

A Concise Commentary On  
**THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES**

By

*Steve*

# The ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

## INTRODUCTION

The Book of Acts tells the story of how Christianity began and how the word of God grew and multiplied. Acts serves as the link between the Gospels and the epistles. It tells how the Christians back then took the great commission that Jesus gave us serious and started telling people about Him. They began spreading the Good News in Jerusalem and then to all of the known world at that time.

**Writer:** Luke the Physician.

**Time:** AD 33-62

Luke starts out by telling how the Gospel was launched in Jerusalem and then it quickly began to spread throughout Judea, Samaria, and the rest of the world. Then Luke covers the First Missionary Journey of Paul. There was a controversy over whether the Gentiles should keep the Mosaic law so Luke tells what takes place with The Jerusalem Council. Then he picks back up with Paul's Second and Third Missionary Journey. He concludes the book by telling about Paul's journey to Rome.

- **Chapters 1 - 2**

The early church is established and Matthias was chosen to replace Judas as an Apostle

- **Chapters 3 - 8**

Tells about the progress of the church and the stoning of Stephen

- **Chapters 9 - 10**

Covers Philip the Evangelist, the conversion of Saul and the Apostle Peter

- **Chapters 11 - 12**

Peter defends his ministry to the Gentiles and James became the first martyr

- **Chapters 13 - 14**

Paul's first Missionary Journey

- **Chapter 15**

The Jerusalem Council convenes to discuss the debate concerning the Gentiles

- **Chapters 15 - 18**

Paul's second Missionary Journey

- **Chapters 18 - 21**

Paul's third Missionary Journey

- **Chapters 21 - 28**

Paul's goes to Jerusalem, then Caesarea and then to Rome

## Acts 1

**v.1-3...**Luke starts off by mentioning the former account he wrote which was The Book of Luke. We do not know who Theophilus was. He could have been a close friend of Paul's or he could have been someone that Paul is sharing the Gospel with in hopes of him becoming a Christian.

He tells Theophilus in that Book he wrote about the miracles and healings Jesus performed as well as what Jesus taught until He was crucified and ascended back to heaven. He tells how Jesus gave the apostles instructions as to what they were suppose to do after He went back to heaven. They were to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. **Mark 15:16**

**Then in verse 3 Luke tells...**of the resurrection of Jesus and how He showed Himself alive to prove that He was who He said He was. Luke tells Theophilus that He did so for 40 days.

I would think that during these 40 days Jesus would have been summarizing what He had taught them and reminding them of the responsibility He is now placing upon them.

**v.4-5...**Jesus is with the apostles only now. He tells them that they are not to leave Jerusalem until they have received the promise of the Holy Spirit from God that He had being telling them about.

Jesus reminds them about John the Baptist and his baptism, but the baptism that was going to take place after He leaves them is going to be the baptism of the Holy Spirit and that it was going to happen shortly after He leaves them. **Luke 24:19, John 14:16, 17, 26; John 15:26**

**v.6-8...**While Jesus was preaching and teaching during His ministry, His disciples and the apostles were hoping that He would establish a "kingdom" like King David ruled from in Jerusalem. We see here that even though Jesus had told them before that His kingdom was not of this world, they still have their thoughts about Him establishing an earthly kingdom.

Jesus knew that He was about to leave them and go back to Heaven and when they received the Holy Spirit they would understand the difference about His kingdom and a kingdom here on earth. He proceeds by telling them that when they receive the power of the Holy Spirit they were to start in Jerusalem sharing the Gospel and then they would spread it to all of Judea and Samaria and then to the rest of the world.

**v.9-11...**This is similar to Elijah being taken up in that they were both taken up to heaven.

We see where Elijah being taken up to heaven in **2 Kings 1-11**

The difference though is that Jesus was going back to where He came from which was and is the right hand of God where He reigns as the Son of God.

The 2 men here in **v.10** refer to 2 angels. It could possibly be the same two men, that is angels, who appeared to Mary Magdalene in the tomb where Jesus was buried. **John 20:12**

They ask the apostles why they are standing there gazing up in wonderment since Jesus had told them that He was going back to heaven. Then they remind the apostles that Jesus is going to come back from heaven at the appointed time for Him to come back in the same way they saw Him leave. Luke also recorded Jesus' ascension in **Luke 24:50-51**

When Jesus comes back though, **2 Thessalonians 1:7-8** says, "He will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know Him."

**v.12-14...**Mt. Olivet is where Jesus and His apostles spent much time together. It is a Sabbath's day journey from Jerusalem, which is about 2/3's of a mile. That is the distance the Jews were allowed to walk on the Sabbath Day. That is why it is called a Sabbath's day journey.

The apostles went back to an, upper room, in Jerusalem, after Jesus was taken up to heaven. All eleven apostles were there. It could have possible been the same upper room where Jesus ate the Last Supper with them. **Mark 14:12-16**

They started praying as they waited for the promise of the Holy Spirit that Jesus told them about. We do not know what they were praying specifically about, but I would think that it was possible for guidance and understanding.

This is the last time that we hear anything about Jesus' mother, Mary. Jesus had 4 half brothers, James, Joses, Simon and Judas as we see in **Matthew 13:55-56** and they were there as well.

Two of Jesus' half brothers wrote two of the books of the New Testament. James and Judas. We read in **Galatians 2:19** where James becomes one of the "pillars" of the church in Jerusalem.

**v.15-19...**We see here that Peter takes charge, as he has done in the past and will do in the future as well. There are 120 people gathered here together. Even though the Scriptures does not say specifically who they were, we can assume they were all believers and followers of Jesus.

Peter tells how it was prophesied that Judas would betray Jesus....**Read Psalm 41:9**

We read in **Matthew 26:20-25** where Jesus tells His Apostles and Judas, that he, that is Judas, is going to betray him.

And in **Matthew 26:47-56** we read where Jesus is betrayed by Judas.

Judas went out and hung himself and **v.18** tells how his body began to decay and fell to the ground. Everyone in Jerusalem heard about how Judas betrayed Jesus and that he then went out and killed himself and that is why that field was called, Field of Blood.

**v.20-26...**It is prophesied in **Psalms 109:8** that Judas would betray Jesus and that Judas would need to be replaced. One of the qualifications of replacing Judas was that the person had to have been an eyewitness to the miracles and healings that Jesus had performed, as well as His teachings, beginning with the baptism of John the Baptist to the day that Jesus was taken back up to heaven.

**In v.23 we see...**that they narrowed it down to 2 men, Joseph called Barsabas and Matthias. The reason for confining the selection to those who had accompanied Jesus from the beginning is because they would be the most reliable witnesses to Jesus' identity after the resurrection. The Scriptures do not say for sure they were, but it is possible Barsabas and Matthias could have been two of the seventy that were sent out by Jesus in **Luke 10:1**

**Then we see in v.24 that...**even though they narrowed it down to these 2 men, they wanted God to choose the person who would replace Judas so they cast lots.

Casting lots was a method used by the Jews of the Old Testament and by the Christian disciples prior to Pentecost to determine the will of God. They would have put Barsabas and Matthias' name on a stone and then put the stones in a jar. They would have shook the jar and then pull one of the stones out.

This was the last time we read of anyone casting lots in the Bible. The apostles would not need to do so from that point on because the Holy Spirit was personally going to guide them now.

There is no need for casting lots today because the Bible provides all the answers we need to help us make decisions in our lives.

**In v.26 we see...**when they cast the lots the lot fell on Matthias so he was chosen by God to replace Judas. It could possibly be that they wanted to maintain 12 because they may have still been going out together in pairs of 2, just like Jesus sent them out in **Mark 6:7**

## Acts 2

**v.1-4...**Pentecost was one of the three annual festivals at which the Mosaic law required every male Jew of the whole nation to be present. It was one of the Jewish feast days that was observed in the Old Testament and was still being observed during the time that Jesus was on the earth. They didn't call it Pentecost though. That's the Greek name. The Jews called it the Feast of Harvest. It was the celebration of the beginning of the early weeks of harvest. In Palestine, that is, in Israel, there were two harvests each year. The early harvest came during the months of May and June and the second harvest came in the Fall. Pentecost was the celebration of the beginning of the early wheat harvest, which meant that Pentecost always fell sometime during the middle of the month of May or sometimes in early June.

During the time that Jesus was preaching and teaching the 12 apostles that some of the apostles talked among themselves about who would be the greatest when Jesus was gone. **Mark 9:33-35** We see here **in verse one** that they had moved passed this and were all now, "in one accord".

**Verse 2 does not...**say a mighty wind came upon them, but rather it sounded like a mighty wind as the Holy Spirit was "poured out" on them. This sound of a mighty wind represents the power of the Holy Spirit that they were receiving.

**In verses 3-4...**it is impossible to fully understand what the scriptures mean when it says they, the Apostles, were "speaking in tongues", because the Bible doesn't describe exactly what it was. However, since people were coming to Jerusalem from all over the world, it is most likely that they were speaking the languages from each country where the people came from since the scripture said they heard them in their own language **Acts 2:6**

**Genesis 11:1-9** tells the story about the Tower of Babel. Here we see where and why God created different languages.

The apostles lives changed on The Day of Pentecost. That was the day they were given the power of the Holy Spirit.

**In verse 5 when...**it says, "from every nation", it means from every nation where Jews were living. Every Jewish male was required to come to Jerusalem each year to observed The Day of Pentecost so this was a good day to launch the church.

