

# **ACTS**

**THE HEARTBEAT OF JESUS CONTINUES**

**Becky | 2015**



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### **Welcome to Bible Study Transformation!**

*“What you think about God is the most important thing about you.”*

A.W. Tozer

This course will cover the Book of Acts. These are Scriptures which will usher us into the very throne room of our King!

God longs for you to know Him as He is in reality. He is King! He reigns over all!

From the study of this book, we will see a theology concerning our God unfold. An understanding of theology is lacking within the church body today. So we will tackle this fearlessly, knowing that our God wants us to know Him. But theology without application and transformation can lead to empty worship. So each lesson will offer application/contemplative questions and hymns for each week’s lesson.

- I commend you for making the effort to come to Bible Study – it requires effort – so I do not take for granted that you could be doing many other things.

Many times we begin with enthusiasm and energy but as time passes, we grow heavy and forget our initial enthusiasm. I pray you remember your desire right now to become truly transformed by God’s Word.

- ☑ As a reminder to be steadfast, **write in the front of the book cover**, what you want the Lord to reveal to you during these weeks of study.

### **Study Structure**

The study is structured so that each week, you will decide whether you will work on the **Basic Study** or both the **Basic Study** and the **Digging Deeper** section.

The first section will only take 1 – 2 hours at most. For those who wish to tackle more in-depth study, the Digging Deeper section will provide that challenge.

Both types of homework will engage in the Application/Contemplative Questions at the end of each week’s assignment.

Whether your week allows you to invest 4-5 hours or 1 -2 hours or less, you will benefit from the lessons and the class discussion because you will be working on the same material.

**You will need:**

A Bible

A three-ringed binder

(optional) dividers

Colored pencils

**Books of the Bible**

The first lesson, we will spell out the entire book of the Bible when using references.

Thereafter we will use abbreviations to refer to the books: Hebrews = Heb.; Genesis = Gen.

**Hebrew/Greek**

Also when Hebrew or Greek words are mentioned and numbered, the numbering is from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. You will find the corresponding number in this dictionary should you wish to study further.

**Example** - Hebrew for "steadfast love" is *hesed* # 2617: it is a word used for God's faithful, eternal love which He has poured out on His people; it is His word for covenant love; it can also mean kindness, mercy

Psalm 136 is the classic text for the use of this word.

**Appendix**

1. The Appendix includes a section on **Doctrine** which will solidify all we are learning about God and many other important Biblical truths.
2. Keep a list in the Appendix of what you are learning about the **Holy Spirit**.
3. In the Appendix, you will find **the text of the Book of Acts**. These copies are for you to analyze, write notes, make remarks, and pour over time and again for the purpose of familiarity.

4. Finally, you will find instructions in the Appendix on **how to do your text analysis**. These skills will help you pull all you can from each verse in the Bible. You are digging for gold and you will find it here!

### **The Heartbeat Continues ...**

When Jesus Christ first cried as a baby, He drew His first breath.

Imagine that for a moment. The Lord of lords taking a breath as a human for the first time.

As He was stretched out on a cross, dying for our sins, the countdown was running for His last few breaths. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1

And then His breathing stopped.

For three days, He was in a dark tomb. No breathing took place.

Then after three days!!!

His holy lungs filled and He breathed the first resurrected breath!

Meditate on that for a moment.

Now as His life flows through you, you are His heartbeat here on this earth.

That was His plan all along.

Do not waste those heartbeats on selfish pleasures or mediocre thoughts.

The heart of the King of kings beats within you.

***“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself up for me.” Gal. 2: 20***

The focus throughout this study will be on listening for that heartbeat.

The book of Acts changes everything. Now the baton has been passed to you.

Run, and as you run breathe, let His heart beat for you.

**The goal of studying the Bible is not to know more stuff – it is to be permanently transformed by what you learn, incorporating these truths into your life.**

**So if you are looking for another study to fill your time or an interesting study or a safe study, keep looking. This study has one goal – to transform you into the image of Christ.**

**You have been warned!**

## WELCOME TO THE STUDY OF ACTS!

Handout: Doctrine

### LESSON 1 "A Crucial Book"

**This book is crucial to the understanding of your faith: how it started, how it survived, and how it is to be lived today.**

**If you have studied the Gospel accounts of the life and work of Jesus Christ, then Acts will seem like the Gospel according to the Holy Spirit. This book continues the heartbeat of Jesus Christ through His people – and that includes us!**

**So become very familiar with the few years that changed this world. The Book of Acts takes you on a journey unlike any other.**

#### ▪ BASIC STUDY

**Now for some questions to engage your thinking as we prepare to study this “turn the world upside down” book.**

- ❖ Can you remember when you had only baby teeth?

Or can you remember before you could walk?

Can you remember when “Big people” talked and you thought you would never be able to do the same?

Probably not.

But I am going to ask you to do something even harder for some people – consider before you knew anything about the church.

Do you remember the first time you ever heard “Jesus,” “Christian” or “church?” If you are like me, these words are so much a part of you that you cannot remember not at least knowing of their existence or meaning.

- ❖ Imagine a world without Christianity.

Imagine a world with all the other religions you know of ..... but no Christianity.

What impact would that have?

This is what we find upon opening the book of Acts. A people without a Shepherd, a people without direction, a people with collective broken hearts. These were the people God would use to transform the world so that we today can have the privilege of knowing Christianity personally.

- ❖ The Gospels are my favorite studies in the Bible, because they each give a glimpse of our Lord. But the study of Acts is crucial to the understanding of how – after the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus – His followers changed the world.

When we open to Acts 1, we look into a world **without the New Testament**; we see a band of disjointed, directionless people, without an instruction manual, without the earthly physical presence of their leader. There were no churches, no concept of Christianity. They were the first – everything depended on them getting it right. Were they extraordinary people? Extra smart, extra gifted, extra connected? No.

- ❖ So what can we learn from these pioneers that will help us today?

As always with any study of God's word, **context** is key. What is context?

Biblical meaning must be gathered from the **context** of Biblical passages. Every word you read must be understood in the light of the words that come before and after it. Every verse relates to the verse before and after it. Every verse relates to the chapter in which it is found. That chapter relates to the prior chapter and the following chapter. To study the Bible properly is not for the casual reader. Bible study is strenuous. Christians have become very lazy when it comes to thinking and logic.

So let us approach the book of Acts with energy, diligence and resolve. The Lord has provided this book for our understanding. What is it that He desires us to understand?

What you derive from this study will almost certainly be different from what I take from it. What each one sees will be pertinent to his own walk with the Lord.

So come to this study with anticipation and an open mind. The Lord will surely speak to you as you wait on Him.

Let's gain some context concerning the relationship of Acts to the rest of the Bible.

To properly understand the Acts of the apostles, it is helpful to have a little background info on them. Now where would you discover this info?

Yes, the Gospels. Now which Gospel account would you turn to first to help with your understanding of Acts?

- ✓ Now to put us in context with this gospel, let us remember how the gospels relate to all of Scripture.

The Bible as a whole has been referred to as the redemption story. Now how would the writers of Holy Scripture be able to get across the idea of redemption? The first necessity would be to reveal man's need to be redeemed.

- **The Bible is divided into 2 major sections: the Old Testament and the New Testament.**

The Old Testament has 39 books. The story of redemption is seen within the first 3 chapters of the book of Genesis. Chapters 1 and 2 cover the creation of the world. Chapter 3 informs us of man's fall and utter ruin due to his disobedience to God's one command. God did not give him a massive amount of rules and burdens, He simply gave him one command. Yet, Adam could not resist the temptation to "be as god." Because of his yielding to sin, mankind was plunged into a world unknown until that time. **After the first 3**

chapters of the Bible, the remainder of it discloses little by little God's plan of buying back man from the slavery of sin.

The next four books, Exodus through Deuteronomy, comprise along with Genesis, what is known as the Pentateuch. The five books of the Bible which contain the Law.

Man was given the Law to show him what the standard of God was. Man was unable to keep this Law and was confronted with his need for a **substitute**. Within the legal system, God had provided for a substitute to take the penalty for the sinner. In the case of the Old Testament, the substitute was a lamb or in some cases another animal sacrifice. These animal sacrifices would never permanently take away man's sin but would serve as a reminder to man of the seriousness of his transgression. Sin brings death.

The remaining books of the Old Testament deal with the continuing saga of man's battle with sin and God's never-failing, everlasting demonstration of His undying love for His sinful children.

- As in every epic, there are characters and a plot. The plot is the redemption of God's people. The characters are many. The primary characters are the people singled out to become God's own possession: Israel. For the Lord to provide a Redeemer, He would also provide a nation from which the Redeemer would come. Jesus was prophesied to come from Israel and not only from this nation, but specifically from the tribe of Judah. The OT is replete with the promises of a Messiah coming from Judah.

Genesis – Deuteronomy is the Law.

Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1, 2 Samuel, 1, 2 Kings, 1, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther comprise the histories of the OT. These books also tell the story of man's continual battle with sin.

There are victories and there are slaughters in these accounts.

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon are the books of poetry.

Again these poems are filled with man's crying out to God for His deliverance. The remaining books of the OT are the prophets: major and minor.

- ❖ The OT begins with an account of the generations of Adam (Genesis 5) and ends with a curse in Malachi.
- ❖ The NT begins with the genealogy of Jesus Christ and ends with "there will no longer be any curse." Rev. 22:3
  - Matthew is the Bridgebuilder. His book of the account of the life of Christ bridges from the OT to the NT. He focuses on the Messiah. Matthew has more OT references than almost any other NT book. (Only Revelation has more.) Matthew's Gospel was written primarily to Jews. So his purposes were a bit different from the other writers. Matthew presents Jesus as **the Messiah-King**. His audience is Jewish. Matt. 28:18-20 are the key verses.

- Mark wrote primarily to the Romans (suffering persecution) and presented Jesus as **God's Suffering Servant**. Mark 10:45

- Luke wrote to the Greeks. He wrote specifically to Theophilus, an unknown person to us, but important to Luke. The writer was diligent to make known to this unknown man the truths of who Jesus was and the course of action which His followers took to ensure the establishment of His kingdom.

In Luke, we see **the humanity of Christ**. Jesus is a man as well as God. Key verse: 19:10

Luke narrates those events which demonstrate *the humanity of Christ*. The genealogy is traced back to *Adam*. The parables included by Luke have a *human element* to them.

**Son of Man acts as key terminology for Jesus.**

- John was written to all men, everywhere. John presents **Jesus as the Son of God**. The key verses are: 20:30, 31

The deity of Christ is proved by miraculous signs in this gospel account. John contains the “I am” sayings of Jesus which point to His identity as God. I AM is the key name God is known by throughout the Old Testament. It is the name which designates God as self-existent, all-sufficient. It is used 6, 800 times in the OT. Jesus says, “I am the bread of life; I am the true vine; I am the living water; I am the resurrection and the life; I am the good shepherd; I am the gate; I am the way, the truth and the life; I am the light of the world.”

- ❖ These gospel accounts are key for a correct understanding of the kingdom of God. His kingdom is so unlike any kingdom we have ever seen or heard of.

Now having read all of the above concerning a better understanding of the context of Acts in relation to the Gospels, why are there four accounts of the Gospels and only one account of the Acts of the Apostles?

**Read Acts 1** and ask the Lord to answer the following questions.

What am I learning in regard to the kingdom of God?

How does it relate to the gospels?

How does it relate to my life today?

How can the Lord use my life to make an impact for His kingdom?

Also **read Luke 1** and see if you find any parallels to Acts 1.

Now as we embark on the study of Acts, we need to constantly ask ourselves the above questions.

As we study, we will learn biblical study skills. The 5WH (who, what, when, where, why and how) will be our guides to unveil the truths of God's Word.  
Are you more of a "Why" person? A "When" person?  
The most important is always "WHO."  
ALWAYS find out WHO is speaking or being spoken about because we are seeking a **relationship** and not answers alone.

May you be eternally blessed as you seek the Eternal One.

- **If you elect to do the shorter version of study this week, proceed now to the Application Questions at the end of Lesson One.**

### ❖ DIGGING DEEPER

#### Review

- What do you learn about Luke as a writer?

He is writing an orderly account to Theophilus whose name means "dear to God, or beloved of God."

Many have compiled an account, so his is not the first.

He comments on eyewitnesses.

He investigated everything carefully.

According to tradition, Luke interviewed Mary, the mother of the Lord.

- What is significant about the opening of the Gospel of Luke?

The Prologue to both Luke-Acts

- What do you see about the Luke-Acts connection?

Early on in the Church, these two documents were read together. As the synoptic gospels were developed, Luke and Acts were divided. Ancient scrolls were usually 35 feet long. Luke and Acts are each of this approximate length. The prologue to Luke is intended to be the prologue to the Luke-Acts opus.

- What is important about the unique beginning of Luke's Gospel in regard to the people he mentions?

Zechariah "God remembers" is only mentioned here as is Elizabeth.

These are real people in real time.

Also Luke emphasizes the Jewish roots of Christianity.

Luke parallels two children: John and Jesus; two sets of parents; two angelic encounters and a sign is given to both parties of the impending miracles.

- When we first open the book of Acts, what is the condition of the early Church?

A people without a Shepherd

Without direction

Without a New Testament

With broken hearts

Yet, these people are the very ones who have impacted our own lives!

They changed the face of history because they were available and obedient to Christ.

Let us learn from them.

What do you need to do today in obedience to Christ which will eternally impact God's kingdom?

(This is why we study the Bible, by the way, to make an impact on His kingdom!)

**What does the end of Luke have to teach us about the book of Acts?**

**Look at Luke 24:1-8**

What was the condition of the follower of Christ in Luke **chapter 24**?

*They were preparing for a burial.*

*They were perplexed. Verse 4*

*They had forgotten and needed to remember His words. V. 6-8*

**What else do you see about their condition at this time?**

**V. 9-11**, (*nonsense to them to believe that Jesus was alive .... Is it nonsense? To the world it is nonsense and so it was to the early followers of Christ, until ....*),

**V. 11**, says that "*They would not believe.*"

**V. 12**, Peter at least checked it out and he "*marveled.*"

**24:13-19 Who was Jesus to these two?**

*(They still only saw Him as a prophet.) 20 -24*  
**Who is Jesus to you? Is He a Prophet or a great man or a Savior but not Lord?**

**How did Jesus respond to them? V. 25-27**

He called them foolish and slow of heart to believe. So **where** do you believe according to Jesus?

In the heart

Is your heart slow or quick to believe the words of truth?

- **V. 27**, Can you imagine this study session with Jesus? Every Sunday we come and do the same thing: we search the Scriptures to gain understanding of Who this amazing Lord is. We are following the example set by the Lord on the day He was raised from the dead!!

Scripture tells us that Jesus appeared for 40 days after His resurrection.

**What did He accomplish during these days?**

Part of the time during the 40 days of His appearing was designated to teach the disciples the truths of Who He was in the Scriptures. Which Scriptures concerning the Messiah, the Son of God, do you think Jesus taught them in these precious few days?

Let's look at a few which He may have spent time discussing with them. I have listed many but not all – you chose as many as you like – it will bless you so much!

**CROSS REFERENCES**

**Micah 5: 2**

**Palm 69: 9 (John 2: 17)**

**Jeremiah 31: 15**

**Isaiah 40: 3**

**Isaiah 59: 20**

**Isaiah 42: 1-3** (I believe there is no doubt He talked about this one, because Matthew recorded it when he wrote his gospel account!)

**Matthew 12: 18-21**

**Isaiah 61: 1 (Relate to Luke 4: 18, 19)**

**Psalm 110: 1**

**Malachi 3: 1** (I believe without a doubt that they discussed this passage because all three gospel writers refer to this verse!)

**Zechariah 13: 7**

**Jonah 1: 17** (Again, check out **Matt. 12: 40**)

**Psalm 118: 22, 26 (Matt. 21: 9, 42; Mark 12:10, 11)**

**Isaiah 52: 13- 53: 12**

**Psalm 22**

**Psalm 31: 5 (Luke 23: 46)**

**Read Matthew 26: 52-56** How does this relate to what we have been seeing with the prophecies concerning Him?

- ❖ As He taught, their hearts were burning.
- Does your heart burn as you learn of your Lord? **Luke 24:32**

**Read Luke 24: 33-35**

- After having met with Jesus, it was only natural that the disciples would speak to others. After spending time with Jesus, is that your response: to tell others about the love of your life?

**What is the focus in Luke 24: 36-43?**

**Why was it so important to establish that Jesus had a body? (v.39)**

**Luke 24:42** The importance of Christ having a bodily resurrection is depicted here. He ate with them.

Christianity is a historical religion – not a mystical one. Christianity is not based primarily on an idea or a philosophy; Christianity is based on a PERSON!

The historical reality of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is indispensable to the Christian faith. No other religion makes this claim. No other religion hinges on the Central Personality of its core belief system. Buddhism exists without Buddha, Confucianism muddles along without Confucius. But take Christ and His resurrection away from our faith

and we are left without hope, direction and meaning. The resurrection is crucial to Christianity. "Crucial" comes from the Latin word "Crux" meaning cross. There is no Christianity without the cross and without the Lord Who conquered death on that cross.

**Luke 24: 44-49, What is the focus? "You will be prepared to be My witnesses."**

**Luke 24: 50-53 after being with Jesus, worship is the only response!**

How does Luke 24 open? ... preparing a body for burial  
How does it close? ...continually praising God!

### **Acts 1**

With the book of Acts, Luke is building a bridge between the account of the life of Jesus and His continuing work in and through His disciples.

The Prologue to Luke-Acts is really **Luke 1:1-4**. The two books are definitely linked together.

**Acts 1:1** tells us that Luke has already written about what Jesus *began* to do and teach. The work of Jesus is not finished yet; although His physical body is no longer here, His spiritual body remains.

Prior to His death, Jesus told His followers that He was going away (in **John 14**). They could hear nothing else. "I am going away."

- ❖ Think for a minute what that would sound like to these people who had left everything for Him.

What do you think your response would have been to hear that your Lord was leaving?

As Luke closes and Acts opens, we understand that Jesus has appeared to His disciples on numerous occasions.

Why did He do this?

He had much to teach His followers about His kingdom before they could launch out on their new ministry.

*"We may infer that Jesus' teaching during the 'forty days' dealt in essence with (1) The validation and nature of His messiahship, (2) the interpretation of the OT from the perspective of His resurrection, and (3) the responsibility of His disciples to bear witness to what had happened among them in fulfillment of Israel's hope." Expositor's Commentary. P. 254*

Although the Holy Spirit was promised, they were losing their precious Lord.

This Lord Who loved them and died for them, do you think He would send the Holy Spirit in a way in which the disciples would be uncertain of His coming?

Do you think He Who died for you would do less?

Talk with the Lord and ask Him to make His Spirit evident in your life so that you never wonder if He truly abides within you. Do that right now! Nothing is more important than this conversation with the Lord!

For 40 days the disciples saw, heard and touched the Word of Life as He explained what they were to do after He ascended to the Father. (1 John 1:1-3)

❖ **Why did the first century church turn the world upside down and we do not ....**

**It is because they preached the kingdom of God, and we do not.**

➤ **APPLICATION TIME**

**Spend the remainder of your study time this week, asking the Lord where you are failing to turn the world upside down, so that He may turn it right side up.**

**Record here what He tells you.**

**If you record nothing, then is He not speaking to you or are you not listening?**

**Luke writes of Jesus' resurrection and speaks of "many convincing proofs" that Jesus is alive.**

**Are there convincing proofs in your life that point to the truth of the resurrected life of Jesus living within you? What are these proofs in your life?**

**What did you learn about being the "continuing heartbeat of Jesus" in this lesson?**

**Read the Doctrine handout.**

**Record your findings in the Appendix on the attributes of God.**

**Record what you learned about the Holy Spirit this week in the Appendix.**

**Consider what hymn the early Church would have loved to sing at this point in their new faith.**

**Record it here. Then SING IT to the Lord as you close your week of study.**

**LESSON TWO**                      **Handout: The Holy Spirit**   **Additional Handout: Narrative**  
**ACTS 1**    **“HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED HOLY SPIRIT EMPOWERED LIFE?”**

**Review**

**How did the last chapter of Luke prepare us for Acts 1?**

*Luke 24 opens with a people preparing their Lord for burial; it ends with a people praising their God.*

**What took place in this chapter that causes this change?**

*Jesus appears to His disciples and teaches them concerning Himself and His kingdom.*

**What was the crucial doctrine presented in ch. 24?**

*The bodily resurrection of Jesus*

As Acts 1 opens, we are told that the account Luke is writing involves all that Jesus began to do and teach. **How does this verse impact us as followers of Christ today?**

*We are part of all that Jesus is continuing to do and teach!*

**BASIC STUDY**

In studying the Acts of the Apostles, we have benefited from a closer look at the Gospel of Luke.

As a historian, Luke was committed to an accurate account of the life of Christ and the life of the early Church. In both Luke's Gospel and here in Acts he records certain aspects of the faith which are not provided elsewhere. For this we are very grateful, but we must also ask the question: "Why did he include these particular points?"

Luke's Gospel emphasizes the universal message and nature of the "good news" more than the other writers of the gospel accounts. Luke is more conscious of the poor, downcast, and the outcasts from Jewish society. (The Good Samaritan, the Pharisee and the tax collector, the rich man and Lazarus)

Luke wrote frequently of women and children and their faith.

He is concerned with social injustice. This was a constant concern for our Lord as He lived His earthly life.

What is the key way of referring to Jesus in the book of Luke? Luke 5: 24; 6: 5, 22;  
9: 22, 44; 12: 10, 40  
Son of \_\_\_\_\_

How does that title fit His passionate concern for the oppressed and forgotten of society?

What does the Lord's concern for the outcast, the poor and the downcast say to us today?

“Why does the Church today *not* reflect the power of the first century Church?”  
How can resolving our deficiency in regard to social injustice also resolve our lack of power?

#### ✓ Text Discovery of Acts Chapter One

Refer to appendix directions on how to do text discovery. Then go to the text of Acts Chapter One and dig out all you can find about this crucial first chapter of this book. Give yourself at least one hour to do this text discovery.

- If you are not doing the Digging Deeper assignment, go now to the Application Questions at the end of the study for this week.

#### ❖ Digging Deeper

After doing the Text Discovery, follow the verse by verse exposition which is below.

- Verse by verse exposition

Picking up with Acts 1:4, what were the Lord's instructions to His disciples?

Were they to head out and conquer the world?

They were told to \_\_\_\_\_.

- Acts 1:5

There is a contrast here. What is it?

*Baptizmo*: “to dip, immerse, saturate, overwhelm”

What do you remember about the baptism which Jesus experienced?

**Matt. 3:11-17**

- **Acts 1:1-5** concerns the instructions of Jesus to His disciples before His ascension.

**In reading these verses, how many Persons of the Trinity do you find?**

- **Acts 1:6-11**

**In verse 6, does it appear the disciples understood the ministry of Jesus?  
How do you know?**

**If this was your last opportunity to ask Jesus a question, what question would you ask?**

**What does v. 7 tell you about the Father?**

**What does this verse tell you about man?**

*Before we look at verse 8, which is the key to the whole book, consider what v. 1-7 teach us about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.*

*God is in control.  
God is sending the Holy Spirit.  
God had promised the Holy Spirit.  
God has fixed the times and epochs.*

*Jesus began to do and teach v. 1  
Jesus was taken up to heaven. v. 2  
Jesus gave orders to apostles. v.2  
Jesus chose apostles. v. 2  
Jesus presented Himself alive after His suffering.v.3  
Jesus exhibited convincing proofs.v.3  
Jesus appeared over a period of 40 days.v.3  
Jesus spoke of things concerning the Kingdom of God. v. 3  
Jesus gathered the apostles together. v.4  
Jesus commanded them not to leave Jerusalem. v. 4  
Jesus had already told them about the Holy Spirit. v.4*

*The Holy Spirit gave orders to the apostles. v. 2*  
*The Holy Spirit was promised by the Father. v. 4*  
*The Holy Spirit was spoken of by the Son. v. 4*  
*The apostles were to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. v. 5*

For the apostles and for us, the key to understanding the message of Acts is in **verses 1-7**. Before we even see **1:8**, we learn that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have a ***purpose, plan and directive***. Before they (and we) are given our marching orders, it has been made clear that the kingdom of God (v.3) advances at His command.

**How would knowing that the power and authority of God prevails, prepare God's servants for hearing Acts 1:8?**

- **Read Acts 1:8**

**What will happen?**

**For what purpose?**

- ❖ **Power: "dunamis" = might**

**What do the locations signify?**

**To Jerusalem (3:1-8:1) to Judea and Samaria, up to Antioch of Syria (8:1-12:25), and to the ends of the earth ((13:1-28:31)**

- **Acts 1:9**

**What is significant about how He was lifted up?**

**What do you find out in verse 11 about the return of Jesus?**

**Why do you think the Lord wanted them and us to know this?**

**The transfiguration (Matt. 17), the ascension (here), and the parousia (1 Thes. 4) are three distinct manifestations of the divine glory of Jesus. The cloud in each of these events is to be understood as the cloud which envelops the glory of God (the *Shekhinah*).**

This cloud rested above the Mosaic tabernacle and filled Solomon's temple. (Ex. 40:43; 1 Kings 8:10-11) The cloud was the visible reminder to the people of Israel that the Lord had taken up residence among His people. The cloud also was evident to the people of Israel as they moved out from camp during the wilderness years.

➤ **1:6-11 the Commission and the Ascension**

What is important about the "two men in white clothing?"

- **Read Acts 1:12-14**

Who is there and what were they doing?

*A Sabbath's day's journey was less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  a mile or 2,000 cubits. Taken from Joshua 3:4, Jews felt they could only travel this amount on a Sabbath since these were the outer limits of the camp area from the tabernacle. (Ex. 16:29; Num. 35:5)*

- **Read Acts 1:15-26**

What is the topic of these verses?

Who is taking charge?

Where is the last place we see Peter during the pre-resurrection life of Christ?

Luke 22: 54-62

In regard to Peter, read Matt. 10: 2; Mark 3: 16; Luke 6: 13, 14.

Where is Peter mentioned in each of these lists?

This is significant as in ancient cultures, the one listed first is of more importance.

What accounts for Peter's pre and post-resurrection transformation?

**What do we know that Jesus did for the 40 days prior to His ascension?**

**Read Luke 24: 25-27, 32, 45-49**

**In Acts 1: 20, when Peter recites Ps. 69:25 and Ps. 109:8, does that indicate anything?**

**What are the requirements for a replacement for Judas? Read Acts 1: 15-22**

**Was Paul to be the intended replacement? Why or why not?**

It was not because of the death of Judas that he was replaced, but the defection of Judas from the faith.

No steps were taken to appoint a successor to James the son of Zebedee when he died by the executioner's sword in **Acts 12**.

The appointment of Matthias was to restore the number to twelve, representing the correct accounting for the kingdom thrones mentioned in **Matt. 19:28**.

Now the full complement of apostles is restored and the church is ready for the coming of the Holy Spirit, which ushers in the mission and ministry of the newly formed church. With the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, God appears to have favored their decision of Matthias.

The apostles were the guarantors of the gospel. Their own witness to the ministry of Jesus and His bodily resurrection were of utmost importance. The faith of Christianity hinges on the resurrection. The original twelve must be eye-witnesses to this event to be eligible for the office of apostle.

The necessity of having exactly twelve apostles in the early church sprang mostly from the need for Jewish Christians ministering within the Jewish nation to maintain this symbolic number.

The mission of the twelve was primarily to the nation of Israel, while Paul's ministry was to the Gentiles. (**Rom. 11:13**)

Paul did not meet the criteria for apostle, so he was instructed to go back to Jerusalem to be confirmed in the apostolic office by those whose credentials were beyond a shadow of a doubt.

➤ **APPLICATION QUESTIONS:**

1. Do you wait on the Lord? Why or why not?

2. A Holy Spirit believer is saturated with God's Spirit. No corner of your life will be left untouched by His Spirit.

Is there a corner of your life which is not saturated with the Holy Spirit?

Describe a saturated life, driven by God's Spirit.

3. Do you know what it is to live by the power of the Holy Spirit – God's Spirit unleashed in you?

Describe it in your life if you know this life.

Describe what your next move is if you do not know this power in your life.

4. What does the first question about waiting on the Lord have to do with His power in your life?

5. How has this lesson impacted you to "be the continuing heartbeat of Jesus?"

**Begin to keep a Timeline (listed in the Appendix) on Peter.**  
**Read the Doctrine Handout. Read the Handout on Narrative.**  
**Record what you have learned this week concerning the Attributes of God.**  
**Record what you learned this week about the Holy Spirit in the Appendix.**  
**Choose a hymn that you know that relates to this week's lesson.**

When reference to being filled with the Holy Spirit is made, the people involved immediately began to witness powerfully for Jesus Christ. This is the one sure evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit in people's lives: they testify to Jesus!

## LESSON THREE

## Doctrine Handout: The Feasts

### ACTS 2 LEARNING TO WAIT ON THE SPIRIT

#### Additional handout: The Four Cups of the Seder Meal

“Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe.” Acts 2:43a

*“We are not going to move this world by criticism of it nor conformity to it, but by the combustion within it of lives ignited by the Spirit of God.” Vance Havner*

**We have gained insight from looking at the Gospel of Luke. The account Luke writes of the life of Christ focuses on Christ as the *Son of Man*. As this title indicates, Jesus identified with humanity as He lived His earthly life. He did not remain untouched by the beauty or the ugliness of the common man. So as we approach the next account written by the Apostle Luke, we need to remember the portrait that Luke has painted for us of a Savior Who can relate to our infirmities and limitations. This is why he is the writer who understands man’s need for the coming of the Holy Spirit. We are sheep without hope and guidance apart from the Spirit of God.**

- We know that **Acts chapter 2** involves Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit. How does **chapter 1** set the stage for this event?
- Why does the Lord give us **chapter 1** in preparation for **chapter 2**?

**Acts 1:1-7** God is in control.

**Acts 1: 8-11** But you .... Now because of what God has done we are more than able.

**Acts 1:12-14** The list of characters are gathered in the upper room.  
(Note: **the** upper room)

**Acts 1:15-26** The selection of the twelfth apostle (criteria for selection)  
Fulfilling Scripture

Now all is ready for the promised Holy Spirit.

- How does knowing that the Lord is in control and has a plan help you wait on His timing?

#### **Acts 2 Christ our Passover Lamb**

Jesus was crucified on Passover. He is our Passover Lamb. (**1 Cor. 5:7**)  
Lambs were sacrificed in the afternoon before the evening meal. At what time of day did Jesus die? **Matt. 27: 46**

Why did we need a Passover lamb? **1 Peter 1: 16-25**

What is Passover?

Exodus gives us the account of the conditions of slavery in which the Israelites find themselves in Egypt. Moses was raised up as a deliverer and leader for the suffering sheep of Israel. After nine plagues have occurred against Egypt, the tenth and last will be the death of all first-born males throughout the land. The only way of avoiding this tragedy will be to place the blood of a lamb over the doorpost. The Death Angel of God will “pass over” the homes so marked. After the historic event of the first Passover, God’s people were to memorialize this deliverance each year. (**Exodus 12** relates this.)  
This is what our Lord was doing the night before His crucifixion.

Egypt represents: \_\_\_\_\_

Slavery represents: \_\_\_\_\_

We are slaves to sin. We are susceptible to the Angel of Death because of our sin. For us to be “passed over” we need a sacrificial lamb.

Just as the Israelites could not save themselves from the Death Angel who took the life of every first-born male in the land, so we cannot save ourselves from the condemnation of sin which brings death.

We need a Passover lamb.

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➤ You may say, “Well, I am not Jewish. I do not need a Passover lamb.”

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**Read Romans 3:10-12, 23; 6:23**

After the Passover, the next sacred festival was the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Within the feast, the highpoint was the Feast of First Fruits. After the Passover celebration, the first barley sheaf was offered. First Fruits was the celebration of the first collection of the coming harvest. It ended with the seven weeks of wheat harvesting.

How many days from Passover to Pentecost? **Leviticus 23: 15, 16**

How many days was Jesus buried? **Matt. 16: 21; Luke 9: 22**

How many days did He appear after the resurrection? **Acts 1: 3**

How many days did they wait for Pentecost?

The Feast of Firstfruits occurred on the day after the Sabbath following Passover, which means it was always on the first day of the week (the Sabbath is the seventh day.) The resurrection took place on the first day of the week. **Matt. 28: 1**

With this day as His resurrection day, Jesus “became the firstfruits of them that slept.”

**1 Cor. 15: 20.**

If Pentecost was fifty days later (Pentecost means “fiftieth”), then by subtracting the days from the Passover, the burial, the resurrection/ascension, you will see how many days remained to equal 50.

Seven weeks plus one day (50 days) – then Pentecost also took place on the first day of the week.

- 
- In **Acts 2:2**, what was the first thing they experienced
- 

“Wind” in Hebrew : *ruach* Greek: *pneuma*

The word “spirit” is the same as “wind” in both Hebrew and Greek. **John 3:8**

The people did not feel the wind, they heard it as a sound of a “violent, rushing wind.”

Did they see anything?

What else happened?

*So there is sound, a sight and strange, miraculous speech.*

**Look at Ex. 24:16-18; Deut. 5:22-27** (This concerns the giving of the Law.)

More on this sound: look at **Ezek. 37:1-14**

**Look at John 7:37-39; 1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 8:9, 11, 14-17**

- ✓ There is a relationship between this Feast and the giving of the law at Sinai. *“Toward the end of the intertestamental period, however, it began also to be observed as the anniversary of the giving of the law at Mount Sinai, because this was reckoned as having happened fifty days after the Exodus.”* The Message of Acts John R. W. Stott

Jewish tradition associated wind, fire and voices with Mount Sinai.

So this giving of the Spirit was associated with the Lord’s giving of the Spirit and writing His Law on our hearts.

**Joel 2: 28, 29**

**Is. 44: 3**

**Jer. 31: 33, 34**

**Heb. 8:10**

**Heb. 10: 14-17**

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➤ What was the Church of Christ doing in its first few hours of existence?

They were gathered together.

They were obediently waiting.

They were studying Scripture.

They were in prayer.

Based on what we see here, as we wait on the Lord, are we doing nothing?

*The day of Pentecost was that moment in redemptive history when God unlocked the power of the Holy Spirit and gave it to His church, not just for those who were gathered there, but to the church of every age and to every Christian throughout time.” R. C. Sproul*

*“As a body without breath is a corpse, so the church without the Spirit is dead.” John R. W. Stott*

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✓ **DO YOUR TEXT DISCOVERY ON ACTS 2.**

*“Pentecost was a reversal of the judgment at the Tower of Babel when God **confused man’s language (Gen. 11:1-9)**. God’s judgment at Babel **scattered the people**, but God’s blessing at Pentecost **united the believers** in the Spirit... The Tower of Babel was a scheme designed to **honor man** and make a name for men, but Pentecost brought **praise to God**.” Warren Wiersbe*

- Realizing that the Lord has this plan to pour out His Spirit to counter the evil man had attempted at the time of the Tower of Babel, how does that effect your view of Pentecost?

The Gospel of Luke is a recounting of the mission of Christ to a lost world. Luke refers to Christ as the Son of Man, focusing on His humanity. Jesus was willing to leave glory and become a man in order to identify with him. He calls His disciples to do the same. Here in Acts He has prepared His followers for the coming of the Holy Spirit with the distinct purpose of **Acts 1:8**:

to be His witnesses throughout the world.

*“The Spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions and the nearer we get to Him, the more intensely missionary we must become.” Henry Martyn*

According to **Acts 1:8**, why was the Spirit to come?

Has the purpose of the Spirit changed?

“The purpose of the coming of the Spirit was to \_\_\_\_\_.”

The Baptism of the Spirit concerns power for witness and service. We are not exhorted to be baptized by the Spirit – this is something God does when we become identified by faith into Christ. **Rom. 6: 1-8; Rom. 8: 9**

We are commanded to be filled with the Spirit. **Eph. 5: 18**

After Pentecost there were more fillings of the Spirit but no more baptisms.

**Acts 4: 8, 31**

**Acts 9: 17**

**Acts 13: 9**

- Are there two givings of the Spirit?

What is the difference of the giving of the Spirit in **John 20: 21, 22** and Luke's account here in **Acts 2**?

- ✓ John's impartation of the Spirit was real and specific. Acts records the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit which was more public and involved the birth of the Spirit-indwelt community, the church.

What do we learn in **Acts 2:5** about these people?

In **Acts 2:11**, of what were these people speaking? Where was their focus?

What does this tell you about the Spirit and being baptized with the Spirit?

What is the contrast that you see in **Acts 2:12, 13**?

Do you see the same contrast in response to the Holy Spirit today?

“**But**” in **Acts 2:14** signals a change, what is that change?

Always be on the lookout for certain words; “but” is one of those words. Words that point to a shift in thought, action or content are significant. Words of summation, such as “therefore” and “finally” also are worthy of a double take.

- All Christians should know this sermon because it contains the message we are to proclaim to all men.

Christian biblical preaching begins here in **Acts 2:14 - 36. Read this sermon.**

This is the first Christian sermon ever preached. (Christians are those who follow Christ.)

- **Go to Applications Questions if you are not doing Digging Deeper**

#### ❖ **DIGGING DEEPER**

So what is included in this message?

**This message was centered on the Bible. And the message was Christ-centered.**

In what way?

Where did Peter begin? (with what text) Why that particular text? What was the subject of this text?

- ✓ What Peter is doing here is explaining that what has occurred at Pentecost had been prophesied and now fulfilled.

When Joel said “in the last days” God would pour out His Spirit, what is Peter telling his hearers?

We are in \_\_\_\_\_

Have all of Joel’s prophecies been realized?

With the coming of the Holy Spirit we have entered the Messianic Age. The culmination of this age will be the return of Jesus. All of these prophecies will be realized during the Messianic Age. Messiah was the central personality in Jewish thought.

Keeping this in mind, how do you think most **devout** Jews would respond to Peter's words concerning Jesus of Nazareth Whom they had just crucified?

Remember the hardships involved in traveling to Jerusalem to celebrate the feasts. Many of the Jews who actively participated in this arduous journey would be very devout.

How do they respond to Peter's sermon? **Acts 2:37**

Why are they willing to believe what Peter is telling them?

What are Peter's "proofs" that Jesus is the Messiah?

**Acts 2:22**, "signs" *semeion* point beyond themselves to the divine power behind them and so lead to faith.

*We must keep in mind that Luke has told us from the beginning that he is reporting on "all that Jesus began to do and teach."* **Acts 1:1**

What do **Acts 2:23, 24** teach us about God? How do these verses relate to **Acts 1:7**?

**Look at Acts 2:25-28** Now Peter focuses on a different Scripture: **Ps. 16:8-11**

How does this passage strengthen Peter's argument concerning Jesus the Messiah?

Also read **Ps. 89:3f** which is quoted in **Acts 2:30**? **Ps. 16:10** quoted in **Acts 2:31**

How does **Acts 2:32** relate to **Acts 1:8**?

**Read Acts 2: 33            The right hand of God**

*"Messiah had confident trust in God as He looked to the cross. His declaration was I was always beholding the Lord in my presence (this is the key to that trust). Jesus kept His focus on God no matter what trials came His way. He knew that because God was at His right hand, He would not be shaken. The right hand symbolizes protection. In a wedding ceremony, the bridegroom stands to the right of the bride. In the ancient world, a bodyguard stood on the right side of the one he was*

*protecting. In that position he could cover him with his shield and still have his right arm free to fight.”*  
John MacArthur Acts

What do we learn from **Ps. 110:1** quoted here in **Acts 2:34, 35**?

Let **Acts 2:36** ring in your ears and heart. How would you have felt hearing these words?

Do we have the entire sermon of Peter recorded for us here in Acts 2?  
**Look at 2:40**

*“The transformation of the apostles from fearful, cowering skeptics to bold, powerful witnesses is a potent proof of the resurrection.”*

Today’s preaching is many times ineffectual because it is man-centered. What can God offer man?

*Kerugma* is the Greek word associated with preaching. It means “proclamation or proclaiming.”

At least five elements are involved in the New Testament kerugma.

1. It presented Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.
2. It described Him as God in human flesh.
3. It focused on His life and work, especially His death and resurrection.
4. It spoke of His second coming.
5. It declared that salvation was only through faith in Him and those who rejected Him faced God’s wrath.

The *kerugma* always closes with an appeal for repentance, the offer of forgiveness and of the Holy Spirit, and the promise of salvation.

*Martin Luther has stated that every time the gospel is presented in its entirety, there will always be conflict.*

Do you agree? Why or why not?

**Acts 2:37** gives the response of the hearers of the first Christian sermon.

1. What did they say?
2. What was it that Peter had just told them that elicited this response?

Peter had begun his sermon with the passage from the prophet **Joel (2:28-32)**. It always helps to get the whole picture when reviewing a text.

**Look at Joel 1:1-4, 9-14; 2:1-3, 12-17**

- In Joel Chapter One, the land had been devastated by locust.

**Joel 1:11** tells us that the wheat and barley harvest have been destroyed.

3. At what time of year was Peter delivering his message (**Acts 2**)?
4. What was the Festival of Weeks (in **Acts**) in celebration of? **Lev. 23: 15-21**
5. What is the message which Joel is delivering? (esp. **Joel 1:13, 14**)

**Read Joel 2:1-3, 12-17**

*“Return to Me with all your heart. Rend your heart and not your garments.” Now return to the LORD your God.”*

For Joel’s message to be effective – the people must be pierced to the heart as those hearing Peter’s sermon were.

**Look at Deut. 32:39**

**“See now that I, I am He, and there is no god besides Me; it is I Who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I Who heal, and there is no one who can deliver from My hand.”**

The God Who **inflicts** is the God Who **heals**.

**Look at Zech. 12:10** and see the connection.

Conviction ultimately brings healing.

**Read Heb. 12:7-11**

6. How did Peter answer the question in **Acts 2:37**?

Peter's first words in his sermon are a command: Listen!

After their convicting cry, Peter's closing comments were another command: Repent!

**Repent: *meta noeo* "change your thinking"**

There is false and true repentance.

False repentance dreads the consequences of sin.

True repentance dreads sin itself.

**Read 2 Cor. 7:10**

7. What do you learn about guilt?

How many types of guilt are there?

**True repentance exposes false guilt.**

Peter also tells these new converts they must do something else: be baptized.

Peter allows for no secret disciples here.

Baptism denotes a public break with Judaism and identification with Jesus Christ.

Peter did not make accepting Jesus an easy thing.

8. What did Jesus say about the cost of following Him?

**Lk. 14:26-33**

**Luke 18:18-27**

**Acts 2:38** *eis* (for) can also mean "because of" or "on the occasion of", "or for the purpose of."

Baptism is not essential for salvation. Peter does not say anything about baptism in his other sermons. **Acts 3:12-26; 5:29-32; 10:34-43**

**Acts 2:40** #4696 perverse: *skolios*= “bent, crooked”

Many of this perverse generation would perish in the Jewish revolt and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. nearly forty years later. This generation parallels the rebellious generation that wandered the wilderness for forty years.

**9. How do you define success in the church?**

**Read Acts 2:41-47**

Describe the Acts church.

10. Do you like this church?

11. What can you do to help your church be more like the Acts church?

The Acts church was

A scriptural church

A fellowshiping church

A Christ-centered church 1 Cor. 11:24-29

A praying church

An awe-inspiring church Acts 2:43

A miraculous church Heb. 2:4

A sharing church Acts 2:44-46

A joyful church Acts 2:46-47

“sincerity of heart” sincerity=*aphelotes* “simplicity, root word means “free from rocks”

A growing church Acts 2:47

**Acts 2:47** These people were praising God. To praise God is to recite His marvelous works and attributes. Joy comes to those who give God all the glory.

Why would the gospel writers and Peter in his sermon, devote so much attention to the resurrection?

- God's great work was done on the day that Jesus Christ was resurrected from the grave.

If you look at Peter's sermon focus, (**Acts 2:14-36**), the resurrection is mentioned many times more than any other subject. ***The resurrection is the focus of the gospel message and it should be the focus of the church today.*** We serve a Risen Lord!

#### **Look at each of the Gospel accounts.**

1/4 of Matthew concerns the last week of the life of Christ.

1/5 of Mark, 1/8 of Luke and almost half of the Gospel of John describes this momentous week which culminated with the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord.

Each of these writers saw the focus of the life of Christ was centered on His death and resurrection.

In modern biographies, the recounting of a person's life is told to inspire or to entertain.

The recounting of the life of Christ unfolds for us not only the purpose for His own life, but the life and death decision for everyone who has ever lived.

**What will you do with this Man?**

Because the church is the body of Christ, a divine operation is necessary to add to it.

It is not by the will of man that this is done. **John 1:12, 13**

#### **Tree analogy**

*To add to a tree, you cannot take a dead branch and tie it on. Instead of adding to the tree, that encumbers it. A living branch must be knit to the living trunk by a living union, so that the vital sap of the tree will flow in the grafted bough. May the Lord so add to all our churches, and He will have the glory forever."* Charles Haddon Spurgeon

The early church did not have team strategies or formulas for growth, activities and programs to allure all ages. The early church possessed a purity of devotion to the risen Lord unmatched in succeeding generations.

**May each of us, as members of the Body of Christ, live in purity of devotion to our Risen Lord.**

#### **➤ APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

1. What is going on in your life right now that is hard for you to wait on the Lord's work?
2. Are you constantly being filled with God's Spirit? Why or why not?

3. In regard to the book of **Acts**, Martyn Lloyd-Jones says,  
*“Live in that book, I exhort you: it is a tonic, the greatest tonic I know of in the realm of the Spirit.”*

What are your thoughts on this quote after spending a few days studying the Book of Acts?

4. Is God’s Law written on your heart? How do you know? What specifically in your life shows you that He has imprinted His Law on your heart?

5. Compared with the people of Babel and the Spirit-filled Acts believers, who are you more similar to? Do you promote yourself or God? Do you promote Him, His way or your own?

6. When you speak of Christ, do you follow Peter’s pattern given in his sermon in **Acts 2: 14-36**? Do you use Scripture, do you speak of His returning to set up His kingdom, do you make it personal and show the individual responsibility for His suffering and death, do you call for a response?

7. How has this week’s study impacted you as the “continuing heartbeat of Jesus?”

**Continue your list on Peter’s Timeline.**

**Read the Doctrine Handout on the Feasts and the Additional handout.**

**Record what you have seen this week concerning the Attributes of God.**

**Record what you have learned about the Holy Spirit in the Appendix.**

**Choose a hymn that relates to this week’s lesson and sing it to the Lord.**

**LESSON FOUR** **Doctrine Handout: Jesus Christ**  
**ACTS 3 & 4** **“In the Name of Jesus”**

✓ **Do the Text Discovery of Acts 3.**

**Read Acts 3:1-6**  
**Ask the 5WH**

**Acts 3: 1-26**

*“They weren’t awed by the church because of its buildings, programs, or anything reflecting human ability, but by the supernatural character of its life.” J. MacArthur*

- Who is involved? What are they doing? Where are they? Why are they there? When does this occur?
- When does the lame man respond? How is the miracle accomplished?
- What is significant about how Peter approached the lame man? Why do you think Peter noticed him? What had given Peter the in “sight” to “see” this man?

**Acts 3:4**, Peter demanded that the man look at them.

**This man is an illustration of what *salvation* is about.**

He was born lame and all of us are born unable to walk so as to please God. **Rom 6: 23**

Adam, as our father, fell and passed his lameness on to us. **Rom 5**

This man was poor, a beggar with nothing. **Matt. 5: 3**

He was “outside the temple” and all sinners are separated from God, even when they are right at the door.

The man was healed purely by the grace of God. **Eph. 2: 8**

He gave evidence of what God had done by “leaping and praising God.”

He publicly identified himself with Jesus and His followers. **(4:14)**

- ❖ Just as a backdrop, the gate at which this man sat was ornate and beautiful. It was made of Corinthian brass and was so large that it took 20 men to close it. It was nearly 75 feet tall.

*What a stark contrast to the broken body of the lame man who was positioned here daily.*

*There is a wonderful Thomas Aquinas quote which relates to this passage. Aquinas was in Rome. (This occurs in the Renaissance period.) As he and a cardinal walked along the street they noticed a beggar. The cardinal reached into his pocket and pulled out a silver coin and gave it to him. The cardinal turned to Aquinas and said, "Fortunately Thomas, we can no longer say, as Peter said, 'Silver and gold have I none.'" To this Aquinas replied, Yes, that is true. But neither can we say, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."*

The ninth hour is the third time of prayer for the day. It is also the time of the evening sacrifice. The temple area would have been full.

- After a miraculous healing of this type, with a full temple area, what do you think would be advantageous to occur at this time?

Right! Another sermon!

**Read Acts 3:12-26**

What does Peter focus on in this sermon?

Peter turned his gaze on the lame man; the lame man turned his gaze onto Peter, "Look at us!" **3:4**, now Peter turns their gaze to Jesus. **3:12**

Peter proceeds to describe who Jesus is. This is the key to the power of the Church which we have lost!!!

How does he identify Jesus? **Note these names on your Text Discovery.**

**His Servant Jesus (13), Holy and Righteous One (14), Prince of Life (15), The One God raised from the dead**

**Acts 3:16, Peter continues His description of Who Jesus is by basing the miraculous healing on the power of the name of Jesus.**

The emphasis in Acts 3 and 4 is on the name of Jesus. His name represents His authority, reputation and power. We do not know the name of the lame man, what happened to him after this, why God chose him of all the lame men in Palestine. But what we do know is HOW. This miracle was performed **in the name of Jesus.**

**The true identity of Jesus overwhelms the false understanding of these deceived and blind men.**

Now what verbs does Peter use to express how these men treated Jesus?

*Delivered, disowned, killed!* (13, 14)

How does Peter continue his sermon?

**Acts 3:17-26**

**Read Deut. 18: 15, 18, 19; Gen. 22: 18**

**How do those verses relate to this passage?**

**These Old Testament verses were the widely accepted messianic proof text of the time.**

**What is it that Peter wants to make sure the people understand?**

**In Peter's sermon he refers to fulfilled Scripture, the call to repent, the continuing voice of Scripture, a very personal "you" approach.**

**In your opinion, the resistance of Israel to accept Jesus Christ as their Messiah, was it due to an intellectual or informational problem or a moral problem?**

**Did they need more information or a changed heart?**

**Support your answer.**

❖ Can you imagine being a part of this generation? In their lifetime Messiah came! More than any generation, they were heirs of all the promised covenant blessings!

**Acts 2** ends with many people praising God and the number growing day by day of those being saved. There were many signs and wonders. **Acts 3** opens with a specific miracle. Why this particular wonder?

What was accomplished through this sign?

- 1) It was the occasion for Peter's second sermon
- 2) This miracle and sermon were the cause of the first persecution of the church

❖ **Lessons we can learn from Acts 3 (read the following and add your own observations)**

1. God is longsuffering. The people of Israel had rejected God, His prophets, His word, His Son and yet, God continued to approach them. We must be patient as we witness to the lost.
2. Helping one individual can have a tremendous effect as others see the dramatic impact of salvation. Peter and John took time with this lame man and many people were brought to the Lord through his influence. The apostle took time for individuals.
3. The best defense of the truth of the Christian faith is a changed life. A Lazarus life is irrefutable!

The faith which we proclaim, the faith by which we live our lives, is called "Christian."

Who we are, our identity is wrapped up in this name.

*"Have this attitude (mind) in you which was also in Christ Jesus, Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men, being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. **Phil 2:5- 11***

The power and authority of Jesus' name came at great price.

**Baruch hashem Adonai** (Blessed be the Name of the Lord)

*"In Semitic thought, a name does not just identify or distinguish a person; it expresses the very nature of his being. The power of the person is present and available in the name of the person."*

Expositor's Commentary p. 294

“*Hashem*” became the representation of the holy name of Yahweh. It denoted His divine presence and power.

✓ **Do the Text Discovery of Acts 4.**

➤ **Go to the Application Questions if you are not doing Digging Deeper.**

### ❖ **DIGGING DEEPER**

**Acts 1** gives us the ascension, **Acts 2** Pentecost, **Acts 3** records the healing of the lame man and many believing in response to that miracle. Here in **chapter 4**, we find the persecution which follows these great movements in the early church.

- **Read Acts 4:1-4**

Using your **5WH**, try and gain insight into the following:

What is the conflict going on here?

1. What caused the conflict?

Look at the long list of those confronting Peter and John: priests, captain of the guard, the Sadducees, rulers, elders, scribes, Annas, Caiaphas, John, Alexander and all those who were of high-priestly descent. **4:1-6**

The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. They denied the existence of angels. They rejected the sovereignty of God and believed that man was master of his own destiny. They also believed that the Messianic age had begun with the Maccabean period. So they were not looking for, nor were they interested in a Messiah. Both here and later in **5:17**, the Sadducees are the ones who initiate the persecution. The temple was the heart of the Sadducees' domain.

2. Why does Luke include **v. 4**? What is his point?

- **Read 4:5-7**

3. Do any of these characters look familiar?

**Matt. 26:3, 57; Lk. 3:2; 22:54; Jn. 11:49-51; 18:12-14, 28**

This was a court composed of many of the same players as Jesus had faced weeks earlier. Peter could hardly expect justice. Annas had been deposed by the Romans in AD 15. Caiaphas had been his replacement, presumably because Rome felt that he could be manipulated more easily.

Caiaphas 18-36 AD The Sanhedrin was the supreme court of Israel. It had 71 members, including the high priest. At this time in history, it was dominated by the Sadducees, the wealthy, aristocratic, landowners. The Sanhedrin met in a place called the Hall of Hewn Stone.

4. As followers of Christ, what can we count on?

**Jn. 15:18-20**

**2 Tim 3:12**

**1 Pet.2:21**

**Luke 12:11, 12**

Peter and John were brought in before these men who were seated in their customary semi-circle.

What is the question the leaders put to Peter and John? What is the significance of this question?

**5. As they question these men, do they refute the occurrence of the miracle?**

• **Read 4:8-12**

6. What is the content of Peter's reply?

What is his focus?

He could speak boldly because he knew the outcome depended on the Lord and not on himself.

7. Does Peter seem to have a formula?

**Acts 2:23-24**

**3:15**

4:10

You can always tell those who are filled with the Holy Spirit: they speak of Jesus.

Peter's yieldedness to the Spirit's control released the power of the Spirit in his life. Because Peter was Spirit-led and Spirit-filled, persecution merely drove him closer to the Lord. *This is the key to successfully handling persecution.*

- Read Luke 21:12-15

8. Where is the quote Peter uses from?

Ps. 118:22 is a *messianic reference* and it was known to be one.

Jesus Himself quoted this verse in regard to Himself. Lk. 20:17, 18

- Look at Matt. 21:42; 1 Pet. 2:4-8; Eph. 2:20

9. Why is the imagery of the cornerstone so important here, especially at this juncture in the early church?

Nothing is so offensive to the natural man as teaching that he cannot save himself.

- Read Acts 4:13-17

10. Did the leaders try and dispute the veracity of the miracle? What does this tell you?

The Greek word for "resurrection" is *anastasis*. The root word "*stasis*" is the word for standing. To the Greek mind resurrected people were people who were standing up as opposed to dead people. Here was the man healed by the power of Jesus' name *standing in their midst as testimony to the power of the resurrected Jesus*. This "resurrected man" was a symbol of the very gospel Peter and the others were proclaiming. Acts 4:14

**Both the miracle and the message of Peter were evidence that Jesus Christ was alive and at work in the young church. The Holy Spirit was**

**moving. This was promised in Acts 1, “all that Jesus began to do and teach.”**

11. How do we know what was said in the Council? Who is writing this account?

**Acts 5:34; 22:3**

- **Read Acts 4:17-22**

12. Conscientious objectors! Civil disobedience! What can we learn from Peter’s example?

Were there others in Scripture who disobeyed the civil laws?

**Look at Ex. 1**

**Heb. 11:23**

**Dan. 1:6; Dan. 3**

By examining these Scriptural responses to laws that counter the precepts of God, we can understand how to act in faith.

Peter could trust the Lord (**Acts 4:19**), so Peter could act in faith. When you are loyal to the Lord and put Him first, you can trust Him to defend you as you face whatever trials may come.

❖ **Know when to submit to man’s law and when not to submit**

**Mary and Joseph made the arduous, dangerous trip to Bethlehem to obey civil law. Because of their obedience, they played a part in fulfilling prophecy. For Messiah was not to be born in Galilee but Bethlehem.**

**There are times when we obey civil law and times we must not obey.**

- **Read Acts 4:23-31**

13. What is the content of their prayer?

Is it about their circumstances, trials, problems, concerns ... ?

Their prayer concentrates on God. Their eyes are on Him and Him alone.

They refer to God as:

Creator (24), voice of the prophets: God of revelation (25), Sovereign God of history (27, 28), Protector (29), Healer (30), Sender of miracles (30), The God Who shakes things up! (31)

✓ **Make sure you record these names on your text.**

God's characteristic actions are summed up with the three verbs that we find here: "You made; You spoke; You decided."

God's answer to the prayer of His people was to shake the place where they were meeting and to fill them again with the Spirit.

14. Is God shaking you up? How? If not, Why not?

*"Most of their ministers had jail records and would probably have a hard time today joining our churches, let alone leading them. What really was the secret of their success? This chapter provides the answer: the Christians of the early church knew how to pray so that God's hand could work in mighty power... They did not pray to have their circumstances changed or their enemies put out of office." W. Wiersbe*

- The signs and wonders presented in Acts are important for the followers of Christ because they point to Him. In the public ministry of Jesus, many of His works were previews of His coming rule over nature. He turned water to wine; He walked on the water; He stilled the storm; He multiplied the fish and loaves. **There will come a time when nature will be finally and totally subservient to Him. All miracles point to that coming time.**

As a Sovereign God, our Lord can be depended on. His sovereignty is not an abstract doctrine that we talk about and defend. It is a living truth that we found our faith on, our actions being based on His character, our needs being met in His Person, His Identity.

"*Despota*" Sovereign Lord, a ruler of unchallengeable power.

When Jesus was arrested and appeared before Pilate, not once in the entire trial did Jesus suggest that the authority of Pilate was illegitimate. Jesus did not say, "We cannot tolerate injustice like this in our world. We must rise up against it."

*"The Sanhedrin might utter warnings, threats and prohibitions, and try to silence the church, but their authority was subject to a higher authority still, and the edicts of men cannot overturn the decrees of God." John R. W. Stott*

While the gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed today in spite of the efforts of the Sanhedrin to crush it, **there is no governing body in existence today called the Sanhedrin.**

Satan tries to quiet the growing church. First he tries by violence and persecution. Next (**chap.5**) he will try by internal corruption and then he will attempt to weaken the church by distraction.

