

PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

ACTS

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HISTORY:

The last of part of **Luke 24** after Jesus' Resurrection and appearance to the two followers on the road of Emmaus, Jesus speaks a promise of His Father to the disciples, where they were to wait in Jerusalem until the power from on high would come upon them. This power was to make them bold and effective witnesses among all nations. He led the disciples out as far as to Bethany before His Ascension to heaven. The ascension closes the Lord's earthly ministry. Now it would be left for others to continue His ministry. They returned to Jerusalem with great joy to the temple.

SYNOPSIS:

1:1-11 Luke is the writer of Acts. He was the companion of Paul, and had every opportunity of obtaining information about the great events of the gospel of Christ. He addresses this Book to Theophilus (meaning "loved by God", was the man to whom Luke wrote the Gospel of Luke & Acts; many speculations but little is known of him), and it is made clear that it is a continuation of the Book of Luke. Jesus had showed Himself to many in the 40 days alive after His Resurrection. He commanded the disciples not to depart from Jerusalem but wait for the promise of the Father. John baptized with water but they would be baptized with the Holy Ghost. They were still wondering if Jesus would restore the kingdom of Israel at that time. Jesus lets them know that *"it is not for them to know the times or the seasons; it's in the power of the Father."* Their power will come when the Holy Ghost comes upon them to make them witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, and in the uttermost part of the earth. After Jesus spoke He ascended up into the clouds out of sight. While they were staring up at the last glimpse of Jesus, two men in white apparel (angels) appeared among them. They ask these men of Galilee as to *"Why stand here gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you...shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."*

1:12-26 After Jesus disappeared into heaven, the disciples returned to Jerusalem from the Mount called Olivet and gathered in the Upper Room where Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James (the son of Alphaeus), Simon (The Zealot), Judas (brother of James), the women, Mary (the mother of Jesus), and the brothers of Jesus were on one accord in prayer and supplication. Peter made it known that their small group had grown and that there were 120 that assembled in the Upper Room. He also lets them know that the scriptures had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit had spoken through David in the Old Testament concerning Judas who served as the guide to apprehend Jesus. Although Judas was one of the chosen, he had received money for the arrest of Jesus and he bought a field with the money. He committed suicide and the people called that place, *"The Field of Blood."* Peter's proof was King David's prediction in the Book of Psalms: *"Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and His bishopric (office) let another take"* Ps.69:25. Therefore, they needed to choose a successor to take the place of Judas: one who had participated in Jesus' earthly ministry and one who was a witness with them of Jesus' Resurrection. They appointed two: Joseph called Barsabas, surnamed Justus, and Matthias. They prayed over this decision by asking the Lord, and by lot. It fell upon Matthias (gift of God). *"Matthias was chosen and became an apostle with the other eleven."*

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ACTS 2:1-13, 37-47NEXT 3:11-21

2:1 And when the day of Pentecost— The Day of Pentecost was one of the most phenomenal and important events in all of history. It was the third great Israelite feast mentioned in Leviticus 23. It was a harvest festival fifty days after the Passover week. However, this Pentecost had greater significance than the preceding.

- Old Testament Pentecost occurred fifty days after Israel left Egypt and the Passover lamb was slain.
- New Testament Pentecost occurred fifty days after Christ rose from the dead, the Lord being our Passover Lamb.
- Old Testament Pentecost celebrated the birth of the nation Israel (Ex.19:5) and as they received the Law given on tablets; 3,000 people died for breaking the Law by worshiping the golden calf, signifying the covenant of the law that brought death (Ex. 32:28). However, on...
- The first New Covenant Pentecost Day, the Spirit was given; 3,000 people received life and were added to the Church of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:41), signifying the covenant of the Spirit brought life.

The former pointed typologically to the latter. Old Covenant Israel was a type, to point us to Christ.

The importance of the New Testament Pentecost brought:

- The coming of the Holy Spirit.
- The birth of the church.
- The corporate filling of the Holy Spirit, of the body of believers with the promised presence of Christ.
- The personal filling of the individual believer by the Holy Spirit.
- The Presence and Power of God coming upon believers, gifting and equipping them to proclaim the glorious message of salvation to men.

2:1b ...was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. The Day of Pentecost had fully come:

¹Jesus was crucified on Passover; He was buried on the Feast of Unleavened Bread; He was Resurrected on the Feast of First Fruits. Then fifty days after the Resurrection of Jesus, the promised New Covenant arrived on the Feast of Pentecost. 120 people were praying, and had been praying with (on) one accord for ten days to bring what God desired for them. Jesus' disciples were assembled "with one accord" (Gr homothymadon), meaning likemindedness for that very purpose. They were instructed to tarry until they were endued from on high with His power. There was an importance for all this to occur. This was fulfillment. You see this was man obeying in the city of Jerusalem precisely where Christ told them to go and wait. This shows the unity and purpose among these early disciples in one place (the Upper Room).

2:2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. Suddenly, without warning, something unexplainable that you would never forget, came.

1. There was a mighty sound that filled the room.
 - a. The sound was from heaven, that is, from God.
 - b. The sound was like the rushing of a mighty wind.
 - c. The sound filled the house and was localized in the house where they were sitting.

The wind is symbolic of the Holy Spirit's presence.

2:3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

2. There was the appearance of "*cloven tongues*" (diamerizomenai). The Greek means a tongue that was cloven, that is, parting asunder.
 - a. The tongues were not fire, but like fire, that is, looked like fire.
 - b. The tongue of fire that first appeared symbolized the presence of the Holy Spirit which was to dwell

¹ http://www.bereanbiblechurch.org/transcripts/acts/2_1-4.htm
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in the midst of God's people as a whole. When He began to divide into many tongues of fire and to rest upon each believer, He was symbolizing that He was to dwell within each believer as well as within the whole body of believers. The word "it" means "He" (the person of the Spirit of God) *"sat"* (ekathisen). The Holy Spirit Himself was descending and resting upon each of the disciples. They were not receiving tongues of fire but as foretold by John the Baptist that there was One coming who would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire - the Spirit of God.

Fire in the Old Testament often indicates the presence of God, especially in His burning holiness and purity, consuming everything that is impure. These tongues may therefore portray both the purity and the power of the speech of these disciples as they proclaimed the mighty works of God, as well as the holy presence of God. ²The baptism in the Holy Spirit is key, because in that experience we first yield our wills to God; we then yield the one unruly member that we are powerless to control: *"the tongue."* When we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, we actually fulfill the instruction to yield our members to God as instruments (weapons) of righteousness. Certainly, when the tongue has been yielded to God and taken over by the Holy Spirit, it becomes a weapon: in prayer, in testimony, and in preaching.

2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. ³We are commanded to be continually filled with the Spirit. I just want to say that the filling differs from the baptism. Baptism—The moment you trusted the Lord Jesus Christ, when God did that sovereign work of grace in your life and opened your heart, God, the Holy Spirit, united you, identified you with the body of Christ. The primary meaning of the word *"baptize"* is: *"to immerse or dip."* It means: *"identification with or united to."* The baptism with the Holy Spirit is identification with the body of Christ. *"Filling"* is continually and allows you to be endowed with power for God's purpose and work.

3. There was the **filling and speaking with other tongues** because of the sudden appearance of God's power. The *"filling of the Spirit"* refers to you permitting the Spirit to control you, lead you, and empower you, on a daily basis. At this point they were under the complete guidance and direction and control of the Holy Spirit. You've got to remember: *"The Holy Spirit's Baptism"* is that we are being placed into Christ; and *"being filled with the Holy Spirit"* is that Christ is being placed in us to be used for powerful service.
 - a. The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit.
 - i. First, both the body (church) and each individual believer were filled. They were all filled with the presence and power of the Spirit; corporately and individually.
 - ii. The disciples were given the gifts of the Spirit to carry on the work of the ministry upon earth. This fact is not mentioned here, although it is certainly to be demonstrated in the preaching and witnessing about to take place.
 - b. The disciples began to speak with other tongues.
 1. Other tongues mean foreign languages; other languages. The disciples we supernaturally witnessing and preaching in the languages of the different nationalities gathering together there. The languages also show that from then on God's people would come from all nations, marking the transition from Israel to be the church. Christ in them, changes everything.
 - His Spirit had actually entered into their hearts and lives. They were filled with a deep sense of His presence and power; His concern and His love for the world; His courage and drive to share the great news of the glorious gospel. They spoke in different dialects as the Spirit gave them utterance. This may indicate a clear difference from the Gift of Tongues as listed in 1Cor.12-14.

² Declaring God's Word—A 365 Day Devotional by Derek Prince

³ http://www.bereanbiblechurch.org/transcripts/acts/2_3-4.htm

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All gifts once bestowed by the Spirit and thereafter are to be exercised by the believer. God made His presence known to this group of believers in a spectacular way—roaring wind, fire, and His Holy Spirit. Elijah also needed a message from God in the Old Testament. There was a mighty wind, then an earthquake, and finally a fire. But God's message came in a gently whisper. God may use dramatic methods to work in your life; or He may speak in gentle whispers. Wait patiently and always listen.

2:5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. There were Jews from many other countries present in Jerusalem. "Devout men" (men who handle spiritual matters carefully, worshipfully, reverently); Jewish pilgrims who had come from all over the world, had returned to Jerusalem to celebrate the *"Feast of the First Fruits"* heard the Word. *"Out of every nation under heaven"* (intended to indicate the widespread nationalities of the Jews present in Jerusalem); every nation where there were Jews.

2:6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. When the rumor of this remarkable transaction was spread, the multitude came together and was confounded. It was apparently the sound of the thunderous blast caused by God that brought the people rushing to the scene. And it was the news of the disciples' behavior that brought the crowd together—every man heard them speak in his own language.

2:7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Gallileans?—The crowd heard an amazing thing—the disciples supernaturally speaking in their own tongue (dialect; language) and it was understood. What didn't make sense, made sense! ⁴Luke says, *they "marveled."* It is really a word which means they were *"hit hard, stunned; in awe, wondered, amazed, were astonished."* They were staggered by this amazing thing. People from Galilee were known for speaking in an unusual way. ⁵People from other places could not always understand them. But now, the strange thing to these people was that Galileans were speaking in languages not native to their own tongue, but to the tongue of the people who were listening. This amazed them because they expected to hear the Galileans speak in their own tongue.

2:8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? — They are still asking the question! Well the answer only comes from God sending His Spirit through vessels of clay. We can presume that all the people present would speak Hebrew, Greek or Aramaic, and many would probably speak all three. So these *"other tongues"* in their native languages were intended as a sign rather than as a means of conveying knowledge. Wherever they were born, they were able to hear their dialect spoken by men that were not from their place of birth. 1Cor.14:22 says *"Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not..."*

2:9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, 2:10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, 2:11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. ⁶Luke then lists 16 nations. He starts off on the east and lists the Parthians and the Medes and Mesopotamia. It would be where we would think of as Iran and Pakistan and Afghanistan today. He comes around and he moves through what is today Turkey and Syria and Iraq. Then he moves down into Egypt and North African nations. Then he goes up into Asia and Europe.

⁴ http://www.bereanbiblechurch.org/transcripts/acts/2_4-13.htm

⁵ <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/acts-lbw.htm>

⁶ http://www.bereanbiblechurch.org/transcripts/acts/2_4-13.htm

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Then he mentions Rome. People had come as visitors from Rome for this festival, both Jews from Rome and also "*proselytes*"—people who so wanted the God of Israel that they were willing to go through a process of becoming Jews in order to enter into the promises of God, for the Jews. Why are all these places mentioned? This is a list of many lands from which Jews came to the festivals in Jerusalem. And because of captivities and persecutions they had been widely dispersed throughout the world. They would go back to their homelands with God's Good News of salvation. Thus God prepared the way for the spread of the gospel. ⁷This message of the wonderful works of God is not just for one nation, but for all. These, who spoke in languages foreign to their own, were not really speaking to these people, but were rather letting God speak to these people through them.

2:12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?— There were three mixed reactions to what had happened: 1) Amazed 2) Doubt. Many were just at a loss to what was happening. But they were attracted to seek meaning in it all; thoughts were literally running through their minds as to the meaning.

2:13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine. 3) Mocking. Others simply mocked, accusing the disciples of being drunk. There are always some who will scoff and dismiss the acts of the Spirit. Don't ever be deterred by your critics. Press on with the strategy that God has given you.

SUMMARY:

Ten days after Jesus ascended to heaven, on the Jewish Feast Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit is poured out as promised with the sound of a rushing mighty wind, and with tongues of fire appearing above their heads. Those filled with the Holy Spirit begin to speak in other tongues (**2:1-4**). Devout Jews visiting from other countries are attracted and amazed as they hear wonderful works of God proclaimed in their own languages (**2:5-13**).

APPLICATION:

The Spirit of God gives power to change us as well as others. However, it is the Holy Spirit's job to do the changing, for we alone have not the power to change anyone. He steps into their hearts to do a make-over!

SYNOPSIS: 2:37-42

3000 NEW BELIEVERS!

37The people were very worried when they heard this. *'Brothers, what shall we do?'* they asked Peter and the other apostles. **38**Peter answered, *'You must be sorry for the wrong things that you have done. Choose to do good things instead of evil things. You must each receive baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. This is so that God will forgive your sins. Then you will receive God's gift. This gift is the Holy Spirit. 39This promise is for you and it is for your children. It is also for all those who are far away. It is for everyone whom the Lord our God will call to come to him.'* **40**Peter said much more. He warned them. And he tried very hard to persuade them. He said, *'Save yourselves from the punishment that is coming to these wicked people!'* **41**Many people believed his message and they received baptism. About 3000 people came to be with them on that day. (**EEV**)

THE FIRST CHURCH KEPT FOUR THINGS GOING

⁷ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/acts/03.html>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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42The believers learned from the apostles all the time in doctrine. They met together with other believers in fellowship. They broke up bread together in the Lord's Supper, and they prayed together in prayer.

2:43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. The apostles did many miracles and they did wonderful things. Everyone felt both excitement and fear. They had a godly fear, a holy sense of God's presence, a consciousness that God was working, a reverence for god and for what was happening, and a sense of awe and wonder

2:44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common:— This meant that these professing believers were true believers. And they all believed together; sharing all that they had.

2:45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as to every man had need. They sold the things that belonged to them: their possessions and goods. And with the money, they shared everything to everyone who had a need. They met the needs of the world. Remember the story of the rich young ruler whom Jesus told to sell all he had and give it to the poor, and then follow me, but he couldn't? Matt.19:16-22, also 26-30. We neglect an important truth, and that is to serve and minister our neighbor. It is the love of the world that makes us unwilling to give up the possessions we have obtained

2:46 And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart. Every day, they met as a group in the Temple. They broke up bread. And they shared it together from house to house. When they ate together, they were happy and generous.

2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. They praised God always. *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"* (Matt.5:16). They gained favor with the people and the Lord, and every day the Lord added people to their group. Salvation is come! Those people were people who had found Salvation.

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3:1 Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. The Jews observed three times of prayer—Morning, the third hour (9AM), Noon, the sixth hour (12PM), and Evening, the ninth hour (3PM). Two consecrated men— Jesus’ disciples— Peter and John (the ones in the inner circle, the ones witnessed Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, the ones that ran to the tomb after hearing what Mary Magdalene had to say about Jesus’ body not being in the tomb). Peter, the one who Jesus told to feed His sheep. And John the one Jesus told to take care of His mother. Yes, they are always together, and they go up to the temple to pray at the ninth hour (3PM). And at the appointed time, Peter and John, Jesus’ faithful prayer warriors go where they are needed. They’re at church among the people because someone needs Jesus’ help! Are we really listening when Jesus speaks? Or are we all about self?

3:2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;— Peter and John find this man whose name is not known, but we know his condition. He’s lame, crippled from his mother’s womb. Also, we know where he’s placed daily. He’s laid daily sitting at the temple gate, called Beautiful asking for alms (contributions; money, help).

3:3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. This man sees Peter and John as they are about to go into the temple, and like he always does, he’s asking for alms.

3:4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. Peter’s sight is fastened upon this man along with John, meaning he did not look away. You know how we do. We see them on the street corner holding out their hands for money, but many times we look away. The great need of the hour was for prayer, however there was another need right in front of them—the man lame from birth. And Peter says **Look on us** meaning put your eyes upon us.

3:5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. The lame man really paid close attention, expecting, and anticipating a gift from them that will be a blessing to him.

3:6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. Peter and John were not able to hand over any silver and gold (money) to the lame man, and literally said so. But they didn’t stop there, for such as they had, they were willing to give, and that is, *"in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Peter commanded the man to, **rise up and walk!**"* Peter was able to give something which was better than money to the man, for it is in the Name of Jesus, in the authority of Jesus’ Name that commanded bountiful blessings of healing to come. For the man really needed to rise up from his situation and walk.

3:7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. Jesus never leaves us along. Jesus knew what the man needed. Peter and John were in the right place at the right time: His instruments. God will send you and I to the right place at the right time if you’re willing and available. So, Peter extends his hand out to take hold of the man’s right hand and lifts him up. And immediately this man’s feet and ankle bones received strength. Something happened at the Name of

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Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit! The Word spoken came alive!

3:8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. This man was no longer lame, he no longer was sitting at the temple gate, but in this miraculous God-given strength, he began to leap up, stand, walk, and now enter into the temple walking, leaping, and praising God. He knew who to praise. He knew who made it possible.

3:9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God:— People who had seen this man sitting in front of the temple, now see him walking and praising God. This was the day of his miracle, and he couldn't help it.

3:10 And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. Yes, he had sat begging for money at the Beautiful gate of the temple, and they were just filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to the man because they can see him with their own eyes.

3:11 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. This was a sight to see. They see the lame man that was healed holding Peter and John tightly, so the crowd runs out onto the porch of Solomon's Hall.

3:12 And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?— As the crowd gathered around them, Peter gives this opportunity to address the people of Israel asking why are they marveling at this; why look at them as though it was their power or holiness that made this man to walk? You see the people knew beyond question that the crippled beggar had been healed. They had known him to be a cripple for over forty years. So the points to look at:

1. The people marveled not only at the miracle, but at the power and holiness of Peter and John.
2. Peter made the fact very clear that power and holiness are not of men. God does not work miracles for men to be glorified. So, there's no need to marvel or look earnestly upon them! Man has no merit, no virtue, no mortality, no strength, no authority, and no power to work such a miracle. There was nothing about Peter and John that deserved such power, and no holiness whatsoever. God had worked the miracle and God alone. So, when miracles are from God, it's expected, and He's the One to be glorified! God is all powerful!

3:13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go. Although Peter commands the man to rise up and walk, it was in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth and of His power that the miracle came! Peter lets them know that the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the forefathers glorified the Son, Jesus. Peter also tells them that Jesus, God's Son is the One they delivered up and denied before Pilate when Pilate wanted to let Him go. The power and holiness is of God's Son!

3:14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;— Peter repeats this again, that they denied Jesus. Even when it was an opportunity to let Jesus go, they chose a murderer to be granted freedom over Jesus, the Holy and Just One! So the points to look at:

1. Men delivered up God's Son.

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- a. Jesus died for every man's sin. b. It was every man's sin that necessitated His death.

Can we look at it and say that no man is exempt from God's love and then say no man is exempt from the death of Jesus? Every man's sins are covered by God's love and Jesus' death. Therefore, every man—in all the arrogance and rebellion and denial of his sins—delivered Jesus up to the cross and killed Him. It was for my sins He died. It was my sins that put Him on the cross.

2. Men denied Jesus even when He was innocent. Jesus was innocent of the crimes with which He was charged. Even the Roman governor recognized this! There was no charge against Him that was justified.
3. Men denied the Holy One and the Just (Righteous One).
4. Men desired a sinner and murderer. Think about it: Every man who rejects Jesus is choosing sinful men and their ways over the sinless Son of God and His ways. Why? – Because murdering sinful man allows men to walk and live as they wish (immorally and unjustly).

3:15 And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses.

5. Men killed the Prince of life. The word "*Prince*" means both Prince and Author, the very Source of all Life. Although Peter tells them they killed the Prince of Life, this shows that He can't stay dead. God, the Father raised Jesus from the dead, and Peter and John are witnesses.

3:16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. So, to complete this, Peter recalls to them that it is in a man's name that represent his character. Therefore, it stood for his authority and power. By using Jesus' Name, Peter showed who gave him the authority and power to heal. And it must be used by faith. It is in the Name of Jesus through faith in His Name that the man they saw and knew had received perfect healing; making the lame man strong.

3:17 And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. Peter describes that it was because of their ignorance just as their rulers' didn't know what they were doing to commit such a horrendous act of killing the Prince of Life.

3:18 But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Even in their ignorance, Peter still tells them that it was in this way that God fulfilled all that He had long ago foretold as to the sufferings of His Christ, by the lips of all the prophets. These prophecies are found in Psalm 22 and Isaiah:6 and 53:5. Peter was explaining the kind of messiah God sent to earth. The Jews expected a great governor, not a suffering servant.

3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. A person just cannot continue and continue doing the same old things and expect forgiveness. So, Peter now makes reference that they will have to repent, so that they can be converted, to have their sins blotted out. And thereby, the Lord will send "*seasons of refreshing*" from His presence. When we repent, God promises not only to wipe away our sin, but to bring spiritual refreshment.

3:20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:— Peter had shown them where they had gone wrong, and after repenting to be converted, their sins may be blotted out. Then, this Jesus who was before preached by the prophets; the Messiah whom they killed will return. This will be His Second Coming.

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3:21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. There is an appointed time in which Jesus will return. But first heaven must be His home until the times of restoration or fulfillment of all things; until all things are put right of which God has spoken from earliest ages through the lips of His holy prophets—since the world began. This is the same Jesus they preached about! This means the former state in the program of God has to be restored, however, all events involved in the restoration will not take place at the same time. Scripture teaches that several major events of the restoration that will happen at different times.

1. There will be the return of the Lord Himself to catch up and resurrect the believer (1 Thess. 4:16-18).
2. There will be the salvation of Israel (Rom. 11:25-26).
3. There will be the millennial reign of Christ upon earth (Rev. 20:4-6).
4. There will be the deliverance of the whole creation from suffering and corruption, including both nature itself and those among mankind who believe (Rom. 8:21-23).
5. There will be the explosive destruction and melting of heaven and earth by fire and the making of the new heavens and earth by God (2 Pt. 3:10-13).
6. There will be the glorious moment when Christ will deliver up the kingdom to God the Father ...that God may be all and all (1 Cor. 15:24).

SUMMARY:

Peter and John went up together to go into the temple at the ninth hour of prayer. There is a man lame from birth begging for alms at the gate called Beautiful. He sees Peter and John approaching and asks for alms. Peter along with John also sees the lame man and tells him to "look on us." And the lame man is expected to receive something from them. Peter and John didn't have money (silver nor gold) to give, but such as they had was a powerful Word and the Name of the One who has all authority and power backing them.⁸In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Peter commands the lame man to rise up and walk. Taking the lame man by the right hand and lifting him up, the man is healed instantly and completely. Walking, leaping, and praising God, he accompanies Peter and John into the temple to the wonder and amazement of the crowd. The crowd recognized that it was the man who used to be lame, who used to sit at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and they began to be filled with amazement of what had happened to him (**3:1-10**).

⁹The people see the lame man walking and praising God. They know him as the one who begged alms at the Beautiful Gate. They are filled with wonder and amazement at what happened. As the lame man holds on to Peter and John, the people run to them in Solomon's Porch. Peter questions why the crowd marveled; why look at Peter and John so intently? As though by their own power or godliness they made the man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of their fathers had glorified Jesus whom they delivered up, denied, and killed the Prince of Life, for a murderer to be granted for release. But God raised Jesus from the dead where Peter said they were witnesses. It was through faith in His name that made the man strong (**3:11-16**).

Peter knows they and their rulers crucified Christ in their ignorance. Those things God foretold by the mouth of His prophets, how Christ would suffer, He has fulfilled. Peter commands them to repent and be converted that their sins may be blotted out, and that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord. God will send Jesus Christ who was preached to them before, but first heaven must receive Him until the times of restoration of all things which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began (**3:17-21**). [TOP](#)

⁸ http://executableoutlines.com/acts/acts_0and3.htm

⁹ http://executableoutlines.com/acts/acts_03.htm

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

4:1 And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,— Right before all this, Chapter 3, brings to light of what Peter and John are doing.

Peter and John are about to go into the Temple at the hour of prater (the 9th hour). A certain man who had been lame since birth was carried and laid daily at the temple gate called Beautiful to beg for alms (money; contributions). The man asks Peter and John as they passed by for alms, but the reply of Peter and John was: *"Silver or gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. They took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately, and his feet and ankle bones received strength. And the man leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God" (3:1, 7-8).* He was healed, but Peter made it very clear that it was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of their fathers who glorified His Son Jesus. *"By faith in the name of **Jesus** has strengthened this man whom you see and know and the faith which comes through him (Jesus) had given him (the man) this perfect health in the presence of you all"* (3:12-13a, 16).

Peter goes on to tell them, you know Him (Jesus), for He's the One who you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had determined to let Him go (3:13b). Peter really laid it on them by telling them that they are the ones who denied and disowned the Holy One, the Just One, and desired a murderer, killing the Prince of Life whom God had raised from the dead in which they are witnesses. Again, **His** name has made the lame man strong (3:14-16). Peter tells them to repent and be converted so that their sins would be blotted out (3:19). The excitement and noise were bound to attract the attention and bring the temple authorities to the scene.

And now the verse of the lesson: *And as Peter and John were speaking to the people of Jerusalem in the temple, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came near them.*

4:2 Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead. The priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees were grieved that Peter and John taught the people, and especially preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead (that in Jesus the dead rise). This was a doctrine in which the Sadducees violently denied and opposed (Mark 12:18, 24-27). They also didn't believe in angel nor spirit (Acts 23:8). The officials were threatened by the preaching of Jesus being raised from the dead.

4:3 And they laid hands on them, and put them in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide. The priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees being so grieved at Peter and John that they laid hands on them, arrested them, and put them into prison until the next day: for it was already evening; late in the afternoon, and too late for a trial.

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4:4 Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand. But many of the people that heard the Word Peter spoke believed. It reached to the amount of a high number of about five thousand men.

4:5 And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,— The next day the rulers, the elders, and scribes, part of the Sanhedrin, the ruling body of the Jews came.

4:6 And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. Annas, the high priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, many of relatives of the high priest, gathered together at Jerusalem—known as the Council or the Jewish Sanhedrin—a legislative body of 71 members headed by the high priest. They could condemn to death, but could not execute, for this was done by the Romans alone.

4:7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?— The interrogation began as they set Peter and John in the midst of them asking point blank, straight to the point: *"By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?"* Two things:

1. They knew Peter was preaching the resurrection through Jesus Christ. They had to stop it or risk losing the loyalty of the people and their position and livelihood, so they were seeking an opportunity to accuse and stop Peter and John.
2. They didn't think the power could be of God because if God was to choose anyone it would be revealed to them, the traditional religious leaders. They felt the name and power to heal the crippled man must be diabolical (demonic).

4:8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,— Peter and John were both filled with the Holy Ghost, but Peter's bold faith just couldn't be quiet, guided by the Holy Spirit, he addresses the *"... rulers of the people, and elders of Israel..."*

4:9 If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;— Saying *"if we are examined today for doing a good deed for a lame man, as to how this man was healed."* If you're examining us for doing something good for a crippled man and how was he healed...

4:10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. Peter reiterates again the same thing he's said in chapter 3. *Let it be known unto all, and to all the people of Israel.* Peter credits that *"It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified; whom God raised from the dead."* *It is even by His authority that this man stands here before you healed.* Peter was declaring that men must know that it was the power of the resurrected and ascended true Messiah, the Savior whom God promised to send into the world, and there must be no doubt. It was this Jesus alone who made the man whole in both body and soul—healed. If you get nothing else, seven bold proclamations came forth out of this:

1. It was done not in our power, but by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth!
2. You crucified Him!

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3. God raised Him from the dead!
4. Here's the proof standing before you whole by Jesus' power!

4:11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

5. He's the stone you despised and rejected!
6. He has become the head of the corner—the Chief Cornerstone!

Peter describes who Jesus is. *Jesus is the stone, the "Head" stone that the builders despised and rejected.* The "builders" were the religious rulers. They had counted Jesus as "nought" (no good, unacceptable, of no account, of no worth). The rulers were about finding their own chief stone, building their lives as they wished. However, *Jesus has become the Chief Cornerstone*. When building a physical building, the chief stone (first stone; capstone) is laid as the foundational stone. Then the other stones are laid next to and upon the chief stone. In the spiritual building, Jesus is the "Chief Cornerstone" laid as our foundational stone that we build upon and shapes us. He's our "Living Stone" (1 Peter 2:4) and we also are living stones being built up as a spiritual house 1 Peter 2:5). The "Chief Cornerstone" unites the church.

4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

7. Salvation is only found in Jesus Christ, none other name under heaven!

Jesus Christ alone saves. Salvation comes only through Jesus Christ, therefore no man can be saved (1) by any other head or lord, *neither* (2) *is there salvation* by any other name under heaven *given among men, whereby we must be saved.* "That's why God sent His only begotten Son.

4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. The "Sanhedrin" could see that Peter and John's boldness and power was not due to education and learning. Their boldness stood out, but it was obvious that...

- They were "uneducated", meaning of what the religious leaders thought.
- They were "unlearned", meaning they had no kind of technical education.
- And they were "ignorant men", meaning that they were laymen with no special professional qualifications.

The religious leaders were in wonder and amazement. They recognized and perceived that it was due to them having been with Jesus. Peter and John had stayed close to Jesus, and showed first-hand the boldness and power of their master.

4:14 And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. The enemies of Christ could not deny the tremendous miracle, for the man that had been healed was clearly standing right there beside them.

4:15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,— So Peter and John were sent out from the Council's chamber so they could discuss the matter among themselves and reach a verdict.

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4:16 Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. They were asking each other as to what should be done with Peter and John.

- They acknowledged that a notable miracle hath been done. The Council could hardly discredit the healing.
- All the people knew the man had been transformed.
- The man made whole stood before them. Everyone in Jerusalem knew about it.

4:17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak hence-forth to no man in this name. The rulers knew they must stop the new movement, suppress it from spreading any further among the people. So, they thought if they threaten them, saying '*don't keep spreading this and don't speak this name to anyone again.*' People were beginning to believe of the Resurrection (4:4).

4:18 And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. Peter and John were called back in, commanding them never again to speak nor teach in the name of Jesus. The court's orders had to be obeyed, or else Peter and John would face severe consequences.

4:19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. But Peter and John refused to compromise their message and boldly replied, "*You're all judges, then you judge, is it right in the sight of God to listen to you more than God?*" Two things:

1. God is to be obeyed before men.

4:20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. Peter says "*We cannot but speak the things which we ae seen and heard.*" We are sometimes afraid to share our faith in God because people might feel uncomfortable, disapprove, or reject us. But Peter and John's zeal for the Lord was so strong, that they could not keep quiet, even when threatened.

2. A man must testify to what he has seen and heard.

4:21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all men glorified God for that which was done. The Council further threatened Peter and John, and finally let them go because they didn't know how to punish them without starting a riot, for everyone was praising God for this wonderful miracle which was done.

4:22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom the miracle of healing was shewed. The healing of a man who had been lame was more than forty years.

4:23 And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. After being threatened by the Sanhedrin and finally

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released, Peter and John returned to where the other disciples were gathered, and reported to them all that the chief priests and elders had said to them.

4:24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:— When they had heard the story, with one accord they lifted up their voices unto God. We can learn from the manner in which the believers praised God. First, they called God the Lord of everything, saying *"O Lord, Creator of heaven and earth and of the sea and everything in them."* ¹⁰They were reminding themselves that He made everything.

4:25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?— They said words are from a psalm that David wrote (Psalm 2:1-2). *"By the Holy Spirit You spoke through the mouth of your servant and our father, David..."* These believers were Jews, so, they called David their *"father"* because he was a famous king in Israel. *Why did the Gentiles rage, and the people busy them-selves with empty things; plan their little plots against Almighty God?"* The *"Gentiles"* in the psalm were the Romans.

4:26 The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. They continued, *"The kings of the earth unite to fight against him and against the anointed Son of God!"* David wrote this psalm about 1000 years before Jesus' birth. His prophecy there about the Messiah had now happened. And some people in the psalm wanted to stop Jesus. By quoting this passage, the Christians were affirming their agreement with God that the people of the world have always hated the Lord.

4:27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,— They continued praying to God, *"That is what is happening here in this city today! Herod the king, and Pontius Pilate the governor, and all the Romans—as well as the people of Israel—are united against Jesus, your anointed Son."*

4:28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. They continued, proclaiming that these things were predestined by God, yet human beings who did them were morally lawless and responsible for their evil deeds, yet, they still needed to repent. They did what was already determined by God's hand and purpose. This prayer reflects both a deep acknowledgment of human responsibility and a deep trust in God's wisdom in His sovereign direction of the detailed events of history. *"To carry out what your hand and Will had destined should happen."* No matter the plots that come against us, they will be unsuccessful because God has a perfect plan destined for us.

