The same called unto him Barnabas and Saul, and sought to hear the word of God. (8) But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn aside the proconsul from the faith. (9) But Saul, who is also [called] Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fastened his eyes on him, (10) and said, O full of all guile and all villany, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? (11) And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. (12) Then the proconsul, when

he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

Verse Six A - From this verse it seems that Barnabas and Saul preached throughout the island and terminated their work on the island at the seaport city of Paphos.

Verses Six B - through Twelve - Entering Paphos, Barnabas and Saul came in contact with a sorcerer named Bar-jesus (Elymas by interpretation). This false prophet was with Sergius Paulus who was the proconsul. Located at Paphos was the temple of Venus-Aphrodite, who was identified with the Greek goddess, Aphrodite. A nature goddess, it was believed that she arose from the sea at Paphos. Not only did the people worship Venus-Aphrodite, but they also engaged in the practice of sorcery.

Earlier in the book of Acts (Chapter eight) we read of Simon the Sorcerer. Sorcery was a very popular practice in this period of history since it was believed that the lives of men could be read from the stars. Those who professed to decipher the celestial readings were held in high esteem.

Sergius Paulus was a man of understanding and a truth seeker. He sent for Barnabas and Saul to hear the word of God. Bar-jesus sought to turn aside the proconsul from the faith. Saul, who was called Paul (Luke now refers to Saul by his Gentile name), rebuked him and caused him to be blind for a season. Bar-jesus is referred to as being:

1. Full of guile.
2. Full of all villainy.

3. The son of the devil.
4. An enemy of all righteousness.
5. One who perverted the right ways of the Lord.

When Sergius Paulus observed what was done, he believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord. The conversion of the proconsul would have much influence for Christ throughout the island of Cyprus.

There is a very interesting note in Saul's assuming his Gentile name *Paul*. Paul suffered what Saul had inflicted upon the Christians. Saul stoned, Paul was stoned; Saul inflicted scourgings on the Christians and five times Paul received forty stripes save one; Saul hunted the church of God, Paul was hunted; Saul bound, Paul was bound (see II Corinthians 11:21-23). The change of name heralded a change in leadership. Where it was formerly Barnabas and Saul, it was now Paul and Barnabas. It remained Paul and Barnabas, Paul and Silas, Paul and company throughout his labors.

Verse 13

On to Perga

John Mark Leaves Them

(13) Now Paul and his company set sail from Paphos, and came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departed from them and returned to Jerusalem.

Setting sail from Paphos, Paul and his company came to Perga in Pamphylia. Nothing is said about preaching the

gospel in Perga, but we are informed that John Mark left the missionary group. Several reasons have been suggested for John Mark's departure:

1. He did not like the change in leadership.
2. The dangers of the country.
3. He had contracted malaria.
4. John Mark may have disliked Paul's aggressive attitude toward the Gentiles.
5. The policy of Paul may have called for a greater sacrifice than he wished to make.

It is evident that John's reason, whatever it was, was not acceptable to Paul because he accused him of withdrawing (Acts 15:38), and later refused to permit him to accompany him on his second missionary journey. It should be noted, however, that John Mark was willing to start on the second journey, and he must have later regained the good graces of Paul because Paul later refers to him, saying to receive him (Colossians 4:10; see also 2 Tim. 4:11).

Verses 14-51

Paul Preaches and Makes Disciples Is Cast Out of Antioch He and His Company Go to Iconium

(14) But they, passing through from Perga, came to Antioch of Pisidia; and they went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. (15) And after the

reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. (16) And Paul stood up, and beckoning with the hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, hearken: (17) The God of this people Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they sojourned in the land of Egypt, and with a high arm led he them forth out of it. (18) And for about the time of forty years as a nursing-father bare he them in the wilderness. (19) And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave [them] their land for an inheritance, for about four hundred and fifty years: (20) and after these things he gave [them] judges until Samuel the prophet. (21) And afterward they asked for a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for the space of forty years. (22) And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king; to whom also he bare witness and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who shall do all My will. (23) Of this man's seed hath God according to promise brought unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus; (24) when John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. (25) And as John was fulfilling his course, he said, What suppose ye that I am? I am not [he]. But behold, there cometh one after me the shoes of whose feet I am not worthy to unloose. (26) Brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and those among you that fear God, to us is the word of this salvation sent forth. (27) For they that dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor the voices of the prophets which are read

every sabbath, fulfilled [them] by condemning [him]. (28) And though they found no cause of death [in him], yet asked they of Pilate that he should be slain. (29) And when they had fulfilled all things that were written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a tomb. (30) But God raised him from the dead: (31) and he was seen for many days of them that came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses unto the people. (32) And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers, (33) that God hath fulfilled the same unto our children, in that he raised up Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. (34) And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he hath spoken on this wise, I will give you the holy and sure [blessings] of David. (35) Because he saith also in another [psalm], Thou wilt not give Thy Holy One to see corruption. (36) For David, after he had in his own generation served the counsel of God, fell asleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: (37) but he whom God raised up saw no corruption. (38) Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins: (39) and by him every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. (40) Beware therefore, lest that come upon [you] which is spoken in the prophets: (41) Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; For I work a work in your days, A work which ye shall in no wise believe, if one declare it unto you. (42) And as they went out, they besought that these words might be spoken to them the next sabbath.

(43) Now when the synagogue broke up, many of the Jews and of the devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas; who, speaking to them, urged them to continue in the grace of God. (44) And the next sabbath almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God. (45) But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy, and contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, and blasphemed. (46) And Paul and Barnabas spake out boldly, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. (47) For so hath the Lord commanded us, [saying], I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, That thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth. (48) And as the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of God: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. (49) And the word of the Lord was spread abroad throughout all the region. (50) But the Jews urged on the devout women of honorable estate, and the chief men of the city, and stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and cast them out of their borders. (51) But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.

Entering the city of Antioch of Pisidia, Paul and his company entered the Jewish synagogue. The worship in the Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath day consisted of three parts:

1. Recitation of the *Shema*, which was a type of creed

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composed out of Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:13-21, Numbers 15:37-41. Prayers, eulogies, or benedictions, to which the people responded, A-Men; and if a priest was present, the blessing.

2. The reading of the scripture: first from the law (five books of Moses), then from the prophets, which included the historical books.
3. At the end came the exposition or exhortation by a competent teacher.

(R. B. Rackham, *The Acts of The Apostles*, p. 202)

After the readings, Paul was invited to exhort the people. Paul went up, beckoned with his hand and began his sermon. Paul's sermon followed Jewish lines, and as Stephen's speech (Acts seven) it took the form of a historical retrospect. From a study of this and the other sermons of Paul, there are five distinct elements which stand out:

1. An appeal to the past.
2. Statement of facts.
3. Answer to objections.
4. Appeal to the spiritual needs of men.
5. A grave warning.

These elements are present in Paul's sermon at Antioch.

Note Paul's proof that Christ was the Messiah:

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- A. By history, Acts 13:16-23.
 - 1. God chose our fathers, v. 17.
 - 2. Delivered them from Egypt, v. 17.
 - 3. Sustained them in the wilderness, v. 18.
 - 4. Gave them a land, v. 19.
 - 5. Gave them judges till Samuel the prophet, v. 20.
 - 6. Later he gave them a king at their request, v. 21.
 - 7. He removed Saul and raised up David, v. 22.
 - 8. From David's seed came the savior, Jesus, v. 23.

- B. By witnesses, Acts 13:24-40.
 - 1. John the baptizer bore witness of Him, vv. 24-25.
 - 2. His own people knew him not, as was prophesied, v. 27.
 - 3. He was crucified, buried and was resurrected, vv. 28-29.
 - 4. Resurrection proven by:
 - a. Eyewitnesses, v. 31.
 - b. Psalms, vv. 33-37.

- C. Salvation offered.
 - 1. Salvation in Jesus, v. 38.
 - 2. Warning against disbelief, vv. 40-41.

Paul's message was made known to many people and he was invited to speak the following Sabbath. At this gathering almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God. The gathering of this large multitude stirred the Jews to jealousy and they contradicted the things spoken by Paul and they blasphemed. As the Jews

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"judged themselves unworthy of eternal life," Paul and Barnabas turned to the Gentiles. Paul had been called to preach to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15), and it was also prophesied by the prophet Isaiah that the Gentiles would receive the gospel (verse 47 where Luke quotes Isaiah 49:6). When the Gentiles heard this they were glad and glorified the word of God and some believed. The word of God spread throughout the whole region.

In verse forty-eight Luke states, "And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Who were not ordained to eternal life?

The Jews, who:

1. Were filled with jealousy.
2. Contradicted the things spoken by Paul.
3. Blasphemed.
4. Thrust the gospel away from them.
5. Judged themselves unworthy of eternal life.

Who were ordained to eternal life? The Gentiles who:

1. Were glad.
2. Glorified the word of God.
3. Did not thrust the gospel away.
4. Did not judge themselves unworthy of eternal life.
5. Believed the preaching of Paul.

God has provided salvation for all of sinful mankind (Mark 16:15-16), and invites all to come to Him (Matthew

11:28; Revelation 3:20). He chose us in Him (Christ) that we should be holy and without blemish, sons of God, enjoying redemption through His blood (Ephesians 1:3-7). God wants all men to be saved (II Peter 3:9), provides a sacrifice for man's sins (Hebrews 9:11-15, 23-28; 10:12), and provides in the Bible instructions as to how man can receive/accept this salvation (John 8:24, 8:21; Hebrews 11:6; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:10; Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:1-4). Man is responsible for his own eternal destiny (II Corinthians 5:10; Acts 28:24-28).

The Jews did not give up. They were jealous, had been rebuked by Paul (Acts 13:46), and were urged on by the devout women of honorable estate and the chief men. They stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas and cast them out of their borders. It is interesting to note that the persecution of Paul and Barnabas did not come from the worshipers of the heathen god, *Men*, which was the chief god of the city, but from among the ones to whom they had first carried the gospel.

Paul and Barnabas shook off the dust of their feet against them (Matthew 10:14; Mark 6:11; Luke 10:8-11), and left seeking for a new opportunity to follow Jesus Christ.

Verse 52
Disciples Filled with Joy
and with The Holy Spirit

(52) And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Great joy is experienced by those who are obedient to the gospel (Acts **8:39**).

ACTS 14

Verses 1-7

Paul and Barnabas Preach in Iconium and are Driven Out of the City They Leave for Lystra

(1) And it came to pass in Iconium that they entered together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake that a great multitude both of Jews and of Greeks believed. (2) But the Jews that were disobedient stirred up the souls of the Gentiles, and made them evil affected against the brethren. (3) Long time therefore they tarried [there] speaking boldly in the Lord, who bare witness unto the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. (4) But the multitude of the city was divided; and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles. (5) And when there was made an onset both of the Gentiles and of the Jews with their rulers, to treat them shamefully and to stone them, (6) they became aware of it, and fled unto the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe, and the region round about: (7) and there they preached the gospel.

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In the New Testament times all four of the cities in Asia Minor visited by Paul — Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe — were in the province of Galatia. Antioch and Iconium were in the district of Pisidia and Lystra and Derbe were in the district of Lycaonia.

Entering into Iconium where the mother-goddess *Cybele* was worshiped, Paul and his companions entered into the synagogue of the Jews and so spake that a great number both Jews and Greeks believed.

There were among the Jewish community Gentiles, who were students of the Jewish religion. The only thing that separated them from being proselytes of the Jewish religion was the act of circumcision. They attended the synagogue and were referred to as, "God fearers" (Acts 13:16, 26). In Acts 14:1 we see Gentiles attending the synagogue. These God fearers would be prime prospects to obey the gospel since they had been taught about the one true God and the coming Messiah. Paul would then teach them that Jesus was the Messiah and encourage them to be obedient to the gospel of Jesus Christ. This could also be a factor in the Jews' jealousy of Paul's success.

Verses Two **and** Three - The disobedient Jews stirred up the Gentiles against the brethren. In spite of this Paul and his co-laborers tarried a long time in the city speaking boldly in the Lord and performed signs and wonders to substantiate their message. The preaching of the gospel divided the city. While some supported the apostles, those Gentiles and Jews (with their rulers) who opposed Paul

and his co-workers planned to treat them shamefully and stone them. When Paul and his company learned of their plans, they fled to Lystra and Derbe and preached the gospel in these cities and the region round about.

Verses 8-20

Paul Heals the Lame Man Is Proclaimed a god Is Stoned and Left for Dead

(8) And at Lystra there sat a certain man, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked. (9) The same heard Paul speaking, who, fastening eyes upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be made whole, (10) said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up and walked. (11) And when the multitude saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. (12) And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercury, because he was the chief speaker. (13) And the priest of Jupiter whose [temple] was before the city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the multitudes. (14) But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they rent their garments, and sprang forth among the multitude, crying out (15) and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: (16)

who in the generations gone by suffered all the to walk in their own ways. (17) And yet He left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness. (18) And with these sayings scarce restrained they the multitudes from doing sacrifice unto them. (19) But there came Jews thither from Antioch and Iconium: and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. (20) But as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and entered into the city: and on the morrow he went forth with Barnabas to Derbe.

From Luke's account it is evident that the people were very suspicious and dedicated to the god, *Jupiter* (counterpart of the Greek god, *Zeus*; the chief god). The temple to Jupiter was before the city (Acts 14:13).

There was at Lystra a man who had been a cripple from his birth and had never walked. Paul, seeing that the man had faith that he (Paul) could heal him, commanded him to "stand upright upon thy feet." The crippled man leaped up and walked. The people who witnessed this declared that the gods had come down to them in the likeness of men (Acts 14:11). They called Barnabas Jupiter (Greek *Zeus*) who was the chief god, and Paul they called *Mercury* (counterpart of the Greek god *Hermes*) who was the messenger god. The priest of Jupiter prepared to offer sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas. Paul indicated that they should not be worshiped because they were just men of like passions as the men of Lystra. In verse fourteen Luke

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names Barnabas before Paul and refers to them as apostles. The word *apostle* in its general use refers to one sent. Paul and Barnabas had been sent by the church in Antioch of Syria (Acts 13:3). Paul was an apostle in a special sense because he:

1. Saw the Lord, Acts 22:14.
2. Heard a voice from the mouth of God, Acts 22:14.
3. Was called out of due season, I Corinthians 15:6.
4. Was called for a special purpose, Acts 9:15.

From sermons found in the New Testament we learn a very important principle in preaching. When preaching to those who believed in God, preachers began by appealing to God's dealings with His people.

1. Peter, Acts 2:14-47.
2. Stephen, Acts 7:1-53.
3. Paul, Acts 13:16-41.

In these examples the speakers did not declare unto them the one true God, they already believed on Him. They started teaching them where they were in knowledge. In Acts 17:16-28 Paul did not preach to the Athenians about Moses, Abraham and God's dealings with the Israelites, but declared unto them the one true God which they worshiped in ignorance. In the passage under consideration Paul began preaching to the people about a God that they did not know (Acts 14:15-17).

Jews arrived from Antioch and Iconium and persuaded the multitudes so that they stoned Paul; dragged him out

of the city thinking he was dead. One minute Paul was declared a god, but a few hours later the same group turned on him and stoned him. Paul had turned the worship of the people, with a mild rebuke, into foolishness as he told them to abstain from vain things. This left the people empty and easy to be stirred up.

Verses 21-23

The Next Day Paul and Barnabas Go to Derbe and Make a Number of Disciples; They Return to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch Encouraging the Disciples and Appointing Elders

(21) And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch, (22) confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. (23) And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed.

The next day Paul and Barnabas go to the city of Derbe. Their work in that city is summed up in verses twenty-one and twenty-two. No particulars of the work are mentioned, only that Paul preached and many disciples were made.

It is thought that since Derbe was not mentioned as one of the cities in which he suffered persecution, Paul's work in this city was a peaceful one (II Timothy 3:10).

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Verse twenty-two speaks of the new Christians being confirmed. New converts are not to be left to their own, but are to be taught (grounded in the truth) that they might grow into fruitful disciples (**II Peter 3:18; Hebrews 5:11-14**).

Verse twenty-three informs us that elders were appointed in every church. From the teaching of the New Testament we learn:

1. A congregation is to have a plurality of elders (**Acts 14:23**).
2. They are to meet certain qualifications (**I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9**). The terms elder and bishop describe the same office and the same work (**Acts 20:17, 28**, overseer or bishop).
3. They have a definite work to do (**Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17; Titus 1:9; I Peter 5:1-4**).