**In verses 6-8 we see...**that the sound of this "mighty wind" was heard not only in the place where the Apostles had gathered, but also throughout Jerusalem and the multitude of people came together to see what it was all about. We see here how God miraculously intervened and had everyone clearly hear and understand the apostles in their own language to eliminate any confusion.

**In Mark 14:69-70** we read how the servant girl recognized Peter as a Galilean because of his speech when Peter denied the Lord. Galilean's spoke with a distinct ascent that people recognized, but here we see that Peter and the others are speaking a completely different language.

**In verses 11 - 13 we see...**how a majority of the people were excited and embraced hearing about, "the wonderful works of God", and they were wondering what was going to become of this event that was taking place. While others were mocking them and suggesting that the apostles were drunk. It is much the same way today, some people accept the message of Christ, and some reject it.

**We see in verses 14 - 41 where...**Peter preaches the first recorded Christian Sermon.

**In verses 14 - 15 we see...**where Peter, along with the other eleven apostles stand up to get the attention of the people and then Peter reminds them that it is only the third hour, that is, 9:00 in the morning and that they were not drunk.

**Joel 2:28-32** is the scripture Peter quotes from showing that the prophecy of Joel has been and is being fulfilled.

Gentiles are everyone who are not Jews. In **verse 22** we see where Peter begins by saying, "Men of Israel", of which are all Jews, so we see the message of, The Good News, that is, The Gospel, is preached first to the Jews, then the Gentiles as we see in **Romans 1:16**

Peter goes on to declare in **verse 22** how Jesus is the Messiah, the anointed One, the One the Jewish people had been waiting for as their Savior. Peter points to the fact that Jesus was proven to be the Messiah by all of the miracles and healings He done among the people in a way that no one else ever had. He also points to the fact that they were all eyewitness' to these things.

**In verse 23 Peter tells...**how they, the Jews, were determined to kill Jesus so they delivered him up to Pilate to be crucified. Pilate was wanting to set Jesus free as we see in **Matthew 27:15-25**

He says he is washing his hands of this matter so he would be innocent of the blood of Jesus. However, he wasn't innocent. Both Pilate and the Jews were guilty of killing Jesus. Pilate had Jesus crucified because the Jewish leaders wanted Him put to death. **Luke 23:13-24**

**Then in verse 24 Peter tells...** how Jesus was resurrected from the dead by God and was alive.

**In verses 25 - 28 Peter points out...**how King David had prophesied in **Psalms 16** that God would raise Jesus from the dead and that Jesus would reign at the right hand of God.

King David is considered the greatest King ever of Israel and **in verses 29 - 31** Peter points out that David is dead and buried and how that David himself talked about how the Christ, that is Jesus, would die, but that God would raise Him from the dead and He would sit on the throne throughout eternity next to God, His Father.

**In verses 32 - 36 Peter declares...**that Jesus was indeed raised from the dead and they are witness' to this and that He is indeed back in heaven, at the right hand of God. And then Peter very boldly tells them that they killed an innocent Man, but God has raised Him from the dead and made Him both Lord and Christ. Peter is getting to the heart of the matter now.

**In verse 37 the people...**realized they had indeed killed the Messiah and they had Godly sorrow in their hearts and they ask Peter what they should do?

We are told in **1 Corinthians 7:10** that, "godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation, not to be regretted, but the sorrow of the world produces death."

We see here that they had godly sorrow.

**Then in verses 38 - 41 Peter tells them...**they have to repent from killing Jesus for the remission of their sins and be baptized. **Verse 41** says that those who, "gladly received his word", were baptized and that 3,000 souls were added to the church that day.

We see here how the church has grown from 120 in **Acts 1:15**, to 3,000 now.

**Verses 42 - 47 tells...**how those who had become Christians were continuing to meet, just as we do today when we assemble together with the saints. We should be wanting to fellowship with one another willingly, but we see in **Hebrews 10:25** that we are specifically instructed not to forsake the assembling of the saints.

The apostles did many miracles and healings proving their message was from God. Seeing the apostles do these wonders and signs created a respectful fear towards them as well as towards God.

We see that the first century Christians provided for each other as stated in **Acts 4:32-37**

The church was now growing daily as the Gospel was beginning to be shared not just by the apostles, but also by other believers after they become a Christian.



## Acts 3

**v.1-3...**Devout Jew's observed prayer three times a day. At 9:00 in the morning, at 12:00 noon, and then at the "ninth hour", which would have been 3:00 in the afternoon. Peter and John had become Christians, but they still practiced some of the customs of Judaism such as praying with other Jews in the temple as they were doing here **in verse 1**.

We see here that they are getting ready to go into the temple to pray and worship God when they see this lame man. The man did not become lame from a accident, but was lame since his birth and as we will see **in chapter four** the lame man was forty years old so the people there knew him very well and what his condition was.

Since the man was lame from birth he had to beg for help everyday and he would have seen or even possibly heard Peter and John preach or teach before. Therefore, when he saw them he felt as though they would especially help him financially since they talk about helping the poor.

**v.4-6...**A majority of the people look away when they see someone crippled and/or begging for help. Most people who have to beg are ashamed that they have to so they never really look up as they beg for money. However, we see here that Peter looked right at him, then told the lame man to, "look at us", and they made solid eye contact.

The lame man seemed to be happy that Peter was talking to him because he thought Peter and John was going to give him a large sum of money.

The lame man didn't realize that Peter and John were going to give him something much better than money, they were going to heal him and give him the ability to walk, something that he had never done in his life of forty years. Then Peter calls on the name of Jesus and heals him.

**v.7-9...**We see here that Peter did not give the lame man a "hand out", but rather a "hand up". Peter took him by his right hand and helped him stand and the lame man was now able to walk, run, and jump, just like anyone else.

Then the lame man walks into the temple with Peter and John. The lame man had been laying in front of the temple for many years now so the people in the temple would have known him.

Can you imagine how the people would have been reacting when they saw him walking in with Peter and John?

**v.10-11...**News about the healing spread quickly throughout the city so people began to run to the temple to see the lame man who was forty years old and born lame, now walking and praising God. They were all amazed and wanted to know how the lame man was now able to walk. Solomon's porch was on the east side of the Temple. It is the same place where Jesus also walked and preached. **John 10:23**

**v.12...**Here we see that by healing the lame man it created a large gathering of the people there in the temple including the Jewish leaders and this gave Peter a chance to preach his second sermon.

He begins his sermon by saying, "Men of Israel", so we can see it was a Jewish audience and that there were no Gentiles in the crowd.

Then Peter quickly ask them why they are looking at them as though they had personally healed the lame man. Peter and John and the other Apostles always healed people "in the name of Jesus". The difference though with Jesus was He healed people and/or did miracles Himself directly showing that He had the power to do so.

**v.13-15...**Then Peter mentions Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the three "Founding Fathers" of the Jewish religion which showed respect to the "Jewish faith" that the crowd held so dearly to themselves. We see here also that Peter calls Jesus, God's servant, who they had denied.

We see here how much Peter had grown since receiving the Holy Spirit because just a few weeks earlier he had denied Jesus "3" times, but now he was boldly declaring Him.

**In verse 14 Peter...**very aggressively tells them that they denied Jesus and asked for a murderer, Barabbas, to be delivered to them. **John 18:40**

How do you think that made them feel?

Peter follows up **in verse 15** by telling them that they not only asked for a murderer to be delivered to them, but they killed the Prince of life, that is, the Creator of life.

**In verse 16 Peter...**reminds them that he and John did not heal the lame man. He tells them it was in the name of Jesus that the lame man was healed. Peter reminds them of the great power of faith in the name of Jesus.

**v.17-18...**Peter calms down a little bit and turns a little more compassionate as he tells them he understands now that they killed Jesus in ignorance.

This reminds me of what Jesus said while He was hanging from the cross.

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." **Luke 23:24**

Then Peter tells them that the Christ, that is Jesus, was "born to suffer and die" just as the prophets of old had prophesied that He would. Then he tells them that Jesus has fulfilled this prophesy.

**v.19-21...**Peter tells them, they will have to repent from having put Jesus to death and convert from their Jewish faith to Christianity if they were going to have their sins forgiven. Then he tells them if they will repent that their hearts will be refreshed with the Joy that comes from knowing Jesus as the Son of God and knowing that He is their personal Savior.

Then Peter points to the fact that ALL of God's prophets, since the beginning of time had pointed to the coming of the long awaited Messiah, and Jesus of Nazareth, was/is the Messiah.

So here Peter is not only telling them that they just killed Jesus, but they had killed the Messiah, the One that they all had been waiting for.

**v.22-23...**Then Peter tells how Moses, who was the first prophet for the Israelites, even told about the coming of Jesus. He tells them just as he, that is Moses, lead the Hebrew people out of captivity to the "promise land", the Messiah/Jesus was going to do the same thing.

However, He was going to lead mankind out of the captivity of sin and lead them to the eternal Promise land which is heaven. **Deuteronomy 18:15, 18, 19**

**v.24...**Samuel is one of the most respected and honored prophets in the Jewish history. He was the prophet who anointed David to be the king. Peter talks about how even Samuel had pointed to the coming of Jesus. Peter is reminding the Jewish leaders who had gathered with the crowd that all of the prophets and all of the "Old Testament" scriptures pointed to the coming of Jesus and that this Jesus of Nazareth is the One they were all talking about.

