

ACTS

Unknown

LESSON ONE

Introduction

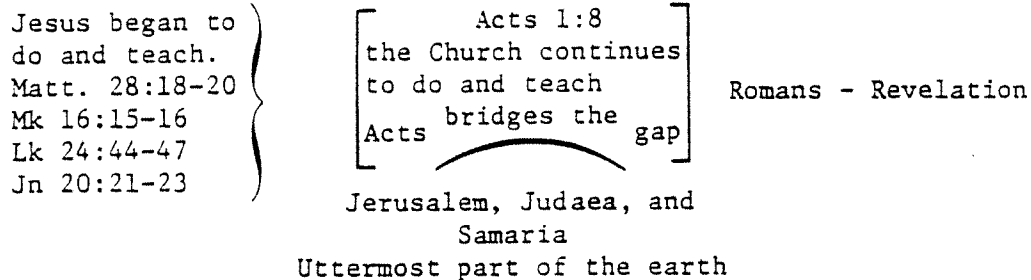
Acts is history. It is to be read as history. The historian seeks to find, among other things, the thread to which the events of history are attached that he might discern what made history what it was and thus aid future history makers. Luke, applying this principle, with amazing ability (evidencing inspiration) weaves several threads into the historical fabric revealing forces human and divine which combined in the first century church to give the church in future generations an accurate insight into the dynamic of workable, powerful, practical Christianity.

The historical book of Acts stands indispensably important to those who search for the principles of pure New Testament Christianity, which is what is involved in restoration.

I. Acts is Historically Reliable

- A. Written in the historical context of time, place, person, events.
CF. Lk 1:1-4, Acts 1:1-3.
- B. Confirmed archaeologically, especially by Sir William Ramsay of Great Britain.

II. The Construction of the New Testament Books and location of the book of Acts follows a natural order. The very location of Acts among the New Testament books helps us to determine its purpose.



Where else could such a book be located in such a group of related books as the New Testament?

III. Acts is Multipurposed - All the different purposes view the fulfilling of the Great Commission from different vantage points.

- A. The Book of Acts is an Historical Apologetic (a defense).
Luke is concerned to defend Christianity against the charges of sedition. In the eyes of many Christianity started with a handicap. Jesus, its founder, was condemned by a Roman governor on a charge of sedition. The movement was attended by tumult and disorder whenever it spread. But Luke defends both Christ and the church (and the gospel).

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1. He shows Jesus' trial and crucifixion to be a miscarriage of justice (cf Luke 23:13-15)
2. In Acts the Gentile officials are kind and reasonable in their attitude generally:
 - a. Cyprus (Acts 13:4-12), Sergius Paulus, the distinguished proconsul. Heard and believed.
 - b. Philippi (Acts 16:35-39). The powers that ruled made public apology to Paul and Silas.
 - c. Corinth (Acts 18:12-17). Gallio, the proconsul of Asia, declares Paul innocent of any breach of Roman law.
 - d. Ephesus (Acts 19:23-41), where Asiarchs are Paul's friends. Paul is publicly absolved of any public sacrilege by the chief executive officer (the town clerk).
 - e. Palestine, under Felix, Festus, and Agrippa (Acts 24-26). Paul continually found innocent of crimes the Jews pronounced against him.
 - f. Rome (Acts 28:16-31), where Paul was not hindered from preaching the gospel.

The only real trouble the church encountered during the period Acts recounts came from the Jews who rejected and crucified Christ (Acts 4:1-22; 5:17-32; 7:54 - 8:1; 12:1-3; 13:49-50; 14:4-5; 21:27 - 25:27).

Christianity was not seditious. This ought to teach us something in relation to the Christian religion and our relation to the governments of men.

B. Christianity's Transition from Jew to Gentile

1. Geographically: Acts 1:8
 - Jerusalem, Acts 1:1 - 8:3
 - Judaea and Samaria, 8:4 - 12:25
 - The uttermost part of the earth, 13:1 - 28:31
2. Racially

Ch. 2 Jew	}	All "received the word"
Ch. 8 Samaria		cf. 2:38-41
Ch. 10 Gentiles		8:12-14 10:48 - 11:1

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LESSON TWO

CONFLICT AND TRIUMPH

An Outline of the
Chronology of the Gospel's
Journey.

Acts is multipurposed. There are a number of threads which Luke weaves throughout the fabric of his account of the church in the first century. Each of these is outstanding for revealing the fulfillment of the great commission from a different vantage point.

One of those threads the author traces becomes the great theme of the book which characterizes the activity of the church in Acts -- Conflict and Triumph.

At the conclusion of Luke's gospel he recounts the great commission (Lk. 24:44-47). In Acts he presents several steps or stages in the early history of the church as she labors to fulfill the great commission. In each of these sections of the book the church is seen to come into conflict as a direct result of preaching the gospel. In each section or stage persecution, internal problems, natural calamity are used by Satan to disrupt the unity of the church and to stop the progress of the gospel. But out of each conflict the church emerges the victor, and Luke sounds a note of triumph.

By taking account of these sections we observe the conflict and triumph of the church under the great commission as she preaches the gospel in:

LAST
KNOW FOR TEST

1. Jerusalem, 1:1 - 6:7.

Herein the church is presented as established and increasing. Almost immediately the infant church is brought into conflict through persecution (ch. 4), hypocrisy (ch. 5), and discrimination against certain of the widows (ch. 6). Enough to wreck any church! But in each case the situation is dealt with and the gospel continues to flow. As a result the church continues to grow, even from out of the ranks of the Jewish hierarchy (6:7). DETAILS OF THE GOSPEL'S SPREAD

2. Judaea, Galilee, and Samaria, 6:8 - 9:31.

This section details the triumph of the church over the severe persecution maintained by Saul of Tarsus. But through his conversion the church emerges from the conflict both edified and multiplied.

3. Caesarea and Antioch, 9:32 - 12:24.

Herod seizes James and puts him to the sword. He seizes Peter and puts him in prison. But God slays Herod, frees Peter and sends him to bring in the Gentiles. Thus the note of triumph in 12:24, "But the word of God grew and multiplied."

4. Galatia, 12:25 - 16:5.

Paul and Barnabas carry the gospel to the regions of Pisidia, Iconium, Derbe, and Lystra among the Gentiles. Their success incited jealousy among the Jews (13:44-45). At Antioch of Syria, Jews who were nominal Christians brought in division through binding the law on Gentile Christians as necessary unto salvation (Acts 15). This resulted in the apostles' consideration of the matter and drawing up decrees which freed Gentiles from Mosaic impositions and thus strengthened the church spiritually and numerically (16:5).

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5. Asia and Europe, 16:6 - 19:20.

The success of the gospel, though not apart from persecution, is seen in Paul's labors at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, and Ephesus. Christianity is presented as having penetrated into the very heart of the intellectual world, exchanging human wisdom for divine revelation. As illustrative of this section, see especially 19:8-20. Neither disobedient Jews (8-9) nor black arts (11-19) could prevail over the gospel (v.20)!

6. Rome, 19:21 - 28:31.

Paul purposed to see Rome. The following chapters find the providential God leading faithful Paul out of one conflict after another to fulfill his purpose to preach Christ to the uttermost part of the earth.

In Jerusalem he is seized by Jews who are set to destroy him, but God uses the Roman army and the governor of the empire to protect His preacher. For two years he is in prison at Caesarea, but stands before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa (chapters 24-26) proclaiming the gospel. His appeal to Ceasar is granted and we see his thrilling adventure to Rome. Finally at Rome Paul, the prisoner, yet preaches and teaches the gospel of Christ "with all boldness, none forbidding him."

Out of all conflicts the church is triumphant in her purpose.

Conclusion: Luke's purpose is to teach us the abiding truth that Christ is with us always to fulfill the great commission (Matt. 28:18-20); that God will work all things after the counsel of his will to fulfill his great redemptive purpose through the church (Eph. 1:11; 3:20-21).

ACTS LESSON THREE

THE BIBLICAL IDEA OF WITNESSING

One of the threads Luke weaves throughout his history reveals the converting power of the apostles or preachers. The author reveals this great power to us by developing the apostles' testimony throughout the first half of his account.

Our purpose in this lesson is to establish the following in relation to that testimony as developed by Luke in Acts:

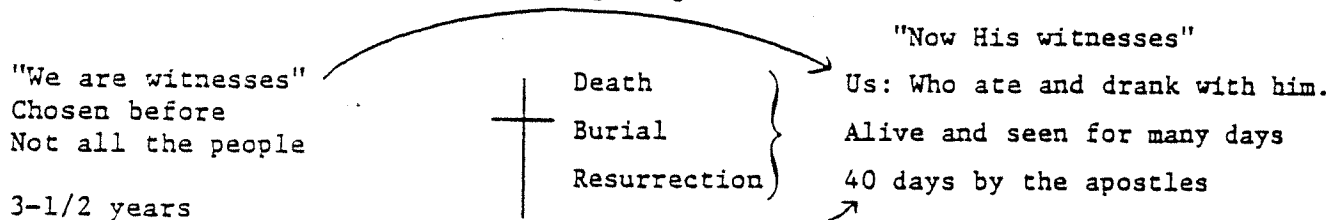
1. Who the witnesses were
2. What the witness was
3. The purpose of the witness
4. The qualifications of the Biblical witness
5. Luke's purpose for recording it

I. The Biblical Idea of Witnessing. CF Jno. 15:26-27.

Jesus said that the apostles would bear witness or testify of him. That is, they would confirm the truth of his deity and claims as Saviour. A witness seeks to confirm a truth by his testimony.

A. This Testimony confined to the Apostles. CF Acts 10:39-41; 13:30-31; 1:1-3.

Note carefully Peter specifies that the witnesses for Jesus observed "all things which he did;" that not all the people were witnesses. He specifies that these witnesses were confined to those "that were chosen before of God," which Acts 1:2 shows were the apostles. Then he distinctly identifies those chosen witnesses as "us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead." Paul teaches us that Christ's witnesses were all "from Galilee" and that the particular witness they were giving was confined to them. Paul even excludes himself from this particular witness. This is significant, for Paul's testimony of Jesus was confined to his own experience with him. Paul's witness and the witness of the original twelve was based on different historical experiences with Jesus. The witness of the original twelve is viewed in the following diagram:



B. The Purpose of the Biblical Witness was to guarantee the resurrection of Jesus.

This is the ground of the Christian faith (Jno. 11:25; Rom. 1:4; I Cor. 15:14-15). Jesus said our belief would be based on the testimony of the apostles (Jno. 17:20). This is why we believe though we have not seen Jesus (Jno. 20:28-29). We have the testimony of qualified witness to his resurrection from those apostles who saw him before and after he died and was raised.

The testimony of the apostles that they saw Jesus and ate and drank with him after the crucifixion is one of the great confirmations, evidence of an historical nature that Jesus was raised. Study carefully Acts 2:32; 3:15; 5:29-32; 10:39-41; 13:30-31. In every case Luke records the apostles' claim to have seen Jesus after he was raised. The force of their testimony lies in three areas:

Chosen before
and after

who saw
him after
he was
raised

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Chosen before
and after

1. Their number -- there were twelve witnesses.
2. Their agreement -- the apostles were in total agreement.
3. Their lives -- they persisted without variation in the face of persecution till they were martyred.

It is against nature for such action and moral conviction to be based and maintained on a lie. There is only one conclusion for these men to have given such a testimony: It actually happened. Jesus was raised and they saw him! See 1 Jno. 1:1-4. This is the force of Luke's statement that "with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection" (Acts 4:33).

Today we have no testimony to give of our own which can convince anyone that Jesus was raised. Our testimony must be the testimony of the eyewitnesses themselves. As Paul said, "Preach the Word" (2 Tim. 4:2).

C. The Qualifications of the Biblical Witness:

According to Jesus and Peter the witnesses for Christ's resurrection must meet the following qualifications:

1. Jno. 15:27; Acts 1:21-22. Each witness must have been with Jesus from the baptism of John until the day of Christ's ascension.
2. Acts 1:21-22. This insists that the apostles had to have seen the resurrected Lord inasmuch as no one saw the resurrection itself take place.
3. Jno. 16:13; Acts 1:8. Each witness had to be specially guided by the Holy Spirit in order to preserve the testimony from error.

These requirements were not arbitrary, but necessary in order to be a convincing testimony to the fact of the resurrection. (Jesus had to have witnesses to the fact of his life prior to death and to his life after his death as a confirmation that the Jesus they saw for forty days after the crucifixion was the same Jesus they had lived with for three years prior to the crucifixion. There are three important considerations from these requirements.

1. 1 Cor. 15:6. Paul offers the fact that above five hundred persons who saw Jesus after the crucifixion were yet alive and available to testify that they had so seen him. But we have no knowledge that any of these had seen Jesus before his crucifixion. Further, their testimony was not preserved from human error by the Spirit's inspiration as was the testimony of the apostles. Thus, whereas they could be offered as a part of the evidence that Jesus was raised, they themselves could not be numbered with the inerrantly qualified witnesses as specified in Jno. 15:26 and Acts 1:8, 21-22.

2. Acts 22:15. Paul was indeed a witness to the fact of the resurrection, but his testimony was confined to what he had seen and heard as was the testimony of the original twelve. See Acts 4:20. Paul's testimony is recorded in Acts 9, 22, 26. His testimony was unique to his experience and was the only one of its kind. A witness can only testify to what he himself has seen and heard. This explains why Paul excludes himself from the witnesses in Acts 13:30-31. Though both Paul and the original apostles were witnesses of the resurrection, they each gave the testimony which was confined to their experience with the resurrected Lord.

3. Rev. 3:13. Antipas was called by Jesus "my faithful witness," though this does not seem to refer to any verbal testimony. Earlier Jesus stated that Christians were to be "faithful unto death" in order to receive the crown of life (Rev. 2:10). Antipas was indeed faithful even unto death and thus his life and martyrdom was a testimony to his faith in Jesus. But this testimony was not of the sort which is recorded in Acts.

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4. Rev. 12:11. John writes that faithful Christians overcome Satan "because of the word of their testimony." This "testimony" was not a relating of any personal experiences which these Christians had with Jesus. There is no way of proving what experiences we have with Jesus apart from miraculous confirmation. This testimony of Rev. 12:11 is the apostles' testimony; it is the word of the testimony of all Christians -- the word which the apostles themselves spoke and wrote by inspiration.

II. Only the Apostles Were Qualified to Prove Jesus Was the Messiah, Lk. 24:44-48.

Notice carefully, after Jesus had interpreted to the apostles the meaning of the prophecies in the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms, he then stated, "Ye are witnesses of these things." The "these things" of which the apostles were witnesses was the fulfillment of those Old Testament Messianic Prophecies. They predicted that the Christ (Messiah of Jno. 1:41) would suffer and rise again from the dead. Since Jesus suffered at Calvary and rose again, he was therefore that Messiah of Prophecy. The fulfillment of this prophecy was witnessed by these apostles. They were thus qualified through the Holy Spirit from Pentecost to testify, or to bear witness, or to confirm to others that Jesus was that Messiah.

OLD TESTAMENT

The Law
The Prophets
The Psalms



Jesus suffered
and
rose again

All things fulfilled.
Jesus said to the apostles:
"Ye are witnesses of these
things."

CONCLUSION: According to the New Testament, the Biblical witness of the sort we read about in Acts was confined to those Spirit-guided apostles whose testimony of what they had seen and heard was preserved from error. The purpose of their testimony was to confirm to lost men that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. This could only be done by convincing men that Jesus was raised from the dead. No one since the apostles has had that eyewitness experience, and no one shall. The testimony of Jesus' resurrection, verified by the total number of the apostles and preserved from error by the Holy Spirit, is now recorded in the New Testament and preserved for our investigation. To that testimony we must go for any confirmation of the Deity and Messiahship of Jesus Christ. This is the Biblical idea of witnessing. Any so-called witnessing today is not of the kind we read about in the book of Acts.

Our task is, then, to reproduce the testimony of qualified witnesses. Or as Paul said to Timothy, "Preach the Word." (2 Tim. 4:2). That will be enough.

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LESSON FOUR

THE UNIVERSALITY OF CHRISTIANITY

World evangelism was not a concept fully understood by the church from the outset. Narrow national Judaism was not totally dispelled even with the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. The Acts presents the great transitions from this narrow Jewish nationalism to universal Christianity, thus finally and fully realizing the meaning of Joel's "all flesh" and Christ's "into all the world" and Peter's "all that are afar off" as inclusive of uncircumcized Gentiles into the church of Christ.

I. The Nationalistic Concept of the Kingdom as conceived by the Jews in the first century.

A. The Jews. The following verses reveal that the Jewish people as a whole conceived of the Messianic Kingdom as nationalistic. Cf. Matt. 3:1-2, 11:12; Jno. 6:14-15.

B. The Disciples of Jesus held the same concept even to the day of Jesus' departure back to the Father. Cf. Matt. 16:13-20, 16:21-23, 20:20-22; Luke 24:13-21; Acts 1:6.

II. The Concept of the Apostles From Pentecost to Cornelius.

The concept of the nature of the kingdom and of Messianic prophecy was definitely changed at Pentecost by the work of the Holy Spirit. The apostles were made to understand that the kingdom was spiritual and that Christ's work and Old Testament Messianic prophecy were fulfilled in remission of sins. Yet even the apostles had a limited concept to whom remission of sins was offered. While it included Gentiles, it was nevertheless confined to proselytes (Gentiles converted to the Jewish religion who had received circumcision). Cf. Acts 2:5-11, 6:1-6. Notice, "Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch."

And see also Acts 8:5, 14-15. Samaritans were a sort of half-breed Jew and served God's purpose in spreading his gospel to "all flesh." The Samaritans were a natural stepping stone in the transition from the Judaistic concept of Christianity to pure Christianity unadulterated by national limitation.

III. The Transition From Judaistic Christianity to Universal Christianity was finally effected through Cornelius.

A. Peter's Concept of the Law and the Gospel Prior to Cornelius. He (and surely the other apostles) believed the Law of Moses was yet binding (Acts 10:9-17). He believed that Gentiles were not subjects for the gospel unless first Judaized or proselyted (Acts 10:19-35).

It required a supernatural act from the Holy Spirit to confirm even to Peter and the Jews with him that remission of sins was intended by God to be offered to these Gentiles (Acts 10:44-48).

B. The Transition Explained to the Apostles and Jews at Jerusalem,
Acts 11:1-18.

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C. Luke's Explanation why the Gospel prior to Cornelius' conversion was not preached to Gentiles (Acts 11:19). He further explains that after Cornelius, men began to preach to Greeks (uncircumcised Gentiles) (Acts 11:20).

IV. The Jerusalem Conference, Acts 15.

A. The Problem, Acts 15:1,5. Certain Jews who were supposed to be Christians did not understand the sufficiency of the Cross and the gospel of Christ. They were still binding the Law as necessary. The sufficiency of the work of Christ and the preaching of the gospel was at stake.

B. Peter's Statement, Acts 15:7-11, shows that Gentiles could be saved through Christ alone without the Law of Moses. This was the official inspired position of the apostles (v. 11). Peter has changed drastically from his position just prior to Cornelius.

C. God Confirmed that the Gospel Without Addition from the Law was for All, Acts 15:12.

D. James Interprets the Prophets to Have Predicted Salvation for Gentiles, Acts 15:13-18. Is this "The coming in of the Gentiles?" Cf. Rom. 11:25-27.

E. The Apostolic Decree (Cf. Acts 16:4) officially announced the transition as from God, Acts. 15:22-29.

Thus the Acts reveals that the transition from Jew to Gentile also includes a great transition from Law to Grace.

Observation and Conclusion: A careful comparison of Peter's position prior to Cornelius and the position of the Judaizers in Acts 15 will reveal, if not an exact position, very close parallels. The question may be asked, Why was Peter allowed to continue so long in that limited concept? The answer seems to be revealed in Paul's statement in Rom. 1:16, "The Gospel is...to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." It was a part of God's plan to allow the Jews to hear the gospel first. It is clear that the "first" Gentile converted to Christ was Cornelius (Acts 15:14).

This was even necessary, it seems, in order to allow the Jews time to accept the drastic implications of this transition (see Acts 13:46). The implications are that as long as the Jewish Christians conceived of Judaism as essential to Christianity they would quite naturally believe in the necessity of the temple and of the mother city of Jerusalem. If this is true, then the destruction of Jerusalem would imply to the Jewish Christians the failure of Christianity. But prior to this event (A.D. 70) the Jerusalem conference settled the matter of Judaism. Paul had written his Romans and Galatians epistles and so was martyred in A.D. 68. The entire subject of Law and Grace had been discussed orally at Jerusalem and preserved in the apostolic epistles. The entire church had then passed through the transitional crisis by A.D. 70. With the destruction of Jerusalem the apron strings were cut! Christianity was for all--as it is to this day.

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! . . . His ways are past tracing out! (Rom. 11:33).

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LESSON FIVE

POWER AT PENTECOST
(Acts Chs. 1-2)

I. APOSTOLIC PREPARATION, Acts 1:1-26

- A. Introduction, 1-5. This introduction recalls the closing statements of Luke's gospel (Lk. 24:44-53), thus linking Acts as a continuing narrative of the events of Christ and the apostles. What "Jesus began both to do and to teach" the apostles and the church continued to do.
- B. The Ascension of Jesus, 6-11.
- C. The Appointment of Matthias to the Apostolic Office, 12-26.
Matthias was chosen by God to take the place of Judas Iscariot "and he was numbered with the eleven apostles." Cf. 2:14; 6:2. Matthias was an apostle with equal authority to the rest of the apostles.

II. APOSTOLIC PREACHING, Acts 2:1-47

- A. The Power Source, 1-13. Christ had promised the apostles they would be empowered by the Spirit (Lk. 24:49; Acts 1:4-5, 8). At Pentecost they received the Holy Spirit who gave them power in three areas:
 1. Language, 4. The Spirit empowered the apostles to "speak with other tongues." These "other tongues" were different languages (6-8, 11). The word "unknown," as in the K.J.V., is not in the original text. These languages were, as a matter of fact, known and recognized by those who heard (v. 11).
 2. Knowledge of the gospel which was not known completely until the Spirit guided them into understanding (cf. Jno. 14:26; 16:12-13; Acts 1:6-8). See also 1 Cor. 2:6-13 where Paul explains that what had been a mystery from the foundation of the world was revealed by the Spirit to the apostles that they might "know" those things, and that the Spirit selected the very words which they spoke.
 3. Power to Work Miracles (Mk. 16:19-20; Jno. 15:26-27; Acts 1:8; Heb. 2:3-4). The apostles' power to confirm their word by supernatural deeds was intended to produce faith (cf. Acts 3:1-12, 16; 5:12-14, et al). See also 1 Cor. 14:22.

Inasmuch as such things were not expected of these "Galilaeans" it is no wonder that when they began to speak in the very languages of the people "from every nation under heaven" (5) that they were "confounded" (6), "they were all amazed and marvelled" (7); and they were even "perplexed" (12).

- B. Peter's Explanation, 14-21. This supernatural element confirmed Peter's claim that Joel's prophecy of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh was now in fulfillment. "This is that."
- C. The Sermon on Pentecost, 22-36.
 1. The Proposition or Claim: Jesus of Nazareth, crucified and raised, 22-24.
 2. Evidence to sustain the claim, 25-35.

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- a. Jesus' own miracles (cf. v. 22).
- b. Prophecy fulfilled (25-31). Peter logically reasons from prophecy that David's statement in the 16th Psalm that his flesh would not see corruption could not have applied to David himself inasmuch as the presence of his tomb was proof that his own flesh saw corruption after he died and was buried. Therefore, David's words were a prophecy of another. Peter continues to explain that David remembered the oath God promised to him (in 2 Sam. 7:11-16) "that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne," and with that promise in mind he predicted in the 16th Psalm that Christ was going to be resurrected from the dead. Thus, Christ, the seed of David, was raised to sit on David's throne. The resurrection is the only possible explanation of Ps. 16.
- c. The Apostles' Testimony (32). Remember lesson three - the Biblical Idea of Witnessing. We cannot expect of human nature that twelve men would invent a lie and then maintain that lie in the heat of persecution without material gain. The purpose of the apostles' testimony was to offer themselves as evidence that Jesus was raised, as David prophesied, and was therefore the Christ.
- d. Conclusion: Jesus exalted and coronated as Lord and Christ (33-36).

D. The Response (37-47). Three thousand were "baptized for the remission of sins" and to "receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (37-41), and they began to maintain a life in accord with the divine revelation of the Spirit as taught by the apostles (42).

It was on this day that the church was established (47). It was on this day that the Kingdom of God of the Old Testament (e.g., 2 Sam. 7:11-16; Isa. 9:6-7; Dan. 2:44) which John the Baptist and Jesus announced in their ministries was "at hand" (Matt. 3:1-2; Mark 1:14-15) was established. Jesus said the Kingdom would come with power in the lifetime of the very men into whose ears he spoke the words (Mk. 9:1). Inasmuch as the power came with the Spirit (Acts 1:8) and the Spirit came on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4), therefore the Kingdom came with the power of the gospel on that day. The Kingdom of Old Testament prophecy is therefore the church of New Testament Christianity.

CONCLUSION: As Christ was the central figure throughout Luke's gospel, so now the church has centrality throughout Acts. She is central only because she continues to do and to teach what Christ began. Thus she continues to this day to be the central figure in history as she continues to engage in her divinely given task of world evangelism. To justify our membership in that great blood-bought church, we must each engage ourselves in soul winning under the great commission. Preach the Word.

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LESSON SIX

PETER'S SERMON: JESUS THE MESSIAH
(Acts ch. 3)

I. THE OCCASION, Acts 3:1-11.

Peter heals a lame beggar on the temple grounds which filled the people with wonder and amazement to the point they were willing to listen to Peter's explanation.

II. PETER'S MESSIANIC SERMON, Acts 3:12-26.

Messiah is the Hebrew word for Christ. The Old Testament scriptures foretold the coming of the Jewish Messiah (deliverer) and produced within Israel a Messianic hope. Peter's proposition is that Jesus has fulfilled these prophecies and is therefore the Messiah. His reasoning is as follows.

A. Jesus Is The Suffering Servant of Prophecy, (13-18)

Peter teaches that Jesus served the purpose of God by suffering at Calvary to provide remission of sins for Israel. This was in fulfillment of prophecy.

1. The idea of "The Suffering Servant" is from Isaiah 42:1; 52:13 - 53:11 (13). This was fulfilled when Jesus became sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21) and paid the price for our sin debt (Matt. 20:28; Heb. 9:26; Jno. 19:30). "It is finished" in the Greek (TELESTAI) means "paid in full." Hence Matt. 27:46, Jesus was separated from God for our sakes. He suffered and served the purpose of God to save us. By this means Jesus is restoring Israel to God according to prophecy. Cf. Rom. 11:25-27.
2. All the prophets prophesied the same thing (18). Cf. Lk. 24:44-47; 1 Pet. 1:10-11.
3. The proof of Peter's claim for Jesus is in his resurrection (14-15) which both the miracle of healing and the apostolic witness confirm. Peter insists that faith in Jesus was the ground of the miracle of healing (16, see the marginal reading).

B. Jesus Is The Great Prophet Of Prophecy, (22-24).

1. Moses declared the obligation of Israel to hearken to God's prophets (cf. Deut. 18:18-19). A particular prophet seems to be indicated (22-23).
2. All the prophets from Samuel foretold the days of that prophet which Peter stated were "these days," i.e., the days of Jesus and the people who then lived (24). Hence Jesus was that prophet and Israel was to hearken unto him or be destroyed.

A prophet was a mouth for God (Deut. 18:18-19; Jer. 1:4-9, etc.)
Jesus was a prophet, cf. Jno. 5:31; 7:16; 8:26; 12:48-49.

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C. Jesus Is The Seed Of The Promise To Abraham, (25-26).

The Jews, Peter said, were "sons of the prophets," that is, they were heirs of the things prophesied for them to receive. The things they inherited from God were remission of sins (19, 26) which Jesus served God's purpose to provide by suffering at Calvary. See also Gal. 3:16, Jesus is the seed of Abraham; Gal. 3:8, Justification is the blessing he brought through his suffering.

CONCLUSION: The scriptures of the prophets foretold the coming of God's suffering servant, of God's prophet, and of Abraham's seed who would bring world-wide blessing. Jesus fulfilled all these prophecies. Therefore, he is the Messiah of the Jews to whom Jesus was first to come (26, cf. Acts 13:46; Rom. 1:17). In his cross he fulfilled the prophecies to suffer. In his resurrection he confirmed that his cross was redemptive. "Repent ye therefore and turn again that your sins may be blotted out."

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LESSON SEVEN

"PREACHING IN THE FACE OF PERSECUTION"
(Chs. 4-5)

These two chapters are classics for depicting the dynamic spirit of early Christianity. Neither persecution from without nor trouble from within could disrupt the unity of the church or stop the flow of the gospel.

I. FEARLESS PREACHING IN HARD PLACES, Ch. 4:1-31.

A. Produces Church Growth, 1-4

The weight of the Jewish hierarchy was thrown against Peter and John, but not before their preaching had brought the total "number of the men . . . to be about five thousand." The Oriental way of numbering did not include the women and children. Thus the church had grown into the thousands by this time even though it began under fire of persecution. Cf. Phil. 1:12-14; 1 Thess. 2:1-2.

Preach The Word
IS SS: 11
1 Cor 3: 6-7

B. Produces Persecution, 5-22

1. The Apostles Challenged To Present Their Authority, 5-12. The question posed by the Jewish court was subtle, it did not specify what the apostles had actually done to deserve arrest, only "they inquired, By what power, or in what name have ye done this?" What they had actually done was left open. Peter endowed by the Spirit's wisdom seized his opportunity to specify the thing they had done: they had healed an impotent man (cf. 3:1-10) by the authority of Jesus Christ! The embarrassing truth was standing before them in the form of the healed man himself, and the Jews "could say nothing against it" (14). Then Peter indicts them of having "set at naught" this power--the only name (authority) under heaven "wherein we must be saved." Matthew 28:18-20 has been confirmed.

2. The Apostles Persecuted, 13-22.

This records the official beginning of the Christian persecution. At this moment the preachers are threatened (21) and charged officially "not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus." The apostles' reply: "We cannot but speak the things we saw and heard" (20) was neither disrespectful nor contrary to God's command to obey the laws of the land (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17). The Bible is careful to teach that rulers are servants of God and answerable to him for governing the people according to moral law. How much more when Jewish rulers were to shepherd Israel into the government of Messiah? Yet they rejected him of whom they read from the scriptures every Sabbath! Whether it was right in God's sight to hearken to the Jews' charge or God's command to preach Jesus as the Christ these Jews had to decide for themselves. As for the apostles, they would obey the Lord, though persecuted to death for it.

C. Requires Prayer, 23-31.

There is strength for Christians in "their own company," and more especially when they pray together. God hears and answers prayers. These Christians committed their new plight of persecution and threatening to the Lord who then emboldened them to continue to speak "the word of God with boldness."

1 Pet 1-4

ACTS

II. A DECREASE FROM WITHIN PRODUCES AN INCREASE FROM WITHOUT, 4:32--5:16.

The contrast between good Barnabus and hypocritical Ananias and Sapphira is well known. What seems to be often overlooked is the good results which issued from the severe action of the Lord against Ananias and his wife. The results were that "great fear came upon the whole church and upon all that heard these things" (11), the people of Jerusalem magnified the apostles (13), and "believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (14). See also 1 Cor. 5:1-8 and 2 Thess. 3:6-14.

III. GLORIOUS DISHONOR, 5:17-42.

A. Jailed for Preaching, 17-18.

B. Freed for Preaching, 19-32.

Though having been warned not to preach Christ again they replied, "We must obey God rather than men" (29).

C. Dishonored for Preaching, 33-40.

The Sanhedrin, the Jewish supreme court, was minded to slay these preachers. Only Gamaliel's advice restrained them. The Jewish rulers had the apostles beaten and once again "charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus."

D. Yet, They Continued Preaching! 41-42.

The indefatigable spirit of Jesus characterized these preachers who actually "rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name." and "they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus" in the temple publically every day.

CONCLUSION: Such a course of action could only lead to the salvation of souls that were lost, and at last a martyr's death for these preachers. This was their chosen lot--for life! And they rejoiced in it. May God fill our ranks with such spirits today. Read 2 Timothy 3:12. Can you measure up to this?

K...
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ACTS
LESSON EIGHT

STEPHEN'S DEFENSE
(Chs. 6-7)

Outstanding among Bible worthies, Stephen is one of whom it can truly be said that he was a great servant of the Lord. From Luke's record emerges a picture of an admirable personality in whose character resided the qualities of faith, unyielding conviction, and integrity. Three distinct areas of Stephen's life are touched upon by the historian. One can be studied from the following division in this section of the book of Acts.

- I. **STEPHEN'S CHARACTER AND ABILITY** – Problems of Numerical Growth Require Men of Special Qualifications, Acts 6:1-7.
- A. **THE TWOFOLD PROBLEM**, 1-2. The Grecian widows were being neglected in the distribution of daily needs and the work of gospel preaching would thus be threatened if the apostles themselves attempted to care for them.
 - B. **THE SOLUTION**, 3-6. A sufficient number of qualified men were selected to relieve the situation. We learn the following pattern for the church today:
 - 1. A business to be accomplished, 3.
 - 2. Qualifications to be met, 3. See also I Tim. 3:8-13.
 - 3. An appointment to be made, 3, 5-6.

This action relieved the widows and released the apostles for their particular ministry of preaching. (Elders and preachers please take note.) The purpose of **deacons**, who are the ministers or servants of the church (from DIAKONOS, translated MINISTER, SERVANT, DEACON), seems to be a special work "to relieve the church of any burden needing attention in order to enable her to function most effectively in evangelism and edification of the church... Good men well qualified for their particular task should be selected and given the authority to function in that particular area of work" (Ed Wharton, The Church of Christ, p. 50).

- C. **THE RESULT**, 7. The word continued to be preached and the church continued to grow.
- II. **STEPHEN'S DEFENSE** – Prophecies of Jerusalem's Destruction Based On Israel's History, 6:8 – 7:53.