The church must ever be on guard against his strategies. But we also must never yield in discouragement that he has succeeded. Because he is defeated already and we are more than conquerors who can never be separated from the love of our Sovereign King.

➤ **APPLICATION QUESTIONS:**

1. Do you have a sense of awe at the work the Lord is doing in your midst?  
Why or why not?
  
2. How important to you is the resurrection? Do you think of it every day, all throughout the day?
  
3. If you do not think of the resurrection frequently, what is filling your mind? What are you thinking of instead of the resurrection?
  
4. When you think of a growing church, do you only think in terms of numbers? In what other ways must a church GROW in order to please the Lord?
  
5. Do you get discouraged when your political candidate does not win?  
What would Jesus say to you about that?
  
6. When you talk to others about your faith, are you pulled in directions that allow the unbeliever to dictate the topic? Or do you keep the focus on Who Jesus is and what will they do with Him?

7. How has this week's study impacted you as "the continuing heartbeat of Jesus?"

**Continue you list on Peter's Timeline.**

**Read the Doctrine handout.**

**Record what you learned about the attributes of God in the Appendix.**

**Record what you learned about the Holy Spirit in the Appendix.**

**Choose a hymn that relates to this week's lesson/ sing it to the Lord.**



## LESSON FIVE

## Doctrine Handout: Satan

### ACTS 5, 6, 7

#### “The Strategy of Satan and How to Overcome It”

- ✓ Read Acts 5: 1-42 and do your text analysis.

#### “The Original Church That Gives Itself Away”

The fact that Peter and John were arrested, tried, and threatened had absolutely no effect on the spiritual life of the church, the church was still unified (**Acts 4:32**), magnified (**v. 33**), and multiplied (**v. 32**). So Satan had to try a different tactic.

#### Look at Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37; 5:1-17

**Acts 2:42-47** is a summary paragraph which points to the thesis of this panel in Acts (**2:42-6:7**).

One of the themes in Luke’s summary statement is the nature and extent of the early believers’ commitment to one another in social concerns. Not only does Luke express the generous heart of the early church, he provides the practice of those involved and here in **Chapter Five** an abuse of the same practice.

**Acts 2:43** mentions also the wonders and signs that were taking place. **Acts 3**, with the healing of the lame man, gives us an example of that theme in the summary paragraph.

**Chapter Four** provides us with the first persecution and the continued growing of the early church. Growth and persecution are recurring themes especially here in this first panel of Acts.

- Look at 2:42-47

Is this a description of a communist commune?

What exactly is going on here?

What does **v. 46** tell you concerning property?

Who was enforcing this generous action? Was it required by the government?

Who decided to “give themselves away?”

- Look at 4:31-37

What do you see in **v. 32** about the people?

What is the description of the believers?

- **4:43, 45** tells us something about property, what is it?

What was the purpose of selling their land?

Who distributed the proceeds?

**Look at 5:1-4**

What do you learn about the process of giving here?

Was it forced or voluntary?

Why did Ananias and Sapphira do what they did concerning the sharing of their goods?

Who did they offend? Why?

- **Look at 5:5-6**

What was the response of the people to what happened to Ananias?

Does our Christian culture promote the reverential fear of God?

- **Read 5:7-11**

What does Peter accuse Sapphira of?

What purpose is achieved with the death of Sapphira?

What would have happened in the early church had Peter not been discerning? What type of people could have become its leaders?

**Heb 10:30, 31** How does this verse relate to the present passage in Acts?

Giving gifts to God is sacred business. It is a great honor to be allowed to present an offering, a gift to our Majestic King and Lord. To offer a sacred gift to Him in pretense or for the purpose of gaining honor among men is not to be tolerated.

Had Jesus taught anything regarding how to give? **Matt 6:1-4, 19-34**

- The Didache (one of the earliest books of instruction for the church) gives this advice:

“Let your donations sweat in your hand.” It does not say, “Let your donations freeze in your hand so that you never give it.”

The point is this: hold on to it until you have given careful scrutiny to where you are going to give the gift. But it must leave your hand and make its way to the work of the Lord.

- **Read 5:12-17**

What are the responses of the people to the apostles? Why?

In v. 17, what was the response of the high priest to all the apostles were doing?

Relate this reaction to **Matt. 27: 18** and **Acts 13:45**.

How does this relate to Ananias and Sapphira?

For a church to give itself away, first there must be individuals who are ready to give themselves away.

As long as each man and woman is most concerned with protecting their own interests and maintaining a comfortable control over their lives, they will not “give themselves away” as the Lord modeled.

- **Read Acts 5: 18-26**

**Relate this passage to John 15: 20, 21; 16: 2**

**What happens in v. 18-21?**

**Did the apostles resist arrest? V. 18, 19**

**Who rescued the apostles?**

**The Sadducees did not believe in angels. Begin to notice in the Book of Acts how many times Luke refers to angels to counter this erroneous belief.**

- **Read Acts 5: 21-26**

**What occurs here?**

- Acts 5: 27-32

What is Peter's response to the accusation of the Council (Sanhedrin)?

Look again at Acts 2: 33.

What do you see that relates to 5: 31?

- Acts 5: 33-42

Who is in charge here?

What a contrast between the apostles and the Sanhedrin! Who really has the ministry of power?

In the world's system, who has more power: the apostles or the Sanhedrin?

Then why does the Sanhedrin not prevail here?

What in your life relates to this?

You seem powerless in some regard yet because of the Lord, your faithful witness is prevailing?

If this is not happening in your life, pray for this kind of victory!

- As this "trial" unfolded, it became clear that the apostles became the judges and the Council became the accused. 5: 29, 30

Gamaliel (you will see more of him later), offers some advice. What is his advice? V. 34-39

At his death, Rabbi Gamaliel was deeply mourned. It was said of him that "the glory of the law ceased and purity and abstinence died."

- Acts 5: 40-42

**What happens to the apostles here? What is their response?**

**Read Matt. 5: 10-12**

**How does that relate here?**

**While Rabbi Gamaliel's advice may sound reasonable, he is actually advocating not to make a decision. Jesus does not give us "neutral" as a position when it comes to following Him.**

**This is one of our best tools against Satan: know Who you follow and decide to follow Him completely – no backup plans!**

✓ **Read Acts 6 and do your Text Analysis.**

✓ **Read Acts 7 and do your Text Analysis**

### **Acts 7**

What are your first reactions to this important chapter of Scripture?

What does Stephen focus on in his defense?

Keep in mind, this defense was for his very life – what would you be focusing on for your defense?

Would you be so yielded to the Lord that you spoke only of Him?

And as you focused on Him would you speak with unchecked boldness, piercing the very hearts of your accusers?

**Read Acts 7** one more time and find the most compelling argument which Stephen makes concerning Who Jesus is.

➤ **Go to the Application Questions if you are not doing Digging Deeper.**

❖ **DIGGING DEEPER**

**ACTS 5**

**In regard to Ananias and Sapphira, it was imperative that the Church remain uncontaminated by greed and hypocrisy in the early stages.**

*Hypokrisis*: “hypocrisy” denotes deception and playacting. *Hypokrites* is an actor; one who wears a mask.

**Hypocrisy is poison for the church. It spreads and contaminates the body of Christ.**

❖ **What can you do to guard against hypocrisy in your life?**

**Hypocrisy** is deliberate deception, trying to make people think we are more spiritual than we really are.

***God judges sin. And He judges it severely at the beginning of a new period in salvation history.***

**Lev. 10** – Nadab and Abihu offered “false fire” to the Lord. This was just after the tabernacle was erected.

**Josh. 7** – Just after Israel entered the Promised Land, Achan’s sin of deception required his swift death.

**1 Cor. 10:11, 12** explains that Israel’s judgments were used as warnings to the people and also to us.

What is the Lord saying regarding deception, pride, hypocrisy in His church?

Why was the hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira so dangerous?

- What did Jesus teach about hypocrisy?

**Matt. 6:5, 6**

**Matt. 23:13-33**

**Mark 7:6- 8; 12:13-17**

**Lk. 12:54-56**

## ACTS 6 WHAT DOES SERVING GOD REQUIRE FROM YOU?

1. What is taking place in **Acts 6: 1-6**?

*The church had been under attack from the Pharisees.  
There had been corruption within the church in the sin of Ananias and Sapphira.  
Now the church was threatened again in a new way.*

2. What was this new threat?

Is caring for the widows only an Old Testament law?

**Deut. 24: 19-21; 26: 12**

**1 Tim. 5: 3-16**

3. What important structural addition was made to the organization of the church?
4. **Verse 5** tells us of seven names. Do we know much of any of the other men in this verse?  
What does that tell you about what is important in service to the Lord?

**Acts 6: 2**

4. What is the Greek word for “serve?”

*From this word, what area of service is rendered in today’s church?*

According to **verse 3**, what qualifications were required for this ministry?

Because of this new role of service, what did it provide for the church leadership? **V. 4**

With time the role of *deacon* developed to be an important part of the church.  
But here in Acts, what were the selecting requirements for a deacon?

**1 Timothy 3: 8-13** gives the qualifications for deacon which came later. What are they?

- ✓ This important role of deacon was the result of a complaint leveled against the church leaders.

What do you learn about how a servant of the Lord responds to complaint?

**Acts 6: 7** stands alone. What is of great importance that is recorded in this verse?

**Read Acts 6: 8-15**

What occurs in these verses? Who is the focus?

What does his name mean?

There are two words in Greek for “crown.” *Diadema* is a “royal crown” which is inherited.  
*Stephanos* is the “victor’s crown” which can only be earned.

- **Keep here a running list of how Stephen earned his crown of service to the Lord.**

***Chapter Six opens with a problem in the church. Are problems always bad things to cope with or sometimes do problems uncover a better way of doing things?***

- What problems do you face in your relationship with the Lord and with others or perhaps in your church that may end up being an impetus to a better way?

The early apostles were willing to re-structure their existing way of doing things. We take for granted the office of **deacon** as servants in the church. But this problem was the motivating factor in the development of the structure within the early church.

We MUST be willing to change and adapt if we are going to be effective for the Lord.

In regard to Stephen in **Chapter Six**, what else did he do besides “wait on tables?”

- **Acts 6: 10** relates to **Luke 21: 15; 12: 11, 12**. Describe here how it relates. And how does it relate to you?

As **Chapter Six** closes, Stephen faces false accusers. But as the people look at Stephen, what do they see about him?

Who does this remind you of?

**Ex. 34: 29-30, 34, 35**

**Matt. 17: 1-5**

**2 Cor. 3: 7, 8**

Just as Moses was God's faithful servant, Stephen, too, was obedient to the Lord, even to death.

If Stephen's face was shining in such a way, does that indicate that he was focused on his accusers or on Someone else?

Who are you focused on when you are attacked? Your attackers or your Advocate?

❖ **WORD STUDY**

**Acts 6: 8** tells us that Stephen was "full of grace and power." The word for "full" is **pleres** which means to "be filled up." Stephen was totally controlled by faith, the Holy Spirit, grace and power.

What controls you?

What would your life look like if you were totally controlled by the Holy Spirit?

**Someone has said that Christians become very unchristian when they get organized.**

In **Acts 6**, we see some movement toward a more organized Church.

How can we guard against the pitfalls of structure within the Church body?

When you read **Acts 6**, who is directing the organization of the Church?

What verses within the first **10 verses**, show you who was guiding the structuring of the Church?

**Acts 4: 4** gives the last number (of men, adding women and children would swell the number).

What was that number?

Without phones, not to mention cell phones, emails or postal service, how did these new believers operate?

**Read Acts 1:8.** Was the Church to only concern itself with Jerusalem?

So in a short while, the message would spread out and more issues would arise. Can the Church focus only on one issue at a time or must She be following an agenda which we cannot see?

In other words, how does the Church know which problems to attack first and how?

Currently at my church, I am faced with potential dissension over the use of a classroom. The Lord reminded me that I do not have to capitulate to the louder party, but I absolutely do need to wait on His resolution to this problem. If I force my will (which I can certainly do), He cannot bless. So thank You, Lord, for the timeliness of this study of Acts!

*“A church racked by internal conflict finds its message lost in conflict, its energy dissipated. And a church thus focused on itself will find it difficult to reach out to the lost world.” MacArthur*

So again to make sure we do not miss the point. How do these early Church warriors make peace and not war?

- **Acts 6: 7** tells us the outcome of Spirit-led leadership. What is it?

- **Acts 6: 8** lets us know that Stephen did more than wait on tables. What did he do? What was the response to what he did?

- **Acts 6: 9**

1. The principal city of Cilicia is Tarsus. Paul (at this time Saul) was from Tarsus. He very well could have been a part of this synagogue with Jews from Cilicia. **Could Stephen know that he potentially would have a great impact on a future leader (perhaps the greatest leader of the Church)?** Without knowing *why* we are faithful, what propels someone to serve the Lord with this kind of abandon?

- **Acts 6: 10-12** Stephen was faithful to witness powerfully for the Lord and so all things ended well for him, right?

What does this tell us about why we serve God?

- **Acts 6: 13**

2. Relate this verse to the following Scriptures:

**Matt 12: 6**

**1 Pet. 2: 4-10**

**John 2:18-22**

3. The greatest example of serving is our Lord. Jesus, before He was to face crucifixion, removed His clothes, put a towel around His waist, bent down low and washed the dirty feet of His disciples.

**Read John 13** and see how it fits with the life of Stephen.

**ACTS 7**

WHAT DID IT COST TO BE AN EARLY FOLLOWER OF CHRIST?  
WHAT DOES IT COST TODAY?

When **Chapter 7** begins where is Stephen? Who is there?

1. How does Stephen begin his defense?
2. To gain an overview, which Biblical characters does Stephen discuss in his defense?

**Acts 7:2-8; 9-16; 17-43; 44-53**

Stephen chooses wisely and with purpose, not randomly. Each of these people deliver a strong argument for his stance as a follower of Jesus.

Stephen has been accused of speaking against Moses and God (**6:11**) and against the temple and the Law (**6:13**).

3. How does his choice of national heroes and villains support his argument?

### **Abraham**

God had called Abraham to leave all he knew and trust the Lord for his future. He gave him a promise for land, a nation and to be a blessing to all nations. God also revealed to Abraham that his people would be in bondage for a specific period of time. Yet, God would see to it that they would be delivered. Stephen also remarks that God gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision. This rite would serve as a form of identification that those who followed Yahweh were separated for His purposes and promises.

Abraham is a perfect example of how we should respond to the Lord. Just as God revealed more and more of His covenant relationship to Abraham (**Gen. 12, 15, 17**), God has through the ages continued to unfold His plan to His followers. As the nation of Israel **refused to accept** their prophets and their Messiah, they were exposing their own **rejection** of the God Who sent them.

**Joseph** was **rejected** by his brothers and delivered over to the enemy for monetary gain.

Yet, God had His own purposes and these were not thwarted by Joseph's brothers. These brothers were the original fathers to which Stephen refers throughout his discourse.

**Moses** Stephen next calls Moses "to the witness stand."

It is interesting the particulars that Stephen records concerning the life of Moses. He includes the early threat to the life of Moses as a baby. (Much like the threat to the life of



- ❖ God does not call all of His followers to be martyrs, but He does call us to be “living sacrifices.”

**Rom. 12:1-2 Write these verses here.**

- ✓ Are there times in our lives as believers that we need to ratchet it up and be more deliberate with our discourse – asking people to make a decision?
- ✓ Why do we feel the need to always be polite, dignified and proper as we watch people hurdling toward hell?

**Let us follow the example of Stephen ... the example of Christ Who spoke Truth at all times.**

### ➤ APPLICATION QUESTIONS

**Acts 5:1-11** *Ananias and Sapphira* apparently envied the praise which *Barnabas* received and that envy led to their deaths. *The high priest* envied the acclaim *of the apostles* and that led to their consuming jealousy which blinded them to the great work which the Lord was doing in their midst.

1. What is blinding you to the Lord’s work in your own life?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What is hindering you from “losing your life for My sake in order to find it?”  
**Matt. 10:39**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. **Acts 4: 13** makes clear that the opponents of Christ could see that “you have been spending time with Jesus.” Can that be said of you?  
Is it obvious that you have been spending time with our Lord?  
Describe how you are different because you spend time with Him.  
If you are not clearly one who spends time with Him, what hinders you from doing so?

4. Are there any areas in your life as a Christian that are hypocritical? Ask the Lord to show you.

5. What did you learn about “giving yourself away” this week?

6. What did you learn this week that defeats the strategy of Satan in your own life?

7. What do you learn personally from the example of Stephen about serving others?

8. When you serve the Lord, do you feel safe?

Do you feel that serving the Lord is a noble action and should be met with praise and support?

What is dangerous about serving the Lord?

9. Why are there so few “Stephens” among us – those willing to lose everything, even their lives, for the kingdom of God?

10. Why are so few of us willing to boldly declare the truth, even when it opposes tradition?

11. What did you learn this week that impacts your resolve to be the “continuing heartbeat of Jesus?”

As an additional activity, your class may want to do a role-play of the martyrdom of Stephen. Bring something to represent Stephen, ( I used a robe on a coat hanger) have class members take off jackets or anything that would hinder them being able to throw harder. Now throw imaginary rocks (I used tennis balls) at the mock Stephen. This gives you a physical connection to the visceral hate these people had for such a Spirit-filled man. What was Stephen’s response to this hatred?

**Continue your list on Peter’s Timeline.**

**Read the Doctrine handout.**

**Record in the Appendix the attributes of God which you have seen this week.**

**Record what you have learned this week about the Holy Spirit in the Appendix.**

**Choose a hymn that relates to this week’s lesson. Sing it to the Lord.**



**LESSON SIX**  
**ACTS 8 and 9**

**Doctrine Handout: Salvation**

**THE CHURCH MOVES OUT IN POWER**

**Review:** let's look at what we have learned so far in Acts. *Then think about what has most impacted your spiritual life through our glimpse into this book and record that here.*

**Acts Chapter 1**

Who are these people?

They are people .... without a Shepherd  
without direction  
without a New Testament  
with broken hearts

**Acts 1:15-22** Peter leads in the selection of a new disciple.

**Chapter 2**

This covers the Day of Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

*When is the last time you thanked God for giving you His Holy Spirit?*

Who is the key figure in **Chap. 2**?

What accounts for his transformation?

*Have you been so transformed by God's Spirit?*

- **Acts 2:46, 47** is a summary statement of this section in Acts.

**Chapter 3**

What happens here?

How does it occur?

What is important about the name of Jesus?

Key phrase: **Baruch Hashem Adonai**

**Chapter 4**

Who are the central figures in this chapter? **4:8**

**Read 4:20** *Is this statement true of you?*

- ❖ Chapter 4 examines persecution from without the church.

### **Chapter 5**

Who are the key figures here?

*What did you learn about giving yourself away?*

**Read 5:28** *Have you filled Cumming with teaching concerning Jesus?*

- ❖ **Chapter 5 examines corruption within the church.**

### **Chapter 6**

What did you learn about in this chapter?

The Hellenistic widows were being overlooked in the daily giving of food.

This episode in the early church could have caused great disunity. But because of wise leadership, a break in the fellowship of the church was avoided.

- ❖ **This chapter examines disunity in the church.**

We are introduced to a new character in the drama of Acts. Who is he? **6:5, 6, 8-15**

- **6:7** is another summary statement in Acts. This verse also tells us an important fact, "a great many \_\_\_\_\_ were becoming obedient to the faith."

What does this tell you?

These priests probably heard Jesus, did not believe at first but with time, they came to believe.

*How can that help us as we share with others the life of Christ?*

### **Read Chapter 7**

What did you learn about being a disciple of Jesus Christ?

- ✓ Now record what has impacted you most in these first few chapters.

A present day Stephen, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, gave his life for the truths of our faith and because of his love for Jesus. He wrote The Cost of Discipleship.

Last week we did a roll-play about the martyrdom of Stephen. Remember, you were part of the mob that was angered at his words. So angry that they took off their outer garments so they could throw their stones harder. They wanted to snuff out the life of this pure, holy man. **Why?**

- ❖ The early church faced persecution, corruption and disunity with strength and power.

How did they do this?

- ✓ **Do your Text Discovery on Acts Chapter 8.**

#### **Chapter 8                      The church is scattered.**

Keep in mind as you study the remainder of Acts, this early account of Saul, later to be called Paul.

**8: 1** Who is left in Jerusalem?

**8:3** tells us that Paul was ravaging the church. This Greek word means “to mangle the prey like a wild animal.” The tense of the verb is imperfect, meaning that it occurred over time, continuously.

**8:4-8**    What did the persecuted people do? Who is a key figure here?

**9-13**    Who is the main character here? Describe him.

**14-24**    Understanding the tensions between **Jews and Samaritans** makes this episode in the growth of the early church even more dramatic. This historic animosity also helps us concerning the issue of the necessity of the appointed apostles' presence for the Holy Spirit's anointing.

What are your thoughts about how this relates to the continuing heartbeat of Jesus?

What can we learn from Simon's response to the Holy Spirit?

How can **Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23, 24-30**, help understand Simon Magus?

Keep in mind what happened in **8:1-4**: the followers of Jesus were scattered like seed. *Diaspeiro*. **διασπείρω** # 1289 means "to scatter seed."

The persecution the believers faced was used of God to plant them in new soil so they could bear fruit: some in Judea, some in Samaria and some to distant fields

#### **"The Road Less Traveled"**

We pick back up in **Acts 8:25**.

1. What are Peter and John doing as they head back to Jerusalem?

Beginning with **8:26**, we return to a new disciple and his ministry. Who is that?

**Read 8:26-28**

**Ask yourself the 5WH.**

2. Who speaks to Philip?
3. What does he tell him to do?
4. Where does he tell him to go? When? Why? How?
5. Why didn't the angel tell the Ethiopian how to be saved?

This desert road to Gaza was seldom used. Gaza, one of the five chief cities of the Philistines, had been destroyed over 100 years earlier. A new Gaza was built in a different location. There was a more traveled road between Jerusalem and the new Gaza, but Philip was instructed to go by way of the Old Gaza road. Why? Philip did not ask. He just obeyed.

*What does that tell us?*

- ✓ *If God had asked you to do something that did not make sense to you, do you think you would have obeyed or argued? How does God ask us to do things? Do angels speak to you?*

Describe the man to whom Philip was sent.

Ethiopia was a larger territory during this time. It included a large track of land south of Egypt.

Candace was the name given the Queen of Ethiopia, much like “Caesar” or “Pharaoh” was given to rulers of Rome and Egypt. The Queen was the real power on the throne, as the kings were regarded as divine and were above the day to day rule of the people. This eunuch was a powerful man who was in charge of the treasure of the Queen: he was her Minister of Finance or Secretary of the Treasury.

As far as Jewish law was concerned, would this eunuch ever be considered a full Jew?

**Read Deut. 23:1**

6. Why had this man come to Jerusalem?

*“The eunuch is a classic example of one who lived up to the light he had. God then gave him the full revelation of Jesus Christ through Philip’s ministry.” John MacArthur*

7. What was the eunuch doing?

Exactly which passage? Does that matter?

**Back to Philip.**

8. How does he know what to do?

The box above that describes the influence of the eunuch indicates that he was a powerful man. Did that seem to discourage Philip? How do you know?

9. How does Philip “prime the pump” so he can witness to this man?

Philip does not have to convince the eunuch, the Spirit had already been at work in the heart of the man.

*What does that tell you about witnessing?*

The passage in Isaiah was not clear to him even after his time of worship in Jerusalem. Those in Jerusalem were divided on the interpretation of this passage. Some said that it (the slaughtered sheep) referred to the nation of Israel, others thought Isaiah spoke of himself, and others thought this referred to the Messiah.

The eunuch desired information about salvation. He traveled all the way from Ethiopia. But he still was confused. It took someone to explain salvation to him in a way which he could understand. For a man to be truly converted there must be understanding on some level.

- **Read Matt. 13:23** Remember the “*diaspora*”?

10. When the Ethiopian believed, what did he do?

What was his action (**36-38**) and what was his attitude? (**v. 39**)

“He went on his way rejoicing.” **Acts 8:39b**

Joy is a mark of a true believer. (**John 15:11; 17:13; Acts 13:52; Rom. 14:17; 1 Pet. 1:8; Jude 24**)

As a government official of his stature, the eunuch would have had an entourage. Did the presence of others, on his way home, deter him from making his profession of faith public?

11. Do you think the water just “happened to be there” on this desert road?  
What attribute of God does this point to?

12. What happened to Philip?

What did he do?

Azotus is about 20 miles from Gaza. It is also 60 miles from Caesarea, where he ended up.

- ❖ Philip preached in the cities (such as Joppa and Lydda, which Peter would shortly visit) as he traveled.
- ❖ We next see Philip in Caesarea, twenty years later and still serving God. (**Acts 21:8ff**)
- Just as a side note: the church Father Irenaeus tells us that the Ethiopian eunuch became a missionary to the Ethiopians.

**The gospel, the work of Jesus, was spreading to the whole world on roads less traveled.**

✓ **Do your Text Discovery on Chapter 9.**

➤ **Go to Application Questions if you are not doing Digging Deeper.**

❖ **DIGGING DEEPER**

**When you begin chapter 8, who is left in Jerusalem?**

**Who is going out with the message of Jesus?**

**How does that relate to you and me?**

• **ACTS 8: 5-8**

**Where is Phillip going?**

**Read Matt. 10: 1, 5-10**

**John 4: 1-26**

**What do you learn about the attitude of Jews to Samaritans?**

**So what has changed by the time you get to Acts 8?**

**Read 1 Cor. 12: 13.**

**Read Eph. 2: 11-22 and see how it relates to the above question.**

**Acts Chapters 1-10 are transitional, with Acts 10 being the climax.**

**We see a consistent move away from Jerusalem as the Gospel makes its move into the world. After the death of Stephen and the rejection of his message of Jesus Christ as the Messiah, we see more and more the center of the Christian faith moving out of Jerusalem.**

**The stoning of Stephen was a turning point with Jewish leaders; it was the final rejection of the gospel by the leaders of Judaism before the gospel moved out in power beyond Jerusalem.**

**“The Grace of God is not for sale!”**

- **Acts 8: 9-13**

Who is introduced here and why would this be included in the Acts account?

How is Simon referred in v. 10?

**Simon Magus = Simon the Magnificent or Simon the Great Power**

**This title shows that Simon claimed some form of deity for himself.**

**Look at Mark 14: 62** and see how Jesus referred to God.

How might his “title” give him a perverted view of himself?

How would that self-importance hinder his ability to fully trust in Jesus as his Lord?

- **Read Acts 8: 14- 24**

Continue with your focus on Simon.

What do you learn about Simon from these verses?

What prompted Simon’s “faith?” v. 13, 18

*“Magicians often sold each other their tricks and incantations.” J. MacArthur*

So it was not the Word of God which influenced Simon’s faith, but the miracles he saw.

Read **Matt. 13: 20, 21**. Does this relate to Simon?

Look up the word **simony** in a dictionary. Record what you find here.  
This word originated with this passage.

In **verse 24**, Simon asks Peter to pray for him. Does that indicate the spiritual state of Simon?

### **SALVATION**

*“This episode shows how close a person can come to salvation and still not be converted. Simon heard the gospel, saw the miracles, gave a profession of faith in Christ, was baptized and yet, he apparently was never born again.” W. Wiersbe*

Peter was given insight to see that Simon was a counterfeit and Peter exposed his wickedness. If allowed to go unchecked, think of the damage this type of attitude could have inflicted on the purity of the early Church! Praise God that He watches over His Church with great diligence!

### **UNGODLY POWER**

**Contrast magic arts with the power of the Holy Spirit.**

*“Simon believed in the signs but not in the One whose power was behind them. True salvation is not mere profession or ritual act. It is the divine transformation of the soul from love of self to love of God, from love of sin to love of holiness.” MacArthur*

*“New Testament language does not always distinguish between believing and professing to believe.” John R. W. Stott*

Justin Martyr (who was from Samaria, as was Simon) and Irenaeus, both early Church fathers, refer to Simon Magus as one who presented himself as a god. Clearly this was a man who did not yield to the faith which espoused self-sacrifice and humility.

### **Now let’s turn to the Samaritan focus**

- **Acts 8: 14-24**

It is appropriate that John is mentioned as well as Peter here because earlier in the Gospels, John had wanted to bring fire down from heaven to consume the Samaritans. What accounts for the difference in attitude?

**Read Luke 9: 51-56**

In **Acts 8: 12**, we see that the Samaritans were believing and being baptized. Yet, according to **8: 15, 16**, they had not received the Holy Spirit. Yet in **Acts 2: 38**, Peter had instructed them to repent, be baptized and they would receive the Holy Spirit.

Why do you think these Samaritans had to wait to receive the Holy Spirit?

*“God wanted to unite the Samaritan believers with the original Jewish church in Jerusalem. He did not want two churches that would perpetuate the division and conflict that had existed for centuries.” MacArthur*

**Read Matt. 16: 13-20.**

What did Jesus give to Peter?

This meant that Peter alone had the privilege of “opening the door of faith” to others. Peter was the one who preached at Pentecost, thereby opening the door to the Jews in Jerusalem. Now he would open the door to the Samaritans. In **Acts 10**, Peter will be the one to convert a Gentile.

We must not look at this unique time in Church history as the norm. Peter has long since joined his Lord in heaven. But at the outset of the gospel message, Peter was the one who proclaimed this message to Jew, Samaritan and Gentile.

- **Acts 8: 25** stands alone. This is an important point and deserves special attention.

What is remarkable about this verse?

Think of **Matt. 28: 18-20**

Think of the former hatred of Jew for Samaritan.

Think of the hostilities to which they are returning to in Jerusalem.

- **Read Acts 8: 26-40**

✓ List all of the “coincidences” you see in this passage.

Angel spoke to Philip

Angel told him to go on the road not typically used to and from Ethiopia (a deserted road)

Ethiopian just happened to have a scroll of Isaiah (very precious and uncommon to have this)

Continue listing more

Philip in v. 35 “opened his mouth and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him.”

Could you proclaim Jesus from any Scripture?

From the first book of the Bible to the last we see Jesus.

Can you tell others about Jesus from any point in the Bible?

Learn about Jesus so well that you can turn any conversation into one which praises Him!

### **ACTS 9 A Truly Transformed Life!**

- **Read Acts 9: 1-22**

- Now write a short testimony of your own – how you turned to Christ for salvation. (This version of Paul’s testimony takes about 2-3 minutes to read.)

In most testimonies there is 1) a brief before, 2) a point of conversion and then 3) a comment on the present day work the Lord is doing in your life.

**Use a separate piece of paper for this assignment if you need more space.**

**What are the similarities between your conversion and Paul’s?**

**What strikes you most about Paul’s conversion?**

**Have we seen Paul before in Acts? Look at Acts 7: 58; 8: 1**

**Would you think Paul to be a likely servant of Jesus?**

**So why did Jesus choose Saul?**

**Read two other accounts of his conversion and record any additional insights into why he was chosen. Each of the three accounts in Acts has different information.**

**Acts 22: 1-21**

**Acts 26: 9-18**

- Read Acts 9: 23- 31

List what happened to Paul after his conversion.

Was life easier for Paul as a Christian than as a Jew?

Acts 9: 32 picks up with Peter. Paul is out of the picture for over ten years!

Where is he? What is he doing?

We know little of this time. But be assured, God is at work, preparing him for the great role to which He appointed him.

Years with no specifically clear activities yet even though we see nothing – much is going on.

So when we pray for others and nothing seems to be happening – be faithful in prayer. We just don't see anything happening ... but it is!!!

According to Acts 9: 4, to persecute the Church is to persecute \_\_\_\_\_ .

Look at 1 Cor. 12: 27

Paul, prior to the road to Damascus, was attempting to snuff out Christianity and he was making great headway in that regard. Do you understand how unlikely it was that this “new faith” would survive all the opposition and persecution it faced?

Take a moment to pause and thank God that He preserved our faith when it was a fledgling, infant, struggling belief. No national support, no funding, no protection through a Constitution, no history – a brand new way of life. With so much against the Christian faith, it is a divine act of protection that preserved so precious a truth.

Thank Him also that our foundation is firm – and continues firm even though hell itself assaults our faith.

### ➤ APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Is there someone you have been witnessing to and you are getting nowhere?

Who are they?

If you were to follow Philip's example, you would pray that the Spirit prepare the way, opening the heart of the person, perhaps that person even reading Scripture which you could help explain. But just like Philip, you must know how to explain that Scripture. That is why we are studying so diligently – to be the mouthpiece for the Lord.

2. Think of someone you think most unlikely to be saved. Like Paul was.

Someone was undoubtedly praying for him.

Commit to pray for that person until the Lord releases you.

Write their name here.

### 3. Let's take another look at Paul's conversion.

#### Acts 9: 4

Has the Lord ever appeared to you or blocked your way on the road?

Sure He has!

When you read His Word – which New Testament believers did not have (other than the Old Testament) – and as you read **1 Cor. 13: 1**, and it pierces your heart – He has stopped you in your tracks. (How about **1 John 3: 18; 4: 20**?)

But the question is, will you heed His words? Write out a prayer to the Lord that nothing will hinder you from listening to Him.

4. **Read Heb. 12: 2, 3.** Has God ever blinded you to the world and all you saw was Jesus?

As you read His Word and dwelt in Him, abiding in Him – you were blinded to the world's pull and temptation?

Describe such a time. If you have never experienced this. Stop right now and ask the Lord to be your Jehovah-jireh (the God Who provides).

5. How has this week's study impacted you as "the continuing heartbeat of Jesus?"

**Continue your list on Peter's Timeline and start one on Paul.**

**Read the Doctrine handout.**

**Record in the Appendix your findings on the attributes of God.**

**Record what you learned this week about the Holy Spirit in the Appendix.**

**Choose a hymn for this week. Sing it to the Lord.**

**LESSON SEVEN**  
**Acts 9: 32 – 11: 30**

**Doctrine Handout: Justification**  
**“Even the Gentiles”**

**How dramatic was our introduction to Saul!**

**But now the story turns to Peter again.**

**I believe this is on purpose – not just the chronology of the events, but the intent of the Lord.**

**This shows us that the gospel message is so much more than just one man.**

**Yes, these two men are crucial to the message of the gospel, but now, YOU are crucial to the gospel message.**

**As you study this week, remember that the heartbeat of Jesus continues in you.**

- **Read Acts 9: 31-43**

Lydda was about 12 miles from Joppa. Lydda was a town 2- 3 miles north of the road connecting Joppa and Jerusalem. This was an important place, since the roads from Egypt to Syria and from Joppa to Jerusalem passed through it.

But why was Peter here? **Verse 32** tells us if you look carefully.

So the great evangelist also considered the need to revisit those who were already saints.

Does this tell you anything about the importance of good teaching?

There are three major miracles in this section of Acts performed by Peter. These miracles are very reminiscent of similar miracles of Jesus. Peter's ministry continues to be validated by the Lord.

**Remember: the heartbeat of Jesus continues ... here through Peter and now through you.**

**Read Mark 2: 1-12** and note the similarities.

What is the response of the people to what occurred?

In **Acts 9: 34**, Who does Peter credit with the healing of Aeneas?

- What is the next miracle (**9: 36-43**)?

- ✓ Joppa was about 38 miles from Jerusalem and was the main seaport of Judea. Currently it is a suburb of Tel Aviv.

**Compare to Mark 5:22 – 24, 35 – 43.**

Think for a moment what the busy life of Peter must have been like. **Read v. 38 and 39.**  
What was Peter's response to an interruption of what he was doing in Lydda? Had Peter seen that modeled?

- ✓ Funeral services in those days were held at home.  
After sending the people out of the room (**v. 40**), what did Peter do?  
Why is this so important? What did it show?

Relate this one action of Peter to the following verses:  
**Eph. 3: 20**

**Matt. 14: 23**

**Luke 6: 12-13**

**Acts 9: 43** tells us that Peter "stayed many days in Joppa."  
**Does 9: 42** give you an idea as to why he stayed there for some time?

*"Peter took the opportunity to ground these new believers in the truth of the Word, for faith built on miracles alone is not substantial." W. Wiersbe*

**These short verses show us (especially v. 42) why we must be walking miracles, raised from the dead!**

The fact that Peter remained in the home of a tanner has significance to our next miracle in Acts.

What is the importance of Peter residing with a tanner?

Read Lev. 5:2

Lev. 11: 8, 11, 27, 35-40.

**Just in these 12 verses of Acts, do you see how the heartbeat of Jesus continued through Peter?**

**In so many ways, our Lord has shown us how He intends to live through His people. One heartbeat at a time.**

## Acts 10

***Most of the Church today is not from Jewish background. As believers in Christ who do not come from Jewish roots, we owe a great debt to what takes place in this chapter of Acts.***

***For the Gentile (who is everyone who is not Jewish), this chapter is of immense importance.***

***Do not read this chapter lightly, but in humility and great joy watch how the Lord opens wide the door of heaven to ALL people!***

### ✓ Do your Text Discovery of Chapter 10.

At the end of the previous chapter, where was Peter?

**Chapter 10** opens where?

- ✓ Caesarea was located 30 miles north of Joppa and named in honor of Augustus Caesar. It was the administrative capital of the province of Judea, possessing a splendid harbor built by Herod the Great.

**Read Jonah 3: 10 – 4: 11** and relate to the Jewish attitude toward Gentiles that prevailed in Israel.

What kind of man was Cornelius?

Was Cornelius a Christian? Was he saved?

Read the following verses and relate to **Acts 10**.

**Isaiah 55: 6, 7**

**Jer. 29: 13**

- ✓ The ninth hour was the most important time of prayer in the Jewish day.

In **Acts 10: 4-7**, why didn't the angel just give the message of salvation? Why send for Peter?

What does this tell you about being the "heartbeat of Jesus?"

- **Acts 10: 9-16**

In the meantime, what is happening in Joppa?

God had prepared the heart of Cornelius. Now He would prepare the heart of Peter!

It was customary to go up on the roof for prayers in order to have privacy.

Notice when the Lord spoke to both men: Cornelius and Peter! Very important.

Although Peter was a Christian, he still thought like a Jew. The Jewish thinking was clear: to become a Christian, you must first become a Jew. The Samaritans from earlier (**Acts 8**) were part Gentile but also part Jewish – they were a mixed race which is why they were so hated. (This mixture had occurred during the Assyrian domination.)

In regard to the New Testament truth of Salvation, read the following:

**1 Cor. 1: 21-25**

**Heb. 7: 25**

**1 Pet. 2: 4- 10**

**Eph. 2: 5, 8**

Did Peter understand these truths when we meet him in **Acts 10**?  
How would God reveal this to him?

Could Peter preach salvation by faith and yet require a Gentile to be circumcised?

- **Read Acts 10: 17-29**

Describe what is happening here and any insights which you may have.

- **Read Acts 10: 30 – 48**

Now explain in your words why this chapter is so so important for ALL believers.

- ❖ What we see at stake in this stage of the Christian faith is a growing understanding of what **Justification by Faith** truly consists of.

**Read the Doctrine handout on Justification and relate it to the events you see in this portion of Acts.**

- ✓ **Do your Text Discovery of Acts 11.**
- **Go to the Application Questions if you are not doing Digging Deeper.**

- ❖ **DIGGING DEEPER**
  - Acts 9: 32

Just as an historical note: Richard the Lionheart visited the Holy Land during the Crusades and spent a good amount of time in the village of Lydda. He built a church in honor of Saint George there (the ruins are there to this day).

- **Acts 9: 36**

Where have you seen Joppa before in Scripture?

**Check out Jonah 1: 1-3** What could this passage have to do with Peter?

God is preparing Peter's heart for something. Any idea what it is? Hint: **Chapter 10**

### **Acts 9: 39**

In Jerusalem, there was a law that a body was not allowed to be exposed for more than one day. But beyond Jerusalem it was the custom to permit loved ones to come and remember the deceased for three days. Burial would then follow.

### **Acts 10**

#### **Gentile Association with Jewish Religion**

Gentiles could have varying levels of adherence to Judaism.

- *Benefactors* supported the Jewish community and presumably were sympathetic to Jewish belief.
- "God-fearers" were affiliated with the synagogue and showed keen interest in Judaism; there is also an important mention of God-fearers in an inscription from approximately A.D. 210 in modern Turkey. They were non-Jews who believed in one God, attended the synagogue and respected the moral and ethical teachings of the Jews but who did not fully embrace all of the Jewish customs, such as the rite of circumcision.
- *Full proselytes* converted to Judaism and embraced all of its requirements, including circumcision.

Notes from Archaeological Study Bible, New International Version p. 1776, 1785

Where would Cornelius fall in this listing?

**Read Matt. 8: 5-13** – this is an encounter Jesus had with a centurion. So Peter had seen and heard what Jesus thought about the faith of this centurion.

### **The Keys of the Kingdom**

**Read Matt. 16: 13- 19**

Especially note v. **18, 19**.

Jesus gave the keys of the kingdom to Peter. What did this mean?

**Read Acts 2: 14, 22- 24, 29- 33, 36**

Peter gave the Pentecost message which opened the door of heaven to the Jewish people.

Peter, in **Acts 8: 14, 15**, was the one who opened the door of the kingdom to those in Samaria. They had received the word of God and believed, but they had not received the Holy Spirit – that privilege and responsibility fell upon Peter.

Now we see Peter as the one who holds the keys of the kingdom, ushering in the Gentiles!

In all of the Gospel accounts that list the disciples, Peter is always listed first. This is a mark of prominence. **Matt. 10: 2-4; Mark 3: 16- 19; Luke 6: 14- 16**

Explain what it means that Peter was used of the Lord to open the door of the kingdom to Jew, Samaritan and Gentile.

**Dietary Laws**

**Read Deut. 14: 4- 20** (Fuller listing is found in **Lev. 11: 2- 45**.)

What is the significance of this vision occurring three times? **10: 16**

Now read **Mark 7: 14- 23**

**Col. 2: 16-17**

*“On the one hand, God gave laws that came out of His character, which, if ever repealed, would do violence to His sanctity and holiness. Therefore, God would never repeal the moral law ... Yet there are other rules that God set down for historical purposes ... until the coming of Christ, Who tore down the wall of separation and began to build His church, not just with Jews but with Samaritans, Gentiles and God fearers.”* R.C. Sprout

- **Read Acts 10: 17-29**

Do you think Peter fully understood at the point when he obeyed this word from the Lord?  
**V. 17**

What does that mean for you as God calls you to obey His Word even when you do not fully understand?

What is He calling you to do right now that is not “logical?”

- **Acts 10: 23**

How does this verse show that Peter is beginning to change in regard to Gentiles?

- **Acts 10: 25- 28**

*“Peter refused both to be treated by Cornelius as if he were a god, and to treat Cornelius as if he were a dog.”* John R.W. Stott

- **Acts 10: 30-48**

What do you learn about God in these verses?

What do you learn specifically about Jesus?

Beginning with **10: 34**, what do you learn about the gospel message?

What are the main points in the gospel message?

**Acts 10: 35** tells us that “the man who fears Him and does what is right is **welcome** to Him.”

- ✓ The word “welcome” or “acceptable” is *dektos* # 1184 and means “marked by a favorable manifestation of the divine pleasure.”

Are you so marked by Him?

Are there evidences in your life that His imprint is on you? What are those evidences?

God has so ordained that believers are the instruments or vehicles of His truth – both for the gospel message and for equipping the saints in truth.

This is just one more way – and a key way – that we are the continuing heartbeat of Jesus on this earth.

**Read John 21: 15-17**

In this section of **Acts**, how do you see Peter honoring his commitment to Christ voiced in **John 21**?

**Acts 11**

- **Read Acts 11: 1-18**

**How does this passage relate to John 10: 16?**

**How does it relate to Deut. 10: 17; Job 34: 19?**

Every word of Scripture is inspired and is never redundant. Yet Luke here (**Acts 11: 1-18**) writes much of what he had already written in the previous chapter – why does he repeat here what he has already said?

At the point we find the early Church in **Acts 11**, was the *mystery* referred to in **Eph. 2: 11- 3: 12**, understood?

What was the hindrance to a fuller understanding of this truth?  
How would understanding come?

Are there things which the Church today has trouble understanding?  
What are they?

- **Read Acts 11: 19 – 26.**

What is happening here?

Where are they?

**Antioch is 300 miles north of Jerusalem. Antioch was built by Seleucus Nicator who was one of Alexander the Great's generals. He was also the son of Antiochus. Antioch was the third largest city in the Roman Empire, following Rome and Alexandria. This city prospered greatly because of the trade routes that passed through its center. This was a decadent city, full of wealth, luxury and every kind of vice. A large colony of Jews lived here. The population was estimated at 500, 000. This became later the launching point for the missionary journeys of Paul.**

**Verse 19** – *diasparentes* from *diaspeiro* = to scatter abroad, *dia* = throughout + *speiro* = to sow seed

Look back at **Acts 8: 1-4**.

What had been the result of this “scattering?”

So is persecution something to be avoided at all costs? Why/Why not?

**11: 20** Phoenicia is mentioned here. It was a country about 15 miles wide and 120 long stretching along the northeastern Mediterranean coast (modern day Lebanon). Its most important cities were Sidon and Tyre.

Here we see Cyprus mentioned. This is an island in the northeastern Mediterranean.

In **11: 22**, we are re-introduced to Barnabas whom we met in **Acts 4: 36**. (Where is Barnabas from?)

What else do you remember about him from **4: 36**?

What do you learn about him here (**verses 22-26**)?

What is it in **v. 23** that causes Barnabas to rejoice?

**V. 25**, we pick back up with Saul. It has been seven or eight years since we last saw him. What does that tell you about the Lord's servants?

What happens first in Antioch? **V. 26**

*"Is it because the word 'Christ' was constantly on their lips that the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch?"* John R. W. Stott

- **Read Acts 11: 27-30.**

Historically what is occurring throughout the world?

When is it happening?

From an accuracy point of view, what does this fact lend the accounts we are reading?

What does Barnabas do that all Christians should do?

**Acts 11: 27, 30** record the first mention of the words "prophecy" as a gift and "elders" as a Christian office.

➤ **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

**Read and study 1 Peter 5: 1-14**

1. This is Peter's philosophy of ministry. What do you learn?

2. There are two conversions in **Acts Chapter 10**, what are they?

The absolute importance of the purity of the gospel message is threatened.

***“If we speak about the teachings of Jesus without first speaking of the need for repentance and faith in Jesus as our Savior from sin, people naturally begin to think that Christianity is merely about doing good. It is learning what Jesus taught and trying to put it into practice. This only encourages self-righteousness, a trust in human righteousness, which is harmful. Whenever Christianity has fallen into that pattern of teaching it has made a great mistake.”***

J. M. Boice

Go back to **Acts 2** Lesson and look at the end of the lesson which refers to “kerugma.”

3. What must be included in a complete announcement of the gospel message?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Look at the beginning of Chapter Four. What are the signs of a legalistic church? A legalistic Christian?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. How has this week’s study impacted your understanding and equipping in regard to being the continuing heartbeat of Jesus?

**List your findings about Peter and Paul on their Timelines.**

**Read the Doctrine handout.**

**Make your notes on the Holy Spirit from this week’s lesson.**

**Record your findings in the Appendix on the attributes of God.**

**Choose a hymn which relates to this week’s lesson.**



- ✓ In ancient times the type of guarding here described would be considered maximum security. Why would Peter need this kind of guarding? (5:19)

Who was Herod really trying to control?

How does that work out for him?

In contrast, what is Peter's response to his condition?

How can Peter be so calm?

Check out the following:

**Psalm 4: 8**

**Psalm 34: 15, 16**

**Isaiah 41: 10**

**1 Peter 3: 12**

**1 Peter 5: 6, 7**

Does this convict you of the absolute importance of hiding God's Word in your heart?

**Ps. 119: 11**

**In Acts 12: 11, Luke uses the same word for "delivered" that Stephen used in 7: 34 when he was speaking of the Jewish *exodus* from Egyptian bondage. Keep in mind that this event with Peter occurred during the Passover season.**

**How might this continuing Source of Deliverance be an encouragement to the early Church?**

- **Read Acts 12:13-17**

What is the response of the people to Peter's appearance?

Do you think they had prayed for James?

*Are you ever disappointed when the Lord does not answer your prayers and it effects your confidence in prayer?*

*What can you learn from this passage in Acts that can help your prayer life?*

Why did God deliver Peter and yet James was allowed to be executed?

Who is the James to whom Peter tells them to relay the information of his escape?

**Look at Acts 15: 13ff**

**Gal. 1: 19**

- **Read Acts 12:18-19**

What does Herod do?

- **Read Acts 12:20-23**

Where is Herod and what is he doing?

**Read Isaiah 42:8.** How does that help you understand this part of Acts?

- **Read Acts 12:24-25 This is another summary statement. (2:42; 6:7)**

How does the ending of this chapter differ from the beginning?

Is God in control of both the beginning and the end? How can you know?

**Read Rev. 1:7, 8; 21:6; 22:13**

Not only does our Lord know the beginning and the end, HE IS THE BEGINNING AND THE END! Praise Him forever!

**ACTS 13, 14**

✓ **Do Text Discovery of Acts 13**

**PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY: CITIES IN DARKNESS**

Until this chapter, what city has been the center of the growing Christian church?

What city now becomes the focus? Who is there?

- **Read Acts 13:1-3**

What is going on? How did it happen? Who is making things happen here?

✓ **Make a special note of what you learn about the work of the Holy Spirit.**

- **Read Acts 13:4-8**

**The disciples had been in Antioch, but were now going down to Seleucia and then on to Cyprus.**

**But to give you a glimpse of what they saw ...**

*"They went first to Seleucia, the harbor that served that part of Syria, and they boarded a ship. We are told, even by geographers today, that on a clear day, if you stand on the coast of Syria in what was once Seleucia and look out into the Mediterranean – 130 miles in the distance on a clear day – you can still see the shape and outline of Cyprus. That was in the vision of Paul and Barnabas as they set sail." R. C. Sproul*

Who are we introduced to here?

Luke's integrity as an historian was under scholarly attack years ago for this very passage.

- ❖ Cyprus was known to be under the direct control of the Senate of Rome. So it was thought that Luke was in error when he mentioned Sergius Paulus as the proconsul. SPQR (Senate Populus Que Romanus), the Senate and the People of Rome ruled this island. Yet, in recent time, a stela has been uncovered that had been set up during the reign of Claudius, who was reigning at the time of this trip. This stela gives voice to the fact that the local ruler at that time was given the title "Proconsul." Once again Luke is vindicated as a trustworthy historian.

Does Elymas remind you of anyone? Look back at **Acts 8:18-21**

*Does the church today have opposition of this kind?*

*What can we learn from Paul's response? Read 13:9-12*

According to **13:12**, what was the response of the proconsul and why?

*Have you ever been overwhelmed or amazed at the teaching of God's word?*

**Read Acts 13:13.** Do you notice a change of any kind?

- **Read Acts 13:14-18** We come now to Paul's first sermon.

Note where he is when he gives it; what his basic content is; the response of the people. (13:16-41 is the sermon.)

- **Read Acts 13: 44**

Can you imagine your whole city coming out to hear the word of God?

What is the response of the Jews and why? **V. 45**

How do Paul and Barnabas respond? **V. 46, 47**

**V. 49, 52** In spite of the persecution mentioned in **V. 50**, what is the response of the disciples?

What is the responsibility of Paul? What is your responsibility?

Can you educate people into the kingdom of God?

Can you woo people into the kingdom of God?

Then how do we fill God's kingdom?

What is the gospel? Write a short definition of the gospel here.

The gospel is not about you primarily. You are affected by the truth of the gospel, but the focus of the gospel is **Jesus**: His life, His death and His resurrection. This is why people need desperately to know Jesus. They need to know about His life through the Scriptures. They need to know about His sacrificial death and what it accomplished. They need to know about His resurrection and the impact of His present life right now. So the gospel has objective content. We are all called to be educators. Before we can educate others, we must know Jesus and the facts of His life for ourselves. This is why we study Scripture daily: to know Him and because we love Him.

✓ **Do Text Discovery of Acts 14.**

➤ **Go to Application Questions if you are not doing Digging Deeper.**

### ❖ **DIGGING DEEPER**

#### **Back to Chapter 12**

Something that will help us as we approach this concept of prayer and God's sovereignty is to look at the players in **Acts 12**.

Herod Agrippa I, the King of Judea, grandson of Herod the Great, son of Aristobulus. He was raised and educated in Rome, a friend of future emperors Gaius and Claudius. Appointed to this current position by Emperor Gaius, a childhood friend, grandnephew of Emperor Tiberius. Herod was the highest authority in Palestine.

Herod, as powerful as he was, remained helpless against the sovereign authority of God.

James, an apostle of Christ: baptized into the sufferings of Christ as indicated by the Lord Himself in **Matt. 20:22, 23**

Peter, an apostle of Christ: appointed to preach the gospel even until the age of an old man, also indicated by the Lord (**John 21:17-19**)

Followers of Christ, with no high official to aid them, they could appeal only to God Himself and this is exactly what they did. These people realized their own impotency to achieve their desire to release and restore Peter. To avail themselves of God's power, they first had to acknowledge their own inability and need.

God does not always remove the "cups" which we ask Him to remove. As in the case of our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus asked three times for the cup to be removed, yet, ultimately, Jesus was resolved to submit to the answer of the Father.

Do you remember the *seder* cups we studied weeks ago?

**With each cup the priest would say, "Blessed be the Lord God, King of the universe."**

**"Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech ha olam..."**

**Understanding the truth of Who our God is unlocks the mystery of prayer. The more you know Him, the more frequently and more readily you will run to Him in prayer.**

Jehovah = LORD

God, the Almighty

the Ancient of Days

Jehovah-jireh = God the Provider

Jehovah-sabaoth = God the Lord of Hosts

Jehovah-shammah = the God Who is there  
Jehovah-rapha = the Lord Who heals  
Jehovah-nissi = the Lord my Banner  
Jehovah-shalom= the God of Peace  
El Elyon= The Most High God  
El Shaddai = the All-Sufficient God  
El Olam = the Everlasting God  
El Roi = the God Who sees  
Qanna = the Jealous God  
Elohim = the Creator  
Adonai = Lord  
Jehovah-raah = the Lord my Shepherd  
Jehovah-mekoddishkem = the Lord Who sanctifies you  
Jehovah-tsidkenu = the Lord our Righteousness

As you pray to our Lord using these names, how will that effect your prayers?

**Acts 12** marks a turning point in the narrative of the early Church.  
What do you think that turning point is?

**As Chapter 12 closes, we are reminded that at the beginning of the chapter, Herod was on the rampage – arresting and persecuting church leaders; at the end he himself is afflicted and dies. The chapter opens with Peter in prison, James dead and Herod triumphing. It ends with Herod dead, Peter free, and the Word of God triumphing.**

**What does that do for you in regard to prayer and trusting a Sovereign God?**

**Back to Chapter 13**

**Chapter 12 saw a changing of the guard. Up until then, the focus had been on Jerusalem and Judea. Now the gospel moves out.**

**Is this just a necessity due to persecution or has this been the plan all along?**

**Remember Acts 1: 8**

**Matt. 28: 19**

**Luke 24: 47**

**John 10: 16**

**Eph. 2: 13-18**

**Is. 42: 6**

**Is. 45: 22**

**Is. 49: 6**

**Is. 60: 1-3**

### **Back to Acts 13**

Do you see anything in the first two verses that would indicate why they were sensitive to the calling of the Holy Spirit?

Many of the disciplines which early believers lived by have become forgotten by the Church today. Do we wonder why we lack the power and direction!

**Does your church ever move out in service without sufficient time in prayer and fasting? If yes, that is very dangerous!**

❖ **The Holy Spirit is not a power for us to use BUT it is His option to use us as the Lord sees fit.**

**Read Acts 13: 5.**

What tells you in this verse that there was more than a small number of Jews here?

**Why was it important to go to the synagogues first?**

**Acts 3: 25, 26**

**9:19, 20**

**Rom. 1: 16**

**Having gone to the synagogues first, when Barnabas and Saul reached the other side of the island, they were summoned by the proconsul. He was interested in what they had to say.**

**Does this tell you anything about how the gospel news travels?**

**We feel contained and restricted when we are told what to do in a certain way, but the Lord works in our circumstances if only we will be obedient. Leave the results to Him!**

**Read 13: 12**

**Why did the proconsul believe?**

**In verses 9-11, are you surprised at Paul's harsh response?**

**Would you respond so boldly?**

**How do you know that the Lord was with Paul in his declaration of the sinfulness of Elymas?**

**The next scene is in \_\_\_\_\_ . v. 14**

**After reading the Law and the Prophets, Paul began a sermon.**

**List below his key points/ beside each point check the ones that are routinely preached today.**

**Paul includes many necessary areas of biblical knowledge.**

**He discusses history to show the hand of God in His faithfulness;**

**Paul discusses theology to point to the need for a Savior;**

**Paul also addresses the longings of man's heart by injecting certain Scripture references, such as v. 22, which discloses both God's heart and David's. We all long to hear the Lord say that we are "a man or woman after His heart."**

**Paul also includes the kerugma (the early church message of the gospel – Lesson 2).  
What can you take from Paul’s example as you share the faith you live by with others?**

- **Read Acts 14:1-4**

Note as you continue reading the book of Acts, Paul targets specific cities. For the most part he goes to large cities and makes his impact there.

- ❖ Again, the scholars attacked Luke’s accuracy in this passage. At one time Derbe and Lystra were not in the same province (Lycaonia), yet upon later archaeological discovery, markers were found that delineated an ancient boundary. It was discovered that between the years A.D. 37 and A.D. 72, Lystra and Derbe were in the same province. This is the period of time in which Paul’s missionary journeys took place. Once again, Luke has been vindicated and the critics silenced.

*What do you learn from Paul’s method here in **Acts 14** that you can use as you reach out to others with the gospel?*

What does Paul do in the face of opposition?

On what does Paul rely? (**V. 3**)

In **Acts 14:8-10**, a lame man of Lystra is healed. The crowds worship Barnabas and Paul as gods.

How do Barnabas and Paul respond when they hear of the people’s praise? (**V. 14**)

After proclaiming Paul and Barnabas to be gods, what is the next thing the people do? (**V. 19**)

Where do you find Paul going in **V.21**?

What had just happened to him in that city?

Why was Paul going back to Lystra?

Here is a list below all the cities to which Paul delivered God’s message of redemption in **Acts 13 & 14**.