Verses 24-28

They Go to Perga and Then to Attalia They Return to Antioch of Syria and Give a Report to the Church

(24) And they passed through Pisidia, and came to Pamphylia. (25) And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia; (26) and thence they sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been

committed to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled. (27) And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all things that God had done with them, and that he had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles. (28) And they tarried no little time with the disciples.

Very little is known of Paul's work in Perga, only that he spoke the word. From Perga Paul and his company went to Attalia. Sailing to Antioch of Syria they made a report to the church which had sent them forth on their journey. Paul reported that God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

These lessons can be learned from Paul's first missionary journey:

1. The universality of the gospel. All men are to be taught the saving gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. God's providence. Paul and Barnabas were cared for and blessed through all manner of trials, temptations and tribulations.
3. The strength of Christian fellowship.
4. The power of God's word is made manifest to all who read the account.

SEGMENT XIV

ACTS 15:1-35

THE JERUSALEM MEETING

Verses 1-35

The Meeting

(1) And certain men came down from Judaea and taught the brethren, [saying], Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved. (2) And when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and questioning with them, [the brethren] appointed that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. (3) They therefore, being brought on their way by the church, passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. (4) And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church and the apostles and the elders, and they rehearsed all things that God had done with them. (5) But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying, It is needful to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses. (6) And the apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider of this matter. (7) And when there had been much questioning, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel,

and believe. (8) And God, who knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; (9) and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. (10) Now therefore why make ye trial of God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? (11) But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they. (12) And all the multitude kept silence; and they hearkened unto Barnabas and Paul rehearsing what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles through them. (13) And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Brethren, hearken unto me: (14) Symeon hath rehearsed how first God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. (15) And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, (16) After these things I will return, And I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen; And I will build again the ruins thereof, And I will set it up: (17) That the residue of men may seek after the Lord, And all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, (18) Saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from of old. (19) Wherefore my judgment is, that we trouble not them that from among the Gentiles turn to God; (20) but that we write unto them, that they abstain from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood. (21) For Moses from generations of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath. (22) Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men out of their company, and send them to Antioch with Paul

and Barnabas; [namely], Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: (23) and they wrote [thus] by them, The apostles and the elders, brethren, unto the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greeting: (24) Forasmuch as we have heard that certain who went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandment; (25) it seemed good unto us, having come to one accord, to choose out men and send them unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, (26) men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (27) We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who themselves also shall tell you the same things by word of mouth. (28) For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: (29) that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you. Fare ye well. (30) So they, when they were dismissed, came down to Antioch; and having gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle. (31) And when they had read it, they rejoiced for the consolation. (32) And Judas and Silas, being themselves also prophets, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them. (33) And after they had spent some time [there], they were dismissed in peace from the brethren unto those that had sent them forth. (34) [But it seemed good unto Silas to abide there.] (35) But Paul and Barnabas tarried in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

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Luke writes of a difficulty which arose in the church at Antioch because of the false teachers who came from Judaea. They had come to Antioch teaching, "Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Paul and Barnabas had no small disputation with these teachers who would bind the Law of Moses on Christians. (Even today there are those who would bring the Old Testament practices into the church of Jesus Christ - tithing, Sabbath keeping, and mechanical instruments of music). There is a valuable lesson in the actions of Paul and Barnabas. When the error was taught they withstood it immediately with, "no small dissension and disputation." They were aware of the fact that you cannot allow error to be taught because of the destruction of the faith of Christians. The idea that if you just ignore the false teaching it will go away is not true. Error must be confronted and the false teachers rebuked.

The decision was made to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to inquire of the apostles and elders about these teachers.

The meeting of Paul and Barnabas with the apostles and elders in Jerusalem is referred to by many as the first conference in the church, and is used as an example and for the authority for modern day conferences. Note the comparison in the following illustrations.

THE ECUMENICAL/ECCLESIASTICAL COUNCILS OF TODAY

Congregations select delegates to represent them and

A SIMPLIFIED STUDY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

then send them to a conference/council. Here they discuss doctrine, policy, and then vote as to whether it should or should not be. The majority rules and the churches are bound by the decisions made by the council, (*see chart on next page*).

In such an unscriptural arrangement, the churches are bound *not* by what the Bible teaches but what the council decrees.

An excellent example of this is the Methodist Church in America. The Methodist Church began in 1729 and adopted its creed in 1784. In that creed it stated "all men are conceived and born in sin." (*Hardeman's Tabernacle Sermons, Vol. IV, sermon entitled, "The Blood-Bought Institution of the New Testament," p. 122; quote on p. 128*). In 1910, delegates from the Methodist Church met in its ecumenical council in Asheville, North Carolina, and removed the statement about original sin from their creed. The delegates left home believing one doctrine and returned home believing a different doctrine. When the delegates reported to their respective congregations, they changed their faith. The members of the Methodist Church were not affected by what the Bible said, but by what the council decreed.

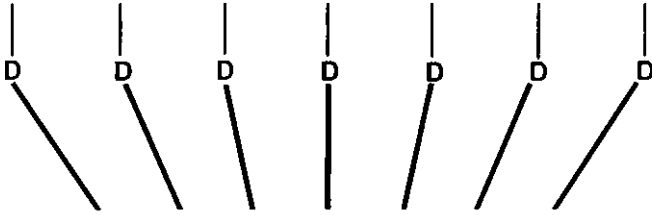
THE FALSE TEACHERS OF ACTS 15

Men from Judaea came teaching a false doctrine, "Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye

The Ecumenical/Ecclesiastical Councils of Today



Congregations select delegates to represent them



And send them to a conference/council

Here they discuss doctrine, policy and vote as to whether it should or should not be. The majority rules and the churches are bound by the decisions made by the council.

A SIMPLIFIED STUDY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). The brethren at Antioch decided to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to inquire about this question (Acts 15:2).

The purpose of Paul's and Barnabas' trip was not to vote on anything, but to ask the apostles and elders about the false teachers who had come from Judaea. (This was an appeal to apostolic authority, Matthew 18:18). The answer to the inquiry is found in Acts 15:22-29. The church at Jerusalem had not sent the false teachers to Antioch. This action is far different from the ecclesiastical councils previously mentioned.

To the Gentiles God granted repentance unto life (Acts 11:18). When there arose those of the Pharisees who taught that the Gentiles should be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses, there was much questioning. Note the facts that were brought out in their discussion:

1. God made choice among them that by Peter the Gentiles should hear the gospel and believe (v. 8).
2. God gave them the Holy Spirit as he did the apostles (Acts 11:15, 15:8).
3. God made no distinction between the Jews and Gentiles cleansing the Gentiles by faith (v. 9). (If the Gentiles were cleansed by faith there was no need for them to be circumcised and obey the Law of Moses; see Galatians 5:4).
4. To insist that the Gentiles were to be circumcised and obey the Law of Moses

A SIMPLIFIED STUDY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

was to put a yoke upon the disciples (v. 10).

5. Both Jew and Gentile are to be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus (v. 11).
6. Barnabas and Paul told of the signs and wonders that God had wrought through the Gentiles through them (v. 12).
7. James points out that God would take out of the Gentiles a people for His own name, as was prophesied by the prophet Amos (vv. 14-18 quoting Amos 9:11-12).

The apostles, brethren, and elders wrote to the Gentiles that they had not sent the false teachers to Antioch. They instructed the Gentiles to abstain from:

1. Things sacrificed to idols.
2. Blood.
3. Things strangled.
4. Fornication.

Not only did they put this in writing, but they sent Judas and Silas who would deliver the message in person. When the message was delivered the people rejoiced for the exhortation. Judas and Silas, being prophets, also exhorted the brethren. Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch teaching and preaching the word.

SEGMENT XV

ACTS 15:36-18:23

PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Verses 36-41

Paul and Barnabas Part Company

(36) And after some days Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us return now and visit the brethren in every city wherein we proclaimed the word of the Lord, [and see] how they fare. (37) And Barnabas was minded to take with them John also, who was called Mark. (38) But Paul thought not good to take with them him who withdrew from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. (39) And there arose a sharp contention, so that they parted asunder one from the other, and Barnabas took Mark with him, and sailed away unto Cyprus; (40) but Paul chose Silas, and went forth, being commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. (41) And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

When the time came for Paul and Barnabas to visit the churches which had been established on their first missionary journey, Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them. Paul did not want to take him because he withdrew from them on their first journey (Acts 13:13) and did not go with them to the work. Luke tells us that a sharp contention arose and Paul and Barnabas parted

company. This incident in the life of Paul teaches us that sometimes brethren cannot agree on a course of action, but they can still work in the kingdom of God. It should be recognized that Paul and Barnabas did not disagree on doctrine or what the Bible taught, but on how the work was to be accomplished. This disagreement on policy resulted in two mission teams, Paul and Silas and Barnabas and John Mark. Barnabas and John Mark went to Cyprus while Paul and Silas went through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches. How may confirming or strengthening congregations be accomplished?

1. Teach them God's word.
2. Answer their questions about the scripture.
3. Encourage and admonish them.
4. Fellowship with them.

Of course when individuals grow spiritually (II Peter 3:18), the congregation will increase in spirituality.

CHAPTER 16

Verses 1-5

Paul and Timothy

(1) And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewess that believed; but his father was a Greek. (2) The same was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. (3) Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and he took and

circumcised him because of the Jews that were in those parts: for they all knew that his father was a Greek. (4) And as they went on their way through the cities, they delivered them the decrees to keep which had been ordained of the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem. (5) So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.

After traveling through Derbe, Paul and Silas arrived in Lystra. It is at this point that Luke introduces us to the young man, Timothy. When Timothy was converted is not recorded. He had been taught the scriptures from a very early age (II Timothy 1:5, 3:15), by his mother and grandmother (II Timothy 1:5), and probably was converted when he initially heard Paul preach the gospel on his first missionary journey.

In verse three it is stated that Paul would have Timothy go with him on his journey, and that Paul had him circumcised. This may seem strange in view of the confrontation with the teachers from Judaea who taught that the Gentiles must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses to be saved (Acts 15:1). Timothy's mother was a Jewish Christian, while his father was a Greek. Being one half Jew, Timothy could not effectively work among the Jews. **McGarvey** states in his commentary:

The Jews who were in those parts, like all other Jews, could not look favorable on a man of Jewish blood who was uncircumcised. He would appear to be repudiating his nationality.

A SIMPLIFIED STUDY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Timothy was circumcised as a matter of expedience to be able to work effectively with the Jews. When Timothy became a member of Paul's teaching team, there began a long and close relationship between them (I Timothy 1:2, 18; 6:20; II Timothy 1:2, 3-6).

On another occasion Paul steadfastly refused to have Titus, who was a Greek, circumcised (Galatians 2:3). In Titus' case it involved a matter of doctrine (Acts 15:5; Galatians 2:3-5). In view of the teaching of the Judaizing teachers (those who wished to bind Moses' law upon the Gentiles), the Gentiles had to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses to be saved. To do so would have been an admission that the gospel of Jesus Christ was not powerful enough to save the Gentile sinners. According to their doctrine it would take the gospel *plus* the law of Moses to save, which would render the gospel of Jesus Christ ineffective.

Paul and his company went on their way through the cities, delivering the decree which had been ordained by the apostles and elders that were at Jerusalem.

Verses 6-10 **Macedonian Call**

(6) And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; (7) and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not; (8) and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. (9) And a

vision appeared to Paul in the night: There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. (10) And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Being guided by the Holy Spirit, Paul by-passes the province of Asia and Bithynia and was directed to the city of Troas. Troas was the chief city in the N.W. part of Asia Minor in the Roman province of Asia. This city came under the possession of Rome in 133 BC. It was in Troas that Paul saw the vision of the man of Macedonia (Acts 16:9), and where he raised Eutychus from the dead (Acts 20:9-10).

The obedience to the vision was characteristic of the apostle Paul. The Bible says, "Immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia." Would to God that men were as quick to obey God today as was Paul.

Verses 11-15

Lydia's Household

(11) Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a straight course to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis; (12) and from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a [Roman] colony: and we were in this city tarrying certain days. (13) And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a

place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake unto the women that were come together. (14) And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul. (15) And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide [there]. And she constrained us.

Paul and his company sailed from Troas to Samothracia and the following day to Neapolis, which served as the seaport for Philippi. Philippi was the chief city of Macedonia and took its name from Philip II of Macedon who was the father of Alexander the Great.

It is thought that the Jewish population in this city was very small. It took ten Jewish men to form a synagogue and nothing is said about Paul going into the synagogue to teach, instead he went to the riverside where prayer was being offered by a group of women.

One of the women was Lydia, who was from Thyatira and a seller of purple. Purple was a very costly dye which was used only on the costliest cloth. It was used in the furnishings of the tabernacle (Exodus 25:4), in Solomon's temple (II Chronicles 2:14, 3:14), and was put on Jesus by the Roman soldiers (Mark 15:17, 20).

Thyatira was a very wealthy city in the Northern part of the Roman province of Asia, near to the borders of Mysia.

A SIMPLIFIED STUDY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

This city was known for its purple dye and trade guilds.

That Lydia was a religious person is indicated by the fact that she worshiped God. Luke states that she heard the preaching of Paul and his company (men and women are called by the gospel, II Thessalonians 2:14). The gospel Lydia heard opened her heart (what Paul preached fell on good soil, that is, good and honest hearts, Luke 8:15), and she attended (gave heed) to the gospel Paul preached (Hebrews 11:6).

Both Lydia and her household were baptized. Many who desire to justify infant baptism use this for their example and authority.

There are four cases of household baptisms in the New Testament:

1. Cornelius (Acts 10:47).
2. Philippian jailer (Acts 16:34).
3. Stephanas (I Corinthians 1:16).
4. Lydia (Acts 16:15).

In three of these there is positive proof that no infants were included:

1. Cornelius - those who were baptized spoke in tongues and believed.
2. Jailer - they all believed.
3. Stephanas - they set themselves to minister to the saints.

An infant is not capable of engaging in the above mentioned activities. This leaves the household of Lydia.

1. *Question only for discussion:* Could the household of Lydia have been all women (Acts 16:13)?
2. There is no indication that Lydia was married.
3. If she was married, not every household has children.
4. No children are mentioned, and if there were children they would have to have been old enough to give heed to the preaching of Paul.

Infants are not candidates for baptism because they are not able to have faith, confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and they have no sins to repent of until they disobey the word of God (I John 3:4).

Verses 16-18

Paul and the Slave Girl

(16) And it came to pass, as we were going to the place of prayer, that a certain maid having a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much gain by soothsaying. (17) The same following after Paul and us cried out, saying, These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim unto you the way of salvation. (18) And this she did for many days. But Paul, being sore troubled, turned and said to the spirit, I charge thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out that very hour.

There was in Philippi a maid, possessed by a spirit or demon, who brought her masters much gain by sooth-

saying (foretelling events). For several days she followed Paul and his fellow-workers crying out, "These men are servants of the most high God." Not desiring to have the endorsement of the spirit world, Paul rebuked the spirit and cast it out that very hour.

DEMON POSSESSION

There are about 80 references to demons (unclean spirits) in the New Testament. In eleven instances a distinction is made between demon possession and diseases ordinarily caused (Matthew 4:24, 8:16, 10:8; Mark 1:32-34, 6:13, 16:17-18; Luke 4:40-41, 9:1, 13:32; Acts 19:12).

The results of demon possession are not exclusively mental or nervous, that is, "appearing or acting unsteady, erratic, or irregular" (*Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*) (Matthew 9:32-33, 12:22). They are mental in two instances only (Matthew 8:28; Acts 19:13). Epilepsy is specified in only one case (Matthew 17:15-18). There is a distinction made between diseases caused by demons and the same disease not so caused (Matthew 12:22; 15:30).

From the New Testament it is evident that demons had complete possession of individuals. Those possessed are depicted throughout as unfortunate sufferers who, by no fault of their own, are dominated by demons and who, when the demons are cast out by Jesus, accept their deliverance with joy and gratitude (Mark 5:18-20; Luke 8:2).

A SIMPLIFIED STUDY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

It is important to note that Jesus nowhere speaks of forgiveness of sins, purification or sacrifices (as he did in some cases of physical sickness) that had to be made after his curing of demon possession.

CHARACTERISTICS OF DEMONS

It is clear from a study of the New Testament that demons were personal beings. They:

1. Had understanding (Mark 1:34, 5:8, 9:25; Acts 19:13-16).
2. Knew Christ (Luke 4:34; Mark 1:24).
3. Possessed desires and passions (Mark 5:10, 13; James 2:19).
4. Could speak (Mark 1:24, 26, 34; Luke 4:41).