**v.25...**Peter reminds them of their Jewish heritage. He tells them as sons of the prophets, the promise God made to Abraham was to them also since they are his descendents.

**v.26...**Peter reminds them of what Jesus had taught him and the other apostles and that is, the Gospel is to be delivered first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles.

They had killed Jesus, their Messiah, but now Peter is telling them they have a second chance to accept Him, if they will repent of their sins and turn from their iniquities.

## Acts 4

**v.1-4...**The Sadducees were a group of people who were both very rich and catered to the rich. They did not believe in life after death, that is, in eternity. They believed that after you die, "it was over, just like rover". So for Peter and John to be preaching and teaching that there is a resurrection, this challenged the Sadducees and their power. They did not want to lose their power so they ordered the temple guards to seize Peter and John and throw them in jail.

We saw **in chapter 2** where 3,000 believed and were added to the church and here in Peter's second sermon another 5,000 men believed. This does not include the women and children. We see here how the message of Christ crucified and His resurrection are penetrating the hearts of those who have an open heart to hear the message.

**v.5-7...**It was late in the evening when they had Peter and John put in jail so they waited until the next day to have them brought before the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was a Jewish court made up of 70 men and the high priest. It was similar to our Supreme court as far as power goes. It is the same group of people that Jesus went before **in Mark 14:53-65**

Once again, the message of the resurrection of Jesus challenged the Sadducees since they did not believe in it and would lose their power if the people accepted what Peter and John were teaching. If Jesus was resurrected the Pharisees would lose their power also because the people would no longer need a priest to go between them and God since Jesus was the only way.

They accepted the fact that the lame man was healed so now they are asking Peter and John by what power did they do it, that is, how did they do it? They are asking Peter and John the same thing they asked Jesus **in Matthew 21:23**, "By what authority are you doing these things?"

**v.8...**We read **in Luke 12:11-12**....where Jesus tells His apostles that they would be brought before men, but not to worry because the Holy Spirit would speak for them.

**v.9-12...**Peter denied the Lord 3 times just a few weeks ago, but now we see the promise Jesus made to them is now taking place. The Holy Spirit has taken over and is now giving Peter the boldness to declare the Gospel, that is, the Good News.

Peter starts off by making them look foolish in that he and John are being charged for a good deed that was done in healing this helpless lame man. Then he tells them where the power comes from, Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Then Peter points out that they killed Him, but that God raised Him from the dead and that He is alive. The same thing he had told them **in Acts 2:22-24**

Then Peter tells them **in verse 11** of the prophecy of how it was told that the rulers would reject Jesus, but that He would become the chief cornerstone. The cornerstone is what you build around and they were building the church, that is, Christianity around Jesus.

**Then in v.12 Peter**...declares that not all religions are the same. Peter tells them that only one group of people could go to heaven and that was those who profess and accept that Jesus is Lord.

**v.13**...We see here how the Holy Spirit is working through Peter and John. Even though they were just fishermen, without an education from the Jewish schools and teachers, they deliver the message of Jesus crucified and resurrected in a very powerful and convincing way.

**v.14**...We see here that the man who was healed is with Peter and John during this interrogation and he is, *standing there*, with them. The evidence that a miracle had taken place could not be denied. The rulers, elders, scribes and Sanhedrin could not deny the miracle had happened and now they are trying to figure out what they can do to Peter and John.

**v.15-18**...The members of the Sanhedrin ask Peter and John to step outside for a moment. They wanted to talk amongst themselves as to what they could do to stop them from preaching about Jesus. They were in a great dilemma because they knew if they allowed Peter and John to continue to declare the resurrection of Jesus they were going to lose their power. They could not deny that the lame man was healed and that the healing had taken place in the name of Jesus. Therefore, they decide to threaten Peter and John with bodily harm and/or throw them back into prison if they continue to preach in the name of Jesus since that was all that they could do.

**v.19-20**...Here we see that Peter and John make a statement that can't be challenged. They tell them they are going to listen to God instead of them. Peter and John had walked and talked with Jesus. They had seen all the things He had done. They had seen Him after He was resurrected. They could not help but tell about Him and His resurrection, especially since He had instructed them to do so. They tell the Sanhedrin they are compelled to listen to God instead of listen to them. They tell them they can decide for themselves if it is better to listen to God or listen to them. What was the Sanhedrin going to say to that?

**v.21-22**...We see here that the people who had assembled in "the court" to listened to what the Sanhedrin was going to do to Peter and John were ready to rebel if the Sanhedrin tried to punish them. The people had accepted the fact that Peter and John were men of God and they glorified God for the miracle He had done through Peter and John. The "religious leaders of the people" throw their hands up in the air in frustration, so to speak, because they realize there is nothing they can do. All they can do is threaten them not to preach Jesus anymore, knowing that they would continue to do so.

**v.23-31**...Since the religious leaders could not do anything to Peter and John they release them. Then they go back to their brothers, sisters, and friends and tell them what took place. Then they begin to pray together. People will pray to God personally often and many every day, but we can learn from this that it is also good to come together as brothers and sisters in Christ and pray to God as one just as they did here. They begin their prayer by recognizing who God is, the Creator of heaven, the earth, the sea and everything else.

Then they bring to remembrance of what King David had prophesied **in Psalm 2:1-2** when he talked about how the Jewish rulers, as well as Herod, Pilate and the Romans would rise up and kill the Christ, Jesus, the Messiah. Now they, Peter and John, as well as the other apostles and Christians are being persecuted so they began to ask God for boldness when they preach Jesus crucified and resurrected. They also ask God to continue to heal people like He had the lame man, in the name of Jesus, so that people would know this is being done by Him, not by them.

God hears their prayer and grants their request by filling them with the Holy Spirit just like He did on the Day of Pentecost **in Acts 2:1-2**

Please note that there is a difference between being filled with Holy Spirit vs. the Holy Spirit dwelling in the child of God. The Holy Spirit dwells in every child of God, but the filling of the Holy Spirit is an event that took place from time to time with the apostles.

**v.32-37...**Those who made up the early church fully understand the teaching of Jesus when He taught how the church was to be made up of many members, but yet be one body.

**Read, 1 John 3:17-18.....**where we see how we are to help each other.

**We see in verse 33 where...**the apostles continue preaching and teaching Jesus with boldness accompanied by many signs and wonders. **Acts 2:43**

**We see in verse 34 and verse 35 where...**the first century Christians continue to help each other concerning their needs, just as we are told they did in **Acts 2:44-45**

**In verses 36-37 we are...**introduced to Barnabas who will become Paul's first traveling partner in spreading the Gospel. Barnabas was truly a giver and one who provided encouragement to everyone. The name Barnabas actually means, "Son of Consolation, that is Encouragement."

We see that Barnabas is a Levite from the island of Cyprus.

## Acts 5

**v.1-2...**In these **first 2 verses** it appears as though something good has taken place. Ananias and Sapphira had sold some land just as Barnabas had done in **Acts 5:36-37**. We are not told for certain in the Scriptures, but it seems as though they were going to possibly give all of the proceeds to the church, just as Barnabas had done. They may have told the church they had sold the land for a certain amount of money and wanted to look as though they were giving all of it to the church. However, we see here they kept back part of the proceeds.

**v.3-6...**We see in **Luke 22:3** where Satan "filled" Judas' heart to betray Jesus and now Satan has "filled" Ananias' heart to sin also. The sin here was that Ananias was trying to act like he was willing to give everything to God. When he sold the land, he told the apostles he had sold it for x amount of dollars and was giving it all to God. However, he was actually keeping some of the money back for himself.

**We see in verse 4...**where Peter tells him that he didn't have to sell it first of all and after he sold it he didn't have to give any of the money to God. However, Ananias wanted to lift himself up by acting like he was giving more than the others and he lied to the apostles and to the Holy Spirit, as well as to God when he said he was giving everything he made off of what he sold to the church.

**In Deuteronomy 23:21** the Scripture says when you make a vow to God and don't keep it, God considers it a sin. **In Ecclesiastes 5:4-5** it says..."It is better not to vow than to vow and not pay."

Peter points out that he, Ananias, conceived this in his heart which allowed Satan to easily help him carry it out. When Peter finishes telling him the sin he had committed, Ananias drops dead on the spot and some of the men carry him out and bury him. This was a severe penalty Ananias had to pay for his sin, but we can learn from it that we can never hide anything from God.

**v.7-11...**Even though it had been three hours since Ananias' soul had been required of him, Sapphira had not heard about it. She does not know that her husband Ananias had died, because he lied, to the Holy Spirit. Peter gives her the opportunity to tell the truth, but when Peter asked her if the amount they were giving to God was the amount they sold their land for Sapphira said, "yes."

Ananias and Sapphira had apparently conspired together to lie about the amount they had sold their land for. When she also lies about it she drops dead on the spot as well and the same men who came and carried Ananias' body out comes and takes her body and buries her beside him.

**We see in verse 11...**that fear came upon all the church as well as the people who heard about it. We need to also have that respectful fear of God.

**v.12-16...**We see here that the Holy Spirit was still working through the apostles by healing people and doing other kinds of miracles. They had gathered together on Solomon's Porch which was located on the east side of the Temple.

Solomon's porch is the same place Peter preached his second sermon in **Acts 3:11-26**. It was kind of like a "fellowship room" where people gathered together to study God's word.

**In verse 13 it could...**mean that no one joined them, that is the apostles, because they were afraid they would be persecuted like the apostles were being persecuted. Or it may be that they were afraid to draw near them because of what had recently happened to Ananias and Sapphira not knowing why they died as they did. All they knew for sure was that they died after Peter rebuked them.