(Seleucia)

Iconium

Salamis  
Paphos  
Perga  
Antioch (Pisidian)

Lystra  
Derbe  
Attalia

*Now list all the cities in which you have lived (I would say visited, but that would be overwhelming).*

*Have you faithfully delivered God's message of redeeming love in all of these cities?*

### ➤ APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Go through **Acts 13** and **14** and mark the cities on the Map in the Appendix.
2. Has God called you to be a missionary to the world?
3. What has God called you to do? Do you know your calling?
4. Are you doing it?
5. Are you waiting to be as talented or smart as Paul?
6. Remember Peter?  
Did God use him?
7. What is hindering you from being as bold, as committed, as abandoned as Paul?
8. What happens in **Acts 13: 13**?

It is not known exactly why John left, but a few possibilities have been offered:

- The area they were approaching was known to have bandits
- He was homesick
- He was not prepared for the ardor of the trip
- He did not like Paul's focus on the Gentiles

- He was offended that his relative was no longer in charge

Let's look for a moment at the last one.

This is a likely candidate. Many church leaders have disagreements – even the greatest of all time!

So what do we learn from this defection from the missionary journey and how it affected the rest of the time on Missionary Journey #1?

9. As Barnabas yielded the leadership to Paul, what does that tell you about keeping your focus on the mission and not on self?
10. What did you learn this week about God's Sovereignty as it relates to prayer?
11. How has this lesson impacted you as "the continuing heartbeat of Jesus?"

**Continue adding to the Timelines of Peter and Paul.**

**Read the Doctrine handout.**

**Record in the Appendix what you have learned about the attributes of God.**

**Record what you have learned about the Holy Spirit in the Appendix.**

**Choose a hymn which relates to this lesson.**

**LESSON NINE**  
**Chapters 15, 16, 17**

**Doctrine Handout: Notes on Discipleship**  
**Additional handout: Are you persuaded?**  
**Additional handout: Greek Philosophy**

**“What Does It Cost To Be a Disciple?”**

**ACTS 15: JERUSALEM COUNCIL - WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?**

The Church has had nearly 2,000 birthdays, so it is easy to forget how strained and difficult her beginnings were. We tend to think that once Christ was resurrected, spoke to His disciples and Pentecost had occurred, that it was all smooth sailing after that. To fully appreciate what you will be studying and pondering this week, try and imagine a twenty year old person leading our country or the world or the universe! Because that is what the Church is doing – she is leading the world, by the power of the Holy Spirit, out of darkness.

This Council takes place about twenty years after Pentecost.

✓ **Do your Text Analysis of Acts 15.**

- **Read Acts 15:1-5: The Disagreement**

What is the issue here in this passage?

Who is doing the disturbing?

What is the demand they are placing on new converts to Christianity?

Are they authorized to make this demand on new believers? Look at **Acts 15:24**

What would the church look like today if this had been left as dogma (creedal truth)?

What was at stake here?

- Boiled down to a simple question, the issue here is:

***What must a person do to be saved? Justified?***

*Imagine the church today if this policy had remained in effect.*

**Read Eph. 2:11-22**

(Also **Galatians 2** sheds some light on this issue.)

Especially in **Galatians 2**, you see that Paul “*understood that forcing circumcision on the Gentiles involved the very essence of the gospel. And if the choice was to be between the truth of the gospel and harmony in the church, then he was for the truth of the gospel... what we cannot live with is the destruction of the gospel.*” J.M. Boice

- **Read Acts 15:6-11: The Defense**

Note who is the first to speak here in Jerusalem. Why is that?

What is his stance on what you must do to be saved?

How does he present his argument? What proof does he give?

What is the key verse of this paragraph?

- **Looking back at what has gone before is always helpful.**
  - **Read Acts 13: 12, 39, 44, 48; 14:3, 27**

What do all of these verses focus on?

**God had opened the *door of faith* and not the *door of the law!***

*How does this apply to us today?*

- **Read Acts 15:12-21**

Next who do we see speaking? What are they talking about?

Then who speaks and what is the content of his message?

What is the importance of James including the quote from the prophet Amos?

**Acts 15: 16** 'tabernacle' (*skenen*) # 4633 can be referred to as 'tent.' Many times 'tent' is used for 'body,' as in **2 Cor. 5: 1**.

The quote from Amos refers to "rebuilding the tent of David which has fallen."

In what way does that address the problem at hand for the Jerusalem Council?

How does that quote relate to Christ?

**Look at Ezek. 37: 24**

**Jer. 30: 9**

**Hos. 3: 5**

What is his final solution to the problem at the Jerusalem Council?

What do you think about his ruling? Fair/unfair, biblical, wise

**"The Old Testament declared both the salvation of the Gentiles (Is. 2; 11:10) and the future establishing of a glorious kingdom for Israel (Is. 11-12; 35; 60) but it did not explain how they related to each other."**

**W.Wiersbe Acts: Be Daring**

- **Read Acts 15:22-29: The Decision**

Who is involved here?

What is their plan of operation?

What is the content of the letter?

What is the standard or authority to which all the church fathers refer when making these momentous determinations?

*What is the standard to which you refer when you are making an important decision?*

The decision of the Jerusalem Council accomplished at least three things

1. It strengthened the unity of the church and kept it from dissolving into two factions.
2. It allowed for the united witness to the lost Jews.
3. It brought blessing to the Gentile congregations.

What does this Council teach us today?

One thing this Council teaches us is that the problems and differences within a body of believers is really an opportunity for growth, an occasion to come together and work things out according to the Scriptures. We also learn that at times, we must compromise in order to retain the essentials. We need to know our priorities and never yield on them, yet at the same time, be flexible and wise concerning what we are willing to surrender for the moment.

- **Read Acts 15:30-35: Reading the Letter**

What is the response to the letter?

- **Read Acts 15: 36-41**

What occurs here?

What can you learn about evangelizing and discipling from **V. 36**?

Proclaim \_\_\_\_\_

Return \_\_\_\_\_

Observe \_\_\_\_\_

What is the problem with Paul's idea? **V. 38**

Can two godly men act like this? **V. 39**

Can this occurrence actually have been part of God's plan?

What good came from it?

This chapter begins and ends with a conflict which could have undermined the early Church. Does this give you confidence that your God will allow nothing to hinder His Church?

The conflict of the Judaizers at the beginning of the chapter brings into sharp focus the need for a clear understanding of what the gospel content is, what the gospel message is, and what the essence of true salvation is.

*“The Judaizers were saying that the atonement of Jesus was not good enough.”* R. C. Sproul

*“If it was necessary for the Gentiles to keep the law of Moses to be saved, then faith is not enough... We cannot affirm **sola fide**, justification by faith alone.”* James Montgomery Boice

**“Sola fide”** was the cry of the Reformation. Martin Luther, after reflection on the book of Romans saw that he could not bring one thing to God as worthy of God’s approval. Luther recognized for the first time that faith was what God was calling him to profess and possess ... not works. With faith, the works will come. It has always been justification by faith alone, but not a faith that is alone. There will be evidence of that faith. But that is evidence and not a pre-salvation requirement.

*“The apostolic church thus survived the greatest challenge it had yet faced and established the doctrine of salvation by grace.”* J. MacArthur

It is thought that the Council took place in 49 A.D.

The conversion of Cornelius was approximately ten years earlier.

- ✓ **Do Text Discovery of Acts 16**
- ✓ **Do Text Discovery of Acts 17**
- **Go to Application Questions if you are not doing Digging Deeper**

#### ❖ **DIGGING DEEPER**

##### **Back to Acts 15**

The Judaizers were saying that the atonement of Jesus was not sufficient for salvation.

They felt that a Gentile must be circumcised to be a follower of the Lord.

Did they miss the meaning of circumcision?

Why was circumcision given in the Old Testament? How did it relate to the new Church?

**Read Gen. 17: 5- 14**

**Ex. 12:48**

**Deut. 10: 16**

**Deut. 30: 6**

**Jer. 4: 3, 4**

**Jer. 31: 33; 32: 39**

**Rom. 2: 28, 29**

**Rom. 4: 1-12**

**Gal. 5: 6; 6: 14, 15**

**Phil. 3: 1-11**

**Col. 2: 9-14**

In your own words, write the purpose of circumcision and how we are identified as belonging to the Lord today. As you compose your ideas on this, keep in mind that the New Testament verses you just read were not in existence when the Jerusalem Council met.

Perhaps what you are composing could have been used there! Imagine!

### **Acts 15:35 – 16:40 What is Discipleship? Paul's Second Missionary Journey**

- **Read Acts 15: 36-41**

Paul and Barnabas had already been to these areas, isn't that enough?

What do you learn about a Christian "taking a vacation" from ministry? How long did Paul pause from missionary journey one to missionary journey two?

What lessons do you learn from Barnabas about **discipleship** from these verses?

.... Paul?

*"The ultimate priority in evangelism is discipleship – teaching believers to obey all that Christ has commanded."* (Matt. 28:19-20) MacArthur: Acts

- **Read Acts 16:1-5**

Where are they going?

Has Paul been here before? (14:8-19)

What does this teach about making disciples?

To truly make an impact on others, sometimes great sacrifice is required. It is when you are pressed on all sides that others see from Whom your strength truly comes.

What does Paul require of Timothy? Is his salvation dependent on this action?

What Paul requires of Timothy is not crucial to his salvation, but it was helpful to their specific mission: reaching Jews and Gentiles with the message of Jesus Christ.

Concerning matters such as food offered to idols and the act of circumcision, these things were declared to be *adiaphorous*.

**adiaphorous** [ædɪˈæfərəs]

*adj*

(Medicine) *Med* having no effect for good or ill, as a drug or placebo

[from Greek *adiaphoros* indifferent, from A-<sup>1</sup> + *diaphoros* different]

**Read Gal. 2:3-5.** What is contrasted here?

Why does Paul respond differently? Is he inconsistent?

**Read Phil. 2:19-24** and see what you learn about Timothy.

❖ Further information concerning Timothy:

**1 Cor. 4:14-17**

**1 Tim. 1:1, 2, 18-20; 4:12-16; 5:21-23; 6:11, 12**

**2 Tim. 1:1-8; 2:1-3; 3:10-12; 4:1-9**

- **Read Acts 16:6-10**

What do you learn about the Holy Spirit?

What do you learn from this passage about God's hand in a change of plan?

Paul had intended to go into Bithynia after Mysia, thus employing ***the elaborate Roman road system*** and evangelizing many important, strategic cities.

On a map, locate Troas and Macedonia.

Troas was an Aegean seaport and the site of ancient Troy was ten miles inland.

"It is at Troas that the first of the "we" sections of Acts appears (**16:10-17**). Because (1) this "we" section stops at Philippi, (2) the second "we" section (**20:5-15**) begins when the missionaries revisit Philippi after the third missionary journey, and (3) the ministry at Philippi receives the greatest attention (**thirty verses**) in this fifth panel, we may reasonably suppose that the use of "we" points to a resident of Philippi who traveled from Troas to Philippi with Paul and Silas and that this person was Luke himself." Expositor's: Acts

In **v. 10**, the pronouns tell us something regarding the party involved in this section of Acts. What are the pronouns in this verse? What do they tell us?

✓ **Closed Doors**

*"When God closes doors, it is not because He has nothing for us to do. He does not want us to take a vacation. It is to keep us from getting into a work to which we are not called in order that we might be saved for a work to which we are."* J.M. Boice

Does it comfort you to know that even apostles had difficulty in determining God's will?

- **Read Acts 16:11-15**

**Follow the names of locations along a map.** As Paul goes to all of these foreign places, many different countries, what language is he speaking to so many varying cultures? How is this possible?

What does this show you about God's plan?

When does Paul discuss faith with the people of Philippi?

Where? Why is there no synagogue?

What do you learn about coming to faith in Christ from v. 14? Look at **Luke 24:45** for additional insight.

Paul's first convert in Europe was \_\_\_\_\_

*"It is better that the words of the law be burned than be delivered to a woman!"*  
rabbinical teaching during Paul's time.

This little Christian community in Philippi was the first church in Europe.

- **Read Acts 16:16-24**

A slave-girl is the next person freed from the dominion of sin.

**Matt. 8:29; Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34; 8:28**

The demons were getting more of a hearing than the proclaiming of the gospel!  
Why was Paul annoyed?

What did Paul do? **V. 18**

How did the merchants respond?

What did they accuse Paul of?

In v. 21, they use the word "unlawful," why do they use this word and is it truly unlawful what they are doing?

- ✓ *Religio licita/religio illicita*: religion approved by Rome/religion not approved by Rome

Luke endeavors to show that Christianity and not Judaism is the true fulfillment of the word of God spoken through Moses and the prophets and that the Jews' rejection of the gospel is consistent with their rejection of the prophetic messages brought to them for centuries.

It was the true fulfillment of Judaism and therefore the purest form of Judaism which was already an approved religion in the Roman Empire. Christianity was considered a *religio licita* because of its association with Judaism.

## Acts 16: 22-24

- ❖ Suffering for the gospel is a critical aspect of Christian *discipleship*.

No limit is set by Roman law (unlike Jewish law) as to the number of blows from the rods.

The *fascis lictoriae* ("bundles of the Lictors") symbolized the imperium (power and authority) of ancient Rome.

Fascis symbolize summary power and jurisdiction. The word is the plural of the Latin word *fascis*, meaning bundle. Traditional Roman *fascis* were bundles of birch rods tied together with a red ribbon to form a cylinder around an axe.

Italian Fascists took their name from the *Fascis*.

Lictors were Roman civil servants assigned with the task of serving as bodyguards for the local magistrates (officials). And to aid his work, a Lictor carried a "peacemaker" of sorts; a bundle of individual birch rods approximately 4 feet in length which he bound together by a red leather ribbon to form one tight column of solid rod. In the center was a small ax that was carried in order to perform impromptu executions. So picture something like a meter-foot long nightstick weighing 4-5 pounds with a small ax head protruding outward.

Now, these Lictors would lean these rods up against the shoulders much the same way a rifle might be carried today, and 10 to 12 of them would form a collective rank in front of the magistrate to which they were assigned. Wherever the magistrate went, the rank of Lictors went, escorting him like special police entrusted to ensure the magistrate's safety, and also to keep the local peace within the community.

On occasions when civic conflict arose, these Lictors would become instruments of punishment by the magistrate's command, and were often ordered to arrest and punish (or punish, then arrest, as we'll see shortly) citizens that appeared to be creating unrest.

Well with that context in mind, we see more clearly what is taking place on the occasion that Luke records here for us. The local magistrates, with this growing mob looking on, has ordered their 10-12 Lictors to beat Paul and Silas with these meter-long, 5 lbs rods (ax heads removed).

Further, **verse 23** states that our missionaries were struck, not a few times, but rather, **"...they had inflicted many blows upon them."** The word "many" literally suggests the idea that someone had lost count. It speaks of a great number. Further the word "blows" speaks to what is called a "stripe" or a heavily inflicted wound. So Paul and Silas were beaten times without number in a way that inflicted very deep/heavy wounds...as one might expect when being flogged by a 4-5 pound, 4-foot long column of tightly wound birch rods.

Then they were placed in a secure area of the prison, in other words, the deepest, darkest part of the dungeon. Their feet were placed in stocks. The stocks exerted pressure on the feet and the ankles of the prisoner thereby functioning as a form of torture.

- **Read Acts 16:25-34**

What do you find Paul and Silas doing after the beating they received and the pain they are in because of the stocks?

*"The legs feel nothing in the stocks when the heart is in heaven."* Tertullian

*"Any fool can sing in the day. It is easy to sing when we can read the notes by daylight; but the skillful singer is he who can sing when there is not a ray of light to read by.... Songs in the night come only from God; they are not in the power of men."* C.H. Spurgeon

**Job 35:10**

**Psalm 16:7**

**42:8**

**63:6**

**92:2**

**119:55, 62, 148**

**Luke 6:12**

How do we know from **v. 29** that Paul and Silas were in a very dark place?

When asked what to do to be saved, notice that Paul did not suggest counseling and he does not give him a theology lesson, he does not list the Ten Commandments and tell him to live a good life and he even does not tell him about the new little church in town. But what does Paul focus on? **V.31**

Note also that the three conversions here provide a marked contrast to the mind of the legalistic Jew.
--

Every morning, the head of the Jewish home would offer God a prayer. In this daily prayer, he thanks God that He did not make him a Gentile, a woman or a slave. Yet although in this one chapter, we find that these three people who embody the most despised representatives of humanity are the very ones to whom the Lord sends His apostles to build His church in Europe.
--

<i>“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Gal. 3:28</i>
--

- The universal nature of salvation is a key element of Luke’s writing. He is the only Gentile contributor to the New Testament. His gospel and Acts comprise over one quarter of the New Testament.

In **v. 27-30**, we see that it was the jailer and not Paul who was the true prisoner. But because of association with Paul, he too, became a free man.

What does the jailer do in his first acts as a believer? **V. 33, 34**

- **Read Acts 16:35-40**

Why does Paul press the fact that he is a Roman citizen?

What does he require of the chief magistrates?

Once Paul and Silas were escorted out of the prison, where did they go?

This brand new little church would face persecution, but they had seen how a godly man endures trial with triumphant faith.

**Read Phil. 1:27-30**

And we will see the Philippians again in **Acts 20:5, 6**

## Acts 17

- **Read Acts 17:1-3**

**Look at your maps**

1. Where was Paul in the last chapter?

In what direction is he traveling?

- ✓ Mark the cities he passed through and where he stopped on your map in the Appendix for the second missionary journey.

It was a 100 mile journey from Philippi to Thessalonica, following the *Via Egnatia* in a south-westerly direction. **Thessalonica** was the determined destination. This city was the capital of the province of Macedonia, a harbor town, situated at the head of the Thermaic Gulf. It was an important trade route because of its location on the Aegean Sea and its location on the *Via Egnatia*. It was a flourishing commercial center. Since 42 B.C. Thessalonica had been a free city (means that it had an elected citizens' assembly, it could mint its own coins, and it had no garrison within its walls.) At this time it is estimated that approximately 200,000 people lived in the city itself.

- Keep in mind that there were closer cities to Philippi: Amphiopolis (33 miles from Philippi) and Apollonia (27 miles further). Yet Paul, with wounds inflicted in Philippi, pushed on 100 miles to this particular city of Thessalonica.

This city was strategic to Paul's mission: proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ.

*What areas are strategic to the message of Christ now in our community?*

What do you learn from his custom of giving the gospel in this passage?

**V. 2, how does this verse relate to Acts 8:35?**

Paul **reasoned, explained** and **gave evidence** Who Jesus was and what He did.

[Paul did not argue in the abstract; he reasoned to the people from the Bible using all the prophecies about Messiah in the OT.]

Does this mean he lectured them? What did he do? How can we learn from this when we are speaking to others about Jesus?

Did Paul try to coerce the people?  
Did he try to entertain the people?  
Did he want to open up a shop and take the people's money?

Typical passages to which Paul directed his hearers were those such as:

**Psalm 2:1-7**

**Ps. 16: 8-11**

**Ps. 110:1**

**Ps. 118:22**

**Is. 52, 53**

**Deut. 21: 22, 23**

These are all typical *peshet* uses, a Hebraic formula.

*Peshet* means "this is that." So Jesus is that which was proclaimed in these Old Testament passages. This is that.

- **Read Acts 17:4-9**
2. What were the responses to Paul's message?

**Acts 17: 4**, "Some were persuaded."

- ✓ **Read the article on "Are You Persuaded to Follow Jesus?" in the Appendix.**

Some accused Paul of upsetting the *Pax Romana*.

The Greek in **v. 6** means that "these men have turned the world upside down."

**V. 7**, "another king" the word here means "another of a different kind" – "*heteron*"

In view here is a king unlike Caesar. In reading Thessalonians, the strong emphasis on the kingship of Christ and the promise of His return is evident.

When Paul uses the word *parousia* in reference to the return of Christ he was using the same term when an imperial visit is in view. **1 Thes.4:15; Acts 14:22**

[Luke's accuracy in calling the city magistrates '*politarchs*' has been confirmed from a number of contemporary Macedonian inscriptions.]

**Read 1 Thes. 1:1-2:12** This passage gives understanding in relation to this section of Acts.

- **Read Acts 17:10-15**

**Look on your map.**

3. Where is Paul going now?

What happens here?

Do you see anything of any special note?

How often are these people looking into the Scriptures?

***"They did it daily – not just on Sunday mornings for an hour, but daily, because these teachings were matters of life and death."*** J. M. Boice

"Examine" (*anakrino*) # 350 is used of judicial investigations; it implies integrity and absence of bias

Paul seems to have welcomed this attitude since Luke refers to them as more noble. Paul believed in doctrine because his messages are full of doctrinal content, but he did not believe in indoctrination which is tyrannical instruction demanding uncritical acceptance.

*"A characteristic of the true religion is that it suffers itself to be examined into and its claims to be so decided upon."* Bengel

Luke apparently stayed behind in Philippi to strengthen the young church there. Silas and Timothy stayed on for a while in Berea and Paul went on alone to Athens. Four strong to three strong to one strong ... but at the heart of it all was Paul's mission to turn the world upside down, even if he was one man alone.

4. Did Paul next go to the nearby town?

Why do you think he had to go as far as Athens?

**There is danger in presenting the truths of Scripture, but the greater danger lies in NOT proclaiming the eternal truths contained in this book. This is why expository learning is so vital. Going verse by verse and not picking and choosing what seems popular or comfortable. Topical studies are helpful at times, but the bedrock of your Bible study and application must be the counsel of God's word.**

- **Read Acts 17:16-21**

5. Where is Paul?
6. Who is with him?
7. What did he observe?

What is the most famous site in Athens, still there to this day?

The acropolis is the highest place in the city. It is here that the people would worship their gods. The Parthenon was the temple of Athena, known in Roman terms as Minerva. In the Parthenon stood a huge gold and ivory statue of Athena. Her shining spear-point was visible forty miles away. Just as in the Old Testament, the idol worshipers would worship at the high places, so in Greece, the high places were the most religious sites of all.

Why do you think throughout history, people worship in this fashion?

*Where do you go to get "closest" to God?*

It was said by an ancient visitor to Athens that it was easier to find gods in Athens than it was to find a man.

- ❖ Schools of philosophy in Greece: **handout on Greek philosophy**

**Acts 17:18**, what was it that the philosophers found so offensive?

8. Where did Paul go to proclaim the truths of the gospel? **17: 17-19**

Did Paul concern himself with the motives of his questioners? **v. 21**

- ❖ God opens the door. These men ASK Paul to explain his beliefs. How does he go about doing that?

*“The Council of the Areopagus was responsible to watch over both religion and education in the city, so it was natural for them to investigate the ‘new doctrine’ Paul was teaching.”*  
W. Wiersbe

- **Read Acts 17:22 – 34**

9. How does Paul begin his speech? He opens with a \_\_\_\_\_.

How does he proceed to describe God?

God is \_\_\_\_\_ **v. 24**

God is \_\_\_\_\_ **v. 25**

God is \_\_\_\_\_ **v. 26-29**

God is gracious in His patience yet, God is Judge. **v.30-34**

**“Judgment” is the Greek word: krisis # 2919**

Paul does not just give them a new, clever system of idolatry to follow. Paul makes clear that there is a **crisis** in their individual lives: what will you do with Jesus?

That is the same crisis for today.

### **What will you do with Jesus?**

Paul’s logical conclusion: God made us in His image, so it is foolish for us to make gods in our own image.

It is we who are far from God. We have erred and lost our way.

**V. 27 pselaphao** # 5584: Greek for: “reach out for, to grope about as when a blind man feels his way along”

Same word Homer uses in the Odyssey when describing the blinded Cyclops groping to find Odysseus in order to kill him. We grope and reach our way in this dark world seeking to find Life and not death. **John 14:6**, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.” Has He not told us how to find Him?

- ✓ General Revelation
- ✓ Specific Revelation

God has provided many avenues for discovering Who He is. God alone knows the heart and the true intent to worship Him. He reveals Himself faithfully to those who seek Him. But we must remember that at times seeking Him seems like we are groping in the dark. Because He is immensely beyond us, even a glimpse of His majesty and splendor should cause us to follow the example of the deer in **Psalms 42**, “As the deer pants for the water, so my soul pants for You, O God.”

Paul quotes from several of the Greek poets indicating that man is meant to seek God. Epimenides, 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. poet of Cnossos in Crete: “*For in him we live and move and have our being.*”

Aratus 3<sup>rd</sup> Century Stoic from Cilicia (Paul’s home area) and Cleanthes, also a Stoic: “*For we are also his offspring.*”

Paul, by using their own poets, points to their inconsistency.

Paul used the quotes which were familiar to them to bring in a common perception of God from which Paul could further explain the One True and Living God. We as well must have at least a general understanding of our culture so as to be relevant and perceptive.

*“All idolatry tries to minimize the gulf between the Creator and his creatures, in order to bring him under our control.”* John R. W. Stott

*“We learn from Paul that we cannot preach the gospel of Jesus without the doctrine of God, or the cross without creation, or salvation without judgment.”* Stott

**The bottom line of the encounter in the city of Athens is this: have you been so outraged at the godless idolatry of your community to speak truth to those in darkness?**

An idol is any god substitute. Think of all the people you know and how they have replaced the devotion that belongs to God alone. They have replaced Him with careers, hobbies, children, money, pleasure, projects, and they wonder why they are still empty or frustrated.

**Look back over the cities** involved in this chapter and see how Paul was received in each one.

In Thessalonica, they \_\_\_\_\_.

In Berea, they \_\_\_\_\_.

In Athens, they \_\_\_\_\_.

What does this tell us about sharing our faith?

➤ **APPLICATION QUESTIONS for Chapter 15 (Committed to Truth)**

1. If we are saved by God’s grace through faith in Christ, where do obedience or action or duty fit in?

What were the purposes of the law?

Haenchen writes “*Chapter 15 is the turning point, ‘centerpiece’ and ‘watershed’ of the book, the episode which rounds off and justifies the past development and makes those to come intrinsically possible.*”

Do you agree or not? Why?

2. In **Chapter 15**, we see that the very foundations of the new Christian faith were being undermined. The leaders in Jerusalem felt the new converts must let Moses complete what Jesus had begun, and let the law supplement the gospel.

How would you, from what you have learned this week, lead someone out of this error?

#### **APPLICATION QUESTIONS for Chapter 16 (Discipleship)**

1. Who is close enough to you to see how you live? To follow your walk with Jesus? Are you invested in the lives of others? Is the focus of your “investment”- the life of Christ - flowing out of you?

*This is the essence of true discipleship as modeled by our Lord, by Paul and by the apostles.*

2. After doing this study on discipleship and Paul’s missionary life, what can you translate into your own life with Christ as His disciple?

Do you exhibit joy in the face of distress?

Do you listen to the Spirit or move at your own pace?

Do you love those the Lord has placed in your life with a sacrificial love?

Do you confront the opponents of God?

Are you content with the direction in which God is moving you? Explain.

Do you view those who inflict wounds on you as potential brothers and sisters in Christ (like the jailer was to Paul and Silas)?

Do you long to hear more than anything else: “Well done, good and faithful servant?”

### **APPLICATION QUESTIONS for Chapter 17 (Persuaded)**

**Acts 17: 11**, in what way are the Bereans noble-minded?

1. Are you noble-minded?

**Acts 17: 16**

2. What provoked Paul here?

Are you ever provoked to action because of this? Why or why not?

3. In this chapter of **Acts**, we see Paul taking on the intellectuals of the most intellectual city on earth. Do you take on whoever the Lord sends you to speak with?

**Continue with your lists on the Timelines for Peter and Paul.**

**How has this week’s study impacted you are “the continuing heartbeat of Jesus?”**

**Read all of the Doctrine and Additional handouts.**

**Record your findings in the Appendix on the attributes of God.**

**Record what you learned this week about the Holy Spirit in the Appendix.**

**Choose a hymn which relates to this week’s study. Sing it to the Lord.**

## LESSON TEN

## Doctrine handout: The Word

### ACTS 18 and 19 “PAUL CHANGES HIS APPROACH”

**Do you understand God when He speaks to you?**

**Do you understand fully?**

**Did Paul really know what lay ahead of him?**

- ❖ In Bible study, many methods can be helpful to achieve an understanding of your text.

One skill to work on is observing *the overall skeleton of a passage*. So let's do that with this section of Scripture.

{Paul leaves Athens and has a 53 mile walk to think things over... }

What is the geographical skeleton of chapters 18 and 19?

Where is the action taking place?

#### ✓ **Do your Text Discovery of Chapters 18 and 19 with this in mind.**

Using your map, follow the action in this chapter. Do not stop to read details. Do not ask questions that have nothing to do with location. You are on a mission to understand one thing: location.

**Acts 18:1** Where was Paul?

Where does Paul go?

**Acts 18:5** Where have Silas and Timothy been?

**Acts 18:12** Where is Achaia?

**Acts 18:18** Where is Paul off to now?

Where is Cenchrea?

**Acts 18:19** Where are they now?

**Acts 18:22** What two cities are mentioned here? Locate them both on your map.

**Acts 18:23** Where is Paul now?

**Acts 18:24** What city is mentioned here?

Is Paul mentioned?

**Acts 18:27** Where does the action move now?

**Acts 19:1** What two cities are mentioned?

**Acts 19:10** Where did Paul remain for over two years?

Now you have a very nice skeletal overview of a portion of Paul's second journey.

- We may see very clearly here how much we DO NOT know about Paul. **Acts 18:23-19:1** describes a journey of no less than 1,500 miles and it is dismissed with barely a reference. There are untold tales of bravery and devotion which we will never know.

Another tool in Bible study is framing the time sequence.

Time can tell us a lot about what is important to God and His servants.

**We will not focus on that here, but realize that time is a creation of God for His purposes and we do well to note what He is showing us through the use of time.**

✓ **Athens was a real turning point in the ministry of Paul. Until Athens, Paul had generally taught a few weeks in each city and moved on.**

Now we find he stays in Corinth (**18:11**) \_\_\_\_\_ months.

He stays in Ephesus (**19:10**) \_\_\_\_\_ years.

**Read 1 Cor. 2:1-5**

What is Paul relating about his visit to Corinth?

What is the focus of these five verses?

{After Athens, where men were wise in their own eyes, Paul's strategy changed.}

**Read**

**2 Cor. 11:9**

**Phil. 4:14, 15 {signs that their (Philippians) faith was growing: generosity}**

What do you find out here?

**Corinth**

Was leveled in 146 B.C. by Roman General Mummius due to revolt of the Achaians; city lay in ruins for 100 years

Julius Caesar rebuilt the city in 44 B.C. and in 27 B.C. it became the capital of the Roman province of Achaia

A seaport city

A very mixed city with a great variety of cultures, known for its luxury

200,000 freemen and 500,000 slaves

A very corrupt city, a center of the cult of the love goddess Aphrodite (Venus): at one time there were ten thousand temple prostitutes

**Romans 1:18-32** was written in Corinth. Corinth was associated with wickedness all over the Roman Empire. And this is where Paul will "set up shop" for 18 months!

Paul also wrote **1 and 2 Thessalonians** in Corinth.

**Acts 18: 1, 2** give us a historical date which can place the time exactly: **A.D. 49.**

**This is when Claudius issued this decree, commanding all Jews to leave Rome.**

- **Acts 18: 5, 6**

What is critical about Paul shaking out his garments?

{Re-enact Paul shaking out his clothes and then marching next door. Shaking the filth of the blasphemers off his body. Think of Paul's dusty, well-traveled cloak. Jews returning from Gentile lands customarily shook the Gentile dust off their sandals, an act of disgusting hatred of all things Gentile. Paul is here symbolizing his rejection of the Jews.}

"Resisted:" *antitasso* # 498– "to arrange in battle array"

They organized themselves to fight Paul's teaching and even blasphemed the name of Christ.

### Read 1 Thes. 3:6

- News from the Thessalonians encourages Paul.

Do you routinely write others to encourage them? Or speak encouraging words? Or visit those who need a warm touch?

### I love verse 7!

**Paul left the synagogue because of resistance. But he went right next door to the house of Titius Justus! Those listening to Paul didn't even have to change parking spots!**

**Only God could do that.**

- **Read Acts 18: 9, 10**
  - God Himself encourages Paul.

Appearances to Paul: **Acts 9:1-6; 16:9-10; 22:17-18; 23:11; 26:12-18; (27:23-25); 2 Tim. 4:16-17**

One of the names of the Lord is *Emmanuel* – God with us.

The Hebrew name, *Jehovah-shammah*, means: the God Who is there.

Why does the Lord appear to Paul now?

### Read 2 Cor. 1:3; 7:6 and relate to the above.

- **Acts 18:10**

*"'I have many people in this city.' This must have been because God, Who alone is able to see the future and determine it, was looking ahead, saying that by the preaching of the Word through Paul's ministry He would bring many people to faith in Jesus Christ... But as soon as God spoke to him, **Paul changed his tactics and stayed on.**"* James Montgomery Boice

### Acts 18:11

*"The Word of God is the divinely appointed means by which people come to put their trust in Christ and so identify themselves as His."* John R. W. Stott

Gallio {fall of A.D. 50 - spring of 52; brother of Seneca [stoic philosopher], tutor of Emperor Nero. Seneca was forced to commit suicide and later Nero had Gallio killed as well. Paul would later be killed by the same man that killed Gallio who was here defending Paul and the Christians. Gallio defended Paul! Paul had started to open his mouth, but Gallio took up his defense!

**An overall thought concerning these verses (18: 1-11), is that Paul was re-evaluating things. He had been less than successful in Athens and he was most likely discouraged.**

**I believe that is why the Lord appeared to him. 18: 9-10**

**The Lord sent Silas and Timothy back to Paul. 18: 5**

**Also if you look at 1 Cor. 2:1-2, Paul was done with the whole clever and scholarly approach. He was going “to preach Christ and Him crucified.”**

**Acts 18:14**

Could this be the divine protection the Lord had promised in the vision?

Luke only records this one instance of the Lord’s protection here in Corinth, but this one is crucial. Why? What precedent did this set for the rest of the province of Achaia?

{The decision of so eminent a Roman proconsul would carry weight wherever the issue arose again and give pause to those who might want to oppose the Christian movement.}

Expositor’s p. 486

By the way, **begin noting Luke’s recording of the relationship between the Roman government and the Christian church**; he was careful not to accuse the government or try to escape its authority. There are many possible reasons for this attitude. One suggested reason is that it was thought that Luke’s work in writing Acts was an attempt to supply information which was hoped might reach those who would decide the fate of the Apostle Paul in Rome. Luke’s support of Paul’s ministry through the recounting of Paul’s life, would solidify Paul’s reputation in the eyes of those within earshot of this book. Remember, as this book was written, Paul was most likely in a Roman prison, awaiting his hearing before Caesar.

{*religio licita*}

- **Acts 18:8** Who is Crispus?
- **Acts 18:17** Who is Sosthenes? Look at **1 Cor. 1:1**.

What seems to keep happening to the leaders of the synagogue?

Apparently the Jews have to keep finding another ruler for their synagogue!

### **Ending the second missionary journey**

It is not easy to see where the second missionary journey ends and the third begins, but Antioch is the place of origin and ending for the trips, so that will be our clue as to the jumping off point for the journeys. **Acts 18:22**

**Apparently Luke’s interest shifts from the journeys themselves to the establishing of the church at Ephesus.**

- **Acts 18:23-19:1**

Why does Luke give us so little detail of Paul's journeys here in this passage? What does Luke want to focus on?

- ✓ Paul and his associates in the gospel will spend over two years in Ephesus.

Some details on this crucial city.

**Ephesus**

300,000 inhabitants

Capital of Roman province of Asia

Important commercial center with a large harbor, wealthy due to trade

Temple of Diana (Artemis) one of the seven wonders of the ancient world

Probably 400 years old in Paul's day

It measure 418 feet long by 239 feet wide and had 127 columns that were over 60 feet high, four times the size of the Parthenon in Athens!

**Baptism of John**

**Acts 18: 25 and 19:3 mention John's baptism.**

**What is important about this difference?**

As **Acts 18** comes to a close, what, who, where, when ... is going on?

Why is Paul not the focus?

**Acts 19**

**Acts 19: 20** – "So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed."

How? The Doctrine handout this week is: The Word.

**The third missionary journey of Paul was begun without a lot of fanfare.**

**Acts 18: 22, 23 marks the beginning of this last missionary journey of Paul.**

**In acts 18: 21, Paul had hoped to return to Ephesus.**

So as **Acts 19** opens where is Paul?

What is the issue as the chapter opens?

Had John the Baptist prepared people concerning another, later baptism?

**Look at Luke 3: 16**

**John 1: 32, 33**

*“Quite clearly, John’s ministry was anticipatory; Christ is the fulfillment of all things.”*

Bible Knowledge Commentary

- **Acts 19: 8**

What does Paul choose as his topic of discussion?

Where does Paul go and why? **V. 9**

How long is he there? **V. 10**

What was the outcome?

- ✓ Read the remaining paragraphs and title them according to the instructions in the Text Analysis found in the Appendix.

**19: 11-20**

**21 – 22**

**23-27**

**28-41**

- **Go to the Application Questions if you are not doing Digging Deeper.**

#### ❖ **DIGGING DEEPER**

Digging Deeper this week will focus on people.

**Describe Apollos. Acts 18**

**Describe Priscilla and Aquila. Acts 18**

What was Luke's purpose in introducing them? Why not just focus on Paul and his ministry?

#### **Nazirite vow**

**In verse Acts 18: 18, short mention is made of a vow. Most likely it was a Nazirite vow.**

**Paul was forever finding ways to make inroads with people. He would follow Jewish customs when needed. This was perhaps one of those occasions.**

#### **Numbers 6: 1-21**

A special pledge of separation and devotion to God

A Nazirite vow is voluntary. Paul was not under any compulsion; he was not abandoning grace for law when he performed this vow. This was purely a matter of personal devotion to the Lord.

According to Jewish law, a Nazirite vow had to be completed in Jerusalem.

The vow could only be fulfilled after a thirty-day period of purification in the Holy City.

The hair would be presented to God and sacrifices offered.

- Keep in mind **1 Cor. 9:19-23**

Remember, not only is Paul's game plan changing, but the whole world is changing!

If a ministry remains one-dimensional or stagnant it will become \_\_\_\_\_ .

- **List the ways in which the Lord encouraged Paul in this portion of Scripture.**

**Chapter 18** opens with two new friends and co-workers for Paul. The chapter ends with a new colleague as well. God is providing people to help Paul in his work.

***The big lesson for me from the transition from Chapter 17 to 18 is this:  
Don't be stagnant; don't be set in your ways. But listen to the Spirit's leading.***

***Don't miss out on what God has to do in your life because you would rather continue in the safe, familiar routine that you have.***

***You must always be listening to the Spirit, ready to adjust to His Voice with new directions.***

***Look at the people He is bringing into your life --- like Priscilla or Aquila or Apollos – even Gallio. Rejoice that He has so richly blessed you!***

## Acts 19

- Acts 19: 1-7

Yes, Paul's strategy continues to adapt with his current situations. One thing that keeps developing Paul's approach to reaching the world with the gospel is the daily and constant influx of new challenges.

How does the next "surprise" tend to actually strengthen his ability to spot hindrances to an individual's faith?

## Baptism of John

### A baptism of repentance

Prepared the way for the Messiah Who would baptize with the Spirit

#### Luke 16:16

**How might only knowing of the baptism of John hinder your ability to preach the full gospel?**

Deleted: Baptism of John

## Tongues

*"Tongues" are mentioned in this chapter.*

*Do a thorough research on this topic by looking up every occurrence of the word in the New Testament.*

*Compile what you learn from a biblical point of view.*

*Do not reason according to anything you have "heard" in the past. Come at this completely willing to believe whatever the Scripture teaches.*

***Tongues is not a huge teaching in Scripture, so it should not occupy great amounts of time, but since this is a frequent topic among believers, it is best to be informed from the Bible.***

*Do this on a separate piece of paper.*

- Acts 19: 11-20

Here you see reference to *exorcism*.

What do you learn?

What was the response of the people? **V.18-20**

The net worth was around \$5, 000,000 (Or 50, 000 days of salary). What does that tell you?

This passage is much like the "showdown" between Moses and the magicians of Pharaoh.

**Exodus 7: 22; 8: 7**

In both cases (**Exodus** and here in **Acts**), the outcome of true deliverance provided freedom from bondage.

At **verse 20**, we have another summary statement.

The last one was **16: 5** (the one before that was **12: 24**).

What are you learning from these summary statements?

Deleted: the

### Word Study

**Acts 19: 20** “mightily” = *kata kratos* # 2596 & 2904 in power

Luke only uses this word other time in his writings: **Luke 1: 51**.

This is the Magnificat of Mary in which she praises the power of God. “*War imagery cannot be missed here.*” [Baker Illustrated Bible Commentary](#)

More importantly, the phrase “in power” (*kata kratos*) is most often used in military contexts in Hellenistic literature. By using this word, Luke is summarizing the journey, not only of Paul, but of the Word of God. He makes clear the victory of God’s Word over all enemies as this Word advances throughout the world, conquering hearts as it goes.

#### ➤ The Doctrine handout this week is The Word.

According to the [Bible Knowledge Commentary](#), **Acts 19: 21** “sets the tone for the remainder of the book.”

**Some have felt that Luke’s Gospel focuses on Jerusalem and Acts emphasizes the message going out from Jerusalem to Rome.**

**The early Church faced opposition in many ways. In Jerusalem, that persecution came from organized religion (the Jewish leadership). In Thessalonica, it stemmed from an unruly mob, urged on by jealous religious leaders (Acts 17: 1-9). In Athens, it was worldly philosophy which opposed the gospel message (Acts 17: 16-34).**

Thinking of the Word Study above, what battle is being fought here in **Acts 19: 21-41**?

**What opposition do you see in your church to the preaching of the gospel message?**

**In your community?**

- **Acts 19: 23-26**

**What really prompted the disturbance here?**

**Which commandment does greed break?**

**Ex. 20: 17**

**How do the words of Jesus relate to Demetrius?**

**Mark 8: 36-37**

- **Read Acts 19: 26** Paul had done his job: people were being persuaded to follow Christ.

**How was Paul able to persuade and turn away from idols so many people?  
What can we learn from him?**

**Looking ahead to Paul's farewell to the Ephesians gives us some insight.  
Read Acts 20: 24, 27, 31 and record why Paul was so instrumental in these lives.  
Would you be willing to follow his example?**

**Look at verse 32. What is the humor in this verse?**

**Can you picture the scene?**

- **Acts 19: 34**

**Can you imagine the fervor and dedication it would take to shout "Jesus is Lord!" for two hours?**

**What prompts this kind of devotion? And as Christians, should we be this vocal?**

- **Acts 19:35** town clerk calms the crowd. Luke shows us again that even non-believers are useful when God prepares the way.

**18:12-14** Gallio comes to Paul's aid without Paul even opening his mouth to defend himself.

[this Gallio was later killed by the same emperor that would take the life of Paul]

**As this chapter closes, how do you see the Lord protecting His missionaries, His message and His lost sheep (providing a way for the continued message to be available)?**

### **Paul's Strategy to Reach People for Christ**

1. **Carefully select a location**  
"Location, location, location!"  
Paul began to be very selective about the cities he visited.

2. **Present a reasoned argument Acts 19: 8**  
Paul carefully crafted his sermons according to his audience.
3. **Extend your stay while there is a ministry there**  
Paul remained over two years in Ephesus and nearly two years in Corinth

**When Paul first began his missionary journeys, he stayed only a short time in each place. As he progressed in his strategy to reach the world, he began to spend longer times in certain strategic locations.**

➤ **Application Questions**

1. As with Apollos (**Acts 18**) and the Ephesian disciples of **Acts 19**, these only knew in part the truths of the gospel. There are those within the church who know only in part. It is our responsibility as students of God's Word, to fully equip them with a complete understanding of the truths which have provided a firm foundation for us.

How are you implementing a way to reach others with these truths? What is your strategy?

2. What role do friends and coworkers play in Paul's life and ministry? How can this help you?

3. Have you been encouraged by another Christian recently?  
Have you encouraged another person recently?

4. Are traditions, such as the vow Paul kept, good or bad? **Acts 18: 18**

5. When you are not seeing fruit in sharing your faith, do you give up or do you change your tactics? Explain.

6. When do you know it's time to shake the dust off your feet? **Acts 18: 6**
  
7. Do you have the humility and teachable spirit of Apollos? **Acts 18:26**
  
8. Where you know there is incorrect, unbiblical teaching, do you confront it? **Acts 19:2-7**
  
9. How has this week's study impacted you as "the continuing heartbeat of Jesus?"

**Continue your list on Paul's Timeline.**

**Read the Doctrine handout for this lesson.**

**Record your findings in the Appendix on the attributes of God.**

**Record your insights on the Holy Spirit from this week in the Appendix.**

**Choose a hymn that relates to this week's lesson. Sing it to the Lord.**

**Paul wrote 1 Corinthians while in Ephesus and an earlier letter also (1 Cor. 5:9.)**

**LESSON ELEVEN** Doctrine Handouts: Righteousness of God/Sanctification  
**ACTS 20, 21, 22 Our Great Defense: “That I May Know Him”**

*“Apologetics is simply to defend the faith, and thereby destroy arguments and every proud obstacle against the knowledge of God (2 Cor. 10:5). It is opening the door, clearing the rubble, and getting rid of the hurdles so that people can come to Christ.”*

Dr. Norman L. Geisler

*“Apologetics is that branch of Christian theology that seeks to provide rational warrant for Christianity’s truth claims.”*

William Lane Craig

✓ **Do your Text Discovery of Acts 20 and 21.**

- **Acts 20:1**

Paul goes from Macedonia to Greece.

Paul now leaves Ephesus (**Acts 19**) for Greece, probably Corinth and here Paul wrote Romans: the masterpiece of his letters, his magnum opus.

What uproar? Go back to Ephesus **Acts 19: 23**

**Look at map 19:21, 22** While Paul was dealing with Demetrius and company, where were the other missionaries?

- **Acts 20: 1-6** What happens here?
- **Acts 20:7-12** Eutychus (his name means “Fortunate” ... you be the judge!)  
Why is this included in Holy Scripture?
- **Acts 20:13-16** Paul makes his way to Jerusalem, trying to arrive before Pentecost.
- **Acts 20:17-35** Paul bids “farewell” to the elders of Ephesus.

Why does he do this? Is this the sign of a good leader?

**(Rev. 2:1-7)** relates to this passage in Acts. What do we learn about this church in its later development?

- **Acts 20: 36-38**

What do these verses show you about Paul, about leadership, about the costs of discipleship, about loving the brothers and sisters of faith?

## **Acts 21**

- **Acts 21:1-6** Paul continues his progress toward Jerusalem.

**Verse 1** tells us that Paul and company “parted” from the Ephesians. The word for “parted” (*apospao*) # 645 means “to tear away;” it shows the trauma of that parting.

✓ **Find these places on a map.**

Cos > Rhodes > Patara > Phoenicia > Cyprus > Syria > Tyre

- **Acts 21: 7-9** Philip (We have seen him before - **Acts 6:5; 8:5, 26-40**)

[**Acts 8: 35**] CENTER OF THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

There have been twenty years from **Chapter 8** to **Chapter 21**. Philip knew Stephen and Paul had taken part in Stephen’s death – this must have been quite a meeting!

- **Acts 21:10-16**

Agabus warns Paul about going to Jerusalem.

**V. 13** key verse

**Read again Acts 20:24 and relate it to 21:13.**

**How do you get to this level of willingness to set aside your own agenda?**

**Meditate on the following verses:**

**Phil. 1:1, 7; 12-14, 20, 21, 29, 30; 2:17; 3 :1-10; 4:1, 2, 4, 6, 13**

**Stop being afraid of suffering!**

**Stop avoiding suffering at all costs!**

**Stop escaping suffering!**

Many of our mistakes, many of our heartaches, much of our energy is spent, never

to be regained, in the pursuit of avoiding suffering.  
Paul does not make this mistake. He is consumed with knowing Christ.

How does Paul do this? Is he beyond you?  
No, he knew the truths of **Phil. 2:5-11**.

The above points are for you to remember as you **grow closer to the Lord**.  
The below points are for you to remember as you **grow closer to those the Lord loves and desires for you to love as His hands, as His feet, and as His heart**.

#### Tactics in Defense of the Gospel

- Always be respectful of others viewpoints
- Do not be on the defensive all the time
- Ask what they believe and why/ do not continually defend what you are presenting
- Do not let conversation degenerate into personal attacks
- Bring the focus back to the “krisis”: “Who do you say Jesus is?”
- Remember that current hot topics can detract from eternal focus or it can help, so be on guard
- When all is said and done, do “not shrink from declaring the whole purpose of God.” **Acts 20:27**
- Prepare yourself by knowing truth
- “Do not consider your own life as dear to yourself” **Acts 20:24**  
/ “pour yourself out” (**Phil. 2:17**)

#### Acts Chapter 21:17-22:30 “Defense of the Faith: Willing to Go to Jerusalem”

Are you willing to go to your Jerusalem?

“We can know God only as He reveals Himself to us in the Scriptures, and we cannot know the Scriptures **until we are willing to be changed** by them ... A true knowledge of God **must change us.**”

James Montgomery Boice “*The True God*” from Foundations of the Christian Faith

*What you believe about God is the most important thing about you.* A.W.Tozer  
(What comes into your mind as you think about God?)

Last week we looked at the close of the third missionary journey.

Paul had changed his approach to his mission work. As seen in his stay in Corinth in **Acts 18**, Paul had begun to stay longer periods of time in each city. Corinth: one and one-half years, Ephesus in **Acts 19**, he stayed 3 years.

But as of **Acts 19:21**, Paul was determined to go to Jerusalem and Rome. From this point on, he makes his way there.

In **Acts 20**, we saw how Paul took his job as spiritual leader very seriously. He warned the elders of the Ephesian church to be aware of the wolves who would come in and try and corrupt the church. Indeed, look at **Rev. 2** and see the condition of this church 30 years later.

Paul made clear that he had fully presented the truths of Scripture to everyone he could.

- ❖ **Can you say the same?** I cannot. But I am convicted and motivated by these verses and Paul's commitment.

Paul was loved by those he encountered. Why did these people love Paul? I believe they saw that he left nothing unsaid, undone and "unfelt." They knew they were loved by him and they returned the love.

Part of their love was displayed in their attempts to warn Paul of the danger he faced as he approached Jerusalem. They encouraged him to give up the idea of going there.

But Paul knew that he must go to Rome and to Rome he would go.

**Acts 21:16** is seen by some as the close of the third missionary journey.

- **Read Acts 21:17-20a Where is Paul here?**

The good news ....

- **Acts 21:20b-22**

The bad news ...

- **Acts 21:23, 24**

The plan

1. What do you think about this plan? Is this a compromise for Paul?

2. **Acts 21:25** refers back to what earlier event? (**chapter 15**)

The early church was composed of many Jews. Look back at **Acts 11:19**. The church was founded by believers fleeing the persecution that broke out in Jerusalem after Stephen's martyrdom – ironically Paul led this persecution.

**1 Cor. 8-10 (Rom. 14 and 15** deal with Christian liberty) touches on some of these early church issues concerning food sacrificed to idols. God Himself was tolerant concerning the transition from Judaism to Christianity, but in time there would be no temple and no temple sacrifices. But for now, Paul was willing to compromise and participate in these ceremonies – **not for salvation**, but for the sake of cooperation and unity.

*Agape feasts*= love feasts, our potlucks

It was a real trial on the unity of the early church for Jew and Gentile to fellowship together. Gentiles bought their meat at markets that offered food that had been sacrificed to idols. Jews were still offended by this. Gentiles were also known to be less moral than Jews. So when they began sharing their lives together, certain ground rules had to be established so the Jews would feel comfortable. But these ground rules had nothing to do with salvation.

- **Acts 21:26**

3. What did Paul do?

- **Acts 21: 27-30**

What is Paul accused of?

The Judaizers accused Paul of teaching Jewish Christians to abandon their Jewish heritage. **Lesson: believers should be slow to accept accusations against other Christians.**

The Nazirite vow symbolized total separation to God. It involved abstaining from alcoholic beverages and all other products derived from grapes, letting the hair grow long, avoiding contact with dead bodies. Usually the duration was for 30 days. It manifested the highest level of spiritual devotion.

Keep in mind, this was most likely occurring during the feast of Pentecost. (**Acts 20: 16**)

- **Acts 21: 31-36**

4. How is Paul rescued?

- **Acts 21: 37-40**

5. How does Paul gain the approval of the commander?

✓ **Do Your Text Analysis of Acts 22**

Record what you see in each paragraph.

- **Acts 22:1-5**

- **Acts 22:6-11**

- **Acts 22:12-16**

- Acts 22: 17-21

- Acts 22: 22-30

✓ Here in Jerusalem, Paul was a prisoner because of the cause of Christ.

**Read Acts 12: 5.** What was the response of the Church to the imprisonment of Peter?

Is there any record that the Church was praying for Paul?

Does that deter him at all?

What does that say to you?

➤ **Go to the Application Questions if you are not doing Digging Deeper.**

❖ **DIGGING DEEPER**

## **Acts 20**

**If you were asked “What are the most important qualities for a minister of Jesus Christ?” how would you answer?**

**This is much the same as the question posed to Jesus concerning the greatest commandment. What was His answer to that question? Matt. 22: 36-40**

**In the weeks that you have watched Paul, what do you see about how he ministers to others and their response to him?**

**Read from his letters to various churches and see if you catch a glimpse of this great defender of the faith.**

**What do you learn about Paul’s heart?**

**Phil. 1: 3-7**

**1 Thes. 2: 7-8**

**2 Cor. 7: 3**

**2 Cor. 11: 24-28**

**Phil. 2: 17**

✓ **In what ways in Acts 20, do you see the heart of a faithful minister of the Lord?  
As you locate these “marks” of the minister, ask yourself if you are so marked.**

**As Paul is making his way back to Jerusalem, he is occupied with a task.  
Read the following related verses and see if you can guess what Paul is doing.**

**1 Cor. 16: 5-8**

**2 Cor. 7: 5-7**

**2 Cor. 8: 1-15, 20**

**2 Cor. 9: 1-15**

Why was this collection so important to Paul?

Acts 20: 4, 5 has a list of men from different cities who are accompanying Paul as he heads to Jerusalem. Why do you think these men are going and why are their cities of origin mentioned?

Read Rom. 15: 25-33 to see if that helps shed some light on this question.

- In Acts 20: 7, the word “talking” is *dialegomai* # 1256 which is more of a discussing idea. Paul not only preached, but he engaged in more than a lecture. He answered their questions and listened to their concerns.

Do you do that? Or do you filibuster?

What a man!!

After speaking all night with those he loved, Paul walked 20 miles the next day most likely continuing to talk with those from Troas. John MacArthur

If the leadership in our local church does not exhibit this kind of sacrifice and dedication, then pray for them and for yourself to “Be abandoned to the Lord and His heartbeat!”

❖ Don’t miss the word “serving” in Acts 20: 19!

*Douleuo* # 1398 is the verb form of *doulos* = a bonds slave

Everything Paul endured was motivated by his status as the bonds slave of Christ. A bonds slave lived for the pleasure of his master. The desires of the master always took precedence in the life of the bonds slave. The will of the bonds slave is swallowed up in the will of the master.

Are you the bonds slave of Christ?

As the Lord’s bonds slave, Paul taught His Word (Acts 19: 8) \_\_\_\_\_

And (Acts 20: 20) \_\_\_\_\_ .

So whether publicly or privately, His servants are faithful to speak His truth.

- Acts 20: 22- 31

If you lead in any capacity, what do you view as important to impart to those placed in your care? If you only had one chance to prepare them for your departure, how would you prepare them?

- Acts 20: 32-38

How do you know when you are no longer necessary for those in your care?  
How do you know when they are ready to stand alone?

If you have children, you would not send a four year old off to college!  
That's obvious; but what about the less obvious decisions.  
What guides you to know when your child or your charge of any kind is "fit for duty?"

Do you realize that if you continue to play your role of overseer past the time of maturing, you are actually impeding or harming the personal development of your student, child, employee?

Compare the prayer of our High Priest in John 17 to this prayer of Paul.

Always remember: the Lord Jesus did not purchase with His blood a company, a neighborhood, a family, a modern nation, a government, a commodity or anything other than His very own inheritance!

He purchased you and me.

The Church belongs to God, not to men.

### Acts 21

- Acts 21: 1-6

In this paragraph, do you find the Spirit warning Paul or prohibiting Paul from going to Jerusalem?

- Acts 21: 7-14

When you find people in new passages of Scripture who you have seen before, what does that tell you regarding the way God works? Here Philip (Acts 6: 5; 8: 5, 26-40)

- 21:8, 9

As you read Acts, do you wonder where all of Luke's information comes from?

**Here's one explanation at least concerning Philip and perhaps Stephen: these daughters of Philip.**

- *Interesting side note:* these women lived well into their 90's and are mentioned by Eusebius and the church father Papias. They were regarded by the early believers as a valuable source of information on the early history of the church. We are told that they may have provided much information to Luke as he wrote his gospel account and also this work of the Acts.

- **21: 10-14**

When we read of the early Christian martyrs, we see that the faith of Paul and others like him, willing to face persecution, suffering and death, was a contagious faith. One person displays honor, bravery and purpose and it inspires another.

Do we see that kind of faith now?

**Word Study on the word "Persuade"**

**Acts 21: 14 (also 17:2-4 "persuaded" 18:4, 13; 19:26)** This was Paul's routine: persuade men that Jesus was the Christ.

The word for persuade is from the same root as the word for "faith."

*pistis*= faith, persuasion *pisteuo*= believe, to be persuaded, to be persuaded that something is true

*peitheo*= believe, persuade, in the middle voice it means "to suffer oneself to be persuaded"

it also means to obey, trust, agree, yield

**Acts 18:4; 19:8; 28:24; Lk. 16:31; Heb. 13:18**

**Before you can be willing to go to your Jerusalem,** you must be persuaded that God is worthy of your life. If you are not willing to give your all for Him, then you have not been persuaded yet.

*Peitheo* means to "yield" so when you do not yield to God, you are not persuaded that you can trust Him.

In Greek when you put an "a" in front of a word you are making it negative: like our "un."

*Apeitheo*=refuse to be persuaded, to refuse belief, to be disobedient

**Acts 14:2; 19:9; Rom. 2:8; 10:21; 11:30,31; 15:31; Heb.3:18;11:31; 1 Pet. 2:2:7, 8; 3:1, 20; 4:17**

*Apeitheia*=the condition of being unpersuadable, obstinate rejection

**Eph.2:2; 5:6; Col. 3:6; Rom. 11:30, 32; Heb. 4:6, 11**

Note the connection between unbelief: not being persuaded and unbelief as disobedience

Non-believers have not been persuaded that God is Who He says He is.

Do you know non-believers who have not been persuaded that God is Who He says He is? Of course you do.

But Christian, are you persuaded that God is Who He says He is? Who is God to you?  
What are some of God's attributes?