Demon possession was a phenomenon which occurred almost exclusively during Jesus' personal ministry on earth. Demons were a part of the kingdom of Satan, whose power Jesus came to destroy (I John 3:8). After Jesus had successfully defeated Satan in the wilderness temptation (Matthew 4:1-11), He was confronted by the devil's workers. In every case Jesus was victorious. The apostles were also victorious over the servants of the evil one. Demon possession existed that the power of God might be made manifest over the devil and his angels.

Demon possession does not exist in our world today and hasn't since the time of the apostles. Men and women are beings of free will and they serve whomsoever they choose. No power (personage) can enter an individual's

body and direct it to do evil or control it (I Corinthians 10:13). Men and women will give an account for the deeds done in the flesh (II Corinthians 5:10), not for something another power caused. The great lesson for Christians today is that God is all powerful and has been victorious over the devil and his workers. Christians today can enjoy victory over Satan and his followers if they will follow God's instructions (see Romans 12:9; James 4:7).

Verses 19-24

Paul and Silas in Prison

(19) But when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they laid hold on Paul and Silas, and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers, (20) and when they had brought them unto the magistrates, they said, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, (21) and set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive, or to observe, being Romans. (22) And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent their garments off them, and commanded to beat them with rods. (23) And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: (24) who, having received such a charge, cast them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

The masters of the maid, who was possessed of a spirit of divination, were very upset when they realized that their hope of gain was gone. They took vengeance upon Paul and Silas. Dragging them before the rulers, they charged

them with troubling the city (v. 20) and setting forth customs which were not lawful for Romans to observe or receive (v. 21). These charges were false but when you touch the pocket book of individuals (getting involved with another's finances) you get into trouble! Paul and Silas were stripped, beaten, and cast into prison. The jailer cast them into the inner prison and put their feet in stocks. No doubt the jailer thought that his actions would secure the prisoners.

Verses 25-34

Conversion of the Jailer

(25) But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners were listening to them; (26) and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison-house were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. (27) And the jailor, being roused out of sleep and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. (28) But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. (29) And he called for lights and sprang in, and, trembling for fear, fell down before Paul and Silas, (30) and brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? (31) And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house. (32) And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house. (33) And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he

and all his, immediately. (34) And he brought them up into his house, and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God.

Being imprisoned for the cause of Jesus Christ did not affect the faith of Paul and Silas. At midnight they were praying and singing hymns unto God as the prisoners listened. A great earthquake shook the prison house, all the doors were opened, and the prisoners' bands were loosed.

The jailer (responsible with his own life for the prisoners, Acts 12:18-19), being awakened and seeing that the doors of the prison were opened, was about to kill himself thinking that the prisoners had escaped. Paul called out with a loud voice that they were all still in the prison house. The jailer then asked the greatest question which can be asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" The answer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shall be saved, thou and thy house" (v. 31). Notice the chain of events in the jailer's conversion:

1. The jailer was told to believe on the Lord Jesus (v. 31).
2. Paul then spake the word of the Lord unto him (told him what to believe (v. 32).
3. The jailer responded by washing their stripes, which was a sign of his repentance (v. 33).
4. Then the jailer and all his were baptized immediately (v. 33).
5. After his baptism the jailer "rejoiced greatly having believed in God." (*believed in God* describes **all** that he did).

A SIMPLIFIED STUDY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

We have in these verses an example of one becoming a Christian. A serious student of the Bible will notice that in the book of Acts different answers are given to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" (*see chart on next page*).

1. Jailer - Believe (Acts 16:31).
2. Those on Pentecost - Repent and be baptized, (Acts 2:38).
3. Ethiopian eunuch - Confess Jesus Christ (Acts 8:26-40).
4. Saul of Tarsus - Arise and be baptized (Acts 22:16).

In these conversions to Jesus we have *four different answers* to the same question. How can this be? Let's suppose that we are traveling on Interstate 81 and 40 from Johnson City, TN, to Memphis, TN. Leaving Johnson City we ask:

"How far is it to Memphis?"

We receive the answer, "It is 510 miles to Memphis."

We continue on our journey until we arrive in Knoxville where we ask, "How far to Memphis?"

The answer given, "It is 403 miles to Memphis."

Our next stop is Nashville.

Examples of Conversion

Matthew 28:18-19 Mark 16:15-16 Luke 24:45-53 Acts 1:8

PREACHING	BELIEVED	REPENTED	CONFESSED	BAPTIZED	RESULTS
PENTECOST ACTS 2:14-41		Told to repent 38		41	added to the church 41
SAMARIA ACTS 8:5-13	12-13			12-13	
ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH ACTS 8:35-39			37	38	went on his way rejoicing 39
SAUL ACTS 9:17-18 ACTS 22:1-21				Acts 9:18 22:16	Sins washed away 22:16
CORNELIUS ACTS 10:34-48 ACTS 11:1-18				Acts 10: 47-48 baptism com- manded	
PHILIPPIAN JAILER ACTS 16:32- 34	34			Baptized 33	Rejoiced 34
LYDIA ACTS 16:13- 15				Baptized 15	

A SIMPLIFIED STUDY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Our question is the same, "How far is it to Memphis?"

Someone tells us, "It is 220 miles to Memphis."

Arriving at Jackson we ask for a fourth time, "How far to Memphis?"

The response is, "It is 90 miles to Memphis."

We have asked the same question each time but received four different answers — and they are **all correct**. The reason these are all correct is that each answer is given in reference to the location of the traveler. The same is true to those mentioned above as it relates to the sinner's relationship to salvation (to the obtaining of remission of sins).

1. The jailer needed to believe on Jesus (Acts 16:31).
2. Those on Pentecost who believed (they would not have asked what to do unless they believed Peter's preaching) were told to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:37-38).
3. The Ethiopian eunuch, who believed and was turning from Judaism to Christianity (a sign of his repentance), was told to confess Jesus Christ (Acts 8:36-39).
4. Saul, who believed, repented and confessed Jesus Christ was told to be baptized (Acts 9:1-19).

Each of the converts met the qualifications set forth by

Jesus (John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Matthew 10:32-33; Mark 16:16).

Verses 35-40

Story of Their Release

(35) But when it was day, the magistrates sent the sergeants, saying, Let those men go. (36) And the jailor reported the words to Paul, [saying], The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore come forth, and go in peace. (37) But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, and have cast us into prison; and do they now cast us out privily? Nay verily; but let them come themselves and bring us out. (38) And the sergeants reported these words unto the magistrates: and they feared when they heard that they were Romans; (39) and they came and besought them; and when they had brought them out, they asked them to go away from the city. (40) And they went out of the prison, and entered into [the house] of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

The magistrates sent word that Paul and Silas were free to go. Paul refused to leave because:

1. They had beaten them openly without trial (uncondemned).
2. They had cast them into prison.
3. They had mistreated Roman citizens and Paul stated that he would not leave privily (secretly).

A SIMPLIFIED STUDY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Later, Paul appeals to Caesar (Rome) when he was being tried before Festus (Acts 25:6-12; see also Acts 22:27-29).

The magistrates, fearful because they had beaten Roman citizens, came to Paul and Silas and besought them to leave the city.

Paul and Silas went into the house of Lydia and when they had seen and comforted the brethren, they departed.

CHAPTER ACTS 17

Verses 1-9

Paul at Thessalonica

(1) Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: (2) and Paul, as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three sabbath days reasoned with them from the Scriptures, (3) opening and alleging that it behooved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom, [said he,] I proclaim unto you, is the Christ. (4) And some of them were persuaded, and consorted with Paul and Silas, and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. (5) But the Jews, being moved with jealousy, took unto them certain vile fellows of the rabble, and gathering a crowd, set the city on an uproar; and assaulting the house of Jason, they sought to bring them forth to the people. (6) And

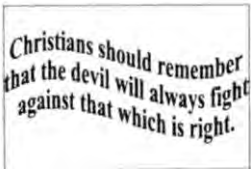
when they found them not, they dragged Jason and certain brethren before the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; (7) whom Jason hath received: and these all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, [one] Jesus. (8) And they troubled the multitude and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. (9) And when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

Traveling through Amphipolis and Apollonia, Paul and his companions arrived in Thessalonica, which was the chief city of Macedonia. Locating a synagogue of the Jews Paul went into it and reasoned with them out of the scriptures (Isaiah 1:18; I Thessalonians 5:21). The message Paul preached was simple: "the scriptures teach that Jesus is The Christ." The results of "reasoning from the scriptures" were very gratifying, some believed and consorted (united) with Paul and Silas. A great multitude of the devout Greeks and a large number of the chief women became followers of Jesus Christ. **McGarvey** makes this statement concerning verse four:

It seems from this statement that the largest class of the converts were "devout Greeks," that is, Gentiles who had learned to worship God according to the example of the Jews. Next to these were the chief women, also Gentile proselytes; and least of all, Jews. The great majority, then, were Gentiles; and Paul, on account of this preponderance could afterward write to them, "Ye turned unto God from idols to serve a living and true

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God" (I Thessalonians 1:9).



Christians should remember
that the devil will always fight
against that which is right.

The unbelieving Jews moved with envy and enlisted certain lewd (wicked) men to create an uproar in the city. Christians should remember that the devil will always fight against that which is right. The character of the evil one is set forth in John 8:44, and his followers are aptly described in John 3:19-20.

Not finding Paul and Silas, the angry mob assaulted the house of Jason. Jason and several of the brethren were taken before the rulers of the city and charged with "turning the world upside down." It is **true** that the preaching of the gospel will turn the world upside down. The word of God will turn man from:

1. Idolatry (I Thessalonians 1:9).
2. Fornication (I Corinthians 6:18).
3. Sorcery (Acts 8:9 and 13).
4. Homosexuality (I Corinthians 6:9).
5. Stealing (I Corinthians 6:10; Ephesians 4:28).
6. Drunkenness (I Corinthians 6:10).
7. Cursing (Ephesians 4:29),

and many other acts of wickedness (Colossians 3:1-11).

The gospel is God's power unto salvation (Romans 1:16), and will turn man from his evil ways. The Jews, who were persecuting Jason and the brethren, did not receive the word of God with "all readiness of mind"

(Acts 17:11).

Jason was accused of receiving the missionaries and Paul and Silas were charged with teaching that there was another king besides Caesar. While Caesar was an *earthly* king, Jesus was king over His *spiritual* kingdom. While Jesus was on earth the Jews rejected His kingship (John 19:15). Jesus is surely king over His kingdom (I Timothy 6:15-16). Being troubled over the events, the rulers of the city took security from Jason and released them. Paul and Silas were immediately sent away by night unto Berea.

Verses 10-15

Paul and Silas Go to Berea

(10) And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Beroea: who when they were come thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. (11) Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of the mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so. (12) Many of them therefore believed; also of the Greek women of honorable estate, and of men, not a few. (13) But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was proclaimed of Paul at Beroea also, they came thither likewise, stirring up and troubling the multitudes. (14) And then immediately the brethren sent forth Paul to go as far to the sea: and Silas and Timothy abode there still. (15) But they that conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timothy that they should come to him with all speed,

they departed.

Arriving in the city of Berea, Paul and Silas entered into the synagogue and taught the word of God. The Jews in Berea were more receptive to God's word than the Jews in Thessalonica in that, "they received the word of God with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (v. **11**). There is no greater characteristic in man than the willingness to study God's word, and no greater ignorance than a refusal to hear and search the scriptures (**II Timothy 2:15**). The result of studying the word of God was that many believed.

When the Jews who had caused trouble in Thessalonica heard that the gospel was being preached in Berea, they came to Berea and stirred up the people. The brethren took Paul to Athens, while Silas and Timothy remained in Berea.

Verses 16-34

Paul at Athens

(16) Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he beheld the city full of idols. (17) So he reasoned in the synagogue with Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with them that met him. (18) And certain also of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, What would this babbler say? others, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached Jesus and the resurrection. (19) And they took hold of him, and brought him unto

the Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new teaching is, which is spoken by thee? (20) For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. (21) (Now all the Athenians and the strangers sojourning there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing.) (22) And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus, and said, Ye men of Athens, in all things, I perceive that ye are very religious. (23) For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you. (24) The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; (25) neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; (26) and he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined [their] appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; (27) that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: (28) for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring. (29) Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man. (30) The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: (31) inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained;

whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. (32) Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; but others said, We will hear thee concerning this yet again. (33) Thus Paul went out from among them. (34) But certain men clave unto him, and believed: among whom also was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

In Athens, while Paul waited for Silas and Timothy to join him, he observed a city full of idols. The ancient writer, **Petronius**, satirically said that it was easier to find a god in Athens than to find a man. This city was referred to as, "one great altar to the gods." Luke tells us that Paul's spirit was provoked when he observed the many gods erected by man. Paul who knew the one true God would be disturbed to observe men worshiping gods who could not speak, see, hear, move or in any way show intelligence (Ephesians **4:6**). Paul, instead of being impressed with the magnificent temples, saw nothing but a pile of idols.

Paul was determined to preach the gospel in this great city, which was known for its literary genius, philosophical brilliance, and more architectural beauty than any other city of antiquity. He reasoned with the Jews in their synagogue and with those who met with him in the market place.

In Athens there were several schools of Philosophy, two of which were the Epicureans and Stoics. The Epicurean philosophers made pleasure the end of all human existence. The Stoics believed that the good life was obtained through glorifying human reason (separate from

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God's revelation to man) and self-sufficiency. This pursuit was considered by them as seeking true virtue. The basic problem with these philosophies was that it made man, not God, the ruler of life.

The Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were not impressed with the message of Paul but with the "newness" of what Paul said (Acts 17:21). The message of Paul was the death and resurrection of Jesus (Acts 17:18). The philosophers took Paul unto the *Areopagus* (Mars Hill) to hear more from the babbler (Acts 17:18).

Paul, standing in the midst of Mars Hill, took advantage of the opportunity to speak on the behalf of Jehovah God. A close look at Paul's sermon is important because of the insight it gives us on preaching. Paul begins his preaching where his audience was intellectually — idol worshippers, and declared unto them the one true God.

PAUL'S SERMON

1. He noted that the Athenians were very superstitious (religious).
2. Their devotion to man-made gods was so great that they raised up an altar to an unknown God in case they had overlooked one.
3. Paul told them that he was going to declare unto them the god that they worshiped in ignorance.
4. The true God made the world and all that is therein.
5. The true God does not dwell in man-made temples.

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6. Unlike the gods created by man, the true God is not served with men's hands because He needs nothing. (He gave life and breath to all things, therefore He needs nothing from man). He is God of the entire universe.
7. Man's purpose on earth is to seek God. God can be found because He is not far from His creatures.
8. It is in this one true God that we live and move and have our being. We exist because of Him!
9. Man, being the offspring of God, should not think of the Godhead (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) like unto gold, silver or stone which has been crafted by man's hands.
10. God commanded them to repent of their idolatry.
11. Repentance was enjoined to these idolaters because God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world.
12. Paul preached the one true God (in contrast to the idols of Athens), repentance, and the resurrection of Jesus.

The response of the philosophers to Paul's preaching was that of derision. They made fun of the gospel Paul preached. Paul in his preaching career had been beaten, imprisoned and run out of town, but he had not met the indifference he encountered in Athens. Paul departed from them.

Even though Paul's efforts did not result with the success he had experienced in other cities, converts were made for the cause of Christ (Acts 17:34).

CHAPTER 18

Verses 1-4

Paul Arrives at Corinth

(1) After these things he departed from Athens, and came to Corinth. (2) And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of Pontus by race, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome: and he came unto them; (3) and because he was of the same trade, he abode with them, and they wrought, for by their trade they were tentmakers. (4) And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks.

As Athens was noted for its literary genius, philosophical brilliance and architectural beauty, Corinth was a city of commerce. Because of its harbors it became a thriving commercial city. Corinth, a city of some two hundred thousand souls, was a very wicked city. The residents worshiped *Aphrodite*, who was the goddess of love. Near Corinth was the mountain, Acro-Corinthus. On a flat area at the top of the mountain there was a temple dedicated to the goddess. It is reported by historians that the temple housed one thousand prostitutes and under the guise of religion practiced unrestrained immorality. The Greek language made a verb out of the city's name, *Corinthianize*, which meant to practice whoredom. Realizing the prevalence of the practice of immorality, Paul's instructions to the Corinthians were certainly in

order (I Corinthians 6:18).

Entering Corinth Paul came in contact with Aquila and his wife, Priscilla. He lodged with them because they were tentmakers, the same trade as Paul. Each Jewish boy was taught a trade in order to provide for himself. It has been written that a Jewish father who did not teach his son a trade, taught him to be a thief.