The people had a great reverence towards the apostles because of the miracles they were doing in the name of Jesus.

**In verse 14 and 15 we see...**that the church is still growing with leaps and bounds as the apostles continued preaching Christ crucified and His resurrection. The apostles are still healing people of various sickness' and infirmities just as Jesus did to show that they were sent by Jesus to proclaim the Gospel, that is, the Good News. The Scriptures do not say that Peter's shadow healed people, but we see the people believe that if it just falls on them they will be healed.

It reminds me of the woman in **Matthew 9:20-22, Luke 8:43-48** and **Mark 5:25-34** who just wanted to touch the hem of Jesus' garment so she would be cured of her blood disease.

**We see in verse 16 how the...**apostles were doing just as Jesus had told them to do and that is to start preaching in Jerusalem first. However people in the surrounding cities were hearing about how the apostles were healing people just as Jesus had done so they were coming there with hopes of being healed or having their loved ones healed which gave the apostles a great opportunity to preach to them the message of Eternal Life.

**v.17-28....We see here in v.17 why...**the religious leaders were opposed to the apostles. It says because of indignation, which is jealousy, and once again, they have them thrown into prison.

Pilate knew the Jewish religious leaders were jealous of Jesus also. **Matthew 27:17-20**

**We see in verse 18 were...**this time the Sanhedrin does not just arrest Peter and John, but the other apostles who were there also. They were desperately wanting to put a stop to them preaching about Jesus.

**Then we see in verses 19 and 20 how...**God always takes care of His own. He sends an angel who opens the jail door and tells them to go back to the temple and continue preaching Christ crucified and His resurrection. The angel of the Lord tells them to, "Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life." The phrase, "this life", would have been the new life they would begin to live when they accepted Jesus as their Savior.

Paul talked about putting off the old man and putting on the new man **in Colossians 3:1-11**

The apostles go back to the temple and continue preaching Jesus crucified and His resurrection.



**We see in verses 21-24 where...**the high priest calls the council together for an urgent meeting and then sends the temple guards to bring the apostles to them. However, the angel has already let them out and sent them to the temple to continue preaching so the guards come back and tells them the prison is locked and secure, but the apostles are nowhere to be found. Can you imagine what is going through the high priest and the councils minds right now? They were probably both furious and yet afraid not knowing how the apostles got out of the jail.

**In verse 25 one of...**the guards comes and tells the Sanhedrin that the apostles are back in the temple teaching and preaching in the name of Jesus. The guards are then sent to bring the apostles to the high priest and counsel and **verse 26** says they done so peaceable and respectfully because they feared the people would turn on them if they tried to rough up the apostles. Even though they were the guards, with weapons, they realize that there were thousands of people there who believed in Jesus and if the people turned on them they knew they didn't have a chance in escaping and they themselves would be killed.

**In v.27 -28 the guards...**set them before the council and the high priest rebukes them once again for preaching in the name of Jesus and telling everyone that it was them who had Jesus killed. The apostles were not lying though, it was them that sought to have Jesus put to death.

**v.29-32...**Peter gives basically the same answer **in v.29**, "We ought to obey God rather than man", that he gave **in Acts 4:19-20** when he said...

"Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than God, you decide. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

**Then in verses 30-32 Peter...**does not deny the charges that the council and high priest are bringing against them. He points to how, "the God of our fathers", (the fathers would have been Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), raised up Jesus to be Prince and Savior of mankind, which included the Jews, but yet they murdered Him by having Him crucified. Peter then tells how he and the other apostles are a witness to the things that Jesus did and what He taught. We see here again where the Holy Spirit that was promised to them by Jesus is now filling them with boldness and they are not going to back down.

**v.33-39....** The council and the high priest had warned and threaten the apostles once before to quit teaching in the name of Jesus and quit saying that it was them that had Jesus put to death, but the apostles continue to do so. Some of the members of the Sanhedrin were so mad at the apostles that they met together to see how they could come up with a plan to kill them.

However a man by the name of Gamaliel speaks up and advises against doing so. It should be noted that Gamaliel was a Pharisee and that it was mostly Sadducees who were leading the charge to have the apostles killed. The people did not respect the Sadducees as much because they were wealthy aristocrats and didn't even believe in the resurrection, that is life after death. Whereas the Pharisees were more of the "common man" and believed in the resurrection. The Sadducees knew that they better listen to Gamaliels advise.

Gamaliel points to two false prophets, Theudas and Judas, who claimed to be sent from God, but they were not and they were both killed and their followers ceased. Gamaliel's advice is to let this "play out" and if it is not from God, it too will come to an halt, but if it is from God then there is nothing they can do about it. If they continue to try and stop the apostles they will actually be trying to stop God Himself, so they need to simply leave the apostles alone.

Gamaliel's advise reminds me of what Paul said **in Romans 8:31...**"If God is for us, who can be against us?"

**v.40-42.....**The counsel and high priest accepted the advice from Gamaliel, but they still had the apostles severely beaten and commanded them once again not to preach or teach in the name of Jesus.

A quick footnote on the beating they most likely had. The beating the Jewish leaders usually gave was referred to as, 40-1, which would have been 39 lashes. In **2 Corinthians 11:24** we see where Paul makes reference to being beaten five times. He said he received forty stripes minus one each time. The reason it is referred to as 40-1 is because under Jewish Law if the person giving the beating goes over 40 lashes, then they could be beaten as well, so they would stop at 39 in case they had miscounted.

Can you imagine being beat with a whip 39 times across your back....and then rejoice about it?

The apostles rejoiced after they were beaten knowing that they **suffered** because they stood up for Jesus. So often people today will not stand up for Jesus simply because they are afraid they will not be accepted by some of their friends. We need to always remember to stand up for Jesus and be thankful that we know we will not **suffer** by being beaten with whips. We may **suffer** the loss of some "friendships" when we stand up for Jesus or even **suffer** in some other ways, but to **suffer** for Christ sake is actually a good thing.

**Philippians 1:29** says..."For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to **suffer** for His sake"

**2 Timothy 3:12** says.."Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will **suffer** persecution."

**1 Peter 3:14** says..."But even if you should **suffer** for righteousness' sake, you are blessed. And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."

**1 Peter 4:16** says..."Yet if anyone **suffers** as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter."

**We see in verse 42 where...**the apostles continue to share the Gospel with everyone, knowing that they would continue to **suffer** for His sake.

## Acts 6

**v.1....**We see here that the church was growing fast. The word disciples here simply means Christians. The murmuring is between the Hebrews and the Hellenists. Hebrews were Jews who were born in Jerusalem and/or Palestine. They were educated in the Jewish customs, whereas Hellenists were Jews who were foreign born and were educated in the Greek customs. However, these Hellenist Jews were not Greek in ancestry. The Hellenistic time frame was approximately between 400BC (Alexander the Great) and 100 AD. A lot of the Hellenist were Sadducees.

The murmuring was concerning how the Hebrew widows vs. the Hellenist widows were being treated. The Hellenist believed as though their widows were not being taken care of as well as the Hebrew widows. There seemed to be a rivalry between the two groups.

**v.2...**The twelve apostles remind everyone that spreading the Gospel is more important than serving tables. They were not saying the issue concerning caring for the widows was not important, only that they had enough on their plate so they had to set priorities.

This reminds me of when Jethro, Moses' father-in-law told him **in Exodus 18:1-27** that he, Moses, was taking too much on himself and that he needed to delegate some authority to help him out.

**v.3-4...**They were looking for faithful and trustworthy men. They were looking to appoint these men to what we call today, Deacons. They were to have the same qualifications that are given for Deacons which is found **in 1 Timothy 3:13-18**

The apostles want to appoint them to take care of these matters so that they can continue preaching the Gospel, the Good News.

**v.5-6...**We will hear more from Stephen and Philip later, but we do not hear about the other 5 any more in the Bible except with the possibility of Nicolas becoming the cult leader of the Nicolaitans that we read about **in Revelation 2:6, 15**

The Philip mentioned here is not the apostle Philip, but was known as, Philip the Evangelist.

We do not know a lot about these men and their backgrounds, but we do know that Nicolas was a proselyte. A proselyte is a person who has converted from one religion to another one. Nicolas was possibly a Gentile who had converted to Judaism and then became a Christian.

All seven had Greek names so it is possible they were Greek or Hellenist Jews themselves and that the apostles were wanting to show the Hellenists they were going to be more than fair in appointing some men to oversee their concern as far as taking care of their widows.

We see here that good men were chosen and the laying on of hands was still in effect. Laying on of hands at this time was how the apostles transferred the power they received from Jesus to others. It ceased after the apostles died.

**v.7...** We see here that a great many of the Jewish priest became Christians. This reminds me of what Jesus said **in John 12:42-43** where He talked about how many of the Jewish rulers believed in Him, but unlike these priest, they were not willing to confess Him publicly.

**We see here in verse 7 that...**the church is continuing to multiply greatly in Jerusalem.

**v.8...**We see Stephen starting to take charge here immediately. The Scripture does not tell us what the "wonders and signs" were, but they were most likely the same thing that the apostles had been doing and were still doing.

**v.9...**The Synagogue of the Freedmen were Jews who had been set free from Roman slavery; the Cyrenians and Alexandrians were from the north of Africa; the Asians and Cilicians from the peninsula of Asia. They were all foreign born Jews. The Scriptures do not tell us why, but they were arguing with Stephen.