- A. **THE CHARGE AGAINST STEPHEN**, 6:8 – 7:1.
Stephen was charged with stating that "Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place" (Jerusalem). In point of fact Jesus did say that (Matt. 23:37-38).
- B. **STEPHEN'S DEFENSE**, 7:2-53.

This sermon, one of the longest recorded in the Bible, is actually an apologetic (a defense). Luke's giving such place (space) to this sermon should manifest its significance. Based on the principles of divine moral government (Ps. 89:14; Prov. 14:34; Mal. 3:6; 2 Tim. 2:11-13) Stephen teaches that as God once wrought just judgment upon Israel for her rejection of his deliverance through the Patriarchs, Moses, and the prophets (2-43), so now once again he will destroy Jerusalem for rejecting the great Deliverer Jesus (51-53).

Israel was characterized by resisting the Holy Spirit (51). The historical reference points in refusing to accept God is seen in Israel's rejection of:

- 1. Joseph, 9.
- 2. Moses, 25-27, 35.
- 3. The Prophets, 52.
- 4. The Law, 53.
- 5. The Messiah, 52.

ACTS

In all of this Israel was characterized by a rebellious rejection of God's Holy Spirit (51). Consequently their economy was to be destroyed as in the past. This is Stephen's answer to the charge in 6:13-14. Jesus himself in relation to Israel's condition often attempted to gather his "children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Thus his pronouncement of doom: "Behold, your house (the Israelite commonwealth) is left unto you desolate." As the Lord came in judgment against Jerusalem in 586 (see 2 Chron. 36), so he did once again in 70 A.D., and for the same reason – characteristic rebellion.

Is it not true that history repeats itself? Is it not thus possible to see straws in the wind falling in such a direction we can (fore) tell which way the world-wind is blowing?

III. STEPHEN'S MARTYRDOM – Dignity In Death, Acts 7:54 – 8:3.

Stephen's preaching was strong and to the point. It was logical and cut at the tap root of their sin. Stoning was the execution death divinely appointed for Israel's worst criminals. Such a shameful death was not justified on Stephen's part. But Israel now was the church. And the Israel of Christ lamented this great gospel preacher and servant of the church. "And devout men buried Stephen."

To this day Stephen is called the first Christian martyr. No member of the church has ever been known to be ashamed of Stephen or the manner of his death. He has in fact dignified dying in the Lord.

CONCLUSION: Jesus on the cross said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Lk. 23:34). Stephen, though a fearless preacher and plain spoken, loved his enemies, too. While his murderers stoned the life from his mortal body, he, in the spirit of the Lord at Calvary, "cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Luke tells us he then fell asleep in Jesus. O, that our fate could be so sweet! But only if we have accepted—not rejected, the Lord. For these only can it be said: "BLESSED ARE THE DEAD THAT DIE IN THE LORD."

ACTS
LESSON NINE
GREAT SIGNS AND GREAT CONVERSIONS

(Chs. 8:4—11:18)

The church of Christ in the first century swept over the earth with such conquering power that her converts were characterized by faithfulness even in the face of severe persecution. Often the question is raised, What was the dynamic of the early church? What were the causes of her unquenchable faith and evangelistic success?

Jesus promised that through faith we would know no limits in our Christian service (Matt. 17:20; see also Eph. 3:20-21; Phil. 4:13). Luke records the proof of that fact in his historical account. The early church actually believed that Jesus was resurrected, that the apostles spoke the very words of God, that they were saved from sin, that Christ was truly coming again, and that the Lord was actually with them individually and collectively. This faith was the dynamic of their courage and steadfastness. Their secret was their unmitigated belief.

While that faith was produced by the word of the apostles (Jno. 17:20; Rom. 10:17), we must remember that no one in the first century grew up with a New Testament. These people had to have good reason for believing the gospel—something that would convince them to sacrifice comfort and convenience for privation and persecution. Only miraculous signs from God would be sufficient.

The following shows the purpose and power of the supernatural element in the apostolic church.

I. THE GOSPEL CONFIRMED BY MIRACLES IN THE FIRST CENTURY

The purpose of miracles was to confirm the word (Mk 16:20). The supernatural element is thus seen to be involved in the following cases of conversion:

A. The Samaritans, Acts 8:4-12

Philip preached Christ to the Samaritans (5) who believed "when they heard and saw the signs which he did" (6). Their faith in Christ confirmed by Philip's miracles was the dynamic which led them to accept Christ in baptism (12).

B. Simon, a Sorcerer, Acts 8:13

His black arts were sufficient to amaze the people of Samaria. But when Philip performed signs from God they were so far superior to Simon's magic tricks that even Simon himself "was amazed" at the difference (13) and was won to Christ.

C. The Ethiopian Eunuch, Acts 8:26-40

While no miracle is recorded to have been performed by Philip to convince the Eunuch of the truth of his message, as in the case of the Samaritans, two things must nevertheless be kept in mind:

1. Luke is careful to remind the reader (Theophilus) that the preacher was under the direct supervision of the Holy Spirit (26, 29, 39).
2. The message Philip preached necessitated an appeal to the miraculous element in order to convince the Eunuch, as has always been the case, of the supernatural Jesus. While Luke says only that Philip "preached unto him Jesus" (35), involved in that preaching was "the good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ" (12), that is, the authority of Jesus Christ. And that divine authority has always been proven by an appeal to the evidences for the resurrection. When Philip preached Jesus he preached all that is necessary to bring unbelievers to belief: He preached the cross of Christ as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (32-33, cf. Isa. 53), he preached the resurrection and sustained Christ's authority (12), he preached pertinent things "concerning the kingdom" or the church (12), and he preached baptism for remission of sins (12, 13, cf. 2:38) which accounts for the Eunuch's urgency to be baptized (36).

Apparently the evidences offered by Philip to prove Christ's resurrection and consequent confirmation of his divine authority was sufficient and thus no further confirmation by miracles was required of Philip. When the Eunuch asked, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" (36), Philip inquired only if he believed what he had heard (37). When faith was affirmed the Eunuch was immediately baptized (38).

D. Saul of Tarsus, 9:1-18

Saul's fanatical manner of life as a prejudiced Jew bent on annihilating the church of Christ (see Gal. 1:13-14; Acts 26:4-13) made it impossible for any Christian to approach him with the gospel. Only the resurrected Lord himself would be able to arrest his activities against the church and gain an audience with his mind long enough to convince him of the historical and redemptive truth of Christianity. Hence the supernatural appearance of Jesus himself to Saul.

E. The People of Lydda, Sharon, and Joppa, Acts 9:32-42

Peter's miracle of healing upon Aeneas brought the people of Lydda and Sharon to the Lord (34-35). And his miraculous resurrection of Dorcas "became known throughout all Joppa: and many believed on the Lord" (41-42).

F. Cornelius, His Kinsmen and Near Friends, Acts 10:1-48

The appearance of the angel was obviously for Cornelius sufficient confirmation that what Peter preached was the truth of God (1-8). This is manifested in his obedience to the angel's command to send for Peter. While the miracle of speaking in tongues (44-46) was designed to convince the Jews that God accepted Gentiles by faith in Christ, it would at the same time serve as a confirmation to the total number of Gentiles gathered to hear Peter that Christ is Savior. These also were baptized (10:48 - 11:1).

The supernatural element is thus seen to have accompanied each case of conversion.

II. THE GOSPEL CONFIRMED TODAY BY THOSE SAME FIRST-CENTURY MIRACLES

Mythology says, Once upon a time in a far away place . . . But that cannot be verified. True historical events can be verified in time and space, among certain persons and during certain events. Acts is that kind of history. It has been verified culturally and linguistically as a first-century document. Archaeology has upheld its statements at each new discovery. It is geographically accurate in its statements. Other documents from the same period of time reflect its historical trustworthiness. There is no statement of the Acts which can be denied as factual on any grounds of historical evidence.

The point is, the supernatural element of the book is embedded in this historical framework. To deny the miracles is to destroy the very reason for faith on the part of these persecuted Christians. Extract the miracles from the account and the historically confirmed faith and persecution of the early church cannot be satisfactorily explained.

CONCLUSION: Christianity is not the product of blind faith. It is the result of actual events which guarantee to us for all time the sinful condition of all men, the redemptive value of Christ's crucifixion, and the eternal consequences of belief and unbelief.

The nature of man and the nature of true belief in Christ will not leave one indifferent to the gospel (1 Thess. 2:13). Today's characteristic indifference to Christ and Christian living is but the confirmation of unbelief. It seems obvious that at least as much attention must be given to the miraculous element in preaching today as was by preachers in the first century and for the same reason. Believest thou this?

ACTS
LESSON TEN

THE COMING IN OF THE GENTILES

(Acts 10:1-16:5)

Prior to Cornelius the gospel had not been preached to pure uncircumcised (unproselyted) Gentiles. By the miraculous endowment of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles gathered at Cornelius' house, God confirmed to Jews (and to all men) for all time to come that Gentiles can be saved by faith in Christ apart from the legal system of the law of Moses (10:44-48; 15:7-11). At first the apostles and brethren (Jewish) at Jerusalem, hearing that the Gentiles "also had received the word of God," contended with Peter for having even gone into a Gentile's house to eat! (11:1-3). But Peter, with his apostolic authority lending finality to the matter, explained the situation (11:4-17), declaring that God made no such distinctions between Gentiles and Jews. Peter therefore concluded that he himself had no right to "withstand God" in his desire to bring Gentiles into his fellowship. To this the brethren at Jerusalem agreed "when they heard these things . . . and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life" (11:18).

This Gentile precedent resulted in the following:

1. A predominantly Gentile church at Antioch (in Syria) (11:19-21).
2. Fellowship between the Jewish and Gentile churches at Antioch and Judaea (11:22-30). The brethren at Jerusalem sent their best exhorter, Barnabus, to the church at Antioch to help them grow spiritually and numerically. Later the Gentile church responded to the needs of their Jewish brethren in Judaea by sending relief during a time of famine.
3. The sending out of Barnabus and Saul (Paul) to preach to the Gentiles in Asia Minor (chs. 13-14).

Such divinely directed acts should have been sufficient proof to all that God fully received Gentiles into the church without any appeal to Judaism whatever. But Judaistic legalism launched a counter offensive at Jerusalem seeking to make the law of Moses a permanent part of Christianity. Luke recounts the problem and the divine solution in Acts 15.

I. THE PROBLEM, 15:1-5

Pharisaic Ignorance Of The Natures of Law And Grace. Certain "Pharisees who believed" in Christ as Messiah nevertheless apparently did not understand the following.

A. THE NATURE OF LAW. Law condemns and cannot justify. See Deut. 27:26; Gal. 3:10. It is in the nature of any legal system to condemn lawbreaking; otherwise law is powerless as a system of regulation. It is not in the nature of law to justify. See Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16; 3:21. Paul's "if there had been a law (any legal system) given which could make alive . . ." is tantamount to saying that no law of a legal nature which naturally condemns can possibly make the dead in sin alive (or justify). That would be sheer contradiction. It would be like a law enforcement officer stopping a speeding motorist to give him a license to speed!

Thus to bind law on Jews OR Gentiles would be to condemn them for certain at the next transgression. These Jews did not understand this.

B. THE NATURE OF GRACE. Grace is simply favor which one bestows. It indicates that no merit has prompted the gift, whatever it may be. The reason for bestowing the favor lies with the giver. In God's case he bestowed his favor on us when he sent Jesus to Calvary to provide redemption (Eph. 2:8). The reason for that great unspeakable gift was that he loves us (1 Jno. 3:16; 1 Jno. 4:10).

The condition God has placed upon man for receiving his gift of salvation is obedience of faith in Jesus Christ, not an attempt to make ones self righteous by keeping a legal law system which by its nature condemns our sinful imperfections.

Neither did these Pharisees understand the nature of God's gift of Christ by grace which was totally sufficient in itself to save all men.

It's a simple matter (for those who will receive it) of one system cancelling out the other. Of this all legalists are ignorant.

ACTS

II. THE SOLUTION, 15:6-29

The gospel as sufficient in and of itself to save all men was preached by Paul in Asia Minor even as Peter preached it to Cornelius. It was that sufficiency which was challenged. Luke records the four points which the apostles argued was proof that pure Christianity was sufficient to save:

A. PETER'S APOSTOLIC ENDORSEMENT, 7-11.

1. God gave the Gentiles (Cornelius) the Holy Spirit as proof that "he made no distinction" (9) between Jews and Gentiles, and saved them by faith in Christ without any appeal to the law of Moses at all (7-9).
2. He emphatically states the official position of the apostles at this time that Jews were saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus in like manner as Gentiles—i.e., without the law of Moses (11).

B. GOD'S DIRECT ENDORSEMENT BY MIRACLES, 12. Jesus promised the truth of his word would be confirmed or endorsed by signs following (Mk 16:15-20). When Paul and Barnabus preached only Christ and him crucified among the Gentiles (in Acts 13-14), God confirmed that doctrine by working miracles among them.

C. THE PROPHETS' ENDORSEMENT AND THE JUDGEMENT OF JAMES, 13-21.

1. The prophet James tells us that Amos predicted what Peter had affirmed, and that by saving Gentiles God was thus fulfilling Amos 9:11-12 by taking "out of them (the Gentiles) a people for his name."
2. James concluded on that basis not to "trouble" the Gentile Christians by requiring them to keep the law.

To determine the seriousness of this "trouble" see Gal. 1:6-7.

D. THE APOSTOLIC DECREE, 22-29. Cf. 16:4. The Holy Spirit inspired an epistle to be read to the churches among the Gentiles where the problem existed. In the epistle the error was condemned (24), Paul and Barnabus were endorsed (25-26), and their gospel declared as genuine (27).

CONCLUSION: The historian records that when the Gentiles who had been victims of this legalistic heresy received the epistle and had read it, that "they rejoiced for the consolation." Another statement fraught with meaning says that the prophets Judas and Silas, after they had confirmed the brethren in the gospel, "were dismissed in peace from the brethren" (15:33). Rejoicing and peace are the fruits of a pure gospel. Legalism always divides the church and replaces peace with fear and frustration.

It is our judgment together with James that we trouble not the churches with death-dealing legalism. It is also our obligation together with Paul that when Pharisaism raises its head in modern days to bring us into bondage that we give "place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Gal. 2:5).

This is the paradox of Christianity: we must wage war both offensively and defensively if we are to maintain peace in Israel. How can it be otherwise if we are to survive the battle?

ACTS
LESSON ELEVEN
CHRISTIANITY PREVAILS OVER PAGANISM (1)
(Acts 16:6 – 17:15)

After the official act of the apostles at Jerusalem to stop the flow of legalism, Paul determines to strengthen the churches in every city wherein he and Barnabas had proclaimed the Word. Barnabas took Mark to Cyprus for the same purpose while Paul and Silas "went through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches." At Lystra Paul, ever vigilant for faithful men who manifest the desire and ability to be true evangelists, pressed young Timothy into the service, who, as a child serves a father, served willingly with Paul "in the furtherance of the gospel" (Phil. 2:19:22). Together these three went on their way through the cities delivering to the churches "the decrees to keep which had been ordained of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. So, the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily" (15:36-16:5).

Judaistic legalism having thus been at least for the time being, placed in check, Paul lifts his eyes to the harvest fields of Europe. With both providential and direct guidance from the Holy Spirit he marches forth to make new conquests on a new field of action, and to do battle against a new kind of foe – idolatrous paganism.

The historical account of his exploits for Christ can be traced by the major cities where he preached; each one a commentary on the sophisticated life and religion of Greeks and Romans deep in bondage to idols. *Increasing in*

I. PHILIPPI, Acts 16:6-40

From a Roman prison cell Paul wrote to the church he established at Philippi. The epistle reveals his tender affection for those brethren. Someone has said that Philippi was Paul's "sweetheart church." He remembered them fondly. An interesting statement of Paul's is "in the beginning of the gospel" (Phil. 4:15). Luke records at least four things which belonged to that church's beginning:

A. The Conversion of Lydia, Acts 16:11-15.

This woman was no doubt a believer in the God of the Jews (see verses 13-14), inasmuch as she worshipped God on the sabbath. Her hospitality would not soon be forgotten (15).

B. The Maid With The Spirit Of Divination, Acts 16:16-18.

C. The Conversion of the Philippian Jailor, Acts 16:19-34.

1. The Occasion, 19-30

a. The Maid's Owners Accused Paul of Speaking Contrary to Roman Law, 19-24.
Nothing was mentioned about spirit of divination being cast out which was the real reason for their action.

b. The Earthquake in the Prison House, 25-30.

2. The Jailor's Conversion, 31-34.

D. Paul's Appeal to His Roman Citizenship to be vindicated of false charges and released from prison, 35-40.

II. THESSALONICA, Acts 17:1-10.

After three days of preaching in the synagogue Paul persuaded a good number to Christ. But jealous Jews incited the city to mob violence and the newly established church "immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night" (10).

These efforts at Thessalonica were by no means in vain. The first epistle to the Thessalonians makes that clear. See 1 Thess. 1:9-21. The church of the Thessalonians was:

A. An Example of Faithfulness During Persecution, 1 Thess. 1:4-7; 2:14.

Acts tells us Timothy was with Paul and Silas. The first letter to the Thessalonians tells us that Timothy was sent by Paul back to Thessalonica to see if they weathered the persecution under which the church began. The word Timothy returned to Paul was that they stood fast in the Lord in all the affliction (1 Thess. 3:1-8).

B. Evangelistic, 1 Thess. 1:8.

III. BEROEA, Acts 17:10-15.

We have no "Epistle to the Bereans" though we know a church was established there (12). Yet the Bereans are outstanding for one noble characteristic: "They received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (11), and such a spirit resulted in their salvation.

Later the Jews came from Thessalonica to stir up a riot against Paul once again and the church at Berea sent Paul away for his safety.

CONCLUSION:

History has a greater and more beneficial purpose than merely to record facts whether interesting or otherwise. A major purpose of the historian is to determine from the facts the cause(s) of this or that event and to deduct from the matter whether it was beneficial or not, thus aiding future participants in shaping a better world. Surely Luke would have us employ this principle and thus determine the causes of the success of early Christianity. Would we not at least include the following:

1. PREACHERS LIKE PAUL, SILAS, AND TIMOTHY. They had to be faithful, dedicated, and have a passion for lost men. If any one of these characteristics do not characterize a preacher he will be something less than an evangelist.
2. PEOPLE LIKE THE BEROEANS who will search the scriptures to determine what is right; LIKE LYDIA, whose heart was open to the Lord's word.

These two elements when combined — good preachers and good men — can only produce good results, and that makes for the best kind of history.

What other forces at work in the early Christian success can you determine from these chapters in history? Can you see involved in these chapters two sets of forces:

1. Providence, faith, and preaching, and
2. Pride, prejudice and persecution?

Answer these questions:

1. How did these forces antagonize each other?
2. What was the outcome then?
3. Can you predict with some confidence the future success of 20th century Christianity when and if these forces come together again?

One last question seems relevant: Is Christianity a first-century success where you are? What relation do YOU sustain to the answer?

ACTS
LESSON TWELVE
CHRISTIANITY PREVAILS OVER PAGANISM (2)
(Acts 17:16 – 19:20)

Paul, Silas and Timothy penetrated Europe with the gospel, leaving a line of churches at Philippi, Thessalonica and Beroea. To Beroea came unbelieving Jews bent on stopping the progress of the gospel and endangered the life of Paul. But faithful new converts spirited Paul out of the city and set in motion once again the great evangelistic spirit of the apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 16:6–17:15).

And once again we begin to trace those Christian exploits by following him to three more major cities in Europe and Asia where we will see the power of the gospel prevail over idolatrous paganism.

I. ATHENS, Acts 17:16-34

The city of Athens was considered by many to be the intellectual heart of the Roman world. Philosophy and idol religions abounded. The people were "very religious" and spent their time hearing and telling what new things had come to them (21-22). This condition gave Paul his opportunity to preach to eager ears. At the same time much ado about nothing better than human wisdom could offer made them fickle, as verse 21 would indicate. With assets and liabilities abounding, and his spirit "provoked within him as he beheld the city full of idols" (16), the preacher began to work in earnest every day in both synagogue and market place preaching "Jesus and the resurrection" (18). This doctrine gained such interest that "they took hold of him, and brought him unto the Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new teaching is, which is spoken by thee?" (19-20).

A. Paul's Sermon, Acts 17:22-31

Luke's decision to record Paul's sermon at Athens makes us the beneficiary of much truth. Such great truths as the unity and nature of God are brought out in Paul's sermon. We will arrange the sermon according to our view of its major thrust:

1. Origin of Men and Nations, 22-26.
2. Purpose of all men: To seek God, 27-29.
3. Destiny of all men: To stand before God in judgment, 30-31.

A strong undercurrent in this sermon was striking at poly-theistic idolatry. A knowledge of the physical geography of Athens lends much meaning to the sermon. The acropolis is just adjacent to the Areopagus and in plain view. Obvious references to the Parthenon and the idolatrous service which was perpetually rendered to the goddess is seen in verses 24-25, 28-29.

B. The Result: Certain Men Believed, 32-34, among whom was Dionysius the Areopagite!

II. CORINTH, Acts 18:1-17

Here Paul yokes up with fellow Jewish Christians, Aquila and his wife Priscilla, to make tents for a living (1-4). With the arrival of Silas and Timothy, Paul waxed zealous in the gospel and established the church in Corinth (5-8) and remained there for a year and half (9-11).

Historical background of Corinthian paganism gives meaning to the statement that "he dwelt there a year and six months, teaching the word of God." The Corinthians practiced sexual immorality or fornication as a religious observance, thus Paul's teaching in 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 6:12-20.

III. EPHESUS, Acts 18:18 – 19:20. Paul went to Ephesus twice.

A. En Route to Antioch of Syria, 18:18-22

This would terminate his second missionary journey. His visit to Ephesus at first was incidental, though he preached Christ in the synagogue and departed with a pledge that, if the Lord willed, he would return. Then on to Caesarea, Jerusalem and finally Antioch (22).

B. As a Result of a Third Missionary Journey, 18:23–19:22. This visit was by intent, it seems.

1. The Occasion of Establishing the Church, 18:24–19:7. The teaching of a certain Apollos exalted Christ but failed to present Christian baptism as Aquila and Priscilla understood it (24–28). It seems as though it required the efforts of the apostle himself to convince Apollos' converts (?) of their need to be baptized again under the proper authority (19:1–6). The truth of Paul's doctrine was confirmed by miraculous gifts (6).
2. A Means of Extending the Church, 19:8–10. We do not know who Tyrannus was, but he allowed Paul to teach the gospel for two years in his own school. From his students the gospel spread throughout all of Asia.
3. An Incident Which Helped to Establish the Church, 11–19. Certain nomadic Jews (thus referred to as "strolling Jews," v. 13) who were paganistic, observed Paul's miraculous power and believing in the superstition that certain words and phrases had magic power over spirits, took to naming the name of Jesus over them that were possessed of evil spirits. But their efforts backfired and they became victims of their own ungodly practice (condemned by Moses in Deut. 18:9–14). The demons overpowered the exorcists! (14–16).

The Jews and Greeks of Ephesus immediately saw in this incident that God endorsed Paul and his gospel, but rejected sorcery as a means to God. It also brought some Christians to their senses. It made them realize the sin of having fellowship with the black arts (17–19), and summarily confessed their sins. When they burned their books of magic then Luke records, "So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed" (20).

Thus the word of God prevailed over the word of man. It is the ever-present struggle of human wisdom versus divine revelation—and the word of God won out. It's no wonder.

CONCLUSION: What lesson can the church learn from his historical account? Surely we can see that no branch of human wisdom can make a man wise unto salvation, or endow a preacher with converting power. Only the gospel has that power (see 1 Cor. 1:18). There is no branch of learning, **SAVE BIBLICAL**, which can benefit our soul's eternal need (1 Cor. 1:21).

If the same gospel is introduced into the same areas of Europe and Asia today, it will produce the same results as it did in Paul's day.

QUESTIONS WE WOULD LIKE TO ASK:

1. If it is asked, How shall we confirm the word without miracles? it must be remembered that the word has been both confirmed **AND** recorded in the verifiable context of history. The Bible is history. Thus our plea is well grounded: **BACK TO THE BIBLE.**
2. Can the value of the history of the church as recorded in Acts be overstated?
3. Is it possible that the church where you are needs something related to the book burning at Ephesus?

ACTS LESSON THIRTEEN

HISTORY AND THEOLOGY (Acts 19:21 – 21:16)

Whenever reading Acts remember that Luke's purpose in writing both his former treatise, the gospel, and this one was to confirm to Theophilus the historical truth of the gospel of Christ (see Luke 1:1-4). Lest we forget this and relegate Acts to mere history apart from practicality, let us use this section of Acts to illustrate its practical character throughout the entire book.

I. HISTORY AND THEOLOGY

If the title of this division is not clear, it means that what the Christian believes is inextricably bound up with historical facts. For an illustration, the Christian believes he will be raised from the dead because Jesus was raised. The historical fact of Jesus' resurrection makes the Christian doctrine (theology) of a resurrection from the dead both meaningful and practical. On the other hand, if Christ were not actually raised, the doctrine of the resurrection would be neither meaningful nor practical.

Often the historical record logically traces the reasons for moving from one theatre of action to another. This is illustrated in Acts 19:21–20:1 where Paul's purpose to go to Jerusalem (19:21) was initiated by a certain Demetrius who made silver shrines for the worship of Diana. Had this incident not happened, Paul may have remained in Ephesus longer (cf. 19:22), but about the same time he purposed to go to Jerusalem Christianity came under fire (23-29) and Paul's life was once again endangered (30-31). Consequently, logically, Paul "departed to go into Macedonia" (20:1).

Now in such a context are all the elements of historical verification: certain persons, times, places and events. The places yet offer themselves for investigation. Both archaeology and Roman and Greek records have corroborated the persons, times and events. Whatever supernatural acts or whatever doctrine may be found in such a context is at once authenticated. It must be received as genuine as the context. *Thus the Christian's faith and practice is not to be determined by tradition or by what he thinks best for him, but rather by the recorded history of first-century Christianity as presented in Acts.*

II. ILLUSTRATIONS OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES CONFIRMED WITHIN THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT.

A. THE LORD'S SUPPER, Acts 20:1-12

The breaking of bread, or the Lord's Supper (cf. 1 Cor. 11:17-34), is placed squarely in the historical setting. From this we determine two things:

1. The Lord's Supper was an important part of early Christianity. Consider the people who engaged in it (20:2-7).
2. The Lord's Supper was confirmed by a miracle to be the way God wants his church to commemorate Christ's death (20:8-12). Christ's death was a redemptive act of God. This was confirmed in his resurrection. When Paul raised Eutychus it was another confirmation of the resurrection of Jesus and the meaningfulness and practicality of Christianity.

B. ELDERS OVER A LOCAL CHURCH, Acts 20:17-38

Paul was hastening to get to Jerusalem by Pentecost and for that reason "determined to sail past Ephesus" (16). But the church at Ephesus was in need and so "from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church" (17). In his address to the elders we learn of their:

1. *Work*, 28:31, which included *overseeing* (28); *shepherding* (28) cf. Lk. 15:3-6; 1 Pet. 5:1-2; and *watching* (31) cf. Ezek. 3:16-21; Heb. 13-17.
2. *Number*, plural. Cf. "the elders of the church" (17), "they," "ye," and so to the end of the address. Always in plurality in the scriptures when viewed in their official capacity in a local church. See Acts 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22; Phil. 1:1; 1 Thess. 5:12; Tit. 1:5.

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20: 22-23

19: 21 ^{Paul} PURPOSE TO
GO TO ROME
NB. CHAPS 21-28
ACCOMPLISHES THIS.

III. PAUL'S PURPOSE TO GO TO JERUSALEM FULFILLED, Acts 21:1-16.

Once again the historian picks up the narrative and traces the line of events in Paul's journey from Miletus to Jerusalem by ship via Cos, Rhodes, Patara, Phoenicia and Tyre, Ptolemais and Caesarea, visiting brethren as they found them along the way. Periodically Luke tells us that prophets warned Paul saying that bonds and afflictions awaited him at Jerusalem (20:22-23; 21:10-11), but he steadfastly proceeded on to the great city and lodged there with Mnason, an early disciple.

What shall we say that we are to learn from this portion of the text? Courage? Faith? Resolve? Perhaps the best thing we can learn is that Luke recorded this trip because it took place! It provides the connecting links in time and space from one theatre of operations in the ever-expanding kingdom of God to another.

CONCLUSION:

The New Testament is not a handbook of rules. It is not a mere list of do's and don'ts. It is not the philosophy of men who have tried to find some workable formula as a life principle. Its epistles were called out at different times to answer specific needs at specific places as was the book of Acts. In these productions the true doctrines for the church emerge and we are able to both see and practice them. The setting is historical and therefore verifiable.

What half-smart forger would tie his literary invention to so many known people and places only a little while after the events happened, and then allow his forgery to be distributed among the very people among whom these events were supposed to have taken place? The only answer which is reasonable is that these events as recorded in the history book called Acts are not forgeries, but actually did take place. Luke may well have had tongue in cheek as he recorded with precision the events of his two volumes, and against the unbelievers of his day threw them a challenge — Here are the facts; check them out for yourselves!

Christianity is built on fact, not fiction. Thank God for the way the Bible is written.

THE JOURNEY TO ROME AND

19: 21 — Paul DESIRES & ANTICIPATES A TRIP TO ROME
20: 22-23 — H.S. TESTIFIES TO PAUL'S AFFLICTIONS AGAINST HIM IN JERUSALEM
21: 10, 11 — AGABUS ATTESTS PAUL'S ARREST IN JERUSALEM
23: 11 — GOD AFFIRMS THE JOURNEY TO ROME.

THAT THE GOSPEL BE PREACHED TO ALL THE WORLD.

ACTS
LESSON FOURTEEN
PURPOSE AND PROVIDENCE (I)
Deliverance at Jerusalem
(Acts 19:21-23:35)

The original statement of Paul's purpose to go to Jerusalem and then on to Rome for the gospel's sake is recorded in Acts 19:21. The rest of Acts from this point reveals the providential fulfillment of this purpose.

I. DEFINING PURPOSE AND PROVIDENCE

Providence signifies that preparation, care and supervision which are required to secure a desired future result. The word is used but once in our English Bible where Tertullus, the Jewish orator says to Felix, "That by thy providence evils are corrected for this nation" (Acts 24:2). This takes it for granted that human beings have to a greater or lesser degree a control over the forces about them to bring about a desired end. "The doctrine of Divine providence, therefore, has reference to that preservation, care and government which God exercises over all things that He has created, in order that they may accomplish the ends for which they were created" (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vol. IV, P. 2476).

God's purposes in the earth are thus not separated from his overruling providence. (See Matt. 28:18-20.) He dramatically illustrates this through faithful Paul to the end of the book of Acts.

II. PAUL'S REQUEST OF THE ROMAN BRETHREN, Rom. 15:30-32

Paul's fourfold prayer request is seen fulfilled to the letter in the book of Acts. This particular lesson shows the providential fulfillment of the first half of Paul's purpose, which was to go to Jerusalem to preach the gospel, and also the providential fulfillment of the first portion of Paul's request that the Roman Christians pray for his deliverance from disobedient Jews in Judea.

III. PROVIDENCE AT JERUSALEM, Acts 21:17-23:35

Only a week after Paul arrived in Jerusalem his life was threatened three times. In each case God delivered him and Paul's prayer request was answered. But Acts reveals how that deliverance took place and the servants God used to accomplish it.

A. Seized In The Temple, Acts 21:17-22:29. Delivered From The Jews The First Time.

1. The Occasion, 21:17-26, In the temple.
2. The Jews' Reaction, 21:27-30. Attempted to kill him.
3. Paul Rescued, 21:31-36. By the Roman Tribune.

In all this prayer is answered and God's providential overruling is observed. Also this formed the first occasion Paul had to preach Christ to these Jewish people (21:37-22:21). Would they have listened otherwise?

B. Dissension In The Council, Acts 22:30-23:10. Delivered From The Jews The Second Time.

1. The Occasion, 22:30.
2. Paul's Defense, 23:1-6.
3. Reaction and rescue, 23:7-10.

C. A Plot To Kill Paul, Acts 23:12-35. Delivered from the Jews the Third Time.

1. The Plot Against Him, 12-15.
2. God's Deliverance, 16-35.
 - a. Through Paul's nephew, 16-21.

- b. Through Claudius Lysias and 470 Roman soldiers, 22-30.
- c. Through Felix the governor, 31-35.

CONCLUSION: Paul's purpose to preach Christ at Jerusalem had been fulfilled—not miraculously—but providentially. Also, his request at the hand of the Roman Christians that God would deliver him from those that were disobedient at Jerusalem was also fulfilled. Thus God clearly illustrates how any Christian who will fit himself into God's purpose shall find himself caught up in the providential workings of God.

God's Providence in our lives is a book which like some languages can only be read backwards, and then only by Bible believers. We are not left to speculate whether Christ interferes and overrules in the Christian's life. That is a matter of biblical doctrine, and of historical record.

hms 8:28ff

ACTS LESSON FIFTEEN

PURPOSE AND PROVIDENCE (2)

Paul's Deliverance In Caesarea

(Acts Chs. 24-26)

Paul's purpose to go to Jerusalem and then on to Rome (Acts 19:21) has been providentially fulfilled as far as Jerusalem. Three attempts to kill him have been thwarted and Paul has been removed for safe-keeping and judgment at the hand of the Roman provincial governor Felix at Caesarea.

This lesson seeks to bring to light the providential workings of the Lord in the life of Paul at Caesarea to preserve him alive and to fulfill his purpose to preach Christ at Rome.

I. CHRIST PROMISED DELIVERANCE

Christ originally promised to Paul that he would be delivered from the very people to whom he was sent to preach (Acts 26:15-18). Years later Paul acknowledged that that good providence was the very reason why he stood before the king Agrippa (Acts 26:22).

II. PROVIDENCE AMONG KINGS, Acts chs. 24-26.

Christ earlier announced prior to Paul's conversion that his purpose for Paul was to stand before kings and preach (Acts 9:15). It was the providence of the Lord interwoven into the hectic affairs of state and the life of Paul for his two years in bonds at Caesarea which we observe was responsible for keeping Paul alive and working out his purpose to go to Rome.

Notice with care the events which transpired among rulers which finally resulted in the Roman decision to send Paul to Rome.