Under the rule of Claudius all Jews were commanded to leave Rome. This happened during the ninth year of his reign, 49 or 50 A.D. (The Roman historian, **Suetonius**, in *Claudius* 25:4). An inscription found in Delphi, Greece (*Orosius, Fl.* 417 A.D.), places Gallio's proconsulship at 52 A.D. (Acts 18:12). From these dates it seems that Paul on his second missionary journey visited Corinth in 52 or 53 A.D.

Paul preached (reasoned) in the synagogue every Sabbath and persuaded Jews and Greeks. We are amazed and thankful to God for the power of the gospel. When it was preached in this corrupt city, it produced fruit.

Since Paul says nothing about the conversion of Aquila and Priscilla, it is thought that they were Christians before they left Rome.

Verses 5-11

Work at Corinth

(5) But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. (6) And

when they opposed themselves and blasphemed, he shook out his raiment and said unto them, Your blood [be] upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. (7) And he departed thence, and went into the house of a certain man named Titus Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. (8) And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. (9) And the Lord said unto Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace: (10) for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city. (11) And he dwelt [there] a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

Silas and Timothy joined Paul in Corinth and Paul was constrained (compelled) to preach the gospel to the Jews. The message of Paul was: Jesus is the Christ.

In verse six there is a very important matter which needs our serious consideration. There is a false doctrine being circulated that those who are not Christians are not under (do not answer to) the authority (law) of God. In verse six Luke informs us that when the Jews heard Jesus preached as the Christ:

1. They opposed themselves (rejected the gospel to their own detriment, see Luke 7:30). Any time man rejects the word of God it is to his own harm.
2. Blasphemed (spoke against).

The important question is, did these Jews sin? The answer is, of course they did, because they rejected the counsel of God. They were not Christians and when they blasphemed, they sinned, therefore they **were** amenable (responsible to) the law of God. All men saints and sinners are amenable to God's will. Furthermore, if a sinner is not answerable to God's law, how can he become a Christian?

As was the case in Antioch of Pisidia (Acts 13:46), Paul turned from the Jews unto the Gentiles. Paul declared that their blood was upon their heads because they had rejected Jesus (they *were* responsible, see also Matthew 27:25). Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, along with many of the Corinthians believed and were baptized.

Paul had a vision in which the Lord told him not to be afraid and to speak boldly because no one would harm him. Paul spent a year and six months in Corinth. It was while he was at Corinth that Paul wrote 1st and 2nd Thessalonians around 51 - 52 A.D. (see Acts 17:14-15; 18:5; I Thessalonians 3:6).

Verses 12-17

Trial Before Gallio

(12) But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him before the judgment-seat, (13) saying, This man persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law. (14) But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If indeed it were a matter of wrong or of wicked villany, O ye Jews, reason would

that I should bear with you: (15) but if they are questions about words and names and your own law, look to it yourselves; I am not minded to be a judge of these matters. (16) And he drove them from the judgment-seat. (17) And they all laid hold on Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment-seat. And Gallio cared for none of these things.

The Jews brought Paul before the judgment seat of Gallio and charged him with persuading men to worship God contrary to the law of Moses. Since it was not a transgression of Roman law and a matter "about words and names in the Jewish law," Gallio refused to hear the case.

The Jews, repulsed by Gallio, seemingly took their frustrations out on Sosthenes. Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, was seized and beaten before the judgment seat. Gallio showed no interest in this event.

Verses 18-21

Paul at Ephesus

(18) And Paul, having tarried after this yet many days, took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila: having shorn his head in Cenchreae; for he had a vow. (19) And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. (20) And when they asked him to abide a longer

time, he consented not; (21) but taking his leave of them, and saying, I will return again unto you if God will, he set sail from Ephesus.

Paul had taken a vow and when that vow was fulfilled he cut his hair. Some believe that the vow Paul took was the Nazarite vow, but Paul's actions did not coincide with the requirements of that vow given in Numbers 6:13-18. In reality we do not know what the vow was, where he made it or why. It may be that Paul was engaging in a ceremonial aspect of Judaism. Of this we can be sure, Paul was not keeping the vow in view of salvation (that was through Christ), neither did he bind it on others; nor did he keep it as a part of the Jewish religion.

Arriving in Ephesus Paul entered into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. Ephesus was the leading city of the Roman province of Asia. As a seaport city which was connected to highways leading to the most important cities of the province, Ephesus was the most easily accessible city in Asia by both land and sea. One of the outstanding features of Ephesus was its great temple of *Artemis*. (This goddess, her temple, and her followers will be considered in Acts 19:24-41).

Paul left Ephesus for Caesarea, promising to come to them again if it was God's will.

Verse 22

End of Paul's Second Missionary Journey

(22) And when he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and saluted the church, and went down to Antioch.

Paul landed at Caesarea, saluted (greeted) the church and went to Antioch of Syria.

SEGMENT XVI

ACTS 18:23-21:40

PAUL'S THIRD JOURNEY

Verse 23 (of Acts 18)

Paul Goes Through Galatia and Phrygia

(23) And having spent some time [there], he departed, and went through the region of Galatia, and Phrygia, in order, establishing all the disciples.

This is the third time Paul had visited these congregations and the fourth time he had visited the cities of this area. He:

1. Visited the cities and established the congregations on his first missionary journey.
2. Second visit was on his return from his first missionary journey (Acts 14:23).
3. Third visit was to the congregations he had established while on his second missionary journey (Acts 15:36).
4. His fourth visit was on his third missionary journey (Acts 18:23).

Several times we have mentioned the necessity of strengthening, establishing, grounding in the faith, or helping Christians to grow spiritually. This is an absolute necessity if new congregations are to assume their responsibilities in the kingdom of God. (These responsibilities are: evangelism, benevolence and edification.)

Verses 24-28

Apollos at Ephesus

(24) Now a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the scriptures. (25) This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John: (26) and he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more accurately. (27) And when he was minded to pass over into Achaia, the brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him: and when he was come, he helped them much that had believed through grace; (28) for he powerfully confuted the Jews, [and that] publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

The writer introduces us to Apollos, a Jew from Alexandria, which was in the land of Egypt. Luke describes Apollos as an eloquent man who was mighty in the scriptures and fervent in the Spirit. He accurately taught things concerning Jesus *but only knew the baptism*

of John. At the time of Apollos, John's baptism was not valid.

Note the comparison between the baptism of John and the baptism of Jesus: John's baptism was valid **BEFORE** Christ came because it was for the purpose of preparing the Jews for Christ (Matthew 3:3; John 3:28). At the time that Apollos was preaching the baptism of John, Jesus had already come into the world, died, was buried, resurrected, and ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9-11).

Priscilla and Aquila heard him boldly preaching Jesus in the synagogue and took him aside and expounded unto him the way of God more accurately. Apollos went into Achaia and helped the brethren there, powerfully confuting the Jews publicly. The preaching of Apollos was that of proving by scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. (See I Corinthians 1:12, 3:4, 16:12).

CHAPTER 19

Verses 1-7

Rebaptism of the Ephesian Disciples

(1) And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples: (2) and he said unto them, Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed? And they [said] unto him, Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was

[given]. (3) And he said, Into what then were ye baptized? And they said, Into John's baptism. (4) And Paul said, John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him that should come after him, that is, on Jesus. (5) And when they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. (6) And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. (7) And they were in all about twelve men.

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul entered Ephesus. Meeting certain of the disciples, he questioned them about the Holy Spirit. When they informed Paul that they had not even heard whether the Holy Spirit had been given, Paul immediately asked them about their baptism. Learning that they had been baptized into John's baptism, which was not valid at the time (see comments on Acts 18:24-28), Paul commanded them to be baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus, (*see chart on next page*).

If one has been *improperly* baptized (having water sprinkled or poured over his head), or baptized for the wrong reason (because one thought that he/she was already saved, or into a denominational church) he/she needs to be baptized by immersion in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit for the remission of sins that one might be added to the saved (Acts 2:47).

Paul laid his hands on them, imparting unto them the Holy Spirit, which resulted in their speaking in tongues and prophesying.

John's Baptism Contrasted with the Baptism Jesus Commanded

JOHN'S BAPTISM

1. In water - John 1:26.
2. For remission of sins - Luke 3:3.
3. Believing on Him (Jesus) who was to come - Acts 19:4.
4. Into John's baptism - Acts 19:3.
5. Did not receive the Holy Spirit - Acts 19:2.
6. Jesus had not died.

BAPTISM OF JESUS

1. In water - Acts 8:37.
2. For remission of sins - Acts 2:38.
3. Believing on Jesus who had come - Acts 2.
4. In the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit - Matthew 28:19.
5. Received the Holy Spirit - Acts 2:38.
6. Baptized into Christ - Galatians 3:27; baptized into the death of Jesus - Rom. 6:3-4.

Verses 8-10

Paul Teaches

(8) And he entered into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading [as to] the things concerning the kingdom of God. (9) But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. (10) And this continued for the space of two years; so that all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

Paul, as his custom was, went into the synagogue and reasoned with them concerning the kingdom of God. He did this for three months. However, when some were hardened, disobedient and spoke evil of the "way" (Christianity, Acts **9:2**), he moved his teaching into the school of Tyrannus. There he taught for two years. While Paul was in Ephesus, Luke informs us that **all** of Asia heard the word of the Lord. The gospel was taught in Ephesus and went forth into all of the Roman province of Asia! It should be realized that the gospel is to go forth from each individual Christian, the congregation of which he/she is a member, each village, each district, and each nation, until the whole world has been given an opportunity to hear and obey it (Mark 16:16).

Verses 11-20

Paul's Miracles and Results

(11) And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: (12) insomuch that unto the sick were carried away from his body handkerchiefs or aprons, and the evil spirits went out. (13) But certain also of the strolling Jews, exorcists, took upon them to name over them that had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. (14) And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, a chief priest, who did this. (15) And the evil spirit answered and said unto them, Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye? (16) And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and mastered both of them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. (17) And this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, that dwelt at Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. (18) Many also of them that had believed came, confessing, and declaring their deeds. (19) And not a few of them that practised magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. (20) So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed.

Many use these passages of scripture as proof for what they call, "healing cloths." In America false teachers will offer bits of cloth which have been blessed by them and are supposed to relieve sickness. (They are usually about one or two inches square.) A plea is always made for a gift of money for their "ministry." Note carefully the facts of this case:

A SIMPLIFIED STUDY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

1. Paul was preaching the gospel.
2. He was confirming his preaching with signs and wonders.
3. He had the Holy Spirit.
4. Paul was an apostle.
5. Power came from Christ through Paul.
6. Result was diseases were healed and evil spirits departed.
7. No monetary contribution was asked.

The results of Paul's miracles were that many believed. The very purpose of miracles was to confirm the word of God and to produce faith in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 2:3-4).

When certain of the Jews attempted to do as Paul (cast out evil spirits), the evil spirits mastered *them*.

To those who claim the power of miracles today we say, "demonstrate the power." Heal the leper, the blind and other illnesses which are obvious to all who see, that faith may be produced in the heart of the unbeliever.

When these activities were known, fear fell upon them all and the name of Jesus Christ was magnified. Many who practiced magical arts brought their books and burned them. The value of the books has been variously estimated from 1,815 to 6,250 English pounds (\$9,000.00 to \$35,000.00 in U.S. dollars). Luke says that the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

Verses 21-22

Paul Remains in Asia

(21) Now after these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome. (22) And having sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

Paul's travel plans were to go into Macedonia, Achaia, Jerusalem and Rome. We know that Paul did go to Rome, not as a freeman but as a ward of the Roman government.

Paul dispatched Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia, while he himself remained in Asia. No doubt Timothy and Erastus were checking on the welfare of the congregations in Macedonia.

Verses 23-27

Plot of Demetrius

(23) And about that time there arose no small stir concerning the Way. (24) For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no little business unto the craftsmen; (25) whom he gathered together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this business we have our wealth. (26) And 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 are no gods, that are made with hands: (27) and not only is there danger that this

our trade come into disrepute; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana be made of no account, and that she should even be deposed from her magnificence whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

Paul's preaching that, "they be no gods, which are made with hands," turned the people from the worship of *Diana*. This would concern Demetrius and the silver-smiths because it would reduce the demand for the shrines of *Diana*. From the text it is evident that Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen became upset because their business (19:24), wealth (19:25), and trade (19:27), was endangered by Paul's preaching. *The fact that the temple of the goddess Diana was made of no account was secondary. Their pocketbook was more important than their religion.*

The temple of *Diana*, which was considered as one of the seven wonders of the world, had some 80,000 square feet of space and took some 120 years to build. This temple was not properly the home of the goddess; it was a shrine, the chief one devoted to her service. She was portrayed as a many-breasted female who lived in nature; she was everywhere there was life in that she was the mother of all living things. Tradition says that *Diana's* image fell from *Jupiter* (the chief god, Acts 19:35) into the woods near *Ephesus*. As mother of all living things, all offerings of every possible thing of nature was therefore acceptable to her. Because of this, there was a vast amount of wealth poured into her temple. Not only was she worshiped in temples but also shrines were sold to increase the temple revenue. It is recorded that no one within a bow shot of the temple could be arrested. This

brought many undesirables into the area.

Verses 28-41

Riot of the Silversmiths

(28) And when they heard this they were filled with wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesus. (29) And the city was filled with the confusion: and they rushed with one accord into the theatre, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel. (30) And when Paul was minded to enter in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. (31) And certain also of the Asiarchs, being his friends, sent unto him and besought him not to adventure himself into the theatre. (32) Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was in confusion; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. (33) And they brought Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made a defense unto the people. (34) But when they perceived that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. (35) And when the townclerk had quieted the multitude, he saith, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there who knoweth not that the city of the Ephesians is temple-keeper of the great Diana, and of the [image] which fell down from Jupiter? (36) Seeing then that these things cannot be gainsaid, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rash. (37) For ye have brought [hither] these men, who are neither robbers of temples nor blas-

phemers of our goddess. (38) If therefore Demetrius, and the craftsmen that are with him, have a matter against any man, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls: let them accuse one another. (39) But if ye seek anything about other matters, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. (40) For indeed we are in danger to be accused concerning this day's riot, there being no cause [for it]: and as touching it we shall not be able to give account of this concourse. (41) And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

When the multitude heard Demetrius, they were filled with anger and cried out, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." There was much confusion in the city and the multitude seized Gaius and Aristarchus, who were Paul's traveling companions. Paul would have entered into the theater but the disciples would not let him. The assembly was in confusion with some crying out one thing, and some another, while the majority did not know why they had come together.

When Alexander was set forth and would have made a defense, the mob perceived that he was a Jew and all with one voice cried out for the space of about two hours, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

The town clerk quieted the multitude and reminded them that Ephesus was the temple-keeper of the great Diana. He further instructed them that if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen had aught against the men they had seized, they should take it into the courts. If there were other difficulties, these could be taken care of in the regular assembly. The clerk warned the people that they

could be called to account for the riot, as there was no reason for it.

Some estimate that the theater where the mob gathered was capable of seating 25,000 to 50,000 people. If so, the confusion would have been tremendous.

CHAPTER 20

Verses 1-6

Journey through Macedonia and Greece to Troas

(1) And after the uproar ceased, Paul having sent for the disciples and exhorted them, took leave of them, and departed to go into Macedonia. (2) And when he had gone through those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece. (3) And when he had spent three months [there,] and a plot was laid against him by Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he determined to return through Macedonia. (4) And there accompanied him as far as Asia, Sopater of Beroea, [the son] of Pyrrhus; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. (5) But these had gone before, and were waiting for us at Troas. (6) And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days, where we tarried seven days.

Paul left Ephesus, after exhorting the brethren, and

entered into Macedonia. He did the same for the disciples there (exhorted) and went on to Greece. After three months, when he planned to sail for Syria, a plot was laid against him by the Jews. Changing his plans, he went back through Macedonia to Philippi and set sail for Troas where he remained for seven days. His traveling companions are listed in verse four.

Verses 7-12

Paul Preaches at Troas

(7) And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight. (8) And there were many lights in the upper chamber where we were gathered together. (9) And there sat in the window a certain young man named Eutychus, borne down with deep sleep; and as Paul discoursed yet longer, being borne down by his sleep he fell down from the third story, and was taken up dead. (10) And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Make ye no ado; for his life is in him. (11) And when he was gone up, and had broken the bread, and eaten, and had talked with them a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. (12) And they brought the lad alive, and were not a little comforted.

While Paul was visiting the disciples at Troas, he worshiped with them. Upon the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread (eat the Lord's

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Supper). The stated purpose of meeting was to observe the communion meal. Paul also preached after they had observed the supper.