4:29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all

¹⁰<http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/acts-lbw.htm>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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boldness they may speak thy word,— Notice how the believers prayed: First they praised God (vv.24), quoted His Word back to Him (v.25b-26), then they told God their specific problem, and asked for help (vv.27-29). The Sanhedrin were threatening them, and they needed God to grant them the boldness to continue to speak His Word. They did not ask God to remove the problem, nor pray against those who persecuted them, but prayed for help to deal with it. Boldness required courage to press through the tears and do what we know is right. Like the disciples, we need to pray with others for that courage and pray for the power of the Holy Spirit to give us that courage. Then when the opportunity comes to speak a Word, trust God!

4:30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. The word translated "*heal*" is used elsewhere twice by Luke and by no one else in the New Testament. This offers good evidence for the authorship of Luke. The disciples' prayer comes with a petition "*that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child.*" They wanted more miracles as they continue to proclaim the gospel. They knew that when God stretched forth His hand upon any situation, signs and wonders would come to glorify Him!

4:31 And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. Well, what do you know? They finished praying and God answered their prayer. The place they were assembled in was shaken as if it were an earthquake, and the Spirit filled them. With increased filling came increased boldness to speak the Word of God. The Holy Spirit's power did not come on them automatically, but it was in answer to their expectant believing prayer.

4:32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither did any of them that ought of things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. There were thousands of believers with one heart and one soul walking in unity that brought about by the power of the Holy Spirit. They held nothing back from one another which meant they ALL had all things in common; no one was in want or was hungry, because if one had it, they gave to another. This was not because someone prodded them to do so, or gave them an ultimatum. Christ's physical body was not there, but they did as He had taught them.

4:33 And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. The filling of the Holy Spirit gave the apostles great power and great favor to be witnesses to others of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, for many of the Jews did not believe in life after death. The apostles had favor. Favor was twofold: 1) favor from the people outside the church because of the believers' unity and love. The common people were impressed. They were glad to do it. 2) And favor with God from whom all blessings flow. One question comes to my mind: "Are you really filled with the Holy Spirit?" because most of us are not cooperating with the Spirit.

4:34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,— The <http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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early church took care of all those who had a need. **Four revealing facts** show how obedient the early believers were. Can we be that obedient today? To give away what we really need? What a change in us and in the world there would be!

1. **Fact 1: no one lacked;** no one went without. The idea is that no family, no man, no woman, no child was neglected. No one was left without the necessities of life; no one had to face a day without food, clothing, or shelter that he needed to take care of himself or his family.
2. **Fact 2: all repented** of their hoarding and they gave everything beyond their own necessities. Some possessed lands they did not need, and sold them and gave the money to meet the needs of others. They had to have had land, meaning estates they did not use; extra possessions. Some possessed houses that were not essential to their necessities, so they sold them, and gave the money to meet the needs of others. Who they sold them to, I do not know.

4:35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.

3. **Fact 3: the needy received only what they needed;** only what their necessity was. Everyone who gave up jobs to work for God, at least had their necessities met. The money was laid at the apostles' feet and distributed by them as needed. This simple plan ensured that there would be no poverty in the church. There were three groups in these two verses. There were the rich, defined as anyone who owned anything. There were the apostles, the designated spiritual leaders. And there were the needy, defined as those too poor to own houses or land.

4:36 And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus,—

4. **Fact 4: one man in particular set a godly example—Barnabas.** This is the first mention of Barnabas, the Levite, having no inheritance, but undoubtedly acquired land as individuals from the Island of Cyprus. He was *"Joses who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas."* His name means *"Son of exhortation"; "Son of Consolation" and "Son of Encouragement."*

4:37 Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet. Barnabas was one who had sold a field he owned, and brought the money, and willingly put it at the apostles' feet to be distributed to every man according as was needed. This is truly a lesson of generosity among the people.

SUMMARY

Peter and John spoke to the people of Jerusalem, while the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came near, for they were grieved that they taught the people, and especially preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead (that in Jesus the dead rise). This was a doctrine in which the Sadducees violently opposed (4:1-2). They looked on as they laid hands on the people, so, they arrested them until the next day: for it was already evening. But many of the people that heard the Word believed; now reaching to a high number of about five thousand (4:3-4). The next day the rulers, the elders, scribes, Annas, the high priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, many of relatives of the high priest, gathered together at Jerusalem—known as the Council or the Jewish Sanhedrin—a legislative body of 71 members headed by the high priest.

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They could condemn to death, but could not execute. This was done by the Romans alone. They had brought Peter and John before them asking, *"By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?"* (4:5-7). Peter, being filled with and guided by the Holy Spirit, said to them, *"Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, if we are examined today for doing a good deed for a lame man, as to how this man was healed. Let it be known unto all, and to all the people of Israel. It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified; whom God raised from the dead. It is even by His authority that this man stands here before you healed (4:8-9). He is the stone despised and rejected by you builders. But He has become the Cornerstone. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"* (4:10-12). **(4:1-12)**.

When the "Sanhedrin" saw the boldness of Peter and John, they could see that they were obviously uneducated; unlearned and ignorant men. The word translated *"unlearned"* means that they had no kind of technical education. The word translated *"ignorant"* means that they were laymen with no special professional qualifications. They were amazed and realized what being with Jesus had done for them! They couldn't deny the tremendous miracle for the man had been healed and standing right there beside them. So they sent them out of the Council chamber and discussed among themselves (4:13-15). They were asking each other as to what should be done with Peter and John. And the Council could hardly discredit the healing, for everyone in Jerusalem knew about it, but perhaps they could stop the doctrine of the Resurrection from spreading. From 120 praying people in Acts 1, the church had already increased to over 5,000. They didn't want it spreading any further. So they thought if they threaten them: don't keep spreading this and don't speak this name to anyone again. They called them back in, commanding them never again to speak nor teach in the name of Jesus (4:16-18). But Peter and John boldly replied, *"Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than God, then you judge, for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."* We are sometimes afraid to share our faith in God because people might feel uncomfortable, disapprove, or reject us. But Peter and John's zeal for the Lord was so strong that they could not keep quiet, even when threatened. So the Council then threatened them further and finally let them go because they didn't know how to punish them without starting a riot, for everyone was praising God for this wonderful miracle which was done—the healing of a man who had been lame for forty years (4:19-22). **(4:13-22)**.

Peter and John spoke to the crowd gathered around Solomon's colonnade in which the priest, the captain of the Temple came near, and the Sadducees seized them. After finally being released by the Sanhedrin, Peter and John returned to the other disciples reporting to them all that had occurred. When they heard their story, they lifted up their voices to God united with one accord; praising and praying (4:23-28). They desired three things from God: 1) to grant them the boldness to continue to preach His Word; 2) for Him to stretch forth His hand to heal; 3) and, that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. By the time they finished praying, God had answered their prayer. The place they were meeting in, began to shake. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and boldly preached God's message. They went through a trial; had a prayer meeting, and came out in victory (4:29-31). **(4:23-31)**.

There were thousands of believers with one heart and one soul walking in unity brought about by the Holy Spirit. They held nothing back from one another which meant that they had all things in common; no one was in want or was hungry, because if one had it, they gave to another. This was not because someone prodded them to do so, or gave them an ultimatum. Christ's physical body

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was not there, but they did as He had taught them. The filling of the Holy Spirit gave the apostles great power and great favor to be witnesses to others of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, for many of the Jews did not believe in life after death. The apostles had favor. Favor was twofold: 1) favor from the people outside the church because of the believers' unity and love. The common people were impressed. They were glad to do it. 2) And favor with God from whom all blessings flow. One question comes to my mind: "*Are you really filled with the Holy Spirit?*" because most of us are not cooperating with the Spirit (**4:32-33**).

There were two lessons being illustrated here: the generosity of Barnabas and the deception of Ananias and Sapphir. None of the believers lacked what they needed because they were of one heart and one mind. All who possessed houses or lands were willing to sell them for the needs of others. They began to lay all the proceeds at the apostles' feet. Distribution to others was given as each had need. The example of Joses, called Barnabas, Son of Encouragement, by the apostles. He was a Levite of the country of Cyprus. He sold land, and laid the money at the apostles' feet (**4:34-37**).

[TOP](#)

5:1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,— Here we have another example of people who gave of their possessions. Ananias along with his wife Sapphira were "*professing members*" of the early church. They professed Christ. They had some property which they did not personally need for their own necessities. Therefore, they sold their property in order to help those who were desperately needing food, shelter, clothing, and the gospel.

5:2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But their profession was just that, profession only, a false profession. They tried to fake their commitment. They tried to deceive the church. Ananias and Sapphira had apparently not learned the lesson that there is no such thing as secret sin. Their sin was— "*holding back*." Holding back or keeping back was fivefold.

1. Keeping back is partial commitment. Ananias with Sapphira kept back part of the money that so many desperately needed. They refused to give everything beyond their own necessities. They hoarded and chose to hang on to part of the world.
2. Keeping back is deception. It's deceiving the church. Ananias and Sapphira wanted the church to think they were fellow believers. They wanted the privilege and the honor; the acceptance and the fellowship of believers without paying the price of commitment and loyalty to Christ and His church. They wanted to be included and become part of the church fellowship, but they did not want it enough to totally commit themselves to Christ and His mission. So they tried to deceive the church. They became pretenders (hypocrites, liars).

5:3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?— When Peter confronted Ananias with whether or not Satan had filled his heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, he could only know this by the Spirit of God.

3. Keeping back is allowing Satan to fill the heart instead of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not the Person who stirs sin; He is not the Person who arouses a person to hoard and keep back. The Holy Spirit stirs love—love that cares and ministers. Satan's strategy is to get us to believe his lie that we can keep back and hoard and still be acceptable to God.
4. Keeping back is lying to the Holy Spirit. Ananias had let Satan tell him what to do. He had promised to give all the money to God. Because he did not do this, he had lied to the Holy Spirit.

5:4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. What belonged to Ananias was indeed his to give. Therefore, after selling the land, he could do what he wanted with the money. Since he chose to give it to the church in the same manner that Barnabas had given, he should not have attempted to lie to God and his servants by claiming that he had given his all.

5. Keeping back is acting against and lying to God Himself. A person who keeps back is saying that he does not have to be honest with God; that he can lie to God. A person mocks God by keeping back. A person cuts the heart of God when keeping back. A person distrusts God when keeping back.

No one could know these sins had filled Ananias' heart, not by what he did, not without God revealing it to

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Peter that the sin had filled and completely possessed Ananias. It seemed like, Ananias was lying unto men, but he was really lying to God. It is said that his heart was completely occupied and possessed by Satan.

5:5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. As Peter confronted Ananias with these words, Ananias immediately fell down; not to pray or to worship; but he fell down and was struck dead for his sin against God. The people learned that death can be the consequence of sin. "*Great fear*" was the response that came upon the people to this manifestation of God's presence. This great fear involved both a reverent awe and a healthy fear of God's displeasure of sin and discipline of that sin.

5:6 And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. The young men prepared him for burial. The Jews did not embalm, but customarily buried the dead the same day, especially someone who died by divine judgment.

5:7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. Unaware of what had just occurred to her husband 3 hours earlier, Sapphira came before Peter and the other disciples.

5:8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. A similar question was asked Sapphira concerning the selling of their land they possessed.

5:9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. The question from Peter is: How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Ananias as head of the household was responsible for his wife. He led his wife to follow right along with him; he caused her to lie. She came right alone and agreed with her husband. He had an opportunity to lead his wife in righteousness. Because she had conspired with her husband to test the Spirit of God, and attempted to increase her image in the eyes of the other believers, Peter knew that together they tempted (trying to escape detection of) the Spirit of the Lord. Therefore, he predicted her doom—"the same feet of those who carried out her husband, would also carry out her."

5:10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband. Peter informed Sapphira of her impending death before it happened. As predicted, she also fell down and died at the apostle's feet; so did her husband. The young men came in, found her dead, and carried her out and buried her by her husband.

SUMMARY:

A husband and wife by the name of Ananias and Sapphira sold their possession (land) to help those in need. They tried to mislead the apostles, and test the Holy Spirit, acting as if they were giving the entire proceeds to them. Peter confronted them one at a time, finding them guilty of lying against the Holy Spirit. They both fell dead, bringing great fear upon all (**5:1-10**).

SYNOPSIS:

5:11-26 "*Keeping back*" caused great fear over the church and over many that heard about Ananias and

Sapphira. So, they realized that they couldn't keep back from the Holy Spirit. Everyone recognized the great cost and seriousness of following Christ. Following the Lord meant denying self completely, surrendering to Christ all one is and one has. It meant walking the straight and narrow path, living righteously and godly in this present world and looking for the glorious return of the great God and Savior Jesus Christ (**5:11**). After that, the apostles met at Solomon's porch on one accord; the place where the Sanhedrin arrested Peter and John. Many signs and wonders came from the hands of these apostles. Some people didn't want to mix with the believers, but the believers possessed great unity as they held public worship on the porch, reaching out and evangelizing; attracting huge crowds where multitudes of both men and women were added (**5:12-14**). The sick were carried out into the streets and placed on beds and mats believing that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow; fall on some and heal them; and even those troubled by unclean spirits were healed. They were healed both physically and spiritually (**5:15-16**).

The unity among believers caused persecution. The high priest and all those with him (the sect of the Sadducees) opposed them and began to be filled with anger and resentment to where they had the apostles arrested and placed in prison. But, God sent an angel! During the night the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and led them out. The message to them was to "*go stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life*" (Eternal Life to dying men). Four major words we are to remember:

- Go — go immediately.
- Stand — take your stand; stand forth without reservation or hesitation.
- Speak — proclaim, preach, teach courageously, boldly, and without fear.
- All the Words of this life — the whole gospel of salvation; the glorious message of the death and resurrection of Christ; not watering down or changing anything.

Note a significant fact: difficult assignments usually follow miracles (**5:17-20**). After hearing the assignment, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and began to teach. Meanwhile, the high priest and all those with him and others sent men to the prison to have them brought forth, but upon returning, their report didn't sit well with the priests. The prison was found locked and secured; guards standing at the doors, but the apostles weren't found in the prison (**5:21-23**). Now when the high priest and others heard this report, they were perplexed and wondered what to do and what would happen next. They assumed that if this story of the miraculous release of the apostles would get out, it would be yet another story that would grow, causing even greater popularity for the followers of the Lord Jesus. The apostles were not hiding. They were in the Temple again! They were teaching the people. Thus the officers were commanded to bring Peter and the others from the Temple; re-arrest them, but without violence for fear of the people's reaction, lest they would be stoned (**5:24-26**).

5:27 And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,— They brought them and made them stand in front of the Sanhedrin Council as the high priest asked questions.

5:28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. The high priest

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reminded them that they had been strictly warned before about preaching in this name. They didn't even want to say the name of Jesus. Now, they're saying look what you've done: filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, intending to bring this man's (Jesus) blood upon us, the Sanhedrin. Three charges were brought against the disciples:

1. They had broken this specific law: the name and resurrection of Jesus Christ was not to be preached (Acts 4:18). As believers, we are sometimes forbidden to speak the Lord's name in governments, businesses, to fellow workers, in schools, in institutions, and to neighbors.
2. They were thought to have taught a false doctrine that misled and stirred up people.
3. They were thought to have falsely accused the government of injustice and murder (killed Jesus).

5:29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. But Peter and the other apostles replied "*We must obey God rather than men.*" The apostles knew their priorities. They knew that there would be situations where you cannot obey both God and man; therefore, it would be necessary to obey God and trust His Word.

5:30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Peter continued to speak the message that they had killed the God of their ancestors; killed Jesus and hanged Him on the tree.

5:31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. As Peter spoke about Jesus, he let them know that it was God's power that has raised Jesus, whom the Jewish leaders murdered. God exalted the man Jesus, whom they had rejected, to be seated at His right hand (a place of all authority) to be Prince (Ruler) and Savior (Deliverer), to save God's chosen people, so that the people of Israel would have the opportunity to repent and have their sins forgiven. Note, in this verse, God had three purposes for raising Christ.

1. To make Him a Prince and a Savior.
2. To give repentance.
3. To give forgiveness of sins.

5:32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. And the reason they speak these things is because they are God's witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given. If a person believes, he obeys. And the disciples obeyed, for they had just been witnessing to the Will of God to the world.

- The Holy Spirit witnesses to Christ by giving supernatural power to the disciples to live righteously and proclaim Christ.
- The Holy Spirit witnesses to Christ by convicting of sin and righteousness and judgment.
- The Holy Spirit witnesses to Christ by working signs, wonders, and miracles through the believer.

5:33 When they heard that, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them. The Council's immediate reaction was that they were furious. They were cut to the heart not with conviction, but with anger, wrath, and rage. They plotted and set their minds to kill the apostles.

5:34 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;— Gamaliel was

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one of the most outstanding teachers in Jewish history . His name means "*the reward of God.*"

- He was one in the Jewish Council, a Pharisee.
- He was a doctor of the law.
- He was so respected and loved and given the title "*Rabban*" (Master).
- He was a thinking man, extremely wise with a firm belief in God and His providence. He saw something the unthinking men of the world were missing. His thinking...
 - God's Will and plan can be seen in world events and revolution.
 - What is not of God will come to nothing. They will be frustrated and exposed by God Himself. God will not let any idea or work or movement stand forever that is not of Him, eventually it will dissolve.
 - What is of God cannot be overthrown. The world may try; and it may achieve what appears to be a temporary success; but God....
- And he was the famed teacher of Saul of Tarsus, later to become Paul, the apostle.

So, Gamaliel commanded that the apostles be sent outside the Council chamber for a little while, while he talked.

5:35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. So, Gamaliel's advice to the Council and others was to take heed to what they were planning or thinking of any harm to do.

5:36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. As Gamaliel speaks, he brings up two men. Little is known about Theudas. He was evidently a revolutionist, boasting of himself. The point is some time ago he led an uprising against the Romans; about 400 men joined him, and it came to a futile end. He was killed and all that obeyed him were scattered. It was not in God's plan for him to succeed, so his efforts came to nothing.

5:37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. Here is another example of one not following God's plan. Judas of Galilee rose up and many obeyed him, at a time of taxation; not in the Will of God, and he also died and those who obeyed him were scattered. He incited a nationalist revolt with a larger following against paying tribute to Caesar when God alone was Israel's true King.

5:38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:—Leave those who believe in Jesus alone. Let them go about doing the good they are doing. Reap the benefits of their ministry.

- If they are not of God, they will soon disappear from the scene.

5:39 But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

- If they are of God all the forces of the world cannot overthrow them.

Note this about the Will of God: a man who opposes Jesus and His servant are fighting against God Himself. Gamaliel's advice to the Council in these five verses gave the apostles some breathing room to continue their work.

5:40 And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. The Council hated the

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movement, but the reasoning of Gamaliel and his *"wait and see"* policy had to be adopted; they agreed. But, this time upon releasing the apostles and forbidding them not to preach in the name of Jesus, the Council went one step further; they had them beaten before letting them go.

5:41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. Well, well, upon departure, the apostles went away rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. Increased persecution simply evoked increased dedication.

- God stirred within the persecuted heart a sense of joy and rejoicing.
- God stirred within the persecuted heart a sense of courage and mission.

5:42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. They continued daily in the temple and in every house teaching and preaching. Despite the opposition, they were compelled to share the glorious news of the gospel; their primary reason was teaching to build up believers.

SUMMARY:

Peter and the apostles were questioned by the high priest. They were strictly forbidden to teach in that name, but there they were again in front of the temple teaching. The high priests accused them of filling Jerusalem with their doctrine and bringing blame of that man's blood (Jesus) upon them (the high priests). They didn't even want to say Jesus' name, but Peter and the apostles replied, that they rather obey God than men. The opposing voices stood out: The high priests opposed Peter and Peter and the apostles opposed the high priests and the Sanhedrin Council (**5:27-29**).

The Council's immediate reaction cut them to the heart that they set their minds to killed the apostles. But a voice of reason by the name of Gamaliel who was a Pharisee of the Sanhedrin; one who had a good reputation commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while as they took heed to what they were about to do. He began to remind them of two revolutionist, Theudas and Judas the Galilean, who rose up on two separate occasions, persuading many followers, but, after a while, it came to nought. They were killed and their followers were scattered. The point is that, if they are not of God, they will soon disappear from the scene. And, if they are of God, all the forces of the world cannot overthrow them, and you can be found fighting against God Himself. It's one thing to listen to the voice of reasoning, but you also have to follow it (**5:33-39**).

The Council agreed on the *"wait and see"* policy, but they still had the apostles beaten, charging them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and then released them. After being beaten, can you imagine the apostles went from the Council's presence rejoicing? Rejoicing because they were counted worthy to suffer shame; rejoicing because it was a real honor to be dishonored on behalf of the Name of the man the Sanhedrin dishonored; rejoicing in the Temple and from house to house while they held on to their faith teaching even more; announcing the gospel of Jesus as the Christ! (**5:40-42**).

[TOP](#)

6:1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. As the church grew with many disciples multiplying, an internal problem developed with the Grecians against the Hebrews in this early church because their widows were being neglected in the daily administration of food or relief. Two basic groups or cliques were seen in the church, and one was complaining and grumbling about the actions of the other.

1. There were the Hebrews, Jews born and reared in Palestine and spoke Aramaic. They rejected, despised, and hated all Gentile and Greek culture completely, and used only the Hebrew Bible in its original Hebrew language.
2. There were the "*Grecian Jews*" were the *Greek-speaking* Jews who had come to Palestine from other nations and may not have spoken Aramaic. They were also known as the "*Hellenists*", Jews who were scattered, deported, and dispersed all over the world by the Romans. Many of them would return for the great Feasts of Pentecost and the Passover. Apparently some had been converted on the day of Pentecost or thereafter, and had either delayed their return home or decided to move back to Jerusalem; they had responded to the gospel.

The Hebrew Jews, having always been taught to reject and despise Grecians, and were probably having difficulty getting rid of all their prejudice. The resulting language barrier led to the reject of some needy widows. Perhaps they felt that the Hellenists or Grecian Jews were not due as much attention or as many rights as they were. Cliques and groups are dangerous. There are sins common to cliques that must be guarded against, the sins of...

- being exclusive and shutting others out.
- believing one has more rights than others.
- feeling superior and above others.
- thinking one is due more attention than others.

The leaders of the church did not have enough help to look after every member, and so, there was a division in the church— grumbling, complaining, and gripping against the Hebrews because their widows were being unfairly treated; they were neglected in the daily distribution of food. Why? -The lack of enough leaders to meet all the needs and the apostles need to share the gospel was not met.

6:2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. It appears that up to this time the apostles took care of the business affairs of the church, which included the ministry of the Word of God and the care of the needy (4:37). Attending to the physical needs of the new church (e.g. waiting on tables) absorbed too much of the apostles' time. The twelve leaders (apostles) called the Greek speaking community together to explain the situation. They didn't deny that there was a problem. The church was called together and was involved in the matter. The leaders wisely sought everyone's thoughts, advice, cooperation, and counsel as they declared to them that it's not reasonable that they should neglect the teaching of God's Word and attend tables. Their primary call and mission was to concentrate on the Word of God, its study and proclamation. The meaning of to "*serve tables*" meant sitting and listening or serving and meeting the needs of the needy. If the church had been smaller, the apostles could have met these needs themselves. But when the church became larger, there were just too many people. Trying to do too much will also cause a problem.

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6:3 Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. The twelve leaders (apostles) determined that they were the problem because they took examination of the ministry. The solution of the matter meant they had to delegate responsibility to others. They told the brethren to look out among themselves and find seven men with these required qualification: 7 men of honest report, and full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom (meaning controlled by), that they could appoint over this business of the widows. The men would also be called "deacons" and minister, take time to share and look after the needy (widows) of the church. Having wisdom and understanding what to do with it can cut down many problems. We all can't be the main event!

6:4 But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. The great ministries of the church are twofold: prayer and the ministry of the Word.

- It is in prayer that the believer reaches up and talks to God.
- It is in the Word of God that God speaks to the minister, to the flock, and to the world. The minister must spend hours and days seeking God, finding out what God wants to say to him, the church, and the world.

Now, the twelve leaders (apostles) could give themselves continually to prayer and in the ministry of the Word! "*Continually*" means steadfastly; to persevere; to continue on and on, stick to it. And the seven deacons have their job to do in the affairs of the church; none overlapping the other.

6:5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:— This saying or this proposal was unanimously agreed upon by the whole body. This meant that apostles and Grecian believers (thousands of them) responded in love and humility. What an example! The body had reunited as one in spirit and purpose, worship, and ministry. They selected Stephen, a man we would come to know; a man controlled by a firm faith and controlled by the Holy Ghost, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch (a former convert to Judaism and then to Christ). The fact that they were all Grecian believing Jews points toward God moving the church out into the whole world. These seven men could touch the Gentile world. These seven men chosen were unknown except for Stephen and Philip. The point is that they were men who had the qualities given in verse three. God was preparing the church without their knowing it for the day when they were to be scattered all over the world.

6:6 Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. This was a definite ordination service; a specific moment when the newly excited seven men were set apart for their ministry.

1. The church set them before the apostles and "set" the men apart for God's use.
2. The church went in prayer; the ministers (apostles) led all in prayer.
3. The ministers (apostles) laid their hands upon the newly appointed men.

The laying on of hands symbolized blessings and the imparting of the Holy Spirit's power upon them.

6:7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. The favorable result of these men's appointment brought increase. to take care of the needy widows, three things occurred:

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1. The Word of God increased as never before, for the apostles were freed to concentrate on prayer and the Word. There was a new power in their witnessing and teaching.
2. The number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem; church growth.
3. A great number of priests were being reached for Christ and were obedient to the faith; that is, to receiving and following Christ. They embraced the gospel and lived the gospel!

6:8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Stephen was one of the chosen from the Grecian community. His name means "*crown*." Three things stand out in this verse.

1. He was full of faith (*grace*); FULL ASSURANCE IN THE HEART=FAITH.
 - a. Of God's love, favor, gifts, and blessings.
 - b. His godly, gracious character and behavior.
2. He was full of power (*dunameos*); PUSHING OUT WILLFUL ENEMIES' RE-OCCURRENCE=POWER
 - a. The Holy Spirit is the Divine...
 - i. Presence iv. Might
 - ii. Power v. Strength
 - iii. Force vi. Energy
 - b. He lives and acts through the believer. The Holy Spirit is the One Who...
 - i. influences ii. controls iii. produces iv. effects
3. He did great wonders and miracles. Both grace and power (the Holy Spirit) are necessary before a person can serve God effectively.
 - c. ...the work of God both within and through the believer. It is not man, but the Holy Spirit alone who has the power to save and mature, and work miracles among men.

Stephen's faith was not in himself but in the grace and power of God that filled him.

6:9 Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. Stephen was a man who defended the faith. All of the synagogues listed are Grecian names. Note the word "*arose*" (*anestesan*) which means "*stood up*." Five synagogues in particular stood up against Stephen. They opposed what he was preaching because they and their forefathers had been forcibly deported out of their homeland and scattered across the world by the Romans. Christ was a threat to them and their religion. They were concerned about what Stephen was preaching:

- Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, sacrificed for the sins of the world. Animal sacrifices were no longer needed.
- Jesus Christ is the Mediator between God and man, and man was now to worship God in spirit and in truth through Christ and Him alone. Earthly priests, therefore, were no longer mediators who stood between God and man. They were the ministers and servants of God to the flock of God, but not mediators.

The Grecians saw that the preaching of Jesus as the supreme sacrifice and mediator went against everything they had been taught and stood for. They did not see Jesus as the fulfillment of the Law nor as the Liberator of man, but they saw Him as the destroyer of the Law and of everything they held precious. Therefore, they stood up and argued against Stephen; stood up right in the middle of Stephen's preaching and began to dispute him. They did this several times.

6:10 And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Although they argued with him several times, they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit of God by which he spoke. They

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could stand against Stephen but they could not stand against the Holy Spirit who was in him and speaking through him. The Holy Spirit was supplying the answers, the thoughts and the words to say. Your communion with God is very important against the enemies of the Word! And in that communion one must be under the control of the Holy Spirit, just as Stephen was. Men often do stand against believers, but the man who opposes and argues against the Believer's witness is resisting the Holy Spirit, not the Believer.

6:11 Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. Stephen was a fierce man to be reckoned with. The synagogues were so angered that they bribed men to lie against him, stirring up the people and the leaders against him. Since Stephen had said nothing against Moses or God, they had to introduce false witnesses, a common practice among the Jews. The basic charge was blasphemy; speaking against Moses (the Law) and against God (that is, against the temple, God's dwelling place 6:13-14). Jesus was accused of the same thing (Mk.14:63-64).

6:12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came unto him, and caught him and brought him to the council.

1. The word "*stirred up*" (*sunekinesan*) means to shake as a volcano; to move and rock together as with a violent shaking. This was the first time the people themselves were aroused against the disciples.
2. The word "*came upon him*" (*epistantes*) mean they rushed at him in fury anger, and violence.
3. The word "*caught*" (*sunerpasan*) means to seize with much violence, the picture is that they seized and literally dragged him to court.

They were determined to take advantage of the moment by arresting Stephen.

6:13 And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: The charges against Stephen were threefold:

1. Blasphemy against the temple. The Jews had always taught that God dwelt in the Temple. Stephen was preaching that God now dwelt in the hearts and lives of people, and not just in the Temple.
2. Blasphemy against the Law. By Law the Jews meant the "*Scribal Law*" (all the commentaries and interpretations of the Scripture). Stephen was preaching that Christ fulfills the Law. Truth: God's Law is not destroyed, it is fulfilled in Christ. Christ is now the Ideal, the Pattern, and the Standard by which we are to follow. The Law is not erased, nor annulled. The Law is now found embraced in the life of Christ.

6:14 For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us. The point to note is that the charges were false that they so called heard. They heard what they wanted to hear.

3. Preaching the destruction of the temple and of Jewish customs. This is a repeat of the above. The false witnesses alluded to a portion of Stephen's message in which he quoted Jesus' statement about destroying the body, and it being raised again in three days (Mt.26:61; Mk.14:58). As this statement was misunderstood and misinterpreted when Jesus uttered it; now it is misinterpreted by them when Stephen reported it. Stephen was preaching that Christ fulfills man's need for God and for salvation.

6:15 And all that say in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. The council members saw God's presence upon Stephen's face. The words "*face of an angel*" refers to some splendor, glow, shining radiance—a glory that was present. Apparently, God allowed His glory, His presence to be made manifest and visible for all to see. This same experience was seen on Moses and on

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Christ. Stephen's face showed the great communion he had with the Lord. It was pure, calm, unruffled composure that reflected upon Stephen's face; that peaceful presence of God surrounded him. What an awesome state to be in!

SUMMARY:

As the church grew with many disciples multiplying, an internal problem developed with the Grecians against the Hebrews in this early church because their widows were being neglected in the daily administration of food or relief. The twelve apostles summoned the general body of the disciples and addressed them by saying that it wasn't reasonable that they should neglect the teaching of God's Word to attend tables. They proposed to the brethren to look out among themselves and pick out seven men of good reputation and full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom they would appoint over this need. Then the apostles would be able to continue in prayer and to the ministry of the Word of God. This proposal was unanimously agreed upon by the whole body. The seven men chosen were all Grecian believing Jews whom they ordained—sitting them before the apostles as they prayed and laid hands upon them and commissioned them for service; would be called deacons later (**6:1-6**).

As a result of the seven men appointed to take care of the needy widows, the Word of God increased, the church grew, and the priests were obedient to the faith. Stephen was one of the chosen from the Grecian community full of the faith, power, and performed great wonders and miracles among the people. However, when those of the synagogues got whiff of it, they rose up with dispute against Stephen. They didn't like what he was saying but, they couldn't withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. So since they couldn't win, they instigated men to lie and say that he blasphemed against Moses and God. With this, they stirred up the people, elders, and scribes and laid hold on Stephen, dragging him before the council where by false accusers testified against him. They accused him of speaking against the Temple and against the laws of Moses; Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the Temple and throw out all of Moses' laws and customs. All of a sudden Stephen's face became as radiant as the face of an angel's (**6:7-15**).

APPLICATION:

If your life depended on it to speak about Jesus, would you have the courage to speak to those who oppose you? You can do it when God's Spirit is in control!

[TOP](#)

7:1 Then said the high priest, Are these things so? —This was probably Caiaphas and he's asking the pertinent question: "*Are these accusations true?*"— talking about these charges that had been lodged against Stephen. Stephen was on trial for his life. The charges had been made. He was accused of blasphemy; preaching that the sacred institutions of the nation were to be destroyed — the temple, the law, and the customs of Moses.