A. Paul and Felix, Acts 24:1-27

After the Jews' effort to indict Paul of insurrection (2-9), and Paul's own defense against the charges were made (9-21), attention is revealingly focused upon the character of governor Felix (22-27). Notice he had "more exact knowledge concerning the way" (22) and thus knew that Christianity and Paul were not seditious. Verse 23 further reveals Felix's knowledge of Paul's innocence of the charges brought against him.

The real character of Felix is revealed in verses 26-27. William Ramsay tells us that bribery was commonplace among Roman officials, and thus it is apparent that bribery would have set Paul at liberty. When Porcius Festus succeeded Felix, Felix "desiring to gain favor with the Jews . . . left Paul in bonds."

It seems apparent that Felix could have released Paul quite easily but for reasons of his own did not.

B. Paul and Festus, Acts 25:1-12.

With the coming in of a new governor the Jews renewed their attempt to kill Paul (1-3). However, Festus, unknowingly, refused the Jew's request and once again their plot was spoiled (4-5). But Festus also desiring to gain favor with the Jews (9) asked Paul if he would "go up to Jerusalem and there be judged?" But Paul, seeing through this political hanky panky, refused the governor's suggestion, and further realizing the new governor's real motive to be received by the people he was to govern at Paul's expense, he exercised his right as a Roman citizen and appealed for the emperor to decide his case (10-11). To this Festus agreed (12).

Thus the turn of events (at God's control) was that Paul's purpose to go to Rome was to be fulfilled at the hand of God's servant—the Roman government. Truly "there is no power but of God—for he is a minister of God to thee" (Rom. 13:1, 4).

C. Paul and Agrippa, Acts 25:13 – 26:32.

When King Agrippa came to Caesarea, Festus reviewed Paul's case before him. Agrippa showed interest in the matter and arrangements were made for Agrippa to examine Paul (25:13-27). Paul's

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defence revealed that the Jews' real agitation against Paul was religious jealousy and that he was not guilty of their trumped-up charges against him. At this "Agrippa said to Festus, this man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar" (26:32).

This possibility of having been set at liberty is not to be viewed as disheartening.

CONCLUSION:

We do not believe that Paul anticipated any more than any other human being the forces which the Lord combined to bring his purpose to go to Rome to a reality. The Lord's providence to facilitate His grand purpose to preach the gospel is much a part of the history which Luke records. He illustrates the interweavings of providence to accomplish the divine purpose in Paul's adventurous life and by that history encourages us.

Let us consider the events and causes which only God could foreknow and ^{use} manipulate to fulfill His own grand purpose in Paul:

1. Felix could have released Paul but wanted a bribe as the price. Also, his personal reasons for leaving Paul in bonds when at the end of two years he could have released him was due to his political desires to gain favor with the Jewish people. This would look good on his record.
2. Festus' own politics with the Jews caused him to defer to them at Paul's expense. But it was this act of injustice which prompted Paul to appeal unto Caesar.

Thus although Paul may have been set at liberty had he not appealed unto Caesar, he would have surely been killed by the Jews following his release. Consequently, we are intentionally educated by the Word that even prison bonds, avarice, evil political motives and hatred can be and are used by God to fulfill his great purpose among those who will fit into his plans by faith.

This confidence in Christ's pledge to deliver him from evil to accomplish God's gospel purpose was one of Paul's great motivations to obey the Lord (Acts 26:19).

Obedience cannot be from the heart without trusting faith in the reality of Christ's promise to be with us, "even unto the end of the world." We are not alone!

26 Paul Defence 23
Reaction of Agrippa

ACTS
LESSON SIXTEEN

PURPOSE AND PROVIDENCE (3)
THE VOYAGE TO ROME
(Acts Chs. 27-28)

Luke's exciting history reveals to Christians that Paul's intense desire and purpose to go to Rome was brought about through a series of events which in retrospect can only be attributed to divine providence. While Paul prayed to go to Rome (Rom. 1:9-12) and requested others to pray the same (Rom. 15:30-32), God was working out the ways and means to consummate the matter, the hinderances of the adversary notwithstanding (Rom. 1:13).

As seen in lessons fourteen and fifteen covering the period from Acts 21:27 to 26:32, God overruled in the puny affairs of Jews and Gentiles to send His preacher, not merely to Rome, but to the Roman emperor himself! He even turned the ill winds of hell's fury to fill the sails of the ship that carried Paul to Rome.

The last two chapters of this great history reveal the dramatic acts of Satan at cross purposes with God to kill Paul and how God used every effort of the devil against him to deliver his messenger safely to his destination.

I. THE VOYAGE TO ROME, Acts 27:1-28:15

This drama seems to fall into three divisions:

A. The First Voyage By Sea, 27:1-44

In this section Paul's four-fold prophecy (22-26) and its fulfillment coupled with his good conduct cast him into a good light in which to stand before the emperor.

B. On the Island of Melita (Present-day Malta), 28:1-10

C. The Second Voyage By Sea, 28:11-15

After their shipwreck they stayed three months on the island until they boarded an Egyptian vessel which carried them on to the capitol. Luke's "and so we came to Rome (14) grows out of all the events that transpired from the beginning of their journey. In other words, Luke affirms that these events as he recorded them were true. They were the "acts" of men and God caught up in the history which God and Christians can do more to shape than armies of aliens.

II. PURPOSES FULFILLED AND PRAYERS ANSWERED, Acts 28:16-30

Paul's desire to preach Christ at Rome (Acts 19:21; Rom. 1:13-15), Christ's purpose for him to testify at Rome (Acts 23:11; 27:23-24), and the prayers of the church at Rome for Paul to come unto them in joy. "Through the will of God" and with them to find rest (Rom. 15:30-32) was fulfilled in God's own good time, and in His own way, and by His own providential means. We see this dramatically spelled out in the following two parts:

A. Paul Preaches To The Chief Men Of The Jews At Rome, 16-28

B. He Finds Rest Among His Brethren, 30-31

Though a prisoner Paul was not in jail, and though guarded by Roman soldiers he dwelt in his own hired house, received all that wanted to visit him, and without hindrance preached and taught Christ "two whole years."

This phrase "two whole years" would announce to the Roman official Theophilus a victory for Paul and the gospel. Sir William Ramsay tells us that under Claudius it became Roman law that if within the space of two years accusers did not present their case against the prisoner, that he was to be vindicated of all charges and set free. Thus Acts ends in triumph with Paul free to renew his purposes in the Spirit and go on to preach Christ in Spain (Rom. 15:22-29). Church history from the second century is strong that Paul went on to Spain. Of this we know for certain, that Paul purposed to go there, and if God wanted him to, that no force from hell or on earth could prevent it.

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CONCLUSION:

God's providential government of his world is still operative today, and for the same grand purpose—WORLD EVANGELISM. Paul left to himself on his own human power may have even arrived at Rome and preached Christ there. But with God's handling of the affairs, he was enabled to stand before Caesar himself. Could such a thing have come about in the course of human events without "bonds and afflictions" at the hand of unbelievers? (Acts 20:22-23; 21:10-14)

Without faith to trust Christ's promise ever to be with us to herald his glad tidings (Matt. 28:18-20), we will rebel against God's providential workings and perhaps even spoil the plans. THEREFORE, LET GO AND LET GOD.

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life? God is real. Christ is alive and on the throne. He is King of kings and rules all nations with an authoritative hand. This teaches me the five P's of Christianity:

1. GOD'S PURPOSE - to save men from sin.
2. GOD'S PREACHER - to carry the message.
3. GOD'S PROVIDENCE - the human and divine working together to fulfill the purpose.
4. POWER - from God for preaching.
5. PEACE OF MIND - the result.

Truly all things work together for good for them that love the Lord.

Believest thou these things?

ACTS
LESSON SEVENTEEN
THE HOPE OF ISRAEL
(Acts 26:6-7)

Paul standing before Agrippa presents the real reason for having been held in bonds for two years. Originally he was seized by the Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 21:27-32), and later charged by the Jews as an insurrectionist (Acts 24:5-6). But the real reason for his bondage, Paul says, was due to what he preached.

And now I stand here to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day hope to attain. And concerning this hope I am accused by the Jews, O King! (Acts 26:6-7)

There are certain questions relating to the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and God's dealings with the Jewish people which Paul's defence answers. The answer to these questions are considered in this lesson.

I. WHAT IS THE HOPE OF ISRAEL?

Paul speaks of "the hope of Israel" in Acts 26:6-7 and 28:20.

A. The Messianic Hope

Old Testament prophets predicted the coming of Messiah and his glorious reign; e.g. Isa. 9:6-7; Jer. 23:5-8; 33:14-26; Micah 5:2-5. Such prophecies produced a hope for the Jews of a brighter, better day. Thus it was called the Messianic hope, or the hope of Israel.

B. The Jewish Concept Was Nationalistic. Cf. Matt. 11:11-12; 16:21-23; 20:20-21; Jno. 6:15 etc. All Jews conceived of the kingdom of prophecy as nationalistically Jewish. Even the apostles prior to Pentecost. See Acts 1:6.

C. Paul Stated That The Hope of Israel Was Fulfilled In The Gospel. Cf. Acts 26:6-7; 28:20. Paul makes it clear that he was in bonds "because of the hope of Israel." Yet he was in bonds for preaching the gospel. Therefore, Paul equates the gospel with the hope of Israel. The gospel is what the prophets foretold would come.

D. The Promise Made To The Fathers in Gen. 12:3 and 22:18. Paul declares this promise is fulfilled in Christ (Gal. 3:16) and justification (Gal. 3:8).

II. WHAT OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES ARE YET TO BE FULFILLED?

A. Jesus Said All Old Testament Messianic Prophecy is Fulfilled in His Work of Redemption. Lk. 24:44-47

B. Peter Said All Old Testament Messianic Prophecy Fulfilled in Salvation from Sin. Acts 3:18-19; 1 Pet. 1:10-12

C. Paul Said All Old Testament Messianic Prophecy Fulfilled in the Gospel. Acts 26:22-23

D. Jesus Stated that with the Destruction of Jerusalem All Old Testament Prophecy was Fulfilled. Lk. 21:22

III. WHAT DOES GOD HAVE FOR THE JEW TODAY?

What is the hope of Israel which the Old Testament foretold?

A. Paul Said it was Fulfilled in What He Preached – The Gospel of Christ. Acts 26:6-7; 28:20

B. Peter Said the Abrahamic Promise (the promise which produced hope) was Fulfilled in Remission of Sins. Acts 3:25-26

- C. **God Has the Same Thing For the Jew That He Does for The Gentile.** Eph. 3:6.
Both Jews and Gentiles can partake of the hope of the promise "through the gospel."

IV. **WHO IS ISRAEL TODAY?**

Who are God's chosen people? Only the Jews?

- A. **The New Covenant Was To Be Made With His People Whom He Called "Israel"**
"My People," Jer. 31:31-34. Forgiveness of sins was to be given to Israel, to "His people."
But Jesus died to forgive "His people" (Matt. 1:21). He died to give us a New Covenant for remission of sins (Matt. 26:28). Therefore, all who have their sins forgiven are "His people."
If only Jews are His people then Gentiles cannot now be saved!
- B. **The Church Is God's Israel.** Cf. Rom. 2:28-29; 9:6-8; Gal. 6:14-16; Phil. 3:3. See 1 Cor. 12:2 which states in essence, or by inference, that these Corinthians were Jews spiritually speaking.

CONCLUSION:

- A. A position which yet believes that Old Testament prophecy is to be fulfilled some time in the future for a thousand years on this earth and that God has something for the Jews beyond what he has provided in the gospel has the following implications:
1. That Jesus, Peter, and Paul are wrong when they state that prophecy has been fulfilled in the gospel dispensation.
 2. That Jesus has something to do he has not yet done, thus stating in effect that his first mission was a failure. Cf. Mk. 1:14-15; Matt. 5:17.
- B. Inasmuch as the hope of Israel is fulfilled in redemption from sin, and inasmuch as ALL Old Testament prophecy has been fulfilled, we conclude that what God has for the Jew is exactly what he has for Gentiles – Salvation from sin and the hope of eternal life through the gospel of Jesus Christ. This and nothing more is the hope of Israel for today and for all time.
- Paul said there is only one hope (Eph. 4:4). That hope is the hope of eternal life through the gospel of Christ.

ACTS
LESSON EIGHTEEN
PAUL'S MANNER OF LIFE
AN EVIDENCE FOR THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

The 26th chapter of Acts abounds in the power of apologetics as few chapters in the Bible do. Paul before Agrippa the king and an august assembly of Roman nobility addresses himself to the historical and verifiable evidence for the genuineness of the Christian religion. He begins his defense (for Christianity) by calling attention to his "manner of life" from a youth to the time of his conversion, and paints a picture of his anti-Christian personality and the severity to which it extended against Christians.

The real force of his argument is this: his furious zeal against Christianity was such that it was impossible for any human to win Saul of Tarsus to Christ. Therefore, his drastic change from persecuting the church to preaching Christ could only have been effected by some dynamic greater than man could have exercised.

The material in this chapter might best be viewed by developing it within the framework of Paul's argument in Galatians 1:11-14: In Galatians 1:11-12 the apostle Paul claims that he received his gospel directly by revelation from Jesus Christ and not at the hand of any human teacher. Then in the remainder of the next two chapters he sets forth historical evidence for proof of his claim. Inherent in this apostolic argument is evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. For it is a matter of history that Jesus of Nazareth was crucified before Paul was converted to Christianity. If, then, the evidence is convincing that Paul received his gospel from Jesus after he was crucified, it is conclusive that Jesus had to have been raised from dead in order to reveal it to him. The following is the historical evidence from Paul:

I. MY MANNER OF LIFE IN TIME PAST, Gal. 1:13-14

A. "Persecuted the Church Beyond Measure"

Paul offers this part of his past life as a proof that he received his gospel directly from Jesus. The key is in the phrase "beyond measure;" his persecution of the church of Christ prior to conversion was evidently fierce. Luke, the historian, records for us the information which was common knowledge to the people in Paul's day, which explains the meaning of "beyond measure."

Read Acts 7:58; 8:1, 3; 9:1-2, 21; 22:4; 26:9-13. In this record of the history of Paul's manner of life before he became a Christian emerges a picture of a persecutor so fierce that we can only see him as a fanatic. The question is, how do you deal with a fanatic? You simply cannot. No Christian could have converted Saul to Christ! No Jew would have inasmuch as Saul was their hero. Who then? Paul says it was Christ! But Christ was crucified. The only conclusion is, Christ Jesus was raised from the dead.

B. "Advanced In The Jews' Religion"

There were at least three areas in which Paul advanced as a Jew: in scholarship, having studied at the feet of the greatest rabbi at the time—Gamaliel (Acts 22:3); he advanced socially, and in power to such extent that he held the very lives of many in the church in his hands. Saul of Tarsus was a success—he had arrived.

What ulterior motive could brilliant young Saul of Tarsus have possibly had for becoming a Christian? The Christians could offer him nothing but loss of all his standing and accomplishment. Only Jesus could have provided the dynamic to change him. Therefore Jesus was raised from the dead.

C. "Exceedingly Zealous For The Traditions Of My Fathers"

His fathers were his pharisaical fathers. The traditions were their interpretations of the law of Moses. The Pharisees are famed for their conflict with Jesus. It was their concept of the

law which blinded them to what Jesus was teaching. Saul of Tarsus was a Pharisee (Phil. 3:5) who knew the law but was prejudiced against its true meaning. He was exceedingly zealous for Phariseism to the point of a certain **prejudice**.

CONCLUSION: How does one convert a prejudiced, successful fanatic? Humans cannot! But Saul of Tarsus was changed. He became a Christian and said that Jesus converted him. On the basis of the fact this cannot be easily denied. But since Jesus was crucified earlier, therefore he would have to have been raised from the grave to convert Saul.

II. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT THE CHANGE IN SAUL OF TARSUS

A. Was There Actually An Historical Saul of Tarsus who became a Christian and the apostle to the Gentiles? The answer to this lies in the following facts:

1. **PAUL'S LETTERS!** There are thirteen epistles which bear his name. Someone had to write those letters! They have been received as genuine from the time he wrote them.
2. **HISTORIANS** have never doubted the historicity of Paul the apostle as recorded in Acts and as portrayed in his own letter. We can be as certain of Paul's existence, of his former life among the Jews, of his severe persecutions, of his conversion to Christianity, and of his zeal for Christ as we can be of any events in antiquity.

B. Was There An Ulterior Motive?

Could Paul have become a Christian for reasons other than the ones he gave? To determine this we must investigate the area which would so motivate men to make such drastic change from what Saul of Tarsus was to what he became—and then lie about it!

1. **WEALTH—MONEY?** He had this from the temple treasury while with the Jews, but left it for the poverty of Christianity. Cf. Acts 20:33-34; 1 Cor. 4:11-12.
2. **REPUTATION?** He had a reputation which was heard among kings (Acts 26:24) and became "a fool for Christ" (1 Cor. 4:10, 13).
3. **PASSION?** His moral integrity was above reproach both among Jews and Christians. No one has ever attempted to cast a stain against his pure character.
4. **POWER?** He had it with the Jews (Acts 26:10-12) and left it for the love of Christ.

CONCLUSION: No ulterior motive can be discovered against Paul. Therefore, we must conclude that when Saul of Tarsus changed religious horses in the middle of the stream, he was **absolutely sincere**.

C. Was He Deceived? Many are sincere but deceived. Could this have been the case? The question which must be answered is, who deceived him? Friends or enemies? Friends (the Jews) wouldn't! He was their champion. Enemies (the Christians)—he would have cast them in jail in unreasonable, fanatic zeal. He was NOT deceived. There is only one alternative if Jesus did not actually effect the change himself —

D. Was Paul Mad? This was the indictment of Festus (Acts 26:24). Was he indeed beside himself—mad—crazy? Some modernists, inasmuch as the historical documentary from the New Testament is so overwhelmingly factual that Saul of Tarsus did change from persecutor to preacher, have attempted to explain such phenomenon in psychological terms. In other words, they say Paul was so intense in his efforts, yet conscience stricken for his terrible deeds to Christians that he became depressed, and while on the road to Damascus he experienced too much heat and such combination of forces working on his fevered imagination caused him to "think" he saw Jesus! But this is contrary to the historical facts as recorded. Paul was NOT depressed but was sincere and was doing what he "thought he ought" to be doing (Acts 26:9).

It is also contrary to reasonable consistency to accept the New Testament account of Paul's former life, etc., only to reject the same New Testament account of the cause for such

a change. That manifests a count of prejudice based on presupposition which no amount of evidence can alter.

Also, to think Paul was mad or in any way mentally unsound is simply a failure to sound thinking. Read Paul's epistles. Only a mad man would accuse such an author who manifests such logic as being mad! Paul was not mad.

CONCLUSION: There is but one conclusion. Saul of Tarsus met Jesus on the road to Damascus! And Jesus, at Damascus in the house of Judas on the street called Straight, he revealed to him the truth of the gospel. But for Jesus, who was killed at Calvary, to have appeared to Saul of Tarsus, he HAD to have been raised from the dead!

What other alternative can be given in light of these historically documented facts? It is therefore reasonable to believe in Jesus as the resurrected Son of God and Saviour of the world!

Paul's "I am not mad, most excellent Festus; but speak forth words of truth and soberness" (Acts 26:25) needed no miracle to confirm. For as he explained, "this hath not been done in a corner" (Acts 26:26). Paul's manner of life was then an open book; a much-publicized fact as verse 24 indicates (for how else would Festus know of Paul's scholarship?).

We are indebted to Luke for his accurate recording of the matter and our consequent ability to verify Paul's story in the verifiable context of history. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gifts of Christ – and Acts.

ACTS 2

INTRODUCTION:

1. Christianity with its promise of **abundant life** and **hope of eternal life**, rests squarely upon the sacrificial death and triumphant resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - a. The apostle Paul stresses that the heart of his message is "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 1:17; 2:2).
 - b. He adds later in the Corinthian letter that hope is grounded in the bodily resurrection of Jesus (1 Cor. 15).
 - c. In the Roman letter, Paul refers to this message as "gospel" or **good news of salvation**.
 2. The FOUR GOSPELS beautifully picture the sinless life and victorious death and resurrection of Jesus.
 3. The BOOK OF ACTS then describes the offer of salvation of the resurrected Lord through the apostles' preaching.
 - a. The Gospels conclude with the commission of Jesus to His apostles to "preach the gospel to the whole creation..."
 - b. Acts records the work of the apostles in carrying out that commission. IT IS THE FIRST OFFER OF THAT SALVATION IN ACTS 2 that we will examine this morning. Our focus will center upon the promise found in the Old Testament of the resurrection of Jesus.
- I. THE SETTING FOR THE SERMON IS FOUND IN ACTS 2:1-21.
(Jesus empowers the apostles to offer salvation to man through the preaching of that good news, 2:1-21).
- II. THE SERMON BEGINS IN ACTS 2:22-.
- A. Jesus of Nazareth, crucified and resurrected, is to be the focus of their faith, 2:22-24.
 - B. Peter then proceeds to establish the resurrection of Jesus in order that they may believe.
 1. Peter first appeals to the evidence of promise and prophecy. He quotes David's prophecy of Jesus' resurrection, Ps. 16; 2:25-28.
 2. Peter then, by inspiration, gives his apostolic understanding and interpretation of that prediction or prophecy. 2:29-31 (QUOTE)
 - a. Peter calls David a **prophet**.
 - b. Peter points out that **God swore with an oath to him (David)** ... This is a reference to a promise God made to David in 2 Sam. 7:11-16 in which God promised David that His heir,

offspring or seed would establish a kingdom eternal in its nature.

- c. Peter then says in Acts 2:31 "**He (David) seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ.**"
- C. The apostle's conclusion is that Jesus is both "**Lord and Christ**", 2:36, in whom you must call through faith and obedience to be saved, 2:21.
- D. The people then respond, 2:37-38, and are added by the Lord to His church, the Kingdom of Old Test. prophecy.

ACTS 7 SERMON

INTRODUCTION:

1. Gospels describe the life and work of Jesus in preparation for the establishment of the church, coming of kingdom.
 - A. "I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). Kingdom at hand (Matt. 4:17). (Acts 20:28 and Col. 1:13-14 reveal that church or kingdom exists because of the death of Christ and is composed of all cleansed by that blood).
2. Acts describes the establishment and growth of the Lord's church or the spread of His kingdom.
 - A. Acts composed of sermons and ministry of apostles and coworkers in preaching gospel and spreading church-king.
 - B. WE ARE LOOKING AT SERMONS WHICH REFLECT....

I. IN SERMON OF ACTS 2 we have seen:

- A. First occasion of preaching of resurrected Lord.
 1. Gospel defined in 1 Cor. 15 as D-B-R (15:1-4).
 2. Core of what Peter preached (Acts 2:22-).
 3. People who heard, believed, repented and were baptized were saved or added to the church

II. SERMON OF ACTS 7

- A. Appears wholly different from Acts 2--reason being the occasion and audience was different.
- B. Peter was preaching to partially receptive audience; Stephen to completely hostile crowd. HIS SERMON CONTAINS A DIVINE SUMMARY OF OT MESSAGE AND THEME, illustrated by key individuals and events:
 1. **Abraham** (*became father of Jewish or Israelite nation*)--went into far country. Canaan, which was promised as inheritance for Abraham and his descendants (1-8).
 2. **Joseph**--sold into captivity in Egypt, prelude to bondage under Pharaoh (9-18).
 3. **Moses** became God's deliverer from Egyptian captivity (19-36).
 - a. As part of his ministry, Moses **predicted coming and authority of Messiah, Christ** (37, Deut. 18).
 - b. Stephen picks up this **Messianic** theme as well as that of the **Jews disobedience** both in the OT & NT.
 - 1) Is. disobedience of Moses and prop (39-52).
 - 2) Is. rejection of Jesus (52), and of the preacher, Stephen (54-59).
- C. Outcome and result of Stephen's sermon in contrast to Peter's in Acts 2.

1. "Those that gladly received Peter's words were baptized...and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:41, 47).
2. "When they heard these things...stopped their ears" (54, 57-59). REFUSED TO BELIEVE, REPENT AND BE BAPTIZED!
3. Had Stephen been able to complete his sermon about Jesus, the teachings and commands would have been same as Peter's.
 - a. Stephen had believed and obeyed same message.
 - b. He was guided by same Spirit (6:8) in preaching.
 - c. SAME SP, MESSAGE; DIFFERENT HEART AND RESPONSE!

ACTS 8 SERMON

INTRODUCTION:

1. Acts 1:1-8 sets the stage for birth and growth of body, church!
2. Acts chapter 2 apostolic witness or BIRTHDAY church-kingdom!
In our previous lessons, we have seen:
 - a. Theme of Peter's sermon in Acts 2 D-B-R accord to OT!
 - b. Stephen's sermon in Acts 7 likewise focuses on Jesus both as pictured in prophecy and revealed in fulfillment. The difference in the two is that Stephen is answering a charge of heresy against him (6:11-15) and his defense consists of a historical survey of Israel's history both pointing to and culminating in Jesus.
 - c. Today study sermon of Philip in Acts 8:26-39.

I. THE SETTING OF THE SERMON.

- A. Two men are vitally involved, the preacher Philip and the seeker, the Ethiopian treasurer.
- B. The treasurer, already having some understanding and connection with the God of the Jews, is reading from the Old Testament scripture desiring a greater understanding of the message of the prophets. HE IS OPEN TO GOD!
- C. Philip is led by the Spirit (8:26, 29) to teach this seeker what he needs to know to be saved to be in a right relationship with God.
 1. Philip heard him reading Isaiah and asks, "**Do you understand...?**" Plus interest, first step to SAL!
 2. The treasurer answers "**How can I without guidance?**"
 3. Philip sits with him in chariot and begins to **teach!**

II. THE SERMON

- A. The text, the scripture 8:32-33--Isaiah 53. "**Who is this talking about?**" the treasurer asked Philip.
- B. The **interpretation or explanation**, 8:35-38.
 1. **Jesus**--He is the Sheep, the Lamb, the One humiliated whose life is taken.
 - a. The **death and resurrection** of Jesus as well as the **preaching of the gospel** (and thus est. of church-kingdom) is THE Messianic message of the Old Testament (Luke 24:44-47). And Isa. 53 can be thought of as the mountain peak of Mess. prop!

b. It is this theme that Peter and Stephen preached.

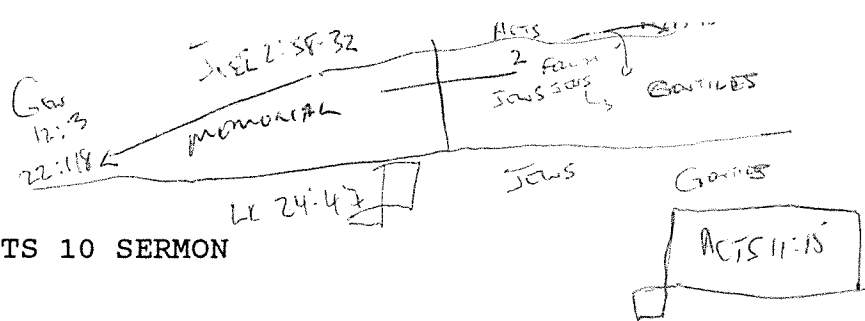
2. **Baptism.**

a. How and why did the preacher get from Jesus to baptism?

b. Answer:

1. Philip, directed by the same Spirit, commands obedience in water baptism as Peter had done and as Stephen would have done had his sermon not been cut short.
2. All -- inspired preachers of the first century and preachers of that inspired word today-- act under the same commission, Matt. 28-18-20!
3. And baptism is the Lord's plan of salvation which beautifully corresponds to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (Rom. 6:3-5).

ACTS 10 SERMON



INTRODUCTION:

1. Religion means "to bind back." The Christian religion thus is "to bind man back to God."
2. That religion (like any movement, pol, social, etc.) had a beginning. While **planned before the world began** (Eph. 1, Acts 2:23) and **predicted by the prophets**, Christianity nevertheless had a **beginning** that is documented and confirmed. THE BOOK OF ACTS REVEALS BEGINNING OF CHRISTIANITY.
 - a. "This is that spoken by prophet Joel" (2:16-)
 - b. "H.S. fell on them...at the beginning" (11:15).
 - c. "rep. and rem. of sins preached...beginning at Jer" Lk 24:47
3. Sermon of Acts 2 specifically records the BEGINNING of:
 - a. Preaching of gospel of **res. Lord** as ACCOMPLISHED FACT! Note: Gos. of king. had been preached in prospect.
 - b. Church a **reality** which Jesus PROMISED to build (Mt. 16:18) of the **presence** of the kingdom which in prospect.
4. Begin. of ch-king. (though 1st composed of Jews and Gen. who embraced the Jew. rel, 2:10) was never intended to remain strictly a Jewish church (2:39, Eph. 2:13-19).
5. Sermon of Acts 10 gives an account of the beginning of the church **among the Gentiles or non-Jewish people**.

TEXT: Acts church. 10.

I. NO SUBSTITUTE FOR OBEDIENCE TO GOSPEL.

- A. Cornelius a devout, religious. man.
 1. Pious (God-fearing). Devout
 2. Prayerful.
 3. Benevolent, generous.
 4. Influential among the Jews.
- B. Can be a good man and not be saved...

Good Laws of
Sadducees
No Law
Obedience

II. MUST HEAR WORDS BY WHICH HE CAN BE SAVED (10:6, 11:14).

- A. To hear these words God **prepared Cornelius by a vision**--SEND FOR PETER (10:1-6).
 1. Cornelius obeys (10:7-).
 2. When Peter arrives, Cornelius receptive audience (24,33).
- B. To speak these words, God **prepared Peter by a vision**--GO TO CORNELIUS (10:7-33). To remove Jewish bias, 10:28.

III. WORDS OF SERMON (10:34-43).

- A. God not partial, no favorites, welcomes ALL:
 1. Who fear Him.
 2. Who work righteousness (Acts 2:40; Phil. 2:12).

- B. Good news which Peter preaches outlines the primary truths of the gospel found throughout the sermons in Acts.
 - 1. Lordship of Jesus.
 - 2. Ministry of help and healing.
 - 3. Death and resurrection.
 - 4. Jesus as Judge.
 - 5. Jesus as Savior.
- C. The **apostles witnessed** these things and **preached as Jesus commanded them**.
 - 1. Their preaching was IN KEEPING WITH THE COMMISSION OF JESUS (Matt. 28:18-20).
 - 2. Their preaching was WHAT THE PROPHETS PREDICTED.

IV. A DIVINE INTERLUDE (10:44-46).

- A. "While Peter yet spake, the Holy Spirit fell..."
- B. By comparing the description of these extraordinary events in Acts 10 with the explanation of them by Peter in Acts 11 and Acts 15:7-11, we can understand that God was **"bearing witness"** to Peter and the Jews that there was **"no distinction"** among men and that **"God had also granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life."**

V. CONCLUSION OF SERMON, 46b-48.

- A. The sermon was interrupted. "While Peter was speaking these words..." During the course of preaching, Peter's sermon is interrupted...
- B. Peter comes back to the sermon and preaches the same thing as he did on Pentecost, thus showing there are NO EXCEPTIONS TO OBEDIENCE TO THE GOSPEL!
 - 1. Peter had stated before the interruption" ... **through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive** remission of sins." (11:17, 15:7,9).
 - 2. Afterward, he asked, **"Can any forbid water...and he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord."**
 - 3. This corresponds with what Jesus said in commanding the apostles to preach!

ACTS 17 SERMON

INTRODUCTION:

1. Salvation is for all the world (G.C.), 10:34-35.
2. God wants those rel. attuned (who have because of birth, upbringing and other cultural factor had an opportunity to...) to HEAR, and God wants those who have never heard of Christ and may in fact be influenced by a pagan society to HEAR!
3. Acts records preaching both to those who have contact, and even belief, in Jehovah God and those who don't.
 - A. Peter's sermon in Acts 2 was to **"devout men.."** who were Jews (2:5), in fact this sermon to Cornelius, the Gentile, was likewise to a **"devout man"** (10:2).
 - B. Philip preached Christ to a man of a godly disposition, who had a love for and connection with the Jewish religion.
 - C. However, in Acts 17 we are confronted with an audience composed, not of believers, but of unbelievers (of idolaters).
 1. Yet God wanted these to hear just as religious people.
 2. And the same gospel truths or core message was necessary as illustrated in Acts 2,8,10.
 3. However, a different approach may be initially required to capture their **attention**, educate their **intellect**, stimulate their **emotion** and motivate their **will** in order that they may listen and obey the apostolic message. LOOK WITH ME TO ACTS 17:22-.

I. SETTING OF SERMON (17:16-21).

- A. In a city of **idolatry** Paul disputed (entered into debate and discussion) not only with the Jews and devout people, but also **"in the market daily with them that met with him"** (17:17). Included in this mixed audience were those who thought Paul a **babbler** and others who said, **"He seems to be a proclaimer of strange or foreign gods, BECAUSE HE PREACHED TO THEM JESUS AND THE RESURRECTION."** (17:18).
- B. Because of the **confusion** and the **curiosity** on the part of the people of Athens, Paul is given an opportunity to speak in what is often called his Sermon on Mars Hill (17:22-34).
 1. His sermon is an example of an appeal to external or extra-Biblical evidence for a personal, creator God.
 2. He leads his hearers from the ONE POWERFUL GOD OF CREATION to the PERSONAL GOD OF REDEMPTION REVEALED IN HIS SON JESUS CHRIST!