Other passages concerning the Lord's supper are:

1. Breaking of bread, Acts 2:42 (Pentecost was on the first day of the week).
2. I Corinthians 11:25 and 16:1-2.
3. I Corinthians 11:23-30.

Justin Martyr (103-165 AD) describes the worship of the first century Christians, saying:

1. Believers partook of the supper.
2. They met on the day of the Sun (Sunday).
3. The Christians baptized for the remission of sins.

Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, when speaking of the second century church says, "In these times the sacrament (denominational term used to describe the Lord's Supper) was celebrated for the most part on Sunday."

Albert Barnes in his commentary states, "It is probable that the apostles and early Christians celebrated the Lord's supper on every Lord's day." As we read Acts 20:7 we can see this is the case.

The Lord's Supper was instituted by Jesus Christ (Matthew 26:26-29), on the night he was betrayed (I Corinthians 11:23). The Lord's Supper consists of unleavened bread and fruit of the vine (Matthew 26:26 and 29). It is to be observed in His memory, proclaiming His death

until He comes again (I Corinthians 11:24-26). The Christian is to partake of the supper reverently (I Corinthians 11:27), while proving himself and discerning the body (I Corinthians 11:27-29).

While Paul preached (until midnight), Eutychus was borne down with a heavy sleep, fell from a third story window and taken up dead. Paul restored life to him, ate a common meal and visited with them till the break of day.

Verses 13-16

Paul Journeys to Miletus Meets the Elders from Ephesus

(13) But we going before to the ship set sail for Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, intending himself to go by land. (14) And when he met us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene. (15) And sailing from thence, we came the following day over against Chios; and the next day we touched at Samos; and the day after we came to Miletus. (16) For Paul had determined to sail past Ephesus, that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

Paul joined Luke ("we" - Acts 20:13) at Assos and sailed to Mitylene, Chios, Samos and then Miletus. Because Paul wanted to be in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, he sailed past Ephesus to Miletus.

Verses 17-35

**Paul's Conversation with the Elders
from Ephesus**

(17) And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church. (18) And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time, (19) serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews; (20) how I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house, (21) testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. (22) And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: (23) save that the Holy Spirit testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. (24) But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. (25) And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more. (26) Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. (27) For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God. (28) Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood. (29) I

know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; (30) and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. (31) Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears. (32) And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build [you] up, and to give [you] the inheritance among all them that are sanctified. (33) I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. (34) Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. (35) In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

When Paul arrived in Miletus, he sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. You will notice that these same men are referred to as bishops (overseers) in Acts 20:28.

ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The church is the spiritual body of Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:18; Acts 2:47).
2. Jesus built the church (Matthew 16:18).
3. Jesus is the only head of the church (Colossians 1:18).
4. Jesus bought the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28).
5. Jesus has promised to save the church (Ephesians 5:23).

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5:23).

6. Jesus governs His church through His word (II Timothy 3:16-17).

In the New Testament the church is spoken of in a universal sense (Matthew 16:18; I Timothy 3:15) and is also designated as a congregation in a specific geographical location (I Corinthians 1:2; I Thessalonians 1:1).

CHRISTIANS AS A GROUP ARE CALLED

1. Church of God (I Corinthians 1:2).
2. Church of the living God (I Timothy 3:15).
3. Body of Christ (Ephesians 5:23).
4. Churches of Christ (Romans 16:16).
5. Bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:22-23).

Each congregation of the church of Christ is overseen by a plurality of men (Acts 14:23) who meet the qualifications set forth in the New Testament (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). These men are called:

1. Elders (Acts 20:17).
2. Bishops or overseers (Acts 20:28).
3. Pastors (Ephesians 4:11).

The elders, bishops, or pastors have a very important responsibility in relationship to the congregations over which they have the oversight. They are to:

1. Feed the flock (Acts 20:28).
2. Teach the Christians (I Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:9).

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3. Tend (shepherd, watch over) the flock (I Peter 5:2).
4. Protect the church (Titus 2:10-11).

Congregations of the Lord's church are served by deacons, whose qualifications are listed in I Timothy 3:8-10. Paul writes to the church at Philippi with the bishops (elders, pastors) and deacons.

When one looks at the church in the New Testament he will find that she has Christ for her head, elders to oversee and deacons to serve. We note the definite absence of councils, popes, or any organization larger than the local congregation.

Sinners enter the church of Christ by simple obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ (see comments on Acts two).

Verses Twenty Through Twenty-Six. Paul had taught publicly and from house to house, declaring those things which were profitable (the whole counsel of God, Acts 20:27). Paul had taught both Jews and Greeks about faith in God and repentance toward God. In doing this, Paul was "pure from the blood of all men." The responsibility for their eternal destiny rested upon their own decision. They were faced with the decision to either: accept the preaching of Paul and be saved, or reject it and be lost eternally.

Paul had been made aware by the Holy Spirit that bonds and afflictions awaited him. His willingness to die for his faith in Christ is seen in verse twenty-four. (See also Philippians 1:21).

Verse Twenty-Eight. Paul's charge (instructions) to the elders was fivefold:

1. Take heed unto yourselves.
2. Take heed unto the flock (church).
3. Oversee the church.
4. Feed the church of the Lord.
5. Watch (Acts 20:31).

Verses Twenty-Nine through Thirty-One. Paul admonishes the elders and warns them of the coming apostasy. Paul pointed out that from among elders some would draw away disciples from the truth. As Paul had prophesied, the first departure (apostasy) came from within the eldership.

Concerning government within the local congregation the New Testament specifies that there be elders in each congregation with the authority in the eldership and not in a single individual. Each congregation operates under the oversight of its elders because each congregation is self governing.

As time passed, one elder became the dominant (ruling) elder. Later this dominant elder began to oversee additional congregations, which is a clear departure from God's pattern.

Eventually, a full grown hierarchy was established with the pope, cardinals, bishops (ruling bishops), and parish priests. By the time the apostle John wrote the book of Revelation (around 96 A.D.), the church at Ephesus had left her first love (Revelation 2:4).

Verse Thirty-Two. If the elders in the Lord's church had remained faithful to God, His word, and had grown spiritually, the apostasy would have never happened.

Verses Thirty-Three through Thirty-Five. Paul was not a covetous person, rather he had worked with his hands (as a tentmaker) to provide his necessities. He set an example for Christians to work and help the weak (see also Ephesians 4:28). Jesus taught that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Verses 36-38

Paul's Tearful Departure

(36) And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all. (37) And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, (38) sorrowing most of all for the word which he had spoken, that they should behold his face no more. And they brought him on his way unto the ship.

The session with the elders from Ephesus was concluded with a prayer. There was much sorrow in the hearts of the Christians because they did not expect to see Paul again.

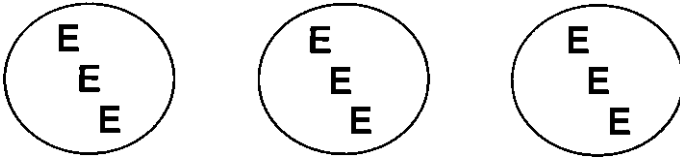
ACTS CHAPTER 21

Verses 1-40

Paul's Return to Jerusalem and His Arrest

Government of The Church

Concerning government within the local congregation, the New Testament specifies that there be elders in each congregation with the authority in the eldership and not in a single individual.

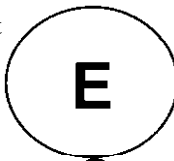


However, as illustrated below by the large "E," as time passed one elder became the dominant (ruling) elder.

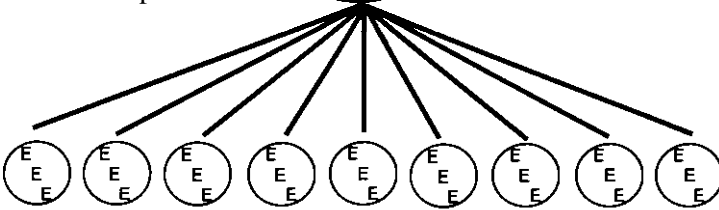
This was a departure from God's pattern.



Later this dominant
oversee additional
which is a clear
God's pattern.



elder began to
congregations
departure from



(1) And when it came to pass that we were parted from them and had set sail, we came with a straight course unto Cos, and the next day unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara: (2) and having found a ship crossing over unto Phoenicia, we went aboard, and set sail. (3) And when we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left hand, we sailed unto Syria, and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unlade her burden. (4) And having found the disciples, we tarried there seven days: and these said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not set foot in Jerusalem. (5) And when it came to pass that we had accomplished the days, we departed and went on our journey; and they all, with wives and children, brought us on our way till we were out of the city: and kneeling down on the beach, we prayed, and bade each other farewell; (6) and we went on board the ship, but they returned home again. (7) And when we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais; and we saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day. (8) And on the morrow we departed, and came unto Caesarea: and entering into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we abode with him. (9) Now this man had four virgin daughters, who prophesied. (10) And as we tarried there some days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. (11) And coming to us, and taking Paul's girdle, he bound his own feet and hands, and said, Thus saith the Holy Spirit, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. (12) And when we heard these things, both we and they of that place besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. (13) Then Paul answered, What

do ye, weeping and breaking my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. (14) And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done. (15) And after these days we took up our baggage and went up to Jerusalem. (16) And there went with us also [certain] of the disciples from Caesarea, bringing [with them] one Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge. (17) And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. (18) And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. (19) And when he had saluted them, he rehearsed one by one the things which God had wrought among the Gentiles through his ministry. (20) And they, when they heard it, glorified God; and they said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of them that have believed; and they are all zealous for the law: (21) and they have been informed concerning thee, that thou teachest all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children neither to walk after the customs. (22) What is it therefore? They will certainly hear that thou art come. (23) Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men that have a vow on them; (24) these take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges for them, that they may shave their heads: and all shall know that there is no truth in the things whereof they have been informed concerning thee; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, keeping the law. (25) But as touching the Gentiles that have believed, we wrote, giving judgment that they should keep themselves

from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what is strangled, and from fornication. (26) Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them went into the temple, declaring the fulfilment of the days of purification, until the offering was offered for every one of them. (27) And when the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the multitude and laid hands on him, (28) crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place; and moreover he brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled this holy place. (29) For they had before seen with him in the city Trophimus the Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple. (30) And all the city was moved, and the people ran together; and they laid hold on Paul, and dragged him out of the temple: and straightway the doors were shut. (31) And as they were seeking to kill him, tidings came up to the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in confusion. (32) And forthwith he took soldiers and centurions, and ran down upon them: and they, when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, left off beating Paul. (33) Then the chief captain came near, and laid hold on him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and inquired who he was, and what he had done. (34) And some shouted one thing, some another, among the crowd: and when he could not know the certainty for the uproar, he commanded him to be brought into the castle. (35) And when he came upon the stairs, so it was that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the crowd; (36) for the multitude of the

people followed after, crying out, Away with him. (37) And as Paul was about to be brought into the castle, he saith unto the chief captain, May I say something unto thee? And he said, Dost thou know Greek? (38) Art thou not then the Egyptian, who before these days stirred up to sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the Assassins? (39) But Paul said, I am a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beseech thee, give me leave to speak unto the people. (40) And when he had given him leave, Paul, standing on the stairs, beckoned with the hand unto the people; and when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew language, saying,

Verses One through Three. Paul sails to Syria by way of Cos, Rhodes, Patara, and Tyre of Syria where the ship was to unload her cargo.

Verses Four through Six. Locating the disciples, Paul and his company tarried with them seven days. The disciples warned Paul that he should not set foot in Jerusalem.

Verses Seven through Fourteen. Sailing from Tyre Paul and his fellow-workers landed at Ptolemais and after a day went to Caesarea where they stayed with Philip, the evangelist. Philip was one of the seven who was chosen to minister to the widows (Acts 6:5). Philip had four virgin daughters who prophesied. This was a partial fulfillment of Joel's prophecy quoted by Peter in Acts 2:17. (See comments on that verse).

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Agabus, a prophet from Judaea, prophesied that the Jews in Jerusalem would bind Paul and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. The disciples begged Paul not to go to Jerusalem.

Paul stated that he was not only willing to be bound, but was also willing to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord (See also Philippians 1:21).

Verses Fifteen and Sixteen. Paul returns to Jerusalem with several disciples from Caesarea.

Verses Seventeen through Twenty-Six. The Jewish Christians were zealous of the law of Moses. There seemed to be a grave misunderstanding among the Jewish Christians in that they evidently proposed one means of salvation for the Jews and another for the Gentiles. Note:

1. For the Jewish people - Christ plus the keeping of the law of Moses (v. 20).
2. For the Gentiles - Christ. They were not bound by Moses' law (Acts 15:19-21; 21:25).

The Jewish Christians had been informed that Paul had taught the Jewish Christians, who were among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses by:

1. Telling the Jews not to circumcise their children.
2. Instructing the Jews not to walk after Jewish customs.

A SIMPLIFIED STUDY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Both of these charges were false. Paul had Timothy (a half Jew) circumcised in order that he might be an acceptable and effective worker among the Jews (Acts 16:1-3). Paul himself observed Jewish customs as he took a vow and shaved his head in keeping the vow (Acts 18:18). Paul, however, did not consider circumcision or the customs of Moses necessary to one's salvation. The chief difference between Paul and the Jews who were "zealous to the law" was that the Jews held that the observance of circumcision and the customs of the Jews were matters of duty, while Paul held them to be matters of indifference.

To convince the Jews that Paul "walked orderly, keeping the law" (v. 24), James suggested that Paul purify himself and be at charge for four men who had taken a vow. If the vow taken by the men was the Nazarite vow (it seems that it was from Numbers 6:1-12), it required a sacrifice and the shaving of their heads.

A difficulty arises. If Paul realized that the Law of Moses was *not* binding and was not the means of salvation (Galatians 4:21-31), but was a schoolmaster to bring the Jews to Christ (Galatians 3:24) — how could he participate in the Jewish sacrificial system? This question has been answered in a number of ways.

1. Paul was wrong, he sinned. The apostles were inspired when they revealed God's will to mankind, not in everyday living. If Peter made a mistake (Galatians 2:11-21) in his everyday life, it is quite possible that Paul erred in this action. (I do

A SIMPLIFIED STUDY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

not accept this because if Paul sinned he was never corrected as was Peter, TE).

2. Paul considered what he was doing a part of a dead law and engaged in this activity as merely observing a custom which had nothing to do with salvation (a custom which allowed Paul to become all things to all men that, "I might by all means save some" [I Corinthians 9:22]).
3. Paul was like Peter who did not understand, until later, what he preached on Pentecost (Acts 2:39). Peter preached that salvation was for those who were afar off, that is, the Gentiles (Ephesians 2:13). This truth was later revealed to Peter in a vision (Acts 10:9-16) and when he came to the household of Cornelius he fully understood the message of God (Acts 10:28). Paul's understanding could have been in stages until he came to a full knowledge of the truth.

It is difficult to think that Paul would participate in the Jewish sacrificial system *after* he had written Galatians 4:21-31, *unless* it was just a matter of custom and not associated with salvation. Paul was not seeking justification by the law (Galatians 5:4).

Verses Twenty-Seven through Thirty. James' plan to satisfy the Jews (in relation to the teachings of Paul) failed and resulted in a riot by the Jews, which was instigated by the Jews from Asia. They accused Paul of:

1. Teaching all men against the people, and the law,

and the temple.

2. Taking Greeks (Gentiles) into the temple.

These Jews had seen Paul with Trophimus, the Ephesian (a Gentile), and supposed (thought) that he had taken him into the temple. The people removed Paul from the temple and the doors were shut.

Verses Thirty-One through Forty. With all Jerusalem in an uproar the mob attempted to kill Paul. When word reached the chief captain what was happening, he took soldiers with centurions (each centurion commanded 100 men) and rescued Paul. Binding Paul with two chains the chief captain asked who he was. A tumult was created by the crowd when some cried out one thing and others something different. When the chief captain could not learn the truth, he commanded Paul to be taken into the castle. The castle was the fortress (tower) of Antonia which stood at the Northwest area of the temple. Built by Herod it was occupied by Roman soldiers. A tower at the southeast corner of the fortress was seventy cubits high from which the entire temple area could be viewed. The fortress was connected with the outer court of the temple by two flights of steps, which allowed the soldiers quick access to the temple area in the event of a riot.

Even with at least 200 soldiers (at least two centurions and their troops) the mob was still after Paul. The soldiers carried Paul to the entrance of the castle while the people followed crying out, "away with him." As he was about to enter the castle he asked the chief captain for permission to speak to the mob. When he spoke Greek, the surprised

Roman asked Paul if he wasn't the Egyptian who led four thousand murderers out into the wilderness. Paul identifies himself as a Jew from the city of Tarsus of Cilicia. When the chief captain had given Paul permission to speak, he spake to the mob in the Hebrew language.