7:2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran. Stephen addressed those questioning him as men, brethren, and fathers, affirming his oneness with them and addressing them in a polite manner as he asked them to listen to him. He began his speech with the history of Abraham. Abraham was among the earliest people in all the Jewish history— the first Jew called; the man chosen by God to be the founder of the nation of Israel. He related that it was the God of glory who appeared to their father Abraham. He dwelt in Mesopotamia before he came to Charran (Haran). The point is: God showed Himself to Abraham when they didn't have a temple or tabernacle; God can appear in front of people anywhere. ¹¹Abraham was a pagan, an idol worshiper, from a foreign country, and God showed up and called him out of a pagan lifestyle. They do not have to be in a special place. This was the call of Abraham, his removal by faith from Ur of the Chaldees to Haran. God sovereignly chose Abraham and poured out His grace on him. Stephen wasn't really defending himself, instead, he took the offensive, seizing the opportunity to summarize his teaching about Jesus. And from there he continues to speak to them.

7:3 And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. Abraham was a pagan; an idol worshiper from a foreign country, and God showed up and called him out of a pagan lifestyle. God sovereignly chose Abraham and poured out His grace on him. He was to come out of his country (Ur of the Chaldees), and from his kindred, and come into the land which God was to show him. Stephen wasn't really defending himself; instead, he took the offensive, seizing the opportunity to summarize his teaching leading to Jesus. And from there he continues to speak to them.

7:4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. Abraham was obedient to God. On God's command, he came out of the land of the Chaldaeans, stayed in Charran (Haran) until his father (Terah) died, and then left where they dwell now, Canaan.

7:5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child. Verse 3 says "*come into the land that I will show you*", but, at this point Abraham was not given anything he could set his foot on when he moved; it was a promise. God promised to give it (land) for a possession to him and his seed after him. Wow, Abraham didn't even have a child at the time. The point is: the promises are by faith for a future inheritance and possession and he gave up all for God and His promise of an eternal inheritance. Abraham truly trusted God when he made that choice; that first step to move. He believed God's promises

¹¹ http://www.bereanbiblechurch.org/transcripts/acts/7_1-53.htm
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without first seeing them. Two things:

1. Abraham never possessed the land.
2. Abraham didn't have a son until he was incapable of bearing seed (100yrs. old).

7:6 And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years. God prophesized to Abraham revealing, that his seed would journey to a foreign land. All believers are the seed of Abraham by faith. His seed would not even possess the land, not for a long time, for his seed (the Israelites) would be brought into bondage to a strange land and there would become slaves for 400years.

7:7 And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place. That nation would be Egypt whom God would truly judge. Afterwards God's people would return and serve and worship Him in the Promised Land.

7:8 And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs. God assured Abraham with a Covenant of Circumcision. Circumcision was the seal of Abraham's faith; just as the believer is sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. Abraham became the father of Isaac, and circumcised him on the 8th day; Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob became the father of the 12 patriarchs (fathered 12 sons). Circumcision was the sign that Abraham was truly trusting God and His promise.

7:9 And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him,— God had given Abraham a son, Isaac; and Abraham had him circumcised, sealing the fact that Isaac was the child of promise; the promised seed for the promised Jewish nation through whom God's people were to be born. Through the line, Joseph was born, and the forefathers rejected God's choice servant, Joseph. So, the patriarchs were flamed up with envy and jealousy against Joseph, sold him into slavery in Egypt, but God was still with Joseph strengthening him to go through the trials. Joseph had told of his dreams but they were blinded with so much envy. Stephen was saying that God's Will and plan could not be stopped, no matter what the present generation did against Christ and His followers.

7:10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. This is what God did: delivered Joseph out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; causing Pharaoh to make Joseph governor over Egypt and all of Pharaoh's house.

7:17 But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,—Israel had been in Egypt for about 400yrs. The people had grown enormously both in numbers and prosperity, becoming comfortable, complacent, lethargic, worldly, and carnal. And God prepared to save His people and fulfill His glorious promise to Abraham. The time of the promise drew near. God moved world events to save His people. God's timing is just as important as His promise.

7:33 Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground. God had protected and prepared the chosen child Moses. Pharaoh's daughter had rescued, raised and educated him in the palace for 40yrs, as if he was her own. Being in the palace and cut off from his own

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people, when the time came for God's chosen servant to be used the Jews misunderstood and rejected him. This verse begins after Moses has run away from the palace, and is now a shepherd in Midian tending sheep of his father-in-law Jethro. At the backside of the desert near Horeb, the mountain of God, and suddenly an Angel of the Lord appeared to him as a flame of fire in a bush. Moses saw that the bush did not burn up, he came closer. God called him by name commanding him to take off his shoes from his feet, for where he was standing was holy ground. It was the presence of God which made the ground holy. Stephen's emphasis could not be missed by the Jewish people...

- they were exalting Moses (the law) above God Himself.
- the promise of God was given long before the law.
- the reason God was calling Moses was to save the people for the Promised Land, not the law.
- Moses (the law) was only a part of God's plan. Moses and the law were not the end, not the thing God was after. The promise was the end.
- the temple was not the only holy ground. God's presence was what made the ground holy. Therefore, where God is, there is holy ground.

7:34 I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt. Again, it was God who acted, not the people. It was God who said, *"I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt."* And Moses was commissioned to return to Egypt and stand in the court of Pharaoh demanding that God's people be released from bondage. Yes, it was God's chosen servant, despite the people's rejection; whom they had said to *"... Who made you a ruler and a judge?"* God sends Moses to them again. Just as Moses had been rejected, so, Jesus was being rejected.

7:45 Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drave out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David;— Stephen makes reference to the tabernacle in the wilderness and the fact that having received the tabernacle from their fathers, they brought it into the land of Canaan, which was possessed by the Gentiles, whom God drove out when they entered into it with Joshua their leader, and captain, at the head of them; who is here called Jesus. The Greek form of Joshua is translated *"Jesus"* in Hebrews 4:8. This was a portable Tabernacle or Temple. Stephen had been accused of speaking against the Temple, but he recognized the importance of the Temple; he knew that it was not more important than God. God is not limited. God doesn't live only in a sanctuary, but wherever hearts of faith are open to receive Him. This next reference is made to the days of David.

7:46 Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. David found favor before God and desired to build the God of Jacob a Tabernacle.

7:47 But Solomon built him an house. But David's son, Solomon was permitted to build God a house.

7:48 Howbeit the most high dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet. It was not understood about where God should dwell. God being the Most High God is not to be confined to a certain place, especially a place made with human hands, even as the prophets says.

7:49 Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is

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the place of my rest?— So, if Heaven is God's throne and the earth is His footstool, He's everywhere. It was really not necessary to build a stationary house as a place of rest for Him, for He lives only in hearts of faith in those who are open to receive Him.

7:50 Hath not my hand made all these things?— Don't we know by now that God's hand has made all things.

7:51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Stephen is talking to many Jews, calling them stiffnecked, even God has called them stiffnecked. Stephen also calls them uncircumcised. Surely, they were circumcised in the flesh because of the Abrahamic Covenant, but they were not circumcised in their hearts and their ears. Stephen was led by the Holy Spirit, but they and their fathers resisted the Spirit of God.

7:52 Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers. Stephen makes an indictment against their fathers. He asked them *"Can you name a single prophet whom your fathers didn't persecute and killed those who showed and announced beforehand the coming of the Lord?"*

7:53 Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. The law had been put into effect by the hands of angels, yet, the people had not kept it. They glorified in the law, but violated it just as much as their forefathers. God had chosen the Jews for His special purposes. He had given the Law to them. He had sent His Messiah, but they had opposed both the Law and the Messiah. Stephen had turned the tables from himself to his accusers. They were the ones guilty of the charges of:

- worshiping false gods,
- carrying the tabernacle but their hearts were upon the false gods,
- being so blessed with God's presence, yet chose the world,
- they were resisting the Holy Spirit,
- they persecuted the prophets, fulfilled the prophecies,
- and they had not kept the Law.

Stephen was on trial for his life. He had been called upon to defend himself, but instead of actually defending himself, Stephen had preached about the tragic failure of the people to follow and obey God. With so many charges against them, how could Stephen be the one who was wrong?

7:54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. Stephen's message had been effective and convicting. It had done its job. Conviction can go either way. It can either cause a person to turn to God, confessing his sin, or cause a person to react against God. Three things happened:

1. *"When they heard these things"*— This is present. It was while they were hearing Stephen preach, that conviction was taking place. He was preaching and the Spirit of God was convicting, trying to get through to the hearts of the people. God was giving the people another chance.
2. *"They were cut to the heart"*— (*dieprionto tais kardiais*). The word "*dieprionto*" means to saw asunder, to cut through. It is used to show violent reaction. The response of their hearts was anger, not godly sorrow. They had no intention of confessing that they had been wrong.
3. *"They gnashed on him with their teeth"*— (*ebruchon*). The word means to bite, to grind, to gnash the teeth just like a pack of snarling dogs. The people were in a rage, filled with anger and malice, ready to do violence, ready to unleash the fury of their emotions.

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When the human heart rebels against God, it becomes disturbed and tormented. God caused the human heart to be...

- uncertain and insecure
- disturbed and trouble
- indignant and reactionary
- etc.

Prov.29:1 says, *"He that being often reproveth hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."* They were exceedingly enraged and indignant and could no longer restrain themselves.

7:55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,— Stephen was a man who was always filled with the Spirit, but there was something different about this instance. Stephen had become a martyr for his belief in the Lord Jesus Christ and the Gospel.

1. God filled Stephen with a very special infilling of the Spirit; a presence and manifestation that caused an awareness engulfing and embracing him, a power and grace to bear and go through whatever lay ahead.
2. God gave Stephen a vision into heaven; enabling him to see into the other world, the spiritual world or spiritual dimension of being.
 - a. Stephen *"saw the glory of God"*. He saw God in the brilliant light of His person, full of splendor and radiance.
 - b. Stephen saw Jesus standing on the right hand of God. Jesus is usually said to be sitting on the right hand of God, symbolizing His authority as man's Lord and Intercessor. But here He is standing, which symbolizes his overlooking the scene and care of His dear follower and the joyful reception of His faithful servant.

Can you imagine the glorious sight? We shall behold every sight in Stephen's vision and much more; in a moment's time, in a twinkling of an eye. The genuine believer will pass from this life into the next world immediately, never tasting or experiencing death.

7:56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

After looking up toward heaven, he saw the most spectacular event.

3. God gave Stephen a glorious testimony. Seeing such a scene, Stephen just burst forth proclaiming the glorious vision he was experiencing. It was most likely a natural outburst of joy and ecstasy; a testimony of the truth of the otherworld to those standing around him. The Son of man is at the right hand of God. Therefore, Stephen was proclaiming...
 - a. that Jesus is the Son of God.
 - b. that our faith in Jesus is not in vain.
 - c. that Jesus is exactly whom He claimed to be.

7:57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,—

¹²Stephen's vision annoyed the men in the Sanhedrin even more. They did not want to listen to Stephen. So, they covered their ears with their hands. To them, Jesus was a criminal. And there was something even worse than that. He had died on a cross. Jews believed that God rejected a person, if that person died on a cross. But Stephen saw that Jesus was at God's right side. This meant that Jesus had the same authority as God. Again, incensed by the calm, quiet attitude of Stephen, the crowd rushed upon him. The persecutors were actually opposing him. Their behavior had reached to a peak of insanity.

7:58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. Casting Stephen out of the city was in accordance with the usual custom.

¹² <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/acts-lbw.htm>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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Stoning him was the punishment in the law for blasphemy. Under Roman rule, the Sanhedrin did not have the legal right to execute without Roman concurrence. Although this was not legal, Pilate apparently either turned a deaf ear to the situation or was not surprised of it, nevertheless, the action was carried out in the rage of the Jews. In the case of the witnesses, that is, the false witnesses laid down their "*outer garments*" which was the custom when they ran or worked. As they laid down their garments, they secured Saul to take care of their garments. He was near enough and it reflects his deep involvement in this repulsive affair and his introduction into this matter. It does not implement him as casting any stone at Stephen. As was customary, the witnesses were the first to cast their stones. This duty was prescribed both in the Mishnah and also in the Law itself.

7:59 And they stoned Stephen,— This stoning was not a formal execution but an act of mob violence. They didn't understand that Stephen's words were truth, because they were not seeking the truth. They only wanted support for their own views.

7:59b ...calling upon God, and saying,—Stephen began to call God, who was ready to receive him! He had trusted and lived for Christ during life, so he could expect to trust and live for Christ in eternity!

7:59c ...Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. This utterance of Stephen echoes the Lord's utterance from the cross. On his knees and being constantly bombarded with stones, Stephen's one concern was not for himself but for those who were his persecutors. There were two prayers on his lips: "*Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*" (7:59c) and "*Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*" (7:60b); one for him, and one for the persecutors.

7:60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. As the Lord cried unto the Father, "*Father forgive them, for they know not what they do*" (Lk.23:34), so too does Stephen. He gets into a position of reverence.—he kneels down and he cries unto the Lord in a loud voice.

7:60b ...Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. "When the men of Israel were at their worst, the man Stephen was at his best. He knelt down to purposely pray. He interceded to the Lord God of heaven for those who persecuted him. Even in death his concern was for their eternal life.

7:60c ...And when he had said this, he fell asleep. It says, "*he fell asleep*" indicating: *a peace, it is well with my soul, or even when a person lays down at night and just sleeps into Jesus' arms.* I can remember when my dad passed. The head of his bed was toward the wall. On this particular day I kept putting him toward the head of the bed and he kept going toward the foot of the bed where the door entrance was. Evidently, he knew something I didn't. I finally gave in and let him lay at the foot of the bed. He died in my arms as I quoted the 23rd Psalm. There was such a peace in the room with he and with me because he had entered where his Shepherd was. Stephen was simply in the arms of the Lord who had been standing on the right hand of God waiting for him to come. It may not have seemed like a glorious death, but it was for Stephen because he could see into the heavenlies which brought to him such a peace.

SUMMARY:

The High Priest then asked Stephen, "*Are these things true*" in which they are saying? Stephen defended himself, but not by offering a legal defense. He defended himself by proclaiming the glorious mercy and <http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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grace of God throughout Israel's history. The Jews greatly admired Abraham and prided themselves in being his "*children*." Furthermore, they depended on their nation's heritage rather than their personal faith. The God of glory appeared unto Abraham; called him out of his country and come to a land in which God will show him. Abraham was obedient to God's command (**7:1-4**).

God assured Abraham with the covenant of circumcision. He showed how the forefathers of Israel was moved to envy, rejecting God's chosen servant Joseph. Nevertheless, God delivered him out of all his afflictions, gave him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh and made him governor over Egypt and all his house. They forefathers rejected God's chosen servant and His deliverance (**7:8-10**).

The Jews grew and multiplied in Egypt as the time grew near when God prepared to fulfill His promise to Abraham to deliver the people from slavery, (**7:17**).

God called Moses by name commanding him to take off his shoes from his feet, for where he was standing was holy ground. And Moses was commissioned to return to Egypt and stand in the court of Pharaoh demanding that God's people be released from bondage, for God had seen their affliction and would deliver them (**7:33-34**).

The people rejected God's chosen servant Moses, and God's deliverance planned through Moses. Afterwards, Joshua led the battles against the Gentile nations and the Tabernacle was mobile until the time of David, whom God greatly blessed, and who desired to build a permanent Tabernacle for God, but instead Solomon built the Temple (**7:45-47**).

God, the Most High God is not to be confined to a certain place. He has made Heaven His throne and the earth His footstool. And where is His resting place?— in the hearts of faith; those who openly receive Him. God's hand has made all things. Stephen called them stiffnecked and uncircumcised, being like their fathers, resisting the Holy Ghost, and who persecuted the prophets and killed those who showed and announced beforehand the coming of the Lord. Stephen is speaking to people who have received God's Law delivered by angels, but did not keep the Law (**7:48-53**).

They acted exactly in keeping with the examples Stephen had given. Stephen saw the glory of Jesus, exactly what they were debating with him about. The right hand of God is the place the Messiah was to ascend, the place of authority. They didn't want to hear another word. His argument was so convincing and words so powerful that they felt they must silence him. So they dragged him out to stone him and had a man named Saul watch their cloaks while they stoned him. As the persecutors stoned Stephen, He prayed for Jesus to receive his Spirit and asking God to forgive them. He then fell asleep knowing he would be with the Lord (**7:54-60**).

APPLICATION:

Unflinching faith come with a price. A martyr is one who suffers for a cause; one who sacrifices willingly. Jesus paid the ultimate sacrificial price.

[TOP](#)

8:1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. Stephen's message was God's final invitation to Israel. Israel had rejected the message and they launched a savage persecution against the church, attempting to utterly destroy it.

1. The persecution was launched by an inflamed man named Saul of Tarsus. The word "*consenting*" (or approving (*suneudokon*)) means to give full consent of the will; willingly approve; approve with pleasure etc. Saul was a Pharisee. He felt that the preaching of Christ threatened his religion, Judaism.

8:1b ...And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem;

2. The persecution was launched quickly, on the very day of Stephen's death. The words "*at that time*" (*en ekeinei tei hemera*) mean on the very same day. The believers were frightened and on the run. Therefore, Saul had to strike immediately to catch them before they could escape.
3. The persecution was launched in fury and in violence. Note the words "*great persecution*" (*diogmos megas*), means that Saul hotly pursued, chased down the believers; bent on violence, utterly determined to stamp out the church.

8:1c ...and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

4. God overruled and used the persecution as a means to scatter the church all across the world. Just as Jesus had instructed—Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth were now to hear the glorious message of the gospel (Acts 1:8). Note the apostles remained behind.
 - They had been given some freedom by the authorities on the advice of Gamaliel (Acts 5:34-40).
 - They were highly esteemed by the public at large and on other occasions the authorities feared to have them arrested lest their arrest cause an uprising among the people (Act 4:21).
 - The apostles were courageous men and they had learned to wait upon the Lord for instruction.
 - i. If the apostles had fled Jerusalem, there would have been no stabilizing person at the church, no leader holding the church together. Remember, the only organized church in existence was the church in Jerusalem. The believers, although imprisoned and scattered, still needed a church to look toward.
 - ii. If the apostles had fled, the church would have been destroyed. There would be no church to picture, no place from which to look for help and direction.
 - Therefore, it was important for the apostles to remain there, important for their loyalty and availability to the church to be known. They held the church together. No matter where the believers had scattered, they knew that the church still existed through its courageous leaders.

SUMMARY:

¹³The death of Stephen was the signal for an outbreak of persecution which compelled the Christians to scatter and to seek safety in the Judea, Samaria and the uttermost part of the earth. However the apostles stood fast. They braved whatever perils that might come. Although the persecution was deadly, nevertheless it accomplished the direct Will of God (**8:1**).

¹³ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/persecution-scatters-believers--philip-boldly-preaches/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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SYNOPSIS:

8:2-8 Certain devout men gave Stephen the burial that was due this first Christian martyr. With papers of permission from the authority of the Sanhedrim and high priest, Saul harassed the church, smashing down doors and arresting men and women in their homes, sending them to prison. This caused the church to be scattered. And this means that the Word was scattered. They preached the Word abroad wherever they went (8:2-4). Because of the witness and death of Stephen, Philip, one of the first deacons (Acts 6:5) went down to Samaria and preached Christ to them. A great revival came about. The people were on one accord; of one mind and took heed to the message and the miracles they had seen. The evidence of the revival was that people with evil spirits were changed, cast out, people with crippled bodies were healed, and the power of God was clearly witnessed. Great joy was experienced (8:5-8).

8:9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:— The people had been enslaved by a false prophet, a religious imposter, Simon. Simon had claimed to have divine powers.

- He used sorcery: magical arts, witchcraft, spirit mediums, astrology, charms, spells, divination or fortune telling. Simon's sorcery was energized by Satan and was used to magnify himself – self-advancement.
- He bewitched (astounded, confounded) people: amazed, astonished, and secured their following.
- He claimed that he was "*some great one*."

8:10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. The people had been enslaved by a false religion: all gave heed; all followed his leadership and teaching; all from the least to the greatest confessed, thinking this man Simon is the great power of God.

8:11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. The people had been enslaved for a long time. They had been held in bondage to the false prophet and false religion of Simon for a long time. In the days of the early church, sorcerers and magicians were numerous and influential. They worked wonders. Simon was one of them, and the people even thought he was the Messiah.

8:12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. But when it came to Philip, the people believed his preaching.

- He preached the kingdom of God.
- He preached the name of Jesus Christ.

When the people heard the message, both men and women believed and were water baptized. All authority and power was the result from the belief that God is its author.

8:13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Even Simon believed and he received baptism too. There seems to be some little doubt about the legitimacy of Simon's conversion. There is no sign of repentance. There is no confession of sin. But there is the statement that "*he continued with Philip wondering and beholding the miracles and signs that were done*." Apparently, Simon wanted the secret of Philip's power. His only concern was not for his own soul but for the ability to get close to Philip and learn the secret of his ability to heal the sick and perform miracles. Simon's ability came from Satan. Philip's ability came from

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God. There was the counterfeit; verses the real deal.

8:14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:— When the news of Philip's preaching and the subsequent conversion of the Samaritans reached Jerusalem, it was necessary for the Jewish church there to send their two key representatives in order to investigate these conversions. The church at Jerusalem had been all Jewish; this assembly was all Samaritans. Thus, Peter and John were sent.

8:15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:— Unleashed in the Upper Room on the Day of Pentecost was a power that brought the most far-reaching changes in history. This power was given for a specific purpose. Jesus said, *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth"* Acts 1:8. If the purpose of the Holy Spirit's outpouring is to help believers be effective in building the kingdom, it is vital that we understand that this power is needed for the body of Christ today. This was a crucial moment in the spread of the gospel and the growth of the church and the apostles. Therefore, Peter and John had come down from Jerusalem and prayed that the Samaritan believers receive the Holy Ghost.

8:16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)— The Samaritan believers had been water baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, but as yet the Holy Spirit had fallen on none of them. Water baptism is the outward sign of new birth; Holy Spirit baptism is the inward sign of new birth. Water baptism immerses a person completely in water; the Holy Spirit baptism immerses a person spiritually in the body of Christ. The first instance of the Holy Spirit's coming upon a group of individuals was in the Upper Room with the one hundred and twenty. In this instance, these Samaritans Jews were not present. Thus Peter and John bring the power of Pentecost to another group of people. They were to go beyond the Upper Room. This will occur twice again in this transition period of Acts: at the household of Cornelius when Gentiles receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 10) and when the disciples of John the Baptist receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 19).

8:17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. Peter and John after praying laid hands upon the Samaritan believers to receive the Spirit's Baptism. This does not mean that this is the only way to receive, for no hands were laid on those at Pentecost or at the house of Cornelius. However, in the case of Saul, Ananias (an ordinary believer) laid hands upon Saul and his natural and his spiritual eyes were opened, and he was *"filled with the Holy Ghost"* (Acts 9:17); *"...he received sight... and arose and was baptized"* Acts 9:18. His water baptism came after the infilling. These new Samaritan believers did receive the Spirit's power for service.

8:18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,— Simon is a sorcerer observing all that's being done; he was fascinated as he viewed all that the apostles had done. He found something so extraordinary in this gift of the Spirit that he immediately wanted the authority to impart the gift himself. He had already witnessed demon expulsions and healings, but this was markedly different. He saw something different that He now offers money to the apostles; he wanted to buy this gift; he wanted the apostles to lay hands on him so he could receive this gift of the Holy Ghost.

8:19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. Simon wanted to do as the apostles did; he wanted to lay hands on others, and he wanted this recognition! He

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doesn't say '*lay your hands on me*', no, but he says "*give me this power that on whomsoever 'I' lay hands...*" He wanted power over people. He wanted people to think that he was important.

8:20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Peter harshly rebukes Simon. Simon only wanted to receive God's power to do what Peter was doing. Peter goes on to tell him that his money would perish because God's gift can't be purchased. Simon surely didn't understand because he still was thinking of the materialistic view; he was still thinking that everything had a price and surely he could buy the gift of the Holy Spirit's power. No amount of money can buy salvation, or forgiveness of sin, or God's power. These are only gained by first believing in Christ as Savior and repentance of sins. Every preacher must be extra-careful that money is not made apart of their stumbling block. God has nothing for sale; everything He has is a gift.

8:21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter:— ¹⁴Whether it refers to the gospel, or to the impartation of the Spirit, is not altogether certain. In either case, the declaration is true; for it is certain that he had no part in the impartation of the Spirit; and equally certain that he was then under the condemnation of God. And he certainly does not have a part in trying to purchase God's gift. It is a sin. There are many who profess the Christian religion, and yet have no part nor lot in the matter, no part in Christ. They are those whose hearts are not right in the sight of God. Peter seized the situation and immediately diagnosed the problem: **...for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.** One act may sometimes bring out the "*whole character*" of a person. We all have to check our motives. Pride, vain glory, and love of money will show up. Simon ¹⁵had tried to become a Christian for the wrong reasons. And he had received baptism for the wrong reasons. He wanted power over people. He wanted people to think that he was important. So, he tried to buy the Spirit's power. His heart was full of himself. ¹⁶Saved men must still deal with sin or it will overtake him in his daily walk; old habits must be put away; his thought process must be transformed by the Word of God. If Simon believed and was a true believer; and had a true conversion, he still had a lot to learn.

8:22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. ¹⁷There was still hope for Simon. Peter told him to repent. Simon would have to pray to God; would have to change. He could not use God's power for selfish reasons. Peter said, perhaps God will know that even "*the thought of his heart may be forgiven him*". The thought of the heart, though ever so wicked, shall be forgiven, upon our repentance, and not laid to our charge; if we truly repent. Simon could say 'sorry' to God. But if Simon did not mean it, God would not forgive him. Simon was not even directed to "*pray*" first, but his first indispensable work was to "*repent*"; that is, to exercise proper sorrow for this sin, and to "*abandon*" his plan or principle of action, then pray that this wicked thought may be forgiven by God. God always forgive people if they are sincere.

8:23 For I perceive — This refers to the Holy Ghost informing Peter of the exact cause, and not mere symptoms. **...that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.** Peter's perception was that Simon was yet caught up in the bitter gall—root of superstition and his fascination with magic, and sorcery (this was a condition of extreme wickedness), and there was still a bond of iniquity within him (a bondage of greed for money, power and control over other men).

8:24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have

¹⁴ http://www.studydrive.org/com/oca/view.cgi?book=ac&chapter=8&verse=12#Ac8_12

¹⁵ <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/acts-lbw.htm>

¹⁶ http://www.bereanbiblechurch.org/transcripts/acts/8_9-13_18-24.htm

¹⁷ <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/acts-lbw.htm>

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spoken come upon me. Now terror-stricken, Simon begged Peter to pray for him, but did not pray for himself as he was told to do (8:22). If you are rebuked for a serious mistake, it is for your good to admit your error, repent quickly, and ask for prayer. The main thing that Peter wished to impress upon Simon was a sense of his sin. However, it appears that he was more concerned about avoiding judgment than in getting right with God. There is no evidence that he repented and sought forgiveness.

8:25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans. Peter and John had come to Samaria to help Philip, and now they are testifying and preaching the Word of the Lord there. They are declaring the message of Christ, but their close relationship with the Lord makes them able to testify; be eye witnesses of the Lord's teachings to them. The apostles are laying their hands on the Samaritans, and were becoming one with them in the body of Christ. The Samaritan's salvation was a fulfillment of prophecy (Jews from Jerusalem and Samaritans from Samaria having fellowship as one). As Peter and John journeyed to return home to Jerusalem, the gospel was preached in many Samaritan villages. Philip did not accompany them.

8:26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. Now we see an angel of the Lord speaking to Philip. "Angels" are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation (Heb.1:14). There was a particular individual that God wanted to reach with the gospel and save. He sent an angel to instruct Philip where to go. The instruction was to arise and go toward the south to a certain road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza. This certain road was a desert road. Gaza was about 6 miles southwest of Jerusalem situated where the desert began. Note that God did not tell Philip why he was to travel the main road to the South, only to arise and go. Just as Abraham of old, Philip had to walk by faith, and this he did. Don't let this go pass you, Philip was engaged in a very successful evangelistic work in Samaria and in Jerusalem, but now he is sent to the desert, but he was obedient to the Spirit of the Lord. This was a faith walk for Philip. There is no boundary line when the Spirit of God leads you to tell or proclaim the truth of the gospel of Christ. The gospel is to be spread to the people in the entire world. Now that's a lot!

8:27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,— Philip got up and went, not knowing why, but trusting God to show him. He encountered a man of Ethiopia.

- Ethiopia was located in Africa south of Egypt.
- Name means "burnt face."
- Sometimes called Nubia or Cush.

This man was a eunuch of great authority; a rich man of power, but he was under the authority of Candace Queen of the Ethiopians.

A "Eunuch"— Castration was typically carried out on the soon-to-be eunuch without his consent in order that he might perform a specific social function; this was common in many societies. Eunuchs would probably be servants or slaves who, because of their function, usually in order to make them reliable servants of a royal court where physical access to the ruler could wield great influence. It can also refer to a man who is not castrated but who is impotent, celibate or otherwise not inclined to marry and procreate.

It shows that he was obviously committed and very dedicated. As a eunuch he was the chamberlain to the Queen of Ethiopia. Candace was not the name of the queen but rather a title given to the mother of each Ethiopian king. She ruled on behalf of her son who, as the child of the sun god, was considered too "holy" to

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be involved in mundane affairs. And her title was Candace, that is, a title like Pharaoh. And this Ethiopia eunuch had come to a position of great trust under the authority of the queen which commanded respect. He was in charge of all of her treasure, much like a Minister of Finance or Secretary of the Treasury. It was the policy of queens to choose outstanding eunuchs to fill official positions in their governments. However, as a eunuch, he would have been barred from the inner courts of the temple. Deuteronomy 23:1 NASB says "No one who is emasculated, or has his male organ cut off, shall enter the assembly of the LORD." Eunuchs were not allowed to be Jews in the full sense, but only "proselytes" (a new convert to a religious faith or political doctrine) of the gate. However, he had come such a long distance to worship in Jerusalem which may mean that he was probably a "God-fearer." A "God-fearer" was a non-Jew who respected the Jewish Law and sought to worship the God of Israel. They worshiped in the local synagogue along with the Jews. If he was a God-fearer this would be the first known overt example of a Gentile coming to Christ, an indication by God of what was to come. He had come to Jerusalem to worship, so therefore, he was a worshiper; a man who was probably seeking truth.

8:28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. The Ethiopian eunuch had traveled over 200 miles, having been to Jerusalem to worship, was now on his way home. This was not a single chariot but he was so important that he traveled with an entourage; a caravan. He was sitting in his chariot reading Esaias the prophet, but his heart was still not satisfied.

8:29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. God gives instruction through different sources. First it was the angel of the Lord who spoke to Philip, and now it is the Spirit of God speaking. Philip found the Ethiopia in his chariot, and the Spirit of God said "go near and join yourself with his chariot." Step by step Philip is being led to his assignment.

8:30 And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?— The chariot is on the move and Philip runs near and hears the Ethiopia man reading aloud the prophet Esaias. That was not unusual. Everyone read aloud at that time. Having been moved by the Spirit of God to speak to this man, and recognizing by the exact portion of Isaiah that the eunuch was reading, Philip received his cue to initiate conversation. The question concerning his ability to understand what he read was natural enough since this man was Ethiopian and not Jewish.

8:31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The eunuch's response also indicates that Philip was at the right place. God had already prepared the eunuch's heart to receive Philip's witness. If we would obey the Lord's leading, we can be sure that God would go before us and open the way for our witness to others. His response back to Philip was, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" Well, the man's need and Philip's teaching ability precipitated the invitation for Philip to come and sit in the chariot with the man. The seeker finds the preacher or the preacher finds the seeker. That was the clue that the man wanted his assistance. God knew what he needed and sent Philip to the desert for that very purpose.

8:32 The place of the scripture which he read was this,— Philip knew the passage the man was reading and began to assist him. This particular passage: **He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:** came from Isaiah 53:7 NASB. The passage from Isaiah was a prophecy about the Messiah. Isaiah 53 was written almost 800 years before the cross. Yet it reads like an

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eyewitness account of the crucifixion. Jews who lived in the first century did not expect their Messiah to suffer. They expected him to beat the Romans. But Jesus had described Himself as a Servant, who would suffer.

The metaphors of "sheep and lamb" express the innocence, meekness, and patience of Christ in His sufferings and death; and Him being like these when **led to the slaughter, and "dumb before the shearer"**, show His willingness to suffer and die for His people, and to become a sacrifice for their sins. ... and to the lamb of a year old being silent while it is being sheared; and both denote the voluntariness of Christ in His sufferings, the stripping Him of his good name, credit, and reputation among men, and of all worldly substance... **"...opened he not his mouth"**— He did not "complain" or "murmur"; He offered no resistance, but yielded patiently to what was done by others.

8:33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: —This particular passage came from Isaiah 53:8 NASB. And here it speaks of, by Jesus humbling Himself, all His rights are taken away; the miserable state which Christ took upon Himself for our sake, in bearing his Father's wrath — justice was denied Him; when he was a man — he had no justice shown him. To take away a person's judgment, is a proverbial phrase for oppressing him. "He was mocked and put down, never got a fair trial." **...and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.** — In other words, who can describe His generation? Who can describe the wickedness that was done to Him? Who will fully relate this man and all His actions? Who will show forth to the world everything He was about? Who will keep His remembrance alive? for His life is removed from the earth; He was cut off out of the land of the living.