II. THE SERMON (17:22-39).

- A. To a city in which there were hundreds of false gods (idols), Paul preached about the authentic God who was unknown to them. Paul identifies this true God as:
 1. The CREATOR (17:24-26), **"who made the world..."** who needed nothing.
 2. The PERSONAL, CONCERNED REDEEMER (17:27-31) who sought the welfare, fellowship and salvation of his creation.
 - a. Man as **"His offspring"** was not to think of God as material, 28-29.
 - b. But rather as a spiritual but substantial being of attributes of...
- B. The holiness, justice and mercy of God is revealed through His son, Jesus Christ.
 1. It is at this point that Paul directly refers to Jesus, presenting truths which Paul had preached in other sermons and which Peter and other inspired **men** had delivered.
 - a. Jesus is the one whom God had **raised from the dead.**
 - b. Jesus is the **judge** as certified by His resurrection.
 - c. Jesus is the **savior**, the inference being that He will not only **judge** the impenitent, but **forgive** those who do repent.
 2. Whether before devout believers in one God or pagans who believed in many gods the message of salvation remained the same.
- C. The response (17:32-34).
 1. Some **mocked**, thus effectively removing themselves from God's reach, for they would no longer listen to testimony. The RESURRECTION was the stumbling block.
 2. Others said, **"We will hear thee again of this matter,"** indicating that a desire or at least curiosity still remained within them.
 3. However, some **believed...**
 - a. Belief is here used as a comprehensive term to indicate **an acceptance of testimony and an obedience from the heart.**
 - b. Therefore what Paul taught these believers they must do would be the same thing he taught all others (16:30-34). Likewise what Peter taught.
 - c. Paul's sermon which is climaxed by an **appeal for repentance or change of mind and life** would have commanded baptism as the act of obedience in faith moment when the Lord blots out or forgives the sin which had been repented of.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ACTION

PURPOSES OF ACTS:

We may read and not understand the real meaning of the text, that is, the original purpose. WHAT DID LUKE HAVE IN MIND? WHAT WAS HIS MESSAGE? We need to read that **their** situation was in the first century, then see what the message or lesson was to **them**, then apply it to **ourselves**.

We begin the study of the purpose of Acts by looking at the purpose of Luke's gospel. **Luke 1:1-4. Luke 1:1 -- these things really happened.** Luke is not an eye-witness, but he claims that he got his message from eye-witnesses. **They saw these things and were ministers of the word.** Luke makes a claim that he has carefully looked into these things, **researched or traced them out and made an orderly presentation.**

NOTE: To know the truth, to be properly, adequately informed is the **foundation of our religion.** There is a difference between being "informed" and "instructed." Does Theophilus have only general information or is he really instructed?

Luke 1--**promomion**--preface to a letter or book.
Acts 1--**pro-ekthesis**--statement made after the first book's introduction.

ACTS PICKS UP WHERE LUKE LEAVES OFF!

LUKE	ACTS
Luke 24:1ff 24:13ff, 24:36	Acts 1:3 "alive," "proofs" "being seen" (summarizes 24)
Luke 24:42	Acts 1:4 "meeting, assembled"
Luke 24:49 "wait in the city	Acts 1:4 "not depart from Jer."
Luke 24:49 I send the promise of my Father"	Acts 1:8 "wait for the promise of the Father"
Luke 24:49 "until endued with power from on high"	Acts 1:8 "ye shall receive power when the H.S. comes"
Luke 24:48 "ye are witnesses"	Acts 1:8 "Ye shall be my witnesses"
Luke 24:47 "all nations"	Acts 1:8 "Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, uttermost part of the earth"

Luke 24:51 "he was parted from them"

Acts 1:9 he was taken up"

Luke 24:50,52 "they returned to Jerusalem"

Acts 1:12 "they returned again to Jerusalem"

Luke 24:43

Acts 1:14 "all continued with one accord"

In both Luke 24 and Acts 1:

1. The ascension of Christ.
2. The fact the Spirit will come on the apostles.
3. The apostles as witnesses.
4. The world is the place witnesses are to go.
5. All is to begin at Jerusalem.

Acts 1 is a summary of Luke 24 and sets the stage for Acts 2. Luke states the PURPOSE in Luke 1:1-4 and then a RE-STATEMENT and SUMMARY in Acts 1:1-4.

THE PURPOSES OF ACTS:

1. **Historical.**

Luke takes several threads and weaves them into the historical fabric that reveals to us forces both **human** and **Divine** which have combined themselves together to produce the church of Christ or the Christian faith. THE BOOK OF ACTS IS INDISPENSABLE TO THOSE WHO SEARCH FOR PRINCIPLES IN ORDER TO REPRODUCE NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY TODAY--AND THAT IS WHAT RESTORATION IS ALL ABOUT!

From Acts we can see three things:

1. That Luke's writing is historically reliable.
2. The construction of New Testament books, and the location of the Book of Acts helps to reveal its purpose.
3. **Acts is a multi-purpose book.**

When we read Acts, we are reading **fact**, not fiction. Anything we know from the past (that is, before our time) is through **testimony of others, through what others have recorded in pictures, print, etc.** Example: The Civil War. Acts is written in the manner of sane and sober history and in a context where you can check it out. Acts records **time, place, persons and events** (the historical context of the writing).

Luke 1:4 states his reason for writing, "that thou may know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast been instructed." Theophilus already had information.

He had heard the gospel to some degree; some writings were already circulating. Luke writes to confirm, verify, to give him proof positive for what he had heard. (Theophilus had likely never seen Jesus nor a miracle performed. He needed evidence or a foundation for faith. Theophilus could take the facts which Luke presented and through reasoning reach a logical conclusion that Jesus is the Son of God and that through baptism by faith he would be saved).

Acts is written in the context of history and confirmed in **archaeology, geography and topography**. **William Ramsey** lived in Asia Minor for years and wrote **The Historical Geography of Asia Minor**. By studying inscriptions, he demonstrated that the geography in Acts of Asia Minor is correct (names, places, Roman titles, etc.). Ramsey started out as a skeptic, believing that Acts was written in the second century, but changed after his research.

Christianity is more than a **moral code**. It is not just a **philosophy of life**. **Christianity is redemptive**. Without salvation from sin, there is nothing. However, salvation from sin is impossible without a **real, historical, actual, factual, believable, VIRGIN BORN, RESURRECTED, ASCENDED, RULING, and COMING IN JUDGMENT LORD!** Luke's gospel and Acts (as well as other inspired writings) record the real-life events of Jesus' birth, life, death and life after death. These things really happened. (Had you been there, you could have seen the cross, gotten a splinter in your hand by rubbing across the rough timber, etc.)

2. The **apologetic** purpose.

The word **apologia** means **defense** and thus **apologetic** is to give a defense.

Acts was written by Luke to defend Christianity against the charge that came in the latter half of the first century--specifically, **that Christianity was Judaism and against the Roman government**.

In Acts, everywhere Christianity goes, it was followed by persecution, stoning, uprising and crisis. Thus, it would look **sedition**, would appear to be a revolt or threat to the Roman Empire. **Luke's purpose is to show differently**. In the **Gospel**, he shows the trial of Christ to be a miscarriage of justice (Luke 23:13-15). In **Acts**, he shows that the Roman officials are kind and reasonable in their attitude toward Christianity, not antagonistic to it.

For example:

1. In Acts 13, **Sergius Paulus**, an official sent for Paul to hear the Word of God. The teaching converted the Roman proconsul.
2. In Acts 16, **Roman soldiers** publicly apologized to Paul and Silas, showing Roman officials are not treating Christians badly but Jews.
3. In 18:12, **Gallio** frees the Christians of being guilty of Roman law, but throws the **Jews** out of the court.
4. In Acts 19, Paul has friends among the **Asiarchs** and **is publicly absolved of wrong by the town clerk**.
5. In Acts 21-26, Paul is found innocent by **Festus, Felix, and Agrippa** said, "Paul would be set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

Luke is therefore showing that **CHRISTIANITY IS NOT A FORM OF JUDAISM AND IS NOT ANTI-GOVERNMENTAL**. Instead, Christians believe in the need and value of civil government as God has directed (Romans 13, 1 Peter 2:13-). Christians do oppose wickedness on the part of men who occupy the role of leaders in government (Nero for example), but also pray for rulers (1 Tim. 2:1-5). If a law is contrary to God's law, Christians "**must obey God rather than men**" (Acts 5:29), but otherwise are obedient, respectful and supportive of leaders in government. Paul himself in Acts is an example of one who is obedient to the law. (He obeys the law in Philippi and takes advantage of his right as a citizen. Paul could have pressed charges and the death penalty would have been carried out against those soldiers who arrested them.)

NOTE: A Roman official like **Theophilus** would want to know if Rome opposed him being a Christian. This explains why Acts would serve an **apologetic purpose** or defend **Christianity against the charge of being against established law and rule**. Theophilus could know that Paul was not a law-breaker. The only ones who opposed Christianity during the period of history recorded in the book of Acts was the **Jews**. (Not until late in the first century, long after Acts was written, did Rome begin to oppose Christianity).

NOTE: The Roman government had no trouble with Paul politically. They let him continue to do the very things the Jews had accused him of--**preaching the gospel**. In Acts 28, he is not a political prisoner, but is in his own private house, with people coming and going.

NOTE: Under Claudius Caesar, once a man had been accused, his accuser had two years to bring successfully his charges. After that the accused person was released if the accuser did not show up. Paul was in Rome two years (Acts 28 so ends). In Timothy and Titus, we find what we cannot locate in Acts.

This leads to the conclusion that Paul was released. Tradition is heavy in the second century that Paul went to **Spain** (see Rom. 15, 1 Cor. 15).

3. A theological purpose.

NOTE: Lightfoot cites 2 Cor. 11:21 as an example of the fact that many things that happened to Paul which are not recorded in Acts. His conclusion, therefore, is that since a lot of history is not recorded, that the purpose of Acts is not totally a historical purpose.

Some **theological purposes** might include:

1. **The activity of the Holy Spirit.** Acts has 61 references to the Holy Spirit. The spirit guides the apostles and authenticates their work. Since Christians "continue steadfastly in the **apostles doctrine**," (Acts 2:42) and since the apostles doctrine is a product of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit's activity is essential to the Christian religion.
2. **Emphasis upon the spread of the gospel.** Luke is interested in the gospel going into various provinces. When he ends Acts with Paul in Rome, the gospel has gone from Judea to "the uttermost of the then known world."
3. **The evangelism of the Gentiles.** Acts 9,22,26 gives three accounts of Paul's conversion. Acts 10-11, later 15 refer to the conversion of Cornelius, the first Gentile convert. Luke in the "we sections of Acts" goes with Paul to evangelize among the Gentiles.
- 4.
- 5.

ACTS--CHAPTER 1--PERIOD OF PREPARATION

THE PROLOGUE 1:1-5

Acts is the second chapter or volume of a continued story. In the first volume, Luke told of all that **Jesus** did and taught. In volume two, Acts, he tells of what the **apostles** (along with other disciples) did and taught. Jesus working through them and with them (Matt. 28:20, John 16:7).

Acts chapter 1 describes a **Resurrected Ministry**.

What did Jesus do during the 40 days between His resurrection and ascension?

1. **Gave proofs of His resurrection** (1 John 1:1-3).
2. **Spoke of the kingdom of God** (Acts 14:22, 28:31).
3. **Renewed the promise to baptize in the Spirit and to empower from the Spirit for the work of witnessing.**

It was through the Holy Spirit that Jesus gave His parting charge to His apostles. Bruce believes this strikes the **CHIEF THEOLOGICAL KEYNOTE OF ACTS**.

1. At his baptism Jesus had been **"anointed with the Holy Spirit and with power"** (10:38).
2. He had been **"declared the Son of God with power by (according to) the spirit of holiness"** (Rom. 1:4).
3. He indicated the power by which the apostles were to carry out the commission when he **"preached on them"** (John 20:22).

1:3 -- spoke of the kingdom.

1. The kingdom and Christ was the twin themes of the Bible (Daniel 2:44, Heb. 12:28).
2. Christ rules over two different kingdoms.
 - a. His kingship is **universal, over all nations** (Ps. 2, 110, 103:19, Acts 17:24). When Abraham was promised the land, he could not go in and enjoy it because "the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full." God would have to judge them. **The day of the Lord** in the Old Testament shows **GOD'S RULE**. (Examples of this rule includes **the flood, Sodom, Caanites**). Today God still rules in the **kingdoms of men**. He does so with a rod of iron and **puts all enemies under his feet** (1 Cor. 15:).
 - b. Christ also rules over His **spiritual kingdom the church** (Heb. 1:9) with a **scepter of righteousness**.
 - 1) Church is a kingdom of **WILLING SERVANTS**. Christians are citizens of both kingdom (Rom. 13, 1 Peter 2). However, they will not choose Caesar over Christ (Acts 5:39).
 - 2) The kingdom of God in Christ was announced by Isaiah and Daniel as something to be **revealed on earth** in its fullness at a later date (Isa.

2:1-4, 9:6-7, Dan. 2:44). It is in this light that we understand the New Testament teaching of the kingdom of God. The kingdom **"drew near"** with His public ministry. The kingdom of God is conceived as coming in the **EVENTS** of His **life, death and resurrection**, and to proclaim these facts, in their proper setting, is to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God! When the apostles preached the story of Jesus, they preached the good news of the kingdom of God, the same good news as Jesus had announced earlier. **What Jesus preached in prospect the apostles preached as a realized fulfillment**, made possible by His life, death and resurrection. Luke supplies a sample of the **Jesus' teaching** during His ministry (Luke 24:44-47). Then Luke shows in Acts that the **apostles preached the same message (2:22-36)**. Their preaching, however, also included **Christ as judge at His second coming (Acts 10:42, 17:30-31)**.

NOTE: The apostles maintained their interest in the hope of the kingdom of God realized in the **restoration of Israel's national independence (1:6)**. The apostles were anticipating that in such a kingdom of an **earthly nature** they would share **positions of authority (Luke 22:24-)**. So now hearing Jesus speak of the coming gift of the Spirit, the mark of the new age, they asked if this was to be the occasion for restoring the kingdom to Israel. Jesus kingdom, however, is not of this world (John 18:31-33), is **within men, is composed of men redeemed by the blood of Christ (Col. 1:13-14)** when they **obey the gospel (Acts 2)**. That kingdom of redeemed, saved men, could not be established until the **King was crowned in heaven, and his first administrative act on earth was to send the Spirit upon the apostles on the next Pentecost**.

A DISCUSSION OF THE SPIRIT IS RESERVED FOR ACTS 2!!!

3. The apostles **witness** was vital to the beginning of the kingdom of God.
 - a. It was not important for the apostles to know when the kingdom would be established, but it was important that they would **receive the power necessary to its beginning**.
 - b. By their own unaided powers they could have told what they had **seen and heard**. However, only by the **power of the Holy Spirit** could they recall what **Jesus had said during His personal ministry, could they know what He would further reveal concerning His exaltation in heaven and His will on earth!**
 - c. As Jesus Himself had been anointed at His baptism with the Holy Spirit and power, so His followers were now to be similarly anointed and enabled to

carry on His work. This apostolic work of **witness-bearing** is a prominent theme of the book of Acts (2:32, 3:15, 5:32, 10:39, 13:31, 22:15).

- d. John 15:25 is Jesus promise to the apostles.
 - 1) That testimony was confined to **select men** (10:39).
 - 2) **Qualification** in Acts 1.
- e. Their purpose was to guarantee the resurrection. Thus, the Holy Spirit **guaranteed the accuracy of their testimony.**
- f. So-called witness today is testifying that he has read, that is, reproducing the testimony of the apostles. Reason we quote and read the apostles word. They saw: we did not.

THE ASCENSION 1:9-11

- 1. The commission, the promise is made to send the Spirit. For that to be possible, Christ must ascend to the Father (John 7:37-39, 16:7-). This is one reason why Luke records it in his introduction added to the fact that the speeches and discussions in Acts make constant reference back to it.
- 2. Jesus came the **first** time to save (John 3:17). He will come the **second** time to judge (Heb. 9:27-28). The second coming of Christ is **central in preaching** (Acts 10:42) and is reassuring to Christians (1 Thess. 4:13-) and ominous to non-believers (2 Thess. 1:7-9).
- 3. The angels' message is "Why stand here looking. Jesus will return. Go do what He commanded. He will empower you."

THE WAITING IN JERUSALEM 1:12-14

- 1. The apostles' immediate duty was to **wait until they are equipped and prepared.** It is difficult to wait. But preparation is needful. Jesus prepared 30 years, studying in **synagogue, living life's experiences (learned obedience, Heb. 5:8-9; cf. 2:10-18; 4:15-16).** Paul prepared, **time spend in Arabia.** Moses in **wilderness** was preparation.
- 2. They were **unified**, a quality necessary if the Lord's plan in Acts 1:8 is to be carried out.
- 3. They are praying.
- 4. A crowd of 120 **was present.**
 - a. The **women** always important in Jesus' ministry.
 - b. **Mary, Jesus' mother**, respected, loyal to Jesus' followers, cared for by His followers, but not almost deified as some make her.
 - c. **Jesus' brothers** presence indicates a change, for earlier they did not believe in Him (John 7).
 - d. However, the **apostles are center stage**, for it is

they who are to be Christ's witnesses and spear-head His campaign against Satan. Cf. Matt. 16:18-19.

NOTE: The 120 on the Day of Pentecost will be added to the church and given the Spirit as an earnest of their inheritance.

SUCCESSOR TO JUDAS 1:15-26

1. Both the betrayal of Jesus and the selection of his successor are subjects of Old Testament prophecy. Just as God could foreknow our sinful condition and our need for a Savior (1 Peter 1:18-20) without causing us to sin, God could foreknow Judas' sin without forcing him to do what he did. Judas had a choice as we do. Thus, "the scripture was fulfilled" in the sense that God foreknew and revealed in prophecy Judas' betrayal. **Prophecy is history written in advance, and God's prophets write of events, people, etc. beforehand--always accurately!**

NOTE: God, in His foreknowledge, regards something as having already occurred. Therefore, God could take the sins of men in the Old Testament, who walk by faith in His revelation and put them on Jesus when He comes and say, **"I will pardon you now."** The illustration of an IOU. God writes a check for forgiveness drawing in advance upon the sacrifice of Jesus. In this way, sins are still only forgiven by the blood of Christ, which the blood of animals only foreshadowed.

2. Jesus applies Ps. 41:9 to Judas in John 13:18, cf. John 17:12. So here Peter adduces further testimonies to the same effect. NOTE: **The real author is the Holy Spirit; David a prophet** (2:30) was a spokesman or mouthpiece.
3. Before Luke reports the actual passages to establish his point, he **inserts a parenthesis** that his readers may understand the background of Peter's remarks. Luke, a Gentile, writing to a Gentile, Theophilus, translates the Hebrew word **Akeldama** into Greek, which Peter a Jew would not have done.
4. Three points of apparent conflict are found with regard to Matthew's account of the fate of Judas.
 - a. First, it says he fell headlong and burst asunder, whereas Matthew says he hung himself. (If he hung himself, he was either taken down or fell, and Luke says he fell).
 - b. Second, it represents him as obtaining a field with the reward of iniquity, whereas Matthew represents the chief priests as buying the field with the same money. (If Judas returned the money as described, and if the priests bought it, that field was really the property of Judas and could be claimed by his

heirs, for it was bought with money that belonged to him.) **Judas bought the field indirectly through the money given him.**

- c. Third, it derives the name **Akeldama** from the circumstance of Judas having fallen there, whereas Matthew derives it from the circumstance that the field was bought with the blood money. (The field could have derived its name from either circumstance).
5. Judas contrasted with Peter. Both sinned. Each sin was wrong, hurt Jesus and the heart of God. Yet, Peter preached on Pentecost and Judas hung himself. What is the difference? For the scriptures says Judas **repented**. The difference is in the application conveyed by the word **repent**. Judas' repentance was not unto **salvation**. He was sorry, regretted the consequences of his sin, but was not brought to sorrow for the offense against Jesus and God. Peter humbled himself, and though the scripture does not record the actual confession, only the tears, he like the publican of Luke 18 said, "**God be merciful to me a sinner.**" God knew what Peter would be doing after denying him. Jesus said, "**When thou art converted...**" An example of **godly sorrow**. John 13 says Judas was stealing from the treasury. Satan had been working on Judas all along and finally got into Judas and filled his heart. (Lots of time we are lost like sheep; we wander off gradually, being enticed). If Judas could do it over again, he would still betray Jesus. (Psychologists say one who believes in hell will not commit suicide.)
6. **Qualifications** are set forth. The obvious reason why such qualifications are necessary is because only such men could be competent witnesses of the identity of Jesus.
7. Manner of selection. Apostles pray and God guides the selection. AN EXAMPLE OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE, PROVIDING. (Prov. 16:33). NOTE: No steps were taken to appoint an apostle until Judas defection. The number was thus restored to twelve. No steps were taken to select a successor to James who was martyred. This was a matter of foreknowledge and prophecy. James was faithful. Today, there are no successors to the twelve apostles. We have them present in their writings. Anyone claiming to be an apostle today and since the twelve, is an impostor and a liar and is to be exposed.

DAY OF BEGINNINGS--ACTS 2

WHAT ARE THE FIRSTS ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST?

1. The day the Spirit was poured forth.
2. The day the gospel of the kingdom was first preached in its fulness.
3. The day prophecies of the kingdom's coming are fulfilled.

WHAT WAS THE DAY OF PENTECOST?

1. "Pentecost" (Acts 2:1, 1 Cor. 16:8, Acts 20:16) is from the Greek word (*pentakostos*) meaning "fifty".
2. It was so called because it was celebrated on the fiftieth day after the presentation of the first harvested sheaf of the barley (grain) harvest, the fiftieth day from the first Sunday after Passover (cf. Lev. 23:15-).
 - a. It was called "the feast of weeks" (Num. 28:16, Deut. 16:9,10), because the time was counted by weeks.
 - b. It was called "the day of first-fruits" (Num. 28:26, Lev. 23:10), because it was the time for the offering of the first fruits.
 - c. It was also a thanksgiving for harvest (Lev. 23:10).
 - d. In later Judaism it was reckoned as the anniversary of the giving of the law at Sinai--a reasonable deduction from the chronological note in Ex. 19:1.
 - e. It was fifty days after the Sabbath of the Passover Week, hence, always on the first day of the week.
3. Passover is our Easter time. Pentecost would be the first of May.
4. Jews came from all over for Passover, requiring much time and money, vs. 9-11, and usually stayed for Pentecost. NOTE: Pentecost was therefore a fitting time for the church to begin so the gospel could spread. People from all over the world, 2:9-11, would go home and take the life-changing message, 8:4, 11:19.

SITUATION: A feast day, people were not working, but were in the temple area offering sacrifices, thus composed a ready-made audience. The church used the temple area to preach the gospel until the scattering (Acts 8, cf. chs. 4-5, 5:32).

THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT, 2:1-4

BAPTISM OF THE Holy Spirit

1. The apostles received the Holy Spirit, and not the 120.
 - a. Promise was given to the apostles, 1:2-8, cf. Luke 24:49, John 14-16.
 - b. Antecedent of the word "they", 2:1, and 1:26.
 - c. Peter defends the "12", 2:14.

- d. The people addressed their question to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 2:37.
- e. It was the apostles' doctrine (2:42).
- f. Those who receive the Holy Spirit were to receive power, but only the apostles had power, 3:6, 4:32, 5:12, 6:6-8. } *SCRIPTURE*

AND THOSE THEY Laid THEIR HANDS ON THEM

- 2. The apostles "were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance (empowered them)."

- a. The Holy Spirit was poured out or sent by the Father in the name of Jesus.
- b. When the Spirit was poured out, the apostles received power from the Spirit to speak in tongues. NOTE: The word "baptize" or "baptism in the Holy Spirit" is a figurative way of describing the pouring out or sending of the Spirit--Heavenly viewpoint. The "filling with the Spirit" means the influence of the Spirit upon the recipient. Context determines

whether that "filling" is miraculous or non-miraculous influence or filling. In this case, that filling is miraculous, for the apostles speak in languages they had never studied. In a case such as Eph. 5:18 the "filling" must be non-miraculous. The pouring out and the filling describe the same event in regard to the apostles, one focusing upon the cause, the other upon the effect.

- 3. The power given by the Spirit took effect on the minds of the apostles, and its presence was manifested outwardly by their speaking in languages which they had never learned. The promise "It shall not be ye that speak, but the Spirit of my Father that speaketh in you," was fulfilled very literally on that occasion, for the very words which they spoke were supplied them by the Spirit. They were not anxious how or what they should speak, neither did they premeditate. Matt. 10:19-20.

{ IN THEIR MINDS

- 4. The word baptism is used figuratively or metaphorically. As the body, when baptized in water, is sunk beneath the surface and completely overwhelmed, so their spirits were completely under the control of the Holy Spirit, their words being his and not theirs. The metaphor is justified by the absolute power which the divine Spirit exerted upon their spirits. Such is not the case with the ordinary influences of the spirit.

*SUBSOMED
SPOKE AS THE SPIRIT
GAVE THEM WORDS*

- 5. The spiritual baptism or baptism in the Spirit promised by John the Baptist and Jesus and announced by the prophets was now an accomplished fact.
 - a. John the Baptist, referring to what God said to Him, stated, "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost (Spirit)", John 1:32. Cf. Matt. 3:11.

which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost (Spirit)", John 1:32. Cf. Matt. 3:11.

- 10 Days
Time
- b. Jesus, in Acts 1:5, told his apostles, "wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of (from) me, for (now Jesus identifies the promise of/from the Father). For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." The promise from the Father and the baptism in the Spirit are thus one and the same. 2:33 also identifies the baptism in the Spirit with the receiving of the Holy Spirit which the Father had promised.
 - c. Joel had predicted the coming/sending/pouring-out/baptism in the Spirit. Peter states, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. (What was spoken?) and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I WILL POUR OUT OF MY SPIRIT..." (2:16-17). The conclusion is that the Spirit or Comforter which the Father promised to send or pour out from heaven is the same as the baptizing in the Spirit!

- 6. John 16:7 and 7:39 point out that the Spirit will not come until Jesus departs or until he is glorified. In Acts 2:33-36 Peter refers to Jesus (after his resurrection) has been exalted at the Father's right hand, having ascended into heaven where he is now sitting (and reigning, 1 Cor. 15). Therefore, the outpouring of the Spirit which Joel prophesied, the Spirit which Jesus promised to send and to baptize the apostles with OCCURRED ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST AS RECORDED IN ACTS 2!

THE AUDIBLE AND VISIBLE PHENOMENON THAT ACCOMPANIED THE SENDING/RECEIVING OF THE SPIRIT:

- 1. The sound resembling, "like that of wind" filled the house, not the whole temple area. Then the apostles went to the temple area, where the crowds would be gathered and where the preaching would be done.
- 2. The tongues like fire sitting upon each of the apostles got the attention of the crowd.
- 3. Acts 2:33 refers to what you have seen and heard. The coming of the Spirit was confirmed by these SIGNS, the sight referring to the tongues, the sound to the languages and, possibly also the sounds. THIS WAS THE SETTING TO ATTRACT THE AUDIENCE AND CONFIRM THE APOSTLES AS DIVINE SPOKESMEN! The formula was often the same through Acts: The miracles to attract and confirm; the gospel to convince and convert!

THE EFFECT ON THE MULTITUDE; THE CROWD'S AMAZEMENT, 2:5-13

1. The crowd was amazed because they heard in their own tongue in which they were born, in their own languages the wonderful works of God, 2:8,11.
 - a. The gift of tongues is not the gift of ears. They did speak one thing, all the same thing, and the people hear in their own language. In that case, the gift would be the gift the hearer possessed, not the speaker.
 - 1) In Corinth when a tongue or language was spoken, an interpreter was necessary or noone understood and was edified. 1 Cor. 14. NOTE: Though the KJV has the word "unknown", the word is in italics, indicating it is supplied by the translators. In reality, no tongue is unknown. All language is known, though if it is foreign to the hearer, it would need to be translated or interpreted.
 - 2) In Jerusalem, no interpreter was present or needful because the apostles spoke in the language of the hearers, a language foreign to the apostles, but not to the hearers.
 - b. The tongue of Acts 2 as well as that described in Corinthians is human language.
 - 1) Their reaction to the tongues is what we would expect and the one we would have made had we been there. If you are in a foreign country and someone speaks your language, you are drawn to them. But if someone were to speak your language and you know that person has never studied it or has no knowledge of it, you would be impressed and ~~and~~ confused.
 - 2) Their response is what the miracle was intended to accomplish: Luke says "they were amazed," "they were perplexed," "they were confounded," "they marvelled," and they said one to another, "What does this mean?" This shows they recognized the MIRACULOUS NATURE OF THE PHENOMENA, but could not determine what it meant--THIS PETER WOULD EXPLAIN IN THE SERMON FOLLOWING. All they knew was these people are speaking our native dialects, but they are all Galileans. A few irreverent will pass the phenomenon off as drunkenness. NOTE: Skeptics and humanists still prefer to deny the miraculous, even though the first century phenomenon is documented beyond all doubt (John 20:30-31, Acts 2:22-24,32) and even though the very existence and vitality of the church is additional evidence (Matt. 16:18-19, Heb. 12:28-29).
2. The identity of those at Jerusalem, 2:5.
 - a. Parthians, Medes, Elamites and dwellers in Mesopotamia, those living east of Judea spoke Aramic. These were the lands of the earliest dispersion to which the exiles from the 10 northern tribes were taken by the Assyrians. They did not lose their identity. Later the southern tribes are deported

- by Nebuchadnezzar. And in spite of the decree by Cyrus of Persia, many Jews chose to remain in those eastern territories. Later Artaxerxes III of Persia planted additional Jewish captives in Hyrcania on the Caspian Sea (353 B.C.).
- b. There is abundant evidence for the large Jewish communities in Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, in Phrygia and Pamphylia. Acts chs. 13-19 prove this. Also, Phil the Jew wrote, "the Jews are exceedingly numerous in each city of Asia and Syria." (Embassy to Gaius, 245) Jewish inscriptions of that period are found in the Crimea (a part of modern Russia), indicating some crossed the Black Sea.
 - c. Others came from Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene. Jews had lived in Egypt continuously since the early sixth century B.C. Philo, an Alexandrian Jew, estimates in A.D. 38 about a million Jews in Egypt, and two of the five wards which made up the city of Alexandria were Jewish in population (On Flaccus 6,8). Jews of Cyrenaica are mentioned elsewhere in Acts, cf. 6:9, 11:20. Ptolemy I of Egypt (323-283 B.C.) settled Jews in Cyrenaica to ensure its loyalty.
 - d. Sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes are the only representatives from Europe. There was a Jewish colony in Rome in the second century B.C. Others were brought there in 62 B.C. to celebrate Pompey's triumph, and later set free. It was probably the spread of Christianity to Rome that led to the Jewish riots of A.D. 49, when Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome (cf. Acts 18:2).
 - e. Proselytes composed a part of the audience. A proselyte was admitted in full fellowship with the Jew by a threefold rite: 1) Circumcision (for male proselytes), 2) a purification self-baptism in the presence of witnesses, 3) and the offering of a sacrifice. Because of the first requirement, full proselytization was more common among women than men. Many men were content to be God-fearers, a looser attachment to the Jewish religion, cf. Acts 10:2.
 - f. Finally, Cretans and Arabians. Arabia in the New Test. is the kingdom of the Nabatean Arabs, east of Syria and Palestine, with its capital at Petra. This kingdom was at the height of its power under Aretas IV (9 B.C.-A.D. 40). One of his daughter's married Herod Antipas of Galilee (4 B.C.-A.D. 39), the wife whom he divorced to marry Herodias.
3. These Jews heard the praises of God in their own tongues. The event was nothing less than a reversal of the curse of Babel.
 - a. The apostles were speaking--the wonderful works of God --in the tongues or languages which the Jews heard and were astonished by. The apostles were likely

using psalms, prayer and hymns in praising God (1 Cor. 14:26, Eph. 5:19). NOTE: When we hear men pray, they are speaking to God. We hear and are edified, but the speaking is to God for us. In Acts 10 the Jews heard Cornelius "speak with tongues and magnify God" (10:46). The tongue was a language, and the content of that language was to glorify God as the tongue had been on Pentecost. The language was also to convince and confirm God's working as much at Cornelius' house as on Pentecost.

- 1) At Pentecost, the purpose was to convince unbelieving Jews that the apostles were speaking a message from God.
 2. At Cornelius, house, among the Gentiles, Peter and his Jewish but Christian brethren were the doubters (unbelievers in accepting the Gentiles as Christian brethren). The purpose of the gift of tongues from the Spirit was to convince them and confirm God's work of salvation among the Gentiles. "The Spirit has been poured out, the gift of tongues given without apostolic hands, and just as the Spirit empowered us on Pentecost, so the Spirit now empowers them (the Gentiles) because we hear them speak in tongues and magnify God in a foreign language." Peter then says, "Can any forbid water?"
- b. In contrast, Peter appears to be speaking a single language, either Aramaic or Greek in preaching to the multitude in the sermon following.

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERMON, 2:14-21

The address of Peter in 2:14-36 is divided into two main sections:

1. An explanation of the phenomenon, 2:14-21.
 2. An outline of the *kerygma* or preaching, 2:22-36.
1. Peter's citation of Joel's prophecy announces that these days, the days of fulfillment have arrived.
 - a. In 1 Peter 1:10, Peter states that what the apostles are preaching is exactly what the prophets foretold and predicted.
 - b. But now that Christ "has been manifested in these last times (literally at the end of the days)," His apostles have no further need to search and inquire. "THIS IS THAT."
 - 1) In these last days God has spoken by His Son (Heb. 1:1-1).
 2. The reformation began when Christ came (Heb. 9:10). The Old Covenant was a figure or shadow and the ordinances of the law were imposed until Christ (9:8-10).
 3. The Great Salvation began to be spoken by the Lord

(Heb. 2:3-4).

c. The pouring out of the Spirit or promise of the Father was:

- 1) Final preparation for the preaching of the gospel. Jesus promised the apostles power to witness when the Spirit came, 1:8. The Spirit was to guide them into all truth, 16:13.
- 2) God's signal that salvation was available to all men who would believe (2:21) and the Spirit available/present to indwell the believer (2:38) as a seal and earnest (Eph. 1:13, 4:30). The gift of the Holy Spirit of Acts 2:38 was the Holy Spirit of promise in Eph. 1:13. THE HOLY SPIRIT WHICH INDWELLS JEWISH BELIEVERS ON PENTECOST WILL ULTIMATELY INDWELL GENTILES (Acts 10-11).

2. The quotation of Joel's prophecy in 2:17-21:

a. Focus upon the outpouring upon all flesh. ALL of ALL NATIONALITIES, Jew and Gentile alike can be a part of the Great Salvation. (Acts 15:7-11, Eph. 2:14-18, 3:6, Rom. 10:13-). Mc Garvey sees vs. 17-18 as the pertinent part of the quotation to explain the phenomenon.