**v.10...**The Freedmen were in a debate, that is, a conversation with God Himself since the Holy Spirit was speaking through Stephen. They were not going to be able to outwit Stephen whatsoever.

**v.11-14...in verse 11 we see...**how the Sanhedrin tries to work on the emotions of the people by making reference to Moses and God in suggesting that Stephen was speaking blasphemous words against both of them. These were serious charges and accusations if proven and in this case, even though they were not proven.

Since the Freedmen were not able to stand up against the wisdom of Stephen they decided to get some people to lie about him.

I am reminded of two other times that **false witness'** were used to have someone killed.

**1 Kings 21:7-13 tells...**the story about Naboth and how Jezebel got **false witness'** to testify and say Naboth had blasphemed God.

**Mark 14:55-59 tells...**how the chief priest and council got **false witness'** to tell lies about Jesus as they set out to kill Him.

**v.12...**the Sanhedrin starts stirring the people up against Stephen and we can see how this is an example even to this day where people can be persuaded to believe something, even if it is a lie. The Sanhedrin and their **false witness'** had stirred the people up so much that they formed a "lynch mob" and seized Stephen, then took him before the council.

**We see in verse 13 and verse 14 where...**the claim and accusations concerning blaspheming against Stephen is basically the same charges that the Sanhedrin had made against Jesus **in Matthew 26:57-68**

The charge of blaspheming against God was as serious of a charge as one could be charged with at the time. We read **in Leviticus 24:16** where whoever blasphemes God was to be put to death.

**v.15...**We see here that the Holy Spirit was definitely working in and through Stephen. The Scriptures say they saw Stephen's face as the face of an angel.

This reminds me of when Moses came down from the mountain **in Exodus 34:29-35**

Moses' face "glowed" and the people saw him in a different way as well.

## Acts 7

**v.1 - 3...**Stephen is now standing before the high priest who would have been similar to a judge in our time. Stephen is charged with blaspheming. The same thing that Jesus was charged with. Just like in today's courts, Stephen was asked does he plead guilty or innocent?

Stephen doesn't give an answer to this charge, but instead he politely calls them men and brethren which would have reminded them that he is a Jew just as they are. Then he starts out by reminding them of their Jewish heritage.

Abraham was considered the father of Judaism and the Jewish nation. He had a special relationship with God. He is called the "friend of God" **in James 2:23**

Mesopotamia was what we know as modern day Iraq. Haran is what we know today as the country Turkey. We read **in Genesis 12:1** where God instructed Abraham to leave his country and go to a land that he is going to show him. Abraham was known for his faith so he didn't ask God when, why, or where. He went as God told him to do.

**v.4 – 5...**Stephen is still reminding them of their heritage and the promise God made to the Hebrew people. We see here that Abrahams father, Terah, (**Genesis 12:24-32**) dies in Haran and doesn't go to the land that God is promising to give to Abraham.

Luke points out **in verse 5** what God had told Abraham **in Genesis 12:7** in that he would give this land to him and his descendents, of which God did.

**v.6 - 7...**This 400 years in bondage is when the Hebrew people were slaves in the land of Egypt that God had told Abraham about **in Genesis 15:13**

**v.8 - 10...**Stephen continues giving them the history of the Jewish nation. God had instructed Abraham **in Genesis 17:10-14** to circumcise every male child on the eight day of their life to represent a covenant between Him and the Hebrew people.

**Genesis 21:1-5** records the circumcising of Abraham's son Isaac.

Stephen reminds them of the story of Joseph, how his brothers sold him into slavery, but God turned a bad thing into a good thing. **Genesis 41:38-44** records how Pharaoh lifted Joseph up to where he was the second most powerful man in all of Egypt. Second only to Pharaoh himself.

**v.11 – 15...**Stephen is reminding them of how God took care of His people in Egypt when the great famine took place while they were there. **In verse 13...**Stephen reminds them of how God reunited Joseph with his brothers which is recorded **in Genesis 45:1-15**

Stephen tells them **in verse 14 and verse 15...**how Jacob went to live in Egypt which is recorded **in Genesis 46:1-7**

The Sanhedrin was of course very familiar with this part of the Jewish history, but Stephen is reminding them in detail.

I am reminded of what Peter said **in 2 Peter 1:13** and **2 Peter 3:1** when he said that he was, "stirring up their minds by way of remembrance."

**v.16...verse 16 tells us...**how Jacob was brought back to be buried in the “promise land” and beside his grandfather Abraham.

**v.17 – 19...**We see here how Stephen is reminding the Sanhedrin about God's promise. Stephen tells how the people multiplied from 70 people during that 400 years to nearly 3 million people.

Then Stephen continues his history lesson by telling how Joseph and Pharaoh dies and a different king (**Exodus 1:8**) rose to power and turned on the Jewish people. He put them into slavery and even started killing their male born babies which is recorded **in Exodus 1:22**

**v.20 – 22...**Stephen introduces Moses into the sermon **in verse 20**. We saw **in Acts 6:11** where the Sanhedrin charged Stephen with speaking blasphemous words against Moses, but Stephen actually lifts up and praises Moses.

Moses would have been killed at birth if God had not intervened. It is not just by chance that Pharaoh's daughter found and began raising Moses. God's plan of delivering the Jewish people from their 400 years in bondage was being set in process.

**Exodus 2:1-9 tells how...** God created a way for Moses' real mother to actually nurse him.

**We see in verse 22 that...**Moses is being educated in the Egyptian schools and ways, but his heart was still with the Hebrew people, the children of Israel.

**v.23 - 29...**We don't know how or when Moses found out he was a Hebrew....but he did. Stephen points out that when Moses was forty years old he defends one of the Hebrews by killing an Egyptian. He didn't realize that God was not ready for him to do so just yet. It is the same way with us sometimes in that we try to do things on our own without relying on God's help.

When Moses realizes that it was known he had killed an Egyptian he goes on the run knowing he would now be killed himself. He goes to a foreign land now just as Jacob had done. He goes to Midian which we know today as western Saudi Arabia.

**v.30 - 34...**Stephen reminds the Sanhedrin of how God instructed Moses **in Exodus 3:1-15** as to what he was to do.

**v.35 - 37...**Stephen is reminding the Sanhedrin (which is the Religious governing body of the Jews) , how their forefathers rejected Moses just like they are rejecting Jesus, but their hearts were harden because they didn't want to give up their power. They knew they would have to if they accepted Jesus for who He was/is, the long awaited Messiah.

Stephen is also pointing out how God showed “wonders and signs” through Moses, just as He had done through Jesus. There were a few of the Sanhedrin that saw the things Jesus did and believed He was who He said He was. Nicodemus was one of them of which we read about **in John 3:1-2**

Then Stephen reminds them **in verse 37 how...**Moses had told their forefathers that God was going to raise up Jesus from among the children of Israel.

**v.38 – 40...**Stephen tells how Moses was with the people in the wilderness and how God spoke directly to him. Even though God instructed Moses what to do and what to say, Stephen points out that the people still rejected him (Moses). Therefore, they were rejecting God.

As Stephen tells the Sanhedrin how the people rejected Moses and how they are rejecting Jesus I am reminded of what God told Samuel **in 1 Samuel 8:7 when...**He said the people were not rejecting him, that is Samuel, but were instead rejecting Him, that is God.

It is the same way today when people reject the message of salvation through the name of Jesus. Some people defiantly reject Jesus, while others reject Him for other reasons such as they simply are not ready yet. It doesn't matter what the reason is for rejecting Jesus today or back then. The end result will be the same for all of those who reject Him.

**v.41...Exodus 20:1 reminds...**us of what the first commandment was....

"You shall have no other Gods before me."

**v.42 – 43...**Stephen quotes the prophet Amos **in Amos 5:25-27**. Amos was an Old Testament prophet that was from Judah, which is in the south, but was sent to the kingdom of Israel up north to prophesy against them. The nation of Israel had turned from God to worshipping false gods and Amos warned them of their coming punishment for doing so. Stephen is explaining to the Sanhedrin that once again, the Jewish people had turned from God, by rejecting Jesus.

**v.44 – 50...**Stephen continues his "history lecture" to the Sanhedrin in a detailed way.

The tabernacle was a portable tent and the Jews carried it with them on their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. They kept the commandments that God had written on two pieces of stone in there. The tabernacle was like a temple to them and they considered it holy.

Once David established Jerusalem as the capital of Israel he wanted to build a permanent temple to replace the tabernacle, but he was not allowed to. God had told David **in 1 Chronicles 28:3...**

"You shall not build a house for My name, because you have been a man of war and have shed blood."

**We see in verse 47 where...**David's son Solomon eventually build the temple.

**In verses 49-50 Stephen...**quotes **Isaiah 66:1-2** in reminding the Sanhedrin that God does not live in temples made with hands. He lives in heaven and earth is just His footstool. The temple itself was not holy. What made it holy was the presence of God Himself.

**v.51 - 53...**Stephen realizes that the Jews were not going to respond favorably to his sermon, that is, his message. He turns from his recalling Jewish history to "calling them out", for what they are and for what they had done, in killing the Messiah, that is Jesus.

**In Exodus 32:9 Moses...**called the people of that generation "stiff-necked" and that is what Stephen is calling them now. Stiff-necked means stubborn and they were.

Stephen points out how they had rejected John the Baptist' message and killed him.