8:34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? The eunuch needed clarity about this passage of Isaiah 53. Even the Jewish religious experts were divided on the meaning of this passage. Some believed the slaughtered sheep represented the nation of Israel, others thought Isaiah was referring to himself, and others thought it referred to the Messiah. But Philip had no doubt; there was no question in his mind that this was the "Suffering Servant", Jesus of Nazareth (Isaiah 53). The Ethiopian represents many people today who are religious, who read the Scriptures, and who seek the truth, yet, do not have saving faith in Jesus Christ. They are sincere, but they are lost. They continually come, but do not receive. They hear, but don't understand. They need someone to show them the way.

8:35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. Philip opened his mouth and began at the very scriptures the eunuch was reading in Isaiah, and explained that Jesus had fulfilled this prophecy. Some people think the Old Testament is not relevant today, but Phillip led this man to faith in Jesus Christ by using the Old Testament scriptures. God's entire Word is applicable to all people in all ages. Therefore, we must not neglect to use the Old Testament because it too is God's Word. Philip proclaimed the Good News of Jesus. Isaiah 53 talks about one who would be rejected by men, one who was familiar with suffering, and one who was bruised for our infirmities. He is one who was wounded for our transgressions and the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. By his stripes we are healed. This is the Good News of Jesus: he paid the price for our sins when he died for us upon the cross. What Philip was preaching was part one: the death, of Jesus Christ.

8:36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? After Philip had explained the verses to him, the Ethiopian began to understand the gospel because the Spirit of God was opening his mind and heart to God's truth. The

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decision of the Holy Spirit in this incident is apparent again as Philip and the eunuch's arrival at a rare watering place in the desert, precisely when the eunuch requested baptism. What did Philip see happen? He saw three significant steps taken by the eunuch:

1. The man desired baptism.

How did he know that believers were supposed to be baptized? Perhaps Philip had included this in his witness to him, or perhaps he had even seen people being baptized while he was in Jerusalem.

8:37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. It is not enough for the lost sinner to desire salvation; he must also believe and understand who Jesus is.

2. The man believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God.

He believed that Jesus, whom Philip preached to him, was The Christ, the Messiah, and consequently the Son of God.

8:38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. It is the heart that understands the Word that eventually bears fruit.

3. The man believed and immediately followed through with baptism.

This was not a sprinkle but an immersion in water. Because of the evidence in the eunuch's life and his sincere confession of the deity of Christ, Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and was baptized. This becomes a fulfillment of Psalm 68:31b which says "...Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God."

8:39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. After coming out of the water, Philip was no longer needed. His task was done. It was time for him to move on, so the Holy Spirit took him away. The word for "caught away" (herpasen) is strong. It means to be snatched away quickly, immediately, miraculously. It's the same word used for the rapture of the church. Elijah (1Kgs.18:12; 2Kgs.2:16) and Ezekiel (Ezek.3:12, 14; 8:3) were also snatched away in a miraculous fashion. This was a powerful confirmation to the caravan that Philip was God's representative. The eunuch went away rejoicing which made the trip even more fruitful!

SUMMARY:

¹⁸In this passage was a sorcerer named Simon. He practiced witchcraft, and because of his ability to exercise control over nature and people through his demonic power, many people thought he was great (8:9-11). When Philip came along preaching Christ it was evident that he was empowered by God, and that Simon started to lose his following. Many of the Samaritans listened to Philip's messages, believed on Jesus Christ, were born again, and as evidence were baptized (8:12). Simon seeing this great miracle, and perhaps fearful of losing his following, offered to buy this power, thinking it would enhance his sorcery. In fact he even professed to believe, and was baptized (8:13). However, it appears that his faith was not in the Word of God, but in the miracles he saw Philip perform. Peter and John were sent to Samaria to find out whether or not the Samaritans were truly becoming believers. As soon as they arrived, they began praying for the new Christians to receive the Holy Spirit, because He had not come upon them yet. They had only been baptized

¹⁸ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/simon-seeks-and-is-denied-the-spiritual-gift-of-healing/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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with water in the name of the lord Jesus. Peter and John laid hands upon them and they received the Holy Spirit **(8:14-17)**. **(8:9-17)**.

Simon wanted to buy the gift of the Spirit when he saw the apostles lay hands on others to receive this gift of the Holy Ghost. He wanted that same authority and the power when he laid hands on others so they can receive the Holy Spirit. Simon found out that his money would perish; no amount of money could buy this gift. He could have no part in it for; his heart was not even right before God. Simon was told to repent of his wickedness and pray, perhaps God would forgive him, for there was bitterness and unrighteousness in his heart. Simon, perhaps fearful of Peter and afraid of the consequences of his own behavior, then asked Peter to pray for him so those things won't happen in him **(8:18-24)**.

Peter and John had come to Samaria to help Philip, and now they are testifying and preaching the Word of the Lord there. As Peter and John journeyed to return home to Jerusalem, the gospel was preached in many Samaritan villages. Philip did not accompany them. Philip was told by an angel of the Lord to go south down the road from Jerusalem to Gaza which was a desert road where he saw an Ethiopian eunuch; a man of great authority in charge of the treasury of Queen Candace of Ethiopia. He had come to worship in Jerusalem and was riding back home sitting in his chariot reading Esaias **(8:25-28)**.

Philip is now told by the Spirit of God to overtake this chariot. As he runs near, he hears the eunuch reading from the prophet Isaiah. He asks, did he understand what he was reading? The eunuch explains that he needed someone to teach him. He was invited to explain the passage in Isaiah (Is.53:7-8). The scripture talked about Jesus being led as a sheep to slaughter and like a lamb to the slaughter saying not a word nor opening His mouth. But the eunuch needed to know if the prophet was talking about himself or some other man **(8:29-34)**.

Philip opened his mouth and preached Jesus, to be the one. Jesus died for our sins, was buried in the grave, and He was raised from the dead. When they came to some water, the eunuch requested to be baptized and Philip did so upon hearing his confession of faith. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit caught Philip away and the eunuch kept rejoicing **(8:35-39)**.

APPLICATION:

There is no boundary line when it comes to gender or race in ministering the gospel of Christ. There is no boundary line when the Spirit of God leads you to tell or proclaim the truth of the gospel of Christ. The gospel is to be spread to the people in the entire world. Now that's a lot!

[TOP](#)

SYNOPSIS:

9:1-9 ¹⁹Not content with persecuting Christians in Jerusalem, Saul received permission from the high priest to seek out those of the Way in Damascus and bring them bound to Jerusalem. It was near Damascus that Saul was blinded by a vision of the risen Jesus. Told to go into Damascus for further instructions, Saul was led blind into the city where he waited for three days, neither eating nor drinking.

9:10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. God had a special disciple named Ananias in Damascus waiting on assignment. God speaks to him in a vision; a dream; and he answers back unto the Lord, "Behold, I am here, Lord."— When the Lord speaks, His voice is recognized. Saul, being thrown off the horse says, "Who art thy Lord?"(v.5). Then later he says, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"(v.6). Even the demon-possessed man in the Gadarene, seeing Jesus afar off, ran and worshipped Jesus crying with a loud voice, "What have I to do with thee Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God?" (Luke 8:28). Ananias just says, "I am here Lord." He was sensitive to the voice of the Lord.

My question to you: "Was Saul (Paul) saved on the Damascus Road, or when he was infilled with the Holy Spirit?"— on the Damascus Road.

9:11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,— God tells Ananias to arise; to get up and go to the street called Straight. Do you see how God worded His Words? He gave the place to go before He revealed the name of the person he was to encounter. Saul of Tarsus was a well-known Pharisee; a Hebrew of the Hebrews who came against Christian Jews. They even knew of him in Damascus and what he came to do. But Ananias was willing to obey when God said go. Then, God tells him who he is to go to— Saul of Tarsus and he is praying. Tarsus was Saul's birthplace. This is full circle.

9:12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight. God is working in both men, for God also lets Ananias know that Saul has seen him (Ananias) in a vision, who will come to see him, so, Saul will be expecting him. Saul has even seen in the vision Ananias put his hands upon him that he might receive his sight. God has given this vision to Saul before Ananias gets there, so that he may have clear assurance that his help, his change, his sight was on the way; that it was the Resurrected Savior speaking to him, and no doubt would linger for either of them.

9:13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:— Well, Ananias was told what Saul had seen in a vision, but Ananias was still afraid to go, and lets the Lord know that he had heard from many people about Saul; the evil and great sufferings he's done toward the saints in Jerusalem. It's one thing to have heard something about somebody, but it's another to see and witness for yourself the work God can do and will do in a person's life, for God is about to show Ananias.

¹⁹ http://executableoutlines.com/acts/acts_09.htm
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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9:14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. Ananias continues, but Jesus already knows what Saul had come to do— to put into chains on and arrest all that call on the Name of Jesus. Saul might have had authority from the chief priest, but it will be nothing to the authority Jesus will give him. It doesn't matter what you start out to do, it's what you end up doing for the Lord.

9:15 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:— Ananias' warnings and concerns were overruled by the Lord because He's communicating: *"I know all this never mind Ananias, go ahead and go to Straight street to the house of Judas for this man is my chosen vessel; a chosen instrument of God."* *"He is to bear my name in his heart and in his behavior and actions as he goes before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel."* God already prepared the way for His vessel, and He's already prepared Ananias to make the way clear for the man God uses, and it's all in Jesus' Name. God has always placed somebody before us to make the way clear. It might have not been easy for them, but we receive the benefits.

9:16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. As Saul had been the minister of suffering to many believers, he himself would now be the recipient of much suffering, both at the hands of believers, and especially at the hands of his own kinsmen, the Jews.

9:17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. Ananias departs and enters the house of Judas. He places his hands upon Saul and calls him brother, and saying that the Lord, even the same Jesus that appeared to him (Saul) has sent him (Ananias). Why? – For four reasons:

1. Saul needed to understand the faithfulness of Jesus' disciple and the touch of that disciple's hand. He needed to experience the help and ministry of God's disciple. He needed to see faithfulness in action—love, care, concern, interest, help reaching out to him in time of need, no matter how he displayed himself before.
2. Saul needed the recognition of being a *"Brother"* in the Lord. This one word probably caused Saul to break out in tears, for he was being reached out to by a dear believer of the Lord despite the terrible wrong he had done to the believers. This was confirmation to him that he had been truly forgiven and received by the Lord.
3. Saul needed the power of healing ministered. He was afflicted. He needed Ananias to help him in his affliction. He needed his eyes healed, symbolizing how the scales of spiritual darkness and sin and shame had been removed from his heart.
4. Saul needed the sharing of the Holy Spirit's infilling. He needed the sharing of the infilling power of the Spirit for service.

My question to you: *"What Spirit do you have before one is filled with the Holy Ghost?"*— Your human spirit. My question to you: *"Why do we need to be filled with the Holy Ghost?"*—For service.

9:18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. Saul was blind for three days. During that time, he fasted and prayed. But when Ananias placed his hands upon Saul, it says immediately scales began to fall from his eyes, and he received his sight; he received his healing. He got up and was baptized with water as an outward expression of his conviction; different from verse 17, filled with the Holy Spirit to be empowered for service.

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9:19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus. Fasting was over, but prayer is never over. Saul tended to his physical need and ate meat, so he could be strengthened because of the last three days, he was without food. He was in new surroundings and a new convert. He had to get acquainted with his new brethren. So, he joined and became associated and identified with other believers. You can imagine how stunned the other believers were, because they remembered his past. However, his old nature and old man had truly died on the Damascus Road, and now he has the new nature shared by all believers.

I want to bring up one point—²⁰There is a common misconception among Christians that the name Saul of Tarsus was changed to Paul by Jesus after Saul's life-changing encounter with the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus. On the contrary, Acts 13:9 tells us that Saul *"was also called Paul"* (NIV). In other words, he had both names before and after he became an apostle of Jesus. He apparently used the Hebrew name Shaul (Saul) in Jewish settings, as when he was addressing a crowd in Jerusalem after his arrest there (Acts 22); and the Roman name Paulus (Paul) in a Greco-Roman environment, as in his epistles. It seems to have been fairly typical for first-century Jews to have more than one name. Other New Testament examples include:

- "Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus)" (Acts 1:23);
- "Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas)" (Acts 9:36);
- "John, also called Mark" (Acts 12:12);

Paul's companion Silas (Acts 15-18), who is also known as Silvanus (2 Cor 1:19; 1 Thes 1:1; 2 Thes 1:1). This information raises an interesting question about the use of Saul's two names in the book of Acts. Luke, the author of Acts, refers to Saul of Tarsus as "Saul" until Acts 13:9, then shifts to "Paul" for the remainder of the book. So, Jesus did not change his name. Saul became Paul on his first missionary journey to Antioch (Acts 13).

9:20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. It didn't take Saul long. You know how it is with new converts—all gong-ho about Jesus! He immediately began to preach Christ in the synagogues whether they wanted to hear him or not. He now had a new belief. He was no longer talking about religion, tradition, ceremony rituals or, trying to round up the Christians to kill them. No, he preached that Christ is the Son of God!

9:21 But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?—

Yes, all that heard him; the public and leaders of the synagogue were amazed. They began to question as to if this was the same man that destroyed those that called on that name in Jerusalem? And wasn't it his intent to bring the Christians back bound to the chief priests? Well, now he's preaching what the Christians are preaching. It was hard to believe.

9:22 But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ. Saul increased the more in strength, meaning he grew spiritually; he increased in spiritual strength. He dealt with the subject of Christ faithfully and steadfastly. He was proving a point; his conversion was for real. The more he grew in the Lord, the more he was able to confound (confuse) those Damascus Jews who opposed and rebelled against the gospel. They really looked for him to quench the Christians spreading that flame, but he continued to preach that Jesus is the Messiah, there in Damascus. He was able to prove (affirm and confirm) it with more and more power as he grew in the Lord.

²⁰ <http://graceandknowledge.faithweb.com/saul2paul.html>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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9:23 And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:— Saul had apparently been witnessing in Damascus for some time, preaching Christ and proving that Jesus was the Messiah, the Savior promised by God. He was so convincing that the Jews plotted to kill him. They became disturbed; full of anger, bitterness, and enmity arose. Why?

- They considered him a traitor to their religion and nation and cause.
- Saul was sharper than they were in debate. He out-argued them and they felt ashamed and embarrassed. They were unable to get the best of him mentally or spiritually, so they set out to retaliate physically.
- The message of the gospel convicted and threatened them. The gospel demanded self-denial, the sacrifice of all they were and had to the Lord Jesus.

9:24 But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. The Jews watched the gates day and night; they laid in wait for Saul, but he already knew of their plan (2Corin.12:32-33). The Jews were so convincing that the governor of Damascus (under king Aretas) sent patrols out, posted guards around the city to prevent his escape.

9:25 Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket. Saul escaped as the disciples lowered him down the wall in a basket by night. Verse 23 "*After many days were fulfilled*" also refers to when Saul had to leave Damascus because of the Jews' plot to kill him. He left Damascus, and just like Moses of old who sought the Lord for years in the desert, Saul went into the desert of Arabia to spend 3yrs. learning from the Lord Himself. It was in the quietness of the desert that he communed and learned of his Lord.

- He did not confer with flesh and blood to learn about Jesus (Gal.1:16).
- He did not go up to Jerusalem to confer with the apostles about Jesus (Gal.1:17).
- He went into Arabia where he stayed for about three years (Gal.1:17).
- After Arabia, he returned to Damascus (Gal.1:17).

9:26 And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. After coming from Damascus (the second time), Saul has now come to Jerusalem and tried repeatedly to join himself with the other disciples, but they were all afraid of him; suspicious, thinking he was an imposter trying to work into their circle to spy upon them, and or identify all the disciples so he could arrest them. They rejected him, believing that he was not a disciple; not one of them. They did not believe his testimony, and would not accept him.

9:27 But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. But, there was one who befriended Saul, by the name of Barnabas. Apparently, he sat down with Saul and listened to him relate his experiences with Christ. He took Saul to the apostles and declared three things:

- Saul's conversion—that he had actually seen the Lord on the Road to Damascus.
- The Lord had actually spoken to Saul.
- Saul had been preaching boldly in Damascus of Christ.

You never know who God will use to connect you with others.

9:28 And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. So, Saul was finally accepted. Peter was convinced and invited him to stay with him. Saul stayed fifteen glorious days, fellowshiping and going all over Jerusalem with him (Gal.1:18).

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9:29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. Saul preached boldly in the Lord's name in Jerusalem, disputing against the Greek speaking Jews; Jews who had been born and brought up in Greece. The opposition was fierce, because he had previously aroused and joined the Grecian Jews to murder Stephen. Saul was in complete agreement with the stoning of Stephen. They refused to surrender to the One called Jesus. They rebelled, arguing with Saul and became so infuriated with him that they determined to assassinate him.

9:30 Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus. The believers heard about the plot, and then took Saul to Caesarea and instructed him to flee to his hometown of Tarsus. It was there that Paul was to begin reaching the Gentiles of the world.

9:31 Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied. In this verse there are essentials to church growth.

- They were at rest and peace. They had peace inwardly, although there was persecution outwardly. One great period of persecution had ended and the church had weathered its first great storm; withstood its first great critics, and won its first great adversary, Saul of Tarsus. The churches throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria were in a continuous state of peace and rest.
- They were edifying and building each other up.
- They were walking in the fear of the Lord. Thus, the local assembly of God's people lived in reverence; stood in awe, worship, and obedience before the Lord.
- They were walking under the control of the Spirit; (*"in the comfort of the Holy Ghost"*), thus, they multiplied by leaps and bounds.

SYNOPSIS:

9:32-35 Now, Peter's healing ministry comes forth. Acts 9 will describe two healing miracles performed by Peter. Peter travels to the town of Lydda, and there he met a man named Aeneas, paralyzed and bedridden for eight years. **The first miracle:** Peter declares to him that Jesus has healed him, and to rise and make his bed. He was healed instantly. And all the people living in Lydda and Sharon turned to the Lord when they saw Aeneas walking around. He lets them know that it was of Jesus Christ. I would also call this a miracle: lives changed to accept Jesus Christ.

9:36 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. *"Joppa"* was a Mediterranean coastal city about ten miles northwest of Lydda. Its seaport brought commercial goods from all over the ancient world. It was...

- Seaport for Jerusalem, the capital of Israel.
- The only seaport that could provide shelter between Egypt and Mt. Carmel.

And we will find that Joppa is the city where • Peter raised Dorcas from the dead, • and was given the vision that led to the evangelizing of the Gentiles (Cornelius – Acts 10).

There also was a Christian community in which a **certain disciple** was named—Tabitha or Dorcas.

- Two names were given for her: Tabitha, which was her Jewish or Hebrew name; and
- Dorcas, which was her Greek name meaning gazelle (or doe or deer) which is a most beautiful

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creature. The gazelle is known for its slender features, its grace and loveliness, and its bright eyes and tender looks.

She had endeared herself to that Christian community because she was **a woman full of good works and almsdeeds**. She was deeply committed to Christ; a very faithful and devoted disciple.

- She was full of **good works** meaning serving and doing all kinds of good to all who needed help.
- She was full of **almsdeeds** meaning giving charitable gifts to the needy. The emphasis is that she gave things, gifts which she herself made. She must have been wealthy, for she was buying material to make clothing, apparently for a large number of the needy, and helping a large number of widows.

9:37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber. It came to pass that Tabitha/Dorcas had fallen ill and died. We never know why some good people die before they have finished their task God has given them to do. God always know our time, for He says our times are in his hands. So, Tabitha/Dorcas was prepared, meaning (bathed her body) for burial in acceptance with the Jewish customs of "*purification of the dead*", and laid (placed) her in the upper chamber (room).

9:38 And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not delay to come to them. A great hope and desperate appeal was stirred within them, for they had heard about Peter healing Aeneas and hoped Peter would come and perform an even greater miracle on their friend. Lydda where Peter performed the miracle was only ten miles from Joppa, so they decided to send two men to urge Peter to come. It seems the Lord was not through with Peter and not through with Tabitha/Dorcas. New believers still needed to grow and mature in the Lord.

- These disciples had enough faith not to bury Tabitha/Dorcas.
- They had enough faith to go for Peter and ask him to come, and to come quickly without delay.

9:39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. Peter did quickly arise from Lydda and came with them to Joppa where he will perform his **second miracle**. But all the glory goes to Jesus Christ. Upon arriving, the men brought him into the upper chamber where Tabitha/Dorcas was laid, and all the widows stood weeping and displaying the coats and garments in which Dorcas had made for them while she was alive with them. The memory and her legacy lives on.

9:40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning him to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up. Peter began to put out or send them all out; including the other mourners out of the room, as he had seen his Master do before He raised Jairus' daughter from her deathbed. Jesus would utter a short sentence—"*Talitha cumi*" *Little girl arise* (Mk.5:41). And so Peter kneeled down and prayed to God. We can't go pass the part about prayer. He put them out of the room because he had to commune with the Lord. This called for silence and solitude with the Master. Because if it was just Peter raising someone from the dead, he probably would have everyone there to see what was going on. OH NO! Only God can raise the dead! Now, after praying, Peter turns to the body saying "*Tabitha arise*", calling her by her name. She then opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. That tells me that the dead will rise again. That tells me that Jesus will call us by name or some other kind of way (*the trumpet will sound*), and we will get up (*those that have believed in Him*). I Thessalonians 4:16 *...and the dead in Christ will rise first*. I can only imagine!

9:41 And he gave her his hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented

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her alive. Peter extended his hand to Tabitha /Dorcas, and lifted her up. That means he took her by the hand just as Jesus did in Matthew 9:25. The touching of a dead body, according to the law, Numbers 19:16 was defiling. However, a miracle was truly being performed and she was the proof of it, for Peter called the saints and widows to present her to them alive and well! There is no denying this with their very own eyes.

9:42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord. The miracle they had witnessed was broadcast throughout all of Joppa. And because it was done, it was known by many, causing many to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Hallelujah! The results of raising the dead were twofold:

1. Many believed.

9:43 And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner. So, Peter lingered many days in Joppa with one known as Simon a tanner. Simon was a tanner which dealt with the hides (skins) of dead animals and their blood. The Jews considered that type of work as unclean on account as his constant contact with dead animals. Peter's lodging there showed to some extent he did not adhere to the Jewish prejudice and was already beginning to break down those prejudices.

2. A tremendous door was open for Peter to freely evangelize the area. It was here in Joppa that God was to give him the vision that led to the carrying of the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 10:10).

SUMMARY:

10The Lord then appeared to a disciple named Ananias in a vision. 11He was told to go to Straight street to the house of Judas called Saul for he's praying. 12Saul also has seen in the vision that Ananias is coming to lay his hand upon him that he might receive his sight. 13Ananias was reluctant to go because he had heard things about him 14and his purpose for coming to Damascus. 15But God told him to go because Saul would be a chosen vessel for Christ. He is to bear Christ's name before the Gentiles, before kings, and the children of Israel. 16God would show him how he must suffer for His name's sake.

Ananias did as he was commanded by the Lord God Almighty; laid hands on him and called him "*Brother Saul, saying, the Lord sent me*" Just like that, he was saved and is now a brother in the body of Christ; called by God. You have to remember that Saul had been fasting and praying for three days, indicating he had believed in the Lord and was calling on Him. Saul was filled with the Holy Ghost. After three days of temporary blindness, "*Immediately*" meaning instant and quickly, the scales that had covered his eyes have fallen off, and Saul has now instantly regained his sight. He arose and was baptized with water as an outward expression of his conviction; different from verse 17, filled with the Holy Spirit to be empowered for service. My question to you: "*Was Saul (Paul) saved on the Damascus Road, or when he was infilled with the Holy Spirit?*" The question is debated by various scholars. I'll let you discuss it. And does the Spirit enter in before He fills you with power? ²¹With Saul's sight restored, he was baptized and resumed eating. For some days Saul remained in Damascus and began immediately preaching Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God in the synagogues, to the amazement of those who knew he had come to the city to arrest Christians. But Saul increased more in strength confounding the Jews (**9:10-22**).

²¹http://executableoutlines.com/acts/acts_09.htm
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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After many days had passed, during which Saul apparently spent about 3 years in Arabia. But now, Saul barely escapes a plot to kill him by the Jews in Damascus. The disciples lowered him down the wall in a basket. He went to Jerusalem and tried to join himself to the apostles there, yet they feared him. But afterwards, Barnabas spoke in his behalf. Saul was accepted by the brethren (**9:23-28**).

Saul spoke boldly of the name of Christ and disputed with the Grecians. Therefore, another plot by the Jews to kill Saul prompted the brethren to bring him to Caesarea and send him on to Tarsus, his hometown. The churches in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria then enjoyed peace and grew as they walked in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit (**9:29-31**).

²²Ten miles northwest of Lydda in the seaport town of Joppa, there was another group of Christians. One of the church's members was Dorcas, a gracious woman filled with love and compassion for the poor. She had died and when the Christians heard that Peter was only 10 miles away in Lydda, they sent for him (**9:36-38**). When he arrived in the upper room where Dorcas had been prepared for burial, he found a group of weeping widows (**9:39**). Peter put them all out. Having prayed, he took Dorcas' hand and commanded her to come to life. When she saw Peter she sat up, and he presented her alive to the waiting people (**9:40-41**). When Peter healed Aeneas, he did not say, "I heal you"; he said, "Jesus Christ heals you." Before he spoke to Dorcas (known as Tabitha in Hebrew), Peter prayed. It was not his own power on which Peter called; it was the power of Jesus Christ. This miracle became known throughout the area, and was the cause of many turning to Christ (**9:42**). Peter stayed in Joppa for awhile with Simon the tanner (**9:43**). (**9:36-43**).

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²² <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/peter-used-by-god-in-joppa-to-heal-beloved-dorcas/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

ACTS 10:1-48[NEXT](#) 11:1-30**SYNOPSIS:**

10:1-8 ²³The **tenth chapter of Acts** tells a story that is one of the great turning points in the history of the Church. For the first time a Gentile is to be admitted into its fellowship. Up the sea coast about thirty miles from Joppa was a town by the name of Caesarea. A soldier, who was captain over one hundred men, lived there. He was a Gentile, however, instead of worshiping many gods as most Gentiles did, Cornelius had learned of the One true God. He also taught his family in the knowledge which he himself had received, though he was not saved (**10:1**). He was also a generous religious man who gave much money to help others (**10:2**). One day, as he was praying, an angel appeared and spoke his name (**10:3**). Cornelius was afraid and said, "What is it, Lord (**10:4**)?" Perhaps "Lord" here means "Sir." The angel told Cornelius to send for Peter, who was at Simon the Tanner's house, by the sea side in Joppa (**10:5-6**). He would tell Cornelius what to do. When the angel had gone, the centurion called two of his trusted servants and a soldier, and explained to them everything that had happened (**10:7-8**). Then he told them to go to Joppa and bring Peter back to him.

10:9-18 ²⁴Before Cornelius could be welcomed into the Church, Peter had to learn a lesson. Strict Jews believed that God had no use for the Gentiles. Sometimes they even said that help must not be given to a Gentile woman in childbirth, because that would only bring another Gentile into the world. The next day after Cornelius' vision, while the three men were getting near Joppa, Peter went up on the flat roof of Simon's house to pray (**10:9**). While he waited for the noon meal to be served, he saw the heavens opened and a great sheet let down by four corners. In this sheet were all sorts of ceremonially unclean animals being let down from heaven (**10:10-12**). Suddenly a voice commanded: "*Rise, Peter; kill and eat*" (**10:13**). Facing a choice, Peter responded, "*No Lord, I have never eaten anything common or unclean*" (**10:14**). The Lord spoke to him again and said, "*Do not call what God has cleansed unclean*" (**10:15**). The sheet was taken up toward heaven, and let down again three times; then it was taken up (**10:16**). Peter had lived as an orthodox Jew all of his life. The "*clean and unclean foods*" belief was a major problem between Jews and Gentiles in that day. God was not just changing Peter's diet, but his entire program. The Jew was not "*clean*," and the Gentile "*unclean*," but both Jew and Gentile were "*unclean before God*." While Peter was mulling over the vision he had seen, there were men sent by Cornelius inquiring for Simon's house standing at the very doorway (**10:17**). They called out to inquire if Simon, whose other name was Peter, was staying there (**10:18**).

10:19 While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. God's timing is perfect, and the three men at Peter's doorway arrived just when Peter was thinking and wondering about the meaning of the vision. You know how you mull things over in your mind. What's the meaning of this? Well, it is the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us to show all things clearly. It was the power of the Holy Spirit that even brought these three men to Peter. They didn't just come on their own. Cornelius was also led after seeing a vision as the angel of God spoke to him. Don't we say all the time "*I was led by the Spirit?*"

10:20 Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them. Now,

²³ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/cornelius--a-religious-man-on-a-mission-for-god/>

²⁴ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/gods-gentile-message-to-peter-through-visions/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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he is to get up from the roof of the house and go downstairs to the door, and go with them, without doubting. God is not looking for a debate from Peter, just obedience. It is the Lord who sends His servants, not the servants sending themselves because God always prepare the way for good to come forth. Mind you, the Holy Spirit does not inform Peter as to what the men wanted. He was just to go with them in obedience.

10:21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?—Remember, the three men were inquiring and seeking his house (10:17), so when they come to him and he meets them he says *"I am he whom you seek."* Now, Peter gets a chance to ask why they have come.

10:22 And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee. Now, the men reveal and clarify why they have come to Peter. They came on *behalf of their master Cornelius "the centurion"—leader of 100 men in the Roman army. Immediately Peter knows that this man is a Gentile, but he listens. They go on to say that he's known as "a just man"—a pious and righteous officer—"one who fears God"—God-fearing; who reverences God; worships the true God —"of a good report"—he's well-spoken of by the whole Jewish nation; a man of high reputation; whose character can be vouched for among all the nation of the Jews. Cornelius was sent a warning from God where a holy angel instructed him to send for Peter to come to his house, so he could hear the words he had to say.*

10:23a Then called he them in, and lodged them. Peter invited the men to stay as guests for the night. Normally, Jews did not provide hospitality for Gentiles. It was not said, but understood, that anytime you invite guests into your home after a long trip, you either prepare a meal or ask are they hungry, or need water to drink. That's what a good host does. Peter was used to: • open the door of faith for the Jews in Acts 2; • open the door of faith to the Samaritans in Acts 8; and now, • to open the door to the Gentiles in Acts 10. The Gospel of Christ was to include everyone.

10:23b ...And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him. The next day Peter accompanied the three men and brought along six other brethren (believers) from Joppa to go to Caesarea. Peter knew he was treading troubled waters by associating with Gentiles. He sensed he would need witnesses to what he was doing; therefore, he prepared himself against any attack.

10:24 And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and he had called together his kinsmen and near friends. Cornelius was waiting on them as they entered Caesarea the next day. So, he called together his relatives and intimate friends, so they might receive Peter's message.

10:25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. Cornelius fell at Peter's feet, worshipping him as he came in. Probably his reaction was evoked from the unusual character of vision which instructed Cornelius to seek Peter's counsel. He didn't know who Peter was, only knowing that God said send for Peter.

10:26 But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man. Being a strict Jew, Peter could not allow Cornelius to behave in such a manner, and commanded him to stand up; and letting him know that he himself was only a man.

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10:27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together. When Peter was invited into Cornelius's house he undoubtedly did not expect to find a great company of kinsmen and friends of the centurion.

10:28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Peter's immediate thought was to justify his presence among them and give adequate explanation for this apparent breach of Jewish law. Jew and Gentile had no ordinary social intercourse between each other. Thus it would be highly unlikely for Peter to enter the house of a Roman centurion. Because of the Levitical dietary restrictions, a Jew would least likely find himself eating at the table of a Gentile, *"or come unto one of another nation."* Thus, Peter is saying that it is highly unlikely that he would dine in the household of an *"uncircumcised Philistine."* What then was his reason for doing so? *"God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean."* Hence, Peter immediately began to tell Cornelius what God had showed him in his vision. God was teaching Peter that Gentiles represented by the unclean animals were acceptable to Him and were to be as much a part of His church as were Jews.

10:29 Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?— Therefore, without objection, Peter came as the Lord sent for him. Now, Peter wants to know from Cornelius his reason for sending for him.

10:30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,— In answer to the apostle's question, Cornelius goes on to explain that four days ago he was fasting until this hour. At the ninth hour he prayed in his house, and, behold, a man stood before him in bright clothing. It was an angel of the Lord who spoke unto him.

10:31 And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God. The angel of the Lord let him know that during his fasting and praying, his prayer was heard. Not only because of the fasting and praying, but also his giving; his offerings; his donations; his contributions; his assistance; his charities has been remembered before the sight of God; God has taken notice. Hallelujah! The heart of a good man is not unnoticed.

10:32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of one Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee. The angel of the Lord gives instructions to Cornelius: *"Send to the house of one Simon a tanner in Joppa and request a man named Simon, whose surname is Peter, and when he comes to Caesarea he will speak unto you."*

10:33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God. Cornelius did not hesitate, but immediately dispatched his representatives to bring Peter to his house. Cornelius still does not understand exactly why this has happened, but he shows a complete readiness to receive whatever Peter has to say. Peter now has a captive audience to hear what the Lord has commanded by the power of the Holy Spirit to speak.