SEGMENT XVII

ACTS 22 - 28

CHAPTER 22

PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE THE MOB

(1) Brethren and fathers, hear ye the defence which I now make unto you. (2) And when they heard that he spake unto them in the Hebrew language, they were the more quiet: and he saith, (3) I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, even as ye all are this day: (4) and I persecuted this Way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. (5) As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and journeyed to Damascus to bring them also that were there unto Jerusalem in bonds to be punished. (6) And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and drew nigh unto Damascus, about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. (7) And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying

unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? (8) And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. (9) And they that were with me beheld indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. (10) And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. (11) And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me I came into Damascus. (12) And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well reported of by all the Jews that dwelt there, (13) came unto me, and standing by me said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And in that very hour I looked up on him. (14) And he said, The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth. (15) For thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. (16) And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name. (17) And it came to pass, that, when I had returned to Jerusalem, and while I prayed in the temple, I fell into a trance, (18) and saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; because they will not receive of thee testimony concerning me. (19) And I said, Lord, they themselves know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: (20) and when the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting, and keeping the garments of them that slew him. (21) And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee forth far hence unto the

Gentiles. (22) And they gave him audience unto this word; and they lifted up their voice, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. (23) And as they cried out, and threw off their garments, and cast dust into the air, (24) the chief captain commanded him be brought into the castle, bidding that he should be examined by scourging, that he might know for what cause they so shouted against him. (25) And when they had tied him up with the thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? (26) And when the centurion heard it, he went to the chief captain and told him, saying, What art thou about to do? for this man is a Roman. (27) And the chief captain came and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? And he said, Yea. (28) And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this citizenship. And Paul said, But I am [a Roman] born. (29) They then that were about to examine him straightway departed from him: and the chief captain also was afraid when he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him. (30) But on the morrow, desiring to know the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him, and commanded the chief priests and all the council to come together, and brought Paul down and set him before them.

Verses One through Two - This chapter begins the first of several defenses made by the apostle Paul, which culminates with his appealing to Caesar's judgment seat (Acts 25:10). When the crowd heard Paul speak in the Hebrew language, they allowed him to address them.

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Verses Three through Sixteen - These events (the account of Saul's conversion), have been discussed earlier in the comments on Acts chapter nine.

Gamaliel was a noted rabbi (teacher) who lived in Jerusalem. Paul had received the best education obtainable in his day.

Paul persecuted this "way" unto the death, this is, he persecuted the saints (Acts 9:13), those who believed on God (Acts 22:19), the church of God (I Corinthians 15:9), who were Christians; thus, those who were of the "Way," meaning the way of Christ.

Paul saw Jesus Christ, heard a voice from His mouth and received His will.

Verse 5 - See comments on Acts 9:1-2.

Verses 6 -11 - See comments on Acts 9:3-9.

Verses 12 - See comments on Acts 9:20-30.

Verses Twenty-Two through Twenty-Three - The crowd gave Paul audience until he mentioned the Gentiles. Their prejudice was so great that they cried out, "away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit for him to live." The gospel was to be preached to every man (Matthew 28:18; Mark 16:15) and Paul was a disciple unto the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). The conduct of the crowd showed their deep distress over Paul's statement.

Verses Twenty-Four through Twenty-Nine - The chief captain commanded that Paul be examined by scourging, which was a common means of beating a confession out of a prisoner.

SCOURGE

A Roman implement for severe bodily punishment... It consisted of a handle, to which several cords or leather thongs were affixed, which were weighted with jagged pieces of bone or metal, to make the blow more painful and effective . . . The victim was tied to a post and the blows were applied to the back and loins, sometimes even, in the wanton cruelty of the executioner, to the face and the bowels. In the tense position of the body, the effect can easily be imagined. So hideous was the punishment that the victim usually fainted and not rarely died under it . . . By its application secrets and confessions were wrung from the victim.

(The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Volume IV, James Orr, General Editor, p. 2704)

Paul asked the centurion if it was lawful to scourge a Roman citizen who was uncondemned. The Roman citizen had certain rights which could not be violated.

ROMAN CITIZENSHIP

The Roman citizen:

1. Had the right to vote.
2. Could not be bound or imprisoned without a trial.
3. Could not be scourged.
4. Could appeal to Rome for justice.

Paul's claim to Roman citizenship could be confirmed by checking the census rolls. It is said that the Emperor Claudius executed men who falsely claimed Roman citizenship. Evidently, it was possible to buy Roman citizenship (Acts 22:28), but Paul was Roman born.

When the centurion (a soldier in charge of 100 men) and chief captain learned that Paul was a Roman citizen, they were afraid because they had bound him.

Verse Thirty - Desiring to know why the Jews had accused Paul, the chief captain brought him and set him before the chief priests and the Jewish council.

CHAPTER 23

PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN

(1) And Paul, looking stedfastly on the council, said, Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day. (2) And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. (3) Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: and sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law? (4) And they that stood by

said, Revilest thou God's high priest? (5) And Paul said, I knew not, brethren, that he was high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people. (6) But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees: touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. (7) And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. (8) For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. (9) And there arose a great clamor: and some of the scribes of the Pharisees part stood up, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: and what if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel? (10) And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should be torn in pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the castle. (11) And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer: for as thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome. (12) And when it was day, the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. (13) And they were more than forty that made this conspiracy. (14) And they came to the chief priests and the elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, to taste nothing until we have killed Paul. (15) Now therefore do ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you, as though ye would judge of his case more exactly: and we, before he comes near, are ready to slay him. (16)

he came and entered into the castle and told Paul. (17) And Paul called unto him one of the centurions, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain; for he hath something to tell him. (18) So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and saith, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and asked me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say to thee. (19) And the chief captain took him by the hand, and going aside asked him privately, What is it that thou hast to tell me? (20) And he said, The Jews have agreed to ask thee to bring down Paul tomorrow unto the council, as though thou wouldest inquire somewhat more exactly concerning him. (21) Do not thou therefore yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, who have bound themselves under a curse, neither to eat nor to drink till they have slain him: and now are they ready, looking for the promise from thee. (22) So the chief captain let the young man go, charging him, Tell no man that thou hast signified these things to me. (23) And he called unto him two of the centurions, and said, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go as far as Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night: (24) and [he bade them] provide beasts, that they might set Paul thereon, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor. (25) And he wrote a letter after this form: (26) Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix, greeting. (27) This man was seized by the Jews, and was about to be slain of them, when I came upon them with the soldiers and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. (28) And desiring to know the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him down unto

their council: (29) whom I found to be accused about questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. (30) And when it was shown to me that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to thee forthwith, charging his accusers also to speak against him before thee. (31) So the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. (32) But on the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle: (33) and they, when they came to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, presented Paul also before him. (34) And when he had read it, he asked of what province he was; and when he understood that he was of Cilicia, (35) I will hear thee fully, said he, when thine accusers also are come: and he commanded him to be kept in Herod's palace.

Verses One and Two - Paul's Trial before the Jewish religious leaders is herein seen. The council which Paul appeared before was the Jewish *Sanhedrin*. This court of justice consisted of seventy members and was headed by the Jewish high priest. While the Pharisees were most influential in the synagogue, the Sadducees were most influential in the Sanhedrin. During the time of Christ this council was very influential and its decisions were honored beyond the borders of Palestine. To impose the death penalty, however, required Roman confirmation.

Paul stated that he had lived in good conscience before God until the present time. Paul continually affirmed that he had always maintained a clear conscience before God (I Corinthians 4:4). He stated to Timothy that from his forefathers he had served God with a clear conscience (II

Timothy 1:3). This is a devastating argument against those who would maintain the doctrine of, "let your conscience be your guide." It is possible to think you are right when in actuality you are wrong!

Verses Three through Five - The high priest commanded them that stood by Paul to strike him. The high priest was to judge Paul according to the law and commanded him to be smitten, which was contrary to the law. Such conduct was not befitting a high priest because it was illegal to smite a man who had not been tried and condemned.

Paul's protest was immediate. He stated, "God will smite thee, thou whited wall." The ones that stood by Paul asked him why he had reviled the high priest. Paul immediately acknowledged his error in what he had said because the scriptures taught, "thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people (Exodus 22:28). Question: Why didn't Paul recognize the high priest? It seems that the chief captain convened the Jewish council (Acts 22:30). It may have been an unofficial assembly and the council members were not dressed in their robes. It could also have been that Paul knew the high priest by name but not by face.

Verses Six through Ten - When Paul realized that the council was part Pharisees and part Sadducees, he set them against each other. The Sadducees did not believe in spirits, angels or the resurrection from the dead, while the Pharisees believed in the reality of each of these. Paul identified himself as a Pharisee and a son of a Pharisee,

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and indicated that he was being called in question because he proclaimed the resurrection of the dead. In his writings Paul placed great emphasis upon the resurrection of the dead (Acts 17:18, 24:15, 24:21; Romans 1:4; I Corinthians 15:12-19, 15:42; Philippians 3:11). The Pharisees declared that they found no fault with Paul, saying, "What if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel?" The Sadducees, who did not believe in spirits or angels, objected and a great dissension arose. The dissension was so great that the chief captain feared for the safety of Paul and commanded him to be brought into the temple.

Verse Eleven - The Lord stood by Paul and told him that as he had testified of him in Jerusalem, he would also give his testimony in Rome.

Verses Twelve through Thirty - The Jews' hatred for Paul was so strong that they planned to kill him. More than forty individuals placed themselves under an oath that they would not eat or drink until they had taken Paul's life. The plan was for the council to request that the chief captain bring Paul to a meeting where they might judge him more exactly. When this was done the Jews were going to kill Paul while he was on his way to meet with the council. Their plan was thwarted when Paul's nephew learned of their plan and told Paul. Paul sent his sister's son to the chief captain and the Jews' plot against Paul was revealed to him. Paul's nephew was instructed not to tell anyone of the plot against Paul. The chief captain made plans to send Paul with two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, two hundred spearmen to Caesarea where he would appear before Felix, the governor. The

letter to Felix. We immediately recognize that the letter does not accurately represent the facts, but is written in such a way as to make the chief captain appear in a favorable light. The chief captain did not rescue Paul having learned that he was a Roman citizen, but rescued and bound him and was in the process of examining him by scourging when he learned of Paul's Roman citizenship.

Verses Thirty-One through Thirty-Five - Paul was escorted by night (v. 23) by four hundred and seventy soldiers to Caesarea. Felix, upon having received the letter from the chief captain, told Paul that he would hear his case when his accusers came.

CHAPTER 24

PAUL'S TRIAL BEFORE FELIX

(1) And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with certain elders, and [with] an orator, one Tertullus; and they informed the governor against Paul. (2) And when he was called, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy much peace, and that by the providence evils are corrected for this nation, (3) we accept it in all ways and in all places, most excellent Felix, with all thankfulness. (4) But, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I entreat thee to hear us of thy clemency a few words. (5) For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of insurrections among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:

(6) who moreover assayed to profane the temple: on whom also we laid hold: [and we would have judged him according to our law. (7) But the chief captain Lysias came, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, (8) commanding his accusers to come before thee.] from whom thou wilt be able, by examining him thyself, to take knowledge of all these things whereof we accuse him. (9) And the Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that these things were so. (10) And when the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, Paul answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I cheerfully make my defense: (11) Seeing that thou canst take knowledge that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship at Jerusalem: (12) and neither in the temple did they find me disputing with any man or stirring up a crowd, nor in the synagogues, nor in the city. (13) Neither can they prove to thee the things whereof they now accuse me. (14) But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets; (15) having hope toward God, which these also themselves look for, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust. (16) Herein I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and men always. (17) Now after some years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings: (18) amidst which they found me purified in the temple, with no crowd, nor yet with tumult: but [there were] certain Jews from Asia (19) who ought to have been here before thee, and to make accusation, if they had aught against me. (20) Or else let these men

themselves say what wrong-doing they found when I stood before the council, (21) except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question before you this day. (22) But Felix, having more exact knowledge concerning the Way, deferred them, saying, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will determine your matter. (23) And he gave order to the centurion that he should be kept in charge, and should have indulgence; and not to forbid any of his friends to minister unto him. (24) But after certain days, Felix came with Drusilla, his wife, who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus. (25) And as he reasoned of righteousness, and self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was terrified, and answered, Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me. (26) He hoped withal that money would be given him of Paul: wherefore also he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him. (27) But when two years were fulfilled, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and desiring to gain favor with the Jews, Felix left Paul in bonds.

Verse One - Paul's accusers were the high priest, certain elders, and an orator by the name of Tertullus.

Verses Two through Nine - Tertullus began his presentation by flattering Felix. He mentions the peace that they enjoyed and the worthy deeds the governor had done unto the nation Israel. No doubt this was an attempt to secure the favor of Felix and influence him to render a favorable verdict for the Jews.

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Tertullus made four charges against Paul:

1. Paul was a pestilent fellow.
2. He was a mover of sedition (insurrection).
3. The ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.
4. One who had gone about to profane the temple.
(Notice the change in the charge of Acts 21:28).

Verses Ten through Twenty-One - When Paul is given the opportunity to make his defense, he begins by telling Felix that he is glad to make his defense before him because he had judged Israel for many years. There was no flattery in Paul's introductory remarks, only the facts. Paul's defense was concise and to the point. "Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem" (v. 12). Five of these days had been spent in Caesarea in custody of the Roman government. There had not been time for Paul to lead a rebellion (revolution) against the Roman government. Denying that he was a leader of seditions, Paul further defended himself by pointing out that the Jews had not found him disputing in the temple, nor had he disturbed the people in the synagogue or the city. Paul sums up his defense by simply stating that the Jews could not prove their case.

Paul was not ashamed of the gospel, Christ, or Christianity (Romans 1:16). He freely confessed that he worshiped God after the way the Jews called heresy. (In the book of Acts the term, "the way," is at times used to designate Christianity. See Acts 9:2; 16:17; 18:26; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22). Paul indicated that he believed in the law and prophets and the resurrection of the dead. (Paul under-

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stood that Christianity was the fulfillment of Judaism. The law was given to bring the Jews unto Christ [Galatians 3:27], but the Jews were so blinded by prejudice they could not see the truth). In his statement Paul indicates that there would be a resurrection of both the just and unjust. Not only are *all* going to be resurrected, but all are going to appear before the judgment bar of God to give an account for the deeds done in their life on earth (Romans 14:10). Realizing that death does not end man's existence (he will be resurrected), and that a day of accounting is coming (II Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 9:27), what manner of life ought we to live? The Bible teaches that only Christians who are faithful unto death will receive a crown of life (Revelation 2:10). As Christ died for us, we are to die to sin and give our lives completely to the service of God (Romans 12:1-2; Philippians 1:21; Galatians 2:20). Loving God we will walk according to His righteousness (John 14:15; I John 5:3). Eternal life in heaven with Jehovah God is the hope that Christians have.

In verse seventeen Paul gives the reason for his presence in Jerusalem (Romans 15:26-33). Certain Jews from Asia found Paul purified in the temple where he was not gathered with a multitude, neither was he causing a tumult (uproar). Paul indicates that these Asian Jews should have been at the hearing if they had aught against him. Furthermore, Paul asked the Jews from Jerusalem to testify of any evil he had done when he was examined before the Sanhedrin. Paul had appeared before the Sanhedrin and there had been no guilty verdict because on that occasion the meeting was broken up by the fighting between the Pharisees and Sadducees. Paul said that the only reason he was on trial was because he taught the

resurrection.

Verses Twenty-Two through Twenty-Seven - Felix did not find Paul guilty, but did not set Paul free. He deferred a decision until Lysias, the chief captain, came to Caesarea. Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea for two years (v. 27) and it may be that Felix never summoned Lysias and kept Paul in custody in hopes he might obtain money to let Paul go (v. 27). Instead of doing what was honorable, just, and right, Felix sought a way to material gain. Paul's chains were not removed but he was given liberty and was allowed to receive acquaintances. No doubt Christians ministered to Paul's needs.