1. The Spirit serves both an empowering and an indwelling function.
2. Acts records examples of those who prophesy (the apostles possessed the gift of prophecy, also Philip, Stephen, selected Christians in Antioch, Acts 13, in Samaria, Acts 8, in Corinth, 1 Cor. 12-14, in Ephesus, Acts 19. Various dreams and visions are a part of Acts--Stephen's vision, ch. 7; Paul's vision, ch. 9; Philip was directed by an angel and the Spirit, Acts ch. 8; Cornelius and Peter's visions, ch. 10; Paul's vision to go to Macedonia, Acts ch. 16; Paul's vision aboard ship to Rome, Acts 27:23; Agabus vision, Acts ch. 11, ch. 21.
3. Other wonders and signs are mentioned in vs. 19-20. (Mc Garvey believes these verses have no bearing on Peter's argument and are merely quoted to complete the connection of that which his argument demanded. His viewpoint is that whatever the identity the day of the Lord refers to, the important thing is its connection with the promise, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.")
NOTE: Sometime name of Lord = person (Acts 4:12).

NOTE: The day of the Lord:

1. Is identified by some as the destruction of Jerusalem, the day of judgment and even Pentecost.
2. In the Old Testament the day of the Lord refers to a day of judgment upon a wicked nation (Isa. 2:12, 13:6, Amos 5:18, Zeph. 1:7, Joel 2:1) and in the New Test, (1 Thess. 5:2-, 2 Peter 3:10). The description of this day is highly figurative, apocalyptic, compare

Revelation.

3. Barclay states that the Jews viewed their history in two divisions—the Present Age, evil and doomed, and the Age To Come, the goldenage of God. Between the two ws the Day of the Lord, symbolizing the terrible birth pangs of the new age (a day of judgment and terror, when the world would be shaken to its foundations). According to Barclay, Peter is saying to these Jews, "For generations you have dreamed of the Day of god, the Day when God would break into history. Now, in Jesus, that Day has come."

The object of the Spirit's work, the pouring out of the Spirit is salvation.

1. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.
2. The name of the Lord can equal the person of Christ (Acts 4:12).
3. How can one call on the name of the Lord?
 - a. Rom. 10:13--through believing and obeying the message that is preached (vs. 13-18).
 - b. Example: Abraham built an altar and called upon the name of the Lord" (Gen. 4)

APOSTOLIC PREACHING, 2:22-36

Peter preached Christ:

1. The AIM: Jesus of Nazareth, crucified, raised and exalted (2:22-24,33).
2. The EVIDENCE to probe his claim (25-36).
 - a. Jesus' life and miracles (22).
 - b. Old Test. prophecy and its fulfillment (25-31).
David's testimony (Ps. 16:8-11, 2 Samuel 7:11-16) could have not applied to himself but to Jesus and His resurrection.
 - c. The apostles witness (32).
 - d. The testimony of the Holy Spirit (33).
 - e. Conclusion (34-36).

Bruce's summary of apostolic preaching:

1. The announcement that the age of fulfillment has arrived.
2. A rehearsal of the ministry, death and triumph of Jesus over death.
3. A citation of Old Test. scriptures which are fulfilled in Jesus.
4. A call to repentance.

Barclay summary:

1. The cross was no accident, cf. 3:18, 4:28, 13:29.
2. This does not lessen the guilt of those who crucified Jesus, cf. 2:23, 3:13, 4:10, 5:30.
3. Acts is out to prove that the sufferings and the death of Christ were the fulfillment of prophecy. Deut. 21:23, the idea of a curse made it impossible for the orthodox

- Jew to believe Jesus could be the Messish (1 Cor. 1:23).
4. Acts stresses the Resurrection as the final proof that Jesus was God's Son and the Savior. (After Christ's death, the disciples were bewildered, broken men; after the resurrection, confident, courageous. EVERY SUNDAY IS THE LORD'S DAY, EVERY LORD'S DAY THE RESURRECTION DAY!

1. The thesis, aim, proposition or central idea of the sermon. (2:22-24).

- a. Jesus was approved, certified to be Divine by His miracles.
- 1) These miracles needed no elaboration. They were known and admitted.
 - 2) The purposes of miracles was to certify (Matt. 11: 2-6).

The evidence is described by the words:

- 1) Miracles or mighty works or powers brought about the power of God.
- 2) Wonders which created wonder in those who witnessed them.
3. Signs which signified God's approval and pointed to Jesus and His kingdom--word in John's gospel. "the powers of the world to come" (Heb. 6:5). "If I by the finger of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you" (Luke 11:20). And the centrality of those who saw his mighty works agreed: "God hath visited his people" (Luke 7:16).

- b. Yet this Jesus had been put to death by crucifixion.
- 1) Why was Christ crucified? To redeem from sin, become an atonement (Isa. 53, Rom. 3:23-26, 5:6-11, 8:33-34, 1 Cor. 1:21-24, Eph. 1:7).
 - 2) The Old Test. predicted it (Isa. 53). Jesus foretold it (Matt. 16:21, 17:22-23, teaching the Old Test. prophecies (Luke 24:44-47). God had planned the cross before the world began (2:24). THE CROSS WAS NO ACCIDENT. God can foreknow with out forcing. God knew how the Jews would reject Jesus and crucify Him, but did not force them to do so.
 - 3) However, the Jews were guilty. Though the Romans nailed him to the cross and pronounced the sentence of death, the Jews engineered his death with false charges, intimidation, etc. They were unconsciously fulfilling "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." Jesus' death made provision for their forgiveness, but Peter says nothing about this until his hearers are truly convicted of their sins.

- c. God raised Jesus from the dead. The Jews' sentence

of death was reversed by a higher court--GOD'S COURT!
It was not possible for Jesus to remain dead because
of God's plan and man's need (1 Peter 1:18-20, Acts 2:
22-24).

- 1) Jesus' suffering and death was **ORDAINED** and **FOREKNOWN**, denying ancient Jews and modern millennialists.
- 2) Jesus' resurrection was likewise **ORDAINED** and **FOREKNOWN**, denying humanists, liberals and infidels.

2. The evidence or proof of the proposition, 2:25-36.

a. David's prophecy in Ps. 16:8-11 (2:25-28).

- 1) I, my and thy refer to Christ. David habitually speaks in the first person when prophesying when prophesying of the Christ.
Difference between hades and hell.
 - 1) Hell, gehenna, place of lost soul.
 - 2) Hades, means "unseen", world of dead, realm of departed spirits. Cf. Luke 16:19-.
- 2) While the body of Jesus was in the tomb, his spirit or soul was in hades. "Thou shalt be with me in paradise," "Into thy hands I commend my spirit". PARADISE, ABRAHAM'S BOSOM, HADES received Jesus' soul at his death. But death could not hold him (2:24). Cf. Heb. 2:14-15, 1 Peter 3:18-22.

b. Peter's interpretation, 2:29-31.

- 1) David is dead, thus the prophecy does not apply literal king David.
- 2) God made a promise to David in 2 Sam. 7, an oath to raise up David's seed, one of David's flesh to sit on David's throne.
- 3) David was a prophet and foreseeing that God would keep His promise to raise up one to sit on his throne spoke in Ps. 16 of the resurrection of the Christ.
- 4) Acts 2:33 states that Jesus was exalted at God's right hand, to God's throne in heaven. Acts 2:30 states that Christ was raised to sit on David's throne. THEREFORE, DAVID'S THRONE = GOD'S THRONE!

c. Apostolic eye-witness, 2:32.

d. Conclusion, 2:33-36.

- 1) Jesus had been exalted at right's hand. He was exalted by God's right hand (2:24) to God's right hand (2:33).
- 2) Ps. 110 clinches the evidence for Jesus res. and triumph over death, and rule in heaven. The argument is similar to Ps. 16. David was not raised; Jesus was raised. David did not ascend into heaven; Jesus did ascend! Luke 22:69 states, "From henceforth shall the Son of man be seated at the right hand of the power of God". Cf. 1 Peter 3:22, Heb. 1:3, Phil. 2:6-11, Eph. 1:20-23.

EXALTATION
Eph 1:19-23
Phil 2:9-11
Col 1:18-19
Heb 1:2-3
1 Pet 3:22

- J.C.'s
EXACTLY
- 3) Now since this is true, GOD HAS VINDICATED HIS SON AS TRUE. He is reigning now as KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. 1 Cor. 15:24-Col., 1:13-14. His lordship is what we confess (Rom. 10:9-10, 1 Cor. 12:3, Phil. 2:11).

SAVE YOURSELVES; CALL TO REPENTANCE, 2:37-41

1. The question, 2:37.

- a. The convicting of the heart or conscience was a result of the word they heard and believed (Rom. 10:17).
- b. Based upon the question they asked, the fact they were disturbed and the response they gave, we know they believed.
- c. Also, by this question and response, we know they tacitly confessed what Peter preached.
- d. And the fact that they were pierced to the heart shows they felt remorse and shame over their sins.
- e. This change that had taken place in their intellect (knowledge), emotion (sorrow) and volition (will) ALL can be traced to the WORD THEY HEARD!

FAITH By ^{THEY} HEAR
THEY
FEELINGS

2. Peter's answer, 2:38.

- a. Repent, the hard part of the gospel.
 - 1) The prophets, John and Jesus preached repentance.
 - 2) A complete change of heart, spiritual right-turn is essential to the new birth. If you don't repent, sin is not forgiven--even if you are submerged 30 times (3:19).
 - 3) The call to repentance, before preached by the prophets, John and Jesus and the apostles, remained an essential element in the preaching of the gospel (3:19, 8:22, 17:30, 20:21, 26:20).
 - 4) The Greek word means "a change of the mind." But the scripture more fully establishes the concept of a change of life. Prov. 28:13. Simon must change his covetous heart but also his covetous ways or he will be lost, 8:22. A principle in 26:20 is: "they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (cf. Luke 3:8-14).
- b. Be baptized.
 - 1) Jews familiar with baptism--Jesus, John baptized.
 - 2) Baptism was in the name of Christ. "In" (*epi*) means "upon" and suggests that baptism is in or upon the basis of the Lordship of Christ as Peter had preached (2:36). The expression also conveys the idea of the authority of Jesus (cf. Acts 4:11-12, 17:30-31). The one who is baptized calls upon the name of the Lord, (which in context with other verses) implies the confession or reliance upon Jesus as Lord (Acts 22:16).
- c. Baptism was for the remission of sins.
 - 1) "For" (*eis*) is defined as "in order to", translated

*PROSPECTIVELY
FROM RETROSPECTIVELY*

- "unto," is in prospect, not in retrospect.
- 2) The word "for the remissio of sins" has the same construction in Greek and thus the same meaning. Matt. 26:28, Acts 2:38.
 - 3) Whatever John's baptism was for, the blood of Jesus is for.
 - d. The gift of the Holy Spirit is the second blessing promised to one who repents and is baptized.
 - 1) The promise does not say "gifts" of the Spirit, and it is therefore not the miraculous gift of 1 Cor. 12; cf. Acts 8. Heb. 2:4 speaks of "gifts of the Holy Spirit" PLURAL, but Acts 2:38 "the gift of the Holy Spirit" SINGULAR!
 - 2) The Holy Spirit is in apposition to the gift. An expression like the "city of Abilene" has Abilene in genitive of apposition to city.
 - 3) The expression means the Holy Spirit as a gift, and the reference is to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit by which we bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, and without which we are not of Christ. (Rom. 8, Eph. 1:13-14, 1 Cor. 6:19-20, 1 John 4:13). Cf. Acts 5:32. 1 Thess. 4:8. CHRIST LIVES IN US (Gal. 2:20). SO DOES HOLY SPIRIT.
 - 4) John 7:37-39 expresses the following conditions in order to receiving the Spirit of God: 1) If thirsty; 2) come, 3) drink, 4) he who believes. The one who has God's Spirit in him has a great river that sustains him. Rom. 8 stresses condition of living according to the Spirit, and not the flesh.
 - 5) The promise in Acts 2:29 in the immediate context is the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is poured out for all flesh (2:17). However, the promise could scripturally also be the Abrahamic promise (Gen 12:3, Acts 3:25-26, Gal. 3:8, Eph. 3:6).
 3. Admonition: Save yourselves, 2:40.
 - a. How? As you turn from sin (repent and are baptized).
 - b. Grace by faith means man is involved in his salvation complying with conditions, but his trust or reliance for salvation is in the Christ whom he trust and obeys. THERE IS SOMETHING TO DO (2:37, 16:30).
 4. 3000 were baptized and added to the apostles and 120.
 - a. Jesus had told His apostles they would do greater works than He had performed (John 14:12). This reflects a fulfillment of that promise.
 - b. Mc Garvey calculates it would take 4. hours to baptize 3000 people, and pools were available in Jerusalem to accommodate them. One pool, the Upper Gihon, was 316 feet long and has an average depth of about 20 feet.

LIFE AND PRACTICE OF THE EARLY CHURCH, 2:42-47

1. The church devoted themselves to the Word of God and worship, thereby growing toward maturity (2:42).
 - a. The apostles' teaching was authoritative because the Lord communicated His word through them. Cf. 1 Cor. 12:28, 14:37, Eph. 2:20, 3:5.
 - 1) New babes need food (1 Cor. 3:1-3, 1 Peter 2:1-3, Heb. 5:12-14, Matt. 4:4).
 - 2) The way to continue is to continue in the doctrine.
 - b. Fellowship--not drinking coffee but worship in context and service. Cf. Phil. 1:5.
 - 1) The fellowship was joint participation in religious activities.
 - 2) It is used in such connections as: "Ye were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:9), and (2 Cor. 13:14), "the favor of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you" (2 Cor. 13:14), and "truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3). "We have fellowship with one another" (1 John 1:7).
 - c. Breaking bread--Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7).
 - d. Prayer.
2. They lived in unity (2:44-46). FAVOR WITH THE PEOPLE WOULD BE BECAUSE OF THE THE LIVES THEY LIVED: They were generous, caring, compassionate (Matt. 5:13-16).
3. They praised God and grew in numbers (2:47).

Barclay's outline of THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EARLY CHURCH:

1. It was a learning church. Word doctrine is "active." It means they persisted in listening to the apostles. Danger of being static, satisfied--7 chs. of Asia. Riches of Christ are inexhaustible and unsearchable, Thus, need to go forward. Look to the sunrise, not the set. Does each day, experience, draw us closer to God?
2. It was a church of fellowship, the quality of togetherness. ~~Next~~ explained of one of his great victories: "I had the happiness to command a band of brothers." "Behold how good and pleasant it is to dwell in unity." Cf. Acts 4:32, 6:5, 15:34-.
3. It was a praying church. They always spoke to God before they spoke to men. They could meet the problems of life because they had been in the presence of God.
4. It was a reverent church. "Fear" of v. 43 is awe or reverence. It was said of a Greek that he moved through

this world as if it were a temple. We are the temple of God, and must not defile it (1 Cor. 3:16).

5. It was a church where things happened, 43. If we expect great things from God and attempt great things for God things will happen. When faith dies achievement dies.
6. It was a sharing church, vs. 44.45. They felt responsible for each other, "were their brother's keeper." "Love thy brother as thyself." 1 John 3:17-18, James 2:14-17, Gal. 6:10, Matt. 25, 2 Cor. 8, Acts 4:32-11:27-30.
7. It was a worshipping church, v. 46. "God knows nothing of solitary religion." "No man is an island." 1 Cor. 14. Half the thrill and effect of a great concert or athletic contest is that of being one of a great body of people. Things can happen when we come together. An application or avenue of fellowship is in worship.
8. It was a happy church, v. 46. A gloomy Chr. is a contradiction in terms. "Let me tell you about Chr., it's killing me." Jesus had problems, stresses, crises (Heb. 2:18); his days were packed; multitudes pressed about him; he knew his fate in advance, but said, "I came to do thy will."
9. It was a church of people whom others could not help liking. There are two words for good: 1) *agathos*, which describes a thing as good. 2) *kalos*, which means a thing not only is good but looks good. Chr. is attractive. It is possible for a Chr. to be good but hard! You could not go to them for fear of him being harsh, insensitive, quickly judgmental. Iceberg Christians! We are responsible for being Christians who consistently bear the fruits of the Spirit and abide by the two great commands, but cannot be responsible for judgments of others which may be colored by lack of reason, experience, maturity, integrity, etc.

PENTECOST BEGAN THE FOLLOWING:

1. The new covenant (Heb. 8:8, 9:15-17).
2. Preaching in the name of Jesus Christ (Luke 24:46).
2. Baptism in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38).
4. The sending of the Holy Spirit (2:1-4, 33).
5. The giving of the Spirit to the believer (2:38-39).
6. The reigning of Christ on David's throne (2:30-).
7. The fulfillment of the prophecies of Joel (2:1-4, 28-32).
8. The building of the Lord's church through the Apostle's Word (Matt. 16:18-19).
9. The work and worship of the New Testament church (2:43-47).

SEE ALSO Pg 12 AT
FRONT

Healing of Lame Man--Ch. 3, Acts

NOTE: Acts is composed of speeches or sermons. More than . of Acts is spoken. Gospels contain preaching of Apostles. Epistles reflect upon preaching of Apostles.

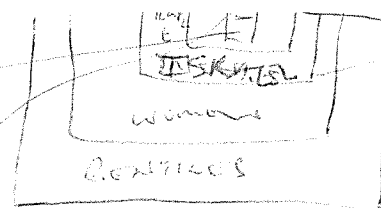
1. Sermons in Acts are summaries or condensations of the entire message presented.
 - a. The words of Peter which Luke records on Pentecost are merely a summation or condensed version of all that he said. The text says, "With many other words..." Peter may have quoted many Old Test. passages.
 - b. Acts ch. 3:22-24 is probably a summary, and "all the prophets" may have referred to a number specifically.
 - c. Acts ch. 10:37-43 appears to be a summary or outline of what Peter would have fleshed out or expanded; likewise, Acts ch. 17 on Mars Hill, etc.
 - d. John the apostle did not include all that Jesus did, but merely selected what was necessary to accomplish his and the Holy Spirit's purpose (John 20:30-31, 21:25)
 - e. Luke wrote all what Jesus did and taught but certainly not all he did and taught, but selected under the guidance of the Holy Spirit just what Theophilus would need to know. So of Matthew and Mark.
 - f. The Old Test. books are not complete accounts in the sense that they record every activity of Israel, but they are fully sufficient for us, avin been selected by God, "the scriptures throughly furnish us to all good works."
2. Thus, in the 66 books we have God's complete revelation in informing us His work through Israel of old, through Christ and through the Isreal of God today, the church, all that we must know, but not all that could have been written. One important purpose of the Holy Spirit was in revealing the message God wanted made known and then in guiding, inspiring the spokesman in its communication.

THE LAME MAN HEALED (3:1-10)

Thus far the labors of the apostles had met with uninterrupted and astonishing success. Now however opposition arises from the Jews, who will be the enemy throughout the history recorded in Acts. Success and apparent defeat will alternate, which will continue to be true in the life of the church.

1. The occasion of the healing (3:1-)
 - a. The court of Israel was the site of the healing.
 - 1) The Court of Israel was that part of the temple area to which Jewish laymen were admitted. The outer court of the temple as rebuilt and extended by Herod did not form any part of the sacred area. Gentilise might walk about in it, and it was therefore called

THE SACRED
COURTS
Holy Place
HOLY V



CONTAINS
THE TREASURY
OF
PRIESTS

the Court of the Gentiles.

- 2) From the Court of the Gentiles, after ascending some steps, one might pass through the barrier which separated the outer court from the inner courts. Nine gates led through the barrier, of which the Beautiful Gate was probably one.
 - 3) The first of the inner courts was the Court of the Women containing the treasury (cf. Mark 12:41-): it was so called because Jewish women might enter thus far, but no further.
 - 4) Jewish laymen might go further into the Court of Israel.
 - 5) Beyond this was the Court of the Priests, reserved for priests and Levites in the discharge of their respective duties. Within this court stood the temple or sanctuary building itself, with its two compartment, the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.
- b. The description, predicament, of the man to be healed.
- 1) He was lame from birth. Thus, his limbs had never worked. His legs would be emaciated as well as useless.
 - 2) He was a beggar in a public place. He was well known by the crowd. The setting and circumstances were such that a real miracle could not be denied and was not. CONTRAST THE CLOSET, FAR-AWAY MIRACLES CLAIMED TODAY!
 - 3) The healing was at a busy time of the day, at the "hour of prayer, being the ninth hour". The hours of burning incense were the third and ninth, a time when devout people assembled about the temple and prayed while the incense was burning (Luke 1:10). The Jewish day began at 6 o'clock in the evening. Therefore the third hour is 9 a.m.; the sixth is 12 midday; the ninth is 3 p.m. NOTE: The apostles kept the customs and habits of the Jews even after Pentecost, cf. Acts 21, though not as matters of salvation, and certainly not to be bound upon others (Gal. 2:1-). *where lot of publicity*

- 2) The miracle itself. "Many wonders and signs were done by the apostles" (Acts 2:43). Luke now gives one example, selecting one which received whilat publicity.
 - a. The purpose of miracles, while offering compassion, were centrally to confirm (Mark 16:17-20, Heb. 2:3-4). Miracles were the credentials of an apostle (2 Cor. 12:12).
 - b. This miracle was had all the marks of a legitimate miracle—complete, instantaneous, and additionally was performed before a large group who knew the lame man previously. None even among the ruling Jews denied it (4:16), though they tried to stifle the publicity regarding it. The same was true regarding the raising of Lazarus. The Jews could not deny it but made plans to do away with the one responsible, Jesus (John 11:47-48). NOTE: THIS IS SIGNIFICANT PROOF FOR

JESUS' DIETY AND THE APOSTLES' PREACHING--EVEN THE ENEMIES COULD NOT DENY THEM, though they rejected the implication and interpretation of the message which the miracle was intended to confirm. Men today may attempt but cannot validly discount the evidence. Only if they close their eyes, ears and minds can they do so (Matt. 13, Acts 28). If informed, only the dishonest can fail to admit the truth of Christianity. They may then choose not to obey or comply with its teachings, but they cannot honestly, rationally deny its credibility.

- 1) This miracle was instantaneous and complete.
"immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength, and he leaping..." Note: having broken an ankle, being off it only 12 weeks, I know that it was atrophied and weak, requiring days and even weeks of effort to walk rather normally, much less to run and jump.
- 2) Further, the lame man did not expect to be healed. He was expecting gold and silver (those in John 6 expected and sought material things, prosperity even when they saw and received personal benefit from a miracle). He had no expectation or trust of being able to walk, therefore, he made no attempt to move until Peter lifted him up. The faith that cause him to walk was that of Peter and not his own.
- c. This miracle shows that faith is not necessary on the part of the one being healed for a miracle to occur. This agrees with what we learn in the Gospels, that the working of a miracle by those who possessed spiritual gifts was always dependent on their faith. Matt. 14: 31, 17:20, James 5:15. However, no faith ever enabled one to work a miracle to whom such powers had not been given.

SERMON (3:12-26)

1. Explanation of the miracle (3:12-16) As in the order of the Gospel of John, first the miracle, then the sermon.
 - a. The spiritual significance of the miracle had escaped many in the crowd. Peter uses this opportunity to explain it--the cripple has been healed because Jesus has been glorified.
 - b. Peter explains the miracle by four points of contrast:
 - 1) The God of your fathers glorified Jesus, but you have delivered up to die. In speaking of the exaltation of Jesus, Peter uses language taken from the prophecy of the obedient and suffering Servant in Isa. 52:13-53:12, a prophecy which opens with the words, "Behold my servant shall...be exalted and extolled, and be very high."
 - 2) Pilate was determined to let him go (recognizing his innocence), but you denied him (refused to let him

be released).

- 3) You rejected one who was holy and just and desired a murderer to be granted unto you. The title "the holy one" is paralleled in the New Test. in Mark 1:24, Luke 4:34, 1 John 2:20, Rev. 5:7. Similar titles are given in the Old Tst. to Aaron the priest (Ps. 106:16) and to Elisha the prophet (2 Kings 4:9). The title "the righteous one" is paralleled in the New Test. in Acts 7:52, 22:14, Jam. 5:6, 1 John 2:1). For Old Tst. instances to the righteousness of the Lord's Anointed, cf. 2 Sam. 23:2, Isa. 32:1, Zech. 9:9, Isa. 53:11.
 - 4) Finally, in murdering him, you put to death the very author of life itself. The word translated Prince can have the primary sense of leader, author, originator. It is translated author in Heb. 5:9, 12:2. It is also found in Acts 5:31.
- c. Is it through faith in His name this man is healed.
- 1) The mere reciting of the name of Jesus as in a formula, rite or as a charm would have no healing or saving power. Cf. Acts 19:13-17. Today some evangelists pay and pave their way to stardom by repeating the name Jesus along with choice religious terms like hallelujah, praise the Lord, Thank you Jesus. Others believe if you call upon his name you will be saved.
 - 2) The name represents the person of Jesus, His nature and character--just as certain names are important in the Old Test. in describing the person, Abraham, Sarah, Eve, etc. Therefore, to call upon His name to be saved is to respond to and rely upon His Deity and Lordship. Cf. Acts 22:16. To pray in His name is to invoke His authority and plead His intercession and advocacy, Cf. Heb. 7:25, 9:24, 1 John 2:1.

NOTE: Barclay sees 3 dominant notes of Christian Preaching:

1. The crime of the crucifixion.
 2. The vindication of the resurrection.
 3. The power of the risen Lord. Cf. Phil. 3, Eph. 3.
2. The notes of preaching, 3:17-26.
- a. It begins with a note of mercy and warning combined.
 - 1) It was in ignorance that the Jews crucified Christ, but ignorance is no longer possible and is no excuse. This note of terrifying responsibility resounds through the New Test: "If ye were blind, ye could have no sin, but now ye say, We see, therefore your sin remaineth," (John 9:41); "if I had not come and spoken unto them they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin," (John 15:20; "To him that knoweth to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).
 - 2) The fact stated in connection with this is that in their rejection of Jesus God was fulfilling

the message of the prophets "that Christ should suffer." As he had done on Pentecost (2:22-24), Peter is bringing together two seemingly conflicting facts, the sovereignty of God and the free agency of man. However, both facts are true. Peter lays two facts side by side, appealing to the prophets for the proof of God's sovereignty-- WHAT GOD PLANNED BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD, THE PROPHETS ANNOUNCED; and appealing to the conscience of the hearers for the proof of their willing denial and rejection of the Christ.

b. The obligation that the knowledge of God brings is the obligation to repent and to turn.

- 1) The command to repent and turn carries the assumption they had believed. A command based upon an argument, or upon testimony, always implies the sufficiency of the proof, and assumes that the hearer is convinced. Moreover, Peter knew that none would repent at his command who did not believe what he had said.
- 2) Two distinct changes are required in the command to repent and turn (the KJV translation "be converted," conveys a misleading idea of passivity as though the mind or heart is yielding to some foreign influence which they were now resisting). In the command "Repent and turn", the word "turn" expresses something to be done following repentance, and something different from repentance.
- 3) The primary meaning of the Greek word for repent is a change of mind. (It is used in this sense in regard to Esau, Heb. 12:17). Repentance is motivated by godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:8-10). Godly sorrow is the cause. Repentance is the effect. Repentance, then fully defined is a change of will caused by sorrow for sin, and leading to a reformation of life.
- 4) The second word properly means to turn--to return to path from which one has gone astray, and then to turn away from sins, or to forsake them. The term denotes a change of conduct. But a change of conduct has a beginning, and a person is properly said to turn when he does the first act of the better life. For the penitent believer, that one act that was universally commanded was to be baptized. When hearers heard the command "repent and turn", they understood baptism to be the turning act.
- 6) Also, the command "Repent and turn" OCCUPIES THE SAME POSITION BETWEEN REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS THAT THE COMMAND "BE BAPTIZED" DOES IN PETER'S STATEMENT ON PENTECOST! Note: Blotting out of sin is a metaphorical expression for forgiveness, the forgiveness being compared to blotting out what had been written on a wax tablet.

*Remission of Sin
Repentance
Remission of Sin
Sins blotted out*

- c. This repentance has certain consequences.
It will affect the past.
- 1) Sins will be blotted out, the blotting out being a metaphorical expression for forgiveness, the forgiveness being compared to blotting out what had been written on a wax tablet. Note: Ancient writing was upon papyrus, and the ink used had no acid in it. It therefore did not bite into the papyrus as modern ink does; it simply lay upon the top of it. To erase the writing a man might take a wet sponge and simply wipe it away. SO GOD WIPES AWAY THE SINS OF THE FORGIVEN MAN!!!
 - 2) "The refreshing from the presence of the Lord" is placed where "the gift of the Holy Spirit" in Acts 2:28; therefore, the reference is to the refreshing of the soul caused by the joys of the Holy Spirit. *Fruit of Spirit*
- d. Peter then goes on to speak of the coming of Christ. This is indicated by the qualifying remark: "whom the heaven must receive..."
- 1) The times of refreshing and the times of restitution refer to the same thing--the period of Christianity. Things prophesied pointed to the cross by which we were restored to fellowship with God. We are living in the times of restitution by which men are reconciled to God. 2 Cor. 5:17-21, Eph. 2:14-18, Col. 1:19-23. When God has restored all the men he is going to restore, Jesus will come again. 1 Cor. 15:24-28. Jesus will cease being mediator and high priest.
 - 2) That day will be happy for the faithful Christian (1 Thess. 4:13-18); punishment for those who know not God and obey not the gospel... (2 Thess. 1:7-9).
- e. Peter insists all that will happen as foretold by the prophets.
- 1) The prophets predicted Christ:
 - as sin offering (3:18-21)
 - as savior (3:19)
 - as prophet (3:22-24)
 - 2) The apostles' teaching is in harmony with the message of the prophets who foretold the suffering, resurrection of Christ and the preaching of the gospel (cf. 1 Peter 1:10-12, Acts 2:22-24, Luke 24:44-47). Therefore, the church and church age is the subject of Old Testament prophecy. The Jews refused to accept a suffering Savior just as pre-millennial folks reject a suffering Savior or of a spiritual, present on this earth church kingdom. Samuel foretells of those days, the days of the suffering Messiah and His church-kingdom.
 - 3) An example of Messianic prophecy is Moses. Moses was distinguished from all the other prophets in that he was a deliverer and lawgiver. The others were enforcing the law that Moses gave. Jesus was like Moses, a deliverer from sin, and the giver of

the new law or covenant.

- 4) Not content with bringing to bear the testimony of Moses, Peter adds to it the combined authority of all the prophets. Peter dates the beginning of the prophecy from Samuel, not because Samuel himself spoke of these days directly, but because the constant succession of prophets began with him. Bruce points out to Samuel who anointed

David who spoke so frequently of the kingdom.

- f. Finally, Peter points to the special privileges they possess as heirs of Abraham. Peter appeals to his hearers based on their relation to the fathers and the covenant. Christ is the promised seed (Gen. 12:3, 22:18, Gal. 3:8,16). God raised His servant Jesus as deliverer and lawgiver to bless those who turn from their iniquities. This recalls the exhortation of 2:19.

NOTE: Propitiation describes "mercy-seat." God sprinkled the covering or lid of the ark, the mercy-seat, with blood. The ark contained the law. Christ is our mercy-seat. His blood became our covering, covering our sins when we were baptized. As long as we are faithful and abide in Christ, His blood covers us. Jesus sees the blood. If we leave Christ, then our sins are exposed to the wrath of God for our sin. 2 Cor. 5:21. When we obey Jesus, we are accounted as righteous.

Ch. 4--Acts

PETER AND JOHN ARRESTED (4:1-4)

1. The cause if their arrest was the preaching of the resurrection of Jesus.
 - a. By the res. Jesus's victory over death had been declared (Rom. 1:4) and made Him the cornerstone upon which the church was built (4:11-12).
 - b. The res. caused opposition among Gentiles as well as Jews (Acts 17:32).
2. The Sadducces led in the opposition.
 - a. They had been relatively indifferent to Jesus now take the lead against His apostles. Caiaphas, the chief priest, a Sadducce, would be especially affronted by the charge of Jesus' murder.
 - b. Politically befriended the Romans to line their own pockets and protect their own material interests. (People will oppose Chr. more quickly for commercial than for religious reasons. If it affects their pocketbook, cf. Ephesus, Acts 19, Simon, Acts 8, Elymas, Acts 13 was about to lose his position because a Chr. does not need an astrologer.) Church membership or non-membership for business advantages.

NOTE: The Sadducces moved against the apostles for two reasons:

 - 1) Religious reasons primarily.
 - 2) Also economic, political reasons. The Roman rulers were normally tolerant but came down hard on public disorders. The Sadducces may have viewed the apostles as causing public disorder.
 - c. Economically they were the wealthy, aristocratic class. They had great influence, controlling the Sanhedrin.
 - d. Religiously, morally, they claimed to be conservative in contrast to the Pharisees. They refused to accept what they considered as doctrinal innovations of the bodily res. and belief in spirits and angels (23:8). They were actually the liberals, modernists, humanists of their day. Even the Mishnah stated that the orthodox view was to believe in the resurrection. Those who say there is no res. are included among those who have no share in the age to come (Sanhedrin, x. 1).
 - 1) Today, many create their own definition of what is

conservative and liberal. They set the standards, and judge others accordingly. Example: Antis consider the moderate or mainstream LIBERAL; the moderate consider those to the left of them LIBERAL. Furthermore, many who determine orthodoxy and apply labels are not even being true to their own definition.

- 2) Who is to decide? The Lord. Rom. 14:4,10. HIS WORD IS THE STANDARD. The AIM should be remain squarely in the center of God's Word, balance is the goal; avoid radicalism, extremism, dogmatism, left or right.
3. Even with opposition the church grew (4:4). If the church is not creating some disturbance, it is dead (Sardis). Light does not mix with darkness, 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Jesus came as light into darkness and was hated. But while being lights, we will reach some in darkness who were looking for the light. Phil. 2:14-16.