- It is evident that God has led both Peter and Cornelius to this very hour.
- It is evident in this transitional Book of Acts that He has also led both the Jews and Gentiles to this very hour.

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- It is evident that the Gentile writer Luke recognized the importance of this hour because of the space he dedicated to it in his narrative.

For the first time Jew and Gentile could sit down with some measure of commonality.

10:34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:—

Peter, now, realizes that God has no respecter of persons. It probably took him off his feet to even say this. It showed how big God is and how little he was. It showed how racial the Jews were. The point is that God has no favorites and no prejudice against anyone. He shows no partiality or discrimination whatsoever. He does not accept a person because of nationality, race, social standing, or class—appearance, possessions or positions, abilities or works, health or stature.

10:35 But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. Also God

has no respecter of nations. Two things make a person acceptable to God, as Peter covered them both in this verse. 1) Fearing God and 2) Working righteousness (to be right and to do right). There are those who stress *being righteous* and neglect *doing righteousness*. This leads to two serious errors.

1. False security. It causes a person to stress that he is saved and acceptable to God because he has believed in Jesus Christ. But he neglects doing good and living as he should. He neglects obeying God and serving man.
2. Loose living. It allows one to go out and do pretty much as he desires. He feels secure and comfortable in his faith in Christ. He knows that what he does may affect his fellowship with God and other believers, but he thinks his behavior will not affect his salvation. He thinks that no matter what he does he is still acceptable to God.

The problem with this is that it is a false righteousness. Righteousness in the Bible means *being righteous* and *doing righteousness*. The Bible knows nothing of being acceptable to God without living righteously.

There are those who stress *doing righteousness* and neglect *being righteous*. Thus, this also leads to two serious errors.

1. Self-righteousness and legalism. It causes a person to stress that he is saved and acceptable to God because he does good. He works and behaves morally and keeps certain rules and regulations. He does the things a Christian should do by obeying the main laws of God. But he neglects the basic law: the law of love and acceptance—that God loves him and accepts him not because he does good, but because he loves and trusts the righteousness of Christ.
2. Being judgmental and censorious. A person who stresses that he is righteous (acceptable to God) because he keeps certain laws often judges and censors others. He feels that rules and regulations can be kept, for He keeps them. Therefore, anyone who fails to keep them is judged, criticized, and censored.

The problem with this is that it, too, is a false righteousness. Again, righteousness in the Bible is both *being righteous* and *doing righteousness*. The Bible knows nothing of being acceptable to God without being made righteous in Christ Jesus.

10:36 The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of

all:)— Peter goes on to say that 1) God sent His Word to Israel. Israel was the first nation to receive God's Word. Salvation is of the Jews. 2) God sent His Word to Israel by Jesus Christ, God's very own Son preaching peace. However, Peter lets Cornelius know that God's Word was not meant for Israel alone. Jesus Christ did not come just for Israel's salvation. Now, he knows that God is no respecter of persons. God accepts people from every nation; all those who fear Him and work righteousness. Therefore, in summary...

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1. Christ is Lord of all

What was once impossible is now possible. What was once unacceptable is now, by the grace of God, acceptable. What was once unheard of is now being boldly spoken by Peter. Gentiles may actually be saved in the same way that Jews have been saved.

10:37 That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;—

2. Peter declared that Jesus Christ had been talking about the Word throughout all Judea.

3. Peter said that Jesus Christ began to preach God's Word in Galilee right after John's ministry of baptism.

Peter told Cornelius, *"You know you have heard the Word."* Think how many hear and sit under the gospel today and pay little if any attention to it. Jesus Christ had travelled and preached the gospel everywhere, and He was the topic of conversation upon everyone's lips. They were without excuse. So it is today with those who have heard the gospel—they are without excuse.

10:38 How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power in a way no other person has ever been anointed. The Holy Spirit was given without measure to Christ. *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel..."* Lk.4:18-19. *"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power..."* Acts 10:38. Jesus Christ did not come nor was He anointed to debate theories and theology with the ministers and priests of His day. He was anointed to *"go about doing good and helping people by delivering them from the oppressions of the devil."* Why? For God was with Him. God the Father and God the Holy Spirit approved His ministry Lk.3:22; Jh.9:1-38.

I have to put this in: How did Peter know these things? Well verse 39 says *"And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree."* Peter and the earliest believers saw and knew Him. Therefore, as a witness, he knew all things because he was there with Jesus.

SYNOPSIS:

10:39-48 Peter, and the rest of the apostles, were witnesses, even eyewitnesses of all that Jesus did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him up on the third day and made him to appear, not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses; who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead (**10:39-41**). And Jesus commanded them to preach to the people and to testify that he is the One appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. And to Jesus all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in Jesus receives forgiveness of sins through Jesus' name (**10:42-43**). And while Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the Word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. They were even hearing them speak in tongues and extolling God (**10:44-46**). Peter declared, *"Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"* And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. The people then asked Peter to remain longer (days) (**10:47-48**).

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SUMMARY:

Peter was thinking about the meaning of the *vision*. He was used, to open the door of faith for the Jews in **ACTS 2**; he was used, to open the door of faith to the Samaritans in **ACTS 8**; and now he was used, to open the door to the Gentiles in **ACTS 10**. The Gospel of Christ was to include everyone. Peter invited the men to stay as guests for the night. Normally Jews did not provide hospitality for Gentiles. The next day he accompanied them and some other believers from Joppa to Caesarea (**10:19-23**).

Peter, a Jew lived in Joppa, but, the next day he entered Caesarea by invitation of Cornelius, a Gentile. Cornelius called together all his relatives and friends upon Peter's arrival. He fell at Peter's feet and worshipped him, but Peter told him to stand up, for he was only a man. And Peter began to talk with them about the Jewish law which didn't allow them to keep company or visit Gentiles. But God has shown him that he must not consider anyone as unclean, common or unsuitable. He agreed without objection to come as the Lord revealed and now he needs to know why he came (**10:24-29**).

Cornelius reveals his story to Peter: Four days ago he had been fasting and praying in his house when an angel of the Lord appeared unto him and told him that his prayers and alms have come up before the Lord. He was to send for Peter and he would speak to him. So Cornelius tells Peter that whom he sought is here with him as God commanded (**10:30-33**).

Peter opened his message up with "*Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons.*" He accepts every nation that fears him, and works righteousness. God's very own Son was sent to the children of Israel to preach peace. But, because He is Lord of all, Peter lets Cornelius know that God's Word was not meant for Israel alone. Jesus Christ did not come just for Israel's salvation. Jesus Christ began to preach God's Word after John's ministry of baptism in Galilee and throughout all Judea. Jesus went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil for God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost; for God was with Him (**10:34-38**).

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11:1 And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. The church's early vision was narrow and traditional, which caused controversy to arise when someone over-steps boundaries. That controversial door has been opened. God has allowed the Gentiles to receive Salvation by sending Peter to speak the Word to them. The apostles and brethren had heard about Peter's preaching mission to the Gentiles and about them receiving the Word of God (even the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues). The news was bound to travel fast, for it was unheard of that a Jew would fellowship and eat with an idolatrous Gentile. And on top of that, Peter had baptized the Gentiles without first requiring them to be circumcised.

11:2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,—Therefore, when Peter came into Jerusalem, he was confronted by the apostles and brethren who were of the circumcision. They contended with him, meaning to stand against; to take an opposite position; to take sides against; to oppose. Remember, most, if not all the believers at Jerusalem were Jews. They were circumcised as small children and had been committed to the Law of Moses since childhood. In their minds Christ had only added new teachings to their existing law and religion. Therefore, if a person wished to accept Christ, he had to become a Jew first: be circumcised • commit himself to the Law of Moses • and observe the ceremonies and rituals of Judaism. Then, and only then could he receive Christ and be baptized. Then, and only then could he be accepted into the church. Some hang onto their religious form, ceremony, rituals, and regulations. These are placed before the lives and salvation of men.

- This creates legalism.
- This creates prejudice, discrimination, and blinds us to God's purpose to reach out to all men in salvation.

The church's mission is to reach both the dirty and the clean; the lower and the upper; the lesbian and the homosexual. The disciple is called to do the Lord's Will to reach and evangelize the world and if necessary at times to break tradition of the way they've always done it. When you do that, you can expect criticism and contention from legalist and traditionalist. Nevertheless, the true disciple of Christ remains faithful even as Peter did. He did what God commanded to reach out and share Christ with a word filled for desperate needs. Do we share or do we bottle the gospel up and keep it to ourselves; do we monopolize it where no one else knows about Christ?—never reaching out or sharing Christ—staying in the four walls of the church building?

11:3 Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. They looked at it as if Peter had over-stepped his bounds. First, he went unto uncircumcised men, and second, he ate with them. Peter had gone contrary to the beliefs of the Law of Moses and their legalistic, traditional, and monopolized religion. They failed to grasp:

- That Christ was the fulfillment of the law.
- That Christ had kept the law perfectly, thereby becoming the Ideal Man, the Perfect Pattern of what every man should be.
- That Christ was not only the embodiment of the law, but so much more—the very embodiment of God Himself.
- That Christ as the Son of God, and as the Ideal Man is the One to whom all men are now to look and obey.

This was the great battle: some Jews never broke away from legalistic religion which built barriers and walls

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for others to cross, causing separatism and division. All through the history of the church, extending from the early church up to the present time, there have been some who have refused to follow Christ alone.

11:4 But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them, saying,— Peter had to give an answer; he had to defend himself in his decision. It had to be clearly explained and understood in sequence to those contending with him. He merely prepared and planned out from the beginning, and explained it step by step of what had occurred.

11:5 I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:—²⁵We can say that Peter had a three-part defense, as he presented three pieces of evidence:

1. The vision from God (verses 5-11).

Peter's first defense is to be straight-forward. In no way did Peter shrink in giving complete details of what had occurred. First, while praying to God in Joppa he fell into a trance and saw a vision of a certain vessel descending like a great sheet let down from heaven by its four corners coming to him.

11:6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. Looking at the sheet he fastened his eyes on this unbelievable object and its content. He saw four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

11:7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat. Peter then heard and was shaken by a voice that said *"Arise Peter, slay and eat."* God is telling Peter to slay and eat any of these four-footed animals, etc.

11:8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth. But, Peter says *"Not so Lord"*; making sure that they understood that it was God who is speaking to him. For nothing common or unclean; unholy or impure has at any time entered into his mouth.

11:9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. Well, the voice from heaven comes back again to answer Peter: *"What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common."* *"Don't say it isn't right when God declare it is."*

11:10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven. Evidently Peter was hard to convince because this was done three times. The sheet with all the creatures upon it, by the same hands that let it down, drew it back up; disappeared up into heaven.

11:11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me. This is where God works out all things well, for at the same time, immediately there were three men already at his house sent from Caesarea for him.

11:12 And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me,— and we entered into the man's house:— Second defense:

²⁵ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/peters-defense-to-the-legalists/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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2. The witness of the Spirit (verses 12-15, 17).

It was the Holy Spirit who told Peter to go with them; follow these Gentiles, doubting nothing; without hesitation; and to make no distinction or difference. Peter had witnesses to back him up. They would substantiate his account of this. These six brethren accompanied him to the man's (Cornelius') house, who also had been praying, and had been prepared by his own vision from the Lord to receive Peter. They were there to vouch and verify the event.

11:13 And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter;— Cornelius was in Caesarea also having a vision, of an angel standing in his house, telling him to send men to Joppa for Simon, whose surname is Peter.

11:14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. Peter would be the one to tell Cornelius and his household words of salvation. Everything that happened to Peter in opening the door to the Gentiles was of God, initiated and controlled by God. Peter was merely the instrument God used. It was God's Will; God's work, God's activity, and God's carrying the gospel to the world (Gentiles) not Peter's. But, the importance of Peter preaching the Word to Cornelius and his house can never be overstressed.

11:15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. As soon as Peter began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on Cornelius and his house as it did on Peter and the 120 disciples at the beginning in the Upper Room.

11:16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Third defense:

3. The witness of the Word (v.16)

As according to the Word of God, Peter remembered the testimony of John. *"John indeed baptized with water but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost"* (John 1:26, 33).

11:17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?— Finally, Peter was convinced of another truth: he could not withstand (stand against) God. Peter had nothing to do with giving the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles. The gift of the Holy Spirit is God's doing, just as to the 120 in the Upper Room who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. And one thing for sure, no man is going to stop God from doing what He purposes to do.

11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. And in conclusion, no one was ready to debate this issue; no rebuttal after hearing all Peter had to say. In the minds of the Jewish Christians, the evangelization of Gentiles would mean a drastic reappraisal of their own position before God. They would have to first question the direct leading of God the Father, provision of salvation by God the Son, and the confirming signs of God the Spirit. Absolutely, no one was ready to do that, so they held their peace, and began to glorify God saying, *"Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."* They were convicted and agreed that God grants repentance to all men. The door that was cracked by Peter was crashed by Paul. Three things in reference to repentance:

1. Repentance is the gift of God and of the Holy Spirit.
2. Repentance is unto life, that is, leads to life.

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3. God has thrown open the door of salvation to the world (Gentiles).

This was a turning point for the early church. They had to accept those who God had chosen, even the Gentiles.

SUMMARY:

²⁶Peter wisely had taken some Hebrew Christians with him when he went to Cornelius' house, because it was not long before he was to be confronted for ministering to Gentiles (11:1-3). When he returned to Jerusalem he was met by members of the strong legalistic party in the church of Judea, and was rebuked by them for fellow-shiping and eating with them. Peter had nothing to fear as he faced these Jewish Christians, because he had only followed orders from the Lord. He simply told the whole story from beginning to end (11:4-10). Peter tells how three men were standing at his house in Judea from Caesarea (11:11) and the Spirit told him to go with them. He presented six witnesses to verify the fact (11:12). Cornelius, at the same time in Caesarea is having a vision, of an angel standing in his house, telling him to send men to Joppa for Simon, whose surname is Peter who would tell him words that would save him and his household. And when Peter spoke, the Holy Spirit fell on them and then Peter baptized them with water (11:13-16). Since God had given them (the Gentiles) the equal gift as those (Jews) who have already believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, he could not stand against God. When the legalistic party heard this, they became silent and glorified God saying that God had also granted repentance unto the Gentiles (11:17-18). (11:1-18).

SYNOPSIS:

11:19-30 Because of the leading of God's Spirit in Peter, the Gentiles in Caesarea are now believers in Christ receiving the filling of the Holy Spirit, water baptism, and God granting repentance (11:13-18). The Christian believers had fled and were scattered abroad because of persecution during the martyrdom of Stephen. They traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch to scatter the Good News, but only to the Jews, but some preached Jesus to the Grecians. And a great number of these became believers. "*The Lord's hand was upon them*" meant that He was pleased with the gospel being preached (11:19-21). This news traveled to the church in Jerusalem and this time Barnabas was sent to help the new converts. He is known as the "*son of Consolation*" or "*Encourager*" for when he saw the grace of God, he rejoiced and encouraged them all to remain and stay close to the Lord, whatever the cost. Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and faith. And as a result a large number of people were added to the Lord (11:22-24). Barnabas then goes to Tarsus to search for Saul and upon finding him he brought him to Antioch for a full year teaching a number of the new converts that were first call "*Christians*." The believers at Antioch were the first to be called "*Christians*" (11:25-26). Prophets came down from Jerusalem and one name Agabus stood up in one of the meetings by the Spirit and predicted a great famine coming to the land of Israel in the reign of Claudius Caesar. In response to this prophetic announcement, the believers at the church of Antioch determined to send relief; set aside a certain percentage of their income to collect contributions for the brethren who lived in Judea. The relief fund was to be sent to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul who were to manage the affairs of the congregation (11:27-30).

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²⁶ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/peters-defense-to-the-legalists/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

12:1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. This King Herod was Herod Agrippa I, the son of Aristobulus and grandson of Herod the Great. His sister was Herodias, who was responsible for the death of John the Baptist. Herod, partly Jewish moved against, vexing the Christians. This word "vex" or "*persecute*" means to oppress, to torment, do harm, to do evil against.

12:2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. As Herod attacked the church, he went after the leaders. James the brother of John was killed with the sword by Herod. James was the first of the apostles to fall victim to martyrdom. Stephen was the first deacon to fall victim to martyrdom. Christ had told James he would suffer as a martyr. "...*My cup you shall indeed drink...*" Matt.20:23. Although this promise was made to both James and John, John outlived all the other apostles, but nevertheless suffered.

12:3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)— Herod saw an opportunity to please the Jewish leaders who opposed them. Apparently, the conversion of Cornelius and the founding of churches throughout the Gentile world upset some to the Jews to no end. This was a shrew approach on Herod's part, for by persecuting and seeking to destroy the church...

- it would keep Jews quiet, keep them supporting Rome's policies.
- it would solidify his own prestige and power with the authorities back in Rome.

So, he sought an opportunity to go further by arresting Peter. Then it was the days of "*Unleavened Bread*", which is often called "*Passover*" because only unleavened bread was eaten during these seven days immediately following Passover. More Jews were in the city than usual and thereby, Herod could impress most of them by arresting him at that time.

12:4 And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people. "*Quaternions*", a group of four soldiers whom Peter was handed over to when he was apprehended and put him in prison. He was probably guarded by sixteen soldiers—four soldiers at a time served two separate three hour watches a twenty-four hour stretch. One wrist of the prisoner was usually chained to the wrist of a guard. The reason for the extra security with Peter was that of the huge throng of pilgrims visiting the city during the Passover. In the midst of the mass confusion within the city, Herod felt some of Peter's friends might attempt a rescue.²⁷ "*Easter*" is never mentioned in the original Scriptures. The Greek word that the King James Version translates as "*Easter*" is actually the word "*Pascha*" (*Hebrew: Pesach*) which means "*Passover*." It was during an annual Passover celebration that Jesus was crucified at Jerusalem. Passover is an Annual Jewish religious celebration instituted by God (Leviticus 23:5). So, Peter was heavily guarded as they intended to bring him out to the people after Passover.

12:5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God

²⁷ <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/edn-t019.html>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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for him. Herod's plan was to execute Peter, but the believers were praying for Peter's safety and sovereign deliverance. As he was kept in prison, prayer without ceasing (fervent, continuous prayer) was going on by the believers unto God for him. The picture captivates the church stretched out, prostrate before God, earnestly and fervently; not letting up; intense prayers crying out to God. As we will find out, Peter was saved. Why was James not? Believers have to remember that God knows the day when our labor will be over and will be called home to be with the Him to receive the fruit of our labor. It was James' time. God's plan is always higher than our plans.

12:6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. This happens the night Peter is to be executed, the same night he slept between two soldiers bound with chains, and other guards standing at the prison gate.

12:7 And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. Behold, God sends an angel to the rescue. He comes and stands beside Peter. He's arrayed in shining light in the prison; a light in darkness to the rescue. It probably shocked Peter. The angel struck Peter on the side, raising him up saying "*Arise quickly*"; get up quickly, and at that time the chains fell off Peter's hands. What a miraculous deliverance!

12:8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. Without thought, Peter had to obey the angel. He was to prepare himself to leave the prison. Peter was still in a gaze. Four things were to happen:

1. Gird thyself; was told to get dressed and put on his clothes
2. Bind on thy sandals.
3. Cast thy garment about thee; throw his cloak round him.
4. Follow me (the angel).

12:9 And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. But, Peter thought he was having a vision and didn't quite know if what he saw was real; that he was in some semi-conscious state, so it took a moment to collect his thoughts, but he went out of the prison and followed the angel.

12:10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. After leaving the prison cell, Peter successfully, by the leading of the angel, made his way through the first and second wards (the two guarded checkpoints before the gate) that led to the city.

12:11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews. When Peter came to himself, he realized the Lord had sent an angel; hath delivered him out of the hand of Herod, and from all the spoiled anticipation the Jewish people were expecting to do to him.

SYNOPSIS:

12:20-24 ²⁸While at Caesarea, the people of Tyre and Sidon came to Herod to appeal for peace. When he gave them an oration, the people praised his speech as *"the voice of a god and not of a man."* Failing to give glory to God, an angel of the Lord struck Herod and he died. The word of God, however, grew and multiplied. Barnabas and Saul, having completed their ministry to the saints in Judea, returned from Jerusalem to Antioch accompanied by John Mark. At this point in Luke's narrative of the history of the church, the focus turns from the ministry of Peter to the ministry of Paul.

SUMMARY:

King Herod began to harass the church in Jerusalem and now the leaders. The first apostle to be killed was James, the brother of John with a sword. Herod saw that this would please the Jews. He proceeded to have Peter arrested and imprisoned in the days of Unleavened Bread. He was heavily guarded as he was delivered into the prison, guarded by four quaternions of soldiers to be kept after the Passover intending to bring him before the Jewish people. Peter was kept there, but prayer was made without ceasing by the church unto God on his behalf (**12:1-5**).

The time for Herod to bring Peter forth, that same night as Peter slept bound between two soldiers and the keepers at the door, behold, an angel of the Lord, standing brightly shining before Peter. He struck Peter on the side; arousing him, telling him to arise quickly. Peter's chains fell off his hands. He was told to gird himself, bind on his sandals; throw on his garment and follow him. Peter went out and followed him, as though he was seeing a vision. But as he passed the first and the second gate that led into the city, it opened by itself to them, and he went into the street. Immediately the angel departed from him, he then realized what had happened. It came to him that the Lord sent the angel that rescued and saved him out of Herod's hand, and from what the Jewish people were expecting to do to him. Through the plan of God, Herod's plan didn't come to fruition. An angel of the Lord freed Peter from prison (**12:6-11**).

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²⁸ http://executableoutlines.com/acts/acts_12.htm
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

INTRODUCTION:

The Book of Acts was written by Luke, a disciple who traveled with Paul on his missionary journeys (Acts 16:10). He reports on the actions of the apostles and the work of the Holy Spirit. ²⁹The Gospel of Luke was written with the intention of leading Theophilus, a lost man, to faith in Christ. Luke knew his relationship with Theophilus was an opportunity for helping him to place his faith in Christ. He became intentional by presenting the claims of Christ to him in written form so that Theophilus could have a clear understanding of all he needed to know about Jesus. He mentions him in Acts 1:1. Theophilus did become a follower of Jesus Christ!

³⁰**Chapter 13** marks a major division in the book of Acts. The first twelve chapters have recorded the events concerning the spread of Christianity in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria. Now we find where the Gospel is now taken — to the uttermost parts of the earth. At least forty cities are mentioned. Up to this point, Jerusalem had been the center of ministry, and Peter had been the key apostle. Now we see everything shifting to Antioch as the new center.

13:1 Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. The greatness of the Antioch church is seen in two facts.

1. The Antioch church was God's choice to become the mission and evangelistic center of the world. However, too many of its members (Jews) were too prejudiced and held too many feelings against the rest of the world (Gentiles). And they refused to repent of their traditional, formal approach to God. God had to bypass the Jerusalem church and raise up another church to become the center of His mission upon earth. This meant that some leaders other than the Jewish leaders had to be chosen to launch God's purpose on earth

2. The Antioch church was diverse; a church that reached out to everyone.

- **Barnabas** was a wealthy Cyprian, a man born and reared on the island of Cyprus.
- Simeon or Niger, the name "Niger" means black referring to the complexion of his skin. He was probably from Africa; also a Roman name showing that he moved about in Roman society.
- **Lucius of Cyrene** was probably one of the poor persecuted believers who had fled to Antioch for safety. If so, he was one of the founders of this great church.
- **Manaen** was of the higher class of society, being a foster brother to Herod Antipas. This is the Herod who had tried Jesus and murdered John the Baptist.
- **Saul of Tarsus** was one of the religionists of society mentioned last, as though he was considered least important among the leaders. However, Saul's deep love for the Lord and his driving commitment to the Lord's cause would soon lead God to use Saul beyond imagination. This is Saul of Tarsus, better known as Paul, and this would be Paul's first missionary trip.

²⁹ <https://www.uu.edu/centers/rglee/fellows/fall98/james.htm>

³⁰ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/barnabas-and-paul-commissioned-for-missionary-service/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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The point is: The missionaries were gifted with certain prophets and teachers. These men with their diversity of backgrounds and social standings show just how much the church at Antioch reached out to everyone throughout the community. It reached out to all classes of people, all needs, all nationalities, and races. No one was excluded; everyone was invited to Christ and welcomed into the fellowship and ministry of the church. The church at Antioch was a ministering church, a great outreach church to launch and support the first missionaries to the world.

- Prophets were given direct revelation from God by the Holy Spirit.
- Teachers were gifted in the interpretation of that revelation. This gift bears the responsibility given by God to understand and communicate the Word of God, to edify believers in the truths of God's Word.

13:2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. These leaders ministered meaning "*worshipped*" unto the Lord and fasted. While doing so, the special gift of the Holy Spirit imparts them to separate (set aside for God) Barnabas and Saul for the work He's called them to do. Note: God calls those who are faithful where they are.

- These missionaries were called while ministering and fasting. It was because of their faithfulness where they were that God knew He could trust these men to do greater things for Him. They would be the first missionaries to be members of a great church, a church that would reach out to all.
- These missionaries were called not by the church or leaders, but by the Holy Spirit. This calling through the utterance of the Holy Spirit sets Barnabas and Saul apart to never again be lay believers, but give their lives to serving God as full time world-wide evangelists or missionaries.

13:3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

- These first missionaries were sent and commissioned after the leaders of the church had finished fasting and praying, and laying their hands upon them.

13:4 So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. We see that the Holy Spirit is involved in all of this. They are sent forth by the Holy Ghost. They first had to board a ship at the port and sail to their designated place.

- The first missionaries were sent forth by the Holy Ghost. Yes, there was a particular place Barnabas and Saul were sent to--Cyprus.
 - **Seleucia** was a seaport of Antioch. They departed from this port.
 - **Cyprus** was the island in the northeast corner of the Mediterranean Sea. It was a stopping off place for the commercial fleets of that day. It was known as a resort area being blessed with a warm appealing climate. The population was primarily Greek and Phoenician, but there were a large number of Jews there as well.

13:5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister. So, they have reached Cyprus. Salamis was the largest city on the island of Cyprus, and they began to preach the Word of God. The city was the commercial center of Cyprus, boasting an excellent harbor. There were several synagogues there because of the large Jewish population. Preaching the Word of God in those synagogues, they have brought with them John Mark who came with them from Jerusalem to Antioch (Acts 12:25). John Mark was the cousin of Barnabas and was to serve as their minister or attendant, and he later would write the Gospel of Mark!

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13:6 And when they had gone through the Isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus:— Now the missionaries have embarked upon the city of Paphos, located on the western side of the island of Cyprus. Paphos was the official capital of the province Cyprus in those days. It was famous for its worship of Venus, the goddess of love or lustful immorality. This was the society from which Barnabas came. It was his home. And it was the first society Paul set out to penetrate with the gospel right after committing his life to world-wide missions. The island had been under Roman rule for about one hundred years when Paul arrived. In this city they found a sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Barjesus.

13:7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. The sorcerer was with the deputy in the country. Sergius Paulus was the governor, the deputy, the Roman proconsul of the country. The Roman proconsuls were appointed and controlled by the Roman Senate. Sergius Paulus was the highest ranking official; the man of power on the island. He had heard about the Word of God being preached by these missionaries and wanted to hear it for himself. He was a man seeking truth and he sent for Barnabas and Saul. If believers are not out witnessing, the world will never hear the Word of God's Truth!

13:8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Luke makes it known that the sorcerer's (verse 6) name Elymas. Elymas is an alternative name for BarJesus whose original Aramaic name means "*Son of Salvation*", but in fact was a "*magician*" and "*false prophet*." He was a religious priest, a Jew who was teaching the truth of monotheism, that there is only one God. But he was mixing the truth with philosophy, science, astrology, and the magic of eastern religions. As he sensed the governor was accepting the message of Barnabas and Saul, he attempted to sway Sergius Paulus from the faith. He did his best to keep the governor from turning to Christ.

13:9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him. At this point the name Saul is interchanged to Paul. Saul was his Jewish name, and Paul is his Roman or Gentile name. Up to now, he had been ministering primarily to the Jews, and while among them it was only natural to use his Jewish name, Saul. Because of the correlation to the governor's name, and the fact that they are now in distinctly Greek-influenced territory, Saul changes the outward usage of his name as a matter of cultural identification with the people whom he is trying to reach with the gospel. Paul's ministry to the Gentile world was being launched at this very moment. He was standing in the court of a Roman proconsul, not in a Jewish synagogue as the Holy Ghost was leading him to proclaim to a Gentile who needed Christ. From this point on he would become known as Paul, the great minister of the Gentiles. He was filled with the Holy Ghost and he set his eyes on Elymas who did not want the governor to receive the message of Christ. There is an enormous danger in trying to stop someone from accepting Christ.

13:10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?— Paul straight-out rebuked the sorcerer; the false prophet's perversion of the truth. He calls him out...

- "**O full of all subtilty**"— He was full of all craftiness, guile, trickery, deceit, seeking to bait and catch to enslave in error and untruth.
- "**and all mischief**"— He was full of all wickedness, fraud, villainy, and sleight of hand, moving about with ease and working against good; doing all kinds and forms of evil.
- "**child of the devil**"— He was being controlled by the devil; doing and working the will and works of the devil.

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- **"enemy of all righteousness"**— He was opposing all that is right and honest and just; opposing all that's pure and moral and clean.

Paul told him to cease taking *"the right ways of the Lord"* and perverting them and making them crooked.

13:11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

- The judgment comes from the Holy Ghost, not from Paul himself.
- The judgment upon the man was by the hand of the Lord.

Paul says look, the hand of the Lord is upon him and he will be blind. He will not see the sun for a season. So, he's struck with blindness (temporarily for a season). And immediately a mist and a darkness fell on him. Being stricken blind, he now seeks someone to lead him by the hand

13:12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

Amazed and stunned not only by the power of these missionaries of the Lord over the sorcerer, false prophet, but more so astonished at the doctrine of the Lord the proconsul believed. His belief was genuine and he did become a follower of Jesus.

SUMMARY:

The congregation in Antioch was blessed with a number of prophet-preachers and teachers: Barnabas, Simon, nicknamed Niger, Lucius the Cyrenian, Manaen, an advisor to the ruler Herod, and Saul. One day as they were worshiping God—they were also fasting as they waited for guidance—the Holy Spirit spoke: *"Take Barnabas and Saul and commission them for the work I have called them to do."* So they commissioned them. In that circle of intensity and obedience, of fasting and praying, they laid hands on their heads and sent them off. Sent off on their new assignment by the Holy Spirit, Barnabas and Saul went down to Seleucia and caught a ship for Cyprus. The first thing they did when they put in at (*went to*) Salamis was to preach God's Word in the Jewish meeting places. They had John along to help out as needed (**13:1-5**) MSG.

They went across the whole island to the city of Paphos. There they met a Jewish man named Barjesus who did magic. He was a false prophet. He always stayed close to Sergius Paulus, who was the governor and a very smart man. He invited Barnabas and Saul to come visit him, because he wanted to hear the message of God. But the magician Elymas (as Barjesus was called in Greek) spoke against them, trying to stop the governor from believing in Jesus. But Saul (also known as Paul), filled with the Holy Spirit, looked hard at Elymas and said, "You son of the devil, full of lies and all kinds of evil tricks! You are an enemy of everything that is right. Will you never stop trying to change the Lord's truths into lies? Now the Lord will touch you and you will be blind. For a time you will not be able to see anything—not even the light from the sun." Then everything became dark for Elymas. He walked around lost. He was trying to find someone to lead him by the hand. When the governor saw this, he believed. He was amazed at the teaching about the Lord (**13:6-12**) ERV.

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SYNOPSIS:

14:1-7 ³¹Luke continues his narration of events during Paul's first missionary journey. Upon arriving in Iconium, Paul and Barnabas again visited the local synagogue. Response to their message was positive among both Jews and Greeks, but soon opposition again came from unbelieving Jews. Even so, Paul and Barnabas stayed *"a long time"* in Iconium, speaking boldly and performing signs and wonders. Eventually the opposition became violent, forcing Paul and Barnabas to flee to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, for there was an attempt to attack and stone them. While in Lystra, Paul preached the Good News (14:1-7).

14:8 And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:— Lystra was much less civilized than most of the other areas evangelized by Paul. It was about twenty miles southwest of Iconium. While in Lystra, Paul preached the Good News of Christ's death and resurrection on the city streets to whomever would stop and listen. They happen to come to this very spot where there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked. Sometimes we have to go where the people are and not stay closed in the synagogue (our four-walled places of worship).

14:9 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,— And this man impotent in his feet, crippled from his mother's womb, and never had walked was in the crowd heard intently the Good News that his faith perceived he could be healed. *"Faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God"* Rom.10:17. The missionaries brought an atmosphere of healing. Paul preached Jesus, who was dead, but was able by the power of God to get up out of a grave, so we can be healed, set-free, and delivered! The man's heart was opened to the gospel, therefore...