\*attributes are divided into many classifications: immanent/emanant,  
transitive/intransitive, relative/absolute, natural/moral, communicable/incommunicable  
Basically how He relates to man and His own separate character

All-powerful all-loving all-knowing righteous just merciful majestic sovereign  
gracious forgiving

Do you really believe He is all-powerful, all-knowing and all-loving?

My God can cure any illness I have;  
He can give me the job I want;  
He can cause all my loved ones to be saved, healthy, rich, happy.  
He can give me my every desire.  
Do I magnify God because He gives me all these things?  
Am I **persuaded** that my God is great?

Yes, God is great because when He does or does not heal me, give me certain requests,  
shield me from pain – I can trust that He knows what He is doing. I can trust that He is  
achieving in me His goal – not happiness, not ease, not a smooth carefree life. Jesus did  
not have a carefree life. What I am persuaded about God is that He is so great, so worthy to  
be praised that with every trial I face, every heartache I endure, every tear which falls, God  
has a purpose: to reflect the life of the One Who lives within me.

Jesus said: *"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. It is for the  
disciple enough that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master."* **Matt.**  
**10:24, 25**

### **I am persuaded that my God is more than able.**

O Jehovah – Self-Existent God – reveal more of Yourself to me that I might truly worship  
You, not only on Sundays, but every day and every moment I breathe.

❖ Prepare me for my Jerusalem.

Stop here and pray that the Lord will prepare you for your Jerusalem – whatever and  
whenever that may be.

At the end of **Acts 21**, we see Paul in Jerusalem. Why is he there?

**Romans 15:25, 26; 1 Cor. 16:1, 2** help us understand his purpose there.

What is his reception in Jerusalem? **Acts 21:20** (Two kinds of responses)

- **21: 15-26**

**Paul's willingness to follow the advice of the church leaders in Jerusalem and participate in the vow (v. 23-26) shows us something. What does it show you?**

- In **Acts 21:27-36** The Judaizers have stirred up the crowd in the temple against Paul. What reason do they give for hating Paul?

**Acts 21:31**, in fact to what degree do they hate Paul?

The feast of Pentecost would have occurred at this time. This event would have aroused an intense level of zeal. Pentecost was originally a celebration of the firstfruits of the harvest, but in Paul's day Pentecost had come to be a celebration of the giving of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai. So the charge against Paul was especially heated at this time.

Twenty-seven years earlier the Jews were calling out similar things, words filled with hatred toward the Lord. The hard hearts had years to soften but did not.

**Look at:**

**Luke 23: 18**

**John 19: 15**

**The area of the temple Paul was in is near the Antonia Fortress where the Roman soldiers took Paul. But Jesus had been here, too.**

The Fortress of Antonia was built in 35 B.C. and named in honor of Herod's friend and Roman Triumvir Marcus Antonius also known as Mark Antony. It was actually Mark Anthony who had requested that the Senate make Herod King of Judea as an eastern boundary to the Roman Empire. At some point the Romans took over the Antonia Fortress and placed a garrison there.

According to later Church tradition the Praetorium was here at the Antonia Fortress where Pontius Pilate judged Jesus, but it is also possible that Jesus was judged at the Herodian fortress on the opposite end (NW) of the city near the modern Jaffa Gate. Herod's palace was the official residence of the Roman procurator's when they came to Jerusalem during the major Jewish festivals.

Many scholars favor the Antonia Fortress because of the balconies overlooking the Temple Court. There is also mention in **John 19:13** of "the pavement" as the site of the trial.

The Via Dolorosa assumes that the Antonia Fortress is the site of the trial of Jesus before Pontius Pilate.

[http://www.bible-history.com/antonia-fortress/antoniafortress\\_place\\_of\\_jesus\\_trial\\_.html](http://www.bible-history.com/antonia-fortress/antoniafortress_place_of_jesus_trial_.html)

**Even today, if you travel to Jerusalem, there is a worn spot where you can see where the Roman soldiers played a dice game – very close to where they would have scourged our Lord. This is the general area from which we will soon hear Paul speak.**

- **Acts 21: 37- 40**

**How does Paul gain the approval of the commander?**

**From what vantage point does Paul address the people?**

**This gives Paul an advantage; what is it?**

**What does this show you about Paul and about God?**

- **Acts 22** marks a major turn in the life and ministry of Paul. From this point on, he will be a prisoner. The geography changes little now. What comes front and center is the message of the gospel and Paul's personal message which is intricately connected to his defense of the faith.
- This section of the book of Acts is considered the prime example of defending our faith. It is remarkable that for the remainder of the book Paul will be in chains or in confinement. **Yet this is the platform from which Paul preaches the faith. The light shines brightest in the darkness.**



## Acts 22 BEFORE GOVERNORS AND KINGS “On Defense”

“O I’m sorry, did I step on your foot?”

“O I’m sorry, did I wake you up?”

“O I’m sorry, did I say something to hurt your feelings?”

“O I’m sorry you did not get the job promotion you were looking for.”

These are not the “sorries” or apologies that Paul means when he says he wants his brethren to hear his defense ... his *apologia*.

*Apologia* # 627 means: to give an answer or speech; to give a defense of oneself

Paul was not sorry for anything, not apologizing for stepping on toes. He was giving **an answer** to the accusation that had been made against him.

As with all of the apostles, they could not give a defense of their words and actions without presenting the truth of Christ. **Here is our example: our lives need to be so intricately woven with the life of our Lord that when we speak, Jesus is the natural topic.**

When we give defense for our faith, we are not apologizing for offending others. The gospel is indeed offensive to some. But it is our privilege and our calling to make known what God has made known to us: that Jesus died according to the Scriptures, that He was raised to life and that His substitutionary death means life for us.

The heartbeat of Jesus continues!

- ❖ **Let’s look at how Paul presented his case.**
- **Acts 22: 1-2**

He was respectful. “*Brethren and fathers, hear my defense which I now offer you.*”

But wait a minute. In order to fully appreciate what Paul tells these people and us, how did he get in this predicament in the first place?

Whose fault is it? What did he do? **Acts 21: 17, 21, 27, 28**

Now what – how is he going to deal with it?

Why has God brought him to this hard place? What in the world good can come from it?

- ❖ Who is Paul, anyway? Better question: Who does Paul serve? **Who is Jesus to Paul?**

From his letters, we can see that Paul refers to Jesus in this manner:

“For me to live is Christ.” **Phil. 1: 21**

“I count all things loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.” **Phil. 3: 8**

In both letters to the Thessalonians, Jesus is the returning King.

In Galatians, Jesus is the Liberator of our souls. Jesus has set us free. **5: 1**

In Ephesians, Jesus is the coming Bridegroom. **5: 23-27**

In Colossians, Jesus is God. **1: 15-19; 2: 9**

To Paul, Jesus is NOT a harsh, cruel taskmaster.

Jesus is not Santa Claus.

Jesus is not a political Messiah.

Jesus is not the newest fad.

Before you can stand before governors and kings, supervisors, teachers, bosses, judges, enemies, anyone for that matter, you must know how to answer this question.

➤ **Who is Jesus to you?**

In **Acts 17**, Paul presented an argument in Athens. He explained Who God was – Creator, Sustainer, Giver of life and Judge. There is a time of judgment. The Greek word for judgment is *krisis*.

**We all face a crisis. Who do you say Jesus is?**

**How do you know Who he is?**

- ✓ **General revelation**
- ✓ **Special revelation**

When Christians speak of how God has revealed Himself, the two technical terms used are *general revelation* and *special revelation*. General revelation refers to God's revealing of Himself through nature or natural means. Special revelation refers to God's revealing of Himself in miraculous ways, primarily through Scripture.

General revelation is of great importance, as it is available to all people in all places. **Psalm 19:1-4**

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul also mentions general revelation in **Romans 1:20**.

Special revelation is called "special" in contrast with general revelation because it is not given to all people in all places. At certain times throughout biblical history, God has chosen to reveal Himself by miraculous means. Special revelation includes physical appearances of God, dreams, visions, angels, the prophets, the written Word of God, and most importantly—Jesus Christ.

The greatest occurrence of special revelation is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is God in human form (**John 1:1, 14**). **Hebrews 1:1-3 (NIV)** summarizes it best, "In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son ... The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being."

<http://www.compellingtruth.org/general-special-revelation.html>

- The Bible is Special revelation. We can know Who He is through this communication God has provided for us.

Paul had not always believed.

What changed?

**We will hear from his own mouth- he will give testimony as to what happened to him.**

But first, let's back up a bit. I know you already know all of this, but pulling it all together will amaze you even more.

Why is Paul in Jerusalem?

How did he get here?

He had been on three missionary journeys prior to coming to Jerusalem.

Where do we first meet Paul?

**Acts 7:58-8:1**

Then we see him again in **chapter 9**. What is Saul doing here?

He is persecuting the early church, the young believers.

Did Paul seek out Jesus? No. Jesus approached Saul.

[We will see more of this testimony in Paul's defense.]

- Look at the change in Paul.

**9:21, 22, 26**

**11:25-26, 30; 12:25**

By the way, why do we call Paul Saul? **13:9**

- ❖ First Missionary Journey

- **Ch. 13 and 14** record Paul's first missionary journey. Why is Paul going on a missionary journey?  
**13:47 and Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:18-20**

Look on your maps and follow, marking each city if you haven't already.

Antioch (Syrian) > Seleucia > Cyprus > Salamis > Paphos > Perga > Pisidian Antioch > Iconium > Lystra > Derbe > Lystra > Iconium > Antioch > Pisidia > Pamphylia > Perga > Attalia > Antioch (Syrian)

**Chapter 15** records the Jerusalem Council which made clear that one did not need to become a Jew first and then a Christian.

**15:36** begins the second missionary journey in which Paul and Silas would return to all the cities of the first journey and check on the brethren.

Remember as Paul gives his defense, he is only doing what he does at all times: presenting the truth of Who Jesus is. Whether he is on a missionary journey or before the Sanhedrin or before kings and governors, Paul is the same man with the same mission: to make Jesus known throughout the world as Messiah, Lord and Eternal King. ***The geography is only incidental.***

Is that true of us or do we want everything lined up just right before we feel our lives are on track?  
Can we say with Paul, "To live is Christ?"

**Read Philippians 1:1, 7, 12-14, 20-21, 29-30; 2:17; 3:1-10, 20; 4:1-2, 4, 6, 13 (Esp. underlined)**

**This will give you a little glimpse into who Paul is.** Reading Philippians is appropriate because this is the first place that he preached the gospel in Europe. On the second missionary journey Paul went to Philippi and met Lydia, his first convert in Europe.

❖ Second Missionary Journey

Syria, Cilicia, Derbe, Lystra, (16:6) Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, (16:11) Troas to Samothrace, Neapolis, Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Cenchrea (18:18), Ephesus, Caesarea, Antioch Here ends the second missionary Journey. **Acts 18:22**

❖ Third Missionary Journey

The third picks up right at **18:23**.

**18:23** Galatia and Phrygia, **19:1** Ephesus

Paul will spend over two years in this city teaching the word of the Lord to such an extent that **Acts 19: 10** says that "*all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Gentiles.*"

In two years' time, this man made a powerful difference in a CONTINENT!

**Scripture is full of wonderful truths, powerful testimonies and even humor at times.**

**Acts 19: 11-17 is one of those humorous stories. The seven sons of Sceva**

**Acts 19: 18-20 shows the power of transformed lives due to the teaching of truth.**

**Acts 19: 23-41 is an example of the response to what happens when "the world is turned upside down." (Also Acts 17: 6)**

Most of us do not possess a resume that looks like Paul's. So where does that leave us mere mortals? Yes, Paul stood before governors and kings. But we all will stand before the King of kings and Lord of lords. What will be our defense?

**Romans 14: 10**

***"But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God."***

**How do you prepare your "brief" to stand before Him?**

**You don't, you have an Advocate. He will take up your cause. He already has.**

**1 John 2: 1b "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."**

**Although this is true of us:**

***"For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment."*** "Is. 64: 6a

**2 Cor. 5: 21**

**“He made Him Who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”**

**When you hear the accuser of your soul, remember this:**

***“Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the One Who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He Who died, yes, rather Who was raised, Who is at the right hand of God, Who also intercedes for us.”***

**Hallelujah! What a Savior!**

**“And this is His name by which He will be called,  
‘The LORD our Righteousness.’”  
Jer. 23: 6b**

## **Back to Acts 22**

### **Proclaiming a Confident Faith**

- **Acts 22:1-5**

How does Paul open his defense?

*What can we learn from Paul’s method?*

### ***Jesus outshines the midday sun!!***

- **Acts 22:6-11**

What does Paul recount here? *What can we learn from this in giving our testimony?*

Do you know how many times Luke records the giving of Paul’s personal testimony in the book of Acts?

Why does Luke tell the same story three times?

One of Luke’s primary concerns is to authenticate Paul’s apostleship and ministry, as well as give historical progress of the early Church.

- **Acts 22:12-16**

Paul further explains his testimony. Ananias, a man well-spoken of by the Jews, was instrumental in Paul’s conversion and commissioning.

What do you learn here that can you can use when you share your faith?

It is rare for a militant of one faith for years to abandon that position and switch to another faith. Usually for such an occurrence, some kind of dramatic event or crisis provoked such a change.  
What was the dramatic event here?

- **Acts 22: 17-21**

This section explains what Paul did right after his conversion. He was told to leave Jerusalem and go to the Gentiles. At this remark, the Jews took great offense to Paul and his story.  
Should Paul have avoided this comment? Why or why not?

**Acts 22: 22-29**

There is an outcry against Paul and he is taken into custody and prepared for scourging.

Again his status as a Romans citizen protects him from this punishment.

Had Paul been prepared for what he faced?

Had he been warned? Was he in error to go to Jerusalem? Should he have listened to the different messages telling him that danger and imprisonment awaited him?

The Spirit had told him a number of times that prison and suffering was ahead of him in Jerusalem. Prophecy must be fulfilled. **Acts 9:16; 20:23; 21:10-12, 14**

➤ **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

1. Twice Paul is heard because of the language and the way he speaks. **21:37-40** and **22:2**

How we speak betrays much about who we are.

*Do you speak with kindness, persuasion, truth, authority? Does your language gain people's attention?*

2. Ask the Lord in a prayer to change your speech where it needs to reflect the speech of Jesus.

3. What have you learned from Paul's practice of sharing his faith and sharing his life that you can use in your own life?

4. How has this week's study impacted you as "the continuing heartbeat of Jesus?"

**Continue your list on Paul's Timeline.**

**Read your Doctrine handouts.**

**Record your findings in the Appendix on the attributes of God.**

**Record your notes on the Holy Spirit in the Appendix.**

**Choose a hymn which relates to this week's study. Sing it to the Lord.**



**LESSON TWELVE**  
**Acts 23, 24**

**Doctrine Handouts: God is Judge/ Faithfulness of God**

**BEFORE GOVERNORS AND KINGS**  
**“Don’t Procrastinate! What are you waiting for?”**

*“Go away for the present, and when I find time I will summon you.”*

**Acts 24: 25**

*“For this reason I also suffer these things; but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am **convinced** that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.”*

**2 Tim. 1: 12**

**Two responses: who looks more like you?**

Paul was con – vinced!

*Con* (here is an intensifier) *vince* = to conquer, overwhelm, to completely win over  
Paul was conquered by Jesus; he was overwhelmed by Jesus.

Do you have a tame faith? A manageable faith?

Or, are you overwhelmed by Jesus?

A confident faith comes from being convinced – conquered by Jesus – “persuaded” (last week) that He is Who He says He is.

✓ **Do your Text Analysis of Acts 23.**

**Write your notes here on the paragraphs.**

- **Acts 23:1-5**

To whom is Paul speaking here?

- **23: 6-10**

On what topic does Paul focus?

- **23:11**

What key event occurs in this one verse?

We call this study “The Heartbeat of Jesus Continues.”

How do you see Jesus still alive and well in this verse?

- **23:12-15**

Describe the plot to murder Paul formed by the Jews.

- **23:16-24**

The plot is uncovered and once again the commander comes to the aid of Paul.  
What does this information teach you about God?

How does this passage build your confidence in the fact that “The Heartbeat of Jesus Continues?”

- **Acts 23:25-30**

The letter of Claudius Lysias delivering Paul to Governor Felix (some humor here)  
Why do you think Luke includes this letter?

- **Acts 23:31-35**

What happens here?

Just in these two chapters (**22 and 23**), Paul endured with confidence:  
plots by the Jews to kill him  
his defense before the crowd and subsequent beating  
his defense before the Sanhedrin  
being stretched out for scourging  
insult by the high priest  
imprisonment and total lack of any control of his destiny (he was hauled numerous places)

***From where does this confident faith come? How can you and I have a faith like this?***

***Confident faith is really redundant.***

***Con= “with” fide= “faith” Paul’s confidence did not come from himself, but from the One in Whom he was “persuaded” to believe. (Remember “persuaded” last week?)***

✓ **Do your Text Discovery of Acts 24**

In chapters **21-23**, Paul had to be rescued four times (**21:32; 22:22-24; 23:10; 23:16, 23, 24**).

This Paul who needed to be rescued was proclaiming the True Rescuer, The True Deliverer.

“For He **rescued** us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son in Whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” **Col. 1:13, 14**

“To wait for His Son from heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, Who **rescues** us from the wrath to come.” **1 Thes. 1:10**

**Read 2 Cor. 1:8-11**

- Think of the people Paul has stood before, proclaiming the truth of his faith, the truth of the gospel. Has this been a part of God’s plan all along?  
*Does God place you in difficult situations so that you can be a light in a dark world and point others to the One Who rescues souls?*  
**1 Pet. 2:9**

- **Acts 24:1-9**

Where is Paul? Why is he there?

Who is the authority detaining Paul?

[Background info]

Pertinent Roman laws concerning Paul’s case

It was illegal to establish a new religion in Rome without the approval of the authorities.

It was required by Roman law that the accusers face the accused at the trial or else the charges would be dropped.

Roman law was very strong against accusers who abandoned their charges.

Since the eyewitnesses of Paul’s alleged desecration of the temple failed to show up, the Sanhedrin’s case was undermined.

One of the charges brought against Paul is sedition: the violation of Roman law. *Pax Romana* was uppermost in the minds of Roman authorities.

The burden of proof rested with the accusers. Paul had only to deny the charges.

A Roman judge could not move a case to another court without the consent of the accused.

Every Roman citizen had the right to appeal to Caesar.

In reading the **first nine verses** of **Chapter 24**, how do they relate to the overall thrust of **Acts**, especially in regard to the foundational years of the Church?

In other words, how does what happens here in **Chapter 24**, effect the Church?

- **Acts 24:10-21**

**Paul's Defense before Governor Felix**

What do we learn from Paul about how to proclaim the truths of faith from this passage? Paul had this one opportunity to make his mark on the minds of those listening. What did he focus on?

Paul did not focus on the things which he did not do (which he was accused of), but he used the time and occasion to focus on what he did do: he worshiped the ancestral God of Israel and His Messiah. Paul makes the claim that His Savior fulfilled most faithfully Israel's national hope.

Judaism was a *religio licita* and therefore legal to practice. Christianity was associated with Judaism.

- **Acts 24:22-23**

What were Paul's conditions of imprisonment?

- **Acts 24:24-27**

Who is Drusilla?

Josephus tells us that she was the youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa I (the Herod of **Acts 12** who had beheaded James) She was the great-granddaughter of the Herod who tried to kill Jesus in Bethlehem (**Matt. 2**); her great uncle killed John the Baptist and mocked Jesus (**Luke 23:6-12**). She was the third wife of Felix. His first wife had been the granddaughter of Antony and Cleopatra. Drusilla had been married before Felix and had divorced that husband to marry him. It is thought that Drusilla was the one interested in finding out more from Paul concerning Christianity.

- **Acts 24: 25** What was Paul discussing here?

Righteousness, self-control and judgment to come: what a sermon outline!!  
What was the response of Felix?

➤ **Look at the Sermon notes on these words in the Appendix.**

- **24:27** tells us how long this went on.

How many opportunities did Felix have to turn from his ways?

The response of Felix in this latter part of the chapter is a common one. Even today people have this response. They believe that they can wait until another day or another opportunity. Felix saw the light, it was presented to him again and again, but he preferred to live in the darkness.

What did Felix do?

He procrastinated. For two years he listened to Paul and he thought there would always be another chance.

The governor's mind was enlightened (**Acts 24:22**), his emotions were stirred (**Acts 24:25**), but his will would not yield. He tried to gain the world, but as far as we know, he lost his soul.

When Felix was replaced, he left Paul a prisoner, but it was Felix who was really the prisoner.

➤ **Go to Application Questions if you are not doing Digging Deeper.**

### ❖ **DIGGING DEEPER**

#### **Acts 23**

- **Acts 23: 1-5**

Why is Paul confident as he proclaims his faith?

Are you a confident person? Why or why not?

Who is the most confident person you know.

Why?

Who (what characters) in the Bible is confident? Why?

#### **Paul before the Sanhedrin**

**Jesus had stood before the Sanhedrin as well as the apostles and now Paul stands before them. They have been given many opportunities to hear and believe, yet they remain immovable.**

**How many times does God reveal truth to you before you accept it and change?**

Ananias was an extremely corrupt high priest. He stole tithes from the other priests. He would do anything to gain the favor of the Roman leaders.

Paul called him a "whitewashed wall." This pointed to his actions as a hypocrite.

**Read Matt. 23: 27**

**Ezek. 13: 10-12**

**Paul actually acted as prophet in his words to Ananias. The priest would die, hiding in an aqueduct at Herod's palace, killed by Jewish guerrillas during the revolt of 66 A.D. His sympathies with Rome finally caught up with him.**

- **Acts 23: 6-10**

Was Paul playing "politics" here?

Did he realize after his encounter with the Sanhedrin that he would never receive a fair hearing with them?

- **Acts 23: 11**

**Relate this verse to:**

**Acts 18: 9-10**

**Acts 22: 17-21**

**Matt. 28: 20**

**Jer. 1: 8 – 19**

**Jer. 7: 27**

**Ezek. 2: 7**

**Paul is not told to win people to Jesus or convert the officials – he is merely told to speak truth. The Lord will take care of the rest. Obey and then leave the results to God.**

**How does this impact you as being the continuing heartbeat of Jesus?**

- **Acts 23: 12-15**

**Attempts to silence Paul by death or imprisonment:**

Write where it occurs by each quote -

**Acts 9: 29**

**13: 50-51**

**14: 5**

**14: 19-20**

**18: 12-17**

**20: 3**

**20: 19**

**21: 27-29**

**Now read 1 Thes. 2: 14-20 and see the heart of Paul.**

Do you see what compels Paul?

Does this powerful love compel you?

**When we look at the heart of Paul, are we in fact looking at the heart of the risen Savior living through Paul? Is that an example of the heartbeat of Jesus continuing?**

**Look at Gal. 2: 20. Write it here and pray that the Lord will give you the same heart.**

- **Acts 23: 16-24**

- ✓ When Paul gives his testimony for the third and last time in **Acts**, note what he says about his protection and purpose.

**Acts 26: 16-24**

How does that promise from the Lord relate to the verses in **Acts 23** that we are taking under review here?

**What does this passage teach about the providence of God?**

- **Acts 23: 25 – 35**

**The march from Jerusalem to Antipatris would be thirty-seven miles – completed in one night!**

### Acts 21: 8-14

Paul is now back where he was when Agabus had made the prophecy concerning his troubles in Jerusalem.

### Acts 24

- Acts 24: 1-9

Compare this passage to **Luke 23: 1, 2, 5.**

**Understanding the Roman pride concerning *Pax Romana* (Roman Peace – a legal system which prevailed throughout the entire Roman Empire, enforcing peace at all costs), how does that aid your reading of this passage?**

- Acts 24: 22 – 27

What kind of man is Felix? Support your answer.

**In v. 24 - 26**, Felix arrives with Drusilla to hear more from Paul. What response does Felix have here?

Felix was ruthless as a governor. He was referred to as a ruffian. He has been described as 'one of the worst of Roman officials.' He apparently had no moral scruples. When Claudius died and the new emperor came to power, he was concerned that Felix was too cruel. This new emperor was Nero – one of the most brutal, maniacal rulers of Rome.

*"Felix was an unscrupulous official who did not hesitate to lie, or even to murder, in order to get rid of his enemies and promote himself."* Warren Wiersbe

In **Acts 24: 22**, Felix decides to wait. In **24: 25**, what does Felix decide to do?

- ✓ Felix invokes the Roman principle *amplius* – the formal delay of a final judgment.

**Another Roman leader found no guilt with his prisoner, but yielded to the people's wishes.**

**Read Luke 23: 4, 22-25**

*“It is not enough for a person to know the facts about Christ, or to have an emotional response to a message ... he or she must be willing to repent.” Warren Wiersbe*

**Compare to John 5: 40.**

**Not only non-believers procrastinate, but Christian, where are you dragging your heels on following Him when He calls?**

**Let’s look at Drusilla for a minute.**

She was a daughter of Herod Agrippa I.

Her great-grandfather tried to kill Jesus in Bethlehem. Herod the Great

Her great-uncle killed John the Baptist and mocked Jesus and killed James the Apostle  
**(Acts 12)**

Herod Antipas

She divorced her husband to become the wife of Felix.

She later died, buried by the ash of an eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

When Paul preached to them about righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, where would she be most likely to squirm?

❖ **It is interesting that when Paul preached the gospel to Felix and Drusilla, he gave the law first – righteousness, self-control and the coming judgment.**

**He did this because before the good news of the gospel, there must be a consideration of the bad news of sin.**

**Rom. 1: 16-32 reveals the same order of unfolding understanding.**

**But God still sits on His throne while Paul sits in prison.**

- **Acts 24: 27**

**It is thought that during these two years of imprisonment, Luke was collecting information and direction concerning both Acts and Luke’s Gospel account.**

**Paul did not waste time! He was on a mission no matter where he was.**

**Felix and Drusilla, on the other hand, were prisoners – doing the bidding of their master.**

### ➤ **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

1. In **Acts 23**, we learn that Paul will be moved to Caesarea. Paul has been promised that he will go to Rome. How can we, with similar calm, face the difficulties in life with victory and peace?

**Read Ps. 34: 7**

How could the Lord use this verse to strengthen Paul as he faced so many uncertainties?

How can this passage in **Acts** and the verse in **Psalms** strengthen your resolve to be the “continuing heartbeat of Jesus?”

2. God protected Paul from death, but not from imprisonment and suffering. And eventually, after the end of **Acts**, God allowed Paul to be executed. How can we have courage when we know that God may allow us to suffer severely?
  
3. **Acts 24: 22-25** Why is procrastination one of Satan’s most powerful weapons in deterring the spread of the gospel?

**4. “Jesus will be either your Savior or your Judge!” You make the choice.**

**Relate this to Acts 24:25.** Use other cross references using Jesus as Judge to support your answer.

For instance:

**Revelation 19:11**

And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.

**Acts 10:42**

"And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead.

**2 Corinthians 5:10**

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

**Use these verses and any that you find to relate to Acts 24: 25 above.**

5. *"The governor's mind was enlightened (Acts 24: 22), his emotions were stirred (Acts 24: 25), but his will would not yield."* Warren Wiersbe

**In what way does this inform you concerning those in your life?**

6. **Felix was in his own prison, made by his own hands; yet he thought he had the power over Paul. The apostle rested in the will of God and was a prisoner of no one except his Lord. (Look at Eph. 3: 1; 4: 1; 2 Tim. 1: 8; Philemon 1, 9, 23) "Paul, a prisoner of the Lord ..."**

In what ways are you in a prison right now?

How can God use this "prison" for His glory?

7. How has this week's study impacted you as "the continuing heartbeat of Jesus?"

**Continue your list on Paul's Timeline.**

**Read your Doctrine handouts.**

**Record your findings in the Appendix on the attributes of God.**

**Record your notes on the Holy Spirit from this week.**

**Choose a hymn that relates to this week's study. Sing it to the Lord.**

**LESSON THIRTEEN**                      **Doctrine handout: Resurrection**

**Acts 25 & 26**

**“BEFORE GOVERNORS AND KINGS: Proclaiming the Faith”**

✓ **Do your Text Discovery of Acts 25.**

**Acts 25**

**v.1-5** Who is introduced here?

**v. 6-12** This paragraph is key because in it, Paul makes a request. What is it and under what conditions was it made?

- After Paul makes his appeal to go to Caesar, we would expect our next scene to take place either in Rome or on the way there. But we are delayed in Caesarea.

Do you find that odd?

What takes place in the next passage?

**v.13-22**

Festus catches King Agrippa and Bernice up to speed on “the strange case of the traveling apostle.”

What else do you see in this paragraph?

**V. 16** gives us some additional insight.

Note the words – the commissioning – of Jesus. Our Lord tells Paul some things involving past, present and future. What are these things?

Past

Present

Future

Stott believes that Paul's commissioning was shaped deliberately to resemble the call of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah and others to be God's prophets. (Is. 6: 8-9; Jer. 1: 4, 7; 7: 25; Ezek. 2: 3; Amos 7: 14, 15)

**Especially Ezek. 1: 28b; 2; 1, 7**

**23-27** Paul is brought before Festus, King Agrippa and Bernice into the auditorium to plead his case.

What can you learn about how he makes his case?

*"Paul's trial before Agrippa is the longest and most elaborate of the five (trials). Luke sketches the scene with graphic detail, and Paul's defence speech is more polished in structure and language than the others."* John R. W. Stott

So why is Paul still defending?

Why is this the longest and most developed of the defenses?

## **ACTS 26**

How long have you been coming to church? How long have you been coming to Bible Study or Sunday School?

Felix sat for 2 years under the teaching of the apostle Paul.

Coming and hearing is not what God is after.

At the end of **Acts 24: 24-27**, Felix had many opportunities to respond to the gospel, thereby preserving his soul. After two years, he remained unmoved and therefore lost for all eternity. He would be removed in a matter of weeks from this post which he so tenaciously held.

*"What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?"*

**Mark 8:36**

**Acts 25:23 contrasts the great pomp and ceremony of Agrippa, Bernice and Festus with the prisoner Paul. Think of the years of abuse, decadence and corruption of the Herods. Then look at Paul, in chains and most likely crippled due to his many beatings and years of mistreatment.**

## Paul Before Agrippa, Bernice and Festus

✓ *When reading the Bible, it is imperative to ask yourself application questions throughout your study. These questions will be in italics.*

- **Acts 26: 1-3, 29**

Under what conditions does Paul find himself here?

Paul is in chains in contrast to the splendor and grandeur of those accusing him.

*How can you relate?*

- **Acts 26:4-8 (also look at Phil. 3:4-6 - ?? “blameless” We appear blameless to ourselves until one point. What is that one point?)**

What is Paul’s focus here? *Does he spend more time defending himself or the gospel?*

- **Acts 26:9-11**

How does Paul describe his past? Does he feel the need to “flower it up?”

*Do you cover up your offenses or do you take full responsibility for them and give God the glory for saving you?*

- **Acts 26:12-18**

**Read this entire passage.**

**How many times does Luke record this one event in the Acts narrative?**

**Ch. 9; 22:6-11; 26:12-19**

**This is so important that Luke has repeated it three times!!!**

*Is Jesus brighter than the midday sun to you?*

*Is He the light to which you are drawn?*

*Heliotropic plants: check out what these plants do and see if you do the same toward the Son.*

*“For conversion includes a radical transfer of allegiance and so of environment. It is both a liberation from the darkness of satanic rule and a liberation into the sphere of God’s marvelous light and power.” John R. W. Stott*

**Christian, do you realize that you operate in a different sphere? That’s why Eph. 2:2-6 is true. You are in heavenly places, seated in Christ. That is your true home, your true identity. Paul knew this and he was able to give hope and a future when all was lost.**

- **Acts 26:19-23**

**Paul’s dramatic conversion is an excellent proof of the power of the resurrection. In an instant, Paul changed from a rabid hater of those who followed Jesus to one who would give his all for his Messiah. His fanatical opposition was completely overcome by meeting Jesus.**

***Have you been overcome by the same Lord as Paul met that day on the road to Damascus?***

v. 22, in spite of all the trials, beatings, scourging, plots to assassinate, imprisonments and derision, Paul continues to speak the truths of Christ and His resurrection.

*Would you be so bold, so faithful in such conditions?*

- **Acts 26:24-29**

**Festus ridicules Paul and Paul does not lose a beat.**

*Would you be so focused and single-minded or would you be embarrassed and not be able to respond as Paul does here?*

*How does Paul remain calm and under control during all of this?*

*Mark that on your list of what the Holy Spirit does. He gives you a calm and focused heart.*

**Acts 26: 24** Here the word for “mad” is *manian* – the word from which we get “maniac.”

*Are you a maniac for football or grandkids or shopping or ...*

*But most important of all – are you a maniac for Jesus?*

- ✓ How interesting that Festus does not think Paul mad until **Acts 26: 24** when Paul speaks of the resurrection. Yet when Paul spoke of his furious rage in **26: 11**, Festus was silent.

Paul is in good company. Some referred to Jesus as insane.

**Look at John 10: 20**

**Mark 3: 21**

**Acts 26:26, 27, 29** King Agrippa has a proposition put before him. What does he do with it? Why does he respond this way?

**Acts 26:30-32**

What parallels do you see here with the trial of Jesus before Pontius Pilate?

*Does it matter if man acquits you, if man finds you blameless?  
Whose approval do you seek?*

➤ **Go to the Application Questions if you are not doing Digging Deeper.**

❖ **DIGGING DEEPER**

**Porcius Festus was the procurator in Judea 60-62 A.D.**

**He was an able official, managing the peace but things quickly deteriorated after Festus was replaced with far less capable leaders who had no interest in Jewish law and customs.**

What evidence in **Acts 25** do you see which leads to the fact that Festus was conscious of cultural differences among the Jews (under Roman rule)?

**Another fact which leads us to believe that things deteriorated after Festus is the constant rebellion which followed the next procurators in Judea, ending in the devastation of A.D. 70, the total destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.**

• **Acts 25: 11**

Paul's invokes the Roman **provocatio**, which granted the right of a citizen of Rome to appeal his case to Caesar. It is considered to be one of the provisions established by Augustus (18 B.C.).

*"Paul's appeal becomes one of the first uses of this provision in our extant historical sources."*

Baker's Illustrated Bible Commentary

At this time, Nero was the Emperor and was under the tutelage of the Stoic philosopher Seneca. While under his benevolent influence, Nero was not hostile to the Christians. The first five years of Nero's reign, he was a model emperor. So Paul would not have hesitated in appealing to Caesar at this time.

• **Acts 25: 13**

Who is King Agrippa?

Son of Herod Agrippa I of **Acts 12**

Great-grandson of Herod the Great

Bernice is his sister and consort

Emperor Claudius had committed to him the care of the temple and the appointment of the high priest

Interested in hearing Paul's case

He ruled from this time until his death in 100 A.D. He was the last of the Herods.

**Acts 25: 23**

The word for "pomp" is *phantasies* # 5325 from which we get the word "fantasy." It means a grand showy pageant.

The amazing thing here is the contrast in where the true power was. Festus, Agrippa and Bernice had an illusion of power, yet this poor prisoner standing before them in chains had the power of the Truth within him.

What illusion are you clinging to, which is really only a fantasy?

Why not cling only to the Way, the Truth and the Life?

• **Acts 26: 1- 18**

Paul portrays himself in **v. 4, 5** as a strict \_\_\_\_\_ .  
in **v. 9- 11** as a fanatical \_\_\_\_\_ .  
in **v. 16** as a minister and \_\_\_\_\_ .

*One thing that gave Paul such a powerful witness was the fact that he knew who he was and for what purpose he had been called.*

*Do you know who you are and for what purpose you have been called?*

*List the answers to both questions here.*

Would the Jews of Jerusalem know Paul?

**Look back at Acts 22: 3.**

Let's look first at Paul as a strict Pharisee.

**Read Phil. 3: 4- 6**

Now look at Paul as a fanatical persecutor of the Church.

**Phil. 3: 7**

Now look at Paul as an apostle, minister, commissioned by God.

**Phil. 3: 7- 10**

**Phil. 1:7-8, 12-14, 21**

The words in **Acts 26: 17**, "I am sending you" are **ego apostello se**

**ego= "I"**

**apostello= "send"**

**se = "you"**

*What English word do you see here which refers to the status of Paul?*

*Look at the beginning of each of Paul's letters and see how he referred to himself in the opening verses.*

*How many letters did Paul write?*

*So Paul, the Pharisee and persecutor of the Church saw himself as **an apostle**, sent by the Lord to do the work to which he was called. His identity changed because of a meeting on a dusty road.*

*Have you had an encounter with the Lord Who changes people?*

*Write here the ways He has changed your identity.*

- **Acts 26: 16**

"Minister"= *huperetes* # 5257 an under-rower *hupo*=under *eretes*= rower

*This word came to denote any subordinate acting under another's direction*

*Zodhiates tells us that this term describes "the subordinate official who waits to accomplish the commands of his superior."*

**Paul's identity became ANYTHING that pleased his Lord.**

*Are you content to be ANYTHING that pleases your Lord?*

**As this study of Acts winds down, it is imperative that you see a marked**

**change in your yieldedness to the Lord. We can always yield more to Him. So that is the intent of the student of the Lord – yes, to study is important, but the goal of study is to break free of you and me and to cling to the identity of Christ in us.**

***“I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who lives but Christ lives in me ...”***  
**Gal. 2: 20**

***“So I stand here to this day testifying ...” Acts 26: 22***  
**These words are very close to the words of Martin Luther as he stood testifying before a tribunal which very nearly cost him his life.**

“Since your majesty and your lordships desire a simple reply, I will answer without horns and without teeth. Unless I am convicted by scripture and plain reason--I do not accept the authority of popes and councils for they have contradicted each other--my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise, God help me. Amen.”

❖ **The importance of the Resurrection in the defense of Paul.**

- **Acts 26: 6**, Paul mentions the “Hope of Israel.” **Read Acts 24: 15; 23: 6** for more insight.  
What is the hope?

**Read 1 Cor. 15: 19**

Go back now and read **1 Cor. 15: 12 -20**

**What is his topic without actually saying it?**

**Peter in the Acts 2 sermon, focuses on this as well.**  
**Read Acts 2: 24-36.**

Peter quotes from Ps. 16: 8-11. So again we see that these truths have been there for the Jewish leaders to see, but they are blinded by their own way of seeing things.

- **Acts 26: 22**

*Paul mentions the fact that he is testifying to the Prophets and to Moses. Paul is using a similar argument to Stephen in Acts 7: 51-52.*

*Paul exposes the truth that the Jews are continuing in opposition to the work of God and His prophets.*

- **Acts 26: 23**

Here Paul is telling Agrippa that he simply teaches the truths that are written in the Prophets concerning the Messiah.

**Is. 52: 13**

**Is. 53: 4 -12**

**Is. 42: 1, 6**

**Is. 49: 6**

**Is. 60: 3**

*To reject the message of the gospel is to reject God's promises to Israel. This*

*message is the fulfillment of God's promises, repeatedly written in the Prophets*

*and the Law. Luke, in his narrative both in his Gospel account and here in Acts,*

*establishes this argument.*

**Luke 2: 25, 29-31**

**Luke 16: 16**

**Luke 24: 27, 44**

**Acts 3: 18-26**

- Acts 26: 24 - 27

That Paul specifically speaks of resurrection is contrasted with the outburst of Festus. As a Greek, Festus would take exception to resurrection. Greeks did not believe in a bodily resurrection since matter was considered evil and distasteful as a part of the afterlife.

**Look at Acts 17: 30 – 32**

❖ *The Resurrection is the heartbeat of the gospel message.*

*If you want to be the continuing heartbeat of Jesus, you must live the resurrected life.*

#### ➤ APPLICATION QUESTIONS

In Acts 25 and 26, in what way was Paul the judge and Agrippa and Festus were actually prisoners on trial?

What did Paul have to lose in order to gain salvation?

Go back through Acts 25 and 26, looking for the *sovereign hand of God*.

- For instance, the fact that Paul was a Roman citizen and only Romans citizens could appeal to Caesar.
- The providence of God in having this provocation established under Augustus Caesar and used by Paul.

#### **Acts 25: 13-26: 32**

Contrast the ungodly, sinful worldview of Agrippa and Bernice with the devotion and self-sacrifice of Paul. What a dramatic contrast to see the holy, humble Paul standing before the morally bankrupt, ambitious and corrupt family of the Herods, who for generations had been opposed to truth and righteousness.

**Paul's focus change in each defense:**

**In each of Paul's defenses, he stresses different things about his conversion.**

**In one he speaks more of his saving experience (Acts 22: 1-21), in another he speaks of the resurrection a great deal (24: 10-21), and another of his commissioning (Acts 26: 2-23 – esp. v. 15-18).**

**Why does he adapt his defenses in this way?**

***“Each time the story is told, the audience and therefore the purpose of telling it are different, this is naturally reflected in the detailed presentation.” Stott***

**This helps us understand a little better how the three synoptic gospels differ in their style, their selection of material and their purpose.**

How has this week's study impacted you as “the continuing heartbeat of Jesus?”

**Continue your list on Paul's Timeline.**

**Read your handout for this week's lesson.**

**Record your findings in the Appendix on the attributes of God.**

**Record your notes on the Holy Spirit from this week's lesson.**

**Choose a hymn which relates to this week's study. Sing it to the Lord.**



**Acts 27:21-26**

Paul leads the way in restoring hope and confidence.  
“Do not be afraid ... Keep up your courage.” **V. 24, 25**

**Where had Paul heard these words?**

**Acts 27:27-32**

**V. 31**, again Paul takes a role as leader and he is obeyed this time. *What can you learn from him here?*

**Acts 27:33-38**

What do you see Paul doing here?

*In a crisis, are you an encourager and resolver or do you throw everyone and everything off the “ship?”*

**Acts 27:39-44**

What was the end result of Paul’s leadership?

Paul is a prisoner on this ship, yet he did not count himself anyone’s prisoner except as the bondservant of the Lord. Paul was exactly where God wanted him, even in the midst of a storm.

276 lives were saved because the Holy Spirit used the willing life of a prisoner named Paul.

*In what situation do you see yourself as a prisoner?*

*Could you be in just the place in which the Lord can use you mightily?*

Kings and Queens, Governors and centurions, storms and snakes did not daunt or deter this man. His one passion was to be a true and faithful servant to his Master.

This is what gave him boldness and fearlessness. This single-minded goal is the salvation of each of us as we face our enemies and our storms.  
**“And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matt. 28:20**

*“Jesus will either be your Savior or your Judge.” W. Wiersbe*  
Don't delay: follow Him where He leads!

## **ACTS 28: ON TO ROME**

### **✓ Do Text Discovery of Acts 28**

#### **Acts 1:8**

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”*

Jerusalem had been a focus in Acts. Then Acts 8:1 ...

Samaria followed: 8:5-8, 25

Gentile lands: 8:26

Caesarea: 10:1; 11:19-21

Summary statement 12:24

Paul's Missionary Journeys

# 1 Chapter 13, 14

# 2 Chapter 15:36- 18:22

# 3 Chapter 18:23- 21:16

Acts 21:17 In Jerusalem, Paul is accused by Jews and held in prison.

Acts 22 –Paul's defense: “Brethren and fathers, hear my defense”

Acts 23 – Paul before the Sanhedrin

Acts 24:10-21 Paul before Felix

Acts 25: 7-12 Paul before Festus

Acts 26:1-29 Paul before Agrippa, Bernice, Festus and dignitaries

Acts 28:17-29 Paul's defense before Jews in Rome

When you think of Rome, what do you think of?

There has probably never been a city quite like Rome.

It was the capital of the Roman Empire for nearly 1, 000 years and during that time, it was literally the focal point of the civilized world.

**Acts 19:21**, “I must visit Rome.”

Jesus tells Paul, “As you have testified about Me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome.” **Acts 23:11**

In **Acts 27:24**, the angel in the storm on the ship tells Paul, “You must stand trial before Caesar.”

God had set Paul’s course – to Rome he would go.

- **Acts 28:1-6** What do you see about the people of Malta? (Malta means “refuge.”)

How does Paul respond to them?

- **Acts 28:7-10** What occurs here? Who is involved?

**Mark your notes on the following paragraphs.**

- **Acts 28:12**

Syracuse was founded as a Corinthian colony in 734 B. C. and passed under the control of Rome during the Second Punic War in 212 B.C.

Tradition tells us that at this time a church was established in this town. With only three days in this city, Paul made such an impact that a church was formed.

- **Acts 28:15**

The Appian Way was one of the great Roman roads of south Italy, named after Appius Claudius, responsible for its planning in 312 B.C.

It was typical in ancient times for a dignitary visiting a city to be greeted by an entourage representing that city. The dignitary would then be escorted the remainder of the way to the city (**Matt. 25:6; 1 Thes. 4:17**) The term here, *apantesis* # 529, is the technical term for such an official welcome.

The greeting of those coming out to see Paul is heartwarming. Paul was unsure as to how he would be received by the Romans since he had never met them.

- **Acts 28:16**

At last they came to Rome, entering the city by the Porta Capena (most likely entrance given the other details).

- **Acts 28:17-22**

Paul summons the leaders of the community to him.

Luke is the only NT writer to mention a Roman emperor, in fact he mentions three of them and alludes to a fourth.

There were a number of synagogues in Rome at the time Paul was there. The remains of some of them exist until this day.

- **Acts 28:23-29**

**This was not a monologue, but an opportunity for questions and discussion.**

How long did Paul preach?

What do you think he preached on?

The very next book in the Scriptures (**Romans**) gives us some insight. Paul had written this treatise on the gospel three years earlier to the church in Rome. We may suppose that he followed the general outline of Romans to this very community. The major teaching in Romans is: sin, salvation, sanctification, God's sovereignty and service.

- **Acts 28: 26-27**

- Paul quoted from Isaiah to the Jews who refused to hear of the Messiah. Jesus has used this same passage in His teachings concerning the kingdom of heaven (**Matt. 13:13-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10**) John applied this to Israel in **John 12:39-40**.

**Some closing focus points:**

- In **Acts 27:21-44**, Paul began as a prisoner and ended as the "captain" on the ship, giving life-preserving instructions.
- **Acts 28:23** Paul is no longer the prisoner here, instead he becomes the judge who summons people before him (**28:17**). His final word becomes the judgment against the Jews.
- **"What Luke emphasizes is not the final trial of Paul but the final trial of the Jews. The opinion of the Roman emperor is no longer important, but the status of the Jews before God again becomes the center of Luke's attention."** Baker
- **God's people had become like their idols: dumb and deaf. Ps. 115: 8; 135: 15-18**
- **Acts ends as it does because throughout this age until Jesus Christ returns the gospel door is open.**
- **The door to the Jewish community was closing. Not many Jews believed. But the door was opening to the Gentiles. Paul repeatedly told the Jews that he was sent to the Gentiles; he made this remark many times as they resisted his gospel message.**

- **Acts 28: 30-31**

In the two years Paul was imprisoned in Rome, he wrote: Philippians, Ephesians, Philemon and Colossians. It is unlikely, Luke implies, that if the gospel were illegal and subversive propaganda, it could have been proclaimed for two years at the heart of the empire by a Roman citizen who had appealed to Caesar and was waiting under guard for his case to be heard.

The ending of Acts

How did Luke want his history to end?

*“The subject of Luke’s narrative is not the lives of these servants of God but the gospel itself. Luke is concerned with how the gospel grew and expanded.”* Boice p.425

Luke set out to chronicle the expansion of Christianity from a small beginning in Judea to becoming a world religion and a force in many cities.

Boice: *“With the coming of the apostle Paul to Rome the first great missionary movement chronicled by Acts is completed. The empire has been reached with the gospel.”*

The last word in this book is *“unhindered” akolutos # 209*. The Greeks chose their word placement very carefully. The first and last words are placed where they are for emphasis. So this last word in Acts is crucial to its message. Luke’s final word is a legal term; with this word the record of Acts closes with a triumphant note: the victory of the word of God.

➤ **Go to Application Questions if you are not doing Digging Deeper.**

❖ **DIGGING DEEPER**

**Make your notes on each paragraph.**

- **Acts 27: 1-8**

**Mark the locations the ship followed in these verses.**

**An Adramyttian ship is one that hugs the coast as it sails – wary of venturing into open water.**

No one writer in the whole range of Greek and Roman literature has supplied us with so much information concerning the merchant-ships of the ancients as St. Luke in the narrative of St. Paul’s voyage to Rome. **Acts 27,28**. It is important to remember that he accomplished it in three ships: first, the Adramyttian vessel which took him from Caesarea to Myra, and which was probably a coasting-vessel of no great size, ([Acts 27:1-6](#)) secondly, the large Alexandrian corn-ship, in which he was wrecked on the coast of Malta ([Acts 27:6-28](#)):1; and thirdly, another large Alexandrian corn-ship, in which he sailed from Malta by Syracuse and Rhegium to Puteoli. ([Acts 28:11-13](#))

Smith’s Bible Dictionary

**Aristarchus, according to tradition, suffered execution under Nero, just as Paul did.**

**Some believe that Aristarchus and Luke identified themselves as Paul’s slaves so they could accompany him while Paul was under arrest.**

**Read:**

**Col. 4: 10**

**Philemon 24**

- **Acts 27: 9-12**

**Sailing was problematic and dangerous from mid-September to mid-November.**

**All sailing in the open sea ceased from mid-November until February.**

**The fast referred to in v. 9 is the Day of Atonement which is usually late September/ early October. Paul’s ship had missed the safe sailing time.**

**V. 10, Paul gives some advice. What is it?**

How does Paul know anything about sailing?

**Read 2 Cor. 11: 25**

- **Acts 27: 13-20**

**Notice the detailed shipping information Luke provides here, especially in this paragraph.**

The *Euraquilo* comes from two words: *euros* meaning “east wind” and *aquilo* meaning “north wind.”

The Syrtis was considered by sailors as the graveyard of ships off the North African coast.

- **Acts 27: 21- 26**

Why do you think these grizzled seafarers are willing to listen to this old Jewish rabbi now?

What does that tell you about the receptivity of people in duress?

- **Acts 27: 27-32**

It has been fourteen days since they left Fair Havens. Describe what the Lord has accomplished in these fourteen days.

What does that tell you about when you face similar difficulties and it seems *too long* for you?

- **Acts 27: 33-44**

Up to this point (**27: 1-33 and following**) how have you seen Paul function as a leader?

- **Acts 28: 1-6**

**The people of Malta show themselves to be gracious hosts.**

**Were these people Christians?**

**Yet they were ready to hear the gospel and respond. Their hearts had been prepared.**

**These pagans from Malta have behaved better than many Christians.**

**God expects Christian leaders and all believers to show hospitality.**

**Read:**

**1 Tim 3: 2**

**Titus 1: 8**

**Rom. 12: 13**

**Heb. 13: 2**

**1 Pet. 4: 9**

**In V. 3, what do you see Paul doing?**

**In what way does he model the example of Christ here?**

**Read:**

**Mark 10: 45**

**John 13: 3ff**

- **Acts 28: 7-11**

**In what way was Paul a blessing to the people of this island?**

**Gen. 12: 3**

**Acts 28: 7**

**“Chief official” is the exact technical term for the person who represented Rome in that place.**

**In almost every city Paul visited, Luke mentions the person who was the magistrate in charge. He does this with great care and accuracy, making sure to record their names and titles with utmost detail.**

Publius' father was sick with probably Malta fever which is a gastric fever caused by a microbe found in the milk of goats found on this island. The symptoms from this disease can last four months on the average but can last for years. It was identified in 1887.

Paul and passengers stayed on Malta for 3 months. All their provisions had been discarded overboard so they had nothing. The islanders graciously gave them supplies on which to live.

*Tradition tells us that after three months of preaching, a church was established on Malta and Publius become the pastor.*

**Do you really think this shipwreck was an accident?**

- **Acts 28: 12-15**

**Mark the cities that are visited.**

**Puteoli is almost 150 miles from Rome.**

**V. 14** tells us that some brethren met them there. How are there brethren already in Puteoli?

**V. 15** Market of Appius is 43 miles from Rome. Three Inns is 33 miles from Rome. These devoted Christians walked the whole way!  
What would this say to Paul?

Have you demonstrated such devotion to the Lord by encouraging someone lately?

- **Acts 28: 16**

What does this stand-alone verse say to you?

- **Acts 28: 17-22**

**Why does Paul call the Jews to talk with them?**

**What does this tell you?**

- **Acts 28: 23-29**

**What is the kingdom of God to which Paul refers here?**

**What was the response of the people?**

- **Acts 28: 30, 31**

**Read the following and relate to these two verses.**

**Acts 14: 4**

**Acts 17: 4-5**

**Acts 18: 6-8**

**Acts 19: 8-9**

**Jer. 7: 25-26**

**Matt. 21: 33-41**

### **Closing Applications on Acts: Reality/ shadow**

#### **Eph. 2:2-6**

Paul understood as he stood before Governors and Kings that truly the One before Whom he stood was in reality, God Himself.

How did Paul know how to answer Festus and Agrippa?

The Holy Spirit within him told him what to say.

Was this something new? Was Paul the only one who had this ability?

No, Jesus had told His disciples not to fear when they stood before those who would question them.

*“And you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say. For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father Who speaks in you.”* **Matt. 10:18-20**

When Paul was interrupted by Festus with an insult, Paul was not thrown off. He kept his focus because he had one goal: to honor the Lord. So he kept his focus and with intention, he turned to Agrippa and made a proposition to him: *“King Agrippa, do you believe the Prophets? I know that you do.”* By the line of reasoning Paul was trying to direct Agrippa to the promised Messiah. But Agrippa was more concerned with his **shadow** than with the **reality** of who he was.

- ❖ Where are you living ... in the shadows or in the reality of who you truly are?
  
- ❖ How do you learn to walk in life and not in the shadows?

### **Truth**

So much in Scripture refers to Truth. The Greek word for “Truth” is *altheia* # 225, it means truth, reality, unveiled reality lying at the basis of and agreeing with an appearance; the manifested, the veritable essence of matter. Truth as evidenced in relation to facts; purity from all error or falsehood

God is the only reality we have. By tapping into the oneness we have with Him, we begin to **truly see** and **hear** and **taste** and **smell**. Our thoughts become His thoughts. What we **see** is from His perspective not the perspective of a myopic, near-sighted shadow.

❖ Again, how do you gain this perspective of life?

It all revolves around **Romans 12:1, 2**

*“Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.  
And do not be conformed to this world (of shadows), but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may **prove what the will of God is**, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”*

Paul knew what the will of God was because Paul was a living sacrifice and his thinking was not **clouded** by his own selfish desires. Because his desires were not his own. What Paul desired more than anything was what God desired.

✓ This also relates to **Heb. 12:1, 2**

*“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,  
Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*

**Heb. 12:3** begins with “*Consider Him ...*” This is what we are called to do: consider Jesus. Consider Jesus when you talk, walk, think, cook, eat, sleep, laugh, watch TV, play, work. Consider Jesus with every breath you take. This is not hard. This is life in the **reality** that the Father is calling you to live. Life in the **shadows** is not what He intends for you.

Get out of the shadows and truly live.

As Paul faced his accusers, as he traveled to foreign lands, as he was taken places others chose to take him, he could rest in the fact that God was the One truly in control of his life, not those who had the whips, ropes and chains.

When he is on the open seas for 14 days with no sunlight to navigate by, Paul has the SONlight to steady his course. **Acts 27:18, 20, 24, 25, 27**

**Before you can live in reality, you must possess a real life. The only *real life* worth living is the life of Christ.**

Look at

**John 1: 3-5**

**John 5:26**

**John 11:25**

**John 14: 6**

**1 John 1: 1, 2**

If you want to live in the Sonlight, then get out of the shadows!!  
Make the decision to get to know your God, no matter the cost.  
Sunday mornings will not cut it. You must give yourself to Him, the way you give yourself to whatever you hold most precious. Then and only then, will you be living in the Light and not in the shadows. If you do this, life will take on meaning and purpose. Trials will still come, but they will not determine your course. You have one captain, one pilot and HE IS NOT THE CO-PILOT! He is in charge! Let Him set the course, He knows where He is going, He has been there before.

## ***Epilogue***

What happened to Paul?

The church historian Eusebius tells us that Paul was released from this imprisonment and later returned to Rome, after the great fire of 64 A.D. Nero blamed the fire on the Christians. During this great hostility to the Christians, Paul was again arrested, imprisoned and eventually martyred. We see a different description of his imprisonment in **2 Timothy** than what is recorded here in **Acts**. He is alone and abandoned; his surroundings are much more meager; his freedom is greatly curtailed; he is not optimistic that he will see anyone again; he is preparing to be offered up as a sacrifice.

- In **Acts**, he has guests; he is on friendly terms with his guards; his needs are met; he is confident that he will see others; he has his own apartment; **Acts 28:31** tells us that he was *unhindered* in his proclamation of the gospel.

A list of those he knew by name, at least, is recorded in **Rom. 16**.

Yet in what seems to be Paul's later imprisonment, Paul is apparently abandoned by many Christians. **2 Tim 4** As time went on in Rome, people had grown cold toward Paul and he was alone. People run hot and cold.

What Acts teaches us ...      *Acts reveals to us:*  
The church's source of power \_\_\_\_\_

The pattern of blessing for the church \_\_\_\_\_

The church's message \_\_\_\_\_

The perils to the church \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

The church's priorities \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Answers are on next page

Choose the best answer from the list.

*Principles of Evangelism from Acts*

1. Paul preached the gospel whenever and wherever he had opportunity.
2. The deliverer of the gospel must be clothed in humility.
3. Paul preached biblically and doctrinally.
4. Paul never wasted opportunity.
5. Paul preached tirelessly and incessantly.
6. Paul preached to everyone – both Jews and Gentiles.
7. Paul preached Jesus Christ as Lord, Savior and Messiah.