Peter pointed **out in Acts 4:10 and Acts 5:30** that they had also killed Jesus, the Messiah.

**v.54...**Have you ever been so mad at someone that you gritted your teeth over and over. The Jews were so mad at Stephen telling them that they killed the Messiah that that is what they are doing here. They wanted to kill him. We saw the same thing **in Acts 5:33** when the Sanhedrin took council on how they could kill Peter for saying that they had murdered Jesus by hanging Him on a tree, that is, by crucifying Him.

**v.55 - 56...**When we read about Jesus being at the right hand of God in other places in the Bible it refers to Him as sitting by the right hand of God. Here, Stephen sees Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

We are not sure why Jesus is standing here. It could be that He was standing and telling Stephen to, "preach on", or it could be that since Stephen is about to die that He is standing as He gets ready to welcome him to heaven. For whatever reason, Jesus was standing at the right hand of God.

Jesus referred to Himself 80 times in the four Gospels as, the Son of Man. In the vision that Stephen sees Him in, that is what he calls Him, the Son of Man.

**v.57 – 58...**We see here how they turned this into a mob lynching. They covered their ears with their hands so that they wouldn't have to listen to Stephen anymore. Then they all charged at him at the same time and took him outside of the city gates to stone him.

In Biblical times, "the witnesses" were to throw the first stones at the accused. We see them doing this here.

I am reminded of the story found **in John 8:1-11** concerning the woman caught in adultery. Jesus told them **in verse 7**, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first."

**We see in verse 58 where...**Saul, who later became Paul, was consenting to Stephens death also. If Saul's conversion to Christianity would have been before Stephen was stoned I could almost hear him say, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at him first."

Why did the Jews request that the Roman Leaders kill Jesus, but not Stephen?

The Jewish leaders ask Pilate to put Jesus to death and when Pilate told them they had to judge Him using their own law, they replied in, **John 18:31**, by saying it is not "lawful" for them to put Jesus to death. They were referring to the Roman law in that they could not since they were under Roman control.

So why were they able to stone Stephen to death?

These could be contributing factors as to why...

1) Jesus' popularity was widespread, but Stephen had just came onto the scene. Therefore the Romans may have had a lot interest in to what happen to Jesus. If the Jews killed Him there could have be a severe backlash in Israel, causing an uprising that the Romans would have had to deal with. However with Stephen, they would not have cared because the Romans for the most part didn't even know who he was.

2) With a mob, things can get out of control fast and the stoning of Stephen may have happen so fast that the Jewish leaders didn't have time to ask for permission from Rome.



3) The Jews had been given the right by Rome to put people to death for certain crimes in the past, usually for what they considered "religious crimes", so the Jewish leaders may have been thinking the Romans would not even care.

One thing for sure though, Stephen died a very painful death and he was the first Christian martyr.

**v.59 – 60...**We see here where Stephen is basically saying the same thing to Jesus that Jesus said to His Father **in Luke 23:46...**

"Father, into Your hands I commend My Spirit" as He died on the cross.

**In verse 60 we see where...**Stephen once again basically says the same thing to Jesus that Jesus said to His Father **in Luke 23:34...**"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."

Do you think if people were stoning you to death with rocks the size of a baseball and bigger that you could say the same thing Stephen said, that is, asking God not to hold them accountable for stoning him to death?

This shows the forgiving heart that Stephen had and that we all need to strive to have when someone persecutes us when we try to share the Lord with them.

## Acts 8

**v. 1 - 4...**Luke reminds us here that Saul was consenting to Stephen's death. Great persecution breaks out against the church/the Christians. We see how God turned the persecution of the church in Jerusalem into spreading the Gospel throughout Judea and Samaria. The regions of Judea and Samaria would have bordered each other just like 2 states do here in the USA.

Because Christians were being persecuted so violently by Saul many of them leave Jerusalem. However their convictions were genuine so even though they left Jerusalem they continue telling people about Jesus and the church continue to grow broader. We see that the apostles were not intimidated by Saul and they stayed in Jerusalem working with the church there.

Since Luke does refer to these devout men **in verse 2** as fellow Christians they most likely were not. We are not sure who they were, but it would have been men that were held in a high esteem and they were not afraid of being persecuted for tending to Stephen's burial.

This reminds me of when Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus went to get Jesus' body so that they could bury Him **in John 19:38-42**

Stephen was a good man! Even though he was killed shortly after the apostles "laid their hands" on him **in Acts 6:6**, he did many great "wonders and signs" amongst the people so they knew he was indeed a man of God. The Scripture tells us **in verse 2** that there was great lamentation over Stephen's death.

**We see in verse 3 where...**Saul created havoc, that is, much damage to the church by entering EVERY house and carrying Christians off to prison! He was very aggressive with his persecution of Christians not yet knowing that he himself would become a "believer" one day and he would be persecuted just as he is persecuting the Christians now.

In Paul's letter to the Philippians he reminds them **in Philippians 3:6** how he persecuted the church before he saw that "great light" (**Acts 22:6-23**) that caused him to go blind. Going blind helped Paul to eventually see that Jesus was/is the Messiah.

**We see in verse 4 where...**the Christians who fled Jerusalem because of Paul were now going everywhere preaching the Good News, the Gospel.

**v.5 - 8...**This wasn't the apostle Philip, it was the man known as Philip the evangelist that the apostles laid hands on and was talked about **in Acts 6:5**

Samaritans were hated by the Jews and the Samaritans hated the Jews likewise. Philip is now taking the Gospel into Samaria which is uncharted water for the most part. This would have been a very dangerous thing for Philip to have done, but he had the Holy Spirit leading the way.

A quick look at why the Jews and the Samaritans hated each other the way they did.

**We see in 1 Kings 12 where...**the twelve tribes of Israel were divided. Ten tribes lived in Samaria which made up the northern kingdom and two tribes lived in Judah which made up the southern kingdom. Jeroboam served as the king of the northern kingdom and Rehoboam served as the king of the southern kingdom.

**We see in 1 Kings 12:25-33 where...**Jeroboam changes the place where the Jews were to worship. He changes it from Jerusalem to Samaria. He made it to where they would no longer travel to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices to God and worship Him. Jeroboam set up idols for them to worship instead of worshipping the living God.

When Israel, the northern kingdom, eventually falls to the Assyrians they began to intermarry with the Assyrians. This is why the Jews hated the Samaritans so much. They would refer to the Samaritans as "half-bred dogs". They considered them not to be pure and unholy.

We see where Philip is performing miracles just as Jesus did to show that he was sent from God to deliver His message. The message was that Jesus was crucified, but God raised Him from the dead.

When the Samaritans saw the miracles that Philip was doing they believed that he was indeed a man sent from God to bring salvation to them. We see **in verse 7** where Philip was casting out demons just as Jesus had told the seventy they would be able to do **in Luke 10:17-20**

The Samaritans were not only being healed physically, that were also being healed spiritually. We see **in verse 8** where there was great joy in the city. The Samaritans accepted the message of eternal life in the name of Jesus, while the Sanhedrin rejecting it.

**v.9 - 13...**We are introduced here to Simon the sorcerer. Simon practiced sorcery, but even he saw the difference between sorcery and the power of God that Philip was using to heal people and cast out demons. Simon was well known, but he wanted to be even more popular. He wanted to be as popular as Philip was and it seems he also wanted to be glorified, just like God was!

**We see here in verse 10 & 11 that...**people actually thought that Simon was a man of God and that he got his power from God. This was not true though, he had been using sorcery to deceive people for a long time. Sorcery had been condemned by God **in Deuteronomy 18:10-12**

**We see in verse 12 when...**those Samaritans accepted the Gospel they were baptized just as the Jews who accepted the Gospel on the Day of Pentecost **in Acts 2:41** were baptized.

**We see in verse 13 where...**Simon believes in the name of Jesus and he is also baptized. He continued following and seeing the things that Philip was doing. Simon had been practicing sorcery for a long time and he thought he knew "every trick in the book", so he was amazed when he saw Philip doing things in the name of Jesus that he thought was impossible to do.

**v. 14 – 17...**Ministry to the Samaritans was forbidden to the disciples during Jesus' lifetime.

We see that Jesus told his apostles..."do not enter a city of the Samaritans." **Matthew 10:5-8** Jesus had instructed them to preach the message to the Jews first. But now the Gospel was being taught and believed in Samaria!

Peter and John were sent down to Samaria to confirm that the Samaritans were accepted now and that the Gospel is for all. We see John going down there to embrace them now even though **in Luke 9:54** we saw where he asked Jesus to let him call fire down from heaven and consume one of the Samaritan villages before.

**We see in verse 16 and verse 17 where...**the Samaritans had not received the Holy Spirit. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

**We saw in Acts 6:6 where...**the apostles had laid hands on Philip and he received the Holy Spirit. That doesn't mean that Philip had the same ability to go and lay hands on others so that they could receive the Holy Spirit as well. We do not see anywhere in the Scriptures where he did.

Here are two possible reasons the Samaritans had not received the Holy Spirit yet...

1) It appears in the Scriptures as though only the apostles, including Paul, had the ability to lay their hands on someone and they receive the Holy Spirit. Some may point to Ananias **in Acts 9**, but the Scriptures do not say that Paul received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit here.

**In Acts 9:12** Jesus just tells Ananias that Saul has seen a man who will lay hands on him so that he will receive his sight. The Scriptures do not tell us when Paul received "the gift of the Holy Spirit." When and how did Paul receive this gift? It could possibly be one of the apostles laid their hands on him, we just do not know! However, we do not know that he did. There are some things in the Bible that are a mystery and we need to simply accept the fact that we will never have an answer for everything.