- He was affected.
- He sensed that the message was from heaven.
- He experienced the stirring of faith in Christ.

The man actually had faith to be made whole. That means both to be cured and to be saved. As Paul preached the man's heart was stirred to believe and trust Jesus to heal and save him.

14:10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. Paul saw that the man had faith, thereby shouted with a loud voice: *Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.*" Note: Paul did not reach out for the man; he did not touch the man at all. He simply spoke with a loud voice. And in an instant the man that had been impotent in his feet, crippled from his mother's womb, and never had walked was healed because the evidence of faith manifested itself—and he walked! The power was of Christ and the faith was within the man.

14:11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. The people assumed and shouted that Paul and Barnabas must be gods.

³¹http://executableoutlines.com/acts/acts_14.htm
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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SYNOPSIS:

14:12-18 And they named (Barnabas) *"Zeus or Jupiter"*, and named (Paul) *"Hermes or Mercury"* because he was the chief speaker. Then the local priest of the Temple of *"Zeus or Jupiter"* prepared to offer sacrifices, but, the apostles tore their own clothes and cried out that they themselves were also men having like passions that preached the gospel and appealing that they turn from those vain things and turn to the living God who made the heaven and earth, the sea and all things therein, etc. Paul and Barnabas reminded the crowd that God had allowed nations to go their own way because they had previously rejected His way, but He did not leave Himself without a witness. Rain from heaven and fruitful seasons (crops) for example are evidence of His goodness bringing gladness in hearts. But Paul and Barnabas could scarcely restrain the people from sacrificing to them.

14:19 And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

After leaving Paphos, then to Pega (13:13-14) Barnabas and Paul came to Antioch and was allowed to speak in the synagogue recounting the history of God's deliverance of the Jewish nations from the time of Moses through the reign of David. However they were expelled out of their coasts. And they shook the dust off their feet and headed to Iconium (13:50-51). They went into the synagogue of the Jews at Iconium, but unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and made their minds evil against them (14:1-2) and there came division, citing a riot. Barnabas and Paul learn of this plot to attack and stone them. So they quickly fled for their lives to Lystra and Derbe (14:5-6).

So these certain Jews that had stirred up division in Antioch and Iconium followed Paul and Barnabas to Lystra. And not long afterwards they began persuading the crowds there to stone Paul, for he was the chief speaker. He was eventually stoned and left for dead. After the stoning, the body was dragged outside the city gates and left for savage dogs and beasts that ran wild through the wilderness. They assumed that Paul was dead when they stoned him.

14:20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. The disciples surrounded Paul, and he rose up and re-entered the city. Mind you these stones were large enough to crush a man's bones, yet small enough to be thrown with force. It would be a slow and painful death, unless hit in a vital spot. It had to be a miracle that Paul was not dead. And the next day Paul departed with Barnabas into Derbe. Derbe was about 30 miles from Lystra.

14:21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch,— There in Derbe is where they preached the gospel and made many disciples. They then returned again to all the cities they had recently been Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch threatened and physically attacked. They knew the danger they faced but, they were helping new believers grow to love God and each other.

14:22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. Their great call as they returned to these cities was first

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confirming the souls, meaning making firm and establishing true disciples of believers. Churches stand in danger of wavering, being lured away, returning to religious tradition, slipping back, not praying faithfully, being tempted by worldly friends, not studying the Scriptures consistently or not witnessing. And secondly, they needed to exhort and encourage them to continue in the faith, for true believers pass through many trials and afflictions while entering into the kingdom of God.

14:23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. To organize the churches, they needed Spirit-led leaders. They appointed and ordained elders in every church, had prayer and fasting, and commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. Just because church leaders are in place, they still need prayer; and much prayer! Therefore ordination involved—the appointment—praying and fasting—commending the minister to the Lord.

SUMMARY:

While in Lystra, Paul preached the Good News of Christ's death and resurrection on the city streets to whomever would stop and listen. They happen to come to this very spot where there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked. The lame man heard Paul speak and fastened his eyes upon him, and saw that he had faith to be healed. Paul commanded the man to stand up and walk, and he did what Paul commanded him to do. And the man leaped and walked. The people assumed and shouted out in their Lycaonian language, that Paul and Barnabas must be gods (**14:8-11**).

There were certain Jews that had stirred up division in Antioch and Iconium, and followed Paul and Barnabas to Lystra, and began to persuade the crowds there in Lystra to stone Paul. They stoned him, dragged him out of the city, and left him for dead. The disciples surrounded Paul, and he rose up and re-entered the city where he had been stoned. And the next day Paul departed with Barnabas into Derbe. There in Derbe, they preached the gospel and made many disciples, then returned again to all the cities they had recently been to that had threatened and physically attacked them — Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. First, they began confirming the souls, meaning making firm and establishing true disciples of believers. Secondly, they began to exhort and encourage them to continue in the faith, for true believers will pass through many trials and afflictions while entering into the kingdom of God. They appointed and ordained elders in every church, had prayer and fasting, and commended them to the Lord, whom they believed (**14:19-23**).

Just because church leaders are in place, they still need prayer; much prayer! Passing through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia where they preached the gospel in Perga. From there they went down to Attalia and finally sailed to Antioch (Syria) from which their journey had begun, thereby ending their first missionary journey. Remember, the church had sent them on this mission; they had recommended them, and because of the grace of God, their work had been accomplished; is now completed. They called together all the believers and reported on their trip, telling how God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles too. There they stayed for *"a long time"* (**14:24-28**).

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15:1 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. Here we go again. There was a problem. Certain men came down from Judaea teaching the brethren that Gentiles who had become Christians must adhere to the old Jewish customs. A person's eternal fate was at stake. The dissenters did not say you should undergo the ritual... • to be obedient to Scripture • to please God • to please the church • to demonstrate your love • to identify with believers. No, the dissenters were saying *'a believer must undergo the ritual and be circumcised to be saved. They were saying that it was the ritual, the circumcision that saved them; a believer was just not saved unless he was ritualized.'* This claimed: • God's grace plus a ritual • God's grace plus man's own work; a spiritual thing (God) plus a physical thing (circumcision). The real problem for the Jewish Christians was whether a ritual was necessary to be saved. The test of following these laws was circumcision. The answer was critical, which would affect all generation of believers. What they failed to understand was that the law could not save. Only faith in Jesus Christ is what's needed to be saved.

15:2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. Paul and Barnabas had no small disagreement; no small debate with these certain men from Judea, so it must have been a great disagreement at great length. After Paul and Barnabas had engaged them in this serious debate, the church arranged to send Paul and Barnabas up to Jerusalem along with certain other men where they would meet with the apostles and elders about this question. Jerusalem was the ritual center; the home base of those preaching the error. It was the source from which the heretical teaching concerning circumcision came. In order to solve the problem and uproot the trouble, they needed to go to the source. If the Jerusalem church would issue a strong verdict denying the necessity of ritual for salvation, the position of salvation by grace alone would be greatly strengthened. Therefore, Paul and Barnabas fought furiously for the truth, and against this wedge being driven.

15:3 And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren. Since no solution transpired to resolve the matter, Paul and Barnabas were being sent by the church to Jerusalem, meaning they traveled at the church's expense, where they passed through Phenice and Samaria along the way, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles to whom they brought great joy. The Phenician churches were founded by laymen. The Samaritans churches had been founded by Philip, Peter, and John.

15:4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. As Paul and Barnabas come into Jerusalem, they were received and welcomed by the Jerusalem church and the church leaders, the apostles and elders, and declared with great detail, reporting all things that God was accomplishing through their efforts. No doubt they provided sufficient evidence to verify the genuineness of the Gentiles' salvation.

15:5 But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That It was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. A large number of Pharisees rose up, but rose up against the message of salvation by faith alone. The question in Jerusalem became much

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larger than mere circumcision. In Antioch the question had been, *"Does a man have to be circumcised to be saved?"* In Jerusalem the enlarged question was, *"Does a man have to keep the whole law to be saved and accepted into the church?"* "Does he have to accept the law as well as accept Christ?"

15:6 And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter. In Jerusalem a unique assembly of the apostles of the universal church and the elders of the local church was held. These two groups were the leading ones in the Lord's New Testament move on the earth. The conference had no chairman as they disputed the matter. No one was ignored or silenced. Everyone had the freedom to speak on this matter.

15:7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. Peter, in the midst of their disputing got up first speaking on the issue of the Gentiles. It defends Paul's Gentile mission and it gives him a chance to give his original position on the Gentile mission he had concerning Cornelius. He reminded them that God had accepted the Gentiles by faith alone and not on Jewish terms. Peter emphasized that it was God's choice to give the gospel to the Gentiles. It was by his mouth that they heard the gospel and believed.

- Cornelius and his house had believed the Word while Peter was in the process of preaching the Word. They believed while they were listening and hearing the Word.

15:8 And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;— Man may look at the outside, but God knows the heart (the inside) of a man. He bore witness, giving them the Holy Ghost as He did to the Jewish believers. It was His choice. He who directed this mission had given them the Holy Ghost.

- God had given the Holy Spirit while they were believing the Word.
 - God knew their hearts.
 - God bore witness to the belief of their hearts.
 - God bore witness by giving the Holy Spirit to them.
 - God gave the Holy Spirit by His act alone (*not by baptism nor by laying on of men's hands*).
 - God gave the Holy Spirit just as He did to the Jews.

15:9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Therefore, there exists no difference between Jew and Gentile believers, for both have their hearts are purified by faith.

- God cleansed their hearts by faith, not upon ritual or ceremony.

15:10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?— Now, here comes the pertinent question: *"Why tempt God...putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples in which neither the fathers nor we were able to bear?"* The matter was made clear and unmistakably in the experience of Cornelius. If a person declares that a man is saved by God's grace plus a ritual or the law, he tempts God, which is very dangerous. The law is a *"yoke"*, a burden. This is a description of the Law and legalism of the scribes and Pharisees. Paul wrote that the law was a teacher and guide that pointed out their sins, so they could repent and return to God and right living. It was, and still is, impossible to obey the law completely. The legalist expected the Gentiles to carry a load they themselves were unwilling to bear. That's why, if we insist that man undergo a ritual and accept the law in order to be saved, it is to put a yoke upon a man, a yoke that no man can bear.

15:11 But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

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Peter goes on to remind the church of their basic belief: all men are saved by the grace (not law-keeping) of the Lord Jesus Christ! This is a resounding affirmation of salvation by grace through faith alone.

15:12 Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them. There was silence in the atmosphere. No one could dispute any longer, and the floor was given over to Barnabas and Paul. It was Paul's time where he declared the miracles and wonders God had brought forth, through them among the Gentiles. This was their first completed missionary journey among the Gentiles. God's miracles show clearly that He approved the preaching of Barnabas and Paul.

SYNOPSIS:

Acts 15:13-41 James, the Lord's brother, delivers the third speech in defense of salvation by faith alone to the apostles and elders. He spoke of Amos' prophecy in support of what Peter had said. ³²He then recommended they not trouble the Gentiles, but that a letter be written asking them to abstain from things offered to idols, blood, things strangled, and sexual immorality. The apostles and elders, with the whole church, agreed to send the letter and to have Judas and Silas accompany Paul and Barnabas to confirm its authenticity. The letter, its counsel approved by the Holy Spirit, was delivered and joyously received by the brethren in Antioch. Judas and Silas offered their exhortation and strengthened the brethren before Judas returned to Jerusalem. But it seemed good to Silas to remain there (**15:13-34**).

Paul and Barnabas stayed teaching and preaching in Antioch, but after some time Paul wanted to visit the brethren in the cities they had traveled to on his first missionary journey. Barnabas was willing, but wanted to take John Mark. But, Paul insisted they should not take John because he left them on their first missionary trip.

Barnabas was the one who stood up for Paul when the apostles didn't want to accept Paul. So, unable to reconcile, Barnabas took John and sailed to Cyprus, while Paul took Silas, and with commendation from the brethren in Antioch, and went through Syria and Cilicia strengthening the churches (**15:35-41**).

SUMMARY:

³³Men from Judea came to Antioch teaching the necessity of circumcision and keeping the Law. Paul and Barnabas disputed this, and the decision was made to send them to Jerusalem to talk with the apostles and elders. Along the way, Paul and Barnabas described the conversion of the Gentiles which caused great joy (15:1-3). Upon coming to Jerusalem Paul and Barnabas were welcomed by the apostles and elders as they declared all things God had done through them. Certain men of the Pharisees believed that circumcision and keeping the Law of Moses were necessary (**15:4-5**).

The apostles and elders met to discuss the issue further. After much dispute, Peter spoke of how God chose him to be the first to preach, by his mouth, the gospel to the Gentiles (*speaking of his Gentile mission concerning Cornelius*); how God acknowledged them by giving the Gentiles the Holy Spirit, and how God made no distinction, purifying their hearts through faith. Peter thus questioned why they should put a yoke on the Gentiles that even they themselves were unable to bear. Rather, it was Peter's belief to the apostles and elders that it was by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that both Jews and Gentiles shall be saved in the same manner as the Jews. Then, Barnabas and Paul report the miracles and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles (**15:6-12**).

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³² http://executableoutlines.com/acts/acts_15.htm

³³ http://executableoutlines.com/acts/acts_15.htm

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16:1 Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek:— Paul on his return trip now comes to Derbe (city in the province of Galatia) and Lystra (city in Lycaonia in Asia Minor) where he meets a disciple by the name of Timothy. He was the son of a Jewess believer but his father was a Greek—meaning, Timothy had a godly mother and grandmother who were Jews, but they were also Christian believers. They were both so godly and strong in the faith that Paul mentioned it years later (2 Timothy 1:15). They both had a great influence upon Timothy. Outstanding things will come from their meeting. The word “*behold*” has the idea of looking and gazing at a wonderful discovery. It will show how Paul took Timothy under his care to develop and grow him.

16:2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. The report of the brethren in Lystra and Iconium was accurate when Paul preached on his missionary journey —of a godly believing mother and an ungodly unbelieving father, yet, here is Timothy, a disciple of Christ. The influence of a godly mother upon her child pays off. His mother Eunice was from Lystra probably heard Paul’s preaching there during his missionary journey.

16:3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek. Timothy is from a divided family spiritually; a half-breed—half Jew and half Greek, yet he followed God despite his father’s belief. Timothy was only a young man, still in his teen years, probably around seventeen or eighteen years old. They all knew Timothy’s situation; that his father was a Greek. Being an uncircumcised Jew (on his mother’s side, but a Gentile on his father’s side), the Jews would never let him preach in their synagogues. So, Paul wanted to take Timothy along with him on his journey, so he asked Timothy to be circumcised to erase any stigma the Jewish believers may have had with him that would be in those places they would travel to. For this meant that Paul had not given up on the Jews and that he would continue to go to the Jew first, then to the Gentiles. Therefore, Paul removed this stumbling block in Timothy’s ministry. Timothy was not required to be circumcised (the Jewish council had decided that in chapter 15), but he voluntarily did this to overcome any barriers to his witness for Christ. Sometimes we may need to go beyond the minimum requirements, but not to be morally sinful in order to help our audiences receive our testimony.

16:4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. It should be noted that as they traveled from city to city, they gave the brethren the decisions which had been reached by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem for them to observe and carry out. The message was the declaration of truth emphasizing both salvation (through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ) and behavior.

16:5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily. Two things are pointed out: 1) the churches were established in the faith and 2) the churches increased in number. This meant that it was a continuous, day by day experience. And every member was beginning to evangelize daily.

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16:6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia. As they passed through Phrygia and Galatia, the Holy Spirit forbids them from preaching in Asia.

16:7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; but the Spirit suffered not. Again as they came near Mysia, and attempted to go to Bithynia, the Holy Spirit didn't permit them. They couldn't go left to Asia, and couldn't go right to Bithynia. The Spirit forbade the westward mission, and the northern mission, but indicated a straight forward course to the Spirit's call.

16:8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. Troas is a seaport on the edge of the geographical continent of Asia. They had come to a dead-end at Troas. In order to proceed they had to cross the Aegean Sea. The Holy Spirit changed the cradle of society, for up to this time Asia (the province within a peninsular of Asia Minor) had been the cradle of civilization, but now it was to give place to Europe. They had to cross over. Europe was soon to become the center of Christianity and of civilization.

16:9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. It was not a dream or a trance that came to Paul, but it was a vision of a man standing, not kneeling, in Macedonia praying, and saying "*Come over into Macedonia and help us.*" Paul was called to Europe. The picture of this man represented all of Europe, crying and begging Paul for help in the whole European continent.

16:10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. This proves the point that a believer should never be discouraged by some closed doors. God is the one who closed the door, and if He did, He had a good reason. And He's able to open up a brand new door. Now, Paul and the others have a chance to take advantage of this open door in Macedonia. Paul's other companions are Silas, his assistant; Timothy, the young disciple, and Luke, the intellectual physician, and Greek by background. The variety of their backgrounds added balance and flexibility to the team. The Lord had called them to preach the gospel unto them. The response must be quick and immediate.

16:11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolls;— The group took a ship from Troas, and sailed a straight course to the island of Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis.

16:12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days. Paul and his companions arrived in Philippi, the chief city of that part of Macedonia; a Roman colony where they spent several days. "**Philippi**" was named after Philip of Macedonia, the father of Alexander the Great. Philippi fit right into Paul's master plan as being a strategic location, assuring the spread of the gospel throughout the Roman Empire. Both businessmen and salesman travelled both from and to Philippi, from all over the world. Therefore, on this second missionary journey, the church of Philippi was founded.

16:13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made;

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and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. Evidently, there was no Jewish synagogue, so, Paul and the team went on the Sabbath Day, the day of rest, down by a riverside outside the city. This was a good place for a prayer meeting among the women. Some women had already come together, and Paul and the others sat down by the river, and began to speak to them there.

- The river provided the water necessary for the ceremonial washings involved in Jewish worship.
- Jewish law required a minimum of ten men to be present for the law (Torah) to be read. However, down by the river only women were present. The Jews considered women to be so unimportant that they were not worthy of the law apart from the presence of men, but Paul preached to these women without the men.

16:14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. Lydia was a businesswoman; a merchant of purple cloth, so she probably was wealthy. Purple cloth was valuable and expensive, and a demand in the Roman world. It was usually worn on the toga or outer garments, as a sign of nobility or royalty. This certain woman, Lydia was from Thyatira. She worshipped God, and God opened her heart as she heard Paul and the others speak. She listened, and kept on listening, giving utmost attention to the gospel. No person is ever converted who does not listen to or hear the gospel. **An Important Note:** no one is ever saved by the preacher. The Word says in Rom.10:14c *"...how shall they hear without a preacher?"* The key word to that scripture is "hear." The preacher is needed to bear witness, for God is the One who does the saving. Only God can open the heart of a person.

- She sought and worshipped God.
- She listened and heard the gospel.
- She had her heart opened by the Lord.

16:15 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. Lydia accepted all that Paul had said, and was immediately baptized, and her household followed her example, and was baptized. She lived for Christ and witnessed to all under her influence. This was significant before her household.

- She was immediately baptized.
- She led her whole house to the Lord.
- She opened her home to others for the Lord.

She wanted Paul and the others to come and abide in her house, only if they agreed and found her to be faithful to the Lord. She urged them until they did.

SYNOPSIS:

16:16-40 Paul and his company were going to the place of prayer and was soon ³⁴followed by a slave girl possessed by a spirit of divination that made money for her owners through fortune telling. For days she cried out, *"These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation."* While

³⁴ http://executableoutlines.com/acts/acts_16.htm
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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true, it annoyed Paul (probably because it was not of her own free will) and he cast the spirit out in the name of Jesus. This greatly angered the girl's masters, who had Paul and Silas beaten and imprisoned. At midnight while Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns, a great earthquake shook the prison and broke free their chains. Assuming all had fled, the jailer was about to kill himself when Paul stopped him. When the jailer asked what he must do to be saved, Paul and Silas told him to believe on the Lord Jesus, and then proceeded to teach him and his family the word of the Lord. That same night, the entire family was baptized. In the morning, the magistrates sent word to release Paul and Silas, but Paul demanded a personal release as they were Roman citizens who were beaten and imprisoned without trial. Scared, the magistrates came and pleaded with Paul and Silas to leave the city, which they did after a short visit to Lydia's house to encourage the brethren. Note that the author's return to the use of *"they"* indicates that Luke stayed behind in Philippi.

SUMMARY:

³⁵With this chapter we find Paul on his second missionary journey that began in Acts 15:40 with Paul and Silas passing through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening churches along the way. In Derbe and Lystra, Paul enlisted a young disciple named Timothy who would become a life-long fellow-worker in the kingdom. His mother was a believing Jew (cf. 2 Tim. 1:5) but his father was Greek. So, with many Jews in the region, Paul had Timothy circumcised so his witness would not have any barriers. As Paul's company traveled through Phrygia and Galatia, they delivered the decrees from the apostles, and elders in Jerusalem, and strengthened the churches (**16:1-5**).

6As they passed through Phrygia and Galatia, the Holy Spirit forbids them from preaching in Asia. **7**And as they came near Mysia, and attempted to go to Bithynia, the Holy Spirit didn't permit them. They passed by Mysia down to Troas, and Paul had a vision in the night of a man in Macedonia standing and praying for Paul to come there to help them. After seeing the vision, he and the team, along with Luke, headed out, being assured that they were to preach the gospel unto the people there (**16:6-10**).

From Troas to Samothracia, and then Neapolis, the company finally arrived in Philippi. This major city of Macedonia and Roman colony, would mark Paul's first ministry on the European continent, but overall this was his second missionary journey. On the Sabbath Paul and his companions went down to the river where women were praying. As Paul spoke, a religious business woman of Thyatira named Lydia listened. The Lord opened her heart to heed Paul, which resulted in her and her household being baptized. She then persuaded Paul, and his companions to abide at her house (**16:11-15**).

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³⁵ http://executableoutlines.com/acts/acts_16.htm
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

ACTS 17:1-4, 10-34NEXT 18:1-28

17:1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:— Paul and Silas, and Timothy journeyed westward along the great military road, *Via Egnatia*. They had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia (these were not small towns), for Amphipolis was itself a major community. Why they passed by these cities we are not told. However, it should be observed that Paul followed definite missionary strategy in establishing churches in key centers which could form evangelistic outreach centers around their location. Thus, he moved on to Thessalonica the chief city and capital of the province of Macedonia. In Thessalonica, Paul discovered a synagogue of the Jews there, for this city had been made free because of its loyalty to Rome. As a free city it was allowed its own government and local laws. A synagogue, a group of Jews who gathered for teaching and prayer could be established wherever there were ten Jewish males.

17:2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,— Paul's regular practice in each town was to preach in a synagogue as long as the Jews allowed it, and he went there three consecutive Sabbath days, which is three weeks, opening up the scriptures to them; reasoning; explaining the scriptures to them. He went straight to the scriptures which could not be denied.

17:3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. The common Jewish view of the Messiah was pictured as a conquering political ruler who would restore their fortunes, defeat their enemies, and usher in the kingdom. The Jews resisted the idea that the Messiah had to suffer, even though this is found in the Old Testament (Ps.22; Is.53; Zech.12:10; 13:7). That's why Paul had to reason so. They had their own perception of Him. That's why Paul so wisely began by talking about the Old Testament writings and explained that the Messiah had to suffer; He fulfilled them. He then made it known that the Messiah died and had risen from the dead, and that Jesus, whom he preaches about unto them, is Christ—Jesus is the Christ! This is a good strategy for us when we witness for Christ. Begin where people are; affirm the truth they do know, and then present Christ, the One who is Truth.

17:4 And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. The Jews were the most prejudicial people imaginable, yet the result of the message was that some Jews believed and joined with Paul and Silas in following Christ. And there were many devout (God-fearing) Greeks, and chief influential women that believed.

17:10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. Yes, those who didn't believe the message were moved with jealousy and envy and incited others to set the city in an uproar. They went to Jason's house thinking Paul and Silas were there, but not so, so they assaulted the house of Jason (vv.5-6). Upon Paul and Silas' return back to Jason's house the Christian brethren related to them what had happened, and the decision was made that it would be best that they escape by night. Berea was about 50 miles southwest of Thessalonica. It was well off the path of the *Egnatian Way*, the major Roman road. Naturally he could preach more freely and reach more people if there was peace. When they arrived they went into the synagogue of the Jews.

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17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. The Jews in Berea were different; nobler than those in Thessalonica. The word "*noble*" applied to people who exhibited noble behavior, in that they were open-minded, fair, and thoughtful. They received Paul's message with all eagerness of mind, searching, studying, and investigating the scriptures daily to see whether those things were true. They did not just believe the message. They checked for themselves that the message had the same meaning as the scriptures.

17:12 Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few. Many Bereans believed, including many honorable Greek women and men. The word "*honorable*" means both of good character, respectable and influential citizens. While the Thessalonians had to be persuaded, the Bereans were ready and believed.

SYNOPSIS:

17:13-21³⁶ Once again the unbelieving Jews from Thessalonica heard that Paul and Silas were ministering in Berea, and they came to stir up the people (**17:13**). As before, Paul had to leave town quietly to avoid more trouble for the Christians. This time the believers in Berea out-smarted the enemy by taking Paul to the sea, and putting him on a ship headed for Athens, while Silas and Timothy stayed (**17:14-15**). While in Athens, Paul could not wait any longer on Silas and Timothy, for he could not swallow the scene there of idolatry anymore (**17:16**). He began to reason and discussed the gospel with men everywhere; in the synagogue; in the marketplace. And he proclaimed the gospel daily to the average citizens, to the Epicureans philosophers, and the Stoic philosophers (**17:17-21**).

17:22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. Throughout ancient history Athens had been one of the most glorious cities of the world. But as history has always proven, when a people gain prosperity, most of them become complacent, selfish, and hoarding. At the time of Paul's visit, the city was at the center of the world, but its citizens lacked spiritual unity and common purpose and behavior. There were as many gods as there were men. Now, Paul stands in the midst of Mars' Hill addressing the men of Athens.

"Mars' Hill" is also known as "Areopagus" which is the Latin form. It was called "Mars' Hill" because Ares, the god of war was said to have been tried there for the murder of the son of Poseidon. It was situated on a high and rocky place in Athens, on a hill just west of the Acropolis. Later, the Romans referred to the rocky hill as "Mars Hill", after Mars, the Roman god of war. There was an ancient court which sat there. The Court of the Areopagus consisted of nine archons or chief magistrates who were then in office, and the ex-archons of blameless life who dealt with matters of religious morals and education of Athens. It subsequently formed the higher court of modern Greece.

This is where Paul stands ready to preach. He stood up in full view, taking a stand where so many of the world's great philosophers had stood, such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. It was the highest court in Athens and Paul expounded, "*I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.*" Meaning, "*in all things I notice; I observe; with my own eyes, I can tell you are very religious (revere your deities).*" The Greek word would mean "*fearing a demon*", a supernatural spirit—given to demon worship. The most momentous moment of

³⁶ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/obstacles-that-hinder-the-work-of-the-lord/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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their lives was about to take place. And there they sat and some stood, completely void of any knowledge of the living and true God. Paul didn't begin by reciting Jewish history as he usually did, for this would have been meaningless to the Greek audience. He began where they were.

17:23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, To The Unknown God. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. Finally he moves to his message to the Person of Christ. When you witness to others, you can use Paul's approach; use examples, establish common ground, and then move people toward a decision about Jesus Christ. Paul had noticed as he walked throughout that great city of Athens, there was an inscription on an altar the Athenians had built: "*To The Unknown God*." This one caught his attention. Two points:

1. The word "*devotions*" means the objects of worship such as idols, altars, images.
2. The people acknowledged that there was an unknown god, and worshipped him. But they did not know him.

None of the gods satisfied the people. Their lives and their religions were still empty and missing something. They knew nothing about him, yet they worshipped him. ³⁷A Cretan poet, Epimenides, had come forward with a plan. A flock of black and white sheep were let loose throughout the city from the Areopagus. Wherever each lay down it was sacrificed to the nearest god; and if a sheep lay down near the shrine of no known god it was sacrificed to "*The Unknown God*" (*Acts 17 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible*). Paul declared unto them that he knew the unknown God they ignorantly worshipped and he would personally declare Him unto them.

17:24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;— He declared that "*The Unknown God*", He is God who made the world and all things therein; He is Creator; Lord of heaven and earth, and He does not dwell in temples made by hands. This means there is only One Supreme God and there are no other gods. Not a god for this and a god for that like the 30,000 gods of the Athenians. All these gods are false. They are only the creation of man's mind and the object of man's desires.

- God is Creator—Creator.
- God is Lord of heaven and earth—Ruler.
- God is Creator, not the created.

Paul's assertion was a powerful and upsetting truth for some of the Athenians to hear. It ran contrary to the Epicureans, who believed matter was eternal and therefore had no creator, and to the Stoics, who as pantheists believed everything was part of God—who certainly couldn't have created Himself.

17:25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;—

- God is the Self-Sufficient One. He needs nothing.
- God is the giver of life and breath and all things—Giver.
- God guides the history of all men and nations (v.26)—Comptroller.
- God has a great purpose for creating men (v.27-28)—Revealer.

17:26 And hadth made one blood all nations of men: for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hadth determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation. From one man, God created all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth. He decided beforehand their boundaries.

³⁷ http://preceptaustin.org/acts_17_commentary.htm
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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17:27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, thought he be not far from every one of us. The purpose is to seek after God because he's not far from them.

17:28 For in him we live, and move, and have our being;— Paul says, here, God causes us to live. Our purpose is in Him. We live in Him. We move in Him. Our very being is in Him. God is not far off. He is near everyone of us and can be found in us. He and His works are all about us. Once we have found (have a relationship with) Him, we can call upon Him and He will make Himself known to us. He will not be unknown to us. Paul goes on to say, **as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.**

- If man is the offspring of God, then idols are less than man, for idols are made by the mind of man. Man is superior to idols, therefore, to worship idols is to degrade the exalted position God had given man.
- If man is the offspring of God, then something created by man is less than God. God is above everything man makes. Therefore, to exalt the works of man's hand above God is to degrade the exalted position of both God and man.

The Greeks certainly could not plead ignorance. Even their poets acknowledged the revelation of God in nature, though they wrongly saw it as a revelation of their false gods. The Cretan poet Epimenides noted that *"in him we live, and move, and exist"*, while Aratus, from Paul's home region of Cilicia added *"For we are also his offspring."* Those noted quotes illustrate the universal revelation of God as Creator, Ruler, and Sustainer. While Paul could easily have documented those truths from the Old Testament, he chose instead illustrations familiar to his pagan audience who were unfamiliar with Scriptures.

SYNOPSIS:

17:29-34 We are God's children; His workmanship. He is not our workmanship for He is a Spirit (John 4:24). He is the designer of us. If He designed us, then we can't design any image from metal or stone; gold or silver or wood, for we know not how the designer looks. God is a Spirit. We worship Him in Spirit and in Truth! What ignorance God may have overlooked in the past, such is no longer the case. He now commands all men everywhere to repent. Why? - Because of the coming Judgment, in which God will judge the world in righteousness. God will judge the world through Jesus Christ (**17:29-31**). Paul mentioning the resurrection provoked a response (**17:32**). Some mocked because many at that time, the idea of a bodily resurrection was foolishness. Others were more cordial, offering to listen again at another time. As Paul left, some joined him and believed. Specifically mentioned are Dionysius the Areopagite and Damaris, a woman. Others joined Paul and believed (**17:33-34**).

SUMMARY:

³⁸Paul, Silas and Timothy continued on the second missionary journey. As they departed Philippi, they traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, arriving at Thessalonica (**17:1**). Paul found the Jewish synagogue and for three Sabbaths "reasoned with them from the Scriptures" (**17:2**). He taught them that Jesus had suffered and died, and then was raised from the dead. He proclaimed to them that Jesus was the Christ. Some Jews and a great multitude of Greeks believed and joined them (**17:3-4**). (**17:1-4**).

³⁸ http://executableoutlines.com/acts/acts_17.htm
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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The brethren sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea (about 50 miles away). They went to the Jewish synagogue there and found the people to be receptive to the gospel. They were willing to study the Scriptures to determine the Truth. Many believed (**17:10-12**).

Paul spoke to the Athenians by finding common ground from which to launch into his gospel message; they thought he was bringing strange things. A mob was formed as he found himself standing in the midst of Mars Hill and he perceived them to be too superstitious. He found an altar with the inscription: **"TO THE UNKNOWN GOD."** He's the God who made all things and does not dwell in temples made by hands, neither worshipped with men's hands. From one man, God created all nations of men and their boundaries. This is the One he proclaimed to them and that they should seek after because He's not far. At this point, Paul tells the Athenians that God causes us to live. It is in Him we live, and move, and have our being. Even their own poets have said, "For we are also his offspring" (**17:20-28**).