**The final chapter of Acts is both an end and a beginning. The story of the church did not end with Paul's death or that of the last surviving apostle. These men and women passed the baton to the next generation of leaders who in turn handed it to the one following them. As a result the Church's history is still being written today.**

**We are connected to this early church; they are a part of our spiritual DNA; our very tissue, the fiber of who we are relates to them. They are not zoo animals and we are looking in on them.**

**This Bible is real. And this is who we are – either affiliated with those devoted to the Lord or affiliated with those devoted to self.**

**It's the same ole story.**

**What is your part?**

**As Acts ends, we see that "The Story" is not over. We each play a role in the unfolding of the Acts of the Holy Spirit. Do not play your part in the shadows, but in the full light of the Son Whom you worship.**

➤ **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

1. **Imagine being the soldier manacled to Paul all day long. People coming and going, constantly hearing about Jesus, constantly hearing Paul teach, constantly hearing Paul pray.**

**What impact do you think that would have on a soldier?**

**Do you think God hand-picked each soldier?**

**2. Now that you have completed this study on Acts, has your appreciation for the Church deepened?**

**How?**

**3. What have you seen over the last weeks about the Holy Spirit that can have a lasting impact on your walk with Christ?**

**4. How does your heart beat more for Christ now?**

**5. Peter and Paul are no longer here. You are here. One day you will not be here.**

**Look at the lyrics to the hymn for this week, "Find Us Faithful."**

**What legacy do you want to leave?**

**How do you want to be found faithful?**

**Acts reveal to us (Answers not in order)**

**Gospel of Jesus Christ – resurrection life**

**The Holy Spirit**

**Sin from within/False teachers from without**

**Walking in the Spirit**

**Teach the Word to those who know Christ/ Preach the gospel to those who do not know Christ**

**Continue your list on Paul's Timeline.**

**Read your last Doctrine handout.**

**Record your findings in the Appendix on the attributes of God.**

**Record your findings on the Holy Spirit.**

## Find Us Faithful

We're pilgrims on the journey of the narrow road  
And those who've gone before us line the way  
Cheering on the faithful, encouraging the weary  
Their lives a stirring testament to God's sustaining grace

Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses  
Let us run the race not only for the prize  
But as those who've gone before us, let us leave to those behind us  
The heritage of faithfulness passed on through godly lives

Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful  
May the fire of our devotion light their way  
May the footprints that we leave, lead them to believe  
And the lives we live inspire them to obey  
Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful

After all our hopes and dreams have come and gone  
And our children sift through all we've left behind  
May the clues that they discover and the memories they uncover  
Become the light that leads them to the road we each must find

Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful  
May the fire of our devotion light their way  
May the footprints that we leave, lead them to believe  
And the lives we live inspire them to obey

Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful  
May the fire of our devotion light their way  
May the footprints that we leave, lead them to believe  
And the lives we live inspire them to obey  
Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful  
Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful

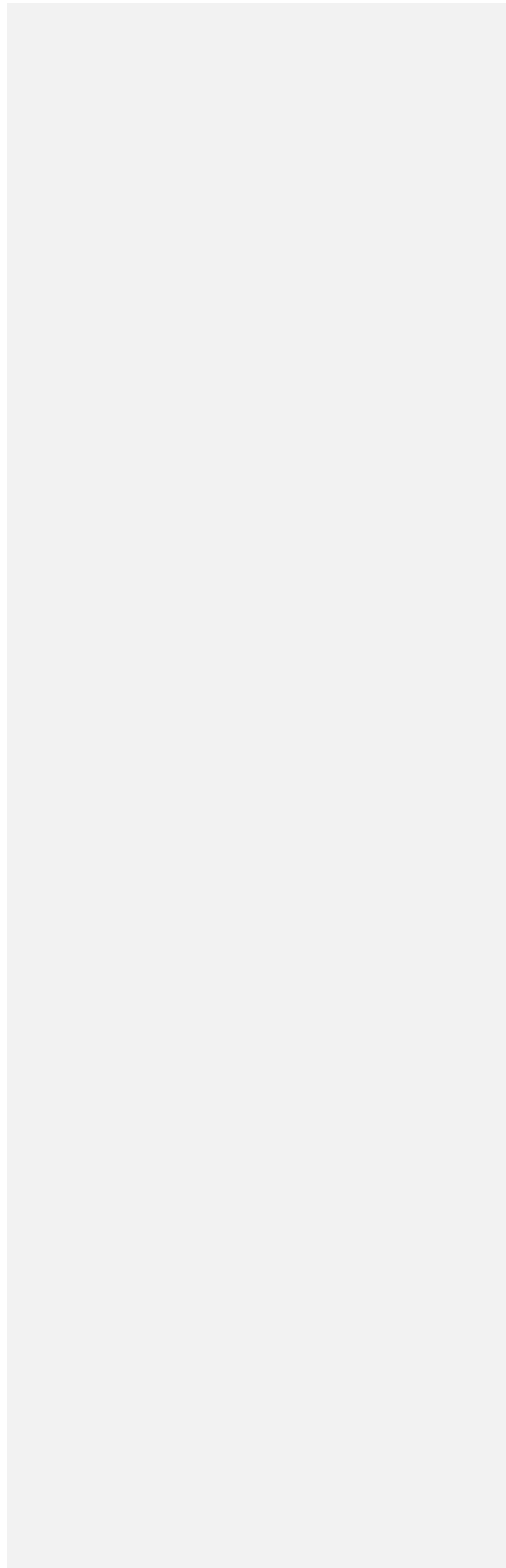
THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ACTS

**YOUR LIST ON THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD**

**Time**

**Peter's Timeline  
Place**

**Event**



Time	Paul's Timeline Place	Event
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## STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

Introduction: The Christian Mission 1:1-2:41

PART 1 The Christian Mission to the Jewish World 2:42-12:24

Panel 1 The Earliest Days of the Church at Jerusalem 2:42-6:7

Panel 2 Critical Events in the Lives of Three Pivotal Figures 6:8-9:31

Panel 3 Advances of the Gospel in Palestine-Syria 9:32-12:24

PART 2 The Christian Mission to the Gentile World 12:25-28:31

Panel 4 The First Missionary Journey and the Jerusalem Council 12:25-16:5

Panel 5 The Second and Third Missionary Journeys 16:6-19:20

Panel 6 To Jerusalem and Then to Rome 19:21-28:31

*Each section contains a summary report: 2:46, 47; 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:20; 28:30, 31*

## NARRATIVE IN THE BIBLE

***The Bible contains more of the type of literature called “narrative” than it does of any other literary type.***

Narratives are stories. The Bible contains what we often hear called God’s story - a story that is utterly true, crucially important and often complex. It is a magnificent story, grander than the greatest epic, richer in plot and more significant in its characters and descriptions than any humanly composed story could ever be.

### Three levels of Old Testament Narratives

Top level: the whole universal plan of God worked out through His creation

*Initial creation; fall of humanity; power and ubiquity of sin; the need for redemption; Christ’s incarnation and sacrifice*

Middle level: center on Israel

*The call of Abraham; the patriarchs; God’s deliverance from Egypt*

Bottom level: individual narratives that make up the other two levels

*Joseph’s brothers selling him into bondage; Gideon’s fleece; Samson and Delilah; David’s adultery*

### PRINCIPLES FOR INTERPRETING NARRATIVES

1. *An Old Testament narrative usually does not directly teach a doctrine.*
2. *An Old Testament narrative usually illustrates a doctrine or doctrines taught propositionally elsewhere.*
3. *Narratives record what happened-not necessarily what should have happened or what ought to happen every time. Therefore, not every narrative has an individual identifiable moral of the story.*
4. *What people do in narratives is not necessarily a good example for us. Frequently, it is just the opposite.*
5. *Most of the characters in Old Testament narratives are far from perfect and their actions are, too.*
6. *We are not always told at the end of a narrative whether what happened was good or bad. We are expected to be able to judge that on the basis of what God has taught us directly and categorically already in the Scripture.*
7. *All narratives are selective and incomplete. Not all the relevant details are always given (John 21:25). What does appear in the narrative is everything that the inspired author thought important for us to know.*
8. *Narratives are not written to answer all our theological questions. They have particular, specific limited purposes and deal with certain issues, leaving others to be dealt with elsewhere, in other ways.*
9. *Narratives may teach either explicitly (by clearly stating something) or implicitly (by clearly implying something without actually stating it).*
10. *In the final analysis, God is the hero of all biblical narratives.*

### Some Final Cautions

1. Allegorizing: instead of concentrating on the clear meaning, pushing another meaning beyond the text.
2. Decontextualizing: ignoring the full historical and literary contexts, and often the individual narrative, instead focusing on small units and missing the intended message.
3. False Combination: combining elements and making a point of the combination even though the elements themselves are not directly connected in the passage itself.  
Example: Ps 23 Because David says that he will dwell in God's house forever and God has prepared him a table in the presence of his enemies ... therefore David's enemies, our enemies, are in the household of faith, the Church.
4. Redefinition: the plain meaning of the text leaves people cold, producing no immediate spiritual delight or saying something they do not want to hear, they are often tempted to redefine it to mean something else.
5. Extracanonial authority: claims of revealing scriptural truths not otherwise knowable. Expressions of belief that one can unlock the mysteries of the Bible. Cults operate on the basis of extracanonial authority.

No Bible narrative was written specifically about you. They are written to glorify God. Your task is to learn God's Word from the narrative and obey what God calls you to do in the light of what is told. Narratives are precious to us because they so vividly demonstrate God's involvement in the world and illustrate His principles and calling.

## DOCTRINE

### **WHAT ARE DOCTRINES? DO WE NEED TO KNOW DOCTRINE?**

The church is in desperate need at this time to learn, understand and teach concerning the doctrines for which many have died, including our Lord.

Our Lord and Savior taught doctrine constantly. He saw the value in working it into the fiber of His followers, so we must guard this teaching as well.

The Sermon on the Mount is a veritable systematic theology; it teaches us who is part of the kingdom of heaven.

As Jesus walked with His disciples, He taught them how the Pharisees had invalidated the law of God. He challenged their blind reverence to those who would put them in spiritual slavery.

Doctrine was extremely important to the mission of our Lord.

*Didache* Greek for doctrine simply means “teaching or instruction.”

*Didaskalia* Greek for “that which is taught, doctrine.”

Generally, *didache* means the substance of teaching and *didaskalia* the act of teaching.

“We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and yet, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.” Acts 5:28

Eph. 4:14 states, “We are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming.”

“Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.” Rom. 16:17

“As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines.” 1 Tim.1:3

“In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith and of the sound doctrine which you have been following.” 1 Tim. 4:6

“If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing ...” 1 Tim.6:3

“Holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict... But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine... not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.” Tit. 1:9; 2:1, 10

- For believers today, the importance of doctrine is just as crucial as it was in the times of the early church. Each generation passes to the next a more corrupt version of truth or a more uncontaminated rendering of the gospel. Without sound doctrine, we are at the mercy of those with a superior rhetoric regardless of their virtue and accuracy.

The great safety in studying doctrine is the surety that truth will always substantiate truth in the scriptures. In other words, one teaching will complement and never contradict another

teaching. If there appears to be contradiction, there must be an inconsistency in the interpretation because scripture will bear out scripture.

Doctrine protects the believer from error, but there is an error even when one knows sound doctrine that must be avoided. Doctrine must always be combined with practice. When one thinks rightly, his belief must be reflected in his behavior.

The study of doctrine is a lifelong pursuit, not of knowledge but of the Teacher Himself.

## **HOW TO FIND DOCTRINE**

After considerable basic observation, now you need to move on to discovering the doctrines within your text. Two opposing errors in regard to doctrine can sideline you. People either think they already know doctrine and they take for granted these truths or people think the doctrines are above them or worse, that doctrines are not useful.

A start with doctrinal (theological) truths is always focused on what you learn about God. You may discover His power, His creative work as Maker, His mercy, His covenant love.

- Record what you see about Who God is. For instance, in **Psalm 95: 3-5**, we see that God is sovereign over all. **Ps. 95: 6** reveals God as our Maker and results in our kneeling before Him.

I mark what I see about God in the right hand column of the text analysis in red.

Later you will have a considerable “library” on the doctrine of God!

- Now move on to mark any doctrines you see about Christ or the Holy Spirit.
- Now mark any **teachings** (that’s what a doctrine is, remember?) on any other issue the writer of Scripture is discussing. Sin, salvation, faith, brotherly love, sanctification, redemption, forgiveness, knowledge, the Law, miracles, the resurrection, prophecy, etc. – doctrine is everywhere! Find it and learn of your God’s ways.

- A few points on locating and learning from doctrine
- Do not read more into the text than is there – God does not need any help!
- Ask yourself every time you see God’s name mentioned, “What did I learn about God here?”

- As you read the text with focus, ask yourself the 5 WH and you will find many doctrines. Who is this about? Where do they go to worship? When is the Lord returning? Why did David's sin of adultery with Bathsheba lead to murder? (As you study sin, you see that it always grows and corrupts until an end is put to that sin.) How does someone become a Christian?
- Doctrinal truths stand in opposition to the world's view
- Doctrinal truths are your protection against false teaching
- Some doctrinal truths are non-negotiable (the resurrection, Deity of Christ, the cross as the only way to salvation)
- Some doctrines continue to be debated among true believers of differing persuasions (predestination, certain gifts, the role of women in the church). These are important issues but do not break fellowship with fellow believers over these interpretations of Scripture. The enemy loves nothing more than to cause disunity in a body of believers. If he cannot kill you, he will try and sideline you.

**Do not become obsessed with doctrine; but feel free to become obsessed with the God of our doctrinal faith.**

***He should be our One True Obsession!***

A few doctrines you will find in Scripture repeated throughout:

Doctrine of the Church  
 Doctrine of God  
 Doctrine of Jesus Christ  
 Doctrine of the Holy Spirit  
 Doctrine of Man  
 Doctrine of the Creation  
 Doctrine of the Fall  
 Doctrine of Sin  
 Doctrine of End Times  
 Doctrine of Grace  
 Doctrine of Justification  
 Doctrine of Law  
 Doctrine of the Resurrection

Doctrine of Sanctification  
Doctrine of Satan  
Doctrine of Spiritual Gifts



## THE CHURCH AS CHRIST INTENDS IT

The Church is not a club.

The Church is not a group of people joined around a list of rules.

The Church is not the Kingdom of God.

The Church is not a building.

The Church is not located on a particular street with a particular denomination attached to it.

**Ask five people what “church” means and you will get five different answers.**

**So how do we come to an accurate, biblical, God-honoring understanding of this crucial word?**

➤ **So what is the Church?**

When answering the “what is?” question, it is usually helpful to develop a **definition**.

One of the clearest definitions usually comes from the original language of the word.

Here the word in the New Testament Greek is most times: *ekklesia*.

### ***Ekklesia***

This word can refer to an individual church or a group of churches

It can refer to all believers in a given city: **Acts 8: 1; 13: 1**

Paul Coenen tells us that “*In Acts too, as in Paul, the **ekklesia** is ultimately one. Admittedly, it appears only as it gathers in particular places (Acts 14: 27). But it always implies the totality.*”

Luke never uses *ekklesia* in his Gospel but employs the word 24 times in **Acts**. This is significant as it indicates Luke’s belief that the Church was not actually present until the period covered in Acts.

Paul uses the word *ekklesia* more than any New Testament author.

- The Church is universal in nature. **Matt. 16: 18; Eph. 1: 22-23**  
Also **1 Cor. 10: 32; 11: 22; 12: 28; Col. 1: 18, 24**

*“The Church includes all persons anywhere in the world who are savingly related to Christ. It also includes all who have lived and been part of His body, and all who will live and be part of His body.”* Erickson

**Old Testament words are:**

*Qahal* – stems from a word meaning “to assemble” **Deut. 9: 10; 10: 4; 23:1-3**

*‘edah* – refers to the people, particularly as “gathered before the tent of meeting.” That the term first occurs in **Exodus 12: 3**, suggests that the “*congregation of Israel came into being with the command to celebrate the Passover and leave Egypt... qahal is the ceremonial expression for the assembly that results from the covenant.*” Millard Erickson Christian Theology

In the Old Testament, God chose a particular people; He did not choose an existing nation but instead, he created a people for His own. **Ex. 15: 16** calls the people of Israel, “Your people ... the people whom You have purchased.”

Did you ever wonder “What was the big deal with Abraham and Sarai being barren for so long?”

When God raised up a people of His own He did not adopt an existing nation as His own but He brought into being a totally new people. Through a miraculous conception and birth (Isaac) God created the Hebrew nation!

*“For Israel the covenant was the Abrahamic covenant; for the church it is the new covenant wrought and established by Christ.”* **2 Cor. 3: 3-18**

***Biblical Images of the Church***

**The Bible uses a number of images to describe the Church.**

The temple of the Holy Spirit

The body of Christ

The Bride of Christ

One of the problems with understanding the Church is our problem with understanding God.

We are more interested in what God does than with Who God is. What is God like?

In regard to the Church, this carries over to our understanding of the Church. We are more aware of the mission of the Church than the identity of the Church. Because the Church is

dynamic, we must seek to understand and come to terms with the true identity of the Church. Following with our discussion of what the Church is not – the Church is not static.

We are forever seeing the Church adapting, reaching people with the same message (the gospel) but with ever changing methods. Language is dynamic and if you use a word that meant something 30 years ago that now is a divisive word, you can quickly see the dynamic nature of words! The same is true of the Church. What may have been effective and poignant 30 years ago, may no longer have any impact. We must be sensitive to the growing and changing world in order to be a dynamic Church. This does not mean that we sacrifice or compromise the essentials of our faith. But just as Jesus adapted His parables to the people to whom He spoke, we must adapt to our surroundings as well. We must not be lazy and do what we have always done.

**What distinguishes the Church as the Church?**

**What qualifies the Church to be called the Church?**

### **The Visible Church and the Invisible Church**

**The Visible Church is made up of the people who profess belief in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. They are aligned within a particular group of professing believers, participating in the sacraments instituted by our Lord.**

**The Invisible Church is made up of those known by God to be His own.**

Must a Christian Be a Part of the Visible Church?

**Acts 2: 47** would indicate that assembling together with other believers is the early standard of the Church. Yet there is never any indication that salvation is dependent on connectedness with a group of believers. **Acts 2: 37; 16: 30** tell us what is necessary in regard to faith: “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.”

So in these instances, we see the precedence of the invisible Church. In other words, the faith of each individual person qualifies them for entrance into the family of God, not membership in a church.

*Membership in a visible church is no guarantee of justification in God's sight.* Yet, God has clearly encouraged the assembling together of believers. From this assembly, the Church is strengthened and humbled. God has chosen the “belonging” of one another to be the basis for growth and ministry for individuals and for communities of believers.

Read the Parable of the weeds amid the wheat (**Matt. 13: 24-43**) and you will see that the Lord instructs us to abide with all professed disciples. He tells us that He knows those who are His and we are to leave this to Him to reveal at the proper time. **2 Tim. 2: 19**

*“Christianity is a corporate matter, and the Christian life can be fully realized only in relationship to others.”* Erickson

**Eph. 5: 32** – Christ and the Church are a great mystery.

The Church makes known the manifold wisdom of God. **Eph. 3: 10**

The Church will glorify Christ to all generations **Eph. 3: 21**

The Church is subject to Christ. **5: 24**

The Church will be presented before Christ. **5: 27**

Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her. **5: 25**

Specifically the image of Christ and His Church, His Bride emphasizes that the Church is the locus of Christ’s activity now just as was His physical body when He ministered on earth.

*“The image of the body of Christ also speaks of the interconnectedness between all the persons who make up the Church.”* Erickson

**Col. 2: 9-10** makes it clear that Christ is Lord of the Church.

Just as a human body functions as a unit of one, so the Body of Christ must strive to maintain a balanced, healthy unison with all parts. When the human body is not functioning well, even in one area, the body is weakened and less effective overall. So the Body of Christ is to be characterized by genuine fellowship – not a club mentality but an intimate understanding of one another and the interrelatedness of a shared life.

### **How Do You Know When the Body of Christ is Doing Well?**

When Christ left His disciples, He told them that the Holy Spirit would come to them and equip them. Today we know when the Body of Christ is well by the fruit of the Spirit being evident in the midst of His people: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. When these fruit are present, the Body is well.

**Gal. 5: 22, 23**

When you examine the sermon of Peter in **Acts 2**, it is not a marvel of homiletical perfection. What did occur at Pentecost was ***the power of the Holy Spirit*** in conjunction with Peter's willingness to be the Lord's instrument, ***the Lord's continuing heartbeat***.

The Church was brought into being to carry on the ministry of the Lord which is to do what He did on earth as though He were still here.

The purpose of the Church must follow the biblical template which is to equip the saints as they go about their lives in the world. Without proper training in righteousness, disciples of Christ will be ill equipped and likely succumb to the world's pitfalls. Believers in the early Church would gather together to worship and be edified; then they would go forth to reach the lost in the world.

- **Unity within the Church**

**Read John 10: 16; 17: 21, 23 and see the importance our Lord places on unity among His followers.**

**Paul also writes a great deal on this subject. 1 Cor. 1: 2, 10, 13; Eph. 4: 3, 4-6, 12, 13; Phil. 2: 2**

**Eph. 4: 4** "There is one body."

*"Christ is the head of the church, His body, of which He is the Savior."* **Eph. 5: 23**

- **Purity is Crucial to the Church**

**Eph. 5: 25- 27** says that Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the Church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless."

- **True and False Churches**

**What constitutes a True Church?**

**The marks of the Church which the Lord instituted are born out of His own ministry.**

**The Lord instituted the sacraments of baptism and communion (Lord's Supper). A true church will observe these practices.**

**The Augsburg Confession (1530)** defines the church as, *"the congregation of saints in which the gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments rightly administered."*

The true church will focus on worship (**Col. 3: 16; Eph. 5: 16-19**), equipping the saints (**Col. 1: 28; Eph. 4: 12-13**), and reaching out to the lost (**Matt. 28: 18-20; Luke 6: 35-36**).

It is the Holy Spirit Who provides power for the Church. **Acts 1:8**

The True Church will exhibit the fruit of the Spirit as described in **Gal. 5: 22, 23**.

*“The purity of the church is its degree of freedom from wrong doctrine and conduct, and its degree of conformity to God’s revealed will for the church.”*

Wayne Grudem [Systematic Theology](#)

**The factors that contribute to a pure Church, according to Wayne Grudem, are the following:**

- 1. Biblical doctrine**
- 2. Proper use of the sacraments**
- 3. Right use of church discipline**
- 4. Genuine worship**
- 5. Effective prayer**
- 6. Effective witness**
- 7. Effective fellowship**
- 8. Biblical church government**
- 9. Spiritual power in ministry**
- 10. Personal holiness of life among members**
- 11. Care for the poor**
- 12. Love for Christ**

#### **False Churches**

Churches that teach a gospel of works-righteousness are false churches. **Gal. 3: 1-6; Rom. 3: 23-26**

Churches that are man-centered and not God-centered are humanistic and follow philosophy instead of the Lord. **Col. 2: 4, 8 -12, 22, 23; 1 Cor. 1: 18-31; Eph. 4: 14-16**

**Rev. 2: 9; 3:9** exposes the “synagogue of Satan.”

**Titus 1: 10, 11** speaks of silencing the rebellious deceivers who upset believers.

**2 Tim. 3: 1-8** gives a list of false ones to be avoided by the true believer.

**Jude 19** declares those who cause divisions to be worldly minded and devoid of the Spirit.

**Matt. 13: 24-43** shows us that the weeds live among the true wheat.

**Matt. 25: 31-46** gives us the teaching from Christ on the sheep and the goats.

**Jesus was well aware of the false ones following Him for their various reasons. But we are reminded that “the Lord knows those who are His.” 2 Tim. 2: 19**

### **Is the Church the Same as the Kingdom of God?**

1. The Church is not the kingdom.
2. The kingdom creates the Church.
3. The Church witnesses to the kingdom.
4. The Church is the instrument of the kingdom.
5. The Church is the custodian of the kingdom.

*“The Church is a manifestation of the kingdom or reign of God, the form it takes on earth in our time... The kingdom can be found wherever God rules in human hearts. But more than that, it is found wherever His will is done.”*

Erickson

For example, the angels are a part of God’s kingdom since they are responsive to His will. Yet they have never been a part of His Church.

Ultimately, the kingdom is to be thought of as the reign of God.

### **The Gospel is Central to the Church**

In the letters of Paul, we see that he viewed the gospel as centering on Jesus Christ and what God has done through Him. The main points of the gospel are the fact that Jesus is the Son of God yet fully man, He died for our sins, was buried and rose from the dead, appeared to many and will return to administer judgment to the world.

Many of the letters in the Scriptures are written to refute error in the teaching of the newly planted churches. For instance, the church at Galatia was falling into works religion. They were beginning to follow a false gospel message. Justification by faith alone was being supplanted and reliance on what a human can offer God was gaining ground as the means of salvation.

#### **❖ What gospel do you believe?**

**Just any gospel message will not do!**

**2 Tim. 1: 9, 10** *“Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, Who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”*

## Church Government

### Which type of governing system is biblical?

*“There is so much variation in the descriptions of the New Testament churches that we cannot discover an authoritative pattern. We must therefore turn to the principles we find in the New Testament, and attempt to construct our governmental system upon them.”*

Erickson

But as you approach the Scriptures, in particular **Acts** and the letters of the apostles Peter and Paul, you will find some organization within the local church. In particular, deacons, elders, overseers, pastors, shepherds and prophets are mentioned. Also in Romans, Ephesians, 1 Corinthians and 1 Peter the gifts within the Body of Christ are spread out among the believers – not one single leader possesses all the gifts.

Also the issue of **church discipline** is addressed in several places: **1 Cor. 5: 1-13; Matt. 18: 17**

Some structure is needed as we see in Scripture that God is a God of order. **1 Cor. 14: 33**

## Two Critical Rites within the Church

**Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are the sacraments in which professing believers participate.**

### ➤ **Baptism**

The mode of baptism has been discussed for many centuries. Some churches follow the idea of baptism which is far more than a symbol. Others see baptism as an act of obedience in which they follow the example of their Lord. Some see baptism as the New Testament equivalent of circumcision – a sign of the covenant seal comparable to the Old Testament identification as belonging to God. Immersion or sprinkling/ believers or infants/ symbolic or saving, all of these viewpoints must be substantiated by Scripture and not by tradition.

Review the following Scriptures prayerfully before you establish your views of baptism.

**Matt. 28: 18-20**

**Rom. 6: 1-11**

**Col. 2: 11-12**

**Titus 3: 5**

**1 Pet. 3: 18-22**

**Heb. 9: 13, 14**

- The Lord's intent from the beginning, with circumcision and with baptism, has been a conversion of the heart, not the flesh.

**Deut. 10: 16; 30: 6; Jer. 4: 4; 9: 25, 26; Rom. 2: 29; Col. 2: 11, 12**

➤ **The Lord's Supper**

This was a rite established by the Lord Himself. **Matt. 26: 26-28; Mark 14: 22-24; Luke 22: 19-20; 1 Cor. 11: 23-29**

**Why would Jesus ask His followers to remember Him by using this practice?**

**The observance of this special meal was a form of proclamation. This repeated action declares the observer's belief in the death and resurrection of their Lord and also the return of the Coming King and Judge. It is very important to the message of our faith that we remember His return. But by focusing on the event of His next appearing, we are ushered into a sense of reverence and urgency. Reverence, because He is King of kings and Lord of lords; urgency, because when He comes again, He will come as Judge. By observing the Lord's Supper, we are reminded of His death which freed us from sin and His return which will mean eternal destruction for those outside of His covenant.**

**As to who participates in the Lord's Supper, we need to reflect the ordinance as it was originally implemented. Those who followed Jesus in faith were part of this observance. This meal was not offered to the crowds of people who came to Jesus.**

*"Rather the Last Supper was shared within the intimate gathering of those most fully committed to Christ." Erickson*

**Also read 1 Cor. 10: 15-17.**

**The subject of the Church is a life-long pursuit. These few pages are a small glimpse into the "mystery" of the Church. How privileged we are to share in this amazing and holy family!**

**Ponder the truths of the Church and you will catch a glimpse of the plan the Lord has had all along. The Church – the Body of Christ, the Bride of**

**Christ, the Temple of God – the reason the Lord ever came to earth to claim His inheritance!**

*“Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.*

*And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”*

**Rev. 21: 1-4**

## COVENANT

*Berith*: cutting (Hebrew)

*Diatheke*: disposition, covenant, testament or will (Greek)

According to Unger's Bible Dictionary, a covenant is a compact between man and man; either between tribes or nations; or between individuals in which each party bound himself to fulfill certain conditions, and was promised certain advantages; also it refers to a compact between God and man. As man is not in the position of an independent covenanting party, such a covenant is not strictly a mutual compact, but a promise on the part of God to arrange His providences for the welfare of those who should render Him obedience.

There are many covenants mentioned in the Bible: with Noah, with Abraham, with David, with Israel and the new covenant. Covenants were usually sealed with an oath and confirmed by the sacrifice of an animal which depicted the future of either party if they were to break the covenant. At times a covenant meal was involved or the giving of salt.

### Signs

Signs are involved with different covenants. With Noah, the rainbow was a sign of God's promise to Noah. Circumcision was the sign God used when instituting the covenant with Abraham. God designated the Sabbath day as the everlasting sign between Israel and God.

"But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'You shall surely observe My Sabbaths; for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD Who sanctified you.'" Ex. 31:13

Today, among believers and even non-believers, marriage is a covenant agreement in which rings are the token sign of the pledge of faithful commitment and constant love.

**In the new covenant, there are two signs of the relationship: baptism and the covenant meal.**

These were established by Jesus. "While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.'" Matt. 26:26-28

Matt. 26:26-28

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

How important are these signs? What is the worth of these signs?

The signs are only as trustworthy as the Person standing behind the value of the sign.

As in the case of wedding rings, the rings themselves do not magically effect the transformation of the two people entering into matrimony.

The signs of God's covenant agreements are only as true as He is Himself. Is God willing to stand behind His covenant promises? A look at the history of Israel and human history in general will give evidence to God's commitment to His promises and covenant agreements: **both the blessings and the curses.**

Grudem: *a covenant is an unchangeable, divinely imposed legal agreement between God and man that stipulates the conditions of their relationship.* Note the term “divinely imposed.” This term is crucial because it reveals the fact that man can never negotiate with God or change the terms of the covenant; he can only accept the covenant requirements or reject them. To emphasize this truth, the writers of Scripture use the term *diatheke* in the New Testament and also in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament. The common Greek word used when referring to a mutual contract agreement is *syntheke*.

Although the actual word “covenant” is not seen in the Genesis account with Adam, the essential parts of the covenant are all there – a clear definition of who is involved, binding provisions that delineate the conditions of the relationship between the two parties, the blessings in the event of obedience. Hos. 6:7, indicates an understanding by the prophet of a covenant agreement between Adam and God.

We experience death because the covenant between God and man was violated.

The crucial covenant with God seen in the Old Testament is between God and Abram.

In Gen. 12:2, 3, God says to Abram, “I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

Gen. 15:18 (read entire chapter for context) tells us that, “On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, ‘To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.’”

This is the covenant upon which the entire covenant system is founded.

### Hesed

Throughout Scripture there is a covenant term which reveals the heart of God toward those with whom He is in covenant relationship. That term is “hesed.”

“Hesed” is the consistent, ever-faithful, relentless, lavish, ever pursuing, one-way love of God for His own people.

Michael Card states,

“*Hesed*” is a Hebrew word that describes the indescribable, that defines the un-definable. Put simply, *hesed* is the defining characteristic of God in the Old Testament.

The classic text for clearly stating the importance of this term is Psalm 136. Here the psalmist uses this word twenty-six times to proclaim God’s eternal kindness, love and goodness to His people. In this psalm, God’s faithful actions toward His people to protect, perfect, provide, deliver and redeem them is the focus of the rehearsal of all His miraculous works. All that God has done to act on behalf of His people is founded upon His great covenant love, His “hesed.”

*“The entire span of creation to God’s redemption, preservation, and permanent establishment is touched upon in this psalm. It all happened, is happening, and will continue to happen because of the Lord’s covenant faithfulness and kindness.”*

[The Complete Word Study Dictionary Old Testament](#)

*“God’s “hesed” was not basically mercy, but loyalty to His covenant obligations, a loyalty which the Israelites should also show.” Nelson Glueck*

*“Hesed” denotes free acts of rescue or deliverance which in prophetic usage includes faithfulness. Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*

Some scholars have viewed God’s “hesed” in the Old Testament as the preview to the announcement in the New Testament that “God is love.”

“Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, Who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments... Then it shall come about, because you listen to these judgments and keep and do them, that the LORD your God will keep with you His covenant and His lovingkindness which He swore to your forefathers.” Deut. 7:9, 12

“He said, ‘O LORD, the God of Israel, there is no God like You in heaven above or on earth beneath, keeping covenant and showing lovingkindness to Your servants who walk before You with all their heart.’” 1 Kgs. 8:23

“I said, ‘I beseech You, O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God, Who preserves the covenant and lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments.’”

Neh. 1:5 (Daniel says almost the same thing in Dan. 9:4)

“Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, Who keeps covenant and lovingkindness. Do not let all the hardship seem insignificant before You, which has come upon us, our kings, our princes, our priests, our prophets, our fathers and on all Your people, from the days of the kings of Assyria to this day. However, You are just in all that has come upon us; for You have dealt faithfully, but we have acted wickedly.” Neh. 9:32, 33

“All the paths of the LORD are lovingkindness and truth to those who keep His covenant and His testimonies... The secret of the LORD is for those who fear Him, and He will make them know His covenant.” Ps. 25:10, 14

“Gather My godly ones to Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice...But to the wicked God says, ‘What right have you to tell of My statutes and to take My covenant in your mouth?’” Ps. 50:5, 16

- Just a quick look at Psalm 136 reveals that God’s “hesed” is everlasting.

“My lovingkindness I will keep for him forever, and My covenant shall be confirmed to him.” Ps. 89:28

“He has remembered His covenant forever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations, the covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac. Then He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant.” Ps. 105:8-10

**Some covenants were to be everlasting and some were to serve a purpose for a time.**

“Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

“Then I passed by you and saw you, and behold, you were at the time for love; so I spread My skirt over you and covered your nakedness. I also swore to you and entered into a covenant with you so that you became Mine,” declares the LORD GOD...“Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an

everlasting covenant with you. Thus I will establish My covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the LORD.”

Ez. 16:8, 60, 62

“I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever. My swelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. And the nations will know that I am the LORD Who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever.” Ez. 37:26-28

“Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, Whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in Whom you delight, behold, He is coming,” says the LORD of hosts. Mal. 3:1

“And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people...to show mercy toward our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to Abraham our father.” Lk. 1:67-73

The new covenant was inaugurated by Christ. He was the mediator of this new covenant and it was better than the prior covenant which was referred to as the covenant of the law.

“It is you who are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham, ‘And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’” Acts 3:25

“And so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, ‘The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob. This is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.’” Rom. 11:26, 27

“But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. When He said, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.” Heb. 8:6, 13

#### **What if you are not in covenant with God?**

“Because you have said, ‘We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol we have made a pact. The overwhelming scourge will not reach us when it passes by, for we have made falsehood our refuge and we have concealed ourselves with deception.’” Is. 28:15

“Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?” Heb. 10:28, 29

#### **The central element of all of God’s covenants with His people has been, “I will be their God, and they will be My people.” (Jer. 31:33; 2 Cor. 6:16)**

*“Do you want something to keep you close to God? Something that will give you confidence that you are never without Him? Then you’re searching for God’s covenant, His undying promise... God’s covenants provide the foundation and structure for life.”*

Covenants O. Palmer Robertson

If you are in covenant relationship with Almighty God, there will be evidence of this truth. You will resemble your Father. The family likeness will be evident in your life. Your identity is wrapped up in Who He is and how you can express your great love for Him. It is interesting that the terms describing covenant have to do with cutting (Hebrew) and wills

(Greek). There must be a “cutting away” of the dead flesh that cries out to be pampered, indulged and spoiled. For the follower of Christ, the marriage begins with a funeral. There must be a death to self-will and a birth to living for the will of God. **This is the covenant life.**

Let this be our prayer:

“Now the God of peace, Who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to Whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.” Heb. 13:20



## DOCTRINE OF DISCIPLESHIP

### Is discipleship an option for the Christian?

There is a totally wrong perception out there as to what a true disciple is.

#### What a disciple is not:

“Someone who reads his Bible and prays.” (If this is the extent of activity)

“Someone who says he believes in Jesus.” (Again if this is the extent of the relationship)

“Someone who attends church every week.” (Again ...)

“A pastor or Bible teacher must be a disciple.” (Not if that alone is the extent of their relationship with Jesus)

The New Testament is a book **about disciples, by disciples and for disciples.**

Unfortunately, today, many are under the illusion that you can be identified with Christ without being His disciple.

The disciple is one who is intent upon becoming Christ-like by systematically and progressively rearranging his/her life according to the Life of Christ. We are enrolled in the School of Christ – really we are enrolled in the Life of Christ.

Discipleship is no mystery. If your mind is cluttered with excuses to avoid this commitment to discipleship by declaring it too hard or too much a mystery, you will believe one of the great lies at work in our era. This lie has already turned the walk of a disciple of Jesus into an anemic, on again/ off again infantile crawl – not the “walk” of a man or woman of God.

*“Disciple making is not about a program or an event but about a relationship ... we impart life ... sharing the life of Christ.”* David Platt, Radical

- Nothing less than the life in the steps of Christ will meet the needs of the human soul.

#### Word Study

“Disciple” in Greek is *mathetes* and means: follower, learner, one who follows the teaching of another; in the ancient world a disciple many times would leave everything to follow and learn from his *didaskalos* (teacher), the student would do exactly as the teacher instructed;

the disciple was not only a pupil but an adherent; hence they are spoken of as imitators of their teacher Vine's Expository Dictionary

- ✓ As far as how you see yourself, as Christian or as disciple, realize that the word "Christian" is used three times, whereas "disciple" is used over two hundred fifty times in the New Testament.

Luke used the word "disciple" twenty-eight times in his gospel account to describe **ordinary** believers.

### The Discipline of Discipleship

Without discipline, we are not disciples.

- The first discipline is the discipline of humility. We recognize our deep need for conversion from death to life. *"But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe."* **Gal. 3: 22**

Also **Rom. 3: 23; Is. 53: 6**

This discipline is counter to the natural heart of man who resists the humility of confessing the need for a Savior. The hard heart of man will not humble itself to admit his own sin and shame. Yet the repentant publican beat his breast in genuine sorrow and prayed, "Lord, be merciful to me, the sinner." **Luke 18: 13**      **He is the one who went home justified!**

Without salvation, there is no possibility for discipleship.

God disciplines His children. **Heb. 12: 5, 6, 11**

### Discipleship costs something.

- **Love Christ above all.**

**Matt. 10: 37** tells us that we must love Jesus more than father, mother, son or daughter.

This includes obedience. *"Salvation apart from obedience is unknown in the sacred scriptures."* A. W. Tozer

- **Deny ourselves.**

We must deny our own agenda as well. **Matt. 16: 24** *"If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."*

- **Count the Cost**

**Luke 14: 28 – 33** reminds us to count the cost of discipleship.

*"For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it?"*

- **Carry the Cross Daily**

*“And whoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” Luke 14: 27*

### **The Power to Live as the Disciple of Jesus Comes From the Holy Spirit**

- The power of the Holy Spirit in the life of the disciple is not an impersonal force or power like “the Force” in Star Wars. Just as the disciples of the early Church learned, the life of the disciple must rely on the Holy Spirit to guide, direct, empower and understand. This empowerment of the disciples of Christ was prophesied by many prophets. **Joel 2: 28-32**
- The disciple needs the Holy Spirit to illuminate the truth of Scripture in order to have the thoughts of God propelling him to live the life of Christ. **1 Cor. 2: 6-13**

**Verse 10** – *“For to us God revealed {truth and wisdom} through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.”*

- It is the Spirit Who gives us the power to live.

*“For if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” Rom. 8: 13*

- It is the Spirit Who guides in ministry. **Acts 13: 1-3**
- *“The Holy Spirit is the key to authentic Christian life – to discipleship – and without His empowerment, teaching and guidance it is impossible to live faithfully.” Tom Tarrants*
- *Paul urges the disciple of Christ to be “filled with the Spirit” and he uses the present tense which means, continually be filled with the Spirit, again and again. Think of being filled with the Spirit like a bucket being filled to the brim. So why is once not enough? “Because we leak badly.”*

### **The Cost of Non- Discipleship**

***“A great deal of focus has been put on ‘getting people to the door of the church,’ but not enough done to help them grow to spiritual maturity once they are in.”***

Kerry Knott, *Sparking a Discipleship Movement*

*The decision not to follow Christ wholeheartedly will cost dearly – it costs you the abundance of life which Jesus offers **John 10: 10***

***If you separate regeneration (the new life in the believer) from justification (the transfer from unsaved to saved), you will believe you can have a Savior that died for your sins in order for you to have fire insurance. This is a spirituality which is inherently resistant to the truths which Christ taught. This belief in such a Savior will***

***insure that you do not walk in a vital, life-transforming union with the Master Who owns you. Jesus is not a “take Him or leave Him” Lord. He is Lord of lords and King of kings!***

***Consumption of Christian services replaces obedience to Christ. We have grown content to just “go to events” as if by warming a chair and thinking about a few remarks in a sermon or study will do anything lasting to us.***

***We have relied on hearing – preaching, teaching, worship music – to form faith in us and then we expect this faith to form the inner life of the believer. But apart from faith joined with action, is there really any faith there?***

***We must be hearers and doers of the Word!***

***This is where a true disciple of Jesus lives.***

***To choose not to follow Christ wholeheartedly will cost you abundant life, peace and purpose.***

### ***Intentional Living***

***The life of the follower of Christ must be planned and executed. A life well lived as His disciple cannot be haphazard. It is not hit or miss. You, as His disciple, must deliberately and intentionally follow Him. Just as the Twelve did 2, 000 years ago.***

***If we have been baptized with Him and walk in newness of life as Romans 6 declares – there will most definitely be a transformed life. Basically the new life is a life lived in concert, in union with the life of Christ. His heart beats in one with your heart.***

***If you suffer from the delusion that you do not have time to concentrate on dedicated time to seek the Lord about His forming within you the life of Christ, then you are destined to live a frustrated life as a Christian.***

***There is nothing in this world that is more important for you to spend your time on than taking each step, drawing each breath from His storehouse of riches. You are walking in beggar’s clothes still if you are not relying on Him. But reliance on Him is not yet instantaneous while we reside in this alien land. In order to tap into His riches, which are ours by rights, we must wire our minds in accord with His each day and each moment.***

**The world wants to wire your mind according to its destructive and warped view. Christ wants you to turn the world upside down, so that the world will be right side up.**

**Genesis Chapter Three records the Fall of Man. This is where sin became the dominant theme of man's life. At that point the world was turned upside down – at odds with the way the Lord created it. When you, as the Lord's child, act in His power, you are turning the world back to the right balance. The world sees God upside down. It is our job, as His inheritance to turn the world back to the proper perspective so the world can see God more clearly.**

**Right now the world only sees God upside down and they cannot make Him out or see Him as He truly is.**

**Let us, as disciples of Christ, help this world clearly grasp Who this majestic, worthy and holy God really is.**

**As we learn and grow, you are encouraged to invest in people. The people you disciple today will change the world tomorrow.**

**Once you have committed to follow Jesus as His disciple, counting the cost, there are still some pitfalls.**

- **If you undertake to “change the world” for the sake of Jesus, thinking that you are following the Great Commission (Matt. 28: 18-20), be careful not to allow your new mission to become your focus.**
- **If we undertake to “straighten out the world” and the church, and we do this on our own, we will hurt a lot of people and damage the mission of Christ.**
- **Our only responsibility is to sustain our relationship with our Lord, listening to His voice and following His lead; keeping the embers burning in the greatest love of your life.**
- **Do not fall for the lie that says your role as an unknown disciple can do little for the kingdom of God – the first disciples were relative unknowns when Jesus called them to do the extraordinary**

**“Christ for us is all our righteousness before a holy God; Christ in us is all our strength in an ungodly world.” Robert Murray McCheyne**

**Disciple of Christ, here are your marching orders:**

**Grab one corner of the world (your corner of the world), and turn it upside down!**



## THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

“God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female, He created them.” Gen. 1:28

“Adam” perhaps means red earth and is the initial Hebrew name for man in the Old Testament.

“Man came into existence by a distinct act of creation. He bore originally, and in an important sense still bears, the image and likeness of God.” Unger’s [Bible Dictionary](#)

The story of man is aptly summed up by the terms of G. Campbell Morgan: generation, degeneration and regeneration.

Why was man created by God?

Man was not created by God because of any lack or need of God’s. God created man because it pleased Him to do so. Is. 43:7 “Everyone who is called by My name, and **whom I have created for My glory**, whom I have formed, even whom I have made.”

The first question in the Westminster larger Catechism is “What is the chief and highest end of man?” The proper response is, “Man’s chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy Him forever.”

How was man created?

Man was created by a divine, direct and definite act of God. He was created in the image of God.

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man on Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’” Gen. 1:26

“*Man’s body was formed from the lower elements-the divine Spirit was inbreathed-a living soul resulted from the union of the first two.*” Herbert Lockyer, [All the Doctrines of the Bible](#)

Through this **body** man has a *world consciousness*. The five senses are the connecting agent to the world. The non-believer senses the world through the same senses as the believer. But the believer in Yahweh has the distinct advantage of seeing, hearing, touching, etc., the world with the divine insight which God alone offers him. Gen. 2:7b, “The Lord breathed ... the breath of life and man became a living soul.”

Man was not created as an infant, he was fully and perfectly functioning in intellectual ability.

Gen. 2:20

While the **body** represents *world consciousness*, the **soul** is the source of *self-consciousness*.

1 Cor. 2:11

There are many emotions within the soul of man.

“I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, my **soul** will exult in my God.” Is. 61:10a

“Truly we are guilty concerning our brother, because we saw the distress of his **soul** when he pleaded with us, yet we would not listen; therefore the distress has come upon us.” Gen. 42:21

Animals do not enjoy this faculty: “Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding.” Ps. 32:9a

Within the **spirit** of man lies the *God-consciousness* divinely sparked by the very life of God.

“We had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of **spirits** and live?” Heb. 12:9

“But it is a **spirit** in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding.” Job 32:8

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your **spirit** and **soul** and **body** be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Th. 5:23

You may also think of these likenesses to God in this sense: **spirituality**, God is Spirit and we are like Him in spirit; **personality**, God is Person and we also have personality; **holiness**, God is holy and has called His children to bear the family resemblance of holiness; **love**, God is love and has endowed us with great propensity to love and be loved to reflect this aspect of His being; **dominion**, God is sovereign and He created man to rule, but first man must rule himself through the power of God’s Spirit.

*“God meant the body to be the servant of the soul, and the soul, the servant of the spirit: and spirit, soul and body all servants of His and avenues along which He can journey to a lost world.”* Herbert Lockyer

Unlike certain postmodern philosophical perspectives, man is not just a thinking animal. The distinction between man and animal is considerable. What animal can properly use tools to the degree that a four year-old child does? More outstanding, what animal can create a tool for complex use? This act of creating things is a direct reflection of our being made in the image of our Creator. A bird continues to build the nest the same way he did thousands of generations ago; look at the complexity of architecture in the buildings man erects.

What animal has the gift of expressing articulate thought? Certain animals can mimic speech, but none can express complicated thought or converse on basic topics. Animals can learn to repeat particular acts because of rewards or punishments. But man acts based on far more sophisticated reasoning. Sometimes his reasons are not moral, but his actions are not motivated purely by instincts. If man is only an animal, then why not transfuse an animal’s blood into a human when we run low on blood donors?

One of the most flawed ways of regarding man is that of *materialism*. This view holds that man is only material and that indeed all life is no more than the material from which it derives its life. In contrast, the man God created has a soul in addition to his body; he has a spirit which can commune with Almighty God.

Man is not just an animal. Man is not just material. Man is the pinnacle of God’s creative activity because he is made in the image of God.

#### Why did man fall?

Eccl.7:29 “Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices.” God declared His work at creation to be very good in Gen. 1:31.

The fall of man was due to his unbelief in what God said. “The serpent said to the woman, ‘You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’ When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.” Gen. 3:4-6

Man alone is represented in scripture as sinful. A future judgment and an immortal destiny lie before man.

#### What did man lose at the fall?

“Just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.” Rom. 5:12

“But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually appraised.” 1 Cor. 2:14

“For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so.” Rom. 8:6, 7

According to Eph. 4:19, man’s understanding has been darkened.

He is spiritually dead. Eph. 2:1

He is under wrath and judgment. John 5:28, 29

“But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.” Is. 59:2

“Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man.” Gen. 9:6

“With it (the tongue) we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God.” James 3:9

Man continues to be regarded as made in the image of God, although that image is now distorted. Even though men are sinful, there remains enough likeness to the Creator that to murder another person is to violate the part of creation that most resembles God.

#### What is the only hope of man?

“So also it is written, ‘The first man, Adam, became a living soul.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit...The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven...Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will bear the image of the heavenly.” 1Cor. 15:45, 47, 49

“For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.” Rom. 5:17

“Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” 2 Cor. 5:21

“If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He Who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit Who dwells in you.” Ro. 8:10, 11

“Jesus said to them, ‘Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.’” Matt. 19:28

#### What is the blessed privilege of man?

It should give us a profound sense of dignity and significance as we reflect on the realization that God created man when He desired to create something in His own image and likeness. He created wonders of our universe ... remarkable and majestic worlds, yet we are more like our Creator than any of His other works. Because of this great truth, every human being, no matter how marred by sin, how small, how old, how weak, how different than the elite, each human being is made in the image of God. The grave implications for our own conduct demand that we regard every human with dignity and significance. Human life, made in His image, is the great privilege and honor we possess; we must never devalue this life.

“You have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One Who created him.” Col. 3:10

“Put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” Eph. 4:24

“When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; what is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him? Yet You have made him a little lower than God, and You have crowned him with glory and majesty!” Ps. 8:3-5

**The ultimate image of God is seen in our Lord Himself.**

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.” Col. 1:15

“He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” Heb. 1:3

## THE FAITHFULNESS OF GOD

### Why is the faithfulness of God so important to our faith?

Gods throughout history have not always been faithful; some have indeed been very fickle and immature, provoking and behaving in petulant manners. The Greek and Roman gods are rife with such activity. But the God of the Judeo-Christian faith is a God of truth and integrity.

**What does Scripture have to say about the faithfulness of God?** Perhaps in observing these Scriptures we can answer the introductory question.

Deut. 7:9, "Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, Who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments."

Deut. 32:4, "The Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He."

Ps. 89:1, "I will sing of the lovingkindness of the LORD forever; to all generations I will make known Your faithfulness with my mouth. For I have said, 'Lovingkindness will be built up forever; in the heavens You will establish Your faithfulness.'"

89:8, 24, "O LORD God of hosts, who is like You, O mighty LORD? Your faithfulness also surrounds You...My faithfulness and My lovingkindness will be with him, and in My name his horn will be exalted."

Ps. 36:5, "Your lovingkindness, O LORD, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness reaches to the skies."

Ps. 91:4, "He will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark."

Do you notice that God's faithfulness is mentioned many times in conjunction with His covenant (*lovingkindness* is a term associated with God's covenant relationship)? Why do you think there is a connection between these two great doctrines of God's ways?

- From these few verses, we see that faithfulness is not a necessity to God in the sense that air is a necessity to a human being, but His faithfulness is simply part of Who our God is. It is unimaginable to understand God without recognizing His character of faithfulness.

Ps. 100:5, "For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations."

Lam. 3:22, 23, "The LORD's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness."

Ps. 119:86, 138, "All You commandments are faithful; they have persecuted me with a lie; help me!... You have commanded Your testimonies in righteousness and exceeding faithfulness."

Ps. 119:90, "Your faithfulness continues throughout all generations; You established the earth, and it stands."

### What does the New Testament have to tell us about our faithful God?

1 Cor. 1:9, "God is faithful, through Whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

1 Thes. 5:24, "Faithful is He Who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass."

1 Thes. 3:3, "But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one."

1 Pet.4:19, "Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right."

1 Jn. 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Rev. 19:11, "And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He Who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war."

- These verses in the New Testament show a connection from God's faithfulness to His people. It is clear that God's faithfulness has a distinct bond with the relationship He shares with His people.

*Like begets like. A child is like his father in some ways.*

Our Father is the standard of faithfulness. As His children, we are to hold to that same standard and be a people of faithfulness.

God's faithfulness should result in our own built-up faith. As we encounter His faithful ways in Scripture, in history and in our daily lives, we should give testimony to His everlasting faithfulness and thereby exhibit our faith.

God is not pleased when we neglect to "share in the family resemblance" in regard to faithfulness.

Matt. 23:23, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others."

- God's faithfulness is inextricably connected with His other attributes: His majesty, for instance. In His majesty, we see that He is exalted in His judgment on sin. (Is. 5:16; Rev. 19:1-2)

His faithfulness is involved in His coming judgment as well. "Before the LORD, for He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in His faithfulness." Ps. 96:13

When we think of God's faithfulness, we like to focus on all His promises of safety, love, provision, protection and prosperity. Blessings, in other words. But God has also promised curses to those who reject His ways of truth. These curses are warnings because as our Creator, He knows what we were created for: to glorify Him. When we fail to glorify God, we are acting counter to our intended purpose and therefore can have no peace. God, in His faithfulness, has promised life to the obedient and death to the disobedient. He has not complicated things ... we have.

- Unlike man, when God makes a promise, He is able to bring it to pass. God keeps all His promises without fail. When we read a promise in Scripture, we can be assured that it will happen as God has said. This is the great faith builder in reading Scripture, because we see time and again how God has been proven faithful to His word. If He has been faithful for all time, then we can trust Him for our lives and our future.

"And being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform." Rom. 4:21

“God is not a man, that He should lie, not a son of man, that He should repent; has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?” Num. 23:19

*“Faithfulness is that in God which guarantees that He will never be or act inconsistent with Himself...Everything God says or does must be in accord with His faithfulness.”* A.W. Tozer, *The Attributes of God*

When we are under pressure, we desire a God, a Champion Whom we can trust. In the heat of battle against our enemy, we need to know our Commander. Studying the attributes of our God will only serve to strengthen and empower us in the days of battle. When the heat is turned up is not the time to call out to a “Santa Claus” version of Almighty God. We must know Him as He truly is: holy, faithful, just, loving, merciful, righteous, all-powerful, compassionate, awe-inspiring, wise, eternal ...

Our culture has invented a god that is comfortable and easy. This is not the true God of Scripture.

We had better know Who God is. If we do not, our enemy will use this misinformation to undo us.

When we evaluate the complete message of Scripture, from Genesis One to Revelation Twenty-two, we see a common communication: God is faithful. Look at all the narratives of the Old Testament; look at the pronouncements of the prophets; look at the life of our Lord. All of the Bible tells us one thing: God can be trusted with our eternal souls.

Do not keep this truth to yourself. Tell the world how faithful our God is and what He has done in your life.

## GOD IS JUDGE

*“For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; He will save us.”* Is. 33:22

*“And the heavens declare His righteousness, for God Himself is judge.”* Ps. 50:6

*“But God is the Judge; He puts down one and exalts another.”* Ps. 75:7

*“Righteous are you, O LORD, and upright are Your judgments.”* Ps. 119:137

There is much in Scripture which informs us concerning this aspect of our God as Judge.

In fact, an entire Old Testament book is entitled “Judges.” This particular book explores the early days in the history of Israel, before the kings, when God used His representatives, the judges.

These men and woman were called upon to serve the nation of Israel in leadership. They were also used of God as deliverers from the oppression of surrounding nations. The accounts of the judges reveal to us God’s commitment to His people to protect, guide, discipline and mold them into His own particular people. The ultimate judge is God Himself.

*“When the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed and afflicted them.”* Judg. 2:18

*“I therefore have not sinned against you, but you are doing me wrong by making war against me; may the LORD, the Judge, judge today between the sons of Israel and the sons of Ammon.”*

Judg. 11:27 (Concerning the situation during the time of Jephthah)

*This entire book of “Judges” points to our need for a Judge.*

- The first time the word “judge” is used in Scripture is Gen. 15:14.

*“But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions.”* Clearly God is in control here of who is judged, when he is judged and how it will turn out when the judgment is completed.

Sarai, the wife of Abram, called upon God as Judge. *“May the wrong done me be upon you. I gave my maid into your arms, but when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her sight. May the LORD judge between you and me.”* Gen. 16:5

Concerning the destruction of Sodom, *“Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?”* Gen. 18:25

- In Exodus, we see that God has called Moses to act as His judge for the benefit of the people.

*“It came about the next day that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from the morning until the evening.”* When he was questioned regarding his long hours of service Moses answered, *‘Because the people come to me to inquire of God.’* Ex. 18:13, 15

The following verses are the advice of the father-in-law of Moses.

*“Now listen to me: I will give you counsel, and God be with you. You be the people’s representative before God, and you bring the disputes to God, then teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk and the work they are to do. Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands ... Let them judge the people at all times.”* Ex. 18:19-22a

- Leviticus and Deuteronomy give instruction regarding judging the people.

“You shall do no injustice in judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor nor defer to the great, but you are to judge your neighbor fairly.” Lev. 19:15

“You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not fear man, **for the judgment is God’s**. The case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.” Deut. 1:17

“You shall appoint for yourself judges and officers in all your towns which the LORD your God is giving you, according to your tribes, and they will judge the people with righteous judgment. You shall not distort justice; you shall not be partial, and you shall not take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and perverts the words of the righteous. Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue.” Deut. 16:18-20a

“The man who acts presumptuously by not listening to the priest who stands there to serve the LORD your God, nor to the judge, that man shall die; thus you shall purge the evil from Israel.” Deut. 17:12

- Hannah knew the importance of God as her Judge.

“Those who contend with the LORD will be shattered; against them He will thunder in the heavens, the LORD will judge the ends of the earth; and He will give strength to His king, and will exalt the horn of His anointed.” 1 Sam. 2:10

Later in the book of 1 Samuel we see the people demanding a king to judge them because the nations surrounding them do this. 1 Sam. 8:5, “And they said to him, ‘Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations.’”

- As David was pursued by a crazed king Saul, he cried out, “The LORD therefore be judge and decide between you and me; and may He see and plead my cause and deliver me from your hand.” 24:15

#### **Do you begin to see the great need of man for justice and a righteous Judge?**

The Lord knows we need this system of balance and righteousness in our community. There is no justice apart from God. He is the standard by which we know what is indeed right.

- When Solomon asked God for wisdom in order to judge God’s people God was pleased to give Solomon great gifts.

“So give Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?” 1 Kings 3:9

- As a good king Jehoshaphat appointed judges in the land. “He said to the judges, ‘Consider what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for **the LORD Who is with you when you render judgment.**’ ” 2 Chron. 19:6

When threatened by invading armies, Jehoshaphat cried out to God, not as Father, but as Judge.

“O our God, will You not judge them? For we are powerless before this great multitude who are coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are on You.” 2 Chron. 20:12

- All creation longs for the standard of perfection which resides within Almighty God. The only possible hope for all life is the corrective work of our Lord. When He comes to judge, He truly comes to set all things right and sound.

“Then the trees of the forest will sing for joy before the LORD; for He is coming to judge the earth.” 1 Chron. 16:33

“For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him Who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.” Rom. 8:20, 21

“And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war.” Isaiah 2:4

Concerning the Coming One ...