Paul was given the opportunity to preach the gospel when Felix with Drusilla sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

FELIX

Through influence at Rome Felix was named procurator of Judaea about 52 A.D., an office he held till recalled by Nero in 59 A.D. Felix had the reputation of being an unscrupulous scoundrel. He is charged with murdering Jonathan, the high priest. The epitaph which history has written for him is:

'With savagery and lust, he exercised the power of a king with the disposition of a slave. '

DRUSILLA

Coffman gives the following description of Drusilla:

Drusilla was a sensuously beautiful person, one of the ten descendants of Herod the Great, whose name appears in the NT, and, like all the Herods, possessed of a character marked by selfishness and profligacy. She was the youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa I; and at this time (57 or 58 A.D.) she was not yet twenty years old. Her brother Agrippa II gave her in marriage to the king of Emesa when she was only fourteen or fifteen years of age.

The young queen was only sixteen when Felix, with the help of Atamos, a Cypriot magician, persuaded her to leave her husband and marry him. She was Felix's third wife, and they had a son named Agrippa.

(Commentary on Acts, James Burton Coffman)

At the time Felix and Drusilla appeared before Paul, they were living in open adultery. One might wonder what Felix and his wife expected to hear from Paul, but when Felix heard the message he trembled. Paul reasoned of:

1. Righteousness.
2. Temperance (self control).
3. The judgment to come.

These three lines of reasoning to a wicked adulterer (who lived with an unbridled lust and was exiled to Gaul after barely escaping execution by the Roman government for his wickedness), caused him to be terrified. Felix knew he wasn't living a righteous life but did nothing to change his life or his eternal destiny. Felix, like many today, wanted to wait for a convenient time. There is nothing recorded in God's word that leads us to think that Felix or Drusilla ever had a "convenient day" on which to obey the commands of Christ. Paul wrote to the Corinthians that today is the day of salvation (II Corinthians 6:2). Felix sent for Paul often and communed with him, but as far as we know the gospel Paul preached to him fell on wayside soil (Luke 8:12).

Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus and desiring to please the Jews, he left Paul in bonds.

CHAPTER 25

PAUL'S TRIAL BEFORE FESTUS

(1) Festus therefore, having come into the province, after three days went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea. (2) And the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they besought him, (3) asking a favor against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem; laying a plot to kill him on the way. (4) Howbeit Festus answered, that Paul was kept in charge at Caesarea, and that he himself was about to depart [thither] shortly. (5) Let them therefore, saith he, that are of power among you go down with me, and if there is anything amiss in the man, let them accuse

him. (6) And when he had tarried among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and on the morrow he sat on the judgment-seat, and commanded Paul to be brought. (7) And when he was come, the Jews that had come down from Jerusalem stood round about him, bringing against him many and grievous charges which they could not prove; (8) while Paul said in his defense, Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar, have I sinned at all. (9) But Festus, desiring to gain favor with the Jews, answered Paul and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me? (10) But Paul said, I am standing before Caesar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou also very well knowest. (11) If then I am a wrong-doer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die; but if none of those things is [true] whereof these accuse me, no man can give me up unto them. I appeal unto Caesar. (12) Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Thou hast appealed unto Caesar: unto Caesar shalt thou go. (13) Now when certain days were passed, Agrippa the King and Bernice arrived at Caesarea, and saluted Festus. (14) And as they tarried there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the King, saying, There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix; (15) about whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed [me], asking for sentence against him. (16) To whom I answered, that it is not the custom of the Romans to give up any man, before that the accused have the accusers face to face, and have had opportunity to

make his defense concerning the matter laid against him. (17) When therefore they were come together here, I made no delay, but on the next day sat on the judgment-seat, and commanded the man to be brought. (18) Concerning whom, when the accusers stood up, they brought no charge of such evil things as I supposed; (19) but had certain questions against him of their own religion, and of one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. (20) And I, being perplexed how to inquire concerning these things, asked whether he would go to Jerusalem and there be judged of these matters. (21) But when Paul had appealed to be kept for the decision of the emperor, I commanded him to be kept till I should send him to Caesar. (22) And Agrippa [said] unto Festus, I also could wish to hear the man myself. To-morrow, saith he, thou shalt hear him. (23) So on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and they were entered into the place of hearing with the chief captains and principal men of the city, at the command of Festus Paul was brought in. (24) And Festus saith, King Agrippa, and all men who are here present with us, ye behold this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews made suit to me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying that he ought not to live any longer. (25) But I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death: and as he himself appealed to the emperor I determined to send him. (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, king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I may have somewhat to write. (27) For it seemeth to me unreasonable, in sending a prisoner, not withal to

signify the charges against him.

Verses One through Twelve - Porcius Festus replaced Felix as procurator of Judaea. The Jewish historian Josephus describes Festus as a man who was wise, just and agreeable. Upon what information Josephus based his statement is not known. Luke pictures him as a politician who was willing to sacrifice an innocent man to the Jews, and who also used him to entertain Agrippa and Bernice.

After three days in office Festus traveled to Jerusalem where the Jews informed him against Paul. It was their plan to have Paul brought to Jerusalem so they would have opportunity to kill him, even though he was innocent of any wrongdoing. This reminds us of their hatred for another innocent man (Matthew 27:18), whom they also put to death (Matthew 27). Festus announced that Paul would be judged in Caesarea before his judgment seat.

After a short stay in Jerusalem, Festus returned to Caesarea and commanded Paul to be brought before his seat of judgment. The Jews from Jerusalem charged Paul with many things which they could not prove. In his defense Paul stated that he had not offended against:

1. The law of the Jews.
2. The temple.
3. Caesar.

Festus asked Paul if he would go to Jerusalem and be judged by him. Paul was in Caesarea, before the judgment seat of Festus — why not judge him under these circum-

stances? Festus was playing the part of a politician, wanting to please the Jews. The actions of Festus placed Paul in a position of having to appeal his case to Rome. This appeal to Rome was one of the rights granted to the Roman citizen. Paul's appeal to Rome was a testimony to the cowardice of Festus. He knew that Paul was innocent and Paul stated this (v. 10), but his unwillingness to declare Paul innocent forced Paul to use his rights as a Roman citizen to obtain justice.

Verses Thirteen through Twenty-One - King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to pay their respects to Festus. Agrippa (Agrippa II) was the son of Agrippa I, the son of Aristobulus, who was the son of Herod the Great. Agrippa II was the great grandson of Herod the Great, who had the babies of Bethlehem killed in his attempt to kill Jesus (Matthew 2). He assumed his kingship over the tetrarchy of Philip in A.D. 54. Bernice was the sister of king Agrippa II and was living with him as his wife. She is referred to by the Roman writer, **Juvenal**, as "Agrippa's incestuous sister." Such was the royalty before whom Paul would later appear.

Festus discussed Paul's case with king Agrippa (vv. 14-21) and we learn several important things from his discussion. Note the following:

1. The Jews asked for a judgment against Paul (v. 15).
2. This judgment (guilty verdict) was asked for without a proper trial (v. 16).
3. The Jews charged Paul with teaching

that Jesus had been raised from the dead.

4. To escape the Jews' plan to kill him (v. 3), Paul appealed to Caesar.

Verses Twenty-Two through Twenty-Seven - Agrippa expressed a desire to hear Paul and on the morrow he was granted his request. Paul's audience consisted of Festus, Agrippa and Bernice, the chief captains and the principal men of the city. Festus declares to this group that Paul had done nothing worthy of death (v. 25). This statement was a testimony of Paul's innocence and places Festus in the position of not dispensing justice. Festus did not have any charges against Paul to send to the emperor, so he asked for Agrippa's help in formulating a letter. Verses twenty-five and twenty-seven declare the innocence of Paul.

CHAPTER 26

PAUL BEFORE HEROD AGRIPPA II

(1) And Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth his hand, and made his defence: (2) I think myself happy, king Agrippa, that I am to make my defense before thee this day touching all the things whereof I am accused by the Jews: (3) especially because thou art expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently. (4) My manner of life then from my youth up, which was from the beginning among mine own nation and at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; (5) having knowledge of me

from the first, if they be willing to testify, that after the straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. (6) And now I stand [here] to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; (7) unto which [promise] our twelve tribes, earnestly serving [God] night and day, hope to attain. And concerning this hope I am accused by the Jews, O king! (8) Why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead? (9) I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. (10) And this I also did in Jerusalem: and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death I gave my vote against them. (11) And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities. (12) Whereupon as I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests, (13) at midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them that journeyed with me. (14) And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice saying unto me in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the goad. (15) And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. (16) But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; (17) delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles,

they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me. (19) Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision: (20) but declared both to them of Damascus first and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judaea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance. (21) For this cause the Jews seized me in the temple, and assayed to kill me. (22) Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; (23) how that the Christ must suffer, [and] how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles. (24) And as he thus made his defense, Festus saith with a loud voice, Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning is turning thee mad. (25) But Paul saith, I am not mad, most excellent Festus; but speak forth words of truth and soberness. (26) For the king knoweth of these things, unto whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him; for this hath not been done in a corner. (27) King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. (28) And Agrippa [said] unto Paul, With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian. (29) And Paul [said], I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds. (30) And the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: (31) and when

they had withdrawn, they spake one to another, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. (32) And Agrippa said unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.

Verses One through Three - Paul is given the opportunity to speak before king Agrippa.

Since the Roman authorities had already found Paul innocent of any violation of Roman law (Acts 25:25-27), he now indicates that he will answer the charges which have been brought against him by the Jews. Paul is confident before Agrippa because he was an expert in all the customs and questions of the Jews.

Verses Four through Eight - Paul was no stranger to the Jews in Jerusalem since they had known him from his youth and knew that he had lived the life of a Pharisee. It may have been that Paul's accusers had known him during the time he went to school under Gamaliel.

Paul points out that he was being judged for the promise of God unto the Jews. This promise was the coming of the Messiah. Since Jesus was the Messiah, he died for the sins of the world (I Corinthians 15:3-4), was buried and resurrected (I Corinthians 15:14-15). You cannot accept Jesus Christ as Messiah unless you accept the fact of his resurrection (I Corinthians 15:13, 16-19). It was Paul's belief in the resurrection of Jesus concerning which the Jews were accusing him. It is thought that the principal accusers of Paul were the Sadducees since they did not believe in the resurrection.

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Paul's testimony of the resurrection of Jesus pointed a finger of guilt toward the Jews who had crucified Him (Acts 2:36). The hatred of the Jews is evident from their attempt to kill him (Acts 21:31, 23:12, 25:3).

Verses Nine through Twelve - In persecuting the church Paul *thought* he was doing God's will. It is possible to think that something is right when it is contrary to God's will. In discussing a Biblical subject with our families, friends, or neighbors, it is not uncommon for them to say, "I know what the Bible says, but I *think* that you can believe another teaching." Man should realize that:

1. He cannot direct his own steps (Jeremiah 10:23).
2. There is a way that seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof is the way of death (Proverbs 14:12).
3. The ways of God are not the ways of man (Isaiah 55:8-9).
4. He will not be judged by what he thinks but by the words of Christ (John 12:48).

Verses Thirteen through Twenty - In these verses we have the third account of Paul's conversion in the book of Acts (accounts of Paul's conversion are recorded in Acts 9, 22, and 26). With regard to verse seventeen see Acts 9:15 and Acts 22:21. The purpose of going to the Gentiles is explained in verse eighteen.

Paul's message was the same in Damascus, Jerusalem, Judaea, and to the Gentiles: repent and turn to God and do work meet for repentance. Repentance has been defined as a change of mind which leads to a change of life (Matthew

21:28-31). Repentance is more than Godly sorrow (II Corinthians 7:9). Godly sorrow leads to repentance which includes a reformation of life. The Bible has much to say about repentance (Luke 3:8, 13:3, 5; Acts 2:38, 17:30). When one repents it will be impossible for him/her to live the same life which they lived before obeying the gospel. The turning to God mentioned in verse twenty, along with Acts 3:19, is equal to Acts 2:38 where Peter told those who were guilty of crucifying God's son, "Repent and be baptized." The turning to God must involve complete obedience to God's word.

Verses Twenty-One through Twenty-Nine - The Jews wanted to kill Paul, but God delivered him that he might proclaim the truths spoken by Moses and the Prophets. Note:

1. Christ would come.
2. He was to suffer.
3. He would be first to rise from the dead.
4. Christ would show light to the Jews and Gentiles.

Some want to know how Christ was the first to rise from the dead when Jesus had already raised Lazarus from the dead. Lazarus died, was raised from the dead *but* he died again. Jesus Christ was victorious over the power of death in that he *never* died again. He was the first to accomplish this.

At this point in his defense Festus interrupted Paul stating that he was mad. Probably, unlike Agrippa, Festus

A SIMPLIFIED STUDY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

did not understand the statements of Paul since he did not have the background in Jewish affairs that Agrippa possessed.

Paul informed Festus that he was not mad but spoke words of truth and soberness. He called on Agrippa to validate this fact. Paul asked Agrippa if he believed the prophets and without giving him an opportunity to answer Paul said, "I know that thou believest." Agrippa was convicted but would not repent and turn to the Lord. He then uttered eight of the saddest words (In the English language) "Almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian." Almost, but not quite. The first verse of the beautiful hymn, *Almost Persuaded*, reminds us of Felix (Acts 24:25) who waited for a convenient season.

*Almost persuaded now to believe,
Almost persuaded Christ to receive,
Seems now some soul to say,
Go spirit, go thy way,
Some more convenient day on thee I'll call.*

Verse three of the same hymn reminds us of Agrippa as he was almost persuaded:

*Almost persuaded, harvest is past,
Almost persuaded, doom comes at last,
Almost cannot avail, almost is but to fail,
Sad, sad, that bitter wail,
Almost - but lost!*

(Hymn written by P. P. Bliss)

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We wonder what it would have taken to fully persuade Agrippa to become a Christian. Paul told his audience that he wished that everyone was in the same spiritual state as he (Paul).

Verses Thirty through Thirty-Two - Agrippa said that Paul might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar. Paul had made his defense five times (Acts chapters 22, 23, 24, 25 and 26), and none of the charges made against him were proven.

It is interesting to note what happened to those who persecuted Paul or denied him justice. Note:

1. Ananias ("the whited wall") was out of office in two years, and murdered by his own people within a decade.
2. Felix was recalled within two years, and he and his family perished in the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 A.D.
3. Drusilla perished with her husband, Felix, and her son in the same eruption.
4. Bernice fell into public disgrace in Rome.
5. Festus died within two years of denying Paul justice.
6. The *Sanhedrin* was destroyed forever by the Jewish War, ending with the sack of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70; only about a decade after the events related in these chapters.

7. Nero (who later executed Paul), died wretchedly, and in disgrace. On and on the list might go, but Herod Agrippa II alone continued till the second century. He alone fearlessly gave an unequivocal verdict of Paul's innocence. See any connection? This writer thinks that he does!

(Commentary on Acts, James Burton Coffman)

Luke wrote in Luke 18:7, "And shall not God avenge his elect, that cry to him day and night, and yet he is long-suffering over them." The words of Jesus were fulfilled in the events which overcame the Jews and the heathen judges who refused to stand for right and free Paul from his bonds.