PETER'S DEFENSE BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN (4:5-12)

1. The Sanhedrin was a formidable foe.
 - a. It could not impose the death penalty, except in the single case of Gentile who trespassed the inner courts of the temple.
 - b. However, it comprised the wealthiest, most intellectual and powerful men in Judea.
 - 1) It was the supreme court of the Jewish nation.
 - 2) In the New Test., it is called the body of elders (22:5, Luke 22:66), and senate (5:21).
 - 3) The Mishnah calls it the Sanhedrin of the Seventy-One, the Great Law Court.
 - 4) It consisted of the high priest and 70 other members
2. The speech of Peter was an act of confident courage.
 - a. Peter knew that he was taking his life in his own hands. This court did not have the power to sentence to death in the case of Jesus either, but it got the job done through the Romans. The same thing could have happened again. Peter and John had seen the faces of these men before, and up close (John 18). And at that time Peter had cowed and lied for his life. Jesus had told him he would one day be a prisoner (John 21). Thinking himself strong, he fell and failed before; what about now?
 - b. Jesus had told Peter that persecution would come (John 14-17). Yet Peter had heard that before. Now, however Peter is that rock for which his name stands. He has been strengthened as the Lord knew he would. As the Sinai toughened Moses, so likely the temple area and

NO LOYALTY SAVE TO GOD; DISMISSED WITH A WARNING (4:13-22)

1. The enemy of the cross wages a losing battle.
 - a. "They could say nothing against it". The miracle of healing was undeniable.
 - 1) The man healed was standing among them, v. 14.
 - 2) He was above 40 years of age, v. 22.
 - b. "What shall we do?" These are the words, not of one confident of victory, but of one unsure, frustrated, angry, and frantically searching for some way to put the lid on the box of Christianity.
 - 1) The Sanhedrin was in a dilemma. The apostles had broken no law. Besides their action had made them popular. (Not only the miracle, but the preaching of the truth, the resurrection, which the orthodox Jew believed--and the consistency of their lives, 2:47--made it difficult for the enemy to discredit their plea and crush their movement). However, to free them would be to face the same problem again as well as to reveal their own weakness. The devil's forces will never admit defeat, and perhaps thinking the apostles will fold under threats and intimidation decide upon this as the course of action.
 - 2) The answer: dismiss them with a warning. This, says one Jewish scholar, was "the first mistake which the Jewish leaders made with regard to this new sect..." (cf. Bruce, p. 104.)
2. The apostles are working for God, not men. If the council believed the ban would silence the apostles, they were quickly disillusioned.
 - a. Their answer, combining their answer here with their second reply when questioned again:
 - 1) We are going to do what is right...serve God and preach His Word. "We must obey god rather than men." Anyway, should we listen to God or you?
 - 2) The Sanhedrin would have to say "God."
 - b. The reason for their answer is found in the answer itself--GOD.
 - 1) They had counted the cost, and what weighed the most and was of greatest value was God's cause and their commitment to it.
 - 2) They could not depend upon advanced rabbinical training, the meaning of "unlearned." (Jesus too been referred to as unlearned by the same Jewish leaders earlier, John 7:15). Neither could they trust their skill, described by the word "ignorant," or "unskilled" (the word means "private person" in Greek, but in later Hebrew and Aramic, appears with the sense of "commoner," "lyaman," "unskilled person.") Peter and John were "people of the land" in the rabbinical sense of the term who could not the oral law (cf. Jn. 7:49). To give a modern-day

NOTE 23:15

Softly 17:10

application, Barclay says they had no college education or professional status.

NOTE: This should not be used as a premium on ignorance and a put down of quality, fundamental and even advanced training in Bible study, preaching and Christian service. "One cannot get too much education if he uses it." However, this does not mean everyone must have a college education or even a diploma to preach.

3. The effect of their preaching--while the rulers were threatening the apostles, the people outside were glorifying God.

TRIUMPHANT RETURN, REPORT, PRAYER OF FAITH, 4:23-31

1. Peter and John joined their fellow-apostles and reported.
 - a. A Scr. precedent is to keep in contact, communicate with fellow-Chrs. Acts 14:26-28, 18:22, 21:17-.
 - b. The reasons for this are many:
 - 1) It is an occasion for celebrating a victory, 14:26-, 4:23-. The prodigal's return, the release of Peter and John here, of Peter in Acts 12 are examples. We are on the winning side; there is reason to be happy (Ps. 144:15, Rom. 8:37, 1 Cor. 15:57, Rom. 8:31-).
 - 2) It is an occasion for thanking God. The Chr's strength is in Christ (Phil. 4:13), cf. 1 Cor. 1:23-31. Peter and John were as uninflated in victory as they had been undaunted in danger. Chrs. must have not the I, but Thou consciousness (example of Diotrephes versus Paul, 1 Cor. 15:7-, ex. of elder at S.A. who bragged on himself in ordination ceremony.)
 - 3) It is an occasion to ask God for further strength and victory.
 - c. KEEP IN TOUCH is advice to preachers to elders, missionaries to churches, preacher students to supporters.
2. The apostles were not given to fear and depression. They had certain convictions:
 - a. God's power as Creator and Sustainer. Cf. Heb. 1:3, Col. 1:15-17, Acts 17 for these powers). Martin Luther threatened by a papal envoy threatened Martin Luther with the consequences of his actions and asked, "Where will you be then?" "Then as now," Luther answered, "In the hands of God." Paul's ex., 2 Tim. 4, and before Herod, Felix and Festus, cf. Stephen, Daniel, 3 Hebrews.
 - b. Without Him, life is futile and chaotic (rebellious). The word translated rage is used of the neighing and high-fed and spirited horses. In the end they have to

accept the discipline of the reins. Men make their defiant gestures against God (communism, humanism, hedonism, evolution--which influences all these--spiritualism (the occult)...)

c. Christ was set upon the holy hill of Zion. The opening words of the 2nd Psalm provide proof of their divine origin in the fulfillment which the apostles had experienced in recent days.

- 1) Christ is the anointed One. The words "Thou art my Son," spoken at his baptism hailed him as this Messiah (Matt. 3:16-17).
- 2) Christ is described in Ps. 2:7 as God's begotten Son and Paul in Acts 13:33 defines this begatall as the resurrection of Jesus, as he quotes Ps. 2:7.
- 3) Vs. 25-26 quote Ps. 2:1-2, and vs. 27-28 is Peter's inspired commentary concerning those responsible for Jesus' death.

--The Gentiles raged against Jesus in the person of the Romans who sentenced him to the cross and executed the sentence.

--The kings of the earth who stood up (set themselves in array, ASV) were represented by Herod Antipas, Luke 23:7-.

--The rulers were represented by Pontius Pilate.

But all these, in uniting against Jesus, WERE MERELY CARRYING OUT THE FOREORDIANED PLAN OF GOD (2:23, 3:18).

- 4) In these words of the apostles, we have an explicit identification of God's "holy servant Jesus " with the royal son of God addressed in Ps. 2:7! Jesus is both the obedient Servant (cf. Isaiah ch. 42-) with the one God anointed or made Messiah--at His baptism (cf. Acts 10:38). The servant and the kingly prophecies of the Old Test. refer to the same person. NOTE: The Jews as a whole looked for a kingly Jesus, anointed, but not for a humble, obedient, suffering servant! Cf. John 6, 12:13.
- 5) David is the human author of the 2nd Psalm. The KJV omits the Holy Spirit. However, the Western text reads "who through the Holy Spirit didst speak through the mouth of David thy servant." Westcott and Hort refer "to the difficulty of this text, which obviously contains a primitive error." The proper way to understand this verse is to take David as the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit. This is the way the ASV translates it. The Holy Spirit or God v. 24) is the Divine author. This serves to establish the inspiration of the Scriptures--the human authors of the Bible were spokesmen and penmen for God--they were guided by the Holy Spirit in their speaking and writing (1 Cor. 2:7-13, Eph. 3:1-4, 2 Peter 1:20-21, 1 Cor. 14:37, 2 Thes. 2:15, 1 Peter 1:10-12).

2. They prayed for three things.

- a. That God would look upon their threats. God is AWARE of our enemy. He knew of the enemy of the Israelites (the Egyptians from which delivered, the enemy standing between them and the Promised Land, the enemy in the land, and the enemy from without--Syria, Assyria, etc) He knew the enemy of the apostles and he does of the church. But He is not only AWARE but CONCERNED and CAPABLE OF HELPING.
- b. That God would give them courage.
 - 1) It is right to pray for courage--to remain faithful, to have boldness to preach and to even be protected from the enemy (Eph. 6:19-20, 2 Thess. 3:1-2).
 - 2) No one all the time is an iron man, invincible, impregnable and resolute. Ex. Reagan's "taflon suit." Even Superman is vulnerable to lead.
 - Paul needed courage, so he prayed.
 - Even Jesus, Matt. 26, Heb. 5:7-10.
 The devil, the enemy (John 8:44, 1 John 3:8, Heb. 2:14-15, 1 Peter 5:8, Rev. 12) can cause you to strain and struggle, gasp and grope, flinch and fall, bend and break--IF YOU HAVE TO GO IT ALONE ALL THE TIME! Elijah was tough, but grew discouraged; so was John the Baptist (Elijah No. II) Peter was rugged... don'T UNDERESTIMATE THE TEMPTING FORCE TO PREACHERS OF THE \$, THE DAME, AND THE _____. Immorality, materialism, false religion and persecution are effective devices of the devil (2 Cor. 2:11, 11:12-15, 1 John 2:15-17, Rom. 16:17-18, 2 Peter 2:1-2, Revelation).
 3. God gives courage. 2 Tim. 4:16-18--delivers and will continue to do so--keeps us when we will be kept, 1 John 5:18-21--is able (Rom. 4:25), faithful (2 Tim. 2:13, 1 Cor. 10:13), is not slack concerning His promises (1 Peter 3:9). An indication of God's answer to their prayer is the supernatural shaking and the miraculous filling with the Spirit. (The description here is reminiscent of what happened on the Day of Pentecost, both in the external signs and the Spirit's empowering. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. That was the outpouring. The Spirit then empowered the apostles (1:8, Luke 24:47). This was not a second baptism of the Spirit. But it was an assurance that God was still with them empowering them to witness (1:8) and work miracles to confirm their testimony as He had promised (Mark 16:17-20). God would reassure Paul when he was aboard ship (Acts 27), when he was in Corinth (Acts 18:9-10), and this was what Paul needed for the scr. says, "And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the Word of God among them," (v. 11). God reassured Paul when the thorn was hard to bear (2 Cor. 12:8-9). GOD REASSURED MEN IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE OF HIS PRESENCE, POWER AND PURPOSE BY SUPERNATURAL MEANS. HE DOES SO TODAY THROUGH THE PROMISES THROUGH HIS WORD...THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

GOD will be with us
Heb 13:5-6

ALL THINGS IN COMMON, UNITY AND LIBERALITY (4:32-37)

Transition: Luke had just described the outpouring of prayer and praise to God. The writer now turns his attention to the religious life of the church. There is a definite connection between the two because unless Christians are strong in prayer and praise they will not be strong in unity, faith and love. Luke had briefly given us a look at the religious life of the church in 2:42-47. By this time, the church was more developed, and Luke goes into more detail.

1. The church was united in faith and love.
 - a. Unity is what Jesus prayed for (John 17:20-21).
 - b. In a church of 5000, counting only the men, each with differing personalities, Luke can say "they were of one heart and one soul".
 - 1) 1 Cor. 12 teaches a mutual ministry: "for the body is one...now ye are the body of Christ, and members one of another." The "one another" passages in the New Test. teach the same thing.
 - 2) The Greek word *koinonia*, which is translated fellowship, communion and communication, etc. in the KJV, means to "have in common, share, participate, partnership."
 - 3) I don't have to agree with all my brethren, but when the leaders make a decision, it is my responsibility to support it. In matters of judgment, the elders are to be followed. (Elders have no legislative power. That belongs to God. They are to carry out the commands or laws God has given. That involves decisions in judgment, expediency). 1 Cor. 1:10 asks us to be of the same judgment. We can or should be able to make comments, have input, but when a decision is made, we need to abide by it. If not, we are the cause of disunity. Elders may make unwise decisions and have to change them, but we still support them.
 - c. Disunity is as much a "work of the flesh" as fornication.
 - 1) "Follow after the things which make for peace" (Rom. 14:19). A right relationship with brethren serves an umpire in our hearts.
 - 2) Jesus says, "Blessed are the peacemakers." The opposite is "Cursed are the fuss-makers."
2. Their oneness is shown by their generosity and care for one another.
 - a. The lack of selfishness was not the result of social theorizing or of rules laid down to govern those who became members. NOTE: This was no communistic system in which there was a uniform distribution of the property. Neither was the property held by all and administered by the apostles as a business committee.
 - 1) Distribution was made unto every man ACCORDING AS HE

HAD NEED."

- 2) This is further illustrated by Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-4). Peter said of their possessions, "While it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?"
- 3) In reality, the church was setting an example for all other churches, especially in time of acute need. Cf. Matt. 25, James 2:14-17, 1 John 3:17-18. Churches in Antioch and Macedonia and Achaia followed that example!
 - Among the heathen, systematic provision for the wants of the poor was unknown.
 - Even among the Jews, though provision was made, voluntary benevolence was often neglected.
 - It was a new thing under the sun to see a large community selling houses and lands... Modern day examples: Sunset, Maxie Boren, Fletcher Sneed, Tom Howard.

b. Chr. sharing was voluntary. Love is a stronger motive than law, and devotion and discipleship than duty.

- 1) True, giving and liberality is commanded (1 Cor. 16:1-2).
- 2) However, the degree and extent of giving is not mandated. Giving can be according to prosperity (1 Cor. 16:1-2 Acts 11:27-30), which seems to be expected, and beyond prosperity (2 Cor. 8-9, 4:32-37).
- 3) Jesus was the ultimate giver (Eph. 5:25)--no place to lay His head but a place prepared of His father. The new commandment was "Love one another AS I HAVE LOVED YOU." In everything, look to His example:
 - in handling suffering (1 Peter 2:21-)
 - in showing love.
 - in being an humble, obedient servant (Phil. 2:5-, John 13:35, Matt. 20:26-28).

3. The apostles gave witness of the resurrection of Jesus in a powerful way. The unity which Jesus prayed for was being observed by the world.

- a. The first work of the church is preaching! Great Commission. The book of Acts is about preaching first and foremost (Luke 24:47-49, Acts 1:8). The apostles begin the book preaching (2:14-) and end it preaching (28:30-31). Only belief and obedience of the message that is preached saves the soul (Rom. 10:13-18, 1 Cor. 1:17-2 Thess. 2:13-14). The church's main neglect, I believe today is failing to preach the "whole counsel of God," the fundamentals and the adding to, the things to be observed (Acts 20:26-27, Heb. 6, 2 Peter 1:5-11, Gal. 5:22-23, Matt. 28:20).
- b. However, people look for people who are interested in people in tangible, visible, touching, caring, feeding, clothing, nursing, lifting, counseling, crying with, providing for ways. AND THAT IS LEGITIMATE! Jesus did those things, and He calls

upon us to do them and says our judgment will involve our doing or not doing these things (Matt. 25). A warning or admonition:

- 1) The church is not a welfare society. We cannot help everybody in need. "As we therefore have opportunity..." (Gal. 6:10). Jesus, who had the resources, did not help everybody, and in fact, rebuked those who followed Him simply for physical things. "It is accepted to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (2 Cor. 8:12). Neither does Jesus intend "that other men be eased, and ye be burdened, BUT BY AN EQUALITY..." (vs. 13-15). Paul labored to provide for his own needs (when he had a right to ask or receive such, 1 Cor. 9). And he commands us, "that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thess. 3:10), and describes him as a disorderly brother to be disciplined.
- 2) The emphasis is helping those we can, which is our Christian duty and privilege. "Bear ye one another burdens, considering thyself..." We do so because it is the Christian thing to do (Eph. 2:10, Gal. 2:10), NOT TO WIN CONVERTS. However, it is certainly a contributing factor to winning souls just as the conduct of the wife is toward the conversion of her husband (1 Peter 3:1-2). The husband is not actually converted by the conduct of the wife; one is only converted who hears and obeys the gospel (Rom. 10:13-17). But he would not listen to the word at first until he sees the life of Christ in his wife. This is the meaning of "without the word." We will never convert anyone just by a good life. We or someone must speak to them. But they may not hear unless we "show our faith by our works" (James. 2:14-17). There is much truth in the saying, "I would rather see a sermon than hear one any day; I would rather someone walk with me than merely point the way." And the companion thought: "I can't hear what you say because of the way you are living." BALANCE IS THE KEY! "These ought ye to have done --the preaching the word is essential (the Reformation restored preaching and breathed life into a sacramental, sacerdotal, creedal, corpse)-- but not to leave the other undone--the poor ye have with ye always, as you can, help them."

NOTE: There is nothing wrong with taking money from the treasury and making distribution for the needy, cf. Acts 6. This includes those who live elsewhere. The need for the distribution in Act 4 and the reason for the complaint in Acts 6 was because many Jews converted Jerusalem had not returned home. They perhaps stayed to be taught. They were not indolent; otherwise, they would not have received help (2 Thes. 3). Some toady are like Judas who carried the treasury and through money, greed (or stinginess) can become

anti-Christ's example: "This is a waste."

4. The introduction of a great servant of God--Barnabas.
 - a. Personal data.
 1. From Cyprus.
 2. A Levite.
 3. Prosperous, generous, owned property and sold it to help the poor.
 - b. Nature or character--an exhorter, an encourager.
 - 1) By word, preaching.
 - 2) By sharing, giving of possessions.

ACTS CHAPTER 5

TROUBLE/DISCIPLINE IN THE CHURCH (5:1-11)

Introduction: The story of Ananias is to the book of Acts what the story of Achan is to the book of Joshau. This account demonstrates the almost stubborn honesty of the Bible. Virtues and vices of men are presented--warts and all (ex. Oliver Cromwell). EVIDENCE OF INSPIRATION!

In preview, some things that may be learned from this account:

1. Giving is a voluntary act.
 2. Satan has great power to deceive and influence.
 3. Man, through Christ, has power to resist Satan.
 4. Man cannot fool God.
 5. Sin will be punished.
 6. Church discipline is necessary for the progress of the gospel.
-
1. Christianity requires a high ethical standard.
 - a. A & S sin was one of hypocrisy, deceit and dishonesty. They were lying to the Holy Spirit and to God, v. 3.4. Their sin was not in refusing to give all.
 - b. Ethics commended and commanded and hypocrisy punished (1 Peter 2:9-10, Matt. 22:37-39, 23:1-37, Rom. 12:1-2, 9-21).
 2. Giving is voluntary.??
 - a. The command is to give according to prosperity, 1 Cor. 16:1-2.
 - 1) Giving may be according to prosperity (1 Cor. 16:1-)
 - 2) Beyond prosperity (2 Cor. 8:1-5).
 - 3) Or all (Acts 5).NOTE: Not every apostolic example is binding (for ex: meeting in an upper room or preaching until midnight). Unless the example is backed by a specific command, it is not binding on us.
 - b. The choice of selling and giving was theirs.
 - 1) They were not forced to sell or if they chose to, to give any certain percent.
 - 2) The communal or sharing of property in Acts 4 was voluntary. Phil. 2:3-4, "Love thy brother as thyself", etc. teach consideration and help of others. We must have that motive, but the manner is a matter of choice, judgment and expediency. NOTE: The only time Jesus told a man to sell ALL was to a man who was covetous, whose money had come between him and God.
 3. Their sin was hypocrisy, trying to deceive God.

- a. They may have thought they were merely lying to men.
 - 1) They wanted to have the praise of men--like Barnabas. Jesus said regarding giving, "Let not your right hand know..." and he condemned the Pharisees for a showy giving, Matt. 7:1-4.
 - 2) They were also motivated by the love of money, (1 Tim. 6:7-10). NOTE: If their greed or selfishness had been as strong as some today however, they would never have even sold the land.
- b. They were actually testing the Spirit's power in the apostles and their apostolic authority, v. 3,4.
 - 1) The apostles' word is the authority.
 - "All thing that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16:15).
 - "...it is not ye that speak, but the Sirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matt. 10:19-20). (cf. Luke 24:49, Acts 1:8, Acts 2:42, 1 Cor. 14:37, 1 Thess. 2:13, 2 Thess. 2:13-15, 2 Peter 3:1-2, 1 John 1:1-5, 4:1-6)
 - 2) One particular power the apostles possessed was "discerning the spirits" (1 Cor. 12). While their intention may have been to deceive men (apostles), the result was "to tempt the Spirit of the Lord." Cf. 1 John 4:1. Jesus knew what was in men (John 2:24:25), the apostles through the Spirit seem able to do the same.

Note: The Spirit is referred to as God and as the Spirit of the Lord, establishing the DEITY of the Spirit, the UNITY OF PURPOSE, WORK AND RELATIONSHIP, while remaining DISTINCTIVE IN PERSONALITY!

4. The power of Satan and the yeilding of man in combination.

- a. Satan is the GREAT deceiver (Rev. 12:11, 1 Peter 5:8, 2 Cor. 11:13-14, Gen. 3:1-).
 - 1) Satan has power over men by reason of sin (1 Cor. 15:56, Heb. 2:14).
 - 2) By deceiving or tempting men to sin, he kills them John 8:44, 1 John 3:8, Heb. 2:14-15, James 5:19-20). > PRW 11:18
 - 3) He may deceive by materialism (ex: Ananias and Sapphira) or fornication (1 Cor. 5), cf. 1 John 2:15-17, Satan appealed to A & S pride, to Eve's, to the Jews, to diotrefhes. PRIDE AND SELFISHNESS are at the root of every sin!
- b. However, Satan cannot force us to sin; he tempts, we yield or agree.
 - 1) "Why hath Satan filled thine heart...?"
 - 2) "...ye have agreed together to tempt..."
 - 3) Satan could not have filled unless they had agreed. Satan entered into Judas and put the desire into Judas' heart to betray Jesus (John 13:2,27). | SHW 2:15H
Judas had to agree however. Judas went to his own

place because he agreed to Satan's appeal--to his pride and selfishness (love for money). SATAN is the instigator and originator of sin (1 John 3:8, John 8:44). Yet A & S are as guilty as though Satan had done nothing. Ex: death of Jesus, the Jews, by agreeing to the temptation of Satan (John 8:31-) put Jesus to death, and in doing so, fulfilled the purpose which God had foreknown and determined beforehand (Acts 2:23), yet they were as GUILTY as though Satan had done nothing. We can't get by by saying, "The devil made me do it." "I couldn't help it." "This is just the way I am." GOD WOULD NOT CONDEMN US FOR BEING JUST THE WAY WE ARE IF WE COULD NOT HELP IT!

c. We can resist (1 Pet 5:8-9). GOD GIVE US POWER (1 Cor. 10:13, Phil. 4:13, Heb. 13:5-6, 2 Tim. 4:6-8, 14-).

1) "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God..." (James 4:7-8). God will keep us if we will keep ourselves (1 John 5:22-25).

2) TEMPTED when drawn away of own lust (desire) order is bait, lure--money, sex, prominence--lust (desire on our part, MAY DESIRE AND NOT ACT OR FOLLOW THROUGH ON ACT--ex: lust after woman in his heart) loot (sin brought forth), and last end (James 1:14-15). GOD NOT RESPONSIBLE! WHO FORCES US TO LIE, STEAL, FAIL TO DO GOOD? Satan can use pressure, peers, and ploys, 2 Cor. 2:11. Be wise as serpents, Be vigilant (aware), Prove all things, Beware, Try the spirits, discern good and evil, Keep yourself from idols, Harden not your hearts, Be diligent--on and on the warnings go (1 Peter 5:8, 1 Thess. 5:21, 1 John 4:1, Col. 2:8, Matt. 2:15). WE DON'T HAVE TO SIN, BUT WHEN AS GOD'S CHILDREN WE DO, THERE IS FORGIVENESS (1 John 1:5-2:2).

NOTE: Sometime when one genuinely repents, he does not forgive himself or the church will not forgive him and let him forget. In this case, trys to get the person who was forgiven to be overcome with excessive sorrow (compare 1 Cor. 5 with 2 Cor.)

5. The need, nature and effect of church discipline.

a. In A & S case, the need was that if their deceit and hypocrisy had gone undetected and corrected, the whole fabric of apostolic authority would have been undermined, the faith of disciples might have been overthrown and the world laughing at the church. The nature of the discipline was DEATH QUICKLY AND PUBLICLY!

1) The death, execution, punishment was either

- God's doing as in the case of Herod (Acts 12).
- 2) Or the action of the apostle Peter (cf. Paul in Cyprus, Acts 13:7-).

The effect of the discipline was 3 fold:

- 1) Great fear came upon all the church (v. 11).
thus discouraging such further sins among disciples.
- 2) The church grew, v. 14.
- 3) God's name and justice was vindicated (Heb. 2:1-2, 10:26-31, Rom. 2:4-5). The incident in ch. 5 contributed to the statement in Acts 9:31. FEAR OR REVENGE OF GOD STIMULATES GIDLINESS AND SPEEDS UP EVANGELISTIC SUCCESS!

NOTE: Eccl. 8:11 teaches that because an evil work is not judged or executed speedily, the heart of man is set to do evil. (Ex. in America when criminals were quickly tried and punished; in Nigeria armed robber shot and picture put in newspaper).

b. Discipline in the church today:

- 1) Is needed (1 Cor. 5, Titus 3, 2 Thess. 3, 1 Thess. 5:14). Paul delivered some to Satan that they learn not to blaspheme.
- 2) The nature of it is not sudden death, but first of all reproofs mingled with pleas for repentance and restoration (cf. Rev. 2:5, Matt. 18:15-17, Titus 3:10), then to be followed by withdrawal of fellowship. THE MOTIVATION IS OUT OF LOVE, SEEKING THE HIGHEST GOOD OF THE PERSON—salvation of his soul, not just contentment on the earth or what would be easier or less sacrificial to him (why in divorce and remarriage, God's will, one's relationship to God and one's eternal destiny is of greater concern and priority than children in the home, financial concerns, what peers think, etc. WHAT IS WORTH MORE?
- 3) The purpose is save the one guilty (1 Cor. 5:5, 2 Thess. 3:14-15), protect the church (1 Cor. 5:6-13, Rom. 16:16-17) and to be a signal to the world that the church stands for something.

c. Discipline in the church today is:

- 1) Preventive, instruction. 1 Thess. 5:14. All teaching (Matt. 28:20) is of this type. The word "disciple" comes from the word "discipline."
- 2) Corrective, 1 Cor. 5, 2 Thess. 3, 2 John 9.
NOTE: In the case in Acts 5, Jesus would not allow Satan to destroy the work of the Spirit through the apostles...not allow benevolence to be discredited...not allow the growth of the church to stop.

THE ATTRACTION OF CHRISTIANITY (5:12-16)

Introduction: This paragraph is a further summary such as we have seen already in 2:43-47 and 4:32-35. It provides a transition to the incident which open in v. 17.

1. Increased signs and wonders. Mark 16:17-20
Hcb 2:1-2
 - a. Greater number of miracles were not because of increased power but because of increased zeal for healing among the people.
 - b. The general atmosphere is like that of the earlier days of our Lord's Galilaean ministry (Mark 1:32-34). Peter's shadow was as powerful a medium of healing as Jesus' robe had been.
 - c. Validity of the miracles are seen. Healings were widespread, public, instantenous and of various kinds.
2. The fear and awe of the people.
 - a. Many were impressed, influenced by the church.
 - 1) "Believers were added..." (by the same plan as Acts 2).
 - 2) "And of the rest dared no man join himself to them, but the people magnified them". People brought many to be healed. However, those who did not believe (were not committed to real discipleship) did not join themselves to the church because they had seen the fate of A & S. The church was a secure place for one who "would continue in the apostles' doctrine." However, it could be insecure in that a high standard of living was expected and every false way would be corrected. (People who wish to make a compromise with sin and who "join" a church just for appearance of religion will avoid such a church. Is the church today a HOSPITAL FOR SICK SOULS DESIRING A CURE...a PRISON OF HARDENED, IMPENTINENT, LAWBREAKERS...COUNTRYCLUB FOR SOCIAL-CONSCIOUS, RELIGIOUS-LOOKING FOLKS WHO WANT TO SUCCEED AND POSSIBLY MASK THEIR SINS? Which? Cf. Laodicea, Sardis, etc. "The Lord knoweth tham that are his. And let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19-21).

Barclay's outline:

1. Its tells where the church met. The church was growing rapidly; many could meet there. They were constant in worship to God.
2. It tells how the church met. They did not hide their Christianity in a corner.
3. The early church was an effective church. Men will still come to a church where lives are changed, standards are upheld and people are helped.

ARREST AND TRIAL AGAIN (5:17-32)

Introduction: Not long before Peter and John had been imprisoned, then dismissed with a warning (4:18-21). The apostles kept on preaching. Also, additional works of healing had created even more excitement than that at the beautiful Gate (3:1-). Thus, the Sanhedrin this time arrested all the apostles (5:17-), and locked them up overnight with the intention of taking more drastic steps the next day.

1. The escape.

- a. God cares for His people-either seeing Him through trial or in this case delivering them from it. *Heb 1:14*
- b. God uses angels in behalf of His people.
 - 1) Acts contains six references to angels (5:19, 8:26, 10:3, 12:7,23, 27:23).
 - 2) Today, angels minister to God's people (Heb. 1:14), escorting Chrs. in death (Lazarus), are concerned about salvation (Luke 15). Their work is not spelled out but could be considered with the realm of God's providence.

2. The faithfulness of the apostles.

Barclay:

- a. They were men of courage. They went straight back to the temple, a place where they would soon be discovered.
- b. They were men of principle. They never asked "Is this course of action safe?" They asked "Is that what God wants me to do?" They were willing to RISK for God because the victory was certain. Even seeming defeat (ex. their being beaten, Stephen's death, the church scattered, James' death, Paul stoned, the Judaizers opposition, Paul's arrest and imprisonment) was a victory! In every case, the gospel kept progressing. Ex: Disciples multiplied, Acts 6:1, church left preaching, 8:4, church prayed, Herod killed, word of God grew and multiplied, 12:24, gospel preached, souls exhorted, churches organized, 14:21-23, gospel went to Phillip, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, etc, Paul preached in Rome, saints in Caesar's household.
- c. They had a clear idea of their duty and their function.
 - 1) They were reminded of the earlier warning, v. 28. The statement "ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine..." was the enemies' admission they were doing their duty.
 - 2) The apostles' answer indicated they were going to continue doing it; "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

3. The heart of apostolic preaching is found in Peter's defense, cf. 2:22-24, 3:11-, 4:1-2.

- a. The death of Christ, propitiation or payment (Rom. 3:24-26), justification, reconciliation and atonement (Rom. 5:9-11), redemption (Eph. 1:7, Rom. 3:24), righteousness (2 Cor. 5:18-21), a curse for us (Gal.

Christ our ~~Redeemer~~ ^{ATONE}

HEB 4:14-8 High Priest

1 TIM 2:1-2 → ADVOCATE

3:12-13), suffered God's wrath for sin (Rom. 5:9, Heb 7:25 ^{INTERCESSOR}
1 Thes. 1:10, 1 Peter 2:24, 3:18).

- b. The resurrection of Christ, declaring His victory (Rom. 1:4) and our victory (Rom. 4:25, John 11:25-26, Rev. 1:18, 1 Peter 3:22).

- c. The exaltation of Jesus, cf. 2:33-36. God bestowed the highest honor upon Him, cf. Heb. 1:3, Phil. 2:9-11, Eph. 1:19-23. GOD EXALTED JESUS TO BE 3 THINGS:
1) A Prince (Is. 9:6-7, Acts 3:15).
2) Savior (1 Tim. 1:12-15, Luke 18:10, Matt. 1:21, 2 Tim. 1:9-10).

NOTE: Repentance as well as remission of sins is a gift
But repentance cannot be given without one's consent
(cf. Acts 3:19).

Note: The apostles respond to the Sanhedrin's first charge in v. 29 of disobedience and then in vs. 30-31 answer the second charge of bringing Jesus' blood upon them by saying it was innocent blood which they shed, and this was proved by His resurrection and ascension.

4. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, cf. 2:38.
a. The Holy Spirit is figuratively described as living water, John 7:37-39.
b. Our bodies are the temple (1 Cor. 6:19-20).
c. The Spirit is a seal and an earnest of our inheritance (Eph. 1:13-14, 2 Cor. 1:22).
d. We know God dwells in us because of the Spirit He has given us (1 John 3:24, 4:13).
e. The Spirit intercedes for us (Rom. 8:26-27), guides us through the Word (Rom. 8:5, Eph. 6:17) and will raise us up at the last day (Rom. 8:11).
f. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his..." (Rom. 8:9-10).

AN UNEXPECTED ALLY, GAMALIEL'S ADVICE (5:33-42)

GOD USED HIS REASONING

used by God But
NOT OF GOD

Introduction: The Sadducean leaders (5:17) were so enraged that they considered passing a sentence of death upon the apostles. But they could take no action without the support of the Pharisee members of the Sanhedrin. The Pharisees were in the minority (never over 6000) but were more respected than the Sadducees. Gamaliel was the greatest teacher of his day, a disciple of Hillel and a teacher of Saul of Tarsus. Men called him "The beauty of the law." And when he died, it was said, "Since Rabban died, there had been no reverence for the law, and purity and abstinence died out at the same time." Gamaliel commanded that the apostles be taken out of the presence of the Sanhedrin in order that he might speak privately to those on the council.

1. The advice of Gamaliel.
a. The Pharisees had a belief which combined fate and

free-will. They believed that all things were in the hands of God and yet they believed that man was responsible for his actions. "Everything is foreseen," they said, "yet freedom of choice is given."

- b. "Take heed...Refrain from these men, and let them alone, for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: BUT IF IT BE OF GOD, YE CANNOT OVERTHROW IT; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

- 1) So Gamaliel's point was that they must be cautious lest they were exercising the free-will to go against God.
- 2) His advice consists of "sound Pharisaic teaching; God is over all, and needs no help from men for the fulfillment of His purposes; all men must do is to obey, and leave the issue to Him."
- 3) A second century sandal-maker stated, "Every assembly which is in the name of heaven will finally be established, but that which is not in the name of heaven will not finally be established."
- 4) Gamaliel illustrates his point by reminding them of other movements within their lifetime which for a time enjoyed great support but were finally overthrown.
 - Theudas (no certain information).
 - Judas of Galilee (led a revolt in A.D. 6, which was crushed by Rome, but lived on in the Zealots).
- 5) His advice was "Wait and see." This helpful to the apostles. God could use a decree by Cyrus; uses various Roman officials throughout Acts (cf. Acts introduction) and now uses Gamaliel. WAIT AND SEE IS NOT A GOOD POLICY FOR CHRISTIANS.
- 6) They accepted his advice and settled for a minor penalty of flogging.