We do know for sure though that Peter and John laid hands on the Samaritan believers **in verse 17**

2) It could possibly be that the Lord was wanting to tie the church there in Jerusalem together with the newly established church in Samaria. Then they would be unified as one church and no rivalries would erupt between the Samaritans and the Jews. Therefore, Peter and John were sent down to Samaria to validate what Philip had been preaching and teaching since they were two of "the pillars of the church" that are mentioned **in Galatians 2:9**

**v.18 - 25...**Simon had become very wealthy practicing sorcery. He wanted to take some of the money he had made and purchase "this power" of laying on hands from the apostles. Simon did not realize that the power was not the apostles to give, it was given by God.

**We see in verse 20 where...**Peter was known at times to react quickly. We see where he very aggressively turns on Simon and tells him that he is going to die with his money in his hand. It is possible that Simon had heard about what had happened to Ananias and Sapphira **in Acts 5:1-11** when Peter called them out and he was afraid he was going to die now.

**Hebrews 4:12 tells us...**"that God is a discerner of the thoughts of our hearts" and we see that Peter tells Simon **in verse 21** that his heart was not right.

Even though Simon's heart was not right, Peter reminds him **in verse 22** that he can still be forgiven if he will repent and pray that the very thought of his heart be forgiven. This reminds us that we should not only ask for forgiveness of the things we do, but for some of the thoughts that we have also.

**In verse 23 Peter...**tells Simon that he knew that he, that is Simon, was jealous of the apostles because God had given them the power they had. He was not just jealous about it, he was very bitter that they had it and he didn't. Yes, Simon was poisoned with bitterness. He wanted the praise of the people and to be regarded as someone great amongst them.

**In verse 24 we see...** that Simon still did not really get it! He was not to ask someone to pray for him to be forgiven, he had to pray to God Himself and ask to be forgiven.

**1 John 1:9...**tells us that if we confess our sins God will forgive us. Simon needed to ask for forgiveness for not only what he tried to do in buying the gift of the Holy Spirit. He needed to ask for forgiveness for conspiring in his heart to try and do so.

It seems that it is possible that Simon may have become a Christian for the wrong reason. He may have been just wanting to get closer to the apostles and see if he could obtain the same power they had.

**v.25....** Jerusalem was the base of the church at this time that the apostles worked out of. We see as Peter and John head back to Jerusalem they preached in many of the Samaritan villages.

Paul said **in 1 Corinthians 3:6...**that he planted the word, his friend Apollos watered, and God gave the increase. We see here that Peter and John are planting seeds in Samaria as well as putting water on the seeds that Philip had planted. God gave the increase as the church began sprouting throughout Samaria and the surrounding area.

When we share Jesus with people we may be planting seeds in their hearts or we may be watering the seeds that someone else has planted. Either way we need to share the Gospel with people just as they were doing back then and let God give the increase.

**v.26 - 29...**God used angels many times in the Bible to tell someone what He wanted them to do. We see Him doing so here with Philip. The angel told Philip where God was wanting him to go.

Gaza was southwest of Jerusalem and there was a road which led to Gaza from Jerusalem. This road would have been like riding across the desert in Arizona from one city to another city. There is really nothing there except the road that connects the cities.

**We see in verse 27 where...**a eunuch had come from Ethiopia to Jerusalem. Ethiopia is a country in Northeast Africa. He had possible been born Jewish or he may have possible converted to Judaism, but either way, he came to Jerusalem to worship God.

Candace was not the queens name. Candace was used as a royal title, similar to how Pharaoh was used in Egypt. We see that this eunuch had a lot of power and influence in Ethiopia by being in charge of her treasury.

**We see in verse 28 as...**the eunuch was returning to Ethiopia and he is reading from the book of Isaiah.

**We see in verse 29 where...**the Holy Spirit told Philip to go and catch up with the eunuch's chariot.

**v.30 - 35...**Philip saw the urgency of the Holy Spirit, so he ran to the eunuch. It was a common thing for people to read the Scriptures out loud back then and that was what the eunuch is doing here. Philip hears him reading from the book of Isaiah and he asked him if he understood what he was reading.

This shows us a great way to approach someone that may be interested in the Gospel. Ask them if they have a question about something they may be reading or have read before.

**We see in verse 31 where...**the eunuch was very receptive to being taught about what he was reading. He invites Philip to climb on up into the chariot and explain to him what he just read.

Even as Christians we may read something that we don't understand. This shows us we need to be receptive like the eunuch was and we need to be willing to listen to someone that may have an understanding to what we are reading.

**In verses 32 - 33 we see...**the passage that the eunuch is reading from is **Isaiah 53:7-8** Isaiah is prophesying about how Jesus would die for the sins of mankind.

**In verses 34 – 35...**we see the eunuch practiced the, "minds are like parachutes philosophy!" They only function when they are open.

The eunuch's heart was open to being taught "the truth". **John 18:37-38** and **John 8:32**

**In Luke 24:13-32...**Jesus met two men on the road to Emmaus after He had been resurrected. Jesus began with the story of Moses and he expanded upon it explaining to them, using the Scriptures, the things that were going to happen to Him.

**We see in verse 35 where...**Philip is doing the same thing starting with the Scripture the eunuch had just finished reading in the book of Isaiah.

We can learn from both what Jesus did and what Philip did. We need to always point to the Scriptures, not our opinions, when we share the Gospel with someone.

**v.36 - 40..**We don't see where Philip told him he must be baptized. However, we know he had to have told him he must be because when the eunuch saw some water he ask Philip what was preventing him from being baptized.

**Then in verse 37 we see...**where the eunuch makes the "great confession" that he believed that Jesus is the Son of God, just as we are to do today if we want to become a Christian. **Mark 16:16**

**We see in verse 38 that...**baptism was taught from the conception of Christianity.

**We see in verse 39 where...**the Holy Spirit instructs Philip to leave the eunuch now and go somewhere else. The eunuch went away rejoicing knowing that his sins had been forgiven and that he was going to live in heaven one day with Jesus throughout eternity.

We do not know if this eunuch is the one who took the Gospel into Ethiopia. However, with his zeal because of what he has just heard and learned it would be easy to say that he would have shared the message of Jesus with anyone who would listen to him there in Ethiopia.

When is the last time you reflected back to when you became a Christian, and rejoiced about it?

**We see in verse 40 that...**Philip then moved on and continue preaching the Gospel. The next city we see him in is Azotus, which is the city also known as Ashdod. It is a seaport located by the Mediterranean Sea 45 miles west of Jerusalem. Philip worked his way 65 miles north to Caesarea, also a seaport on the Mediterranean Sea, where he had a house and lived. **Acts 21:8**

## Acts 9

**v. 1-2...**Saul had just participated in the stoning death of Stephen and now he wanted to continue persecuting others who were Christians. The high priest and the Sanhedrin did not have authority in other countries, but the Roman government gave them authority to arrest Jews in other countries. After they arrested them they had to bring them back to Jerusalem to put them on trial. Therefore, Saul went to them asking for a letter to show he had authority to arrest Christians and bring them back to Jerusalem. He would need this letter to present to the authorities in Damascus.

Saul was not only wanting and trying to put a stop to Christianity in Jerusalem, he now wanted to go to foreign countries and put a stop to it there also. He was starting here in Damascus, Syria.

Jesus said in **John 14:6**, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." The Way, was simply a name for Christianity.

**v.3-4...**Damascus was in the country of Syria just northeast of Galilee. It was 150 miles from Jerusalem which is about a week's walk from Jerusalem.

Jesus said in **John 8:12** that He is the light of the world. Now this "light" has engulfed Saul! The light was so bright and over bearing that it immediately knocked Saul down to the ground! Paul later told the Corinthians about this encounter in **1 Corinthians 15:8**

Then Jesus asked Saul why He was persecuting Him.

Saul was not just persecuting Christians, he was indirectly persecuting Jesus. It is much the same way when someone mocks or "persecutes" Christians today. They are not just persecuting Christians, they are also persecuting Jesus. Jesus said in **Matthew 25:40...**"when you do something to the least of these My brethren, you do it to me."

**v.5-6...**Saul is confused as to who this was because he thought he was actually doing a good thing in persecuting Christians. Paul would later on remind the Philippians in **Philippians 3:5-6...**that he was a Pharisee, a Hebrew of Hebrews and his zeal for the Jewish law and traditions is what motivated him to persecute the church in the aggressive way that he did.

Paul sincerely thought he was doing what God wanted him to do.

Jesus tells him who He is! And then Jesus tells Saul it is hard for him to kick against the goads.

A goad is basically a spear with a very sharp point that was used by people who had cows or a ox to get them to go in the direction they wanted them to go. Jesus was wanting Saul to go in a different direction than he was going in. Jesus wanted him to help spread the Gospel, instead of preventing it from spreading.

When Saul realizes that this is Jesus Himself. The One that the Christians were talking about and that He was speaking to him directly, he was afraid. Then he asked Jesus what He wanted him to do. The Lord tells him in **verse 6** what He wants him to do.

**v.7...**The men who were traveling with Saul were possibly and most likely the Jewish Temple police guard since Saul was going to arrest Christians and bring them back to Jerusalem. There were possible some Jewish zealots traveling with them also.