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18:1 After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;— Paul finds himself at a low point in his grueling ministry. His second missionary journey had been arduous (tough). After travelling through Asia Minor strengthening the churches (**Acts 15:41**), he crossed the Aegean Sea to the Greek mainland. His healing of a demon-possessed girl in Philippi sparked a riot, and he and Silas had been beaten and thrown into prison. After being released following a devastating earthquake, he was forced to leave the city (**16:39-40**). From there he went to Thessalonica, where his ministry enjoyed great success (**17:4**). Persecution forced him to flee to Berea (**17:10**), where many **did** respond to his preaching and teaching (**17:12**), however, when persecution followed him from Thessalonica to Berea, Paul was again forced to escape danger (**17:14**). He arrived alone in the great city of Athens, where his brilliant speech in defense of Christianity had largely been ignored (**17:19-32**). Paul then left Athens and travelled to Corinth (a fifty-three mile walk. The decision was by choice. No doubt he stayed in Athens long enough. Apparently, Paul felt his time could be spent more profitably in Corinth.

18:2 And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. Wherever Paul went, he looked for people who either needed Christ or needed to grow in Christ. With Silas and Timothy still in Macedonia, he had to bear it alone, and God knew Paul needed someone else to help him shoulder any difficulty. At this point he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus and his wife Priscilla. Priscilla and Aquila were originally residents of Rome, but the Roman emperor, Claudius had the Jews banished from Rome in A.D. 52. So Aquila and Priscilla moved to Corinth.

18:3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers. Paul, no doubt looked for work to support himself, and found that Aquila and Priscilla were of the same craft; of the same occupation — tentmakers, so they opened their home to Paul, and he stayed with the couple as they went into the tent-making business together; even eventually risking their lives for him (**Rom. 16:3-4**). They later travelled with Paul to Ephesus eventually settling there (**18:18**).

18:4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. Every Sabbath Paul reasoned in the synagogue persuading Jews and Greeks. **Two points:**

1. Paul reasoned; presented sound, thoughtful, logical points; answered and settled questions in a reasonable way.
2. Paul persuaded; prevailed, urged, induced, pleaded, begged, sought to move and bring about a change of heart and mind.

His goal was to persuade the Jews, and God-fearing Greeks (*Gentiles who had abandoned their pagan religion in favor of worshipping Jehovah God*) that Jesus Christ was Israel's Lord, Messiah, and Savior from sin and hell.

18:5 And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. At this time Silas and Timothy caught up with Paul. They had been left behind at Berea with instructions to meet Paul in Athens, but this had evidently not worked out. Silas had left Berea for Philippi to help Luke with the new church there. Timothy at Paul's request had gone back to Thessalonica to oversee the work there. Thessalonica is the chief city and capital of the province of Macedonia.

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Both men now meet Paul in Corinth. Silas brought a financial gift for Paul from the Philippian church for his missionary support, which is referred to in 2 Corinthian 11:8 and Philippians 4:15 which freed Paul to preach Christ full time; and Timothy came with a good report concerning the Word in Thessalonica; churches of Macedonia growing in the Lord. Paul was "*pressed in the spirit*" means "*compelled of the Spirit*." Paul had been working part time as a tentmaker, now the Holy Spirit has set him on fire to preach the gospel message. Whether it was the generous gift which came, where he can now devote himself completely to the Word or that Silas and Timothy being there had strengthened him, or not, we cannot say. He boldly proclaimed Jesus as the Christ.

18:6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. As Paul preached in Corinth, they rejected. The Jews opposed themselves (*meaning contradicted the scriptures and hold onto religious doctrine*) and they blasphemed the name of Jesus. The idea is that they organized and opposed the preaching and teaching of Jesus as the Messiah, and they reviled and spoke reproachfully of Christ. Paul shook out his garment; his clothes in protest. It was a gesture; a sign, much like shaking the dust from one's feet of their rejection of God; judgment of those rejecting the gospel, (Matt.10:14; Mark 6:11; Acts 13:51), for he would not spend time where he simply faces hostile opposition. "*Your blood be upon your own heads*" reflects Ezekiel's words about God's prophetic watchman (Ezk.33:1-9). The responsibility for their judgment by God was upon them, thereby, they opposed themselves and their blood was upon their heads. Paul had faithfully discharged his responsibility, so that at the final judgment no part of these Jews' failure to believe could be attributed to his failure to tell them about Christ. It is our responsibility to share the gospel, because we don't want their blood to be upon our hands or upon our heads. If they reject, then they are they are the rejecters, not us!

- Paul shook off the dust of those who had rejected him.
- Paul declared their blood; the responsibility for their salvation was upon their own heads.
- Paul's was clean; conscious was now clear.
- Paul turned from the Jews to the Gentiles.

18:7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. Rejected by the Jews, Paul could no longer preach in the synagogue. He departed the synagogue, entering into a certain man's house, named Justus, a devout proselyte; a Gentile. Justus was one who worshipped God and whose house was next door to the synagogue.

18:8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. Also, as Paul preached, Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue and his household believed on the Lord and were baptized, as were many other Corinthians hearing the message and wanted to be baptized.

18:9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:— Now, Paul struggled with whether to continue to preach in Corinth, and the Lord spoke to Paul in a night vision. This was one of the six visions Paul received in Acts, all coming at crucial points in his ministry. Paul was apparently thinking about moving on from Corinth, to not face an uproar of persecution again, this time from the message that caused the baptism of Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue and the other Corinthians. To encourage His servant at this time, the Lord Himself spoke to Paul in a vision: "*Don't be afraid, speak out, and don't be silent*"

18:10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this

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city. It was the presence of the Lord that encouraged Paul. The Lord gave Paul a most glorious promise: *"I am with thee and no one can harm you, because I have many in this city who are my people."* This indicates that many in Corinth would come to faith in Christ. Paul needed nothing else, just the perfect assurance and sense of the Lord's presence, the presence of the One who had done so much for him and in whom he loved so much.

18:11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. Paul's strength was fully renewed by God's promise to him for he continued a year and six months to minister; teaching God's Word there in Corinth. Many were saved and grew in faith because Paul stayed.

SYNOPSIS

18:12-17 Some months later a new deputy, Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia began his rule in the district of which Corinth was a part of. The Jews thought they might be able to manipulate this new ruler, so they rose up on one accord against Paul and dragged him before Gallio (18:12), saying that he's inciting men to worship God contrary to the law (18:13). Before Paul could open his mouth to defend himself, Gallio refused to be a judge of such matters. He wouldn't even hear it (18:14-15). He had them removed from the court (18:16). The Jews were so embarrassed and shamed that they turned against the leader Sosthenes, who had aroused them against Paul. They beat him right there in the judgment hall before Gallio (18:17). Sosthenes later became a convert to Christ. He also became a minister of the gospel with Paul (1 Cor.1:1).

18:18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow. The city evidently had a strong church, for Paul highly praised Phoebe, a deaconess of the church. At some point, he said good-bye to the Christian brothers and set sail to Syria, taking with him Priscilla and Aquila to continue spreading the gospel. Paul was not called to be the minister of a local church. He was called to carry the gospel forth as an evangelist, and a missionary. As Christian believers who are the called to carry the gospel of Jesus Christ, we deny ourselves, take up our cross daily and follow Christ no matter where it takes us. On the occasion of some circumstance unknown to us,—perhaps under some distress, in view of eventual deliverance, Paul had vowed to let his hair grow for a certain time. Having kept the vow, he then shaved his hair, for the vow had now been fulfilled and completed as he reached Cenchrea, the eastern part of Corinth.

The "*Nazarite vow*" (covered in Numbers 6 [especially verse18]) had to be carried out at the door of the tabernacle in Jerusalem with the shaving of the head, and the hair burned on the fire of the sacrifice at the temple, which differed from this vow.

18:19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews. Paul now arrives in Ephesus, the most important city in Asia Minor, where he leaves Priscilla and Aquila there. Whatever town he entered, he always went to the synagogue. He entered and reasoned with the Jews.

18:20 When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;— As in Berea, he was well received in Ephesus, so much so that the Jews asked him so stay longer with them. They were open and hungry for the Word of God; however, he refused this great opportunity. This is why Priscilla and Aquila were left behind—to teach the people. Most of the time when you see their names, Priscilla's name comes before her husband Aquila which points to the fact that she was the stronger and more mature Christian of the two.

18:21 But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in

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Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus. He said farewell to the people in Ephesus, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem to keep the feast (probably the Passover Feast). He promised that if it was God's Will, he would return to them again. This was the end of Paul's second missionary journey.

18:22 And when he had landed at Censarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch. Paul had landed at Caesarea and had gone up to Jerusalem about 52 miles away, and exchanged greetings; respect to the church, and then he went down to Antioch.

18:23 And after he had spent some time there he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples. Paul left again for Asia Minor visiting and encouraging the churches there. He is now beginning his third missionary journey. He covered the countries of Galatia and Phrygia where he strengthened all the disciples there. Paul was alone which is symbolic of his faithfulness and commitment to the Lord's call. His purpose in revisiting the churches was not to socialize or enjoy good Christian fellowship, although he had not seen them in many months, but was more specific: to strengthen the disciples in the Lord. He wanted them to grow in the Lord!

18:24 And a certain Jew named Apollos, born by Alexandria, an eloquent man. And mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. About this time a certain Jew named Apollos, born in Alexandria who was steeped in Jewish religion, tradition, and Scripture arrived in Ephesus on a preaching tour. He had learned the Old Testament Scriptures by memory, and spent hours meditating on them. He understood and believed the Scriptures, grasping the promises of the Messiah. He learned so well that he was an effective speaker, and an eloquent Bible teacher, able to present the Messiahship of Jesus, thereby proclaiming the Scriptures to the Jews.

18:25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord and being fervent of the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the lord, knowing only the baptism of John. Apollos had been instructed in the way of the Lord and was described as being fervent in the spirit; with burning zeal; with spiritual fervor; and with fiery enthusiasm as he taught. Somehow at some point Apollos came into contact with John the Baptist or with his message on the baptism of repentance and he began to diligently teach the things of the Lord.

18:26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. Apollos began to speak boldly and fearlessly in the synagogue. Aquila and Priscilla heard him speak, and invited; took him to their home and talked to him in private. They took him aside to share the full message of the gospel with him, explaining more accurately to him some things he did not know of the Lord really meant. This shows that even in his boldness, he was willing to be taught; helped from any who would teach him, even by those of less learning; from two lowly tentmakers, and he understood.

18:27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote exhorting the disciples to receive him who when he was come helped them much which had believed

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through grace:—As soon as Apollos received what he needed he wanted to go into Achaia and share the gospel there. The Ephesian church encouraged him, even writing a letter of recommendation to the church at Corinth (in Achaia) for them to receive him. When he did come to them, he helped them a great deal for they had believed through grace.

18:28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ. Apollos “**mightily**” used the Scriptures with power, straining earnestly to prove that Jesus is the Christ, the true Messiah. He “**convinced**” the Jews which meant he confronted, argued down, and refuted to the very last point publicly showing the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ. he defended the faith against the Jews in public!

SUMMARY:

³⁹Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. He found Aquila and Priscilla. He stayed with them, as they were all of the same trade; tentmakers. Aquila and Priscilla had left Rome because of the command by Claudius. And during this time, Paul taught in the synagogue and “*persuaded both Jews and Greeks*” that Jesus Christ was Israel’s Lord, Messiah, and Savior from sin and hell (**18:1-4**).

Silas and Timothy then joined Paul at Corinth, coming from Macedonia. Paul taught the Jews that “*Jesus is the Christ.*” They opposed him. Paul told them, “*Your blood be on your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.*” Paul then went to Justus’ house, which was next to the synagogue. Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, and his household believed and were baptized. And many Corinthians believed and were baptized. The Lord spoke to Paul in a vision, encouraging him to be bold and to continue to speak; for the Lord would be with him. Paul continued teaching there another year and a half (**18:5-11**).

Paul remained there a while longer. Next, Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila set sail for Syria. As they were departing, Paul had his hair cut off at Cenchrea as part of a vow. Paul left Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus, as they were traveling. Paul did not remain in Ephesus, as he wanted to keep the feast in Jerusalem (**18:18-21**).

22 Paul had landed at Caesarea and had gone up to Jerusalem, and exchanged greetings, and then he went down to Antioch. **23** Paul left again for Asia Minor visiting and encouraged the churches there. He covered the countries of Galatia and Phrygia where he strengthened all the disciples there. **24** About this time a certain Jew named Apollos, born in Alexandria who was steeped in Jewish religion, tradition, and Scripture arrived in Ephesus on a preaching tour. **25** Apollos had been instructed in the way of the Lord and was described as being fervent in the spirit speaking and teaching diligently the things of the Lord. **26** Apollos began to speak boldly and fearlessly in the synagogue. Aquila and Priscilla heard him speak, and invited; took him to their home. They explained more accurately to him what the way of the Lord really meant. **27** Apollos wanted to go into Achaia and share the gospel and the brethren of Achaia wrote a letter exhorting the disciples to receive him. When he did come to them, he helped them a great deal for they had believed through grace. **28** Apollos “*mightily*” used the Scriptures with power as he “*confronted*” the Jews publicly, showing them Jews the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ (**18:22-28**). [TOP](#)

³⁹http://executableoutlines.com/acts/acts_18.htm
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

ACTS 21

[NEXT](#) ACTS 22:1-30

SYNOPSIS

Paul is accused way back in **Chapter 21** by the Jews of two crimes— they said that he taught against the two most important things in Judaism—the Law and the Temple. They also said that Paul had brought Gentiles into the inner part of the Temple (**21:28**). They dragged Paul into the Court of the Gentiles which was the Outer Court and the chief Roman captain arrested him which really rescued him from being killed by the crowd of Jews. They bound and chained him (**21:33**). He asked the chief captain could he speak because there were many yelling all kinds of things, even *"away with him."* Paul had replied to the captain, *"I am a Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia..."* and therefore, he was allowed and led to the stairs to speak to the crowd. Paul began to address them in the Hebrew tongue which captured their attention (**21:1-40**). It now begins in the next chapter.

ACTS 22:1-30

[NEXT](#) ACTS 23

INTRODUCTION:

Paul had had a bad experience in Jerusalem in chapter 21 for the crowd was trying to kill him. They had accused him of leading the people wrong: 1.) Teaching against the people and Moses' Law. 2.) Bringing Gentiles into the Temple making it unclean.

Chapter 22:1-16 **1** Paul begins to speak to the crowd of Jews in Jerusalem calling them *"Men, brothers and fathers."* He wants them to listen to him as he offers his defense of the change in him. **2** He even spoke their language (speaking in Hebrew), but they kept silent. **3** He tells them *"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, but educated here in Jerusalem under Gamaliel, at whose feet I learned to follow our Jewish laws and customs very carefully. He was very anxious (zealous) to honor God in everything he did, just as they had been that day."* **4** He confessed that he persecuted the Christians, hounded them to death, binding and delivering both men and women to prison. **5** The High Priest or any member of the Council can testify that this is so. He didn't hold back anything. He asked for letters to give to the Jewish leaders in Damascus, with instructions to let him bring any Christians he found to Jerusalem in chains to be punished.

6 "As he was on the road, nearing Damascus, suddenly about noon a very bright light from heaven showed around him." **7** And he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying, *"Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"* **8** He asked who are you Lord? And he replied, *"I am Jesus of Nazareth, the One you are persecuting."* **9** And the men with him saw the light but didn't understand what was said. **10** "And he said, 'What shall I do, Lord?'" And the Lord told him, *"Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told what awaits you in the years ahead."* **11** "I was blinded by the intense light and had to be led into Damascus by my companions." **12** There a man named Ananias, as godly a man as you could find for obeying the law and well thought of

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*by all the Jews of Damascus, **13** came to me, and standing beside me said, "Brother Saul, receive your sight!" And that very hour I could see him! **14** Ananias told me, 'The God of our fathers has chosen you to know His Will and to see the Messiah and hear Him speak (on Damascus Road). **15** You are to take His message; be His witness everywhere, telling what you have seen and heard. **16** And now, why delay? Go and be baptized and be cleansed from your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'"*

Some observations:

1. Saul needed the touch of a disciple's hand, meaning to experience the help and ministry of God's disciple. And to see faithfulness in action, meaning he needed—love, care, concern, interest, help reaching out to him in time of need.
2. Saul needed the recognition of being a "Brother" in the Lord. This one word probably caused Saul to break out in tears, for he was being reached out to by a dear believer of the Lord despite the terrible wrong he had done to the believers. This was confirmation to him that he had been truly forgiven and received by the Lord.
3. Saul needed the power of healing ministered to him. He was afflicted. He needed Ananias to help him in his affliction. He needed his eyes healed, symbolizing how the scales of spiritual darkness and sin and shame had been removed from his heart.
4. Saul needed the sharing of the Holy Spirit's infilling; the infilling power of the Spirit for service.

No one wanted anything to do with Paul. They dragged him out. They had shut the Temple doors. He couldn't even enter back. There's something about a shut door especially when God does it. The people looked at him as an outsider, but God wants him to be an insider. The trial we go through gets us ready for the blessing. Paul was arrested and bound with two chains by the chief captain. And he did get a chance to speak on the stairs of the Roman armory.

22:17 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;— Paul is still telling his story. He had talked about his conversion to Christ, his calling to know, hear, and see by faith, and his commission for service. Now, he appeals to his countrymen bringing up a time when he had come to Jerusalem and being in the temple, he fell into a trance and had a vision while praying.

22:18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. Paul starts off with the fact that in this trance, he saw the Lord! That's very important. And the Lord instructed that he had to hurry up and get out of Jerusalem because the people would not receive his testimony concerning the Lord. They just didn't believe the Lord saved him.

God can be straight-forward while you're praying, or show you in a dream by the Spirit, or show you through His Word. I believe God will always show you first. The second party will only be confirmation of what He's already shown you.

22:19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:— Paul is conversing with the Lord in this trance. He's talking about his time before conversion, conveying that the Jews he wants to talk to already know that he went from synagogue after synagogue imprisoning and beating those that believed on Christ. He couldn't get around that fact.

22:20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him. Paul was even there when the blood of (Christ's) martyr

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Stephen was shed, and he stood there giving his approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.

22:21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles. In the trance the Lord told Paul that it was time to depart from the Jews, for He would send him far away to the Gentiles. This is his calling!

22:22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and then lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. The crowd didn't like anything Paul said but they listened. They certainly didn't like it when he said that he was going to the Gentiles. He was violently rejected by the crowd: *"Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live."* Their objection was that the Gentiles were being given the privilege of following God without becoming Jews first, without being circumcised and accepting the law.

22:23 And as they cried out, and cast off their clothes, and threw dust into the air,— The crowd had become very angry and began to cry out, casting off their clothes, and throwing dust into the air which was a sign of fury and deep grief.

22:24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him. At this point Paul is rescued by the soldiers, for the chief captain did not want a riot, so he commanded that Paul be brought into the castle (armory). However, this time the centurion was fed up with the matter. He couldn't figure out why the crowd exploded so violently against Paul, so he planned to get the truth by scourging (whipping) him.

22:25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?— Paul now appeals to the authorities, by claiming his legal rights as a Roman citizen as they bind him with cords and straps. It was a serious crime to scourge a Roman citizen. And anyone who did so would be jeopardizing his own life, and he hasn't been found guilty.

22:26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman. So, when the centurion heard Paul's statement, he stopped and went to tell the chief captain, saying, *"Be careful! What you are about to do? This man is a Roman!"*

22:27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. Now, Paul has to verify his citizenship before the chief captain. The chief captain simply asks: *"Tell me, are you a Roman?"* Paul says, *"Yes."*

22:28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born. The commander replied, *"I purchased this citizenship [of mine] for a large sum of money [so how did you acquire yours?]."* Paul said, *"But I was actually born a citizen."* (AMP). Paul's citizenship superseded the soldiers', for Paul was born a Roman citizen, whereas the soldier had bought his citizenship.

22:29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him. Paul's rights were respected, because *"Immediately the soldiers who were about to interrogate him withdrew; left Paul, and the commander himself was so alarmed (afraid) when he realized that he had put Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains"* (NIV). The captain had been drawn into a serious crime by the whole affair— A Roman citizen being attacked by a Jewish mob.

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22:30 On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them. The chief captain was determined to find out what caused the riot, so on the very next day, he called the Sanhedrin to appear before him in an official meeting. Paul had been held as a prisoner and had been chained all night. From this point on, Paul's long journey began, but it was not to be the journey Paul had planned. He would enter Rome as a prisoner, not as a free man to move about as he wished. His imprisonment would last about 5yrs. Although Paul's way was genuine, the Jewish brethren didn't receive him. But God has His way of doing things that cuts through all the red tape! This time Paul will appear before the Sanhedrin, the Jewish court and God will use Paul as His witness! You can say this was a set-up, planned by God. The Lord will move events to use us no matter how trying and overwhelming the events may be.

Do you think this is your only stop in life or do you continue?

SUMMARY:

Paul is in Jerusalem in the temple praying and was led into a trance. He saw the Lord saying, *"Hurry up and get out of Jerusalem because the people will not receive your testimony concerning the me (the Lord)."* And Paul says, *"Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat the Christians that believed on thee in every synagogue. I was even there when the blood was shed of Your martyr Stephen, and I stood there giving the approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing Stephen."* God spoke, telling Paul that this was his time to depart from the Jews, for He (the Lord) would be sending him to the Gentiles (**22:17-21**).

The crowd didn't like anything Paul said but they listened. They certainly didn't like it when he said that he was going to the Gentiles. Paul was violently rejected by the crowd saying: *"Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live."* They began to cry out, casting off their clothes, and throwing dust into the air which was a sign of fury and deep grief. The commander ordered Paul to be brought into the castle (armory), directing that he be interrogated and whipped to discover the reason they were shouting against him like this. As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, *"Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?"* Paul was speaking of his Roman citizenship. When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and said to him, *"Be careful! What you are about to do? This man is a Roman!"* The chief captain simply asks: *"Tell me, art thou a Roman?"* Paul says, *"Yes."* The commander replied, *"I purchased this citizenship [of mine] for a large sum of money [so how did you acquire yours?]"* Paul said, *"But I was actually born a citizen."* Paul's rights were respected because *"Immediately the soldiers who were about to interrogate him withdrew, and the commander himself was alarmed (afraid) when he realized that he had put Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains."* So, on the very next day his bands were loosed and the chief priest and the Council was commanded to appear as Paul was brought before them to get to the bottom of the situation (**22:22-30**).

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ACTS 23

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SYNOPSIS:

Chapter 23 Paul now stands before the Sanhedrin—the **second** defense or plea before a group of people. He had already stood before the common people, now he stands before the religious leaders. Paul showed disgust with the High Priest when the High Priest commanded someone to slap him. He retorted, "*You whitewashed wall! God will hit you. You sit there to judge me by the Law of Moses. But you order men to break the Law by hitting me*" (23:3). Paul was fierce with his words and knew what would get them upset—the truth! Now the Sadducees and the Pharisee don't mix, but they were in there listening. They truly began to argue among themselves because Paul brings up the subject of Resurrection. The Sadducees don't believe in the "*Resurrection, neither angel nor spirit*"; while the Pharisees say, they "*find no evil in this man*" (23:8, 9). The chief captain had to step in again and rescue him. Meanwhile, certain Jews (about 40) had bound themselves by a "*curse*" where "*they neither ate nor drank till they had killed Paul*" (23:12). What the Jews were doing was totally against Roman law. The plan didn't work for the plot was discovered by Paul's sister's son.⁴⁰ The chief captain did not want to have to explain to his superior the assassination of a Roman citizen in his charge. Taking no chances, he summoned two hundred foot soldiers, seventy cavalry, and another two hundred artillerymen to see that Paul had a safe exodus from Jerusalem at about 9p.m. at night (23:23). So, he sends Paul to Caesarea to Felix the governor of Judea, accompanied with a letter concerning the improper treatment to this Roman citizen, and therefore, wanted to make sure that the situation was properly handled. After Paul arrives, Governor Felix finds out what Province Paul is from; he finds out that he could not ignore him and is to be given a hearing. Usually, a prisoner had his trial in the province where the crime had possibly happened. But sometimes the governor could send the prisoner to that prisoner's own province. However, Felix decided to have Paul's trial. And Paul had to wait until the accusers from Jerusalem came to press charges (23:1-35).

ACTS 24

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SYNOPSIS:

Chapter 24 The chief priest, Ananias, some elders and Tertullus, a lawyer arrived after five days in Caesarea to make accusations and to provide evidence against Paul. This is Paul's **third** defense or plea before a group of people. Tertullus accused Paul of three crimes— 1) inciting riots, 2) being the Christian ringleader which was against the Roman law, 3) and profaning the temple (24:5-6). Paul was finally able to speak against these alleged allegations when the governor beckoned him. Paul disputed everyone of them; they were not able to prove their accusations. Paul ended his defense by pointing out that he was really called into question in regard to his view of the resurrection of the dead (24:21). But that was not a crime against Roman law. After Paul finished, Felix then had a more accurate understanding of the Christian faith probably

⁴⁰ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/gods-timing-is-very-evident-to-paul/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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because Felix had a Jewish wife. What Paul said was right and Felix knew that it was right. Paul was not guilty, because he had not done any crime. But Felix did not want to offend the Jews. So, he made an excuse. He said that he must wait for Lysias. But he did not need to do this because the letter from Lysias had already accompanied Paul. Felix was not persuaded by the Jews and dismissed the court but continued to hold Paul in custody, frequently conversing with him privately, giving him much freedom as possible as a prisoner, even allowing his friends in the area to visit him (24:23). At one point Felix came with his wife Drusilla and listened to him speak. Drusilla was the youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa and the sister to Agrippa II. Paul reasoned before them about "*righteous, self-control, and the judgment to come*" (24:25). As it turned out Paul stayed there for two years as a prisoner while his case was in limbo and Felix visiting him many times. Because things didn't go as the Jews wanted it to go, Felix was recalled to Rome by the emperor Nero under their accusation of bad administration. Felix left Paul in prison for his next successor to decide his fate, and Porcius Festus succeeded him as procurator of Judea (24:1-27).

ACTS 25

[NEXT](#) 26:1-32

SYNOPSIS:

Chapter 25 Charges again was brought upon Paul as Governor Festus came into office. They wanted him back in Jerusalem. Festus didn't know about their plan to kill Paul, but he would not agree with their request. He invited them to go back to Caesarea with him. They could accuse Paul there. And so, a delegation came back with Festus. He called for Paul to come before him; therefore, this would be Paul's **fourth** defense or plea before a group of people. The Jews "*laid many grievous complaints against Paul*" (25:7). These were the same complaints two years ago that they could not prove. This was as if he had never stood trial before. The charges against Paul were about the Jewish religion. So, Festus suggested that Paul should go to Jerusalem. Festus wanted to hand Paul over to the Sanhedrin again. Festus knew that Paul had not done anything against Roman law. He wanted to please the Jews (25:9). Paul still says that he has done no wrong and he then makes an appeal to see Caesar and Festus says, "*To Caesar you shall go*" (25:12). Festus then has a visit from King Herod Agrippa II and his sister Bernice. Agrippa knew a lot about the Jewish religion; therefore, Festus presented Paul's case to King Agrippa. He too, wanted to hear Paul. So Festus arranged that it would happen on the next day. They came in with all of their glitz and glamour as Paul was brought forth before them. Festus explained the situation to Agrippa and the audience that had gathered around them. Festus reported that the Jews claimed Paul was not "*fit to live any longer*" but he states that he found that Paul had committed nothing deserving death. Festus dilemma was how to write some facts about this man to the Emperor. He brought all of these people and King Agrippa together to examine him that he might have something to write; define the charges a little better. It makes no sense to send a prisoner to the Emperor without stating the charges against him (25:1-27). In the next chapter, Paul speaks.

[TOP](#)

SYNOPSIS:

26:1-11 ⁴¹Paul makes his fifth defense or plea before King Agrippa. King Agrippa gave Paul permission to speak for himself. Paul was happy because he could answer for himself and Paul began by acknowledging that King Agrippa was an "*expert*" in the Jewish customs and questions about the Jews. Paul told of his former life as a Jew and Pharisee.

1. He had spent his early life in Jerusalem - all Jews knew this (26:4).
2. He was a member of the strictest sect, the Pharisees (26:5).
3. Paul noted that he was being judged for the "*hope of the promise made by God to our fathers*" (26:6).
4. Paul reiterated that this was the accusation - this "*hope*" (26:7).
5. Paul asked Agrippa, "*Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?*" (26:8).
6. Paul originally thought he should act contrary to Jesus (26:9).
7. Paul cast Christians in prison, voted for their deaths, punished them, compelled them to blaspheme; he even persecuted them to foreign cities (26:10-11).

26:12-18

8. ⁴²Paul told of the Lord's appearance on the Damascus Road. He had the authority and was commissioned by the chief priests to do so. While Paul was engaged in persecuting Christians, he journeyed on the road to Damascus (26:12).
9. At midday a bright light shone on him and his companions (26:13).
10. They all fell to the ground. The Lord then spoke to Paul in the Hebrew language (26:14).
11. The Lord identified Himself as Jesus (26:15).
12. The Lord told Paul of the purpose of His appearing: to make him a minister and witness of the things he had seen and of the things that would be revealed to him (26:16).
13. Paul was sent by the Lord to the Gentiles (26:17), to open their eyes - that they may receive forgiveness of sins (26:18).

26:19 **Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:—** Paul declared emphatically that his call was from heaven, a call from the Lord Himself. He was the most unlikely person in the world to receive a call from God, but it came. He was Saul then, on his way to destroy Christian lives. He had asked, on the Road to Damascus, after being knocked to the ground by a blinding light from heaven, "*Lord what would you have me do?*" (Acts 9:6) And the Lord began to tell him. There was no need to confer with friends or family. The Lord had called him and the Lord expected Paul to fulfill his call. And Paul declared emphatically that he had not disobeyed the heavenly call. He was a sinner, yes; but the Lord in mercy saved and called him, therefore, all men, whether ruler or common, a person should heed the call of God. Paul declares that the charges against him were unjust and he was not disobedient to God.

26:20 **But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of**

⁴¹ http://executableoutlines.com/acts/acts_26.htm

⁴² http://executableoutlines.com/acts/acts_26.htm

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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Judaea, and then to the Gentiles,— Paul witnessed to all men everywhere as soon as he was saved. He proclaimed Christ...

- at Damascus, the very city where he was visiting when he was converted (Acts 9:20)
- at Jerusalem where he had been educated and was so well known as a Pharisee (Acts 9:29).
- Throughout all Judea, all the cities, towns, and villages—to everyone whose path he crossed.
- To the Gentiles, those who were at odds with the Jews, but whom God loved as much as the Jews.

26:20b ...that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. Paul preached repentance, the need for every man to turn to God and to do the works of repentance. Note these points:

- Proclaiming repentance to men is the call of God to believers.
- Turning to God implies faith. No man is going to turn to God who doesn't believe in God. Therefore, proclaiming faith and repentance toward God is the call of believers.
- Proclaiming that men must do the works of repentance is also the call of the believer. A man has truly repented when he is living a life of repentance. It does not matter what the man claims: if he is living a sinful life, he is a sinful man and not a repentant man. Repentance concerns...
 - How a man lives ○ what a man does ○ where a man goes ○ how a man talks

A changed life is the very foundation of salvation. There is no salvation apart from a life of righteousness. It is this message that must be proclaimed loudly and clearly, for multitudes are deceived and resting in the false security of religion, ritual, ceremony, church membership, baptism, worship attendance, heritage, good parents, morality, and a host of other ideas.

26:21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. Well, this is the reason the Jews seized Paul in the temple and wanted to kill him: he was obedient to the Lord's call. He was being persecuted and charged because he proclaimed the simple message that men should repent and turn to God and do good works. He was really saying that the message of the gospel was not harmful to men; it was good for individuals and for society. The gospel changes people's lives.

- Turns them from evil to good • from immorality to morality • from defeat to victory • from enslavement to freedom etc.

26:22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:— Paul continued to bear witness to both small and great with God's help. Opposition had not stopped him, discouraged him, nor defeated him. Paul's testimony to God's love and care shows that God had always been there to help him, encourage and strengthen him to continue on in his call. His message was not something he manufactured, for it was based solidly on the Old Testament Scriptures.

26:23 That Christ should suffer,— Paul bore witness to Christ's death. The words "*that Christ should suffer*" (*ei pathetos ho Christos*) are spoken from the Jewish point of view. The Messiah was a man who was not only capable of suffering, but he had to suffer. His death was ordained; it was a must in the mind of God and prophesied in the Scripture. It was no other way for God to save man other than by the death of His Son, the Messiah. The point is: the cross was such a stumbling block to the Jews. They could see a Messiah of glory, power, fame, and wealth; but not a Messiah of suffering and death.

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26:23b ...and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles. Paul bore witness to Christ's resurrection. The statement that says, "*He should be the first that should rise from the dead.*" This means He was the first-fruits, the preeminent One, the prominent One, the first in importance to arise from the dead. He was the first to arise who never again had to die (Rom.6:9). The few who had arisen before Him had to die again.

26:24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. Well the verdict upon Paul from Festus was:

1. The first verdict was madness. This was the view of Festus; tragic but humorous. There was Paul preaching away as earnestly and diligently as he could, and then he came to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.
 - a. He says, '*Paul, you are beside yourself*', mad, insane; there is no such thing as rising from the dead. Festus charged Paul with having conceived the resurrection in his own mind.