2. The first physical persecution of Christians.

- a. The punishment was partly face-saving, a way of showing their disfavor. The Jews knew the apostles' courage, and that they would likely do as they had before.
- b. Suffering allows one to identify with Christ and that we might complete His sufferings in our body (Col. 1:20-24). Rejoice in suffering for Christ (1 Petre 3:12-18, 4:12-19).

3. The Christian-attitude after being delivered.

- a. One attitude possible is "That was close; I will not make that mistake again. God needs me alive. I will still be faithful, will outwardly pretend to obey the Jews, but be a Chr. on the inside. Or I will preach but somewhere else."
- b. Their attitude:
 - 1) Rejoicing.
 - 2) Faithful preaching, publicly and everywhere they wanted. WHAT WOULD OUR ATTITUDE HAVE BEEN???

Rv 12:11

ACTS CHAPTERS 6-7

THE APPOINTMENT OF THE SEVEN (6:1-7)

How Acts 6: 7 (test)

Introduction: Luke now records a new and momentous advance in the church. He had concluded his account of the second persecution. He will discuss a third persecution to follow. The rapid growth of the church will not be without problems. In fact, the solution of a problem contributes to the continual growth of the church.

** Perfect
w/ knowledge
Always be displayed*

1. THE PROBLEM, 6:1.

a. The unity which had bound the disciples together (2:44-47, 4:32-37) is now threatened or tested.

1) Jewish Christians are described as either Hebrews (Aramic-speaking Jews, most native of Palestine) or Grecian or Hellenist (whose native language was Greek, many of whom were scattered or dispersed)

2) The church had grown rapidly, and many needy were cared for, specially widows (cf. Acts 2,4, James 1:27, 2:14-17, 1 John 3:17-18).

3) The apostles were busy; thus, the Grecian widows were overlooked in the daily distribution. This led to complaining.

b. Growth brings challenges or problems--more needs and responsibilities. Thus, unity is tested. (The devil can take advantage of even good things--like growth, conversions, etc.)

1. For one thing, real needs can be overlooked without meaning to and cause resentment as in this case.

2. Also, Satan can plant the seed of dissatisfaction when there is no cause.

2. THE SOLUTION, 6:2-6.

a. When a need arises, solve it. Problems are to be and can be solved with God's help. (Phil. 4:13,19, Eph. 3:20-21). Problems never go away. They always get worse. Failure to solve them can cripple or kill a good work. (Imagine what would have had happened if the apostles had not acted decisively and quickly).

b. The apostles called upon the church to be a part of the solution.

1) The apostles could not do it. They were twelve. They were commissioned to pray and preach. (The Great Commission will not be accomplished without prayer, cf. John 4, Eph. 6:19-20). They could not forsake that assignment without being wrong in so doing. (We need to use the talent or do the ONE THING God places before us at that moment, cf. Phil. 3:13). The apostles were not above doing this benevolent, shepherding, physical ministry.

2) The right thing to do was involve somebody else both in doing it and seeing it was done. God's

W. 725

Can 6:10

2. ministering

Serving table

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*UN 74
IC Panged For
way 2:13:20 21
Pm 1:10:13
Pm 1:10:13
EPH 4 4-6*

plan is for leaders to involve and lead the flock. They cannot do it all. Members also have ability and responsibility. (Tell me; I forget...show me, I understand...involve me, I remember).

c. Three things are involved.

- 1) A work to be done. The work of service (*diakonis*) is translated minister, servant, deacon.
- 2) Qualifications to be met. They were to be men of "good report" (honorable reputation), "full of the Spirit" (the fruits of a holy life) and "wisdom" (practical good sense and administrative ability). Servant-leaders of the congregations embody these qualifications.
- 3) An appointment to be made. The congregation did the selecting. The apostles did the appointing. We are not told how the choice was made, whether by balloting, etc. Thus, each church is left to its own judgment.
 - a. All selected had Greek names, which suggests they all belonged to the Hellenistic Jews. (There was no selfishness or jealousy on the part of the Hebrew Chrs. They trusted their Greecian brothers to fairly and wisely carry out this good work).
 - b. They received "gifts from the Spirit" (miraculous); they had already received the "gift" of the Spirit when they became Chrs (2:38, 5:32), and were said to be "filled with the Spirit" (bearing the fruit of the Spirit). Stephen and Philip use these miraculous powers (6:8, 8:5-). Until this time, only the apostles worked miracles. Acts 8 will show the laying on of the apostles' hands is required to give these gifts to another.

3. THE RESULT (6:7).

- a. The church grew rapidly. The progress is seen in the
 - 1) The progress is seen in the numerous converts' "multiplied greatly".
 - 2) But also "in a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith". When they give way, the system which they uphold is about to fall.
NOTE: The faith refers to the gospel, the truth or body of teaching. It is to be obeyed. Cf. Rom. 1:5, 16:25-26.
- b. The church grows rapidly only as "the word increased."
 - 1) The amount of the word increases as more tell the story, cf. 8:4, 11:19.
 - 2) Also, the effect increases. The more favorable condition of the church when the murmuring stopped and the introduction of a more responsible organization made the preaching more effective and **GREATER SUCCESS WAS THE RESULT!**
- c. As prayer and preaching, benevolence and preaching go hand in hand. Ira North ex. A need was taken care of. People saw it and would listen to the preaching.

STEPHEN ARRESTED AND FALSELY ACCUSED (6:8-15)

1. Stephen a wonder worker (1 Cor. 12). Signs were confirmation (Heb. 2:3-4).
2. Stephen a preacher. He was directed by the same Spirit as the apostles.
3. Preaching arouses opposition.
 - a. This opposition came from the synagogue of the Hellenistic Jews. The freedmen were Jews who had been slaves. The mention of Cilicia may mean that Saul of Tarsus attended here. What an opportunity and what a danger. Note: "a great door and many adversaries."
 - b. Stephen's reasoning provoked such opposition that a full scale debate was probably arranged.
 - 1) It was the first time the disciples had met the enemy in open discussion.
 - 2) The exact subject of the debate is not discussed. It, of course, no doubt concerned the Messiahship of Jesus. The nature of the argument may be inferred from the charges brought against him and from his reply. These charges consist of blasphemous words against Moses and God, and the holy place and the law. Stephen knew that the work of Christ abolished and broke down the wall, the law (Col. 2:14, Eph. 2:15) and made men dead to it or freed from it (Rom. 7:4, 6:14). He knew that the temple had been replaced by one not made with hands. Jesus Himself had said, "...one greater than the temple is here." (Mat. 12:6).
 - c. False witnesses were hired.
 - 1) The Pharisees have charge of the case. They had greater influence than the Sadducees. And they are cunning enough to make the charge against the whole body of Chrs. or the apostles (who were popular) but against a single person whom they could make an example.
 - 2) The witnesses were false as those who testified against Jesus (Matt. 26:59-61, Mark 14:55-59). Their charge against Jesus was in the statement, "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will raise it up." (Mark 14:58, Matt. 26:61, though John gives the true significance, John 2:19-21).
4. With God, who can stand against us? (Rom. 8:31)
 - a. "And all...fastened their eyes on him..."
 - 1) Nothing was supernatural about his appearance.
 - 2) The countenance is accounted for by his character. He knew that he stood where Jesus had stood. He knew the supreme hour of his life had come. Words of Jesus "if they have persecuted me, they will persecute you"... "Fear not them which kill the

body, but are not able to kill the soul"... "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak"... "I will be with you"... Because of these "EXCEEDING GREAT AND PRECIOUS PROMISES," his speech would be one of passion (v. 10), and his emotions would be white-hot (cf. Jer. 20:9). He was a warrior facing the enemy with the full armor of the Christian (2 Tim. 2:3, Eph. 6: 10-17). He was guaranteed victory no matter what the outcome to him personally (Rom. 8:31-39, 1 Cor. 15:56-58). PICTURE MOSES BEFORE PHAROAH...ELIJAH BEFORE THE PROPHETS OF AHAB...DANIEL DEFYING THE DECREE OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR and later PAUL (Stephen's executor) before Felix, Festus, Herod and Caesar. He was facing the murderers of Christ. His message and the manner of his presentation made "his face as it had been the face of an angel."

STEPHEN'S SERMON OR DEFENSE (7:1-53)

SUMMARY: It is a defense of pure Christianity as God's appointed way of worship. He is the forerunner of the later Christian apologists who defend Chr. against Judaism. The charges against Stephen were garbled. He sets forth the arguments of which these charges were travesties.

1. The beginning and end of the speech, in particular, insist that the presence of God is not restricted to any one land or building.
2. Another feature of the speech became a regular element of anti-Judaic apologetic writings--the Jews refusal to acknowledge Jesus is in keeping with their rebellious attitude to God's messenger throughout the Old Test period.
 - a. Joseph's brothers hated him.
 - b. Moses was rejected by the people more than once.
 - c. The prophets were killed.
3. The opening words of Stephen's defense imply that the people of God must be on the march, must pull up the their tent-stakes as Abraham did, leaving national exclusivism and ancestral ritual, and go out where God may lead. Stephen blazes a trail later followed by Paul and especially the Hebrew writer.

OUTLINE: Stephen's historical survey reviews the history of the nation from the call of Abraham to the building of Solomon's temple. It concentrates on three main topics.

1. The Patriarchal Period (vs. 2-16).
2. Moses and the Law, (vs. 17-43).
3. The tabernacle and the temple (vs. 44-50).

The first of the three sections of his speech is an introduction to the central themes, the second deals with the charge of blasphemy against Moses, the third with the charge of blasphemy against God.

McGarvey's outline consists of:

Acts 7

1. The introduction (vs. 1-8).
2. Joseph (vs. 9-16).
3. Moses in Egypt (vs. 17-37) and in ^{the} wilderness (vs. 38-41).
5. God's final rejection of Israel (vs. 42-43).
6. The tabernacle and the temple (vs. 44-50).
7. The application (vs. 51-53).

STEPHEN STONED TO DEATH (7:54-8:1)

1. The reward of death (Phil. 1:21-23).
 - a. Jesus commanded "Be thou faithful..." (Rev. 2:10).
 - b. Devout men carried him to his burial but angels (like they did to Lazarus) bore him gently to Abraham's bosom.
2. The vision of Jesus. Not many years before Jesus stood before the same court and in response to the high priest's question "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the blessed God?" Jesus answered, "I AM AND YE SHALL SEE THE SON OF MAN SITTING ON THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER AND COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN." (Mark 14:61-62) And now Stephen was making the same claim on Jesus' behalf as He had made for Himself. He was claiming the words of Jesus had not been blasphemous and false but words of sober truth which had received their vindication and fulfillment from God.
 - a. Daniel saw ONE "LIKE UNTO THE SON OF MAN" brought into the presence of the Ancient of Days to receive at his hands dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:13-14)
 - b. Peter had preached from Ps. 110: "Sit thou on my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool". Pre-millennialism is dead!!!
3. The new enemy--Saul of Tarsus.

ACTS CHAPTER 8

INTRODUCTION: Ch. 8 is an important chapter in the history of the church. The theme verse which outlines Acts is 1:8: "And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

1. Acts 2-7 show the spread of the gospel in Jerusalem and Judea.
2. Acts 8 finds the church reaching out into Samaria.
 - a. First, Philip (one of the 7 and to be distinguished from Philip, one of the 12) preached to the Samaritans. The Samaritans formed a natural bridge between Jew and Gentile.
 - b. Secondly, Philip preaches to a eunuch from Ethiopia as the gospel takes still another step out to still wider circle. (As yet the church had no concept of a world mission and a world church. But the church unconsciously and irresistibly is moving toward her destiny and duty (which was God's will all along, cf. Eph. 3:1-11, Gen. 12:3, Matt. 28:18-20).
3. Acts ch. 10 will complete the circle or begin its completion "unto the uttermost part of the earth—the Gentiles, those afar off" (Acts 2:39, Eph. 2:13).

1. Widescale and fierce persecution.
 - a. The widening scope.
 - 1) Peter and John were involved in the first persecution (Acts 4).
 - 2) The 12 were involved in the second (Acts 5).
 - 3) With the exception of Stephen (whose boldness mobilized the Sanhedrin), the whole church is now under attack.
 - b. The intensity of the attack.
 - 1) The SADDUCEES who arrested Peter and John tried first threatening, then imprisonment and beatings. They were about to follow with the death of the 12 when the counsel of the moderate members like Gamaliel led to a discussion and milder treatment.
 - 2) But the cause of Christ was advanced instead of set back by the imprisonment and scourging. (The darker the night the brighter the Light glows. When the going gets tough, the tough get going. JESUS IS THE TOUGH ONE, THE HOMBRE, THE GENERAL who leads and supplies, Rev. 19:11-, Phil. 4:19). Therefore, the PHARISEES were moved to follow the Sadducees in using violence.
 - 3) The prime mover in this persecution is Saul of Tarsus.
 - a. Armed with authority (letters from the Sanhedrin, 9:2, 26:10), he "made havoc" of the church—arresting men and women (8:3), pursuing them

to foreign cities, causing them to blaspheme and callin for their deaths (26:9-11).

- b. Saul was conscientious in this task. No one is a fierce and determined enemy than a man who is convinced he is right--and religious zeal is the most fiery of all (26:8). The word "made havoc" denotes a brutal and sadistic cruelty. It is used of a wild animal ravaging a body.
- c. No wonder Jewish Christians were afraid to receive him after he was converted (9:26) and Paul largely unknown to the churches in Judea after his conversion writes "they heard only that he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed" (Gal. 1:23). Paul says he "was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor and injurious..." (1 Tim. 1:12-14). His zeal is demonstrated in persecuting the church Phil. 3:6, cf. 1 Cor. 15:10). He viewed Chrs. not as misguided enthusiasts sincerely embracing error deserving of pity but as deliberate impostors preaching and worshipping a so-called Messiah whose manner of death shows that God's curse rested upon him (Gal. 3:13) and whose life and message threatened "the tradition of the fathers" (Gal. 1:14)

2. A church growing in spite of or because of persecution.

- a. We are to pray "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty..." to the end "that all men will be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:1-6).
- b. However, Paul writes that the churches in Judea were born in suffering (1 Thess.2:14). All that live godly will suffer persecution " (1 Tim. 3:16). Christians should not look for and bring suffering upon themselves as though dedication and approval is measured by scars and bruises! Scars received in sincere service and defense is a different matter (Gal. 6:17). In fact, Chrs. should be shocked when they suffer because they are going against the standard of the world (1 Peter 4:1-5). Christ's example is one of suffering without resentment and retaliation (1 Peter 2:21-24). He did not deserve what he got, but because he challenged the world's lifestyle, taught a higher ethic and demanded a transformed life, the world said, "NO, YOU DENY THAT, APOLOGIZE, CONFORM or DIE." BE HAPPY AND KEEP ON TELLING THE STORY AND LIVING IT because 1) GOD IS GLORIFIED, (cf. Gal. 1:24); 2) YOUR FAITH IS STRENGTHENED (1 Peter 1:7); 3) YOU ARE SAVED (1 Peter 4:16-18) and 4) THOSE WHO FALSELY ACCUSE YOU (honest ones at least) WILL BE ASHAMED (1 Peter 3:14-17)
- c. God did not CAUSE the persecution, but God USED it to save more.
 - 1) 2 Baruch 1:4 states, "I will scatter this people among the Gentiles, that they may do good to the

- Gentiles." Not only did they do this in Palestine (8:4) but also later among the Gentiles (11:19-).
- 2) God used persecution of Joseph to bring people to Egypt and salvation when the world was starving. He used the persecution by Pharoah to bring the Jews to freedom and the promised land. He used the exile by Assyria and Babylon to bring them back home a more theistic and dedicated people.

PHILIP'S PREACHING IN SAMARIA (8:5-13)

INTRODUCTION: The Samaritan woman spoke a proverb when she said, "The Jews have no dealings with Samaritans." The reason for this proverb is that:

1. In the eighth century Assyria conquered the Northern Kingdom whose capital was Samaria. They took a greater part of the Israelites away and settled foreigners in the land. This resulted in a mixed race, and for the Jew this was an unforgivable sin.
2. In the sixth century Babylon conquered Jerusalem and carried the captives away. However, the southern Jews refused to lose their identity.
3. In the fifth century they were allowed to return under Cyrus of Persia and to rebuild their cities. The people of Samaria wanted to help. Those of the southern kingdom refused. This caused division between the Judeans and Samaria.
4. The Samaritans built a rival temple on Mt. Gerizim (which the Samaritan woman referred to, John 4:21-) which was destroyed by John Hyrcanus I (135-104 B.C.).
5. They did, however, share with the Jews the hope of the coming Messiah (John 4:25), whom they envisaged in terms of the Moses-like prophet of Deut. 18:15-, describing him as the restorer.

1. The ministry of Philip.
 - a. Philip, a faithful Christian before being selected by the Jerusalem church, received power from the Holy Spirit through the laying on of the apostles' hands making him able to preach and work miracles.
 - b. Philip was foremost an evangelist (21:8). Luke summarizes his preaching by saying he preached:
 - 1) Christ (8:3). Philip preached Christ to the eunuch (8:35). So Peter on Pentecost (2:22-) and Peter and John (3:13-cf. 18, 5:30-) and Paul immediately after his conversion (9:20, cf. 1 Cor. 11:7-2:5). Preaching Christ means preaching His

*Philip's
Preaching:
Christ*

death and resurrection (2:22-36, 3:13-18, 4:1-2, 8-12, 5:30-33, 7:51-53, 10:34-43, 13:26-17:3 cf. 1 Cor. 15:1-3). Likewise, his ascension, coming again and judgment.

2) Kingdom of God.

Timothy - Christ is King Rev 19:11

- a. Peter preached Christ raised, exalted and sitting (thus ruling as King and Priest, cf. Heb. 1).
- b. Philip preaches the kingdom (composed of men who hear the truth and in whom Jesus dwells, John 18:36-37, Luke 17:20-21, Rom. 14:17). THE KINGDOM IS THE CHURCH (Matt. 16:18-19, Col. 1:13-14, Rom. 3:24, Acts 20:28, John 3:3,5, Acts 2:38, 1 Peter 1:22-25, Titus 3:4-5, etc.).
- c. Paul preached the kingdom (28:31) and spoke of it in the eternal sense (14:22).

*Christ is
mediator
intercession*

*King
Priest & King*

3. And the name of Jesus Christ.

- a. Peter called upon repentance and baptism in His name (2:38).
- b. He later preached "Neither is there salvation in any other name..." *Act 4:12*
- c. Ananias commanded Paul to call upon the name of the Lord in the action of being baptized (22:16).
- d. Peter commanded Cornelius to "be baptized in the name of the Lord" (10:48).
THE CONCLUSION IS THAT THE NAME OF CHRIST MUST DESCRIBE HIS IDENTITY, LORDSHIP, HIS WILL AND AUTHORITY. Salvation is in that name, obedience in repentance and baptism is in that name. When Paul says to the Jailor "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...", he is referring to the person, Savior, Lord, the name in whom there is salvation and then baptizes him in that name (as Peter did).

- 4) He preached baptism, cf. 2:38, 10:48. BAPTISM IS INSEPARABLY TIED TO THE DEATH OF CHRIST (Rom. 6:3-4, Col. 2:11-13), THE NAME OR AUTHORITY OF CHRIST, SALVATION BY CHRIST (Mark 16:15-16, 1 Peter 3:21) and ENTERING INTO CHRIST (where salvation is), cf. Gal. 3:26-27, Rom. 6:3-5, 2 Cor. 5:17, Eph. 4:20-24.

b. He confirmed his preaching by working miracles.

- 1) The healing, casting out of demons, etc. were believable, yes, undeniable.
- 2) They confirmed the preacher and his message (Heb. 2:3-4).

*Preach to convert
miracles to confirm*

2. The reception of the people.

- a. They heard the preaching and saw the miracles which he did.
- b. The result was:
 - 1) There was great joy.
 - 2) There was great attention (vs. 6-8).
 - 3) They shook off the spell which Simon had upon them and believed Philip's preaching. The fact that they without hesitation gave up their faith in Simon as the great power of God and believed in Philip SHOWS

*Acts 20:25
19:8 - 20:6
28:30, 31*

THAT THEY SAW A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TRICKS OF SORCERY AND MIRACLES! Simon's acceptance is perhaps the greatest testimony to the difference between his tricks (sleight of hand) and the real.

- a. Tricks of sorcery were and still cannot often be explained. However they excite curiosity and serve no worthy purpose--HEALING PHYSICAL OR SPIRITUAL!
 - b. Miracles also cannot be explained apart from God (John 3:2, 5:19-23) but are undeniable (John 11, Acts 3-4). They serve as credentials (2 Cor. 12:12) and help people, not the purpose as much as the result.
- 4) When they believed, they were baptized, both men and women. HERE THE STORY ENDS!
- a. Did Simon believe? One states his belief was sincere as far as it goes, but was very unsatisfactory and superficial, referring to John 2:23 as an example. The statement is made perhaps he was baptized fearing he might lose his hold over his former fans.
 - b. Did the Samaritans believe? The Scripture says

the Samaritans and Simon each were baptized. His baptism committed him not only to this faith, but to the abandonment of sorcery as well as all other sins. Peter spoke to him as a brother not an alien sinner: the command was "repent and pray," (8:22), (the command to Chrs. cf. James 5:16), NOT "repent and be baptized." And as an apostle, Peter possessed the power to discern spirits (cf. 5:1-11, 1 John 4:1).

PETER AND JOHN VISIT SAMARIA; THINGS WHICH CANNOT BE BOUGHT AND SOLD (8:14-25)

1. The visit by Peter and John.

- a. Four facts are obvious.
 - 1) The Samaritans, having believed the gospel and been baptized, were saved (Mark 16:16) or forgiven (2:38) and had received the "gift of the Holy Spirit."
 - 2) After they had been converted long enough, the news reached Jerusalem, and they sent Peter and John.
 - 3) Before their arrival, the Holy Spirit with his miraculous powers had fallen upon none.
 - 4) But when Peter and John came and laid hands upon the Samaritans, the Holy Spirit with its miraculous powers fell upon them.
- b. From the facts we draw conclusions:
 - 1) Whatever other purposes may have motivated the coming of Peter and John, their chief purpose was to impart the gifts or power of the Holy Spirit. (WE KNOW THE PURPOSE OF A PERSON BY WHAT THEY DO AS WELL AS WHAT THEY SAY).

- a. Philip was an inspired man, himself possessing miraculous power from the Spirit. Yet no powers exist among the Samaritans while he is there alone.
- b. Peter and John confer this power. The Samaritans receive it (v. 17) and Simon sees it (v. 18). While a sorcerer, using sleight of hand and mind manipulation, he nevertheless has an eye for a power greater than his. He wants that power. Peter, in rebuking Simon, does not try to convince Simon that there is no such thing or that the power does come from his hands, but he simply says the power is not for you. Your heart is not right and the gift cannot be bought with money anyway.

NOTE: Cf. Acts 19:1-6 and 2 Tim. 1:6 for other examples of powers given by the apostles' hands. Contrast with 1 Tim. 4:14, Acts 13:3.

- 2) The fact that these Chrs. enjoyed forgiveness and church membership before receiving miraculous powers proves that this gift had nothing to do with these blessings.
- 3) The statement "as yet he had fallen upon none of them, only they had been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus," shows there was no such connection between baptism and the miraculous gift Spirit.
- 4) In general miracles indicated divine approval or confirmation. In addition, supernatural mental powers were included. Their visit would impart knowledge, the discerning of spirits, etc. as well as to convince unbelievers of the reality of their claim.

2. The proposal of Simon.

- a. The word "simony" comes from this act.
- b. The proposal shows the power did not come directly from heaven as in Acts 2 and 10. It came by the apostles' hands.
- c. His request is reasonable in that he was asking for something real and substantial. But it was sinful.
 - 1) Peter tells him he is heading for the bitter gall and the bonds which are the penalty of his sins.
 - 2) His heart was not right. (If the heart is not right, no act or worship or submission is acceptable, cf. Matt. 15:7-9, OT prop, Micah 6, Amos 5, Hosea 6, Ps 51). But even if his heart had been right, he would have still had no part in imparting the Holy Spirit to another. This is why the apostles are referred to as laying and being in the foundation of Chr. (1 Cor. 3, Eph. 2:20). Once the foundation is laid, their work is done. They sit upon 12 thrones, judging...during the period of the regeneration when Christ rules. This is through the confirmed word which they

preached. Once confirmed, it is ever confirmed.
d. He must repent or be lost.

PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH (8:26-40)

ACTS CHAPTER 13-14--FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

PAUL AND BARNABAS GO TO CYPRUS 13:1-12

1. Paul and Barnabas are set apart for the work (13:1-3).
 - a. Prophets and teachers were leaders, v. 1.
 - 1) Some Chrs. possessed miraculous gifts (1 Cor. 12, cf. 1 Tim. 4:14, Acts 11:27-30). *2 Tim 1:6 Acts 19:6*
 - 2) This was part of the supernatural structure and foundation (Heb. 2:3-4, Mark 16:17-20, 1 Cor. 13:8-13).
 - b. The Holy Spirit made known his will (through these prophets and teachers) respecting the ministry of Paul and Barnabas, v. 2.
 - 1) God often used the Spirit to instruct and guide his servants in apostolic times (apostles, 2:4, 4:31, Stephen, 6:8-10, Philip, 8:26, Peter, Acts 10:19, Paul, 16:7,10). *God used Vision to reveal His will to inspired new*
 - 2) The prophetic call to preaching and mission was accompanied by prayer and fasting and laying on of hands. *PHILIP PETER Insiters at Antioch AGABUS*
 - a. Prayer and fasting was associated with religious decisions, commitment, repentance, etc. (Saul, 9:11).
 - b. Laying on of hands expressed the fellowship of the church and recognized them as its "apostles." They were sent out by the whole church, and they reported to them upon their return (14:26-28).
2. Paul and Barnabas go to Cyprus (13:4-12).
 - a. Their route, destination and purpose. v/ 4-
 - 1) They sailed from Seleucia, the port city of Antioch and sailed to Salamis at the east end of Cyprus (the native land of Barnabas).
 - 2) Cyprus was annexed by Rome in 57 B.C. In 55 B.C., it was incorporated in to the province of Galatia. In 27 B.C., it became a separate province governed by an imperial legate. In 22 B.C., Augustus gave it over to the control of the Roman senate, and like other senatorial provinces, it was administered by a proconsul, v. 7. (Luke is a reliable historian, cf. Life of Paul, EXCURSUS, XVI, "coins and inscriptions.")
 - 3) From Salamis they sailed to Paphos, center of the provincial government.
 - 4) Cyprus was possibly chosen by the Holy Spirit because it was the birthplace of Barnabas and the location of a large Jewish population and synagogue, v. 5. (Cf. practice of preaching in the synagogue, 6:9, 17:1,10,17, 18:7, and first to the Jew, Rom. 1:16, Luke 24:47, Acts 1:8. The synagogue also provided an opening for "God-fearers" or Gentiles in the Jewish audience, 14:42). Also, the gospel had already been proclaimed among in Cyprus with much success (11:19). NOTE: These *Place of Education*

J.C.
Luke 4

factors should be considered in selecting a mission work!

1. Missionary knows the nature of the area, speaks the language, knows the culture, can be accepted by the people.
 2. The audience has been prepared by the knowledge of one God, the Christian ethic, respects the scripture of the Jews.
 3. Many have already obeyed the gospel.
- b. Paul and Barnabas are helped by John Mark, v. 5.
- 1) Mark is a cousin of Barnabas. His home was in Jerusalem (12:12).
 - 2) Mark assisted the more veteran and prepared men.
- c. A government leader was in the audience, v. 7.
(An opportunity for a gospel advance among the affleunt and the influential).
- 1) Jewish and Roman leaders are among those who are taught (17:34, 18:8, chs. 22-26).
 - 2) Phil. 4:12,22 shows advance.
- d. Opportunity is always accompanied by opposition.
- 1) Leaders had their oracles (13:6, 16:16,). *[Cora 16:9]*
 - 2) Elyamas was a "false prophet," not in the sense that he foretold things which did not come to pass but more broadly in that he claimed to be a medium of divine revelation.
 - 3) He viewed Paul as a rival, a threat. He did not want to be replaced, demoted or discredited. Thus, he attempted to prejudice the proconsul against the gospel.
 - 4) By this opposition, he showed himself to be "a child of the devil, an enemy of all unrighteousness and one who perverted the right ways of the Lord" (cf. Gal. 1:7, 2 Thess. 2:1-10, 2 Peter 2:1-3, 1 Tim. 6:1-5). *[John 8:44]*
 - 5) This act of rebellion, and deceit brought a judgment from God upon the false prophet. God has always favored, or protected His people (Gal. 12:3). God has power to curse or plague as well as bless (Pharoah, Philistines, Nebuchadnezzar, Assyrian king—120,000 killed in one night, Uzzah, David, Uzziah).
 - 6) Unbelief, the occult, the supernatural, whether claimed of a personal deity or nature, is a direct rejection and oppotion to the true God, and must be aggressively exposed. (Cf. soothsayers in Canaan to be killed. Pharoah's advisers exposed). Thus, Elyamas is cursed to show the power and thus the truth of Paul and the weakness and falsehood of Elyamas.
- e. The proconsul had te opportunity to believe and obey.
- 1) Ramsey suggest belief "is the first stage in the process of conversion, the second being turning to the Lord."
 - 2) His response is either that of courtesy or *He was converted*

ACTS 5:14

conversion.

ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA (Acts 13:13-52)

1. Their arrival and travel to Antioch (13:13-15)
 - a. Paul is the "chief speaker." "It takes more grace than I can tell to play the second fiddle well."
 - b. Paul and Barnabas sail to the south coast of Paul's native land of Asia Minor, having left Barnabas' native land of Cyprus. (They probably landed at Attalia, went by land to Perga, crossed the Taurus range of mountains and entered the southern part of the Roman province of Galatia).
 - 1) This area may have been chosen because Paul had evangelized Cilicia (Gal. 1:21, Acts 9:30), and is now ready to move the gospel plow west.
 - 2) Acts 16:1-8 suggests Paul's westward movement.
 - c. His destination was Antioch.
 - 1) Antioch was a Roman colony.
 - 2) Paul placed great importance in evangelizing cross-road cities of the world. He planted the gospel at strategic cities along the imperial highways.
 - d. The synagogue was the center of teaching.
 - 1) the order of service in the Jewish synagogue:
 - a) First, the law was read.
 - b) Second, the prophets was read.
 - c) Then an address or exhortation based on what had been read.
 - 2) The "ruler of the synagogue" appointed one to speak. But Paul may have asked for the opportunity.
2. The sermon (13:16-52)
 - a. Introduction, vs. 16-22.
 - 1) His brief sketch of the history of Israel served two purposes:
 - a) It led to the main theme of the sermon.
 - b) It did so in a way to arouse interest.
 - 2) Paul's exhortation "follows Jewish lines in its structure." It takes the form of a historical review of God's working through Israel; cf Stephen's sermon. The outline covers God's choice of the fathers through the Exodus until the accession of David and the establishment of the dynasty.

NOTE:

G. Ernest Wright sees this as a confessional summary—a narrative of the redemptive acts of God—constituting an Old Testament kerygma and prelude to the New Testament kerygma. The events proclaimed in apostolic preaching took place as a sequel to God's dealings with His people in ancient days.)

NOTE:

1. 450 years (v. 19) may be intended to cover the period up to David's reign—more probably 400 years covering

the wilderness wandering and the period that elapsed between the crossing of the Jordan and the distribution of the land in Joshau 14:1.

2. It may refer to the whole period in which God was gradually giving full possession of the land. (After the death of Joshau, many strongholds were left unconquered. Also, the Philistines held the territory till after the death of King Saul. Not till the reign of David was the Philistine power completely broken down, never again to make war on Israel (2 SAMule 8:1).
3. If that period of 480 years, 1 Kings 6:1, is understood as the time from the Exodus to the founding of the temple in the fourth year of Solomon's reign--if not counted from starting out of Egypt but from the arrival in Canaan--and the time of destruction of the nation by Joshau estimated at 25 years. (Stephen, like Paul, copunted the subjugation of the Canaanites as in progress until the time of David (cf. 7:45).
4. Saul was not a man after God's own heart, and his dynasty did not endure 9 1 Sam. 13:13, 15:23). David, his successor, was a man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14).
 - a. God bore witness to him in Ps. 89:19: These words were written in a day when disaster had overtaken David's house. The Psalmis was bewildered by the contrast between the divine promise and the humiliation that he saw--the crown of David had been cast to the ground (v. 49). It came to be recognized that promises made to David would be completely fulfilled in a ruler of David's seed--line whom God would raise up--one greater than David--one who would restore and surpasss the vanquished glories of the earlier day (Ezekiel 34:23-, 37:24-; Jer. 23:5, 30:9).
 - b. The angel announces that "the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:33). Luke adds: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for use in the house of his servant David" (Luke 1:69-70). Cf. Acts 2:25-31.

NOTE:

The similarity of Stephen and Paul's sermons.

1. Both used Exodus, but the details are different and for different purposes.
2. Paul's use is to introduce the theme--forgiveness of sins through Jesus as the prophts predicted.
3. Stephen's use is to record the crimes of the Jews in rejecting God's Word and God's Son.

b. Prophecy fulfilled in Christ (13:23-39).

1) Jesus was preached as Savior (vs. 23-29).

- a. Proposition, vs. 23-24. Jesus is the ideal King, the Savior, in fulfillment of the Davidic promise, cf. 2 Samuel 7.