“And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, and He will not judge by what His eyes see, nor make a decision by what His ears hear; but with righteousness He will judge the poor, and decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; and He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, and faithfulness the belt about His waist.” Is. 11:3-5

“And men will say, ‘Surely there is a reward for the righteous; surely there is a God Who judges on earth!’” Ps. 58:11

“Let the nations be glad and sing for joy; for You will judge the peoples with uprightness.” Ps. 67:4

“A father for the fatherless and a judge for the widows, is God in His holy habitation.” Ps. 68:5

“Arise, O God, judge the earth! For it is You Who possesses all the nations.” Ps. 82:8

“Rise up, O Judge of the earth, render recompense to the proud.” Ps. 94:2

“How many are the days of Your servant? When will You execute judgment on those who persecute me?” Ps. 119:84

- The Lord is the only Judge to Whom we can appeal; with great confidence, we can know that He will judge with perfect justice AND compassion.

“For the LORD will judge His people and will have compassion on His servants.” Ps. 135:14

“Judge me, O LORD my God, according to Your righteousness, and do not let them rejoice over me.” Ps. 35:24

“And He will judge the world in righteousness; He will execute judgment for the peoples with equity.” Ps. 9:8

“The LORD judges the peoples; vindicate me, O LORD, according to my righteousness and my integrity that is in me... God is a righteous judge, and a God Who has indignation every day.” Ps. 7:8, 11

“O LORD, You have seen my oppression; judge my case.” Lam. 3:59

“You say, ‘What does God know? Can He judge through the thick darkness?’ ” Job 22:13

“I said to myself, ‘God will judge both the righteous man and the wicked man,’ for a time for every matter and for every deed is there.” Eccl. 3:17

“Then hear from heaven and act and judge Your servants punishing the wicked by bringing his way on his own head and justifying the righteous by giving him according to his righteousness.” 2 Chron. 6:23

- Yes, our Lord is compassionate in His judging, but make no mistake, it will come!

“Now the end is upon you, and I will send My anger against you; I will judge you according to your ways and bring all your abominations upon you... Now I will shortly pour out My wrath on you and spend My anger against you; judge you according to your ways and bring on you all your abominations.” Ez. 7:3, 8

“Say among the nations, ‘The LORD reigns; indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved; He will judge the peoples with equity... Before the LORD, for He is coming, for He is coming to judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in His faithfulness.’” Ps. 96:10, 13

“The LORD arises to contend, and stands to judge the people.” Is 3:13

### Why does God judge?

“You will fall by the sword. I will judge you to the border of Israel; **so you shall know that I am the LORD.**” Ez. 11:10

“The LORD has made Himself known; He has executed judgment.” Ps. 9:16

“Thus says the LORD, ‘By this you shall know that I am the LORD: behold, I will strike the water that is in the Nile with the staff that is in my hand, and it will be turned to blood.’”

Ex. 7:17 (God’s judgment on Egypt was a way of revealing Himself as Lord of all.)

“Therefore, I will deliver My flock, and they will no longer be a prey; and I will judge between one sheep and another.” Ez. 34:22 (He judges to deliver.)

“Let the nations be aroused and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations. Joel 3:12 (He judges to bring all things to completion.)

### What does the New Testament have to tell us about our Judge?

“I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him Who sent Me.” John 5:30

“He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; and the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.” John 12:48

“Because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man Whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”

Acts 17:31

“And He ordered us to preach to the people, and solemnly to testify that this is the One Who has been appointed by God as Judge of the living and the dead.” Acts 10:42

“And I heard the altar saying, ‘Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments.’” Rev. 16:7

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He Who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.” Rev. 19:11

“And they cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?’” Rev. 6:10

“To the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect.” Heb. 12:23

“Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.” James 5:9

“But they will give account to Him Who is ready to judge the living and the dead.” 1 Pet. 4:5

“And while being reviled, He did not revile in return, while suffering, He uttered not threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him Who judges righteously.” 1 Pet. 2:23

“If you address as Father the One Who impartially judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth.” 1 Pet. 1:17

“I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, Who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom... In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.” 2 Tim. 4:1, 8

“On the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.” Rom. 2:16

“

### **What is to be our role in judging?**

“I shall give thanks to You with uprightness of heart, when **I learn** your righteous judgments.” Ps. 119:7

“**I know**, O LORD, that Your judgments are righteous, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me.” Ps. 119:75

“**My flesh trembles for fear of You, and I am afraid of Your judgments.**” Ps. 119:120

“Therefore **do not go on passing judgment** before the time, but **wait** until the Lord comes Who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men’s hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God.” 1 Cor. 4:5

“Or do you not know that the **saints will judge the world**? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts?” 1 Cor. 6:2

“But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For **we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.**” Rom. 14:10

God’s role as Judge in history should bring us to our knees in worship to our mighty God. He alone is righteous to judge; He alone is powerful enough to bring judgment to pass; He alone is perfect in His decisions; He alone is compassionate in His just decrees; He alone can judge with perfect impartiality. We can rest in the veracity of His judgments. The more we learn of Him, the more we can trust His ways in all things, and that includes His judgment.

Sin requires judgment. A holy God cannot condone, overlook or ignore any violation of His standard. The fine must be paid. “The wages of sin is death.” Jesus experienced God as Shaphat, as Judge. He faced and accepted the judgment that should have fallen on me; I praise my Lord and Redeemer that He has provided an eternal life for me, a life free of condemnation. Yet, I will stand before the Lord and give account of how I have used this life He has given me. I will not be condemned, but I will answer for my words and deeds before a Holy God.

### **Jehovah Shaphat**

God is Judge.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT

The doctrine of the Holy Spirit is a critical teaching of both the Old and New Testaments. With a doctrine as important, vital and misunderstood, it is imperative that the focus be on Scripture and not on any particular manmade ideologies.

Hebrew for spirit is *ruah* #7307. This is a noun which means spirit, wind, breath.

### **The Holy Spirit was involved in creation.**

We are introduced to the Spirit of God in Genesis 1:2, "The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters."

The truth of this fact is reiterated in the psalms.

Ps 33:6 says, "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host."

Ps. 104:30, "You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the ground."

Ps. 147:15, 18, "He sends forth His command to the earth; His word runs very swiftly...He sends forth His word and melts them; He causes His wind (#7307) to blow and the waters to flow."

*"The revelation of the Spirit is a progressive doctrine... As the flower or fruit from the last revealed part of the tree, so the Spirit is "third", seeing He is the last revealed personality of the Trinity."* Herbert Lockyer

### **The Spirit gave abilities to perform certain tasks in the Old Testament.**

Ex.31:2-6, "See... I have filled him with the Spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all kinds of draftsmanship, to make artistic designs for work ...." This was done to enable the tabernacle to be built according to God's specifications.

Judg. 15:14, "When he came to Lehi, the Philistines shouted as they met him. And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily so that the ropes that were on his arms were as flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds dropped from his hands."

### **The Spirit inspired prophets to utter their prophecies and elders to judge.**

Num. 11:17, 25, "Then I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take of the Spirit Who is upon you, and will put Him upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, so that you will not bear it all alone... Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him; and He took of the Spirit who was upon him and placed Him upon the seventy elders. And when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do it again."

2 Sam. 23:2, "The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue."

### **The Spirit was given to man at the discretion of God.**

Ps. 51:10-12, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit."

Ez. 36:27, "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances." This was spoken to Old Testament people with a

view to the future promise of the indwelling Spirit which they had only partially experienced.

**The people rebelled against the Spirit.**

Ps. 106:33, "Because they were rebellious against His Spirit, he (Moses) spoke rashly with his lips."

**The people grieved the Holy Spirit.**

Is. 63:10, 11a, "But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit; therefore He turned Himself to become their enemy, He fought against them. Then His people remembered ...."

**The Spirit was present among the returned exiles.**

Hag. 2:5, "As for the promise which I made you when you came out of Egypt, My Spirit is abiding in your midst; do not fear!"

Neh. 9:20, "You gave Your good Spirit to instruct them, Your manna You did not withhold from their mouth, and You gave them water for their thirst."

**The Spirit gave rest.**

Is. 63:14, "As the cattle which go down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD gave them rest. So You led You people, to make for Yourself a glorious name."

**The Spirit brought the dead to life.**

Ez. 37:5, 6, "Thus says the Lord God to these bones, 'Behold, I will cause breath to enter you that you may come to life. I will put sinews on you, make flesh grow back on you, cover you with skin and put breath in you that you may come alive; and you will know that I am the LORD.'"

The full and complete revelation of the Spirit would not become manifest until Pentecost.

Is not the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church today less distinct than in the early church? Why?

Our enemy would deny believers the truth of the blessed Holy Spirit. His tactic is to hide from us Who the Holy Spirit is and if he is not successful in that strategy, his method is that of patronage and falsification.

Paul warns us of the trinity of perversion in 2 Cor. 11:4, "For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully."

**The Holy Spirit was involved in the birth of Christ.**

Matt. 1:20, "But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child Who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.'"

Lk. 1:35, "The angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.'"

**John the Baptist foretold that Jesus would baptize in the Spirit.** (Mark 1:8; Jn.1:33)

This was the fulfillment of the prophecy uttered in the Old Testament. (Jer. 31:31-34; Joel 2:28-32)

The following descriptions highlight the fact that the Holy Spirit acts as a Person; these are personal acts.

#### **The Holy Spirit speaks.**

Acts 1:16, "Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus."

Acts 8:29, "Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go up and join this chariot.'"

Acts 10:19, "While Peter was reflecting on the vision, the Spirit said to him, 'Behold, three men are looking for you.'"

Acts 13:2, "While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'"

#### **The Spirit teaches, guides, and counsels.**

Jn.14:26, "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."

Rom. 8:14, "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."

Gal. 5:18, "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law."

#### **The Spirit testifies (witnesses).**

Jn. 15:26, "When the Helper comes, Whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth Who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me."

Rom. 8:16, "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God."

#### **The Spirit searches and reveals.**

1 Cor. 2:10-16, "For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God... Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit Who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words, taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised... But we have the mind of Christ."

#### **The Spirit wills.**

1 Cor. 12:11, "But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills."

#### **The Spirit intercedes.**

Rom. 8:26, 27, "In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groaning too deep for words; and He Who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."

The Holy Spirit clearly is divine.

#### **The Spirit gives life.**

Jn. 3:5-8, "Jesus said to him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit...The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.'"

Jn. 6:63, "It is the Spirit Who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."

Gal. 4:6, "Because you are sons, 'God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'"

#### **While the Spirit gives life, He also takes life.**

Acts 5:1-9, "... But Peter said to Ananias, 'Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? ... You have not lied to men but to God.' ...Then Peter said to her, 'Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well.'"

#### **The Spirit is opposed to the flesh.**

Gal. 5:16, 17, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please."

#### **The Holy Spirit convicts of sin.**

Jn. 16:8, "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment."

#### **The Holy Spirit helps.**

Jn. 14:16, "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, Whom the world cannot receive, because He abides with you and will be in you."

#### **The Spirit sanctifies.**

Gal. 5:22, 23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

#### **The Spirit transforms.**

2 Cor. 3:17, 18, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit."

#### **The Spirit renews and regenerates.**

Tit. 3:5, "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit."

*"Regeneration does not make a sinner a better man, but brings in a new man. The old nature is not improved."* Lockyer

#### **The Spirit empowers.**

Acts 1:8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

#### **The Spirit unifies.**

Phil. 2:1,2, "Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose."

#### **The Spirit gives evidence of God's presence.**

1 Jn. 4:2, "By this you will know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God."

Jn. 15:26, "When the Helper comes, Whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth Who proceeds from the father, He will testify about Me."

#### **The Holy Spirit will not unveil His magnificence and power unless we maintain a heart of devotion and humility.**

*"The work of the Holy Spirit is to manifest the active presence of God in the world, and especially in the church."* Wayne Grudem

#### **The Spirit dwells within the believer in Jesus Christ.**

Rom. 8:6, 9, "For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace... However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him."

Acts 2:38, Peter said to them, 'Repent and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'

Eph. 2:21, 22, "In Whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in Whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit."

Comforter: *parakletos* #3875 refers to aid of any kind; used of a legal advisor, pleader, proxy, or advocate, one who comes forward in behalf of and as the representative of another; it comes from the verb *parakaleo* which means to call to the side, to aid, help, comfort, encourage, exhort

Spirit: *pneuma* #4151 means breath; the vital spirit of life; the rational spirit, mind, element of life; *"the spirit is man's immaterial nature which enables him to communicate with God, Who is also spirit."* Zodhiates

*"The true abode of the Spirit was and ever must be, the God-Man, crucified, risen, ascended, and coming again."* Herbert Lockyer

Is. 11:2, "The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD."

## JESUS CHRIST

Jesus is a subject about which “even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written.” This is indeed the loftiest study to which one can engage his mind. While art, poetry, literature, and music have made efforts at honoring this Man, it is Scripture alone which can truly enlighten us as to the full revelation of His life and purpose.

Without a proper understanding of Who Jesus is, we miss the import of the entire teaching of Scripture.

The doctrine of Jesus Christ introduces the student to the greatest life ever lived. We first make the acquaintance of Jesus Christ in Genesis chapter one. The first verse of the Bible makes it clear that Elohim, the plural form of the word “El” created the heavens and the earth. Each day of creation is begun with, “then God said,” this points to the creative force of the voice of God, even the Word of God. Colossians makes this evident, “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, for by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.” Col. 1:1-17

Also John 1:3, 10 “All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being...He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.” We run the risk of not knowing Him as He truly is, unless we endeavor to search the Scriptures to discern His true identity.

The Scriptures are full of Jesus Christ. From the opening verse to the closing verse, Jesus is at the heart of the redemption story. The imprint of Jesus is seen in the accounts of the creation of our world, the fall of man, the need for a Savior and the solution to our inevitable righteous judgment. Genesis opens with the creative force of Elohim, the Godhead (we also see the work of the Holy Spirit in creation in Gen. 1:2). The last book of the Bible is referred to as “the Revelation of Jesus Christ ...”

But what is astounding is that this Jesus Whom we worship and adore is One Who existed before the creation of the world. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.” John 1:1-2

- Jesus is co-eternal with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. Christ declares His pre-existence. “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad...Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.’” Jn. 8:56, 58

“Now Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.” Jn. 17:5

When Jesus entered into the world as a human baby He was declared prophetically to be “the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom ... the zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.”

“Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever. Amen.” 1 Tim. 1:17

He is “the Lamb Who has been slain before the foundation of the world.” Rev. 13:8

- There are pre-incarnate theophanies in the Old Testament to prepare the world for the ultimate arrival of God Himself in the flesh. Many of these refer to the angel of the Lord.

“Now the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day...I will surely return to you at this time next year; and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son.” Only God has the power to give life at His own discretion. Gen. 18:1, 10

As Abraham was about to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice “the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, ‘Abraham, Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ He said, ‘Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.’ Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son.” Gen. 18:11-13

In the account in Gen 32 of Jacob’s struggling with the Lord, this is seen as an appearance of the pre-incarnate Christ.

Jacob refers to God as his “Shepherd all his life, the angel who has redeemed me from all evil.” Gen. 48:15, 16

Josh. 5:13-15 records Joshua encounter with the Captain of the host of the Lord Who instructed him to remove his sandals because he was on holy ground. Joshua fell on his face to the earth and bowed down. There is not remonstrance to this obvious worship.

Manoah, the future father of Samson, upon hearing of the coming birth of his son from the angel of the Lord asks the name of the angel. “But the angel of the LORD said to him, ‘Why do you ask my name, seeing it is wonderful?’” Judg. 13:18

“These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him.” Jn. 12:41. This refers to Is. 6 where Isaiah says that he “saw the LORD sitting on a throne, high and lifted up and the train of his robe filled the temple... calling out to one another, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.’”

Zechariah records an encounter with God also. “For behold, I will wave My hand over them so that they will be plunder for their slaves. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me. Sing for joy and be glad, O daughter of Zion; for behold I am coming and I will dwell in your midst ... then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you.” declares the LORD. Zech. 2:9-11

Christ’s pre-incarnate appearance is hinted at in Dan.3:25. “Look! I see four men loosed and walking about in the midst of the fire without harm, and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods!”

- The Old Testament contains many prophetic pronouncements of the coming Servant of the Lord, His Anointed One. For hundreds of years, the prophets had told of One coming to do the work of the Lord. He would come from the tribe of David and He would rule His people and all nations.

Even in Gen. 3:15 we have the announcement that God would put “Enmity between the serpent and the seed of the woman.” In ancient writings, very little is mentioned of the woman’s seed; it is inconsequential as to the woman’s seed. The man’s seed is the important issue. The mention of the woman’s seed points to a unique concept and foreshadows the virgin birth.

Gen. 12:1-13 records the great blessing in promise form of God’s dealing with the man Abraham and his effect on all the world. Gal. 3:16 clarifies this promise. “Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as referring to many, but rather to one, ‘And to your seed,’ that is, Christ.” One of the key theses of the book of Matthew is to reveal Christ as the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant, and so Matthew begins his account with the genealogy, commencing with Abraham.

1. The Christ is to come from the tribe of David. 2 Sam. 7:12-14
2. He is to be born of a virgin. Is. 7:14; 9:7; Matt. 1:22, 23 It is clear and should be pointed out that Scripture makes it key that Jesus was born of Mary and the Holy Spirit. “Jacob begat Joseph” follows a long list of ‘begats’ to be ended with “Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus.” The word ‘begat’ is not included in Mary’s genealogy. Jesus was not ‘begotten’ of natural generation, but was brought forth by the Holy Spirit.
3. He is to be born in Bethlehem. Mic. 5:2
4. He will be worshiped by Gentiles. Is. 60:6; Matt. 2:11
5. He will have a forerunner. Is. 40:3; Matt. 3:1-3

A study of the incarnation or the birth of Christ is a complete and separate doctrine worthy of deep and serious attention. But the above information suffices for the purpose of a cursory view of the doctrine of Christ.

**A summary statement of the doctrine of Jesus Christ would include the fact that Jesus was fully God and fully man in one person.**

- The human nature of our Lord is clearly presented in scripture.

1 Cor. 15:21 tells us, "For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead."

Jesus as a man, possessed a soul. "Then He said to them, 'My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me.'" Matt. 26:38

"See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." Lu. 24:39

"Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil." Heb. 2:14

Jesus experienced the same circumstances as ordinary men. He hungered, wept, felt weary, loved, was angered and felt a full gamut of emotions, but always within the bounds of lawful behavior.

Jesus is referred to both as the Son of God and the Son of Man. Because of His work on our behalf, the Son of God became the Son of Man so that He might effect our transformation, making the sons of men become the sons of God. 1 John 3:1-3

A mere man could not accomplish this work. Only the Son of God could redeem man from his fallen state.

- Scripture leaves no opportunity for argument as to the divine nature of our Lord.

Both Old and New Testaments remark as to the deity of our Savior. (Is. 9:6; Jer. 23:6; Matt. 11:27; Jn. 1:1; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 19:16)

He is self-existent, immutable, omnipresent (Matt.28:20), omniscient (Col.2:3), omnipotent

(1 Pet.3:21, 22).

He is the Lord of the Sabbath, the Forgiver of sin (Lk. 5:20-24), the Commander of death and Hades (Matt. 9:24; Jn. 11:43, 44; Rev. 1:18), the Savior (Acts 4:12; 5:31; Lu. 2:11), the Creator and Preserver of all things, the Judge of all men (Matt. 13:39-43; 16:27; Jn. 5:22, 23; 2 Cor. 5:10).

When reading scripture, the alert student will see that in most cases where the human nature of our Lord is mentioned, the divine nature will not be far from this truth as well. The reverse is true also. When we see the divine nature mentioned, the human nature is not far away. We are profoundly grateful for a King and Lord Who would express His love for us in such a way that we can never fully comprehend, yet we can reap the benefits for all eternity.

-Our Lord was baptized to show His identity with His beloved children. (Matt. 3)

-Our Lord was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. (Matt.4; Heb. 4:15)

*When we yield our lives to Christ, we surrender to the One Who mastered our great enemy in the wilderness and at Calvary. The life of the only One ever to resist and overcome Satan abides within the believer in Jesus Christ.*

-Our Lord was sinless. (Jn. 8:29, 46; 1 Jn. 3:5; Heb. 4:15; 7:26)

-Our Lord was faithful to fulfill all prophetic proclamations concerning Him.

-Our Lord “was going throughout all Galilee, **teaching ... proclaiming the gospel** of the kingdom and **healing** every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.”

-Our Lord performed many signs which were recorded in scripture “so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”

Jn, 20:30, 31

-Our Lord died for His people in a vicarious manner. (Matt. 26:28; Mk. 10:45; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal.2:20) As an inspired writer of scripture, the apostle Paul devotes much of his teaching to the cross of Christ. This is a crucial teaching which must be transmitted to a fallen world. Christ without the cross is heresy.

*“A mere belief in the historical Christ will not save. Our hope is built on His blood and righteousness, without which we are lost.” H. Lockyer*

The death of our Lord is not our hope. Our hope lies in His resurrection. “That is you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that **God raised Him from the dead**, you will be saved.” Rom. 10:9

**The doctrine of the Resurrection** is a teaching in itself which scholars have devoted their entire lives to pursuing.

The first sermons in Acts focus clearly on the Resurrection. Act 2:24-32; 3:15

Although the preaching of the Resurrection resulted in great persecution for the early church, the apostles would not yield in their proclamation of this doctrine.

The Resurrection is an accomplished fact with resounding scriptural support. “But He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God.” Heb. 10:12

More than five hundred people saw the resurrected Christ. This is documented in the scriptural accounts. It may be argued that the Bible cannot support the Bible, but before the compilation into the scriptures we possess today as the canon, these were individual writings of witnesses to these truths. These are not the accounts of one or two people. Also these letters and gospel teachings were contemporary with those acquainted with their veracity or the lack thereof. The claims made by the followers of Christ could have been easily rebutted and dismissed by disclaimers had they not been true. Because of the availability of eye witnesses currently living, the scriptures had to be beyond reproach in their accurate reporting of events.

Our Lord is also referred to as **Prophet, Priest and King**. In former times, a prophet spoke to man about God and a priest spoke to God about man.

1. The people acknowledged Him as a prophet. Lu. 7:16; 24:19; Matt. 21:11, 46

He today continues to reveal God’s will to His people. Jn. 16:12-14; Lu. 24:27, 44, 45

2. Jesus represented His people as Priest and as sacrifice and today continues to represent them before the Father as their Intercessor. (Is. 53:12; Lu.23:34; Jn. 1:29; Heb. 2:17; 3:1;4:15; 9:11-15, 24-28; 10:19-22)

3. Jesus is to be worshiped as King.

When our Lord first appeared, He took the form of a servant, yet some saw Him as He truly is: Sovereign King. When He returns there will be no doubt: He will come as reigning King. Ps. 2:6; Matt. 2:2; 28:18; Acts 17:7; Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:15-19; Rev. 11:15; 19:16

Have we crowned Him Lord of all? This is the only question we need answer.

• The Return of Christ

There is much teaching on the second coming of our Lord. This area of the work of Christ is referred to as the study of end times or eschatology. The Greek word *eschatos* means “last.”

The coming of our Lord is described in scripture as triumphant and glorious. He will return with great power. He Who was judged at the end of His stay on earth will judge all the nations. Matt. 24:30; 25:31-46

It is the responsibility of all believers to eagerly await His Personal, visible, bodily return. 1 Jn. 3:2, 3; 1 Cor. 1:7; Tit. 2:13; Heb. 9:28

*“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.”* 1Thes. 4:16

“He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming quickly.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.”

Rev. 22:20

## JUSTIFICATION

The doctrine of justification is one of the most important biblical teachings. This was the primary issue of the Protestant Reformation. The vital point of this doctrine is that God does the work of justifying and not man. Man cannot justify himself.

**Rom. 3:27, 28** clearly proclaims the truth of this tenet of our faith.

*“Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.”*

**Verse 26** of the same chapter says, *“For the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would **be just** and the **justifier** of the one who *has faith in Jesus.*”*

- ✓ While Romans is the book declaring **God as the Justifier** of a believing man, the Old Testament gives us some insight into this truth as well.

Paul proclaims that man is justified by faith. The opposite of a faith-produced justification would be a works-produced justification, a law-centered justification.

Yet, nowhere does the psalmist in the psalm most associated with God’s law (**Ps. 119**), announce that he is justified by the law. In fact, he repeatedly prays to

the Lord to “save” him, to deliver him, to redeem him. He asks the Lord to *cause*

him incline his heart to God’s testimonies (36), to *cause* him to keep God’s law

(34), to *cause* him to walk in the path of God’s commandments (35). He acknowledges that his blameless state is totally dependent on God. Nowhere does

the psalmist comment on his goodness or his own abiding by the law as his guarantee for salvation. He does not expect God’s help based on his own merit but

“according to God’s word.” Because God is in a covenant relationship with the

psalmist, God will perform all His promises regarding the salvation of His heir.

**Ps. 103:12**, “As far as the east is from the west, so far **has He removed** our transgressions from us.”

Habakkuk tells us that “the righteous will live by his faith.” **Hab. 2:4b**

- ❖ Hebrew for “justify” is #6663 *tsadak* (or *sadaq*): a verb meaning to be right, to be righteous, to be just, to be innocent, to be put right, to justify, to declare right

*“As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will **justify** the many, as He will bear their iniquities.”* **Is. 53:11**

- Not only does God do the **justifying**, He has made it a legal certainty. Theologians refer to this truth of justification as *forensic* because it has “to do with legal proceedings.”

Grudem’s *Systematic Theology*: “**justification** is an instantaneous legal act of God in which He (1) thinks of our sins as forgiven and Christ’s righteousness as belonging to us, and

(2) declares us to be righteous in his sight.”

## IMPUTATION

This act of justification involves the act of more than just declaring us innocent. That would be a merely neutral standing before God. We would be just as Adam (and we all know how that turned out). No, we are forgiven of our sins AND we are imputed the righteousness of Christ.

*“I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, my soul will exult in my God; for He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.” Is. 61:10*

Impute: to think of as belonging to someone, and therefore to cause it to belong to that person. God “thinks of” Adam’s sin as belonging to us, and it therefore belongs to us, and in justification he thinks of Christ’s righteousness as belonging to us and so relates to us on this basis. Grudem

**Rom. 4:6**, “Just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God **credits** righteousness apart from works.”

*Imputation* is encountered three times in this doctrine of justification.

First, Adam’s sin was imputed to his descendants. **Rom. 5:12**

Second, our sin was imputed to Christ. **2 Cor. 5:21**

Third, Christ’s righteousness is imputed to us. Now God sees Christ in us when we identify in covenant relationship with our Lord. **Rom. 5:18**

*“For in it (the gospel) the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘But the righteous man shall live by faith.’” Rom. 1:17*

- ✓ This was the watchword of the Reformation. This verse helped to lead Martin Luther into the truth of justification by faith.

*“This text was to me the true gate of Paradise.”*

Now let us break down this verse phrase by phrase.

### The righteous

Christ is our righteousness.

The believer has ceased trying to please God and has turned to Jesus instead for the righteousness that God gives freely.

**1 Cor. 6:11**, “Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were **justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”

- The focus is on the *past* work of Christ. He has done it all!

### Shall live

In **Galatians chapter 3**, it is pointed out to the Galatians that they had started by receiving the Spirit by faith, but now they are trying to move toward perfection by the works of the flesh.

They had ceased to live by faith. **Gal. 3:2, 3, 5, 6, 11, 12, 21**

- The focus on the *present* life of faith versus a life of works.

### By his faith.

As the book of **Hebrews** tells us, especially in **chapter 11**, believing God means acting on that belief. With each entry in chapter 11, the writer tells us that each believer lived *by faith*. “*By faith Abel offered a better sacrifice ... by faith Noah prepared an ark ... by faith Abraham obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out not knowing where he was going.*”

- The focus is on the *future* promises which give the believer the proper perspective for the life of faith.

“*By faith Abraham lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.*” **Heb. 11:9, 10**

### The Law cannot save us.

**Gal.2:16**, “*Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.*”

**Gal. 3:11**, “*Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, ‘The righteous man shall live by faith.’*”

**Acts 13:39**, “*And through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.*”

### So what does the Law do for us?

**Rom. 3:20**, “*Because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.*”

**Gal. 3:24**, “*Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.*”

### Now that we see the Law cannot save us, what can we do?

**Rom. 4:5**, “*But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.*” Notice who God justifies ... the ungodly.

### What is our future?

**Titus 3:7**, “*So that being justified by His grace, we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*”

**Rom. 4:13**, “*For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.*”

**Rom. 5:1**, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, **we have peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ... Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be **saved from the wrath of God** through Him.”

John Murray says, “Justification is still the article of the standing or falling of the Church.”  
Redemption Accomplished and Applied

“Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; and He will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely; and this is His name by which He will be called, **‘the LORD our righteousness.’**” **Jer. 23:5, 6**

We are justified because He is our righteousness.

**He is our Jehovah-tsidkenu**

## **JUSTIFICATION**

IS BY FAITH Rom. 3:24; 5:1; Gal. 2:16 Faith in Christ  
IS A GIFT Rom 3:24  
IS BY GOD’S GRACE Rom. 3:24  
IS THROUGH REDEMPTION WHICH IS IN CHRIST Rom. 3:24  
IS OFFERED TO CIRCUMCIZED AND UNCIRCUMCIZED Rom. 3:30  
IS THE WAY TO PEACE Rom. 5:1  
IS NOT BY WORKS OF THE LAW Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16  
IS REVEALED IN SCRIPTURES Gal. 3:8, 24  
IS REVEALED IN THE LAW AS OUR TUTOR Gal. 3: 24

“Justification and sanctification can never be separated.  
God does not justify whom He does not sanctify.”

John MacArthur

Are you persuaded that God has justified you?

Do not rest today until that question is settled in your heart

## RESURRECTION

**Has the truth of the Resurrection gripped your heart?**

**Ask the Lord to grip your heart with this truth and you will walk in resurrection!**

*“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe?’”*

**John 11: 25, 26**

**Our faith, the Christian faith, rises or falls on the Resurrection. According to the apostle Paul, “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless, you are still in your sins ... If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied.”**

**1 Cor. 15: 17, 19**

**So since this one truth is so vital to our faith, where and when and how did it come about?**

**Is there allusion to Resurrection before the New Testament?**

**First of all, Jesus taught that there was a Resurrection.**

There was no New Testament when Jesus taught, so He gained His understanding from the truths of the Old Testament.

In **Genesis**, Abraham fully intended to sacrifice Isaac, but according to **22: 5**, he told the attendants that they both (Abraham and Isaac) would return. Abraham knew God could raise his son from the dead, if need be. **Heb. 11: 19** makes that clear by telling us, “He considered God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.”

**Job** also (who most likely lived before Abraham) tells us, “As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God; Whom I myself will behold, and Whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!” **Job 19: 25, 26**

Isaiah writes, “Your dead will live; their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, for your dew is as the dew of the dawn, and the earth will give birth to the departed spirits. Come, my people, enter your rooms and close your doors behind you; hide for a little while until indignation runs its course.” **Is. 26: 19, 20**

**Daniel 12: 2**, “*Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.*”

**Ezek. 37: 1-28** tells us about the Valley of Dry Bones – later to be raised by God into living men.

So the teaching of the Old Testament makes clear the existence of Resurrection.

Yet we are told that the Sadducees and Samaritans of Jesus’ time did not believe in the Resurrection from the dead. They only valued the first five books of the Bible, Genesis through Deuteronomy, And according to them, there was no mention in those books of the Resurrection.

Consider the remarks of Jesus Himself in answer to that argument: “*But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the burning bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now He is not the God of the dead but of the living; for all live to Him.*” **Luke 20: 37-38**

Martha, the sister of Lazarus, even knew of the Resurrection – before Jesus tells her that He is the Resurrection and the life, she says, “*I know that he (Lazarus) will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.*” **John 11: 24**

❖ **Much of the message of the writers of the New Testament involves the Resurrection.**

**Let’s see what they focused on.**

✓ **Jesus’ Resurrection was a divine act involving all three Persons of the Godhead.**

**John 10: 17, 18** “*For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.*”

**Acts 13: 30-35** “*But God raised Him from the dead ... that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised Jesus, as it is written in the second Psalm, ‘You are My Son; today I have begotten You... You will not allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.’”*

**Rom. 1: 4** “*Who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord.*”

✓ **Jesus predicts His own resurrection.**

**Mk. 8: 31; 9: 9; 10: 34**, “*And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed,*

*and after three days rise again... As they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until the Son of Man rose from the dead...*

*They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill Him, and three days later He will rise again.”*

✓ **Unnatural Occurrences at the Crucifixion Validated the Resurrection**

**Matt. 27: 52, 53**, *“The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many.”*

**Matt. 27: 51** – the veil in the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks were split.

✓ **The message of the Gospel itself is included in 1 Cor. 15: 1-8 which relies on the Resurrection as “the hinge on which the door of faith opens and closes.”**

**The Resurrection was the crucial point to the gospel message.**

**Acts 1: 22**, *“Beginning with the baptism of John until the day that He was taken up from us – one of these must become a witness with us of His Resurrection.”*

**Acts 26: 23**, *“That the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He would be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.”*

✓ **Jesus’ Resurrection demonstrated His victory over death.**

**Acts 2: 24** *”But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power.”*

✓ **The Resurrection provides for the pre-eminence of Christ.**

**Col. 1: 18**, *“He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.”*

*Prototokos = first, pre-eminent*

✓ **Resurrection Points to the Value of the Body in Christianity**

Unger’s Bible Dictionary

*“The resurrection of our Lord is set before us in the New Testament as the miraculous restoration of His physical life, the reunion of His spirit with His body, and yet in such a way*

that the material limitations, in which He had previously confined His life, were set aside. The resurrection was the beginning of the glorification.”

Unger’s also tells us that the scriptural teaching of the resurrection points to the fact that both body and soul “are destined to immortality... It has great religious and ethical value, inasmuch as it recognizes the dignity of the body and its true relation to the soul in union with it, and opens to us the hope of complete glorification.”

“Christ’s resurrection was not simply a coming back from the dead (Lazarus). As the ‘first fruits’ (1 Cor. 15: 20, 23) of a new kind of human life, a life in which His body was made perfect, no longer subject to weakness, aging, or death, but able to live eternally.”

Systematic Theology, Wayne Grudem

By “spiritual body” in 1 Cor. 15: 42-44, Paul does not mean “immaterial,” but rather “suited to and responsive to the guidance of the Spirit.” Pneumatikos (spiritual) means in the Greek, “consistent with the character and activity of the Holy Spirit.” It never means “non-physical.”

**The body of the resurrected Lord was clearly a physical body.**

**It was a transformation of Jesus’ humanity that enabled Him to appear, vanish and move unseen from one location to another.**

**In His resurrected body, Jesus was able to do things the natural body does not do.**

“Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight... While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be to you.” **Luke 24: 31, 36**

Christ’s glorified body was not clearly similar to His earthly body, “When she (Mary Magdalene) had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus... After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the door having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, ‘Peace be with you.’” **John 20: 14, 26**

➤ **What Doctrines stand with the Resurrection?**

• **Who is God?**

Obviously the first is that there is a God and the God of the Bible is the only and true God. So there is indeed a God, but what kind of God is He?

Every effect must have a cause. The only cause adequate to account for the Resurrection of Christ is God. **John 1: 18** tells us *“No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God Who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.”*

**Hebrews 1: 1-3**, *“God after He spoke long ago ... in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, Whom He appointed heir of all things, through Whom He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature ...”*

**Is. 53: 10**, *“But the LORD was pleased to crush Him putting Him to grief; if He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand.”*

As hard as this passage is to fully grasp, Jesus, by His very life, death and resurrection has “explained” the Father’s heart.

**Throughout His life, Jesus proclaimed Who God was. He continues to do that today through His people because of the resurrected life which dwells in each of His disciples.**

- **The Deity of Christ**

*“At Pentecost and in the other sermons recorded in Acts, the early disciples used the resurrection to prove Christ’s divinity.”* J.M. Boice

**Resurrection was a messianic sign. Matt. 11: 5**, *“The blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.”*

- **The Seal on Justification**

**Rom. 4: 24, 25** tells us that we are justified based on the approval of God evidenced in the Resurrection.

**Rom. 4: 25**, *“He Who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification.”*

**Rom. 5: 9, 10**, *“Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”*

Greek for “resurrection” *anastasis* # 386 *ana* = up/ *histemi* = to cause to stand

- **The Seal of Sanctification - Relating the Resurrection to the Equipping of the saints**

**Rom. 6: 4** tells us that “we have been raised to walk in newness of life.”

**Rom. 6: 5**, “For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection.”

**Rom. 8: 34**, “Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He Who died, yes, rather Who was raised, Who is at the right hand of God, Who also intercedes for us.”

**2 Cor. 5: 15**, “And He died to all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him Who died and rose again on their behalf.”

**Phil. 3: 11**, “In order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.” **Exanastasis**

**1 Pet. 1: 3**, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

**Col. 3: 1-3**, “Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God... For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” **Col. 2: 9-15**, “... Having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, Who raised Him from the dead...”

**Those who believe in Christ are united with Him so that His life becomes available to them.**

**Our spiritual renewal is connected to the Risen Lord through which our new life originates.**

**Rom. 8: 11**, “But if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He Who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit Who dwells in you.”

*Victory is no longer a question of our strength but of His power.*

- **The Seal on Eternal Life – the Pledge of the Resurrection and Glorification of the True Believer**

The Resurrection of Jesus is evidence that there is life after death. Death is not the end of this life. **John 14: 3, 19**

“This is the will of Him Who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.” **John 6: 39**

*“And you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.” Luke 14: 14*

**1 Thes. 4: 14**, *“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.”*

**Heb. 11: 35** says, *“Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection.”*

*“Who (Jesus) will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.”*

**Phil. 3: 21**

- **The Seal on Judgment**

**Acts 17: 31** *“Because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man Whom He has appointed having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”*

**Keep in mind, the world resists the teaching of the Resurrection.**

**Acts 17: 18.** *“And also some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were conversing with him. Some were saying, ‘What would this idle babbler wish to say?’ Others, ‘He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities,’ – because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection.”*

**Acts 24: 21**, *“Other than for this one statement which I shouted out while standing among them, ‘For the resurrection of the dead, I am on trial before you today.’”*

**John 5: 28, 29**, *“Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.”*

**Revelation 20** speaks of a Resurrection to come in which martyrs are raised. There will be a first and second Resurrection. **Rev. 20: 6**, *“Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.”*

**Paul made clear that there was a division between those who believed in the Resurrection and those who did not.**

**Acts 23: 6-8**, *“But perceiving that one group were Sadducees and the other Pharisees Paul began crying out in the Council, ‘Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees; I am on trial for the hope and resurrection of the dead.’ As he said this, there occurred a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor an angel, nor a spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.”*

**Acts 24: 15**, *“Having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.”*

- **The Resurrection was the divine seal of approval on Christ’s atoning work.**

**Rom. 1: 4** *“Who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

**1 Cor. 15: 20**, *“But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by man came death, by a man also come the resurrection of the dead.”*

**1 Cor. 15: 35 -58**, *describes the resurrected body that awaits the faithful ones: imperishable, glorified, powerful, spiritual, from heaven, transformed (v. 51), immortal, victorious!*

#### **Proofs of the Resurrection**

**While this is not an article intending to address the validity of the Resurrection, below you will find topics to explore which have traditionally been used for such a purpose.**

#### **The Resurrection Narratives themselves**

##### **The Empty Tomb**

##### **The Condition of the Grave clothes**

##### **The Post-Resurrection Appearances**

##### **The Transformed Disciples**

##### **The New Day of Christian Worship**

**If this resurrection life that began in Christ and that will become ours is a reality, may we expect there to be some evidence of it in His followers now?**

**Resurrection is a key teaching in the early apostolic church.**

**The Apostles' Creed**

*It has received this title because of its great antiquity; it dates from very early times in the Church, a half century or so from the last writings of the New Testament.*

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I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
the Maker of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:

Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead, and buried;

He descended into hell. The third day He arose again from the dead;

He ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;  
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost;  
the holy catholic church;  
the communion of saints;  
the forgiveness of sins;  
the resurrection of the body;  
and the life everlasting. Amen.



## The RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

The teaching or doctrine on the Righteousness of God is critical for the believer to understand. This attribute of God is the pivot on which His ways operate. If our God were not righteous, we would have no need for a savior. If our God were not righteous, we could never depend on His faithful carrying out of His promises. If our God were not righteous, His communicated word to us would be untrustworthy.

Sir Walter Scott says, *“Righteousness is the necessary basis of God’s dealing with saint and sinner; the ground too, on which grace gloriously sways its scepter (Rom. 5:21), and the super-structure on which all Christian life, progress and service repose. It underlies every position and relation of the arch of divine revelation.”*

*“God always acts rightly, in perfect harmony with His nature in all His actions.”* Herbert Lockyer

We greatly need to see His righteousness before we can acknowledge that we are devoid of it.

A proper vision of God in His righteous state will forever abolish the idea of my own merit before Him.

“For not knowing about God’s righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.” Rom. 10:3

**Deut. 32:4**, “The Rock! His work is perfect. All His ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is He.”

**Ps. 96:13**, “Before the LORD, for He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in His faithfulness.”

**Ps. 97:2**, “Clouds and thick darkness surround Him; Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.”

**Ps. 97:6**, “The heavens declare His Righteousness and all the peoples have seen His glory.”

**Ps. 98:2**, “The LORD has made known His salvation; He has revealed His Righteousness in the sight of the nations.”

**Ps. 111:3**, “Splendid and majestic is His work, and His Righteousness endures forever.”

- God is the absolute and final standard of righteousness, therefore no standard outside of God exists by which we measure righteousness or justice.

Grudem’s *Systematic Theology* tells us that *“God’s righteousness means that God always acts in accordance with what is right and is Himself the final standard of what is right.”*

“For the sake of My name I delay My wrath, and for My praise I restrain it for you, in order not to cut you off.” **Is. 48:9**

“For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like a filthy garment.” **Is. 64:6a**

“Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.” **Is. 6:5**

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” **Rom. 3:23**

“But the LORD of hosts will be exalted in judgment and the holy God will show Himself holy in righteousness.” **Is. 5:16**

“A destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness.” **Is. 10:22b**

➤ It is established; we need a Savior.

“Declare and set forth your case; indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none except Me.” **Is. 45:21**

“For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh.”

**Rom. 8:3**

To be a Righteous Judge, our God must deal with sin. With the atoning work of Jesus Christ, God has dealt with sin. The debt is paid. But there remains the problem of our righteousness.

Jesus Himself tells us in the Sermon on the Mount, “Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.” **Matt. 5:20**

“But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, Who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.” **1 Cor. 1:30**

(Jesus Christ) “Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

**Rom. 3:25-26**

“He made Him Who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” **2 Cor. 5:21**

When Adam sinned he *imputed* (legally transferred) to us his sin. When Christ lived and died, He *imputed* (legally transferred) to us His righteousness as He took on our debt for sin. As He was transferring “His funds” to our account, He transferred our debt to Himself!

❖ Now what?

“And do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin, as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” **Rom 6:13**

“Present your members as slaves to righteousness resulting in sanctification.” **Rom. 6:19b**

“For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.” **Gal. 5:5**

“If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.” **Rom 8:10**

Westminster Confession: “*Faith, receiving and resting on Christ and His Righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification, yet it is not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces.*”

“As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; by His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many.” **Is. 53:11**

“For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness.” **Is. 61:10**

**Our Righteousness is not Something but Someone.**

**Jer. 23:6b**, “And this is the name by which He will be called, ‘The LORD our righteousness.’”

**Jehovah-tsidkenu**

## SALVATION

“May Your lovingkindnesses also come to me, O LORD, Your salvation according to Your word. Ps. 119:41

### What is salvation?

Webster’s tells us that salvation is 1) a saving or being saved from danger, evil, difficulty, destruction, etc. 2) a person or thing that is a means, cause, or source of preservation or rescue

3) a spiritual rescue from the consequences of sin; redemption

As always, biblical terms require an understanding of the original language in which they were first used. A familiarity with the word in Hebrew or Greek will better enable the reader to grasp the meaning with confidence and cause less confusion when discussing the text in question.

The above reference is in the Old Testament which is primarily written in Hebrew. So we will look for the meaning of salvation in this context.

Here in Psalm 119:41, salvation is *teshuw’ah*, which means deliverance, help, safety, victory. It comes from the verb which means to rescue; it is related to *yasha*, a verb which means to free. This is the word from which we get our word for “savior”.

Much is written in the New Testament regarding salvation, so finding the Greek word for salvation will aid us in further study of the word.

Ephesians 1:13, 14 tells us, “In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your **salvation** – having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, Who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s won possession, to the praise of His glory.”

The Greek here is *soteria*. This word means deliverance from danger or destruction; deliverance from sin and its spiritual consequences. Jesus uses this word only twice (Luke 19:9 and John 4:22). For Jesus, to have salvation was to have the kingdom of God within oneself. This indicates salvation to be a present experience.

Jesus taught that when one possesses salvation (also termed by Jesus as eternal life), death would cause no interruption in the communication of the person with God. This is why God can be referred to as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He is the God of the living and not of the dead. They are all currently in the presence of God Himself and enjoying a resurrection life with their God. (Luke 16:22; 20:37, 38; 23:43)

Now that we have the original languages definitions and the English definition of this term, we can begin to examine scripture references to salvation with more clarity.

### Why do we need a savior?

In brief, because God is holy and we have fallen short of His holiness.

God is our Creator and has authority to designate what sin is and He has the authority to demand our obedience to His standard.

Rom. 3:23, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

### When was salvation, in essence, created?

There is another amazing element to the beauty of salvation: God planned it long ago.

*“What a marvelous origin the salvation of your souls has! It antedates creation, being conceived in the mind of God in the dateless past. It came to us according to the eternal purpose of God.”* Herbert Lockyer

“This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Eph 3:11

“Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity.” 2 Tim. 1:9

“In the hope of eternal life, which God, Who cannot lie, promised long ages ago.” Tit. 1:2

What a tremendous calm it gives the soul to know that our all-knowing, all-powerful, all-gracious God, not only has provided our salvation but He has provided it for all time and since before time began! If He can create a universe like ours how can we doubt that He can save our eternal souls?

### Why would Jesus, Who was one with the Father, resplendent in glory, lay aside His garments of majesty and come to our aid as a mere man, clothed in humanity?

1Tim. 1:15, “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost.”

“For the Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost.” Luke 19:10

By the way, the previous verse, Luke 19:9, is one of the two occasions where Jesus uses the term *soteria*. “And Jesus said to him, ‘Today **salvation** has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham.’”

Read Philippians 2:5-13 This passage explains the attitude of our Lord in coming to save His sheep.

He did not leave His glory above to become a model for obedience or a teacher of truth. He came to save the lost from their future and current destruction.

Even His name designates His purpose in coming to us: “You shall call His name Jesus; for He will save His people from their sins.” Matt. 1:21

God has chosen His Son to be the provider of salvation.

### How do we obtain salvation?

“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be **saved**.” Acts 4:12

Believing in the “name” of Jesus means believing in the Person of Jesus. One must know Who He is in order to believe in His name. A basic understanding of Who Jesus is plays a role in salvation. For genuine salvation to exist, God alone knows to what degree this

understanding of Who Jesus is must take place. But the evidence of the truth of salvation is in the new believer's resurrection life.

"If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be **saved**; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in **salvation**." Rom. 10:9, 10

"Of Him the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins." Acts 10:43

"Jesus answered him, 'Truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God... The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.'" John 3:3, 8

"And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life." 1 John 5:11-13

#### Who is able to receive salvation?

*"It is freely offered to all men, but is conditioned upon repentance and faith in Christ."*

Unger's Bible Dictionary

"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit Whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Titus 3:5-7

God our Savior "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth." 1 Tim. 2:4

Unger's Bible Dictionary: "*Salvation proceeds from the love of God, is based upon the atonement wrought by Christ, is realized in forgiveness, regeneration, sanctification, and culminates in the resurrection and glorification of all true believers.*"

#### How are we to regard salvation?

We are to regard salvation as eternal and unshakeable.

"Lift up your eyes to the sky, then look to the earth beneath; for the sky will vanish like smoke, and the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants will die in like manner; but My **salvation** will be forever, and My righteousness will not wane." Is. 51:6

"Israel has been saved by the LORD with an **everlasting salvation**; you will not be put to shame or humiliated to all eternity." Is. 45:17

We are to regard salvation with gravity and gratitude.

"How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will." Heb. 2:3, 4

We are to see our **salvation** as **Someone** not something.

"Behold, God is my **salvation**, I will trust and not be afraid; for the LORD GOD is my strength and song and **He has become my salvation**." Is. 12:2

**Elohim Yeshuah**

“The LORD is my light and my **salvation**; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the defense of my life; whom shall I dread?” Ps. 27:1

“He only is my rock and my **salvation**, my stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken.” Ps 62:2

*“God is able to keep what He has committed unto us, seeing that what He committed was Himself.”* Herbert Lockyer



## SANCTIFICATION

When looking at doctrinal points, it is preferential to search for certain background information.

1. In the case of this word – “sanctification” – find the word in the original language.

Sanctification - Greek *hagiasmos*: from *hagiazō*, to sanctify

It can be translated as holiness, separation unto God.

This word points to the activity of the Holy Spirit in setting man apart to salvation, redeeming him, and also refers to the work of the Holy Spirit enabling him to be holy even as God is holy.

2. Now that you are armed with the definition of the word in its original intent, the next step is to compare its use in many cross references in Scripture. This will show you how each author, as inspired by God, intends for the word to be used.

Check a concordance which indicates the verses which use the word “sanctification” or “sanctify.”

*Sanctify, sanctifies*: Jn. 17:17, 19; Eph. 5:26; 1 Thes. 5:23; Heb. 2:11; 9:13; 13:12; 1 Pet. 3:15

*Sanctified*: Jn. 10:36; Acts 20:32; 26:18; Rom. 15:16; 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; 7:14; 1 Tim. 4:5; 2 Tim. 2:21; Heb. 10:10, 14

*Sanctification*: 1 Cor. 1:30; 1 Thes. 4:3, 4; 2 Thes. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2

After reading and noting each use of the word “sanctification”, you will have a better understanding of its meaning in regard to the doctrine.

This may seem laborious, but it is a safeguard against false teaching based on misuse of a term that is not clearly understood.

3. Then it is helpful to discover any information you may glean from Bible dictionaries or commentaries. A good Bible dictionary is inexpensive and a great resource. Online sites offer help as well.

Unger’s Bible Dictionary is a standard tool used for many decades.

This source provides helpful information regarding **sanctification**.

The following information comes from Unger’s.

This word (and its counterpart in Hebrew: *qadash*) indicates a separation from the secular and sinful, and the setting apart for a sacred purpose.

The New Testament presents the doctrine of sanctification in three aspects: positional, experiential and ultimate.

**Positional** is the possession of everyone “in Christ.” Positional sanctification is just as complete for the weakest and youngest believer as it is for the strongest and oldest. All believers are “saints” and are “sanctified.” Acts 20:32; Rom. 12:1; Eph. 4:1; Col. 3:1; 1 Cor. 1:2; 5:1, 2; 6:1-8, 11; Jude 1:1

**Experiential** is the phase of sanctification effected by faith. (This is the growth and process part of sanctification.) Rom. 6:1-11

**Ultimate** sanctification is the glorification or complete conformity to Christ at His coming. 1 John 3:1-3; Rom. 8:29, 30; Jude 1:24, 25

4. Now research any theology sources you may have available. Sanctification is defined in Wayne Grudem’s *Systematic Theology* as: *a progressive work of God and man that makes us more and more free from sin and more like Christ in our actual lives.*

From this definition, we see that God and man work together for the purpose of the sanctified nature of the believer. When there are two forces at work, in this case God and man, we say that the work of sanctification is *synergistic* (combined efforts for the end goal). Not covered here but mentioned as a contrast is justification. This particular doctrine is *monergistic*. In the act of justification, the traditional view is that God alone works on man’s behalf. God working alone is *monergistic*. These two theological terms may appear in certain works which you consider.

Because you have invested much time and energy into your research concerning the **doctrine of sanctification**, you are better equipped to agree or disagree with the things which man may say regarding this doctrine. You do not need to rely on other’s opinions. You have done your own investigation and you can draw your own conclusions based on the truth which God Himself has shown you.

\*A word of advice is appropriate here, though.

If you come up with a theory which has escaped the notice of centuries of Christians and you alone are now privy to this jewel of theological mystery, you may have wandered down a road less traveled and stumbled on an unturned rock. Some rocks are unturned for good reason.

The danger of the novice theologian is that we do not always see the extrapolated ramifications of our “discoveries.” That is why a good, sound systematic theology is a tried and true treasure.

Find a source you feel is trustworthy and check out your views with those of the trusted source.

You may differ on some points and not others, but you are armed with the tools to **think** through most all of your own questions now.

You may never be a theologian in the classical sense, but you will be a **thinking** Christian dependent on no one but the Spirit of God. Christians have for too long abdicated the

intellectual role in society, even in Christian society. It is time we take back the influence in our churches, homes, schools and communities.

Think, Christian!

## SATAN

The doctrine of Satan is a difficult study to undertake on many levels. It can be ignored, which is a mistake, or it can become a priority, which also is in error. To properly attempt a biblical view of the enemy of our souls, we must approach this study as any other. The scriptures must lead the way.

*“God, Christ, prophets, apostles and Satan-bound souls had no doubts as to the reality of this enemy of man.” Lockyer*

While we encounter Satan early in the book of Genesis, there are actually passages which infer some information about his existence prior to the Garden of Eden.

Is. 14:12-24, “How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascent to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’ Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit. Those who see you will gaze at you, they will ponder over you, saying, ‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world like a wilderness and overthrew its cities, who did not allow his prisoners to go home?’ All the kings of the nations lie in glory, each in his own tomb. But you have been cast out of your tomb like a rejected branch, clothed with the slain who are pierced with a sword, who go down to the stones of the pit like a trampled corpse... just as I have planned so it will stand.”

Ez. 28:11-19, “... you had the seal of perfection ... you were in Eden, the garden of God ... you were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God... you were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you.”

The Prince of Tyre foreshadows the Beast. (Dan. 7:8; Rev. 19:20)

*“As the anointed cherub, he covered God’s throne; he guarded it. But instead of covering it, he coveted it and so fell.” Lockyer*

And He (Jesus) said to them, “I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.” Lk. 10:18

The name, “Satan”, means *adversary* in the Hebrew.

“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.” Job 1:6 Satan goes on to accuse Job of not being a blameless man and requests of God permission to torment him.

“Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel.” 1 Chron. 21:1

“Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.” Zech. 3:1

Satan bound people with infirmities. “And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?” Lk. 13:16

He is also referred to as the devil or *diabolos* in the New Testament. This word means accuser.

He is the accuser of God's people.

Rev. 12:9, 10

He is also referred to as Apollyon which means "destroyer" in Rev. 9:11.

He is the tempter in Matt. 4:3; 1 Thes. 3:5.

He is the "wicked one" in 1 John 5:18, 19.

He is the "ruler of this world" in John 12:31, 14:30; 16:11.

He is "god of this world" in 2 Cor. 4:4.

He is seen as presiding over mankind's anti-God lifestyles in Eph. 2:2; 1 John 5:19; Rev. 12:9.

He is the father of lies in Jn. 8:44.

He is the serpent who fooled Eve in Rev. 12:9; 20:2.

He disguises himself as an angel of light in 2 Cor. 11:14.

He is described as a roaring lion in 1 Pet. 5:8.

He is a dragon in Rev. 12:9.

He is the enemy of Christ in Matt. 4:1-11; 16:23; Luke 4:13; 22:3.

He is now the enemy of the followers of Christ. Luke 22:32; 2 Cor. 2:11; 11:3-15; Eph. 6:16

He is defeated by Christ. Matt. 12:29

He is resisted by the followers of Christ. Eph. 6:10-18; James 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:9, 10; 1 John 4:4

He is destined for the lake of fire. Rev. 20:10

*Since Satan is a "liar and the father of lies", distortion or denial of the truth is always present in false religions, especially those with a strong demonic influence. Grudem*

*"But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land?'" Acts 5:3*

*"During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray him." Jn. 13:2*

*"I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." 1 Cor. 5:5*

*"Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme." 1 Tim 1:20*

*"And they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will." 2 Tim. 2:26*

### **Demons**

While there is one devil, there is more than one *daimon*, Greek for demon. It can refer to evil spirits. According to Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, this word denotes the spiritual agents acting in all idolatry. The idol itself is nothing, but every idol has a demon associated with it who induces idolatry with its worship and sacrifices. 1 Cor. 10:20, 21; Rev. 9:20; Deut. 32:17; Is 13:21; 34:14; 65:3, 11

*"Demons are evil angels who sinned against God and who now continually work evil in the world." Grudem*

*"We are to consider Satan and the demons as one doctrine because they were one in their rejection of God's claim, and have remained one since their deposition from heaven in their*

*diabolical purpose to thwart God's benign purposes on man's behalf. Had Lucifer not become Satan, there would have been no demons."* Lockyer

***Demons try to seduce believers.***

"But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons." 1 Tim. 4:1

"Do not turn to mediums or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the Lord your God." Lev.19:31 ( See Lev.20:6, 27)

"Or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead." Deut. 18:11

"When they say to you, 'Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter,' should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living?

To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn." Is. 8:19, 20

***Demons act under the supervision of Satan.***

"And I saw coming out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet, three unclean spirits like frogs; for they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them together for the war of the great day of God, the Almighty."

Rev. 16:13, 14

***Demons tremble before God.***

"You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder." James. 2:19

***Demons recognize Christ as Lord and coming Judge.***

"And they cried out, saying, 'What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?'" Matt.8:29

"Demons also were coming out of many, shouting, 'You are the Son of God!' But rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ." Lk. 4:41

"And the evil spirit answered and said to them, 'I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?'" Acts 19:15

***Jesus rebuked demons.***

"And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once." Matt. 17:18

"When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill. This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: 'He Himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases.'"

Matt. 8:16, 17

***There are varying degrees of wickedness with demons.***

“Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation.” Matt. 12:45

### **Future for Satan and the demons**

“Who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God... The one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders.” 2 Thes. 2:4, 9

“I know your tribulation and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy by those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.” Rev. 2:9

“And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, ‘Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a place of every unclean bird.’ Rev. 18:2

“Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.’” Matt. 25:41

“And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.” Jude 6

“For God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment.” 2 Pet. 2:4

### **How does all of this effect us?**

“In which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.” Eph. 2:2

“To open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.” Acts 26:18

“You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.” Acts 10:38

“Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death, He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.” Heb. 2:14

“I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father.” 1 Jn. 2:13

### **What is our response to the power of Satan?**

“So that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.”