CHAPTERS 27-28

PAUL'S VOYAGE TO ROME

CHAPTER 27

(1) And when it was determined that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners to a centurion named Julius, of the Augustan band. (2) And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail unto the places on the coast of Asia, we put to sea, Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us. (3) And the next day we touched at Sidon: and Julius treated Paul kindly, and gave him leave to go unto his friends and refresh himself. (4) And putting to sea from thence, we sailed under the lee

of Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. (5) And when we had sailed across the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, [a city] of Lycia. (6) And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy; and he put us therein. (7) And when we had sailed slowly many days, and were come with difficulty over against Cnidus, the wind not further suffering us, we sailed under the lee of Crete, over against Salmone; (8) and with difficulty coasting along it we came unto a certain place called Fair Havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea. (9) And when much time was spent, and the voyage was now dangerous, because the Fast was now already gone by, Paul admonished them, (10) and said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the lading and the ship, but also of our lives. (11) But the centurion gave more heed to the master and to the owner of the ship, than to those things which were spoken by Paul. (12) And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to put to sea from thence, if by any means they could reach Phoenix, and winter [there; which is] a haven of Crete, looking north-east and south-east. (13) And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, close in shore. (14) But after no long time there beat down from it a tempestuous wind, which is called Euraquilo: (15) and when the ship was caught, and could not face the wind, we gave way [to it,] and were driven. (16) And running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were able, with difficulty, to secure the boat: (17) and when they had hoisted it up, they used helps, under-girding

the ship; and, fearing lest they should be cast upon the Syrtis, they lowered the gear, and so were driven. (18) And as we labored exceedingly with the storm, the next day they began to throw the [the freight] overboard; (19) and the third day they cast out with their own hands the tackling of the ship. (20) And when neither sun nor stars shone upon [us] for many days, and no small tempest lay on [us,] all hope that we should be saved was now taken away. (21) And when they had been long without food, then Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have set sail from Crete, and have gotten this injury and loss. (22) And now I exhort you to be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of life among you, but [only] of the ship. (23) For there stood by me this night an angel of the God whose I am, whom also I serve, (24) saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Caesar: and lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee. (25) Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even so as it hath been spoken unto me. (26) But we must be cast upon a certain island. (27) But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven to and fro in the [sea of] Adria, about midnight the sailors surmised that they were drawing near to some country: (28) and they sounded, and found twenty fathoms; and after a little space, they sounded again, and found fifteen fathoms. (29) And fearing lest haply we should be cast ashore on rocky ground, they let go four anchors from the stern, and wished for the day. (30) And as the sailors were seeking to flee out of the ship, and had lowered the boat into the sea, under color as though they would lay out anchors from the foreship, (31) Paul

said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. (32) Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off. (33) And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take some food, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye wait and continue fasting, having taken nothing. (34) Wherefore I beseech you to take some food: for this is for your safety: for there shall not a hair perish from the head of any of you. (35) And when he had said this, and had taken bread, he gave thanks to God in the presence of all; and he brake it, and began to eat. (36) Then were they all of good cheer, and themselves also took food. (37) And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls. (38) And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea. (39) And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they perceived a certain bay with a beach, and they took counsel whether they could drive the ship upon it. (40) And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea, at the same time loosing the bands of the rudders; and hoisting up the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. (41) But lighting upon a place where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground; and the foreship struck and remained unmoveable, but the stern began to break up by the violence [of the waves]. (42) And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any [of them] should swim out, and escape. (43) But the centurion, desiring to save Paul, stayed them from their purpose; and commanded that they who could swim should cast themselves overboard, and get first to the land; (44) and the rest, some on planks, and some on [other] things from the ship. And so it came to pass,

that they all escaped safe to the land.

Verses One through Five - When Paul sailed to Rome he was accompanied by several fellow travelers. He was in the custody of Julius, who was a centurion. There were other prisoners and Aristarchus as well. (Aristarchus is mentioned in Acts 19:29, 20:4, 27:2). Some believe that Aristarchus was also a prisoner (Colossians 4:10), while others maintain that he was a companion who ministered unto Paul. Paul entered a ship of Adramyttium with his traveling companions, intending to sail along the coast of Asia. When the ship arrived in Sidon, Julius, the centurion, allowed Paul to visit with his friends. No matter where one may be, if there are Christians there, he/she has family, the family of God.

Because of the contrary winds the ship could not sail Westward (toward Rome), so they sailed under the *lee side* of Cyprus (*lee side* would be the side of the island protected from the wind), Northward to the port of Myra which was a city of Lycia. Myra was one of the cities on the grain trade route between Egypt and Rome.

Verses Six through Twelve - At Myra the centurion found a ship of Alexandria which was sailing to Rome and he put his prisoners aboard. Changing ships did not change the difficulties of their trip. After sailing slowly many days, they came to Cnidus and then turned toward Crete. Once again the winds were contrary and instead of sailing North of Crete they were forced to sail along the Southern coast (the *lee side*) of the island. Passing Salmone they arrived in Fair Havens, which was a city of Lasea.

It was the time of the year when sailing the Mediterranean was very dangerous. The fast was past (Jewish Day of Atonement which was celebrated around October the first), and travel on the Mediterranean was unsafe for ancient ships from September 15 until March 15. Paul warned of the impending danger, but the centurion listened to the advice of the master and owner of the ship and continued their voyage. Since Fair Havens was not an ideal place to winter, the majority of the travelers wanted to go on to Phoenix and winter there.

Verses Thirteen through Twenty-Nine - When the south wind began to blow softly, they implemented their plans to sail for Phoenix and winter there. After their departure a tempestuous wind, which was called *Euroclydon*, came upon them and the ship was driven (being at the mercy of the wind). This suggests to us that they had very little control over the ship's course.

Sailing under the lee of Cauda, they secured the boat. This has reference to a small boat which was pulled along behind the ship. It was with great difficulty that the *dinghy* was brought on board. When this task was completed they began to prepare the ship for the stormy weather. Luke states that they undergirded the ship. This involved passing cables or chains around the exterior of the ship to give it greater strength and keep it from breaking apart in the rough weather.

In their attempt to survive they lightened the ship. No doubt part of the cargo was dumped into the sea and on the third day they cast out the tackling (furniture and supplies which were used to make repairs on the ship) into the sea.

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For many days the sun and stars did not appear. Since the sun and stars were used for navigation, they had no idea where they were. Being driven by the tempest, they lost all hope of being saved.

After being without food for a long period of time, Paul stood in the midst of them and pointed out certain things to the ship's company. He told them:

1. You should have hearkened unto me and not set sail from Crete.
2. Be of good cheer, even though the ship will be lost there will be no loss of life.
3. An angel of God appeared unto me and assured me that I would appear before Caesar and that God hath granted the safety of all who travel with me.
4. We will be shipwrecked.

On the fourteenth night the sailors determined that they were coming close to land. They sounded (measured) and found the depth of the water to be twenty fathoms deep. A short time later they measured fifteen fathoms, which indicated that they were nearing the shore. Fearing they would run aground they cast out four anchors and waited for day.

Verses Thirty through Forty-Four - The sailors were preparing to flee the ship when Paul told the centurion and the soldiers that they would be saved only if they remained aboard the ship. They evidently had more respect for Paul's word *at this time* than they did when he admonished them not to leave Fair Havens. After Paul told the centurion the conditions for the salvation of the 276 souls on

board the ship, the soldiers cut the small boat loose.

Paul encouraged them all to eat some food since it had been fourteen days since they had eaten. Paul once again assures them that there would be no loss of life. He took bread and gave thanks for it and they all ate. After eating they further lightened the ship by casting overboard some of the cargo (wheat). Lightening the ship would allow them to sail closer to the land. They made plans to beach the ship and drove it upon land. The ship was broken up by the waves and fearing that the prisoners would escape the soldiers planned to kill the prisoners. The centurion wanted to save Paul and would not let them carry out their plan. Through the providence of God all of the passengers escaped to safety.

CHAPTER 28

(1) And when we were escaped, then we knew that the island was called Melita. (2) And the barbarians showed us no common kindness; for they kindled a fire, and received us all, because of the present rain, and because of the cold. (3) But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out by reason of the heat, and fastened on his hand. (4) And when the barbarians saw the [venomous] creature hanging from his hand, they said one to another, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped from the sea, yet Justice hath not suffered to live. (5) Howbeit he shook off the creature into the fire, and took no harm. (6) But they expected that he would have swollen, or fallen down

dead suddenly: but when they were long in expectation and beheld nothing amiss came to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god. (7) Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius, who received us, and entertained us three days courteously. (8) And it was so, that the father of Publius lay sick of fever and dysentery: unto whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laying his hands on him healed him. (9) And when this was done, the rest also that had diseases in the island came, and were cured: (10) who also honored us with many honors; and when we sailed, they put on board such things as we needed. (11) And after three months we set sail in a ship of Alexandria which had wintered in the island, whose sign was The Twin Brothers. (12) And touching at Syracuse, we tarried there three days. (13) And from thence we made a circuit, and arrived at Rhegium: and after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli; (14) where we found brethren, and were entreated to tarry with them seven days: and so we came to Rome. (15) And from thence the brethren, when they heard of us, came to meet us as far as The Market of Appius and The Three Taverns; whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage. (16) And when we entered into Rome, Paul was suffered to abide by himself with the soldier that guarded him. (17) And it came to pass, that after three days he called together those that were the chief of the Jews: and when they were come together, he said unto them, I, brethren, though I had done nothing against the people, or the customs of our fathers, yet was delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the

Romans: (18) who, when they had examined me, desired to set me at liberty, because there was no cause of death in me. (19) But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had aught whereof to accuse my nation. (20) For this cause therefore did I entreat you to see and to speak with [me]: for because of the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. (21) And they said unto him, We neither received letters from Judaea concerning thee, nor did any of the brethren come hither and report or speak any harm of thee. (22) But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against. (23) And when they had appointed him a day, they came to him into his lodging in great number; to whom he expounded [the matter,] testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening. (24) And some believed the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. (25) And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Spirit through Isaiah the prophet unto your fathers, (26) saying, Go thou unto this people, and say, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand; And seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive: (27) For this people's heart is waxed gross, And their ears are dull of hearing, And their eyes they have closed; Lest, haply they should perceive with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And should turn again, And I should heal them. (28) Be it known therefore unto you, that this salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles: they will

also hear. (29) [And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, having much disputing among themselves.] (30) And he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, (31) preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him.

Verses One through Six - Paul and his traveling companions were shipwrecked on the island of Melita (modern day Malta). According to God's word there was not a single casualty and all reached the shore safely.

The people of Malta are referred to as barbarians. The word *barbarian* as used in this text describes one who does not speak the Greek language. The people of Malta were Phoenicians and spoke some dialect of Punic or Phoenician. The inhabitants of the island showed great kindness toward those who had been shipwrecked. They built a fire for the comfort of their guests.

While Paul was putting sticks on the fire, a viper (snake) fastened on Paul's hand. He promptly shook it off into the fire and felt no harm. The people immediately judged Paul to be an evildoer (murderer) who had escaped the peril of the sea and justice (probable reference to the goddess of justice who was called *Justilia*) was reaping vengeance upon him. The people watched Paul for a great while, expecting him to be swollen or drop dead. When neither happened they changed their minds and declared him to be a god. This is the second time (as recorded in Acts) that Paul was declared to be a god (Acts 14:11-12).

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Verses Seven through Ten - While on Malta Paul enjoyed the hospitality of Publius, who was the chief man of the island. The father of Publius was sick with a fever and dysentery and Paul healed him. Other sick persons from all over the island came and Paul healed them as well. Paul and his companions were honored by the people and they were furnished with those things which were necessary for their travel.

We can only wonder what effect Paul's actions had on his fellow travelers. The reader will note that:

1. He advised the master of the ship that they would be in great danger if they attempted to make Phoenix and winter there.
2. As they were about to be ship wrecked Paul told the Centurion that it was necessary for all to remain on the ship if they were to be saved. (All were saved),
3. He was bitten by a viper and showed no ill effects from it.
4. He healed Publius, the chief man of the island of Malta.
5. He healed other sick on the island of Malta.

Surely they were impressed by the teacher of Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God.

Verses Eleven through Fourteen - These verses give us a record of Paul's continued journey to Rome.

1. He stayed three months on Malta after being ship wrecked.

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2. Departed to Rome on a ship of Alexander.
3. Landed at Syracuse (on the island of Cyprus) and visited there for three days.
4. Sailed to Rhegium, which was a very important sea port located on the Southern tip of Italy.
5. The next stop was at Puteoli, where Paul visited with the brethren for seven days. He would have had the opportunity to observe the Lord's Supper with the saints.
6. After these events Paul began his overland trip to Rome.

Verse Fifteen - When the brethren were informed of Paul's arrival to Italy, they came as far as The Market of Appius and The Three Taverns to visit with him.

Verses Sixteen through Thirty-One - Arriving in Rome Paul was delivered to the captain of the guard. Instead of being put in prison, Paul was allowed to dwell in his own hired dwelling (v. 30) with the soldier who kept him. After three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together and explained his situation. Paul made it clear that he had done nothing against the Jews or the customs of the Jewish fathers, neither had he transgressed Roman law. The Roman authorities declared that he had done nothing worthy of death and would have released him, but the Jews spoke against it. Paul was forced to appeal to Rome for justice. He indicated that it was for the hope of Israel that he was in chains. **E. F. Harrison** wrote, "By this Paul meant that the Christian faith was the true fulfillment of the hope of God's people."

The Jews informed Paul that they had not received any

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letters concerning him; neither had the Jewish brethren brought any charges against him. This fact demonstrates again the innocence of Paul. The Jewish leaders desired to hear what Paul had to say about Christianity, the so-called *sect* (a group adhering to a distinctive doctrine or a leader), which was every where spoken against. A day was appointed and when the Jews assembled with him, Paul taught them out of the law of Moses and the prophets about the kingdom of God and Jesus Christ. The teaching session lasted from morning till evening. As a result of Paul's teaching some of the Jews believed and others did not. When the Jews did not agree among themselves, Paul pointed to a prophecy of Isaiah the prophet:

And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again, and be healed.

(Isaiah 6:9-10)

When Paul spoke this message, the Jews departed from him. Once before, when Paul was making his defense before the mob in chapter twenty-two, Paul mentioned the word *Gentiles* (v. 21). When he did this, the Jews cried out that he was not fit to live.

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Notice that Isaiah said the people would:

1. Hear, but not understand.
2. See, but not perceive.
3. Harden their hearts.
4. Have ears which were dull of hearing.
5. Have eyes which were closed.

These conditions were premeditated. They would not see nor hear and understand with their heart (mind) and be converted, that they might be healed by the great Physician. (Jesus told the Jews the same thing in Matthew 13:14-15. It is a sad event in one's life when he will not accept the will of God). Because of their hardened condition, Paul told the Jews that the gospel would be sent to the Gentiles who would hear it. When the Jews heard this they left, but they had a great reasoning (discussion) among themselves.

For two years Paul stayed in his own hired house and preached the kingdom of God and Jesus Christ. We must admire Paul for his great zeal for the gospel. Even though he was in prison, he still proclaimed Christ to all who would listen. It reminds us of the persecuted Christians who went everywhere preaching the gospel (Acts 8:1-4). Both of these examples should help us to realize that we too are debtors to all men (Romans 1:14), and that we should preach the gospel at every opportunity. We are to even create the opportunity when possible. Paul wrote Timothy to:

Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all

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longsuffering and doctrine (II Timothy **4:2**).

We should go and do likewise.,

APPENDAGE

Paul's Conjectural Travels According to Romans, Philemon, Colossians, Philippians, I Timothy, Titus and II Timothy

Many scholars believe that Paul was released from his first imprisonment and traveled extensively before he was imprisoned a second time and killed by Nero. *I want to emphasize that the conclusions are merely conjectural.*

Luke tells us that Paul was innocent of violating Roman law (Acts 26:32). He was also innocent of the charges which the Jews brought against him, for no charges were sent to Rome concerning his case (Acts 28:21). For two years Paul lived in his own hired dwelling, preaching and teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is the opinion of many that Paul was released from prison after the two years and continued his work.

From prison he wrote that he hoped to visit the Philippians (Philippians 1:23-26). Also, from prison Paul directed Philemon to prepare lodging for him (Philemon v. 22). In these passages Paul expresses hope that he would be released from prison, travel and visit with his brethren once again.

There are certain passages recorded in Paul's writings which do not fit the events recorded for us by Luke. Those who believe that Paul was released and traveled again suggest the following:

1. Paul traveled to Spain in keeping with his plans

APPENDAGE

(Romans 15:28).

2. Stopped on his way back from Spain at Crete, where he left Titus to appoint elders (Titus 1:5). (This is the only reference to Paul being on the island of Crete.)
3. Traveled to Miletus, where he left Trophimus sick (II Timothy 4:20).
4. Left Timothy in Ephesus and went on into Macedonia (I Timothy 1:3).
5. Stopped at Troas, where he left his cloak, books and parchments with Carpus (II Timothy 4:13).
6. Traveled on to the city of Nicopolis (Titus 3:12). Of this city Coffman writes:

Nine cities of this name are found in the Mediterranean area. However, the one to whom Paul here referred "is probably the city of that name situated on the southwest promontory of Epirus." This is only a few miles from the modern city of Prevesa, the city which the Greeks bombarded in 1912. It was founded by Augustus, whose camp happened to be pitched there the night before the famous fight with Antony (Battle of Actium, 31 B.C.) . . . The name "Nicopolis" means "Victory City," so-called from Augustus' victory of Antony.

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7. Paul was once again imprisoned and wrote II Timothy. In Philemon (written during Paul's first imprisonment) Demas was listed as a fellow-worker of Paul (Philemon v. 24), but in II Timothy Demas had forsaken Paul for the world (II Timothy 4:10).
8. When Paul wrote II Timothy he expressed no hope of being released from prison (II Timothy 4:5-8).
9. Tradition says that Paul was beheaded by Nero in 67 or 68 A.D. We have no way of knowing what charges were brought against Paul which led to his second imprisonment and subsequent death.

Note: The above is in harmony with the tradition quoted by **Eusebius** (*Ecclesiastical History* ii. 22), "that after defending himself, the apostle was sent again on his ministry of preaching, and coming a second time to the same city [Rome], suffered martyrdom under Nero."

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