To a worldly materialistic mind, it seems insane to risk so much to gain so little. It was obvious that Paul was a man of unusual intelligence but must have gone crazy (to some) from all of these religious investigations. You've got to remember that flesh and blood does not reveal all this to Paul but it's by the Spirit of God that gives him the understanding of the things he's saying and these things are not made up. But to others, he must be a mad religious fanatic.

26:25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

Festus had spoken out with a loud voice to Paul, interrupting him, calling him mad; therefore, Paul had to reply.

- b. Paul's response to Festus was calm and straight-forward. He declared that he preached the truth and did it soberly, that is, rationally, in complete control of his senses.

If he really thought Paul to be mad he would have hurriedly escorted him out and not listened to him.

26:26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

- c. King Agrippa knew the Scripture. If he would, he could confirm...
 - i. That Scripture predicted the coming of the Messiah.
 - ii. That news of Jesus' claims, His death and resurrection had swept the whole country and surrounding areas.

Nothing was hidden from Festus; nothing was done in a corner. He just reminded King Agrippa that the events of the death and resurrection of Christ were hardly a secret and were openly known to anyone who had any knowledge of Jewish affairs at all.

26:27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

- d. Paul put King Agrippa on the spot by asking, "*Do you believe the Scripture, King Agrippa?*"

This is Paul's final appeal to him. King Agrippa was an expert in Jewish matters. When Paul asked if he believed the prophets, he was forcing him to take a stand. Certainly the king would not repudiate what every Jew believed? But King Agrippa knew that if he affirmed his faith in the prophets, he must then face the question, '*Is Jesus of Nazareth the one about whom the prophets wrote about?*' Well King Agrippa evidently was embarrassed by this face-to-face examination or conviction and was not about to make such an

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admission before Governor Festus and the others.

26:28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

2. The second verdict was evangelistic fervor. The words of King Agrippa are known by Christians worldwide, having served as a basic text for preachers of every generation. Some translate King Agrippa as saying, "*You expect to make me a Christian in so short a time?*" Others say, "*You almost persuaded me to be a Christian.*"

Whatever king Agrippa meant, he was familiar with the Scripture and apparently was gripped by Paul's message. His interest was aroused by the possibility that Jesus really was the Jewish Messiah. Apparently, Paul noticed some interest or conviction working in Festus and he was appealing to him to come forth for Christ. Paul's word had found their mark, and Festus was trying to escape. That's why he called Paul "*mad*" and so he attempted to belittle his witness!

26:29 And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds. Paul longed for all who were under the sound of his voice to be saved. He apparently raised his chained hands toward the audience sitting in the great hall and poured out his heart. Festus and Agrippa knew that Paul had a compassionate concern for them. Every believer should bear witness with the same evangelistic fervor that was aflame in Paul.

26:30 And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them:—They had the opportunity to receive eternal life, but chose to rise up and leave the hall. They could not stand to hear anymore. When they stood up that told everybody that was assembled that this was over.

26:31 And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.

3. The third verdict was that Paul was innocent of the charges. They had gone out to confer among themselves and decided that "*he had done nothing worthy of death or of bonds.*"

Paul's innocence has been declared and verified again mind you by Roman officials.

26:32 Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar. Well, what do you think about that? He could have been set free but Paul had already appealed his case to Caesar, the emperor. Because of the formality of such an appeal, the legal process had to be carried through. As Paul was always led by the Spirit of God, this was already in the works for him. As Jesus "*must go to Samaria*", Paul must go to Rome!

What they refused to hear was the truth Paul brought; he was not the prisoner but they were because they didn't receive the truth. Paul took a stand on truth while they took a stand on pride that leads to death. They heard truth but would not acknowledge it to say yes to Christ. Paul was still free; but they stayed prisoners. They had been shown the light and the way to freedom but they deliberately chose not to. The trial was over but Agrippa, Festus and the others sentence was still to come!

SUMMARY:

⁴³Paul told Agrippa that he had to be obedient to the heavenly vision. He declared the Gospel in Damascus, Jerusalem, Judea, and then to the Gentiles. Paul told the Gentiles to "*repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.*" He said for these things the Jews seized him at the temple and tried to kill him. He recognized that God had helped him to that very time. Paul only preached those things which the prophets and Moses had said would come to pass: that Christ would suffer; that Christ would be the first to rise from the dead; and, that He would proclaim light to the Jews and Gentiles (**26:19-23**).

Festus then interrupted Paul. He interjected at Paul's defense with a loud voice. He said, "*Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!*" Paul replied, "*I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak words of truth and reason.*" He pointed out that King Agrippa knew of these things. Paul further noted that none of these things had been "*done in a corner*" (hidden) (**26:24-26**).

APPLICATION:

The opportunity will come for us to take a stand and tell the truth of the Word of Jesus and we may be the only one they hear it from. Don't allow fear to overtake you. God's Spirit is always there to provide the way for His words to come forth and a way for that vessel you're speaking to, to have a prepared heart to listen. It is always up to God to do the drawing, so don't be alarmed that their response is not what you would want it to be. Hopefully, God provides another chance for them to say yes to Him!

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⁴³ http://executableoutlines.com/acts/acts_26.htm
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

27:1 And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band. The time has arrived when Paul is to go to Rome along with other prisoners under the guard of Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band. Julius may have been on detached duty, performing such tasks as escorting important prisoners. This would be the last journey for Paul. Never again would he return to his beloved Palestine and people, not as far as Acts is concerned. The fact that the prisoners were being shipped to Rome for trial would mean...

- that some had appealed to Caesar just as Paul had.
- that others were condemned to appear as combatants in the gladiatorial shows of the Roman arena to feed the immoral and violent cravings of the populace (*general public*).

Note how the believer is counted among the worthless, the violators, the useless, and the prisoners of society.

27:2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us. The group took passage on a ship from Adramyttium. The Adramyttium refers to a seaport on the Aegean opposite the island of Lesbos. The ship was to hug the coastline, stopping at ports all along the coast unloading and loading cargo. It was only temporary transportation until Julius could find a larger ship in one of the ports that was heading directly for Rome, Italy. Paul had allowed two traveling associates to accompany Paul: Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica as a servant, and some say Luke as his physician.

SYNOPSIS:

27:27-32 The ship had come into danger. ⁴⁴After 14 days of drifting on the Mediterranean Sea the sailors realized that they were getting near land (27:27). In the middle of the fourteenth night of the storm, the crewmen tested the waters and discovered that they were approaching land (27:28). So in the darkness of the night they dropped their anchors and waited for daylight, hoping that they might make it to the shore safely (27:29-30). Under this tremendous pressure some were about to jump overboard, and Paul warned them that they would not live unless they remained with the ship (27:31-32).

27:33 For And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing. The scene begins with the beginning of daybreak. Paul urges all on the ship to eat. Going through a storm is very difficult. And those that had become seasick and had difficulty preparing food caused the passengers and crew to not eat anything; they fasted for two weeks (14 days). However, soon, they would have to swim to the shore and they needed strength.

27:34 Wherefore I pray you to take some meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you. Paul encourages the ones on the ship to eat some meat for their health. He used a common Jewish saying, so all would understand that he meant business by telling them "*not an hair fall*

⁴⁴ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/peer-pressure-adds-to-the-present-peril/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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from the head of any of you." Paul knew that fear was upon the men but he is still demonstrating his faith in the midst of the storm. The invitation to eat was extended by Paul, and the assurance of God's saving promise (27:23-25) and power was given again.

27:35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat. Paul focuses upon God—giving thanks to God in the midst of them all, not quietly, but boldly and loudly before eating the bread. He breaks it and then eats it, just as he had seen his Master the Lord Jesus Christ do. Paul being among non-Christians was not ashamed to honor God. The word says, *"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven"* Matt.10:32.

27:36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat. Those on the ship began to rejoice because of the encouragement Paul had given them. They all were of good cheer as they ate the meat. Paul, the prisoner was the one who compelled them to rely on God, eat meat and give God thanks at a time in their lives when they thought they were going to die; even the centurion saw this. Paul's action speaks for itself.

27:37 And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls. Could you imagine 276 passengers probably on a small ship? When Paul was speaking, all of them were listening and trusted the one that had faith because he trusted God, the faithful One.

27:38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea. Now that they had eaten their full, they began to lighten the ship by throwing all the cargo overboard—the wheat was cast overboard so the ship could go over the waves more easily. Therefore the ship's owner's attempt to bring his cargo to Rome in time to get the best price had now totally failed.

27:39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship. Daybreak had come but they didn't recognize the coastline, but noticed a bay with a beach and wondered whether they could get between the rocks and be driven up onto the beach. They took counsel as to whether they could attempt to run the ship safely into the shore.

27:40 And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoised up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore. They finally decided to try. They let the anchors go into the sea, hoisted the mainsail and headed for the beach. The rudder bands were loosed (two large steering oars on either side of the ship) and they attempted to make the shore with a small "foresail." ⁴⁵ *"The mainsail (foresail) being hoisted showed good judgment, though the distance was so small, as it would not only enable them to steer more correctly than without it, but would press the ship farther on upon the land, and thus enable them the more easily to get to the shore"* (Penrose).

27:41 And falling into a place where two seas met, —Being carried by the wind and waves into a place where two seas met, they didn't make it. This was ⁴⁶where two bodies of water joined. This was due to a small island on the coast of the larger, Salmonetta on the coast of Malta. When they moved into the bay, they did

⁴⁵ <http://bible.cc/acts/27-40.htm>

⁴⁶ <http://bible.cc/acts/27-41.htm>

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not see the inlet coming in on the other side of Salmonetta, but when they saw it, they saw that two seas met. This is called an "*isthmus*" because the Sea touches it on both sides.

27:41b ...they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves. They ran the ship aground and the "*forepart*" (bow) was stuck in the sand and could not be moved, while the force of the waves against the "*hinder part*" (stern) began breaking the ship in two. Why did God not just allow the ship to make it safely to shore without wrecking?; Why was the trial made so difficult for the crew and passengers?; Very simply...

- trials are used by God to cause men to turn to Him for salvation.
- trials prove that a person really trusts God.
- trials make a believer stronger so he can stand against even tougher trials in the future and demonstrate the presence and power of God to a greater degree. The world needs to see the demonstration of God's presence and power, and the only way they can see it is in the life of believers as they go through trials.

27:42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape. The soldiers were governed by a law. It was a merciless law, a code of the world that was devoid of morality. They, the soldiers themselves were held accountable, and would be killed themselves if any of their prisoners escaped. Had Paul not stepped to the forefront as he had and won the confidence of the centurion, all the prisoners would have been put to death by the soldiers' counsel.

27:43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land:— A respect and friendship developed between Paul and Julius, the centurion. Note how God overruled both the soldiers' plan to kill the prisoners and the shipwreck to fulfill His promise and Word. The centurion however, willing to save Paul and many of those who could swim did so. Everyone had to leave the ship, but the ones that could swim were the first to get in the water before it completely broke up.

27:44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land. Some people could swim, so they swam to the beach. Some people could not swim, they held on to objects that floated; pieces of the boat. So they too got to the beach. Nobody drowned. Everyone was safe. God did exactly what he had said and promised. He saved everyone and vindicated His messenger. But note: each one had to go through the frightening trial of being shipwrecked and scrambling to shore. The storm was weathered only by trusting God's messenger.

SUMMARY:

Paul never seemed to be able to do anything half-heartedly and the journey to Rome is itself an exciting and unusual story. At the determined time, Paul and a group of prisoners had collected at the headquarters of the Roman official in Caesarea, and they were sent to Rome under the charge of Julius, a centurion, and the cohort of Augustus' band. Aristarchus and Luke accompanied Paul. The group took passage on a ship from Adramyttium which was a port near Troas on the Asian coast (**27:1-2**).

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A storm has arisen with all those that had embarked upon the ship. ⁴⁷As the day dawned, Paul encouraged them to eat. It had been fourteen days since they had eaten. Paul indicated they needed food for nourishment and survival. He reminded them they all would be safe. Paul then took bread, gave thanks to God, and began to eat before them. They were all encouraged by Paul and ate as well. After they had eaten enough, they threw the wheat into the sea to lighten the ship. There were two hundred seventy-six people aboard the ship (**27:33-38**).

At daylight, they saw a bay with a beach, though they did not recognize the land. They desired to drive the ship onto the beach. They let the anchors go into the sea, hoisted the main sail, and headed for the beach. The ship ran aground "where two seas met" and the "prow stuck fast" - the ship was immovable. The waves violently began to break up the ship. The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to keep any from escaping. The centurion stopped the soldiers' plan. He wanted to save Paul. The centurion commanded all who could swim to jump overboard and swim for shore. The rest floated on boards or parts of the ship. They all escaped safely to the island (**27:39-44**).

APPLICATION:

Paul, a prisoner was the one who compelled all on the ship to rely on God, and give thanks at a time in their lives when they thought they were going to die. Our journey may start off ruff, but Jesus will get us to our destination when we carry Him on the ship. Pray and be encouraged with His Word in your ruff times to weather all your storms!

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⁴⁷ http://executableoutlines.com/acts/acts_27.htm
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

INTRODUCTION:

Paul, a prisoner had began his journey to Rome placed under the guard of Julius the centurion to see the emperor. There were 276 passengers on the ship when a violent storm had overcome them. Paul had received a word from an angel of God that all would be safe if they stayed with the ship. He encouraged them to eat after not eating for 14 days. They gave thanks and ate meat for their health. They began to throw cargo overboard to lighten the ship. The ship later hit a sandbank and got stuck. The soldiers themselves were held accountable if any of their prisoners escaped, for they would be killed themselves. Now the ship began to break up and those that could swim were to swim to land and the rest were to hang on to boards and broken pieces. All escaped safely to land.

28:1 And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita. Paul and all the other prisoners and crew were safe on land after being forced to abandon the wrecked ship. God had promised to save Paul and He did, and God also saved everyone else on the ship. This trial sent them through the wringer. They were wet and exhausted, but now they knew that they were on the island called Melita or Malta. Malta meant "*refuge*" in the Phoenician language. This island was 17 miles long, 9 miles wide, and about 60 miles from Sicily; placed under the province of Sicily by Rome. And this is where God sent them—a place called refuge!

28:2 And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold. The people proved to be kind and sympathetic to their need. Because of the present rain and the cold, they kindled a fire to warm them. They were called barbarians only because they did not follow Greek customs and speak the Greek language, not because they were uncivilized people. All non-Greek and non-Romans were known as foreigners, a barbarous people. They were isolated on an insignificant and poor island. Can you see God's overruling protection? The point to see is how God takes care of those who believe His promises and follow His instructions.

28:3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. As if the shipwreck wasn't enough for Paul, God's messenger, goes through another trial. As we usually say, "*If it ain't one thing, it's another!*" However, God is still keeping His promise, whether on sea or on land. Paul could have been just sitting and waiting for others to gather the sticks for the fire, but here he's still helping people. He's gathering sticks. A viper, another word for viper is "*snake*", leaped from the fire and latches its bite onto Paul's hand. The snake had hibernated in the sticks of wood and when it felt the fire, well...

28:4 And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live. Everyone sees this snake and knows that this is a poisonous snake hanging onto Paul's hand. And therefore, the barbarians assumed that this punishment of the snakebite was Paul's fate from his misdeeds, (their assumption of him being a murderer). Although he hath escaped the sea, their common concept was that the goddess of justice, "*Dike*", would use tragedy to catch up with her victims and suffer him not to live. The snake

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bite was sure death, so they thought. Why did God allow His messenger to be snake bitten? Had he not already suffered and gone through enough? Well for the same reasons I had said in Acts 27:41. And I would like to add another: this is another group of people for Paul to witness to about his God.

28:5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. Well, this had to be an unusual sight for the Melitians.

Two points:

1. The venom did not kill Paul for God took care of Paul through the trial, healing him instantaneously.
2. Paul was able to reach many for Christ. The Melitians saw the delivering power of God, and by seeing God's care for Paul, they were more ready to listen to the gospel. They would soon learn that God was the only true and living God, the God who was truly alive and who saved and looked after all who truly trusted Him.

Whatever trial you're going through, *"shake it off and put it under your feet!"* The enemy may set one trap and then another, *"be not alarmed for God is with you!"*

- The enemy tried to drown Paul, it didn't work, he escaped.
- The enemy then tried to bite him, and that didn't work either, he shook it off and felt no harm.

We see that here was a calmness about him, because most people would have panicked. But Paul was different; he understood and trusted the promises of God that he would get to Rome in one piece.

28:6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

How awesome is our God? The Melitians were really looking for his hand to be swollen, then keel over and die. People will always think;

- That we suffer because of foolishness, wrong-doing, irresponsible behavior, sin etc.
- That we are being punished for our evil deeds.

Yes, there are consequences for sin, but the man born blind did not sin, nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him (John 9:3). A man does reap what he sows; however, he does not always bear severe suffering in a personal way. It falls on the just as well as the unjust. The trials of this life are just the result from a corruptible sinful world and therefore hard to avoid. The major or ultimate judgment for sin will take place face to face with God in eternity. The Melitians saw that Paul was unharmed, and that changed their minds that he was a victim of their goddess. But they said that Paul himself was a god because the snake had no effect. A similar situation is reported in Acts 14:11-18.

28:7 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously. The scene switched from the beach to another part of the island. So, *"In the same quarters"* (same part of the island) were possessions (estate or lands). *"The chief man of the island"* (the leading official) was Publius who graciously welcomed all 276 passengers from the shipwreck to lodge with him in his estate for 3 days.

28:8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. And it so happened, that Publius' father was lying sick with fever and a bloody flux (hemorrhage). *"Malta fever"* is a malady caused by drinking infected milk, of infected Maltese goats. *"Dysentery"* (flux) is disease of the lower intestine caused by infection with bacteria, poor sanitation or parasites marked by severe diarrhea, inflammation, and the passage of blood

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and mucus. Dysentery and fever were common on the island of Malta and often took many lives. This was a very serious disease. Well, there were so many miracles in this lesson, so here's another. Paul came to Publius' father and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and he was healed of the sickness.

28:9 So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:— Well after the healing of Publius' father, the word spread all over the island and many came with diseases and were healed. All 276 people from the shipwreck whined-up staying on that island for 3 months (v.11). This shows us that God has many interruptions in our lives. Trust is our key to the door we enter. Paul's destination was always in the right place because he was always following God.

28:10 Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary. The people of Malta were so grateful that they honored Paul and the others by loading cargo onto their ship. They were treated graciously and sending them on their way with generous gifts. Since they had lost everything in the shipwreck, the passengers were grateful to have their needs supplied. I just know that Paul had plenty of times to preach the gospel to the people. He couldn't help himself. His miraculous deliverance from the sea, the viper, the power to heal would certainly arouse the interest of the people. Paul would certainly give glory to God for all that was done. According to tradition, the church on Malta dates from this same time, with Publius as its first pastor. In this trial many were helped!

Castor and Pollux— the Twin Brothers

28:11 And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

After three months of winter, an Alexandrian ship (the Twin Brothers) Castor and Pollux sailed from Malta. 48In Greek and Roman mythology, Castor and Pollux (known as Polydeuces to the Greeks) were twin brothers who appeared in several prominent myths. The twins were worshiped as gods who helped shipwrecked sailors and who brought favorable winds for those who made sacrifices to them. The Romans considered Castor and Pollux the patron gods of horses and of the Roman social order of mounted knights, called equites. 49In the myth the twins shared the same mother but had different fathers which meant that Pollux was immortal and Castor was mortal. When Castor died, Pollux asked Zeus to let him share his own immortality with his twin to keep them together and they were transformed into the Gemini constellation. The Romans believed that the twins aided them on the battlefield. For though the unbelieving ancients would have attributed Paul's rescue to "the Twins" and taken it as a token of his innocence, Paul has made clear he belongs to, serves and believes in the One True God, who was his protector and deliverer.

SYNOPSIS:

28:12-15 They sailed and landed at Syracuse (3days), then Rhegium (1day), and then to Puteoli. Paul found brethren at Puteoli and stayed with them seven days. As they traveled, brethren heard about them and met them at Appii Forum and Three Inns Taverns. This gave Paul courage and he thanked God.

28:16 And we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him. Upon arrival at Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard. Paul entered Rome as a prisoner. The other prisoners were turned

⁴⁸ <http://www.mythencyclopedia.com/Ca-Cr/Castor-and-Pollux.html>

⁴⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castor_and_Pollux

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over to the proper officer of the Roman guard. Paul was however, placed under house arrest—a private house; being chained to the wrist of a soldier twenty-four hours a day. He was allowed to have guest as he willed. This was probably because he was a Roman citizen. Also, Festus and Captain Julius had said good things about him. He was to be brought before the proper authorities at an appointed time.

28:17 And it came to pass, that, after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. After three days, Paul never was one to waste time, he called the chief of the Jews together. This was the first step in evangelizing the city—an explanatory meeting with the religious leaders. Note: despite the unbelievable ordeal of the past three months or more, he rested for three day and then launched right into ministry of evangelism. Being under house arrest, he sent a request to all the Jewish leaders throughout Rome to meet him at an appointed time in his house. The Jews especially knew of him; for he had been one of the brightest stars of their nation until his conversion to Christ, and he was now the one who riled up the Jews so much wherever he went. They would come out of curiosity just to see this man who had become such a controversial figure throughout the world, to see just what he had to say. There were at least seven synagogues in Rome at this time. Just how many leaders from each attended the meeting is not known. Paul simply related what had happened to him, why he had been arrested and why he was now to appear before Caesar. He needed to explain why he was a prisoner. His purpose was...

- to remove the doubts and questions, rumors and prejudices they might hold against him. He wanted to share the gospel with them. Paul's heart ached for his own people and he always reached out to them first wherever he went. If he went to the Gentiles first, he would have alienated himself from the Jews. He had written to the believers earlier that his love for his own people was so deep he would give his own soul for their salvation (Rom.9:1-3; 10:1).

Paul set at least three dynamic examples for us in these verses.

1. The example of dedication—an enormous dedication to reach people with the gospel, no matter what the circumstances or how exhausted one might be.
2. The example of love—an enormous love for one's own people, one's own nation. Paul never gave up on his people, no matter their ill treatment of him.
3. The example of removing all doubts and questions, rumors, and prejudices so that the gospel can have free course and flow freely as one proclaims it.

Paul had defended himself before:

1. The Jerusalem mob (22:1-23).
2. The Sanhedrin (23:1-10).
3. Felix (24:10-23).
4. Fetus (25:8-12).
5. King Herod Agrippa II (25:23—26:32).
6. The Passengers on the ship (27:24-30).
7. The Jews at Rome (28:17-28).

Paul declared his innocence and the injustice done. He had not violated Jewish law, and he had not injured Jewish people.

28:18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me. Therefore, he established that he had been taken before and was found innocent; and ⁵⁰despite his

⁵⁰ <http://www.biblebb.com/files/mac/sg1802.htm>
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innocence, he was still a prisoner in Rome. If the Romans didn't punish him, the leaders were likely to lead an insurrection against Rome. That was something Festus wished to avoid (Acts 24:9), so he had succumbed to the pressure of the Jewish leaders and kept Paul a prisoner.

28:19 But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of. Although Paul was innocent, the Jewish leaders kept up the pressure to the point that his only escape was to appeal to Caesar in the hopes of receiving a fair trial. Since he was a Roman citizen, he had the right to appeal his case to Rome. That led to his being transported to Rome. Since he had revealed that the Jewish leaders were responsible for his imprisonment, Paul was quick to point out that he was just defending himself against unfair accusations, and that in no way was he condemning or attacking the Jewish people or nation. He was not a traitor to the cause of Judaism. He remained Jewish in nationality and interest. He maintained his special love for the people. He held no bitterness toward Israel. He was just simply defending himself.

28:20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. Paul says, *"For this cause...I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you...for the hope of Israel..."* Paul was saying, the reason I'm bound in chains was for the hope of Israel; the reason these chains bind me is that I'm preaching the hope of the Messiah—He is Savior, he rose from the dead, and He brings resurrection for all of us who believe. There is resurrection for the dead! Paul constantly referred to his chains. In Ephesians 6:20 he says, *"I am an ambassador in bonds."* In 2 Timothy 1:16 he says, *"The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain."*

28:21 And they said unto him, we neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spoke any harm of thee. 28:22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest; for as concerning this sect [Christianity], we know that everywhere it is spoken against. No letter or message from Judea had arrived before Paul. The Jews in Rome so he now hears knew nothing about his trial and had received no report from Judea about him. But they knew that he was a Christian. Christians were denounced everywhere by the Romans because they were seen as a threat to the Roman establishment. They believed in one God, whereas the Romans had many gods, including Caesar. The Christians were committed to an authority higher than Caesar. They had heard bad things about the "group" called Christians. So, they wanted to hear Paul's opinions. It was hard for Paul, but he wanted to preach the gospel in Rome, and he eventually got there in chains after being shipwrecked, and after many trials.

28:23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. This was the second step in evangelizing the city—a clear proclamation of the message. Many had come to the meeting to hear what Paul had to say. On that day it was packed and overflowing. Note three significant points:

1. Paul preached the Kingdom of God. He preached that Jesus is the true Messiah who had brought the Kingdom of God to earth. He preached that Jesus is the true Messiah who is to return to earth to establish the kingdom forever.
2. Paul focused his preaching in the Word of God, and there alone.
3. The results were mixed. Some believed, but most did not believe.

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Paul used both the Law of Moses and the prophets to teach the Jews that Jesus was the true Messiah, the fulfillment of God's promises. He showed them proof from the scriptures and labored long from morning till evening.

28:24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. The simplicity of the gospel causes many to reason too much and therefore disbelieve, while others take it just as it is and believe. They did not believe many times before when Paul preached. It had happened at Paul's trial in Jerusalem (Acts 23:9). We now come to The third step in evangelizing the city—turning to those who would receive the gospel—the rejected Gentiles.

28:25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, **Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers.** Unable to agree with one another, they were left with this final Word of warning from Paul by the Holy Spirit: "*Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers.*" And he continues to quote to verse 28. For the fourth time in Scripture the Spirit of God quotes a prophecy first recorded in Isaiah 6:9-10. Isaiah spoke those words at a time when Israel was in sin. Our Lord Jesus quoted him in Matthew 13:14-15 to pronounce judgment on Israel. John also quoted the same passage (John 12:40). Finally Paul quoted them in Acts 28:25-27. Paul declared that Isaiah prophesied the rejection of the gospel by the Jews. They had chosen not to see or hear. So, they could not understand the message. They had rejected God's Messiah; they had rejected His message, and they had rejected salvation.

Note three points:

28:26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, **Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:**

1. The unbeliever's rejection is willful, always deliberate. He sees and hears, yet he refuses to really open his eyes and ears. He refuses to understand. But why?

28:27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. This is saying,

- a. "*For the heart (the mind, the people's soul) is waxed gross (grown dense, dull, lost their feeling).*"
- b. "*...and their ears are dull of hearing*" (heavy of hearing, hard of hearing).
- c. "*...and their eyes have they closed*" (shut their eyes). The unbeliever's rejection is prophesied. A man who willfully rejects God experiences a *judicial blindness* and rejection by God. This person is given over to a *just punishment*. His obstinate unbelief, constant sin, and continual rejection lead to a *judicial blindness* and to being rejected by God.

2. The unbeliever's rejection is clear, they:

- a. hardened their hearts b. deafened their ears c. closed their eyes d. denied what they saw
- e. refused understanding f. fought conversion and healing.

Paul did not waste time, but made the most of this opportunity. Anytime we give forth the gospel of Christ, it is not a waste of time but the greatest of opportunities to serve and be used by Christ. Although Paul was under house arrest, in chains, he had the opportunity to accomplished what he set out to do—to evangelize the gospel of Christ in Rome rather if they received it or not. The point is: they heard the gospel.

28:28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it. This is a pivotal point of history in the Book of Acts. It ...

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- Opens with the great commission to carry the gospel to the Jew first (Acts 1:8; Rom.1:16).
- Closes with the gospel being rejected by the Jews and being taken primarily to the Gentiles (Acts 28:28).

Paul declared that salvation was now being sent to the Gentiles, and they would hear it. Paul had been serving Christ for more than thirty years now. Everywhere he went, he attempted to bring the glorious message of salvation to the Jews first. However, the elect became reprobate, and the reprobate elect. He's saying the Gentiles will hear, signifying they will obey.

28:29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves. As always, the Jews left arguing and discussing what Paul had declared, their decision was final; they wanted absolutely nothing to do with Paul and the Christ he preached.⁵¹ It meant change. When God moved in ways different from what they had expected, even though he had predicted it, they refused to move with Him. They hung back and clung to their tradition and refused to be disturbed in the comfort of their lives. They did not want to be changed. We resist anything that disturbs the tranquility of an accepted and commonly practiced tradition. We want to cling to the comfortable dead rags of the past, even though the Word of God has always marked out the pathway by which the Spirit works. Because as God bypassed the Jews, so he bypasses any who continually refuse to move with the creative power and the advance of the Spirit of God. The Jews departed disputing among themselves.

28:30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, — Paul stayed two full years in his own rented quarters, with no freedom to leave, which brings us to: The fourth step in evangelizing the city—a mission of continued evangelism. The imprisonment did not keep Paul from doing what he needed to do. Note some significant facts:

1. Paul preached and taught, proclaiming the gospel, and rooting the new believers in the faith. He gave systematic instruction and follow-up as well as evangelizing all with whom he came in contact with all openness.
2. He wrote letters, commonly called his Prison Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians, as well as personal letters, such as Philemon.
3. Timothy often visited him, as did Tychicus and Mark.
4. Paul witnessed to the Roman guard.

28:31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him. Now as Acts closes, the gospel has reached the center and capital of the world, Rome itself. Notice how the book of Acts ends? "*With all confidence, no man forbidding him*" meaning "*unhindered him*." Paul worked unhindered. There was still freedom of the gospel going forth. You see, Paul could not go about the city but he could welcome friends in. He never fretted about his condition, but he welcomed all who came and he sent letters back with them — letters that have changed the world. But the Word was not hindered. No matter what the condition of the church, the Word of God is never bound. We must remember that. God always have a plan.

SUMMARY:

Paul and the other passengers from the shipwreck are now on the island of Melita or Malta (28:1). Those that

⁵¹ <http://www.pbc.org/files/messages/4509/0451.html>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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were already on the island showed kindness to Paul and the crew by kindling a fire to warm them (28:2). ⁵²As Paul was throwing wood on the fire a poisonous snake fastened itself onto his hand (28:3). When the islanders saw what had happened they were horrified. They thought Paul must be a criminal, and that this was a judgment brought upon him. They fully expected that he would become ill or even die (28:4). When he shook the snake off and no ill came to him they changed their minds and thought that he must be a god. It is interesting to note that when the people discovered that no harm had come to Paul, they went from one extreme to another. Instead of a criminal caught by justice, they now thought Paul to be a god on whom snakes had no effect (28:5-6). Publius, who evidently had an estate on the island near the shipwreck, generously gave hospitality to the castaways (28:7). It seems that the father of Publius suffered from a fever and dysentery that were beyond the medical cures of the day. When Paul found out about this, he went to see the sick man, and after praying and the laying on of hands, the man was healed (28:8). This news spread swiftly throughout the island, and others flocked in to see Paul and to be healed (28:9). It is for certain that he had won the hearts of the islanders. They showered Paul and his friends with honors, and when it came time for them to leave, they loaded them down with provisions for the voyage (28:1-10).

Paul had an appointment which God kept for him. God kept him safe throughout the ordeal of the shipwreck and all the trials that occurred afterwards. When he arrived in Rome he could see God's hand still at work in the fact that he was given courteous and lenient treatment and was allowed to stay by himself in his own house, with the soldiers who guarded him. After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews. When they came together he spoke to them. Now Paul makes it clear that it was the Jews who were against him, not he against them. Despite the abuse and persecution he had experienced from the Jewish people throughout his ministry, he bore his countrymen no animosity (28:16-19).

⁵³Paul stated, for this reason "...because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." The Jewish leaders responded to Paul indicating they had not received letters nor heard of any evil spoken of him. They wanted to hear more from him "concerning this sect." The Jews met Paul and he expounded and testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus. Paul spoke from morning till evening both the Law of Moses and the Prophets. Some believed and some believed not. Then Paul told them that the salvation of God had been sent to the Gentiles, for "they will hear it!" The Jews departed and "had a great dispute among themselves." Paul dwelt in his hired home for two years, as he continued under house arrest receiving all who came to him; committed to preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. He taught with all confidence, and no one forbade him (28:20-31).

APPLICATION:

When we follow God we will be placed in situations we had no idea of being in. But what if that's the very place someone needed help? What if God wanted to work miracles through you in someone else's life? God won't place us in situations He hasn't already handled. Our handling of them depends on our trust in Him! We are challenged to commit our lives to God's care. He upholds His Word!

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⁵² <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/crisis-averted--gods-will-for-paul-is-evident/>

⁵³ http://executableoutlines.com/acts/acts_28.htm

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>