2 Cor. 2:11

“These are the ones who are beside the road where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them.” Mk. 4:15

“But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.” 2 Cor. 11:3

“The one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for the purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.” 1 John 3:8

“Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” James 4:7, 8

“And do not give the devil an opportunity.” Eph. 4:27

“Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.” John 12:31

“And concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged... These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.” John 16:11, 33

God is at work through His people building His kingdom. As we labor in this great work, God’s enemy and ours will also be at work to thwart the plans of our Sovereign. We need not tremble or fear this accuser; his fate is already assured. We need not ignore his existence; he is committed to dishonoring our Lord. He is committed to his agenda of destruction and we need to be more committed in following our mandate to win the world for the kingdom of our Heavenly King.

## SIN

There are several words for “sin” in both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

In the Old Testament, “iniquity” is # 5771 *awon*: guilt, evil, iniquity, punishment; it refers to the idea of deliberate twisting or perverting; it conveys the idea of conscious sin

This word is used in Gen. 4:13; Ex. 20:5; 34:7; Is. 53:11; Jer. 11:10; 13:22

Also an Old Testament word, “transgression” is # 6588 *pasha*: transgression, rebellion; this word primarily displays a rebellion against God and His laws (Is. 58:1; 59:12; Amos 5:12)

“Trespass” is # 817 *asham*: this word refers to the idea of guilt or offense due to wrongdoing; this term may also refer to the offering associated with a sin and the ensuing guilt (Lev. 5:6)

“Sin” is # 2403 *hatta’t*: sin, transgression, sin offering, punishment; this word can refer to sins committed against God or man

Mirrored in the New Testament, there are four primary words for sin as well.

They are:

#93 *adikia*: injustice, what is not conformable with justice, that which is wrong

1 John 5:17 says, “All unrighteousness (*adikia*) is sin (*hamartia*# 266). Whatever does not meet God’s justice is missing God’s goal for us.

# 266 *hamartia*: sin, missing the mark, missing the true goal of our lives, which is God; aberration from the truth, error, it stands in opposition to the truth (John 8:46), used in Rom. 3:9; 5:12, 20, 21; Gal. 3:22; Heb. 3:13 *Hamartia* is missing the mark ordained by God and not by us.

#458 *anomia*: lawlessness, not merely the absence of the law but the violation of the law

In 1 John 3:4, “Whosoever commits{on a continual basis} the sin (*hamartia*) also commits {continuously} lawlessness (*anomia*) and the sin (*hamartia*) is the lawlessness (*anomia*)”.

So here, it is evident that lawlessness is missing the mark set by God. He has a standard for His people.

#4189 *poneria*: evil, malice, wickedness (Matt. 22:18; Luke 11:39; Rom. 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:8; Eph. 6:12)

In addition to the above words used in the New Testament for sin, there are two more that are of interest.

# 3847 *parabasis*: from the verb *parabaino*, *para* implies nearness or proximity, beyond or contrary to; *baino*: to go, walk, step; *parabasis* is going beyond, false-stepping, transgressing, violating God’s standard Rom. 2:23; 4:15; 5:14; Gal. 3:19; 1 Tim. 2:14

# 2549 *kakia*: bad, wickedness as an evil habit of the mind, inherently evil

See Eph. 4:31; Col. 3:8; Tit. 3:3; 1 Pet. 2:1

That is a lot on the words meaning sin, but it is imperative to be very clear when discussing this word. Our culture admits no existence of sin, so we must be very definite when using this supposedly archaic word.

Now that we have seen what God's word means by sin, we can observe the dictionary definition of sin.

Webster defines sin as: "the breaking of religious law or a moral principle ... to break a religious law or moral principle ... to commit an offense or fault or any kind; do wrong"

Unger's Bible dictionary tells us that "the underlying idea of sin is that of law and of a lawgiver. The lawgiver is God. Hence sin is everything in the disposition and purpose and conduct of God's moral creatures that is contrary to the expressed will of God."

### **What is sin?**

Rom 3:20 "By the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin."

Rom 7:7 "What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, 'You shall not covet.'"

James 4:17 "Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin."

### **Sin is against God.**

Gen. 39:9b "How then could I do this great evil (commit adultery) and sin against God?"

Ps. 51:4 "Against You, You only, have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified when You speak and blameless when You judge."

### **Self is put in the place of God.**

2 Tim. 3:1, 2 "But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy."

Gen. 3:5 "For God knows that in the day **you** eat from it **your** eyes will be opened, and **you** will **be like God**, knowing good and evil."

### **All have sinned.**

Rom. 5:12, 13 "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned – for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law."

Rom. 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

1 Kings 8:46 "When they sin against You (for there is no man who does not sin) and You are angry with them and deliver them to an enemy, so that they take them away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near ..."

### **Sin brings death.**

Rom. 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

James 1:14, 15 "But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death."

### **Our lives are affected by sin. We are children of wrath.**

Eph. 2:1-3 “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.”

Col. 1:21, 22 “And though you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.”

### **What can be done about our sin?**

Matt. 7:11 “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father Who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!”

Matt. 19:25b, 26 “Then who can be saved? And looking at them Jesus said to them, ‘With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’”

James 4:12 “There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One Who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor?”

Rom. 5:6, 8 “For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly...But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Rom. 5:19 “For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.”

As our representative head (or federal head) Adam’s sin was imputed to us. Imputation basically means “put that on my account.” We face the penalty of sin’s wages, which is death. Christ, acting as our representative, has paid that debt. We now have His righteousness imputed to us. (Rom 5:12, 17-21; 2 Cor. 5:21)

More on this when we discuss *justification*.

Grudem’s *Systematic Theology* offers this: *sin is failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature. Sin is here defined in relation to God and His moral law.*

“We should note that all sin is ultimately irrational. Though people sometimes persuade themselves that they have good reason for sinning, when examined in the cold light of truth on the last day, it will be seen in every case that sin ultimately just does not make sense.”

The doctrine of sin is crucial to the Christian faith. What we do with the subject of sin will determine whether we see the need for a Righteous, Loving, Merciful Savior and Lord.

It is to be remembered that we not only need God’s mercy prior to the point of salvation, but now moment by moment we are completely dependent on His loving compassion. “The Lord’s lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.” Lam. 3:22, 23

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Matt 5:3

“Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.” Matt. 5:4

Recognize your condition before a holy and just God and recognize your only hope of life in the sacrificial offering of His only Son. Sin serves a purpose: it drives us to our knees before

the Sovereign Judge and Lord. Once on our knees, He draws us to Himself as our Father and Champion of our souls. Praise be to the One and only One Who can remove our sin once and for all!

What can wash away my sin?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
What can make me whole again?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain

Oh! precious is the flow  
That makes me white as snow;  
No other fount I know,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

For my pardon, this I see,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
For my cleansing this my plea,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain

Nothing can for sin atone,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
Naught of good that I have done,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain

This is all my hope and peace,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
This is all my righteousness,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain

Now by this I'll overcome—  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus,  
Now by this I'll reach my home—  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain

Glory! Glory! This I sing—  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus,

All my praise for this I bring—  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Refrain

## SOVEREIGNTY

“I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.” Job 42:2

“The Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes.” Dan. 4:25b

“But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases.” Ps. 115:3

**The doctrine of the sovereignty of God should be a comfort to His people.** But this truth only comforts those who know and trust Him.

- How do we come to trust our God as Sovereign?
- How do we see Him clearly enough to realize He truly knows what He is doing?

As with anything else in life, we observe closely the object of our interest.

There are many ways to observe, study, contemplate this attribute of God.

**The first way to observe is to “see” Him in Scripture where He has ordained His own revelation to us.**

“There is only one Lawgiver, the One Who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbor? Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.’ Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.’

But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.” James 4:12-17

Our God is omnipotent (all-powerful). Within this attribute of the Lord’s omnipotence is the idea of His sovereignty. Latin *omni* = “all”, *potens* = “powerful.”

“God’s omnipotence means that God is able to do all His holy will.”

Grudem’s [Systematic Theology](#)

### **The Lord’s power is frequently mentioned in Scripture.**

“Who is the King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle.”

Ps. 24:8

“Ah Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You.” Jer. 32:17

“For nothing will be impossible with God.” Luke 1:37

“And looking at them Jesus said to them, ‘With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’” Matt. 19:26

### **It was well known among the Lord’s servants that He is omnipotent.**

“And do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father’; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.” Matt. 3:9

“And we know that God causes all things to work out together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.” Rom. 8:28, 29

*Many times in both Old and New Testaments, the Lord is referred to as "Almighty."*

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "Who is and Who was and Who is to come, the Almighty." Greek = *pantokrator*

*It is important in mentioning God's omnipotence that, as the above definition states, God can do "all His holy will."* This clarifies the terms of His exertion of power. He cannot lie, sin, deny Himself, be tempted with evil, cease to exist or act in a manner contrary to His attributes. His will is holy and is always consistent with His character.

#### **God also exercises power over His creation.**

"Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure'; calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of My purpose from the east, the man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it." Is. 46:9-11

"Daniel said, 'Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power belong to Him. It is He Who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding. It is He Who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him. To You, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for You have given me wisdom and power; even now You have made known to me what we requested of You, for You have made known to us the king's matter.'" Dan. 2:20-23

"See now that I, I am He, and there is no god besides Me; it is I Who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I Who heal, and there is no one who can deliver from My hand."

Deut. 32:39

"The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up. The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts. He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with nobles, and inherit a seat of honor; for the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and He set the world on them." 1 Sam. 2:6-8

#### **God's power is not always exerted to bless and comfort, but at times to discipline.**

"Let me sing now for my well-beloved a song of my beloved concerning His vineyard on a fertile hill. He dug it all around, removed its stones, and planted it with the choicest vine. And He built a tower in the middle of it; then He expected it to produce good grapes, but it produced only worthless ones.

'And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge between Me and My vineyard. What more was there to do for My vineyard that I have not done in it?

Why, when I expected it to produce good grapes did it produce worthless ones? So now let Me tell you what I am going to do to My vineyard: I will remove its hedge and it will be consumed; I will break down its wall and it will become trampled ground. I will lay waste; it will not be pruned or hoed. But briars and thorns will come up. I will also charge the clouds to rain no rain on it. For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel and the men of Judah His delightful plant. Thus He looked for justice, but behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress.'" Is. 5:1-7

#### **God's sovereign will does not always make sense to us.**

"When David came to Bahurim, behold, there came out from there a man of the family of the house of Saul whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera; he came out cursing continually as he came. He threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David; and all the people and all the mighty men were at his right hand and his left. Thus Shimei said when he cursed, 'Get out, get out, you man of bloodshed, and worthless fellow.' ...Then David said to Abishai and to all his servants, 'Behold, my son who came out from me seeks

my life; how much more now this Benjamite? Let him alone and let him curse, for the LORD has told him.” 2 Sam. 16: 5-11

“I am the LORD, and there is no other; besides Me there is no God... that men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other, the One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD Who does all these.”

Is. 45:5-7

“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has asked permission to sift you like wheat.”

Lk. 22:31

“So Pilate said to Him, ‘You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?’ Jesus answered, ‘You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.’” John 19:10, 11

“Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks! For it is inevitable that stumbling blocks come; but woe to that man through whom the stumbling block comes!” Matt. 18:7

Job 1 reveals to us that Satan is not free to torment us. He must ask permission to inflict us with any of his schemes.

“Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life... God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance, now therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt.” Gen. 45:5-8

“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.” Gen. 50:20

#### **We can trust God’s covenant, sovereign will.**

“No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, Who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.” 1 Cor. 10:13

“In everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” 1 Thes. 5:18

“In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?” Ps. 56:11

“Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.”

Ps. 62:8

“Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He will do it.” Ps. 37:5

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”

Prov. 3:5, 6

“Casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.” 1 Pet. 5:7

**Another way to develop your trust of your Sovereign God is to “see” His work in the lives of others.**

We can remain more objective when looking at the life story of someone else. Also that life has the advantage of looking back with gained insight and perspective. We are in the midst of our own lives. The Lord knows this to be true of us; I believe this is why there are so many narratives in the Scriptures about people like Joseph, Daniel, Job, Abraham and above all

the life of our Lord. These lives give us direction, hope and understanding in the ways of God. Also reading biographies of those who trusted their Sovereign God is a great inspiration. The lives of people like Corrie ten Boom, Hudson Taylor, William Carey, Jim Elliot and many others, can help you “see” how a Sovereign God can be trusted with your own life.

**We also can gain understanding of God’s sovereignty by looking with the help of the Holy Spirit at our own lives.**

“But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him Who lives forever; for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’” Dan. 4: 34, 35

“The LORD of hosts has sworn saying, ‘Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand ... For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched out hand, who can turn it back?’” Is. 14:24, 27

**Basically God’s sovereignty means that He reigns over all.**

There is nothing at all that can happen in God’s universe without His permission. To see this truth in its proper balance, we must ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten us. Otherwise, with an improper view of God’s reign, we might develop an unhealthy resentment and lack of trust in our Sovereign God. When we are tempted to doubt God’s covenant love in the light of His sovereignty, we must ask ourselves if we value our own wills and desires more than His sovereign will. His will must win out at all times because He knows the end from the beginning. He tells us, “I am the Alpha and the Omega Who is and Who was and Who is to come, the Almighty.” Rev. 1:8

“Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him and that it might be paid back to him again?

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.” Rom. 11:33-36

**He is our “El Shaddai,” our all-sufficient God .**

**He is Adonai, Lord.**

**He is Elohim, the Creator.**

**He is El Roi, the God Who sees.**

**He is El Elyon, the Most High God.**

## THE WORD OF GOD

There are many terms which writers of Scripture use for “word.” One of the most powerful words in the Old Testament for God’s word is “law” or *torah*.

“Law (*torah*) in the broad sense refers to any “instruction” flowing from the revelation of God as the basis for life and action...The goal of revelation is the *internalization* of God’s word in the heart of man so as to transform his way of life: ‘The law (*torah*) of his God is in his heart; his feet do not slip.’” (Ps. 37:31; 40:8; Jer.31:33) Expositor’s Bible Commentary

The expression of internalization is delight in God’s revelation.

God’s word is faithful (Ps. 119:43), righteous (119:160), a lamp to my feet (119:105), a light to my path (119:105). His word sustains me during adverse times (119:114).

The godly acknowledge that God’s laws give order within the community. Ps.18:22

*“As he has felt the sun, perhaps in the desert, searching him out in every nook of shade where he attempted to hide from it, so he feels the Law searching out all the hiding-places of his soul.”* C.S. Lewis

The most common term for “word” in the New Testament is *logos*.

According to Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, *logos* is the expression of thought – not the mere name of an object as embodying a conception or idea. It is also the word which designates Jesus as the Personal Word, a title of the Son of God.

*Logos* in the original language means “to explain” or “to reckon.” Even Plato and Socrates used this term to mean “a harmony between the *logos* of reason and the *logos* of reality.”

*Rhema* denotes that which is spoken, what is uttered in speech or writing. In Eph. 6:17, when the believer is enjoined to take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the word (*rhema*) of God, the meaning is that he is to take up and use an individual scripture which the Spirit brings to the regenerate, sanctified mind.

According to Vine’s, *logos* is reasoned speech and *rhema* is an utterance, the articulated expression of a thought.

### Revelation

“The New is in the Old concealed;

The Old is in the New revealed.”

Herbert Lockyer, referring to revelation in the Old and New Testaments

What do we mean by *revelation*?

The word actually means “flinging or drawing back the veil” so as to remove any hindrance to complete vision.

Human search can never discover God.

*“The Bible is not primarily a record of man’s thoughts of God, but a record of what God has done and revealed of Himself to man.”* Herbert Lockyer

Each book of the Bible proceeded from the same divine mind, so the instruction of the Bible’s sixty-six books is complementary and consistent. Scripture never contradicts Scripture instead, one passage explains another.

**“By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of His mouth.”** Ps. 33:6

Heb. 1:3 tells us that Christ is continually “upholding the universe **by His word of power.**”

God’s words of *personal address* are His communications with people on earth. An example of this would be His encounter with Adam and the instructions which God gave to Adam.

God’s words spoken through human lips were considered to be just as authoritative and just as true as God’s words of personal address.

Also, God has provided His *written word*. The first example of this is in Exodus with the narrative concerning the giving of the Ten Commandments. Ex. 31:18; Deut. 31:24-26; Josh. 24:26; Is. 30:8; Jer. 30:2

Since the Bible is a progressive revelation, it is wise to read it as a whole, comparing one part with another. This will result in a true perspective. Partial examination will result in partial understanding; only careful and complete comparison of Scripture will show the complete mind of God.

### Inspiration

“I thought age should speak, and increased years should teach wisdom. But it is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives them understanding.” Job 32:7, 8

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.” 2 Tim. 3:16

The word “Scripture” here is *graphe* and refers to the Old Testament written Scripture because each use of *graphe* in the New Testament refers to the Old Testament Scriptures in every other occurrence in the New Testament. Also look at the previous verse (15) and see how Paul refers the “sacred writings”.

The term which theologians have used many years is *plenary inspiration*. This means that the words of Scripture are God’s very words. (Plenary means “full.”)

Jesus refers to the words of God in Matt. 4:4 when He says to the devil, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*”

### Illumination

This is the work of the Holy Spirit as He gives understanding to the follower of Christ.

“I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.”

Jn. 16:12, 13

“Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Your law.” Ps. 119:18

“Were not our hearts burning within us while he was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us? ...Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.” Luke 24:32, 45

“Sanctify them in truth (aletheia); Your word is truth.” Jn. 17:17

Jesus here does not say that God’s word is true (alethes or alethinos), but He says that God’s word is truth itself. The Bible is not simply true, but we must think of the Bible as being itself the final standard of truth.

“The sum of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.” Ps. 119:160

*“Thus we are to think of the Bible as the ultimate standard of truth, the reference point by which every other claim to truthfulness is to be measured.” Grudem’s Systematic Theology*

Because of the sin of man, his thinking has been distorted. Sin is ultimately irrational and sin makes us think incorrectly about God and about creation. If our world were free from sin, we would be equipped to think properly about the world and about the Bible, but because of our handicap we do not recognize the truths of the Bible as God’s word apart from God’s Spirit.

“But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. For ‘who has know the mind of the LORD, that he will instruct Him?’ But we have the Mind of Christ.” 1 Cor. 2:14-16

When studying Scripture, you may run across the following terms concerning interpretation. Interpretation involves the meaning of the passage in question.

*Hermeneutics*: the study of correct methods of interpretation (study of interpretation itself)

*Exegesis*: the process of interpreting a text of Scripture (application of interpretation; actually explaining a particular text)

The major teachings of the Scriptures which concern the content itself can be classified into four characteristics.

#### **1 – the authority of Scripture**

“But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” 2 Pet. 2:20, 21

#### **2 – the clarity of Scripture**

“The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.” Ps. 19:7

“The unfolding of Your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.” Ps. 119:130

#### **3 – the necessity of Scripture**

“For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. For ‘all flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower fall off, but the word of the LORD endures forever.’ And this is the word which was preached to you.” 1 Pet. 1:23-25

“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” Heb. 4:12

#### **4 - the sufficiency of Scripture**

Grudem says, “*The sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture contained all the words of God He intended His people to have at each stage of redemptive history, and that it now contains all the words of God we need for salvation, for trusting Him perfectly, and for obeying Him perfectly.*”

“The secret things belong to the LORD our God; but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.” Deut. 29:29

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.” 2 Tim. 2:15

“So that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” 2 Tim 3:17  
In Scripture, when “thus says the Lord” is used, it is reflective of a formula used by royalty. This phrase was used when an edict was made. This edict was final, authoritative and could not be challenged or questioned. The only response was to obey it. When the prophets say, “Thus says the Lord”, they are claiming to be messengers of the King of heaven.

*“The Scriptures were given, not to tell us how the heavens go, but to teach us how to go to heaven.”* Herbert Lockyer

### **What is to be our response to God’s Word?**

“Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven.” Ps. 119:89

“Thus says the LORD, ‘Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest? For My hand made all these things, thus all these things came into being,’ declares the LORD. ‘But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit and who trembles at My word.’” Is. 66:1, 2

## EXTRA NOTES

Post Resurrection Appearances of Jesus	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
The resurrection on the first day of the week	28:2-4			
The tomb found empty by the women	28:1,5-8	16:1-8	24:1-10	20:1
Peter and John go to tomb		24:9-12	20:2-10	
Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene		16:9-11		
Jesus appears to the other women	28:9,10			
The soldiers report given to Jewish priests	28:11-15			
Jesus and two disciples on road to Emmaus		16:12, 13	24:13-32	
Two disciples give report to the others			24:33-35	
Appearance to ten disciples, Thomas absent		16:1	24:36-49	20:19-23
Appearance to the 11 disciples, with Thomas				20:24-31
Appearance to disciples who are fishing				21:1-24
Appearance to 11 disciples in Galilee	28:16-20	16:15-18		
Appearance to 500 people- 1 Corinthians 15:7				
Appearance to James-1 Corinthians 15:7				
Christ blesses disciples and departs (Acts 1:9-12)		16:19, 20	24:50-53	
Conclusion			21:25	

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON ACTS 17: PAUL IN ATHENS**

The glory of Athens was during the time of leaders such as Pericles (461-429 B.C.)

Prior to the Epicureans and the Stoics, even before Socrates there were the schools of Heraclitus and Parmenides. They were both in quest of the ultimate truth. Yet, they were in disagreement as to what this ultimate truth was. Those who followed them abandoned the quest for truth, resigning themselves to the inability of man to probe such depths. Therefore they pursued practical knowledge instead. Greek philosophy degenerated into cynicism and skepticism which is the climate when Socrates came on the scene of Greek philosophy. A student of Socrates, Plato, was the one who rescued Greek thought and culture from cynicism and nihilism. He revived the quest for ultimate truth and developed the most profound system of truth that the world had ever seen up to his time.

### **Epicureans**

Epicurus (341 – 270 B.C.)

Belief: the chief end of man was pleasure and happiness. This pleasure is attained by avoiding excesses and the fear of death. Moderation, just the right amount of indulgence was the goal to be sought. Excess has dire consequences. The one totally given over to pleasure will inevitably face his own dilemma: if you seek physical pleasure as the single purpose in life, you will fail to achieve it and you will be constantly frustrated. Balance is the key. Man is to seek tranquility and freedom from pain and love mankind.

Concerning the gods, they believed that if gods do exist they do not become involved in human events. Epicureans were “existentialists” in the sense that they sought truth by means of personal experience and not through reasoning. They were materialists and atheists. This life is all there is.

The idea of resurrection was incompatible with Greek thought. To a Greek, the body was only a prison, and the sooner a person left his body, the happier he would be.

Ultimate personal judgment was also denied by the Greeks.

### **Stoics**

Zeno (ca. 320 – ca. 250) from Cyprus

He traditionally taught in the painted porticoes of Athens (stoa – stoics). Stoics were pantheists who felt man had a great purpose in directing history. They acknowledged the supreme god but in a pantheistic way, confusing him with the ‘world soul.’ The world was determined by fate and humans must pursue their own duty, living in harmony with nature and reason, developing their own self-sufficiency. The Stoics believed in aligning one’s life with the “Purpose” of the Cosmos. They believed in personal discipline and self-control. The most admirable thing in life was to follow one’s reason and be self-sufficient, unmoved by inner feelings or outward circumstances. Self, self, self resulted in pride and no interest in God. Not surprisingly, the first two leaders of the Stoic school committed suicide.

The Stoics believed that everything in this world happened according to fixed mechanistic causes. There is no human freedom. Man has no power to influence his life, but man can control his own attitude about what befalls him.

Epictetus was a stoic.

Marcus Aurelius was also influenced by stoic thought.

Perhaps too simple, but characteristic of Epicureans was to emphasize chance, escape and the enjoyment of pleasure. The Stoics emphasized fatalism, submission and the endurance of pain.

The Epicureans said, "Enjoy life!"

The Stoic said, "Endure life."

At our current time, we are living in an age of skepticism which always follows the impasse between rationalism and empiricism.

There has most likely never been a more hedonistic society on the face of the earth than contemporary America.

- ❖ The sin of man is not atheism; it is religion, which is how we distort God's revelation of Himself. We shape a deity in our own image and make houses for Him with our own hands, and serve and worship the creature rather than the Creator, exchanging the glory of God for a lie (Rom. 1:25).

Psalm 115 tells us in regard to making idols, "**those who make them will become like them, everyone who trusts in them.**" Also Psalm 135:18

If we do not clearly possess knowledge of the true and living God, if instead we have a god who is made merely in the image of man, or even of things made by man, then our idea of man will descend still lower to that level. Our philosophy will become as degenerate, negative and flawed as the philosophies of the Epicureans and the Stoics.

**"For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the cleverness of the clever I will set aside.' Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believed... So that just as it is written, 'Let him who boasts, boast in the LORD.'**" 1 Cor. 1:18-31

## GREEK PHILOSOPHICAL INFLUENCE

**Thales** 624-546 B.C. from Miletus (Acts 20:15-17)

- developed way of measuring pyramids by using shadows
- navigation aid using Little Bear in the north

Contribution to thought: the many are related to each other by the One. For him, the one constant physical reality was water.

**Anaximander** pupil of Thales also from Miletus

Contribution to thought: *indeterminate boundless* whereas actual things are specific, their source is indeterminate, whereas actual things are finite, their original stuff is infinite or boundless.

**Anaximenes** 585-528 B.C. from Miletus

Designated air as the primary substance from which all things come. Also introduced the idea that differences in quality are caused by differences in quantity (expansion and contraction of air).

**Pythagoras** 570-497 B.C. born on island of Samos, moved to Italy

Contribution to thought: mathematics was the principle of all things. Things consist of numbers. He was convinced that the study of math is the best purifier of the soul. The origin of the Pythagorean sect was people's yearning for a spiritual religion that could offer the means for purifying the soul and for guaranteeing its immortality. For the Pythagoreans, the Homeric gods were considered immoral and not worthy of worship. As such the gods could not be the source of any spiritual power to overcome the pervading sense of moral lacking and ultimate death.

Pythagoreans had a high regard for music as well as mathematics. Music was considered therapeutic for certain disorders due to its balance in numerical essence. The intervals in music contained a definite mathematical form and as Aristotle said, "all other things seemed in their whole nature to be modeled after numbers, and numbers seemed to be

the first things in the whole of nature, and the whole heaven to be a musical scale and a number.”

Pythagoreans came up with the concept of limits (first observed in the field of math and carried over to nature). This led to the conception of the form. Later to be fully developed by Plato.

**Heraclitus** 540-480 B.C. nobleman from Ephesus

Chief idea: all things are in flux. “You cannot step twice into the same river.”

Heraclitus was a pantheist- a term meaning God is identical with the totality of things in the universe.

**Parmenides** born 510 B.C. lived in Italy

Dissatisfied with the views of his predecessors, he offered the theory that the entire universe consists of one thing, which never changes and can never be destroyed. This single thing was the One. Any apparent change is an illusion. Parmenides asserts that we can only declare *what is* and not *what is not*. According to Parmenides, we must reject any contention that implies that *something is not*.

**The Sophists** fifth century B.C. primarily in Athens

They were skeptical about the possibility of attaining any absolute truth by which society might order its life. Their interest did not lie in cosmic discussion, but in the realm of human affairs. What made them particularly sought after was that they professed to teach the art of *rhetoric*. The power of persuasion was essential to the young democratic Athens and to anyone who hoped to rise to the level of leadership. Under Pericles (490-429), the old aristocracy of Athens had been replaced by democracy. The Sophists unfortunately looked upon truth as a relative matter. They also charged fees for their training which prompted Plato to discredit them as “shopkeepers with spiritual wares.”

**Socrates** 470-399 B.C. Athens contribution: dialectic reasoning

Socrates wrote nothing. In his youth he was in the military.

He is credited with the philosophical contribution of inductive argument and universal definitions. He developed a new method of intellectual inquiry. The interior life is the seat of a unique activity- the activity of knowing, which leads to the practical activity of doing. Socrates developed the conception of the soul, or *Psyche*. The soul is the capacity for

intelligence and character; a person's conscious personality. He introduced dialogue as the process of discovering knowledge and truth. Each party in a conversation must clarify their ideas and defend their thoughts. Any inaccurate or unworthy thoughts would be pounced on by Socrates and exposed as error and therefore dangerous to character because they were dangerous to thought.

He also introduced into philosophy the concept that things in the universe have a function or purpose and tend toward good (the teleological view). For Socrates, knowledge and virtue were the same thing.

"The unexamined life is not worth living."

**Plato** 428-348 B.C. Athens, founded the Academy at Athens

Education is a matter of conversion- a complete turning around from the world of appearance to the world of reality. The Example of the Cave

Plato's theory of the *Forms* is his most significant philosophical contribution. The *Forms* are those changeless, eternal, and non-material essences or patterns of which the actual visible objects we see are only poor copies. These *Forms* seem to have originally existed in the "mind of God" or in the supreme principle of rationality. Here we see that the Greeks looked for something real and true, aware that what the eyes see is not necessarily reality.

**Aristotle** 384-322 B.C. Athens; was tutor to Alexander the Great; Aristotle's school in Athens was the Lyceum

Aristotle developed the system of logic based on the *syllogism*. Major premise, minor premise and conclusion. Example: All humans are mortal. Socrates is a human. Therefore, Socrates is mortal.

Aristotle developed an elaborate system of philosophy which examined logic, metaphysics, physics, biology, psychology, ethics, art and politics.

Aristotle's *Metaphysics*: "All men by nature desire to know."

**Cynics** held virtue to be the only good, stressed independence from worldly needs and pleasures; they became critical of the rest of society and its material interests; met in gymnasium

**Diogenes** 412-323 B.C. noted for his asceticism

**Epicurus** 342-271 B.C. born on Samos, went to Asia Minor and then Athens

-considered philosophy as the medicine of the soul

-the ultimate pleasure human nature seeks is repose

-in the end, Epicurus fashioned a self-centered moral philosophy, for his concern was not primarily with human society but with individual pleasure

**Stoics** 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.

**Zeno** 334-262 B.C. gave lectures in the stoa (porches) hence the name stoics

-wisdom and control over pleasure

-soul was a material body- a physical "breath"

-"we cannot control all events, but we can control our attitude toward what happens"

-"we have nothing to fear but fear itself"

Later influence on Roman dignitaries: Cicero(106-43 B.C.), Seneca(4 B.C.-65),

Epictetus(60-117), Emperor Marcus Aurelius(121-180)

**Skeptics** skeptikoi=seekers, inquirers

-did not agree with Plato, Aristotle, Stoics or Epicureans

-school of skepticism arose in the hope of attaining mental peace or calmness

-counter to dogmatists

- they suspended judgment, did not affirm anything or deny anything

-probability is enough

**Gnostics** claimed that the truth was a mystery that could be revealed in secret to those who sought initiation. The Gnostics sought by human wisdom to understand the ways of God with man and to avoid what seemed to them to be the stigma of the Cross. If the Gnostics had succeeded, Christianity would have been simply another philosophical religion of the ancient world.

The basic teaching of Gnosticism is that matter is evil and spirit is good.

To explain Christ, they adopted a doctrine known as **Docetism**. This taught that the man Jesus was a phantom with the appearance of a human body or that Christ came upon this material body of Jesus only a short time ... from his baptism until his suffering on the cross. The duty of the Christ was to teach a special *knowledge* that would help man save himself by a process of intellectual ascent.

Gnosticism had no place for the body in resurrection since the body was evil.

Gnosticism also encouraged spiritual pride with its suggestion that only an aristocratic elite could enjoy the pleasures of dwelling with Deity in heaven. The road to Deity was marked by an elaborate and endless experience of “emanations” in which *gnosis* was achieved.

## PAUL'S SERMON ACTS 24:25

### Word studies

#### ➤ **Righteousness** *dikaiosune* –

God is the objective standard which determines the content of meaning of *dikaios*, and at the same time keeps that content of meaning constant and unchanging, since He is the Unchanging One.

God is the standard of all righteousness.

Righteousness of God must denote that self-respecting quality of holiness in God, that reaction of His nature against sin, which must find expression in condemnation of it

God's uprightness or standard without reference to any particular form of its embodiment, to which man is expected to conform

Righteousness according to the divine standard, conformity to the will and nature of God Himself.

To see God's righteousness is to become aware of my sin condition and thereby cry out to God

To be poor in spirit, to be dependent on God

Righteousness is godliness or God likeness.

Man in his natural fallen condition tends rather to accept his own set of standards, creating his own righteousness.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5:3

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for **righteousness**, for they shall be satisfied." Matt. 5:6

"But seek first His kingdom and His **righteousness**, and all these things will be added to you." Matt. 6:33

"For I say to you that unless your **righteousness** surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5:20

#### ➤ **Self-control** *egkrateias* –

Temperance Gal. 5:23; 2 Pet. 1:6

From *kratos* – strength, power, dominion

The controlling power of the will under the operation of the Spirit

In Acts 24:25, the word follows righteousness. In 2 Pet. 1:6, the word follows knowledge.

Man's response to God's Righteousness is yielding to His Spirit's control.

Under the power and authority of God, we are to learn and do the standard of our Unchanging God.

#### ➤ **Judgment** *krimatos* (coming – *mellontos*)

The sentence pronounced, a verdict, a condemnation, the decision resulting from an investigation

Takes place after *krisis* which is the process of investigation, the act of distinguishing and separating

**Antonyms:** *Apologeomai* (verb of *apologia*) – to answer back in making a defense, to excuse oneself

*Dikaioo* – to regard as just or innocent

*Aphiemi* – to dismiss, forgive, remit, let go

*Apoluo* – to release

## GAMALIEL

Paul claims to have been educated by Gamaliel, one of the premier teachers of the Law in the first century. Gamaliel taught between A.D. 22-55, giving us an approximate early date for Paul's education. If Paul began study at the latest age of 16, we can guess a birth year of about 6 at the earliest. Polhill observes that several rulings of Gamaliel appear in the Mishnah, mostly having to do with marriage and divorce. Perhaps Gamaliel's views influenced Paul's personal comments on marriage in 1 Corinthians 7 (Polhill, Paul and his Letters, 30).

Gamaliel was himself a Pharisee in the tradition of the great Hillel. A generation before Christ there were two great rabbis, Hillel and Shammai. While this is a generalization, many of the rabbinic debates of the first century come down to the opinion of Hillel versus Shammai. With respect to Hellenism, Hillel was more open to Hellenism than Shammai and was therefore more open to cooperation with the Romans.

Evidence for this more accommodating opinion is found in the book of Acts. Gamaliel is reported to have offered somewhat lenient advice concerning the early preaching of the apostles in Acts 5:34-39. Basically, he said that if the movement is from God then it cannot be stopped, if it is not then it will not succeed. Gamaliel is reflecting the Hillel tradition of non-violence and allowing God to deal with parties that against the Jews (Polhill, Paul and His Letters, 31).

This is certainly not the opinion of his young disciple Saul when we meet him in Acts 9 and according to Paul's own self-description. He was a ruthless persecutor who sought to stop what he saw as an aberration within Judaism. The people who Paul persecuted were diaspora Jews who accepted Jesus as Messiah and claimed that he was raised from the dead. How can we account for this violent reaction in a man trained by Gamaliel?

It is possible that Paul was not of the Hillel form of Pharasism, but rather the more radical Shammaite party. N. T. Wright describes the Shammaite Pharisee as a militant "hard-liner" that was not willing to work with Rome as long as they could study the Torah, as Hillel had said (What Saint Paul Really Said, 26). Paul was a Diaspora Jew who claimed to have been raised in a family which kept the Jewish traditions without fault. He was an ultra-conservative reacting to what he perceived as a dangerous liberal view (Jesus was the Messiah and the High Priest killed him!)

**Gamaliel the Elder** /*ge'meɪljəl*,<sup>[1]</sup> or **Rabban Gamaliel I** (רבן גמליאל הזקן; Greek: Γαμαλιήλ ο Πρεσβύτερος), was a leading authority in the [Sanhedrin](#) in the mid 1st century CE. He was son of [Simeon ben Hillel](#), and grandson of the great Jewish teacher [Hillel the Elder](#), and died twenty years before [the destruction](#) of the [Second Temple](#) in Jerusalem (70 CE). He fathered a son, whom he called [Simeon](#), after his father,<sup>[2]</sup> and a daughter, whose

daughter (*i.e.*, Gamaliel's granddaughter) married a priest named Simon ben Nathanael.<sup>[13]</sup> The name *Gamaliel* is the [Greek](#) form of the [Hebrew](#) name meaning *reward of God*.

## In Jewish tradition

In the [Talmud](#), Gamaliel is described as bearing the titles [Nasi](#) and *Rabban* (our master), as the president of the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem; although some dispute this, it is not doubted that he held a senior position in the highest court in Jerusalem.<sup>[2]</sup> Gamaliel holds a reputation in the [Mishnah](#) for being one of the greatest teachers in all the annals of Judaism:

"Since Rabban Gamaliel the Elder died, there has been no more reverence for the law, and purity and piety died out at the same time"<sup>[9]</sup>

Gamaliel's authority on questions of religious law is suggested by two Mishnaic anecdotes in which "the king and queen" ask for his advice about rituals.<sup>[10]</sup> The identity of the king and queen in question is not given, but is generally thought to either be King Herod [Agrippa I](#) and his wife [Cypris](#), or King Herod [Agrippa II](#) and his sister [Berenice](#).<sup>[2][11]</sup>

As [classical rabbinical literature](#) always contrasts the school of [Hillel](#) to that of [Shammai](#) and only presents the collective opinions of each of these opposing schools of thought without mentioning the individual nuances and opinions of the rabbis within them, these texts do not portray Gamaliel as being knowledgeable about the Jewish scriptures, nor do they portray him as a teacher.<sup>[2]</sup> For this reason, Gamaliel is not listed as part of the chain of individuals who perpetuated the Mishnaic tradition.<sup>[12]</sup> Instead the chain is listed as passing directly from Hillel to [Johanan ben Zakkai](#).

Nevertheless, the Mishnah mentions Gamaliel's authorship of a few legal ordinances on the subjects of community welfare and conjugal rights. He argued that the law should protect women during divorce, and that, for the purpose of re-marriage, a single witness was sufficient evidence for the death of a husband.<sup>[13]</sup> The Mishnah also contains a saying it attributes to "Gamaliel", although it is vague about which particular "Gamaliel" it means. The saying itself concerns religious scruples:

"Obtain a teacher for yourself, keep yourself [on religious questions] far from doubt, and only infrequently give a tithe using general valuation."<sup>[14]</sup>

Various pieces of classical rabbinic literature additionally mention that Gamaliel sent out three [epistles](#), designed as notifications of new religious rulings, and which portray Gamaliel as the head of the Jewish body for religious-law.<sup>[15][16][17][18]</sup> Two of these three were sent, respectively, to the inhabitants of [Galilee](#) and "the Darom" (southern Judea), and

were on the subject of the [Levite Tithe](#). The third epistle was sent to the [Jews of the Diaspora](#), and argued for the introduction of an [intercalary](#) month.

Since the Hillel school of thought is presented collectively, there are very few other teachings which are clearly identifiable as Gamaliel's. There is only a somewhat cryptic dictum, comparing his students to classes of fish:

A [ritually impure fish](#): one who has memorized everything by study, but has no understanding, and is the son of poor parents

A ritually pure fish: one who has learnt and understood everything, and is the son of rich parents

A fish from the [Jordan River](#): one who has learnt everything, but doesn't know how to respond

A fish from the [Mediterranean](#): one who has learnt everything, and knows how to respond

## [\[edit\]](#) In Christian tradition

The [Acts of the Apostles](#) introduces Gamaliel as a [Pharisee](#) and celebrated scholar of the [Mosaic Law](#).<sup>[19]</sup> In this passage, [Saint Peter](#) and the other [apostles](#) are described as being prosecuted by the Sanhedrin for continuing to preach the [Gospel](#), despite the Jewish authorities having previously prohibited it. The passage describes Gamaliel as presenting an argument against killing the apostles, reminding the Sanhedrin about previous revolts, which had been based on beliefs that individuals such as [Theudas](#) and [Judas of Galilee](#) were the prophesied [messiah](#), and which had collapsed quickly after the deaths of those individuals. According to Acts, his authority with his contemporaries was so great that they accepted his advice, regardless of how unwelcome it was. Gamaliel's concluding argument to them had been:

"if it be of men, it will come to naught, but if it be of God, ye will not be able to overthrow it; lest perhaps ye be found even to fight against God".<sup>[20]</sup>

The Book of Acts later goes on to describe [Paul of Tarsus](#) recounting that he was "educated at the feet of Gamaliel" about Jewish religious law,<sup>[21]</sup> although no details are given about which teachings Paul adopted from Gamaliel, and hence how much Gamaliel influenced aspects of Christianity. However, there is no other record of Gamaliel ever having taught in public,<sup>[2]</sup> although the Talmud does describe Gamaliel as teaching a student who displayed "impudence in learning", which a few scholars identify as a possible reference to Paul.<sup>[22]</sup> The relationship of [Paul of Tarsus and Judaism](#) continues to be the subject of scholarly debate. [Helmut Koester](#), Professor of Divinity and of Ecclesiastical History at [Harvard University](#), is doubtful that Paul studied under this famous rabbi, arguing that there is a marked contrast in the tolerance that Gamaliel is said to have expressed about Christianity with the ["murderous rage" against Christians](#) that Paul is described as having prior to his conversion.<sup>[23]</sup>

In the apocryphal *Gospel of Gamaliel*, he figures as a witness to the raising of a dead man at Jesus' tomb. [\[24\]](#)

## WHO IS YOUR HERO?

Everyone has a hero. Much depends on who your hero is.

Not only does everyone have a hero, at first anyway, but **everyone wants to be a hero**. We all want to be **special and unique**. This is human nature. We want to be special because God made us as His special child: one of a kind. We desire to be admired, worth something, helpful.

I wanted to be Sheba. Queen of the Jungle.

When I think back to that child, it seems that was another person, but no, that was me. It gives me a glimpse back to those formative years that I might otherwise had totally forgotten.

It is most important who we choose as our heroes.

Do you see the response of these that have shared who their hero is? They have **cried**; they **have laughed**; they have **fondly remembered** one who is central to their lives. **Our heroes are embedded deeply within who we are.**

- I believe that Gamaliel was Paul's hero before Paul met Jesus.

After Jesus every other hero pales in comparison.

- But what about Felix?

Who was his hero?

Perhaps his brother, perhaps Claudius, but eventually **he became his own hero** and it became his undoing. He admired himself; he protected himself; he pampered and provided for himself. Not his people in his charge, but for himself.

The wonderful thing about Christian heroes, it does not matter what lies behind. You could have been a murderer, a convicted felon, a thief, an adulterer, anything you would normally want to hide. You can now walk in the light as Paul did because your Hero has rescued you from darkness and you just want to tell others about you Hero!!

In the Christian tradition, Gamaliel is celebrated as a [Pharisee](#) doctor of [Jewish Law](#).<sup>[4]</sup> [Acts of the Apostles](#) speaks of Gamaliel as a man of great respect who spoke in favor of arrested Christian apostles<sup>[5][6]</sup> and the Jewish Law teacher of [Paul the Apostle](#).<sup>[7][8]</sup>



## ARE YOU PERSUADED TO FOLLOW JESUS WHEREVER HE LEADS?

**Acts 17:2-4** “persuaded” **18:4, 13; 19:26** This was Paul’s routine: persuade men that Jesus was the Christ.

The word for persuade is from the same root as the word for “faith.”

*pistis*= faith, persuasion *pisteuo*= believe, to be persuaded, to be persuaded that something is true

*peitheo*= believe, persuade, in the middle voice it means “to suffer oneself to be persuaded”

it also means to obey, trust, agree, yield

**Acts 18:4; 19:8; 28:24; Lk. 16:31; Heb. 13:18**

Before you can be willing to go to your Jerusalem, you must be persuaded that God is worthy of your life. If you are not willing to give your all for Him, then you have not been persuaded yet.

*Peitheo* means to “yield” so when you do not yield to God, you are not persuaded that you can trust Him.

In Greek when you put an “*a*” in front of a word you are making it negative: like our “un.”

*Apeitheo*=refuse to be persuaded, to refuse belief, to be disobedient

**Acts 14:2; 19:9; Rom. 2:8; 10:21; 11:30,31; 15:31; Heb.3:18;11:31; 1 Pet. 2:2:7, 8; 3:1, 20; 4:17**

*Apeitheia*=the condition of being unpersuadable, obstinate rejection

**Eph.2:2; 5:6; Col. 3:6; Rom. 11:30, 32; Heb. 4:6, 11**

Note the connection between unbelief: not being persuaded and unbelief as disobedience

Non-believers have not been persuaded that God is Who He says He is.

Do you know non-believers who have not been persuaded that God is Who He says He is? Of course you do.

But Christian, are you persuaded that God is Who He says He is? Who is God to you?

What are some of God’s attributes?

\*attributes are divided into many classifications: immanent/emanant, transitive/intransitive, relative/absolute, natural/moral, communicable/incommunicable

Basically they are divided according to how He relates to man and His own separate character.

God is:

All-powerful all-loving all-knowing righteous just merciful majestic sovereign gracious forgiving

Do you really believe He is all-powerful, all-knowing and all-loving?

My God can cure any illness I have;

He can give me the job I want;

He can cause all my loved ones to be saved, healthy, rich, happy.

He can give me my every desire.

Do I magnify God because He gives me all these things?

Am I **persuaded** that my God is great?

Yes, God is great because when He does or does not heal me, give me certain requests, shield me from pain – I can trust that He knows what He is doing. I can trust that He is achieving in me His goal – not happiness, not ease, not a smooth carefree life. Jesus did not have a carefree life. What I am persuaded about God is that He is so great, so worthy to be praised that With every trial I face, every heartache I endure, every tear has a purpose: to reflect the life of the One Who loves within me.

Jesus said: “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. It is for the disciple enough that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master.” Matt. 10:24,25

I am persuaded that my God is more than able. O Jehovah – Self-Existent God – reveal more of Yourself to me that I might truly worship You, not only on Sundays, but every day and every moment I breathe. Prepare me for my Jerusalem.

Next time we will discuss “How do you gain a trust of God?”

Until then, **be persuaded** that He is God and He knows what He is doing in your life.

## LIVING IN THE SHADOWS VS LIVING IN REALITY

Plato may not be light reading for us, but there is so much to learn from this man. I believe he is the greatest of all non-Christian philosophers; he seems so to me b/c he is the only one who comes anywhere close to understanding the One true God.

In our quest to understand Reality vs. Shadows, I believe Plato can “shed a little light” on the subject.

Plato tells of the Cave Analogy.

A man and his companions are restrained by chains in a cave their entire lives.

There are things going on outside the cave, but the cave dwellers can only see the shadows produced by the sun filtering into the cave.

They believe the shadows to be all there is and hence: Reality.

One of the men is suddenly able to escape his chains and goes out into the world. He finds that the shadows only represent a poor reflection of what is real. Don't you know that at first when he left the cave, his eyes were squinting and it was painful and hard to grasp.

Just so for us as we grapple with what is real and true about our identity and calling in Christ.

At first we are unable to fully understand who we are and therefore our purpose for existing as a child of God Almighty.

It is much easier and less of a strain to just return to the cave and live the way we are more comfortable. This is what we do with church tradition. We default to what we have been doing or exposed to for the last several years. God is calling us to realize what is true. First of all to realize what is true about God and then to see ourselves through His lense, His perspective.

Business as usual is a killer for the church.

What we have been learning the last 9 months in the book of Acts has revealed to us the truth of the Church: all its trials, joys, conflicts, persecutions, learning stages and ultimate victory in overcoming the world.

Regardless to Paul's chains, the gospel continued unhindered. Therefore, in Paul's eyes, he was unhindered to all that really mattered.

I hope all week long you were looking at the shadow you produced as you walked. That shadow is not you! You are far more than that.

What does a healthy, thriving church look like?

Well, as Plato taught in The Republic when he was trying to explain the just man, to understand the one you must look at the many. And the reverse is true: to understand the many within the Church, you must look at the individual.

How are you doing/how am I doing with the commandments of Christ? The words of Jesus are true and real and full of grace. To know reality is to know what Jesus teaches.

First of all for us, as a collection of individuals followers of Christ, how are we doing with those sitting next to us?

Do we look at each one as a delightful representation of the image of God?

Do we rejoice in the lives of one another?



## Five Misconceptions of Discipleship

- **Discipleship takes place when people attend church programs.**  
In fact, much good teaching can take place during church, but it is often too general and not targeted to the special needs of a new Christian.
- **Discipleship just happens.**  
In fact, we must go counter cultural and instruct others personally and lovingly about the ways of Christ. We need to ask the hard questions and get involved into the process of why they do things.
- **Discipleship is only for new Christians.**  
In fact, discipleship is a process that should be occurring all through our lives. A disciple always follows his master's life. Once a disciple, always a disciple.
- **Discipleship is a program.**  
In fact, discipleship is a lifestyle. We are Christ's disciples and this Christian life calls us to learn and live like Him. This will require significant changes in the way we think and live.
- **Discipleship is only for certain parts of our lives.**  
In fact, Christ wants to teach us in *each aspect* of our lives from our parenting skills to handling finances. This differs from some cults which will actually make your decisions for you! Mentoring is a term that describes the training of a person in one or more specific areas.

### Description of Discipleship

True discipleship takes all of Christ's teaching and implements them into our lives in such a way that we live like Christ did.

We must not be content with only the passing on of knowledge and tradition and assume the accompanying of conviction and belief. We are called to live out a godly life before those we instruct, just as Christ did. There is a great difference between the modern student and a disciple.

### Do we really need discipleship materials?

A good set of discipleship materials is important but not our key focus.

Materials can get in the way and actually just become another program if we are not careful. Good discipleship materials are opportunities to enter different aspects of a believer's personal life with the truth of God. Our goal is to share our lives, convictions and knowledge with them so that they will be more like Christ. The process is not unlike what should happen in a great family where the parents take their parental responsibilities seriously.

## Key questions to ask concerning discipleship

Here are some questions to begin to get you thinking:

1. What areas of growth are we hoping to grow in?
2. Are you willing to grow in those areas of need? What has God taught you? How has He taught you?
3. What steps are needed to bring you to Christlikeness in those areas of weakness?
4. Under this last crucial step, we might approach it from different perspective such as:
  - Truths a person needs to learn
  - Activities needed for fostering growth
  - Areas in which we are praying for discernment

## Concepts of Discipleship

We must start at change in the heart.

**Concepts for Discipleship** has 3 parts:

- > Defining Discipleship (Defining the concept of discipleship)
- > Describing Discipleship (Spiritual disciplines and discipleship)
- > Designing Discipleship (Designing discipleship which you can incorporate into your real life experiences)

We must fight the 'independent' attitude today in which we let everyone learn by himself.

Christ said we need to make disciples. As a church we need to think through where we want to be in areas of giving, discipling, evangelizing, family care, loving of neighbors, etc. We can no longer assume people know the right thing to do.

### FOUR CUPS OF THE SEDER MEAL

There are 4 cups in the traditional seder meal: the meal that Jesus our Lord participated in the night before His death.

These 4 cups are taken from Ex. 6:6, 7.

1. The first cup is the cup of Sanctification.

With each cup the priest would say, "Blessed be the Lord God, King of the universe."

"Baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech ha olam..."

2. The second cup is the cup of affliction.  
Our Lord was willing to drink the cup of affliction in order to redeem us (cup three). This bitter cup was on the mind of our Lord. Matt. 26: 20-30  
"Lord, let this cup pass from Me ... nevertheless, let Your will be done."
3. The third, the one our Lord drank before He went to Gethsemane, was the cup of Redemption. "I will redeem you."
4. We are told in the gospel accounts that He refrained from the last cup, saying that He would not drink of the fruit of the vine until we are with Him in His Father's kingdom.

Our Lord's first miracle was at a wedding in Cana, turning the water to wine.

The next time our Lord will drink wine will be at His own Wedding: the wedding feast of the Lamb!

In John 14, Jesus told His disciples that He was leaving to go and prepare a place for them in His Father's kingdom. (The King of the Universe, Eloheinu Melech Ha Olam)

When a bridegroom leaves to go and prepare the home for his new bride, he typically leaves her a gift.

Our Lord is no mean Bridegroom. He left a gift for those who love Him. He left the gift of His Spirit.

This Spirit is Who will sanctify and ready us for His return and our Wedding.

O dear follower of Christ, dear Bride of Christ, he is coming back for a sanctified Church, not a blemished, unholy, impure, unready Bride. But one adorned with beauty, purity, wisdom and truth.

He has left us His bridegroom's gift, the Holy Spirit of God.

**Do not let the Law, sin, idols, the world, children, family, jobs, the tyranny of the urgent rob you of being prepared for our Lord and Husband.**

**Sanctification** is not so that you can grow in the Lord; while that is a wonderful benefit, it is not the purpose of **Sanctification**. We are sanctified because He deserves nothing but the best and His Father is committed to delivering us to Him on that Wedding Day as nothing short of perfection.

Now we must prepare to meet our Beloved.

**Are you walking in the Spirit, living the life of Sanctification which He provided for you?**

This is why the Spirit is so crucial in the book of Acts, as He is throughout the entire Bible.

We are told in **Acts 1:5** that the baptism of the Spirit is coming.

**Acts 1:8** tells us more: you will receive power to be His witnesses with the coming of the Spirit. **Acts 2:3, 4** ushers in the fulfillment of the Scriptures as God pours out His Spirit on man.

**Acts 2:11** reveals the voice of the Spirit to enable man to speak of the wonders of God.

The Holy Spirit speaks of our Lord, our Bridegroom ... “Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear.” **Acts 2:33**

This is our wedding gift.

**Eph. 1:13, 14** sheds even more light on this truth.

“In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation – having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a **pledge** of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.”

The word “pledge” in Greek (*arrabon*) means engagement ring!

Be faithful, be pure, be singleminded for the coming of your King, Lord and Bridegroom.

When we gather together for that wedding feast, He will drink from the fourth cup of the Passover meal, **the cup of Praise**. Ex. 6:7, “Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, Who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.” He has bought us from the marketplace of slavery, He has purified us by the washing of the word, He has ascended to heaven to intercede on our behalf as we are being made ready. He has waited for His Bride.

**“For the joy** set before Him, He endured the cross.” Heb. 12:2b

## REMEMBERING THE LORD - THE FEASTS OF ISRAEL

“And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He {Jesus} explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.” Luke 24: 27

The word “remember” is stated in the Old and New Testaments more than 300 times.

There is a Jewish saying: “Put something where you can see it so your eye will remind your heart.”

We are going to put the feasts “before us” so our eye can remind our heart about this great God that we serve and adore.

Since most of the feasts involve at least one Sabbath day, we will begin here.

### ➤ SABBATH

This word is from the Hebrew “Shabbat” – rest.

God wanted to give His people a gift and it was a weekly rest. Ex. 20: 8-11

This rest was God’s idea and was not to be burdened by the extra requirements later imposed by legalistic Pharisees.

The origin of this rest goes as far back as Creation itself. God rested on the seventh day after He created the whole world. Because of our identity in Him, we are to follow His example and rest. Jesus did not nullify this rest, but put it in perspective.

“The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” Mark 2: 27

“It is right to do good on the Sabbath.” Matt. 12: 12

“The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.” Matt. 12: 8

As New Testament believers we are prone to dispense with any regard for the Sabbath because we are “under grace.” But the Lord knows we are still in need of rest. The rest He was ultimately pointing to was the rest we find in Christ as Hebrews chapters 3 and 4 describe. But we also continue to need to recharge our bodies as well. You would not go 6 days without sleep, would you? A weekly rest and reflection remain a gift from the Lord.

How you implement this rest is between you and the Lord.

“Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day – things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.” Col. 2: 16, 17

Keep in mind that Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath and as our Lord we are to seek His way of honoring this day.

The Lord knows that one day rolls into the next and we need refreshment and reflection.

**DO not** let your week be out of control! Find a way to prepare for your day of worship.

The Jews actually saw the day before Sabbath as the Preparation Day.

We disciples of Christ just screech into church on Sundays, skid marks included, race into the sanctuary (“sanctus” means holy – so our holy place) and plop down, ready to worship.

This will not do! We must prepare our hearts to receive from our Lord and King whatever it is He has to say or do in our midst.

Are you planning and preparing for the Lord’s Day?

Prepare and then .... REST.

➤ **PASSOVER – Hebrew PESACH** The 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month (March/April) Egypt had been a hard place for God’s people to live. They were essentially slaves there.

Through the Passover event, God delivered His people from this bondage to Egypt. His method of redemption was through the blood of a lamb, placed on the doorposts of the home of a Hebrew. The Death Angel would then “pass over” this house and no death would be administered to the firstborn of that home. The Egyptians did not fare so well and the night of Passover was a night of bitter pain for them.

Read Ex. 12: 1-30

Keep in mind that eating the Passover meal was very prescribed as well. Much as we as believers in the Christ partake of the eating of Our Lamb’s body and blood – we are sharing in His life and His work of redemption. Ex. 12: 11 – “It is the Lord’s Passover.”

Ex. 12: 14 tells us that this was to be a memorial to celebrate as a permanent ordinance.

**Remembering** is so very important! We are to remember our Lord as we celebrate our Passover Lamb. 1 Cor. 5: 7

➤ **THE FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD** The 15<sup>th</sup> day of the first month  
“For seven days you shall eat unleavened bread.” Lev. 23: 6

Throughout Scripture, leaven is associated with sin. God’s people are to purge themselves of all sin. It is not about the cracker but about the need for holiness because our God is holy.

Lev. 19: 2, “You shall be holy for I the Lord your God am holy.”

“Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” 1 Cor. 5: 7, 8

This observance followed immediately upon the heels of the Passover. How short are our memories that we need such immediate reminders of Who our Deliverer is!

Not only are we to remember Who He is and what He has done, we are to remember who we are – we are His holy people. 1 Pet. 2: 9

➤ **THE FEAST OF FIRST FRUITS** Day after the Sabbath

“When you enter the land which I am going to give to you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring in the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest. The priest shall wave the sheaf before the Lord for you to be accepted ...” Lev. 23: 10 – 11

On the first day of the week after Passover, the cereal harvest began. Barley was the first to ripen during this season.

This observance was to remind the people that the Lord was their Provider.

On the day after the Sabbath, following Passover, as the first fruits of the barley harvest were being offered in the Temple, Christ was raised from the dead, “the first fruits of those who are asleep.” (1 Cor. 15: 20)

➤ **PENTECOST OR THE FEAST OF WEEKS** Hebrew SHAVUOTH (May/June)

Fifty days after the First Fruits

“You shall count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall present a new grain offering to the Lord. You shall bring ... two loaves of bread for a wave offering ... On this day you shall make a proclamation as well; you are to have a holy convocation. You shall do no laborious work ...”