- b. John's testimony (v. 25).
- c. Prophetic message fulfilled in Christ, 26-29.
 - 1) The Jews were ignorant of the true meaning of prophecy.
 - 2) They fulfilled unwittingly the prophetic message. (Cf. Deut. 21:23, Acts 5:30, 10:39, 1 Peter 2:24)
NOTE: Crucifixion would be an evidence to the Jew that Jesus is not the Messiah (1 Cor. 1:23).
- d. The resurrection (vs. 30-37).
 - 1) God reversed the death sentence--constant note of apostolic preaching.
 - 2) Bodily appearances over 40 days proved new life.
 - 3) Resurrection is the crowning act of the gospel (Rom. 1:4, 1 Cor. 15:1-4, 12-20).
 - 4) Predicted by the Old Test.
 - a. In the promise God made to the fathers, v. 32.
 - b. In Psalm 2:7.
 - c. In Ps. 16:10. (Both propositions needed proof. No doubt Paul gave testimony of original witnesses.) NOTE: THE PROMISE TO DAVID AND HIS POSTERITY COULD NOT HAVE BEEN FULFILLED APART FROM THE RESURRECTION!
 - d. Is. 55:3, see context.

NOTE: The apologetic or proof used by Peter on Pentecost is used here by Paul.

- 1. Paul's gospel was the same as other apostles (1 Cor. 15:11, Gal. 1:10-11).
- 2. His sermon follows the common outline of apostolic preaching.
- 3. The evidence for a "testimony" collection used by early preachers accounts for common interdependent exegesis of Old Test. passages.
- 4. IF TWO MEN ARGUE THE TRUTH OF ANY PROPOSITION, HOW IS IT POSSIBLE TO DO SO SUCCESSFULLY EXCEPT BY BOTH USING THE SAME EVIDENCE SUPPORTING IT?

- e. Application to believers. Remission of sins preached through Jesus (38-39).
 - 1) Paul joins John the Baptist, Jesus and other apostles in setting forth remission of sins as blessing intended by God in Christ.
 - 2) Paul points out justification is by faith in Christ apart from Moses' law (theme and purpose of Roman and Galatian letter).
 - 3) Reason Paul did not call for repentance and baptism was they were not ready, open to such an exhortation.
- c. Warning (vs. 40-41).
 - 1) Quotation from Habakkuk 1:5, on the eve of Nebuchadnezzar's rise to world power.
 - 2) Paul applies scripture to the new situation in which God is offering greater deliverance through the greatest of all works.
- d. Paul's sermon arouses interest (vs. 42-43).

- 1) They had heard exposition of Scripture before and moral exhortation, but nothing like this. They wanted to hear more (cf. Acts 17:32-33, 17:11, 10:31).
- 2) Jews and religious proselytes were encouraged to continue in this disposition to hear and believe.

NOTE: Proselytes described as "ye that fear God."

NOTE: "In the grace of God" means that God regarded them with favor. If they continued in that favor, they would receive forgiveness of sins, v. 38.

- e. The Gentile interest arouses Jewish envy (13:44-52).
 - 1) During the following week, Gentiles spread the word of Paul's preaching so the whole city gathers to hear (v. 44). They were interested because it included them (cf. Acts 10:34-35, 11:15-18, 15:7-11)
 - 2) The Jews opposed because the Gentiles were disposed to hear and believe. They envied because they thought God should only include them (cf. Matt. 23:15, Gal. 1:6-9, 2:4-5, 3:1, 5:7, 6:12-13, Acts 15).
 - 3) Preaching was not only to begin at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47), but in every community was preached to the Jews first (Rom. 1:16, 2:10).
 - 4) Had the Jews accepted and believed, they would have remained a part of God's elect (not by being Abraham's heirs by race, but by faith) and would have had the privilege of evangelizing their Gentile neighbors (Isa. 42:1-, 49:1-).
 - 5) However, because they disbelieved, the (the Jews) were broken off of God's tree (the elect) and the Gentiles were grafted in (Rom. ch. 11). "but seeing ye put it (the Word of God) far from you (through unbelief--envy, speaki against, contradicting and blaspheming, v. 45), and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, LQ, WE TURN TO THE GENTILES" (v. 46).
 - 6) A pattern of events is introduced that is to reproduce itself almost every place Paul preaches.

NOTE: The Jews regarded Paul as a "sheep-stealer", taking interested Gentiles who may become complete converts to Judaism, and making them converts to Christ.

- 7) The Gentiles were glad...glorified the "ordain the Lord...and believed (v. 48). The word "ordain" means to "appoint, set in order to." (Cf. "Fore-ordain.") The reason the Gentiles were ordained to eternal life is because they heard the Word, were glad of what they heard and believed. No ordaining to eternal life or salvation ever occurred apart from hearing the Word, believing and obeying it.

Cf. Acts 2:22-47, 16:14:15, 30-34, Rom. 10:13-17, 2 Thess. 2:13-15, 1 Peter 1:18-25. (See Mc Garvey, for discussion of word "ordain", p. 29.

- 7) The Word spread (v. 49).
- 8) Further opposition (v. 50). The Jews could not prevent the Gentiles from hearing and believing, but they could make things too hot for the preaching. APPLICATION: People may be prejudiced against the preaching of the truth by gossip, lies, labels, writing up a brother.
- 9) Paul left Antioch (vs. 51-52). Cf. Mark 6:11, Luke 10:16, casting off dust. The disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Spirit. This promise is to the disciple and is contingent upon hearing, being glad and believing the Word (v. 48). However, one may view the Spirit's filling or indwelling, it is dependent upon doing what the Word of God teaches (Acts 2:41-42, John 17:20-21, 14:21,23).

A.D. 44 HEROD'S DEATH
GIFT FOR JERUSALEM SAINTS
FROM ANTIOCHIAN BELIEVERS
VIA PAUL & BARNABAS

Ch. 15--Acts

A.D. 44-49 - FIRST MISSIONARY
JOURNEY
ACTS 13-14

Acts 15--PIVOTAL CHAPTER. Mid-point of Acts and a turning-point in many respects:

A.D. 50 - ACTS 15

1. Jerusalem is no longer the center in Acts after ch. 15. Jer. is mentioned in Acts 21 but takes on a different focus. Antiochia in Syria & other cities become the H.Q.
2. Peter is mentioned for the last time in ch. 15.
3. Barnabas fades from view at the end of ch. 15.
4. Gentile mission becomes increasingly more important.
5. As the gospel spreads out, the apostles are mentioned less and less.
6. New churches are established and elders become more important. Acts 14:23 finds elders in every church.

1130 Churches in Jerusalem

SIGNIFICANCE OF ACTS 15--two things are resolved:

TAKE VERSE 1 & 5
TOGETHER

1. The way of salvation. Is it necessary for Gentiles to be circumcised or to become Jews before they are saved?
How to be saved
LEGALISM
KEEP THE LAW
(ADDING CONDITIONS TO THE NAME of Salvation)
 - a. The message of Romans and Galatians is salvation is not based on law-legal requirements of Moses' law, but on grace and faith.
 - b. In Acts 15 a specific is focused on--circumcision. But it has ramifications.
 - 1) The basis of our salvation is grace and faith. But obedience is not excluded. Those who love him keep His commands, but are not saved on the basis of keeping commands. God has done something in Christ that rids us of sin. We are not always right or righteous in our actions. The emphasis is not on our righteousness, but on our being MADE RIGHT! Rom. 4:1-5, James 2:23. When we sin, we repent, but the means of our forgiveness is the always the blood of Christ. We should not sin regularly. However, our salvation is based on something permanent. JESUS DIED ONCE (Hebrews)
 - 2) Circumcision is a small matter, but it was to bring in all requirements of the law. If salvation is based on works, it is up and down all the time.
2. It is about the practical aspects of fellowship. The Bible is not just discovering theories and principles, but practical human relations.

Sent by Jerusalem
Paul & Barnabas
Titus

Public meeting
in the Church
with
presence of
Apostles
Peter
Paul & Barnabas
James

NOTE: the rapid evangelization of the Gentiles presented the more conservative Jews a serious problem. The Jerusalem brethren had acquiesced in Peter's actions in the house of Cornelius because it was attended by such evident marks of divine approval, but now a completely new situation confronted them. Before long there would be more Gentile Christians than Jewish Christians. The Jewish Christians feared that the influx of Gentile believers would weaken the

Save THING WHITE PEOPLE
THAT BLACK PEOPLE
WILL DO - DANCE POWER - CHANGE MOVING

moral standards. Paul's letter describing the church in Corinth justified their fears.

15:1-5--problem expressed

--V. 1

1. Law condemns the violator (Gal. 3:10-12). Law does not pardon or declare innocent. President Ford did not exercise the law when he pardoned Nixon. Christ died in vain if the law saves (Gal. 5:4). We had a perfect law in Moses law (Rom. 7:12), bt could not be justified by it (Gal. 2:16, Rom. 3:20).

2. Grace is favor bestowed. No merit has prompted the gift. Rom. 5:1-4. The reason for giving the favor lies in the Giver, John 3:16. It is not that salvation is unconditional. There are conditions attached to a gift, but rather unmerited. We are always in debt to God (1 Cor. 15:7-).

--V. 2

1. AN IMPORTANT ISSUE..."no small dissension", understatement. Some things are so severe, crucial, central to the heart of Christian doctrine and fellowship that no concession can be granted, no time wasted in exposing the error and correcting the problem.

- a. Some things while wrong do not have such an immediate impact or influence upon so many people. In such cases, greater tolerance and patience can be exercised, though ignoring, denying or minimizing even seemingly small errors can be destructive. DOGMATISM, RADICALISM, EXTREMISM OF A RIGHT-WING, LEGALISTIC KIND EXISTED!!!

- b. Other times, however, immediate and decisive action must be taken but still in a Christian mannner. CHRISTIANITY WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN DESTROYED AND DEFINITELY AS A UNIFIED OR SINGLE MOVEMENT. Two churches or religions would have existed--a Jewish and a Gentile.

2. The whole issue had to be settled at the highest level. The church therefore sent Paul, Barnabas and other responsible leaders. (Wise, experienced, mature, strong members are needed at such times. A major rupture or issue is no place for a novice). Going to Jerusalem was not necessaay to get correct information, but going to the source of the doctrine to get it stopped once and for all. The brethren who came down to Antioch claimed to be from James. (Going to the source or head of the problem is necessary. You don't kill a snake by hiting it on the tail.)

--15:3-4

NB THE JERUSALAM CONFERENCE ISSUE IS DIFFERENT FROM THE PAUL/PETER ISSUE OF GAL

N.T. = LAW OF
GAL 6:1,2 - CHRIST
IS 1:25 LIBERTY
ROM 3:27,28 FAITH
ROM 8:1,2 LAW OF
SINN OF
LIFE IN CHRIST
J.C.

Con 16:13
1 THES 5:2
ANS 12:9
1 JIM 4:1

ACT 2 = JEWS
10 = GREEKS
15 = UNITY IS
THREATENED

THE

The Word dwelt in inspired men, Paul included. However, it was good to confer with all apostles and also elders (because it was a congregational matter; false teachers came from Jerusalem, and if they need to be disciplined, local elders must do it.) If the elders were wrong, the apostles could teach them. Gal. 23 shows even an apostle could be in the wrong and need correction. So can elders (1 Tim. 5:20).

Communication was open. All meetings were not behind closed doors. The church was informed. Investigation, disclosure, openness--glasnost--was practiced.

SOLUTION ACCORDING TO PETER AND PAUL 15:7-11--4 ARGUMENTS:

1. ^{Peter} Apostolic endorsement, 15:7-11.

- a. Peter says the fundamental principle they were discussing had been decided nearly ten years before at the house of Cornelius. A gift from the Holy Spirit like that at Pentecost was given to the Gentiles, thus showing God's approval, and cleansing of their hearts. ^{By Faith}
- b. ^{Why} then should they impose an unbeaable yoke. The word "yoke" was appropriate because a proselyte, when he undertook to fulfill the law, was said "to take up the yoke of the kingdom of heaven." But to ordinary Jews like Peter and his hearers the traditional law, especially as expounded by the strict school of Shammai, was a heavy burden under which they groaned. Who would trade "the easy yoke of Christ", for the laws "heavy burdens and grievous to be borne" (Matt. 11:28, 23:4)?
- c. GOD PUT NO DISTINCTION, one law of pardon, faith in the cross of Christ. CASE CLOSED! IF YOU OBJECT AND EXCLUDE, YOU ARE OPPOSING GOD!

2. Endorsement by miracles, ^{Signs & Wonders} 15:12. Peter and Paul agree, the two leading apostles.

3. Endorsement by prophecy, 15: 13-21.

- a. James is the most Jewish of all. The Pharisees are probably saying, "Just wait until James gets up." (Every faction has its champion, its brotherhood heavyweight...a school, paper, preacher, lectureship).
- b. James shows THIS IS WHAT GOD MEANT ALL ALONG. "To this agree the words of the prophet." No new law is made or decision reached by a single apostle or all the apostles. No precedent is found for ancient or modern church councils to make laws for God, establish creeds or penalties for violations. What Peter preaches to Cornelius and Paul and Barnabas among the Gentiles is what God announced in the Abrahamic promise and foretold through the prophets.
- c. James states that Amos' prophecy predicted the salvation of the Gentiles. The new tabernacle which

Hab 8: 2 → NEW TABERNACLE
✓ 9:11 MORE PERFECT TABERNACLE
cf Amos 9:15

Amos 9:15 cf
Commanding

has been built (a term for the church, kingdom, or fellowship of God today) is composed of Gentiles as well as Jews. This new tabernacle replaces the old Levitic tabernacle which has fallen. (Eph. 2 teaches that the nationalistic, ethnic disintiction is removed; the wall has been broken down, two are one, both are reconciled in one body).

- 1) The "residue of men who are to seek the Lord" are identical with "the Gentiles upon whom my name is called".
- 2) The prophet Amos had in previous verses predicted the downfall of the Jewish kingdom, which would be the overthrow of the tabernacle or house of David. And in the verse quoted he predicts the rebuilding of the same, which could occur only by some descendant of David again ascending the throne. But after that downfall, no man of David's race became a king until Jesus was enthroned in heaven.
- 3) Through Jesus' life, death, resurreciton and enthronement in heaven the tabernacle was rebuilt. The kingdom or church first began among the Jews, Acts 2, Rom. 1:16, chs. 9-11. It was to be followed "by the residue of men," the Gentiles, seeking the Lord, ever since the hosuehold of Cornelius.
NOTE: "Turned to God" is a favorite word for salvation in Acts.

SUMMATION:

The Letter to Summation

- 4
- a. Don't trouble them or put an obstacle in the way.
 - b. James conclusion that all attempts to impose circumcison and legal obligations of the law on Gentile covertsa must be refused.
 - c. There remained, however a practical problem. In most of the churches, Gentile believers had to live alongside Jewish believers, who had been brought up to observe various food-laws and to avoid contact with Gentiles as far as possible. Gentiles were under no obligation at all to submit to the ceremonial law of the Jew. However, for the sake of unity and brotherhood, it was prudent for the Gentile to be considerate of their Jewish "weaker" brother who still condidered certain food-laws and traditions as sacred. Therefore, without compromising their liberty, James advised the Gentiles to respect the Jewish scruples in the following ways:
 - 1) Avoiding meat which had idolatrous associations. Eating meat is morally indifferent but some conditions would forbid even that. Whenever a weaker brother's conscience is defiled...
cf. 2 Cor. 6:14-"What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness...come ye out from among them?"
 - 2) From blood not properly drained.
 - 3) And from fornication, adopting the lower standards

of the pagans.

NOTE: The Gentiles should abstain from these things for their own sake for all were unlawful, not by the Mosaic law, but under the Patriarchal Age (Gen. 9). But also they were to abstain so to have peace and fellowship with their Jewish brethren. Cf. Lev. 17. (Peter still following Old Test. law of eating meats years after his conversion). THE PRINCIPLE IS: NOT ONLY IS IT LAWFUL BUT IS IT EXPEDIENT, HELPFUL, DOES IT EDIFY.

4. Endorsement by the decree of the Holy Spirit, 15:22-29
 - a. Where no compromise was involved, Paul was one of the most conciliatory and tolerant (cf. Acts 16:3, 21:26, 1 Cor. 9:19). And Paul urges those strong in the faith to forego their liberty for the sake of the weak (Rom. 14:1-, 1 Cor. 8:1-).
 - b. The decree is placed in writing.
 - c. Since trouble had been caused by the unauthorized believers from Jerusalem (vs. 1,24), it was necessary to have brethren accredited by the Jerusalem church.
 - d. These prohibitions were necessary things.
 - e. In the apostolic decree:
 - 1) Error was condemned, 15:24.
 - 2) Paul and Barnabas were endorsed, 15:25-26.
 - 3) Thus, the gospel was declared authentic.

BEGINNING OF THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY 15:30-

ACTS

Chapter 16

TIMOTHY JOINS APOSTLES OR CHURCHES REVISITED (16:1-5).

I. Timothy joins apostles.

- A. Mother and grandmother faithful Jews. (2 Tim. 1:5)
- B. Mother converted to Christianity (previous visit) (Acts 14)
- C. Father a Greek.
- D. Timothy
 - 1. Had been baptized
 - a. Matter of faith; doctrine Rom. 6:3-4; 17-18; Acts 10:48.
 - b. Commanded (also in Acts 10:48).
 - 2. Now circumcision
 - a. Matter of custom; tradition.
 - 1) Under Old Law required, sign of old covenant.
 - 2) Under New Law; Non Essentiel, Judgement (Gal. 5:6; 6:15-16)
 - b. Father a Greek.
 - In eyes; practically a Jew -
 - Circumcision not of Moses but fathers (Jn. 7:22).
 - Obligation to observe did not originate in LAW but in COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM (Gen. 17). Its connection with law grew out of fact that law was given to part of Abraham's seed - (If obligation did not originate with law; law could not annul it - he and other disciples to last (Acts 21) NAT. MARK - no connection with SALVATION.

Insisted Gentile Christians of Gal. churches must submit to circumcision because required for full fellowship/salvation and because for them such submission involved an obligation to keep the law (Gal. 5:3).

But Timothy had been brought up to observe the law. Simple expediency of one already half-Jew with view to greater usefulness in gospel ministry "To Jew I became as a Jew; (Practical purpose - not religious rite).

{ Paul willingness to conciliate and - accommodate; illustrated elsewhere in Acts (21:26) is a principle in 1 Cor. 9:20. Critics charge inconsistency - However; all acts are "brought into captivity of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5) and are subordinated every other interest to gospel (1 Cor. 9:23).

II. Visiting churches (4-5).

A. Delivered Decrees.

- 1. Intended for all Gentile churches (not just for churches of Syria and Celicia.

2. Decision made way to churches of Asia (Rev. 2:14); but not afterward to churches founded (cf. 1 Cor. 8; Rom 14 - not referred to in discussing food question).

B. Characteristic report of progress.

CALL TO MACEDONIA 16:6-10.

- I. Many churches sprang up from Paul's labor in Gal. (1 Cor. 16:1).
- II. God at work - providentially in preaching first time in Galatia.
 - A. Because of infirmity of flesh; I preached - perhaps looking for more fruitful fields (Gal. 4:14-15); "Sweet fruit of labor - illustrated (2 Cor. 12:9-10).
 - B. But they received him as an angel (Gal. 4:14-15); "Sweet fruit of labor - illustrated (2 Cor. 12:9-10).
- III. God at work - man (providentially) in European work.
 - A. Paul forbidden to speak in Asia - infers original plan to go toward Ephesus.
 - B. Also forbidden in highly civilized Belyni (Nicomedia and Nicea most important cities).
 - C. Called to Macedonia (dominant power in Greek world 4th century; Roman colony in 146 B.C.).
 - D. "We" sections.
 - E. Original plan postponed (Ephesus) H.S. did not spoil Paul's strategy but improved it.
- IV. First converts in Philippi (16:11-15).
Philippi:
 - A. Roman with Greek population.
 - B. Named from Philip of Macedonia.
 - C. Under Roman control 168 B.C. In 42 B.C. Anthony and Octavia (Augustus) won over Brutus and Caesar. After battle; settled veterans at Philippi; making it Roman colony. Augustus settled colonists in 31 B.C.
 - D. First contact with Europe and Romans. (Roman colony used Roman law; constitution modeled on municipal constitution of Rome.)
- V. Preached by river.
 - A. No synagogue - must be 10 Jew men - heads families to constitute a synagogue (cf. Ps. 82:1).
 - B. Was official meeting place where women Jewess and God-fearing Gentiles appointed service of prayer on Sabbath.
- VI. Audience -
 - A. Lydia; business woman from Thyratira ; trader; God-fearing Jewish colony.

- day in prayer).
- 2. Gave
- 3. Baptized
 - a. Opened door.
 - b. Be faithful.

Note: Heart Lord opened indicates previously closed.

- VII. Not by hardened sinful life - she was faithful worker as
- VIII. Rather in sense of any ; earnest Jewish worshipper
 - A. Est. earthly k
 - B. Against crucified Savior and sp. rep. (Jn. 5:44, 1 Cor. 1:23).
- IX. This was "hope of Ds" in what instructed and and prayed for.
- X. "Opened heart" man removed mistaken concepts that pre Christ.

- A. Effect was what was aimed at and it led her to "give heed" - fix (mend upon, put something into practice - Matt. 6:1, 7:15; Luke 17:3, 1 Tim. 1:4, 3:8, 4:13, Heb. 7:13.

She first heard, then heart opened, then she gave heed - put into practice what spoken by Paul.

Note: Baptism was one of "these things" because she was baptized.

In preaching - always heard.

D - B - R

Plan of salvation.

- B. How it was done.
 - 1. Immediate, direction action by Holy Spirit.
 - 2. Or thru Word, teaching of Spirit.

Note: Why did writer make this remark in regard to Lydia which he made to no other person he discussed.

- C. Not that God did something for Lydia that he did not do for others.
- D. But in phraseology (accounted for by fact for weeks God turned from field which seemingly promised and leading them on to this heavenly city where seemed NIL. Here they encountered women, surprised to find of 17:11. Had Lord not interferred Paul would have been in Asia, and women

would have prayed knocked but door of faith not open - but God opened her heart - (Acts 8) by bringing preacher (Rom. 10).

Note: No infant baptism.

1. Her belief is mentioned.
2. Not intimidated belief.
3. They were baptized because they believed.

Ans - 4 household - mentioned in New Testament.

1. At Cornelius more, all spoke in tongues
2. Nor jailer - all believed and were baptized (16:34).
- 3.

ACTS 17

PAUL IN THESSALONICA (17:1-9)

Note - 100 miles from Philippi, named from Cassander, founded it in 315 B.C., named after step-sister of Alex, great.

1. Course of argument same as Peter on Pentecost and Paul in Acts 13. The Method and Message.
 - a. Christ suffered
"Scandal of the Cross."
 - 1) Preaching - inconsistent with reign of Christ.
They read in prophets, 1 Cor. 1:23.
 - 2) Prophets did foretell suffering (Luke 24:25-27, 44-47; Acts 3:18- , 26:22-23; 1 Cor. 15:1-4).
Conclusion: This same Jesus, man who died, is Christ!
 - b. Rose again

Note: Witness of apostles - proof ----- not by word only.

- c. Miracles - confirmation --- but power and Holy Spirit (1 Thess. 1:5) cf. Heb. 2:3-4.
2. Response
 - a. Some persuaded.
 - 1) Jason (Paul's host) Aristarchos and Secundus (20:4).
 - 2) "Yet turned to God from idols"
"Became followers, having received word."
"Elect of God."
 - b. Jews rejected.
 - 1) Christians persecuted (1 Thess. 2:14, 1:6).
 - 2) Enemy strategy:
 - a) "Turned world upside down," mob - violence.

- b) Preached Jesus as king, true, but not as Jews claimed
- rival to Caesar.

Note: 1 Thess. 1:9, cf. 1-2 Thess. strong ESCHATOLOGICAL emphasis.

- 3) EPICUREAN, greatest good to be obtained thru gratification of every passion - denied conscious existence after death.
(deny worldly lusts)
- pleasure chief end in life - life free from pain, disturbing passion, superstitious fear (particularly death).
If did not deny existence of gods, but maintained they had no interest in the life of men.

- c. These two philosophies indicate alternate attempts in pre-Christian paganism to come to terms, with life, especially in times of uncertainty and hardships. Both agreed in this -- that the new fangled message could not appeal to reasonable men!
- d. They looked upon Paul as a "babbler", "seed-picker", retainer of "second-hand scraps, a worthless character, a "loafer", as used here, one who picked up scraps of learning here and there - peddler of religion.
- e. Obnoxious - strange/foreign doctrine was the RESURRECTION. Others classed him as a preacher of strange deities.
- f. COURT OF AEROPAGUS, aristocratic body, received its name from where it met - had authority in religion and moral matters - gave Paul opportunity to give account for his "philosophy" - SERMON.

BEREA (17:10-15)

- 1. Preached in synagogue.
- 2. Nobility of soul.
 - a. Prejudice, pre-conceived ideas, tradition.
 - b. Open-minded.

ATHENS (17:16-21)

Intro: two varieties of civilization:

- 1. One result of HUMAN PHILOSOPHY.
 - 2. Other - DIVINE REVELATION.
- 1. City given to idolatry, 16.
 - a. Not white unto harvest.
 - b. Not exactly on Paul's missionary tour.
 - c. Heavy in culture - man's wisdom, art, sculture, literature philosophy - (Socrates, Plato; Adopted home of Aristotle, Epicurus, Zeno).
 - d. Light in God's truth (cf. 1 Cor. 1:21).
 - 2. Paul not quitter, coward, compromiser or stirred if anyone needed gospel, Athens did!
 - a. Preached in SYNAGOGUE with Jews, God-fearers.
 - b. Preached in market - AGORA, center of Athenian life and activity.
 - 3. OPPOSITION:
 - a. Phil - greatest good in life to be attained through TOTAL INDIFFERENCE to both sorrows and pleasure of world.

- (claimed Zeno as founder).
- b. System claimed aimed at living consistently with nature, primary on rational mind of man, self-sufficiency.
- c. In theology PANTHEISTIC
(while Stoicism was marked by great moral earnestness and high sense of duty, it was marked by S , foreign to Christ.

At this point, Paul -----

INTRODUCES JESUS -

Not as loving Savior but universal judge.
Not as virgin birth, or in keeping by John,
Or in healing power, or in death for sins of man but in judgment.

Note: This was intended by Paul, as an introduction of a theme which he intended to pursue -

His plan was:

1. To make idolaters acquainted with God.
2. Call them to repent.
3. Present Christ as Savior.

EPICUREANS:

1. They believed all happened by chance.
2. death was end of all.
3. were no gods but those remote from world who did not care.
4. Pleasure was chief end of man (not fleshly, worldly or material - but no pain).

STOICS:

1. Literally everything was god.
2. Everything was fated because everything was the will of God - thus whatever happens we must not care - but accept.
3. Every so many years world disintegrated in flames and started all over again on same same story.
4. God's as one who planned and purposed - seeks the Lord - repent - know the Lord, not ignorant.
 - a. Man with excuse (Rom. 1:20)
 - b.

Note: Our teachers realized -

 - a. Folly of trying to house derive nature in material temples.
 - b. Worship it in material
 - c. Or represent it by material images.
5. He is in us - we are His offspring - created by God in His image.
(He created us, can communicate with us.
6. God judge.
 - a. Day fixed.
 - b. Standard fixed - righteousness.
 - c. Assurance - res. of Son (John 5).
- MOTIVE TO REP - could see SIN OF IDOLATRY.

ATHENIAN (17:32-34).

1. Epicureans would doubtless agree if he spoke of the immortality of ind. souls.
2. Not the res. of the body. Apollo expressed on one occasion when that very court of the AREOPAGUS was founded on the city's patron goddess Alhen: "Once a man dies and the earth drinks up his blood, there is no RES."
3. Mixed reaction.
Athens played no part in Paul gospel campaign.

SERMON (ACTS 17:22-31).

NOTE: Compare briefer summary of approach to pagans. Here Paul does not quote Hebrew prophets unknown to his hearers. He quotes Greek poets. However, he does not discuss, debate philosophy, principles, but his arguments are based on the Biblical revelation from God,

at times the language of Old Testament ser. He begins with the GOD OF CREATION and ends with GOD, the JUDGE of all!
(Unfamiliar with SCRIPTURE, MESSIAH, JEHOVAH.)

Before he could preach Jesus as Christ, he must acquaint them with God Himself.

1. Preached God as CREATOR.
 - a. Altar to "unknown god" proved Paul's point they were demon - fearing.
 - b. Provided Paul point of contact, with a TEXT for what he had to say - the God they worshipped but did not know He proclaimed.
ALL MANKIND - ONE ORIGIN - EARTH TO DWELL IN.
 - c. LORD - Creator in Him live - no distinction between Supreme Supreme Being and Deniverge who built material world.
 - d. Dwells not in temples - even one at Jew - so even the ACROPOLIS.
2. Preached God as SOVEREIGN,
Not dependent on worship and service of created beings, Cf. Ps. 50: 9-12. He supplies every need.

Steps in Sermon:

1. God the maker not made, thus cannot be worshipped by man's hands (man worships what he makes).
2. God has guided history - behind use and fall of nations.
3. God has made man so instinctively that he longs of God. God-shaped vowel.
4. Days of groping and ignorance are past. Now in Christ full knowledge and revelation.
5. Day of judgment of coming.
 - a. Man is neither a progress to extinction as the Epicureans believed.
 - b. Nor yet a pathway to absorption to God as the Stoics.
 - c. It was a journey to judgment, accountability.

Rom 14:12
2 Cor 5:10-12
Matt 25:1ff

Ac 20

6. The proof of the pre-eminence of Christ was the RESURRECTION.
Not an unknown god - but a risen Christ is who we must deal with.

Acts 13 - 5 main points:

1. Coming of Jesus is the consummation of history. He outlines the the national history of the Jews to show it culmimates in Christ. History not purposeless process. STOICS believed history went in cycles - kept or repeals Christian view OPTOMISTIC - history going somewhere.
2. Men did not recognize God's consummation when it came in Jesus.
3. Though man in blind folly, rejected the crucified Christ, God could not be defeated and the in proff of power and purpose of God.
4. Revelation is full of prophecy.
5. Coming and message of Christ good news - law could not justify, 13:38-39 - Jesus life and death liberates and justifies.
6. What good news for believers, bad news for unbelievers. Condemnation for blind.

PAUL'S MILETUS ADDRESS
(Acts 20:17-38)

INTRODUCTION: Paul said, "Be ye followers of me as I am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). Cf. Rom. 1:14-16. Paul's address to the elders at Miletus reveals much about Paul's mission as a servant of God and also of ours.

1. His service was humble. He was following Christ (Phil. 2:5-8, 2 Cor. 10:1, Matt. 5:3). The business world is not the only place for a person of unbridled ambition and worldly greed to succeed. (The electronic preachers and super church pastors of the denominations have set a standard of great appeal). Dollars replace dedication; charisma replaces conviction.
2. His service was balanced. He was following Christ. Christ taught in the synagogue and on the plain. Most of the time his pulpit was a boat, a well, a mountain. Paul could have worn the academic robe of the learned; he had diploma from the school of Gamaliel and could have placed his shingle in a prominent place and have been called "Rabbi, Rabbi." Rather he chose often to call himself "servant" (Phil. 1:1, Titus 1:1, Eph. 3:7-). Again, this reflects his humility. As a humble servant, Paul taught where there was a need. You find him in the synagogue and in the marketplace, before kings and commoners. He believed no one was above nor below the gospel--none was too good to hear it nor too unworthy of it. One student has the term "get into the trenches." He challenges his fellow-students "before you get behind your mahogany desk, in your padded chair, surrounded by your volumes, get into the trenches." He means by that go where the people are. What is in the trench? Work, difficulty (agony, Col. 2:1, tears, bonds), ingratitude (often not praise but criticism), sacrifice (Paul often paid his own way and that of others, 20:33-35). The trench is not attractive, but it is where people live. Don't mistake of holding up or fortifying yourself in the trench. The French tried that in WW II or the trench could become like a cathedral or fortress with walls so high we could not see the people.
3. His service, his message was "the whole counsel of God". Paul preached faith and repentance, the gospel of the grace of God and the kingdom of God.
 - a. Be careful of those who preach from half- verses:
"Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled ..." (Heb. 13:4, Olan Hicks, Connally-Hicks Debate)
"Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called" (1 Cor. 7:21).
"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus..." (Rom. 8:1).
"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be

- saved..." (Acts 16:31-).
- b. Beware of those who find the church "weighed in the balances and found wanting" when compared to other religious bodies. Ex: others are more evangelistic; others pray more, etc. On that basis, even the eastern cults and ancient religions might be considered more "spiritual and devout." The Pharisees prayed and fasted often. In the Old Test., there were idolatrous sacrifices in the high places and on the hills and in every green tree" (2 Chr. 28:4). But what does that prove? Nothing. The pagan rel. of the OT or Jews who lived likd pagan "did not do that which was right in the sight of the Lord" (2 Chr. 28:1). What is important is doing what God says. Failure to do God's will or to encourage others in not doing God's will is not to have God (2 John 9-11). We can learn from the zeal and sincerity of others, certainly; however, like God's people of old, we committ two evils when we imitate the false (unauthorized) ways of others: "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that hold no water" (Jer. 2:13)--whether these cisterns which men dig contain the error of ancient idolatry or the error of modern false doctrine, they are no substitute for the truth of God. Living waters bring life; poluttet bring decay and death.
 - c. Be on the alert to those who in a blanket way reject the past (we have the right to critique our traditions, but not God's traditions) whether it is of the traditional hermenutic or of the prominence of doctrines developed from this hermenutic (we do not consciously exalt one truth above another; while one truth may hinge upon another--for ex. baptism, the Lord's Supper and the church upon the death of Christ, this does not make one truth less vital than another). Some brethren have taught and written "to keep in sight the heart of that faith... that core message...a reference to love and the death, burial and res. of Christ (Matt. 22:22-37-39, 23:23, 1 Cor. 15:-14)", and I would agree with that, but others have taken that admonition and have made other teaching and commands less important.
4. His service was lifelong. Paul did not intend to let anything stand in his way. He said, "None of these move me..." (20:25). Cf. 2 Tim. 4:6-8, Rev. 2:10.
 - a. What did not move Paul? Bonds and affilications, tears, supporting himself, leaving brethren he loved (v. 25,36-38), elders whom he had to warn or reprove --none of these difficulties or responsibilities moved him away from carrying our his assignmen