Lev. 23: 16, 17, 21

Fifty days after First Fruits, while the disciples of Jesus were gathered together to celebrate Pentecost, God kept His promise and sent His Holy Spirit.

Acts 2: 1-4, 16-18

- THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS Hebrew Rosh Hashanah The 7<sup>th</sup> month, 1<sup>st</sup> day (September/October)

“In the seventh month, on the first of the month you shall have a Sabbath rest, a reminder by blowing of the trumpets, a holy convocation. You shall not do any laborious work, but you shall present an offering by fire to the Lord.”

Lev. 23: 23-25

A Day of Blowing

“Now in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall also have a holy convocation, you shall do no laborious work. It will be to you a day for blowing trumpets.”

Num. 29: 1

For the Jew, this is the New Year – rosh means “head” or “beginning” and hashanah means “the year.” In keeping with tradition it is fitting that the seventh month is holy, just as the seventh day has always been honored. Therefore, the calendar begins with the seventh month.” Celebrate the Feasts Martha Zimmermann

The sounding of the shofar has much meaning for Israel.

The shofar would sound to announce every Friday to stop working as the Sabbath was about to begin.

It was sounded at Mt. Sinai at the giving of the Law. (Ex. 19: 19)

It was sounded at this most holy season to call Israel to repentance. As it was sounded on this day, these words were spoken, “You who are asleep, wake up! You who are in a trance, arise! Search your doings and repent; remember your Creator.”

Fulfillment

Rom. 13: 11; Eph. 5: 14; Gen. 22: 1-14

Jesus is our sacrifice. “Then Abraham raised his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the place of his son.” Gen. 22: 13

➤ **DAY OF ATONEMENT Hebrew YOM KIPPUR** The 7<sup>th</sup> month, 10<sup>th</sup> day

“On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall humble your souls and present an offering by fire to the Lord. You shall do no work on this day, for it is a day of atonement ... It is to be a Sabbath of complete rest to you, and you shall humble your souls; on the ninth of the month at evening, from evening until evening you shall keep your Sabbath.”

Lev. 23: 27, 28, 32 (More on this day in Lev. 16)

The Day of Atonement, when annual atonement was made of the sins of the nation, was the holiest day in the Old Testament calendar. Reformation Bible

“Prepare to meet your God, O Israel.” Amos 4: 12

❖ Job understood the great chasm between God and man.

“Can man be just before God? Can a man be pure before his Maker?” Job 4: 17

“There is no umpire between us, who may lay his hand upon us both.” Job 9: 33

“Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my advocate is on high.” Job 16: 19

“As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives and at the last He will take His stand on the earth.” Job 19: 25

❖ A parable of Jesus indicates the kind of heart that worships on this occasion:

“But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, “God, be merciful to me, the sinner.!” Luke 18: 13

It is customary to read the following Psalms during Yom Kippur: 107, 111, 145.

Fulfillment:

Israel will see the One Whom they have pierced and they will repent.

Zech. 12: 10; 13: 1; 14: 9

➤ **FEAST OF BOOTH OR TABERNACLES Hebrew SUKKOTH**

“You shall celebrate the Feast of Booths seven days after you have gathered in from your threshing floor and your wine vat; you shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter and your male and female servants and the Levite and the stranger and the orphan and the widow who are in your towns. Seven days you shall celebrate a

feast to the LORD your God in the place which the LORD chooses, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you will be altogether joyful.”

Deut. 16: 13-15

The name “Sukkoth” comes from the journey of Jacob to this place. Gen 33: 17

Read Ezra 7: 73- 8: 18 to see how overjoyed the Israelites were to again celebrate this feast upon returning to Judah after the Exile to Babylon. “All the people gathered as one “... as Ezra read from God’s Word.

- ❖ Jesus took great risk to celebrate this feast in John 7. Yet He attended because the theme of His teaching related directly to the festival itself. As He cried out, “If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink,” He was giving the people a visual reminder of a special feature of this service. The priest would be sent to the Pool of Siloam with a golden pitcher to draw water and then pour the water into a bowl at the altar. This action of the priest was to be a reminder to all who saw that the Lord was the Provider of the coming rainy season so necessary for the crops and the survival of the people. This festival was an opportunity to petition the Lord for His blessing through the rains, asking God to open the gates of heaven.

Jesus was well aware of the spiritual drought that existed in their hearts and so His quote from Isaiah seems all the more profound here. “Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters. And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.” Is. 55: 1

These are the three major feasts for which all males of Israel were required to travel to the temple in Jerusalem. (Ex. 32: 14-19) Reformation Bible

The feasts are associated with the provision of life from the land which the Lord had provided for them (agricultural in basis). Yes, He had given them the land but if there was to be a constant flow of life-giving nourishment from this “promised land” there had to be also a constant flow of obedience and faithfulness on the part of the people of God.

The feasts were to remind the people of this connection and never forget that their very lives depended on Him. To walk in dependence on God was to walk in faith; to walk in independence from God was foolish, rebellious and would end in devastation.

The same is true for today – REMEMBER YOUR GOD!

**THE FEASTS OF ISRAEL**

## THE FEASTS OF ISRAEL

<p><b>UNLEAVENED BREAD</b> Lev. 23: 6-8</p> <p>Leaven, as a symbol of sin, was to be removed from the home.</p> <p>Spring 1<sup>st</sup> Month – Nisan 15<sup>th</sup> day for 7 days</p>	<p><b>FIRST FRUITS</b> Promise of Harvest to Come Lev. 23: 9-14</p> <p>This was to be a remembrance of the faithfulness of God</p> <p>Spring 1<sup>st</sup> Month – Nisan Day after Sabbath</p>	<p><b>PENTECOST OR FEAST OF WEEKS (SHAVUOT)</b> Lev. 23: 15-21</p> <p>Two loaves of bread offered as a wave offering 50 days after first fruits</p> <p>Late Spring/Early Summer 3<sup>rd</sup> Month – Sivan 50 days after first fruits</p>
<p>Clean out the old leaven (sin)</p> <p>1 Cor. 5: 7, 8</p>	<p>Christ is the first fruits as evidenced by the resurrection</p> <p>1 Cor. 15: 20-23</p>	<p>The Coming of the Holy Spirit Jews and Gentiles in one body- the mystery of the Church</p> <p>Acts 2: 1-47 1 Cor. 12: 13 Eph. 2: 11-22</p>

## THE FEASTS OF ISRAEL

<p><b>FEAST OF TRUMPETS</b>  <b>A HOLY CONVOCATION</b>  <b>A DAY OF REST AND A</b>  <b>REMINDER</b>  <b>Lev. 23: 23-25</b></p> <p><b>Fall</b>  <b>7<sup>th</sup> Month – Tishri</b>  <b>1<sup>st</sup> day</b></p>	<p><b>DAY OF ATONEMENT</b>  <b>YOM KIPPUR</b>  <b>ATONEMENT FOR CLEANSING FROM</b>  <b>SIN</b>  <b>Lev. 23: 26- 32</b></p> <p><b>Shofar is blown Lev. 25: 9</b></p> <p><b>Fall</b>  <b>7<sup>th</sup> Month</b>  <b>10<sup>th</sup> day</b></p>	<p><b>FEAST OF BOOTHS OR</b>  <b>TABERNACLES</b>  <b>(SUKKOT)</b>  <b>Lev. 23: 33- 44</b></p> <p><b>Final blowing of the shofar</b></p> <p><b>This feast is a reminder of the</b>  <b>wilderness and the provision of</b>  <b>the Lord.</b></p> <p><b>Harvest celebration!</b></p> <p><b>Fall</b>  <b>7<sup>th</sup> Month</b>  <b>15<sup>th</sup> day, for 7 days, the 8<sup>th</sup> day is</b>  <b>a</b>  <b>Holy Convocation</b></p>
<p><b>Israel will be gathered and</b>  <b>God will make a new</b>  <b>everlasting covenant with</b>  <b>them.</b></p> <p><b>Jer. 32: 37-41</b></p>	<p><b>Israel will see the One they have</b>  <b>pierced and repent.</b></p> <p><b>Zechariah 12: 10; 13: 1; 14: 9</b>  <b>Ezek. 36: 25-27</b>  <b>Hebrews 9, 10</b>  <b>Romans 11: 25-29</b></p>	<p><b>All families of the earth will</b>  <b>come to Jerusalem.</b>  <b>They will remember the Lord</b>  <b>and celebrate His Feast of</b>  <b>Booths.</b>  <b>He has provided salvation for</b>  <b>all mankind.</b>  <b>God will tabernacle with man.</b></p> <p><b>Zech. 14: 16- 19</b>  <b>Ezek. 36: 28</b>  <b>Rev. 21: 1-3</b></p>

<b>Ezek. 36: 24</b>			
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CELEBRATE THE LORDS SEASONS

<p>SABBATH The cycle of the week Leviticus 23</p>	<p>REMEMBER ITS GLORY</p> <p>GET READY TO OBSERVE</p>	<p>NEW TESTAMENT REALITY CHRIST IS OUR REST. “Do this in remembrance of Me.”</p>	
<p>PASSOVER FEAST OF UNLEAVENED BREAD FIRST FRUITS – Wheat harvest</p> <p>Count fifty days PENTECOST - Shavuoth</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wine – His Blood</li> <li>• Bread – His Body</li> <li>• “on the day after the Sabbath”</li> <li>• God’s Spirit will come</li> </ul>	<p>Sacrifice of the Lamb of God He was without sin Resurrection – Christ the “first fruits” of the dead <b>1 Cor. 15: 20</b> First fruits of the Holy Spirit <b>Acts 2: 1-4</b></p>	
<p>“Now learn this parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender, and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; even so you too when you see all these</p>	<p>things, recognize that He is near, right at the door.” <b>Matt. 24: 32, 33</b></p>	<p>He has come!</p>	

<p>FEAST OF TRUMPETS Blowing of the Trumpets</p> <p>DAY OF ATONEMENT A Cleansing from Sin</p> <p>FEAST OF BOOTHES/TABERNACLES Gathering in of the final crops</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regathering of Israel in preparation for final day of atonement</li> <li>• Israel will repent and look to the Messiah whom they have pierced</li> <li>• Families of earth will celebrate Feast of Booths</li> </ul>	<p><b>Matt. 24: 30, 31</b> The coming of the Son of Man with a great trumpet The hour of God's judgment/Lamb's Book of Life <b>Zech. 12: 10; 13: 1; 14: 9; Rev. 20: 15</b></p> <p>The final harvest of God's people <b>Zech.14: 16; Ezek 36: 24</b></p>
<p>There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. <b>Heb. 4:9</b></p>	<p>Christ has already entered there. He is resting from His work, just as God did after the creation. Let us do our best to go into that place of rest too, being careful not to disobey God. <b>Heb. 9: 10-14</b></p>	<p>Jesus the Son of God is our great High Priest Who has gone to heaven itself to help us; therefore let us never stop trusting Him. <b>Heb. 9: 15-28</b></p> <p><b>Every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord!</b></p>

## **INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEXT (Discovery) ANALYSIS**

- **Read the passage under review for an overview.**
- **Record first impressions.**
- **Read the first paragraph marking all you see about God.**

**I use a red marker and draw a red triangle around God. I double underline in red any actions (verbs) that refer to God. For instance, “The Almighty reigns.”**

**Red triangle around “Almighty” and “reigns” has two red lines under it.**

**Out to the right of the text, I mark any names of God: Jehovah-sabaoth (LORD of Hosts), Most High God, etc.**

**Go back through and mark any references to Jesus or the Holy Spirit separately or you may do that as you mark the references to God.**

**I use a red cross for Jesus and red H.S. for Holy Spirit.**

**Again, mark out to the right side any points you pick up about Jesus or the Holy Spirit.**

**Jesus is the Messiah, the Healer, the Bread of Life, the Living Word, the Lamb of God, etc.**

**The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, the Counselor, the One Who convicts of sin, etc.**

- **Key Words**

**As you have been marking God, Jesus and Holy Spirit, you have undoubtedly seen other key words in the text. Begin marking these.**

**A key word is usually repeated more than once. It is a word that if removed from the text would greatly affect the meaning of the passage.**

**Come up with your own system of markings. This will make it easier to remember as you mark things. You will find it helpful to keep an index card with your markings in your Bible.**

**At times, you will also want to find the meaning of a particular word in the original language.**

**Greek (New Testament) or Hebrew (Old Testament) word studies are a valuable skill to learn.**

There are many word studies available online or in book form.

To begin, just find the word of interest in your text, for instance, “love.”

You must know the exact verse. John 3: 16

Since this is the New Testament, you will be looking for the Greek word for “love” in this verse.

Most sources will give you a number for that word and you will look up that number and be told that in John 3: 16, “love” is *agape*. Then you will be directed to the dictionary section that enlarges your understanding for this word. It means far more than “love.”

➤ **Words of Time/Place**

Mark words which denote time or place. I use a green X for time and double underline with green words for place.

➤ **Contrasts**

You will also see contrasts. Light/darkness, life/death, good/evil, love/hate, destruction/building, etc.

Mark these contrasts.

➤ **Comparisons should be noted as well. The use of “like” or “as” will signal comparisons.**

➤ **Lists are another indicator of what is important to the writer.**

Make lists of what you are seeing in the text.

➤ **Also you may wish to highlight certain other categories which reoccur throughout Scripture.**

Commands (I use blue highlight. Boy is there a lot of blue in my Bible!!)

Promises (I use green highlight here.)

Prophecy (I use pink here.)

Words denoting God’s glory or majesty or praise (I use yellow for light.)

God’s Wrath (I use orange.) Righteousness (orange also)

I encourage you to come up with your own system.

➤ **Questions**

**As you continue to read and re-read the text, ask yourself questions.**

**Ask Who, What, Where, When, Why and How about as many things as you can think of. These questions will prompt you to see more than you saw at first glance.**

- ✓ **As you progress you may have questions arise that you cannot answer just yet. Mark these either on a separate paper or at the bottom of your page.**

- ❖ **The reason for all these tactics of observation is primarily to slow you down. Reading Holy Scripture is not like reading the newspaper. It takes time and focus.**

**All of these skills will train your spiritual eye to see things that normally would go undetected.**

**Speaking of “undetected” that is what you are doing, you are becoming a detective on the most important case of your life!**

**We all love a good mystery and that is what you are about now: solving the greatest mystery of all time.**

**“Why would Almighty God love and care for rebellious, weak, completely flawed man?”**

**Every time you approach Scripture, this is what is unfolding before you – God’s answer to that question.**

**So do good detective work!**

**After you have done all of the above work, you may still want to delve a bit deeper.**

- **Make a summary of what each paragraph says. Do this out to the left side of the text.**

**Then make a summary of what the chapter says.**

**What is Jesus teaching, doing, revealing about God?**

**What is God making known about Himself, about man, about sin, about time?**

**Summarizing is a necessity for you to learn in order to truly grasp the great truths of the Bible.**

- To wrap up the chapter, find a chapter title that sums up the message of that chapter.

Use words from the text.

Make the words distinct from other chapters.

Try to keep the words manageable: the fewer the better.

Also find a verse that captures the essence of the chapter.

- Record any pertinent cross references near the verses that relate.

For instance, I keep cross references concerning *the Deity of Christ* in all the Scriptures that comment on this truth: John 1: 14, 18; Col. 1: 15-17; Heb. 1: 1-4, etc.

#### DOCTRINES

As an additional benefit to all your diligent study, doctrines will become more and more evident to you as you dig beneath the surface.

There is a section in this study specifically on DOCTRINE. It will give you insight in order to help you find the doctrines in your passage under study

#### INTERPRETATION

After thorough initial study, you will see what the text means. This is INTERPRETATION.

Many students of the Scriptures have gone astray here because they did not lay the proper groundwork of text analysis.

What is Interpretation?

INTERPRETATION is really trying to find what the writer intended his meaning to be for his original hearers. The text analysis helps you interpret the meaning because you have asked the 5 WH, discovered the key words, and so forth. Now you are armed with the tools you need for proper interpretation. Just as an English speaking person may interpret what a French speaker is saying, you will now attempt to interpret not just the words themselves but the meaning behind the words. This is holy ground when dealing with the Scripture, so make sure you have asked the Holy Spirit to give you His wisdom.

- Begin with a consideration of the type of literature you are studying: narrative, poetry, history, prophecy, letter, a vision, etc.

This information will assist you as you unfold the meaning of the text. Not all literature is to be handled in the same manner. History is different than poetry, as an example.

➤ **Context is king!**

Make sure your interpretation lines up with the entire counsel of God's Word. If what you have discovered is in contradiction to the teaching of Scripture elsewhere, then you must not understand the proper meaning.

Sometimes there are truths within Scripture which seem to contradict – when we come to passages like this, we must believe that Scripture teaches truth; Scripture cannot be completely knowable by a finite mind. Along with learning and growing in knowledge is the realization that God is incomprehensible on some levels and we bow to His majesty and splendor, rejoicing that He has revealed as much as He has. (Deut. 29:29)

As always with our following Jesus, faith is the key ingredient.

➤ As you interpret, make sure you are not basing your belief system on obscure passages or doctrines that occur in only one place (baptism of the dead – 1 Cor. 15: 29). In this case, we must resist the temptation to develop a belief based on this one encounter. Most of the time, there is ample reference to each topic discussed by the writers of Scripture. This is the safe and orthodox method of interpretation.

➤ At times as you interpret, you will find it helpful to see how the author used the same ideas or words in other texts. So be diligent to dig. For instance, John has written: his gospel account, three letters and the Revelation. If you wish to gain insight in how John uses the word, “power” you may want to check out other instances when he used this particular word.

Each writer is unique and specifically chosen to write what the Spirit directed, so being an expert on their writings is always a plus when interpreting. The only way you will be an expert is if you spend the time and effort. Do not leave this to the academics and then trust what they tell you – you BE the EXPERT!

## COMMENTARIES

The absolute necessity remains to vigilantly maintain a dedicated commitment to early, steady and thorough study before running to the commentaries to see if you are on the right track. Trust the Spirit to be your Teacher and Guide. He will not fail you.

Something the commentaries do offer which we cannot find elsewhere is the historical background and the cultural setting. These facts may prove very helpful when approaching texts. God created Time and Space and He uses it for His glory. See what you can learn from history and culture which will actually add to your amazement at His Word. God's Holy Eternal Word transcends Time, but we must be careful not to abuse either the text for our purposes or abuse the creatures for which the Lord created Time and Space in the first place.

For instance, the Sabbath. When researching the historical, cultural and biblical purpose, meaning and reality of the Sabbath – what was the Lord showing us? Mark 2: 27, 28

When you have finished ALL of these important observations, you are ready to look at what others have written about your text under review. If you go to these sources before you do adequate foundational study, you will be influenced by the scholars' viewpoint and at that point, you can never return to an unbiased mind. Guard that mind!

Now what!! **TRANSFORMATION!**

After you have spent much time in the text, asking questions, digging out truths, finding the big picture and the small picture of each passage, trying to discern the original meaning, now you are ready to see what the text means for you!

- **APPLY** what the Lord is showing you!

*“Search me, O God, and know my heart;*

*Try me and know my anxious thoughts;*

*And see if there be any hurtful way in me,*

*And lead me in the everlasting way.” Ps. 139: 23, 24*

This is the step you have been working for.

- **But do not jump ahead** – allow the Lord all the time He needs to sink this deep into your spirit. Take all that you have learned and spread it before Him in prayer, asking Him to refine you with His Father's hand. The only way the truths you have been studying will remain is if the Lord Himself plants them in your inner man.

As you have studied, I am sure, the Spirit has already been at work convicting and pointing out areas of inconsistency in your walk with the Lord. Hopefully you have

written these discoveries in your notebook. Now you will do the hard work. The busy work of marking key words, asking questions, looking up other references can be fun and it moves quickly. This work of transforming your spirit on the other hand is hard and many times slow work which we end up bailing out on. If your enemy cannot keep you out of Bible study - learning about the Lord - then he will try another tactic. This tactic is even more devastating: he will try and hinder you from a truly renewed mind. You are now responsible for what you have learned. Do not let the accuser rob you of all you have been striving for!

- Be transformed by what you have been learning.

There are many steps we could discuss here about how to be transformed in your thinking – but I believe transformation comes from the Lord alone. Sure we could list here 10 points on how to be transformed, but many have done that and still come up with only temporary results. The Lord is after an eternal change of heart.

- So go get with Him alone and ask Him, “O Lord, I want Your Word to transform me – I am Yours, shine Your light in my life and let’s get going!”

An unspeakable joy awaits you!

Only remember, just as your car needs routine checkups and adjustments, so do you!

## **ACTS 1**

**1** In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach **2** until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.

**3** After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

**4** On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.

**5** For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

**6** So when they met together, they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

**7** He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.

**8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

**9** After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

**10** They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.

**11** "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

**12** Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city.

**13** When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James.

**14** They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

**15** In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty)

**16** and said, "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through the mouth of David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus--

**17** he was one of our number and shared in this ministry."

**18** (With the reward he got for his wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out.

**19** Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

**20** "For," said Peter, "it is written in the book of Psalms, " 'May his place be deserted; let there be no one to dwell in it,' and, " 'May another take his place of leadership.'

**21** Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

**22** beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."

**23** So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias.

**24** Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen

**25** to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs."

**26** Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

## **ACTS 2**

- 1** When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.
- 2** Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.
- 3** They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.
- 4** All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.
- 5** Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.
- 6** When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language.
- 7** Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans?"
- 8** Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language?"
- 9** Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,
- 10** Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome
- 11** (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs--we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"
- 12** Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"
- 13** Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine. "
- 14** Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.
- 15** These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning!
- 16** No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:
- 17** " 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.
- 18** Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

**19** I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke.

**20** The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

**21** And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

**22** "Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

**23** This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

**24** But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

**25** David said about him: " 'I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

**26** Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope,

**27** because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

**28** You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.'

**29**"Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day.

**30** But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.

**31** Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay.

**32** God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.

**33** Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

**34** For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, " 'The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand

**35** until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." '

**36** "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

**37** When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

**38** Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

**39** The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call."

**40** With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation."

**41** Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

**42** They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

**43** Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles.

**44** All the believers were together and had everything in common.

**45** Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.

**46** Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,

**47** praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.



### **ACTS 3**

**1** One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer--at three in the afternoon.

**2** Now a man crippled from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts.

**3** When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money.

**4** Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, "Look at us!"

**5** So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them.

**6** Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."

**7** Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong.

**8** He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.

**9** When all the people saw him walking and praising God,

**10** they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

**11** While the beggar held on to Peter and John, all the people were astonished and came running to them in the place called Solomon's Colonnade.

**12** When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"

**13** The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go.

**14** You disowned the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer be released to you.

**15** You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this.

**16** By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.

**17** "Now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders.

**18** But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer.

**19** Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,

**20** and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you--even Jesus.

**21** He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

**22** For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you.

**23** Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from among his people.'

**24** "Indeed, all the prophets from Samuel on, as many as have spoken, have foretold these days.

**25** And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.'

**26** When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

#### **ACTS 4**

**1** The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people.

**2** They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead.

**3** They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day.

**4** But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.

**5** The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem.

**6** Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest's family.

**7** They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

**8** Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people!

**9** If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed,

**10** then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.

**11** He is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone."

**12** Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

**13** When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

**14** But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say.

**15** So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together.

**16** "What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it.

**17** But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men to speak no longer to anyone in this name."

**18** Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

**19** But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God.

**20** For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

**21** After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened.

**22** For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

**23** On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them.

**24** When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them.

**25** You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: " 'Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?

**26** The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One. '

**27** Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed.

**28** They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

**29** Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.

**30** Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

**31** After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

**32** All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.

**33** With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.

**34** There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales

**35** and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

**36** Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement),

**37** sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.



## **ACTS 5**

**1** Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property.

**2** With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.

**3** Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?

**4** Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God."

**5** When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened.

**6** Then the young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.

**7** About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

**8** Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" "Yes," she said, "that is the price."

**9** Peter said to her, "How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also."

**10** At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

**11** Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.

**12** The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade.

**13** No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people.

**14** Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.

**15** As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by.

**16** Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed.

**17** Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy.

**18** They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail.

**19** But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out.

**20** "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "and tell the people the full message of this new life."

**21** At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people. When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the Sanhedrin--the full assembly of the elders of Israel--and sent to the jail for the apostles.

**22** But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went back and reported,

**23** "We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside."

**24** On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were puzzled, wondering what would come of this.

**25** Then someone came and said, "Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people."

**26** At that, the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone them.

**27** Having brought the apostles, they made them appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest.

**28** "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood."

**29** Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than men!

**30** The God of our fathers raised Jesus from the dead--whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree.

**31** God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.

**32** We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

**33** When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death.

**34** But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while.

**35** Then he addressed them: "Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men.

**36** Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing.

**37** After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered.

**38** Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail.

**39** But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."

**40** His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

**41** The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

**42** Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.



## **ACTS 6**

**1** In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

**2** So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables.

**3** Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them

**4** and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

**5** This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism.

**6** They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

**7** So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

**8** Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people.

**9** Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)--Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia. These men began to argue with Stephen,

**10** but they could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by whom he spoke.

**11** Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak words of blasphemy against Moses and against God."

**12** So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin.

**13** They produced false witnesses, who testified, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law.

**14** For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us."

**15** All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

## **ACTS 7**

**1** Then the high priest asked him, "Are these charges true?"

**2** To this he replied: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran.

**3** 'Leave your country and your people,' God said, 'and go to the land I will show you.'

**4** "So he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. After the death of his father, God sent him to this land where you are now living.

**5** He gave him no inheritance here, not even a foot of ground. But God promised him that he and his descendants after him would possess the land, even though at that time Abraham had no child.

**6** God spoke to him in this way: 'Your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years.

**7** But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves,' God said, 'and afterward they will come out of that country and worship me in this place.'

**8** Then he gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision. And Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him eight days after his birth. Later Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob became the father of the twelve patriarchs.

**9** "Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But God was with him

**10** and rescued him from all his troubles. He gave Joseph wisdom and enabled him to gain the goodwill of Pharaoh king of Egypt; so he made him ruler over Egypt and all his palace.

**11** "Then a famine struck all Egypt and Canaan, bringing great suffering, and our fathers could not find food.

**12** When Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our fathers on their first visit.

**13** On their second visit, Joseph told his brothers who he was, and Pharaoh learned about Joseph's family.

**14** After this, Joseph sent for his father Jacob and his whole family, seventy-five in all.

**15** Then Jacob went down to Egypt, where he and our fathers died.

**16** Their bodies were brought back to Shechem and placed in the tomb that Abraham had bought from the sons of Hamor at Shechem for a certain sum of money.

**17** "As the time drew near for God to fulfill his promise to Abraham, the number of our people in Egypt greatly increased.

**18** Then another king, who knew nothing about Joseph, became ruler of Egypt.

**19** He dealt treacherously with our people and oppressed our forefathers by forcing them to throw out their newborn babies so that they would die.

**20** "At that time Moses was born, and he was no ordinary child. For three months he was cared for in his father's house.

**21** When he was placed outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him and brought him up as her own son.

**22** Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.

**23** "When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his fellow Israelites.

**24** He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian.

**25** Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not.

**26** The next day Moses came upon two Israelites who were fighting. He tried to reconcile them by saying, 'Men, you are brothers; why do you want to hurt each other?'

**27** "But the man who was mistreating the other pushed Moses aside and said, 'Who made you ruler and judge over us?'

**28** Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?'

**29** When Moses heard this, he fled to Midian, where he settled as a foreigner and had two sons.

**30** "After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai.

**31** When he saw this, he was amazed at the sight. As he went over to look more closely, he heard the Lord's voice:

**32** 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look.

**33** Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off your sandals; the place where you are standing is holy ground.

**34** I have indeed seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groaning and have come down to set them free. Now come, I will send you back to Egypt.'

**35** "This is the same Moses whom they had rejected with the words, 'Who made you ruler and judge?' He was sent to be their ruler and deliverer by God himself, through the angel who appeared to him in the bush.

**36** He led them out of Egypt and did wonders and miraculous signs in Egypt, at the Red Sea and for forty years in the desert.

**37** "This is that Moses who told the Israelites, 'God will send you a prophet like me from your own people.'

**38** He was in the assembly in the desert, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; and he received living words to pass on to us.

**39** "But our fathers refused to obey him. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt.

**40** They told Aaron, 'Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who led us out of Egypt--we don't know what has happened to him!'

**41** That was the time they made an idol in the form of a calf. They brought sacrifices to it and held a celebration in honor of what their hands had made.

**42** But God turned away and gave them over to the worship of the heavenly bodies. This agrees with what is written in the book of the prophets: " 'Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings forty years in the desert, O house of Israel?

**43** You have lifted up the shrine of Molech and the star of your god Rephan, the idols you made to worship. Therefore I will send you into exile' beyond Babylon.

**44** "Our forefathers had the tabernacle of the Testimony with them in the desert. It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen.

**45** Having received the tabernacle, our fathers under Joshua brought it with them when they took the land from the nations God drove out before them. It remained in the land until the time of David,

**46** who enjoyed God's favor and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob.

**47** But it was Solomon who built the house for him.

**48** "However, the Most High does not live in houses made by men. As the prophet says:

**49** "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be?

**50** Has not my hand made all these things?'

**51** "You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!

**52** Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him--

**53** you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it."

**54** When they heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him.

**55** But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

**56** "Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

**57** At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him,

**58** dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

**59** While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

**60** Then he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

## **ACTS 8**

**1** And Saul was there, giving approval to his death. On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

**2** Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him.

**3** But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison.

**4** Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

**5** Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there.

**6** When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said.

**7** With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed.

**8** So there was great joy in that city.

**9** Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great,

**10** and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, "This man is the divine power known as the Great Power."

**11** They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his magic.

**12** But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

**13** Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.

**14** When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them.

**15** When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit,

**16** because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

**17** Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

**18** When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money

**19** and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

**20** Peter answered: "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!

**21** You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God.

**22** Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart.

**23** For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin."

**24** Then Simon answered, "Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me."

**25** When they had testified and proclaimed the word of the Lord, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages.

**26** Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road--the desert road--that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza."

**27** So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship,

**28** and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet.

**29** The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

**30** Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked.

**31** "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

**32** The eunuch was reading this passage of Scripture: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

**33** In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth."

**34** The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?"

**35** Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

**36** As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?"

**38** And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

**39** When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.

**40** Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.



## **ACTS 9**

**1** Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest

**2** and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

**3** As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.

**4** He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

**5** "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied.

**6** "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

**7** The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone.

**8** Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus.

**9** For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

**10** In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!" "Yes, Lord," he answered.

**11** The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying.

**12** In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

**13** "Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem.

**14** And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

**15** But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.

**16** I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

**17** Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord--Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here--has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

**18** Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized,

**19** and after taking some food, he regained his strength. Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus.

**20** At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God.

**21** All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?"

**22** Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Christ.

**23** After many days had gone by, the Jews conspired to kill him,

**24** but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him.

**25** But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.

**26** When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple.

**27** But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus.

**28** So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord.

**29** He talked and debated with the Grecian Jews, but they tried to kill him.

**30** When the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

**31** Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.

**32** As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the saints in Lydda.

**33** There he found a man named Aeneas, a paralytic who had been bedridden for eight years.

**34** "Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and take care of your mat." Immediately Aeneas got up.

**35** All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

**36** In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which, when translated, is Dorcas ), who was always doing good and helping the poor.

**37** About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room.

**38** Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!"

**39** Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

**40** Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up.

**41** He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called the believers and the widows and presented her to them alive.

**42** This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord.

**43** Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.



## **ACTS 10**

**1** At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment.

**2** He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly.

**3** One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!"

**4** Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked. The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God.

**5** Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter.

**6** He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea."

**7** When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants.

**8** He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

**9** About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray.

**10** He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance.

**11** He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners.

**12** It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air.

**13** Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

**14** "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean."

**15** The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."

**16** This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

**17** While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate.

**18** They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.

**19** While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you.

**20** So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

**21** Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?"

**22** The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to have you come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say."

**23** Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests. The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went along.

**24** The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends.

**25** As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence.

**26** But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."

**27** Talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people.

**28** He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean.

**29** So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?"

**30** Cornelius answered: "Four days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me

**31** and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor.

**32** Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.'

**33** So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."

**34** Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism

**35** but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.

**36** You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.

**37** You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached--

**38** how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

**39** "We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree,

**40** but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen.

**41** He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen--by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

**42** He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.

**43** All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

**44** While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.

**45** The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles.

**46** For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said,

**47** "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have."

**48** So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.



## **ACTS 11**

**1** The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.

**2** So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him

**3** and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them."

**4** Peter began and explained everything to them precisely as it had happened:

**5** "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was.

**6** I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles, and birds of the air.

**7** Then I heard a voice telling me, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.'

**8** "I replied, 'Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.'

**9** "The voice spoke from heaven a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.'

**10** This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again.

**11** "Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying.

**12** The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man's house.

**13** He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter.

**14** He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.'

**15** "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning.

**16** Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

**17** So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?"

**18** When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life."

**19** Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews.

**20** Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus.

**21** The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

**22** News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch.

**23** When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.

**24** He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

**25** Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul,

**26** and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

**27** During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.

**28** One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.)

**29** The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea.

**30** This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

## **ACTS 12**

**1** It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them.

**2** He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.

**3** When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

**4** After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover.

**5** So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

**6** The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance.

**7** Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.

**8** Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him.

**9** Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision.

**10** They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

**11** Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating."

**12** When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.

**13** Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer the door.

**14** When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!"

**15** "You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel."

**16** But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished.

**17** Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison. "Tell James and the brothers about this," he said, and then he left for another place.

**18** In the morning, there was no small commotion among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter.

**19** After Herod had a thorough search made for him and did not find him, he cross-examined the guards and ordered that they be executed. Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there a while.

**20** He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they now joined together and sought an audience with him. Having secured the support of Blastus, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king's country for their food supply.

**21** On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people.

**22** They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man."

**23** Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

**24** But the word of God continued to increase and spread.

**25** When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark.

## **ACTS 13**

**1** In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul.

**2** While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

**3** So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

**4** The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus.

**5** When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.

**6** They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus,

**7** who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God.

**8** But Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith.

**9** Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said,

**10** "You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord?"

**11** Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun." Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand.

**12** When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

**13** From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem.

**14** From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down.

**15** After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue rulers sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have a message of encouragement for the people, please speak."

**16** Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: "Men of Israel and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me!

**17** The God of the people of Israel chose our fathers; he made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt, with mighty power he led them out of that country,

**18** he endured their conduct for about forty years in the desert,

**19** he overthrew seven nations in Canaan and gave their land to his people as their inheritance.

**20** All this took about 450 years. "After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet.

**21** Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years.

**22** After removing Saul, he made David their king. He testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'

**23** "From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised.

**24** Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel.

**25** As John was completing his work, he said: 'Who do you think I am? I am not that one. No, but he is coming after me, whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.'

**26** "Brothers, children of Abraham, and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent.

**27** The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath.

**28** Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed.

**29** When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb.

**30** But God raised him from the dead,  
**31** and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people.  
**32** "We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers  
**33** he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: " 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father. ' "  
**34** The fact that God raised him from the dead, never to decay, is stated in these words: " 'I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David. ' "  
**35** So it is stated elsewhere: " 'You will not let your Holy One see decay. ' "  
**36** "For when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed.  
**37** But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay.  
**38** "Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.  
**39** Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.  
**40** Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you:  
**41** " 'Look, you scoffers, wonder and perish, for I am going to do something in your days that you would never believe, even if someone told you. ' "  
**42** As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath.  
**43** When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.  
**44** On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord.  
**45** When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying.  
**46** Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles.

**47** For this is what the Lord has commanded us: " 'I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.' "

**48** When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

**49** The word of the Lord spread through the whole region.

**50** But the Jews incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.

**51** So they shook the dust from their feet in protest against them and went to Iconium.

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

## **ACTS 14**

**1** At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed.

**2** But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers.

**3** So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders.

**4** The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles.

**5** There was a plot afoot among the Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them.

**6** But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country,

**7** where they continued to preach the good news.

**8** In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked.

**9** He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed

**10** and called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

**11** When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!"

**12** Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker.

**13** The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them.

**14** But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting:

**15** "Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them.

**16** In the past, he let all nations go their own way.

**17** Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy."

**18** Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them.

**19** Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead.

**20** But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe.

**21** They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch,

**22** strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.

**23** Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

**24** After going through Pisidia, they came into Pamphylia,

**25** and when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia.

**26** From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed.

**27** On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

**28** And they stayed there a long time with the disciples.

## **ACTS 15**

**1** Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved."

**2** This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question.

**3** The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the brothers very glad.

**4** When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.

**5** Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses."

**6** The apostles and elders met to consider this question.

**7** After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe.

**8** God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us.

**9** He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith.

**10** Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear?

**11** No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."

**12** The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them.

**13** When they finished, James spoke up: "Brothers, listen to me.

**14** Simon has described to us how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself.

**15** The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written:

**16** " 'After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it,

**17** that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things'

**18** that have been known for ages.

**19** "It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God.

**20** Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.

**21** For Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath."

**22** Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, two men who were leaders among the brothers.

**23** With them they sent the following letter: The apostles and elders, your brothers, To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia: Greetings.

**24** We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said.

**25** So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul--

**26** men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**27** Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing.

**28** It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements:

**29** You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell.

**30** The men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter.

**31** The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message.

**32** Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers.

**33** After spending some time there, they were sent off by the brothers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them.

**35** But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.

**36** Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the brothers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing."

**37** Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them,

**38** but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work.

**39** They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus,

**40** but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord.

**41** He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.



## **ACTS 16**

**1** He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek.

**2** The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him.

**3** Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

**4** As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey.

**5** So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

**6** Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.

**7** When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.

**8** So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas.

**9** During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

**10** After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

**11** From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day on to Neapolis.

**12** From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

**13** On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there.

**14** One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.

**15** When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

**16** Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling.

**17** This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved."

**18** She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.

**19** When the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities.

**20** They brought them before the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar

**21** by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice."

**22** The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten.

**23** After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully.

**24** Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

**25** About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.

**26** Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose.

**27** The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped.

**28** But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

**29** The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas.

**30** He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

**31** They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household."

**32** Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house.

**33** At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized.

**34** The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God--he and his whole family.

**35** When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: "Release those men."

**36** The jailer told Paul, "The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace."

**37** But Paul said to the officers: "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out."

**38** The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed.

**39** They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city.

**40** After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and encouraged them. Then they left.



## **ACTS 17**

**1** When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue.

**2** As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures,

**3** explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ," he said.

**4** Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.

**5** But the Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd.

**6** But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here,

**7** and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus."

**8** When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil.

**9** Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.

**10** As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue.

**11** Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

**12** Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.

**13** When the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, they went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up.

**14** The brothers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea.

**15** The men who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

**16** While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols.

**17** So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there.

**18** A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to dispute with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babbling trying to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.

**19** Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?"

**20** You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we want to know what they mean."

**21** (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

**22** Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious.

**23** For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.

**24** "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands.

**25** And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.

**26** From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.

**27** God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.

**28** 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

**29** "Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone--an image made by man's design and skill.

**30** In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.

**31** For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."

**32** When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject."

**33** At that, Paul left the Council.

**34** A few men became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.



## **ACTS 18**

**1** After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.

**2** There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all the Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them,

**3** and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them.

**4** Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

**5** When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.

**6** But when the Jews opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clear of my responsibility. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

**7** Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God.

**8** Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.

**9** One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent.

**10** For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city."

**11** So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

**12** While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him into court.

**13** "This man," they charged, "is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law."

**14** Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, "If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanor or serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you.

**15** But since it involves questions about words and names and your own law--settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things."

**16** So he had them ejected from the court.

**17** Then they all turned on Sosthenes the synagogue ruler and beat him in front of the court. But Gallio showed no concern whatever.

### **Priscilla, Aquila and Apollos**

**18** Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the brothers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cenchrea because of a vow he had taken.

**19** They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.

**20** When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined.

**21** But as he left, he promised, "I will come back if it is God's will." Then he set sail from Ephesus.

**22** When he landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church and then went down to Antioch.

**23** After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out from there and traveled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

**24** Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures.

**25** He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John.

**26** He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

**27** When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. On arriving, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed.

**28** For he vigorously refuted the Jews in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

## **ACTS 19**

**1** While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples

**2** and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

**3** So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied.

**4** Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus."

**5** On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

**6** When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

**7** There were about twelve men in all.

**8** Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God.

**9** But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus.

**10** This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

**11** God did extraordinary miracles through Paul,

**12** so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

**13** Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out."

**14** Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.

**15** [One day] the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?"

**16** Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

**17** When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor.

**18** Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds.

**19** A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas.

**20** In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

**21** After all this had happened, Paul decided to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedonia and Achaia. "After I have been there," he said, "I must visit Rome also."

**22** He sent two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedonia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a little longer.

## **The Riot in Ephesus**

**23** About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way.

**24** A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in no little business for the craftsmen.

**25** He called them together, along with the workmen in related trades, and said: "Men, you know we receive a good income from this business.

**26** And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that man-made gods are no gods at all.

**27** There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited, and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty."

**28** When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

**29** Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia, and rushed as one man into the theater.

**30** Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him.

**31** Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater.

**32** The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there.

**33** The Jews pushed Alexander to the front, and some of the crowd shouted instructions to him. He motioned for silence in order to make a defense before the people.

**34** But when they realized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison for about two hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

**35** The city clerk quieted the crowd and said: "Men of Ephesus, doesn't all the world know that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the temple of the great Artemis and of her image, which fell from heaven?"

**36** Therefore, since these facts are undeniable, you ought to be quiet and not do anything rash.

**37** You have brought these men here, though they have neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our goddess.

**38** If, then, Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a grievance against anybody, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. They can press charges.

**39** If there is anything further you want to bring up, it must be settled in a legal assembly.

**40** As it is, we are in danger of being charged with rioting because of today's events. In that case we would not be able to account for this commotion, since there is no reason for it."

**41** After he had said this, he dismissed the assembly.



## **ACTS 20**

**1** When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said good-by and set out for Macedonia.

**2** He traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece,

**3** where he stayed three months. Because the Jews made a plot against him just as he was about to sail for Syria, he decided to go back through Macedonia.

**4** He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia.

**5** These men went on ahead and waited for us at Troas.

**6** But we sailed from Philippi after the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

### **Eutychus Raised From the Dead at Troas**

**7** On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.

**8** There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting.

**9** Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead.

**10** Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "He's alive!"

**11** Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left.

**12** The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.

### **Paul's Farewell to the Ephesian Elders**

**13** We went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos, where we were going to take Paul aboard. He had made this arrangement because he was going there on foot.

**14** When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene.

**15** The next day we set sail from there and arrived off Kios. The day after that we crossed over to Samos, and on the following day arrived at Miletus.

**16** Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost.

**17** From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church.

**18** When they arrived, he said to them: "You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia.

**19** I served the Lord with great humility and with tears, although I was severely tested by the plots of the Jews.

**20** You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house.

**21** I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

**22** "And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there.

**23** I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.

**24** However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me--the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

**25**"Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again.

**26**Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of all men.

**27** For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.

**28** Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

**29** I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock.

**30** Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them.

**31** So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

**32** "Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

**33** I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing.

**34** You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions.

**35** In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

**36** When he had said this, he knelt down with all of them and prayed.

**37** They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him.

**38** What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.



## **ACTS 21**

**1** After we had torn ourselves away from them, we put out to sea and sailed straight to Cos. The next day we went to Rhodes and from there to Patara.

**2** We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, went on board and set sail.

**3** After sighting Cyprus and passing to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria. We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo.

**4** Finding the disciples there, we stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.

**5** But when our time was up, we left and continued on our way. All the disciples and their wives and children accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray.

**6** After saying good-bye to each other, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home.

**7** We continued our voyage from Tyre and landed at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for a day.

**8** Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven.

**9** He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.

**10** After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.

**11** Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.' "

**12** When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem.

**13** Then Paul answered, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

**14** When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done."

**15** After this, we got ready and went up to Jerusalem.

**16** Some of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied us and brought us to the home of Mnason, where we were to stay. He was a man from Cyprus and one of the early disciples.

## Paul's Arrival at Jerusalem

**17** When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers received us warmly.

**18** The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present.

**19** Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

**20** When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law.

**21** They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs.

**22** What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come,

**23** so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow.

**24** Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everybody will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law.

**25** As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality."

**26** The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them.

## Paul Arrested

**27** When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him,

**28** shouting, "Men of Israel, help us! This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against our people and our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple area and defiled this holy place."

**29** (They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple area.)

**30** The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut.

**31** While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar.

**32** He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

**33** The commander came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. Then he asked who he was and what he had done.

**34** Some in the crowd shouted one thing and some another, and since the commander could not get at the truth because of the uproar, he ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks.

**35** When Paul reached the steps, the violence of the mob was so great he had to be carried by the soldiers.

**36** The crowd that followed kept shouting, "Away with him!"

## **Paul Speaks to the Crowd**

### **22:3-16pp -- Ac 9:1-22; 26:9-18**

**37** As the soldiers were about to take Paul into the barracks, he asked the commander, "May I say something to you?" "Do you speak Greek?" he replied.

**38** "Aren't you the Egyptian who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists out into the desert some time ago?"

**39** Paul answered, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people."

**40** Having received the commander's permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. When they were all silent, he said to them in Aramaic:



## **ACTS 22**

**1** "Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense."

**2** When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet. Then Paul said:

**3** "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today.

**4** I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison,

**5** as also the high priest and all the Council can testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.

**6** "About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me.

**7** I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?'

**8** "Who are you, Lord?' I asked. " 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,' he replied.

**9** My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.

**10** " 'What shall I do, Lord?' I asked. " 'Get up,' the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.'

**11** My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.

**12** "A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there.

**13** He stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I was able to see him.

**14** "Then he said: 'The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth.

**15** You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.

**16** And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

**17** "When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance

**18** and saw the Lord speaking. 'Quick!' he said to me. 'Leave Jerusalem immediately, because they will not accept your testimony about me.'

**19** " 'Lord,' I replied, 'these men know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you.

**20** And when the blood of your martyr Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.'

**21** "Then the Lord said to me, 'Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.' "

## **Paul the Roman Citizen**

**22** The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, "Rid the earth of him! He's not fit to live!"

**23** As they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air,

**24** the commander ordered Paul to be taken into the barracks. He directed that he be flogged and questioned in order to find out why the people were shouting at him like this.

**25** 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?"

**26** When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and reported it. "What are you going to do?" he asked. "This man is a Roman citizen."

**27** The commander went to Paul and asked, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?" "Yes, I am," he answered.

**28** Then the commander said, "I had to pay a big price for my citizenship." "But I was born a citizen," Paul replied.

**29** Those who were about to question him withdrew immediately. The commander himself was alarmed when he realized that he had put Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains.

## **Before the Sanhedrin**

**30** The next day, since the commander wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews, he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the Sanhedrin to assemble. Then he brought Paul and had him stand before them.



## **ACTS 23**

**1** Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, "My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day."

**2** At this the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth.

**3** Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit there to judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck!"

**4** Those who were standing near Paul said, "You dare to insult God's high priest?"

**5** Paul replied, "Brothers, I did not realize that he was the high priest; for it is written: 'Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.' "

**6** Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. I stand on trial because of my hope in the resurrection of the dead."

**7** When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided.

**8** (The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.)

**9** There was a great uproar, and some of the teachers of the law who were Pharisees stood up and argued vigorously. "We find nothing wrong with this man," they said. "What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?"

**10** The dispute became so violent that the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them. He ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force and bring him into the barracks.

**11** The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome."

## **The Plot to Kill Paul**

**12** The next morning the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul.

**13** More than forty men were involved in this plot.

**14** They went to the chief priests and elders and said, "We have taken a solemn oath not to eat anything until we have killed Paul.

**15** Now then, you and the Sanhedrin petition the commander to bring him before you on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about his case. We are ready to kill him before he gets here."

**16** But when the son of Paul's sister heard of this plot, he went into the barracks and told Paul.

**17** Then Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the commander; he has something to tell him."

**18** So he took him to the commander. The centurion said, "Paul, the prisoner, sent for me and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell you."

**19** The commander took the young man by the hand, drew him aside and asked, "What is it you want to tell me?"

**20** He said: "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul before the Sanhedrin tomorrow on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about him.

**21** Don't give in to them, because more than forty of them are waiting in ambush for him. They have taken an oath not to eat or drink until they have killed him. They are ready now, waiting for your consent to their request.

**22** The commander dismissed the young man and cautioned him, "Don't tell anyone that you have reported this to me."

## **Paul Transferred to Caesarea**

**23** Then he called two of his centurions and ordered them, "Get ready a detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at nine tonight.

**24** Provide mounts for Paul so that he may be taken safely to Governor Felix."

**25** He wrote a letter as follows:

**26** Claudius Lysias, To His Excellency, Governor Felix: Greetings.

**27** This man was seized by the Jews and they were about to kill him, but I came with my troops and rescued him, for I had learned that he is a Roman citizen.

**28** I wanted to know why they were accusing him, so I brought him to their Sanhedrin.

**29** I found that the accusation had to do with questions about their law, but there was no charge against him that deserved death or imprisonment.

**30** When I was informed of a plot to be carried out against the man, I sent him to you at once. I also ordered his accusers to present to you their case against him.

**31** So the soldiers, carrying out their orders, took Paul with them during the night and brought him as far as Antipatris.

**32** The next day they let the cavalry go on with him, while they returned to the barracks.

**33** When the cavalry arrived in Caesarea, they delivered the letter to the governor and handed Paul over to him.

**34** The governor read the letter and asked what province he was from. Learning that he was from Cilicia,

**35** he said, "I will hear your case when your accusers get here." Then he ordered that Paul be kept under guard in Herod's palace.



## **ACTS 24**

**1** Five days later the high priest Ananias went down to Caesarea with some of the elders and a lawyer named Tertullus, and they brought their charges against Paul before the governor.

**2** When Paul was called in, Tertullus presented his case before Felix: "We have enjoyed a long period of peace under you, and your foresight has brought about reforms in this nation.

**3** Everywhere and in every way, most excellent Felix, we acknowledge this with profound gratitude.

**4** But in order not to weary you further, I would request that you be kind enough to hear us briefly.

**5** "We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect

**6** and even tried to desecrate the temple; so we seized him.

**8** By examining him yourself you will be able to learn the truth about all these charges we are bringing against him."

**9** The Jews joined in the accusation, asserting that these things were true.

**10** When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: "I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation; so I gladly make my defense.

**11** You can easily verify that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship.

**12** My accusers did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple, or stirring up a crowd in the synagogues or anywhere else in the city.

**13** And they cannot prove to you the charges they are now making against me.

**14** However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets,

**15** and I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

**16** So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.

**17** "After an absence of several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings.

**18** I was ceremonially clean when they found me in the temple courts doing this. There was no crowd with me, nor was I involved in any disturbance.

**19** But there are some Jews from the province of Asia, who ought to be here before you and bring charges if they have anything against me.

**20** Or these who are here should state what crime they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin--

**21** unless it was this one thing I shouted as I stood in their presence: 'It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.' "

**22** Then Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way, adjourned the proceedings. "When Lysias the commander comes," he said, "I will decide your case."

**23** He ordered the centurion to keep Paul under guard but to give him some freedom and permit his friends to take care of his needs.

**24** Several days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was a Jewess. He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus.

**25** As Paul discoursed on righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, "That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you."

**26** At the same time he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him.

**27** When two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, but because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison.

## **ACTS 25**

**1** Three days after arriving in the province, Festus went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem, **2** where the chief priests and Jewish leaders appeared before him and presented the charges against Paul.

**3** They urgently requested Festus, as a favor to them, to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem, for they were preparing an ambush to kill him along the way.

**4** Festus answered, "Paul is being held at Caesarea, and I myself am going there soon.

**5** Let some of your leaders come with me and press charges against the man there, if he has done anything wrong."

**6** After spending eight or ten days with them, he went down to Caesarea, and the next day he convened the court and ordered that Paul be brought before him.

**7** When Paul appeared, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many serious charges against him, which they could not prove.

**8** Then Paul made his defense: "I have done nothing wrong against the law of the Jews or against the temple or against Caesar."

**9** Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there on these charges?"

**10** Paul answered: "I am now standing before Caesar's court, where I ought to be tried. I have not done any wrong to the Jews, as you yourself know very well.

**11** If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!"

**12** After Festus had conferred with his council, he declared: "You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!"

### **Festus Consults King Agrippa**

**13** A few days later King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to pay their respects to Festus.

**14** Since they were spending many days there, Festus discussed Paul's case with the king. He said: "There is a man here whom Felix left as a prisoner.

**15** When I went to Jerusalem, the chief priests and elders of the Jews brought charges against him and asked that he be condemned.

**16** "I told them that it is not the Roman custom to hand over any man before he has faced his accusers and has had an opportunity to defend himself against their charges.

**17** When they came here with me, I did not delay the case, but convened the court the next day and ordered the man to be brought in.

**18** When his accusers got up to speak, they did not charge him with any of the crimes I had expected.

**19** Instead, they had some points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a dead man named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive.

**20** I was at a loss how to investigate such matters; so I asked if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem and stand trial there on these charges.

**21** When Paul made his appeal to be held over for the Emperor's decision, I ordered him held until I could send him to Caesar."

**22** Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I would like to hear this man myself." He replied, "Tomorrow you will hear him."

#### **Paul Before Agrippa 26:12-18pp -- Ac 9:3-8; 22:6-11**

**23** The next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and entered the audience room with the high ranking officers and the leading men of the city. At the command of Festus, Paul was brought in.

**24** Festus said: "King Agrippa, and all who are present with us, you see this man! The whole Jewish community has petitioned me about him in Jerusalem and here in Caesarea, shouting that he ought not to live any longer.

**25** I found he had done nothing deserving of death, but because he made his appeal to the Emperor I decided to send him to Rome.

**26** But I have nothing definite to write to His Majesty about him. Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that as a result of this investigation I may have something to write.

**27** For I think it is unreasonable to send on a prisoner without specifying the charges against him."

## **ACTS 26**

**1** Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself." So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense:

**2** "King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews,

**3** and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently.

**4** "The Jews all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem.

**5** They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that according to the strictest sect of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee.

**6** And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our fathers that I am on trial today.

**7** This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. O king, it is because of this hope that the Jews are accusing me.

**8** Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?

**9** "I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

**10** And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the saints in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them.

**11** Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. In my obsession against them, I even went to foreign cities to persecute them.

**12** "On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests.

**13** About noon, O king, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions.

**14** We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

**15** "Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' " 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied.

**16** 'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you.

**17** I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them  
**18** to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

**19** "So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven.

**20** First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.

**21** That is why the Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me.

**22** But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen--

**23** that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles."

**24** At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. "You are out of your mind, Paul!" he shouted. "Your great learning is driving you insane."

**25** "I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. "What I am saying is true and reasonable.

**26** The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner.

**27** King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do."

**28** Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?"

**29** Paul replied, "Short time or long--I pray God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains."

**30** The king rose, and with him the governor and Bernice and those sitting with them.

**31** They left the room, and while talking with one another, they said, "This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment."

**32** Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."



## ACTS 27

**1** When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment.

**2** We boarded a ship from Adramyttium about to sail for ports along the coast of the province of Asia, and we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us.

**3** The next day we landed at Sidon; and Julius, in kindness to Paul, allowed him to go to his friends so they might provide for his needs.

**4** From there we put out to sea again and passed to the lee of Cyprus because the winds were against us.

**5** When we had sailed across the open sea off the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia.

**6** There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy and put us on board.

**7** We made slow headway for many days and had difficulty arriving off Cnidus. When the wind did not allow us to hold our course, we sailed to the lee of Crete, opposite Salmone.

**8** We moved along the coast with difficulty and came to a place called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea.

**9** Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was after the Fast. So Paul warned them,

**10** "Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also."

**11** But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship.

**12** Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided that we should sail on, hoping to reach Phoenix and winter there. This was a harbor in Crete, facing both southwest and northwest.

## The Storm

**13** When a gentle south wind began to blow, they thought they had obtained what they wanted; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete.

**14** Before very long, a wind of hurricane force, called the "northeaster," swept down from the island.

**15** The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along.

**16** As we passed to the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were hardly able to make the lifeboat secure.

**17** When the men had hoisted it aboard, they passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. Fearing that they would run aground on the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor and let the ship be driven along.

**18** We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard.

**19** On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands.

**20** When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.

**21** After the men had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss.

**22** But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed.

**23** Last night an angel of the God whose I am and whom I served stood beside me

**24** and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.'

**25** So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me.

**26** Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island."

## The Shipwreck

**27** On the fourteenth night we were still being driven across the Adriatic Sea, when about midnight the sailors sensed they were approaching land.

**28** They took soundings and found that the water was a hundred and twenty feet deep. A short time later they took soundings again and found it was ninety feet deep.

**29** Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight.

**30** In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow.

**31** Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved."

**32** So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it fall away.

**33** Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. "For the last fourteen days," he said, "you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food--you haven't eaten anything.

**34** Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head."

**35** After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat.

**36** They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves.

**37** Altogether there were 276 of us on board.

**38** When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.

**39** When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship aground if they could.

**40** Cutting loose the anchors, they left them in the sea and at the same time untied the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach.

**41** But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf.

**42** The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping.

**43**But the centurion wanted to spare Paul's life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and get to land.

**44**The rest were to get there on planks or on pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land in safety.

## **ACTS 28**

**1** Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta.

**2** The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold.

**3** Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand.

**4** When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live."

**5** But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects.

**6** The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead, but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

**7** There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and for three days entertained us hospitably.

**8** His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him.

**9** When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured.

**10** They honored us in many ways and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed.

## **Arrival at Rome**

**11** After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island. It was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux.

**12** We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days.

**13** From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli.

**14** There we found some brothers who invited us to spend a week with them. And so we came to Rome.

**15** The brothers there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. At the sight of these men Paul thanked God and was encouraged.

**16** When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.

## **Paul Preaches at Rome Under Guard**

**17** Three days later he called together the leaders of the Jews. When they had assembled, Paul said to them: "My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans.

**18** They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death.

**19** But when the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar--not that I had any charge to bring against my own people.

**20** For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain."

**21** They replied, "We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of the brothers who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you.

**22** But we want to hear what your views are, for we know that people everywhere are talking against this sect."

**23** They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.

**24** Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe.

**25** They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet:

**26** " 'Go to this people and say, "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving."

**27** For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.'

**28** "Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!"

**30** For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him.

**31** Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.