**v.8...**Paul possibly had eye problems as far as his vision goes from this point on. Some believe Paul's "thorn in the flesh" talked about **in 2 Corinthians 12:7** was possibly his dimmed vision as the result of this experience with Jesus.

**v.9...**Three days would have given Paul some time to do some thinking about how he had been persecuting Jesus and Christians, don't you think?

**v.10-16...**We see here when the Lord called Ananias he was ready to respond, by saying..."Here I am Lord." This reminds me of when Samuel said, "Here I am", **in 1 Samuel 3:1-10**

Then the Lord tells Ananias **in verse 11 and verse 12** what He wants him to do.

The street called Straight that was in Damascus was a street that ran straight as an arrow from east to west, straight through the middle of the city and was the most traveled street in the city.

**We see in verses 13-14 that...**Ananias knows who Saul is. It is possible that Ananias had been one of the many Christians who fled Jerusalem because of Saul's persecution there and had moved to Damascus. Now Jesus is asking him to go see him. I would think Ananias would have been initially afraid to do so? I believe most Christians would have been scared of Saul.

**We see in verses 15-16 that...**Jesus reassures Ananias that he has nothing to be afraid of.

Jesus shares with Ananias how that He is going to use Saul to spread the Gospel and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Matthew 28:19** And that the Gospel would be preached to every creature. **Mark 16:15**

**v. 17-19...**Saul has already seen Ananias in a vision coming to him so Saul was expecting him. Then after Ananias tells him why he is there Saul receives his sight and is then baptized.

Saul had been fasting and praying since "that great Light" knocked him to the ground so after three days with no food or water he must have been very weak. After receiving his strength back he starts meeting with other Christians there in Damascus.

I would think that many, if not most of the Christians there in Damascus would have still been very suspicious of him at first. Saul had been very aggressive in persecuting the Christians so some of them may possible have been thinking that he was just "setting them up".

Ananias would have trusted Saul completely because of what Jesus had told him in that vision, but the Christians who were there may have been thinking that he would eventually turn on them.

**v.20-22...**We see here that Saul is now a "new man", just as we are today when we become born again Christians. **Colossians 3:9-10**



**We see in verse 21 that...**the people knew who Saul was and they knew why he had come there to Damascus. The people were confused and possibly did not believe Saul had really changed.

It is the same way today with a lot of people in that when someone chooses to become a Christian, they may not take them seriously. They may not have been persecuting Christians like Saul was, but they had been living a life that was contradicting to the Christian lifestyle and now that they have changed, a lot of their friends and associates may not believe they have really changed. Therefore, they/we have to not only talk the talk, but we must walk the walk also.

**We see in verse 22 how...**Paul uses the scriptures to prove that Jesus was/is the Messiah. Instead of telling someone our opinion concerning what one must do to become a Christian, we need to do like Paul did and that is, always point to the scriptures.

**v.23-25....** We don't know how many, "many days" were, but we do know that Paul began to immediately preach that Jesus was crucified and that He was raised from the dead. He also preached and taught that Jesus was/is the Messiah.

**We see in verse 23 where...**the Jews were turning on Saul because he was now preaching Jesus instead of persecuting Him. They were determine to kill him as quickly as possible to stop him from spreading the Gospel so they get together and plot out a way to do so.

**We see in verse 24 where...**Saul finds out about their plot. The Jews set some people in position to watch the city gates both day and night so that when Paul went out of the city they could catch and kill him.

**We see in verse 25 where...**some of Paul's Christian brothers and/or sisters help him escape the Jews plot by lowering him down outside the city wall with a rope and basket.

This reminds me of when Rahab help the two spies escape from Jericho **in Joshua 2:1-15**

**We read in 2 Corinthians 11:32-33 where...**Paul shares with those there in Corinth how he was let down in a basket in Damascus so that he would not have been killed.

**v.26...In Galatians 1:15-18 Paul says....**that it was 3 years before he went up to Jerusalem. He went to Arabia and came back to Damascus during this three year period.

Even though it had been 3 years since his conversion, the Christians there in Jerusalem would have still been scared of him because they did not know for sure if he had really been converted.

**...v.27-29...We see in verse 27 that...**Barnabas takes Saul to the apostles that were in Jerusalem at the time. We know that at least Peter and James, the half brother of Jesus were there. This is the Barnabas that we read about **in Acts 4:36**

Barnabas means encourager and that is what he is doing now by speaking up on behalf of Saul. He and Saul become good friends and they travel together on Paul's first missionary journey.

Then Saul speaks for himself by telling the apostles how Jesus had appeared to him on the road to Damascus. He also told them how he had boldly preached that Jesus was crucified, but that God had raised Him from the dead. He also declared to the Jews in Damascus that Jesus was/is the Messiah.

**We see in verse 28 where...**Luke refers to Paul being with "them" in Jerusalem. The "them" here is possible Peter and James since Paul makes reference **in Galatians 1:18-19** to going to Jerusalem and spending 15 days with Peter and James.

**We see in verse 29 where...**Saul continued to preach with great boldness and now some of the same people who killed Stephen were out to kill him.

As we read back **in Acts 7:58** , Saul was there when Stephen was stoned to death, so I would think Saul reflected back to that moment as they attempted to kill him.

**v.30-31...**Caesarea was a city located by the Mediterranean Sea. It is where Philip the evangelist lived. Tarsus is the city where Saul was born and raised, so Saul is now back in his home town being groomed to preach the Gospel.

**We see in verse 31 that...**since Saul is no longer persecuting the church as he had been doing that the church was now starting to grow and expand.

The Gospel was first preached in Judea and then in Samaria and Galilee so that is where most of the first churches were. They have some peace now because they are not worried about Saul showing up in their city or town and arresting them.

**v.32-35...**Luke picks back up **here in verse 32** with sharing Peter's ministry now. We see how Peter has left Jerusalem and he is carrying the Gospel to other cities and towns now. The town of Lydda was about 35 miles northwest of Jerusalem.

**We see in verse 33-34 where...**Peter heals a man by the name of Aeneas in the name of Jesus. He was paralyzed and had been confined to a bed for eight years now.

This reminds me of the time when Jesus healed the lame man in **Matthew 9:1-8, Mark 2:1-12** and **Luke 5:17-26**

Peter uses the power of Jesus to heal and to show that he was sent by Jesus to preach Christ crucified and that God had raised Him from the dead.

When the people in Lydda and Sharon saw this they became Christians. We do not need to see miracles like this today because our faith is to be based on hearing the word of God, not seeing the miracles that Jesus and His apostles performed. **John 20:29**

As mentioned before, Lydda was about 35 miles northwest of Jerusalem. Sharon was an area that made up the plains in the northwest part of Israel, between the city of Joppa and Mt. Carmel.

**v.36-43...**Joppa was a city by the Mediterranean Sea and one of the main seaports the people in Israel used. There would have been a lot of people coming and going throughout that city so it would have been a great place to have preached Jesus.

Most Jews who had a working relationship with non-Jews had two names. An Aramaic name as well as a Greek name. Her Aramaic name was Tabitha. Her Greek name was Dorcas. Both of these names mean "gazelle," a symbol of grace and beauty. She was a very beloved soul.

**We see in verse 37 where...**she dies.

**We see in verse 38 where...**the people seem to think that Peter had the same abilities that Jesus did in raising someone from the dead since they sent for him. However, Peter actually performed miracles and healings in the name of Jesus. Joppa was only about 10 miles northwest of Lydda.

**In verse 39...**we see the great love that everyone had for Tabitha and how she had made and provided clothes for so many people. Many of the widows and other women were possible wearing some of the clothes that Tabitha had made for them.

Tabitha was a genuine giver, instead of a taker, and she had made clothes for a lot of people who were in need of them.

**In verse 40-42...**by asking them to leave the room, we see how Peter was not there to be seen and take credit for raising Tabitha from the dead. After he prayed to God and asked Him to raise Tabatha from the dead in the name of Jesus, God did so. After raising her from the dead Peter allowed everyone back into the room and showed how the power of God was still alive and active. Many people then believed in Jesus after seeing this and became Christians.

I would think that Peter would have remembered when Jesus raised a little girl from the dead which is recorded in **Mark 5:35-43** and **Luke 8:49-56**

**Jesus put everyone out of the room** except for Peter, James, John and the mother and father of the little girl.

**Peter put everyone out of the room.**

**Jesus said,** "Little girl, arise."

**Peter said,** "Tabitha, arise."

**v.43...**Peter saw a need to stay in the city of Joppa with Simon for "many days." It could be that he saw how so many people there had not heard the Gospel preached yet so he stayed and preached there for "many days."

Jews considered a tanner to be especially "unclean" because they handled dead animal skins every day when they worked. Therefore, this would have made many of the religious Jews there angry with Peter since he was actually staying at Simon's house.

The reason that Peter was staying with Simon the tanner could possible also be that God is getting Peter ready for what He is about to have Peter do in **chapter 10**.

## Acts 10

**v. 1-8...**The Roman Government ruled Israel at this time and they considered Caesarea the capital of the country. Caesarea was on the Mediterranean Sea and was the major seaport that Rome used there in Israel for exporting and importing their goods. Caesarea was about 60 miles northwest of Jerusalem. A three day's journey from Jerusalem. It was built by Herod the Great between 25 and 13 B.C. and named after Caesar Augustus.

A centurion was a ranking soldier who was over 100 men. The Italian Regiment would have been like a modern day Army Unit. It was made up of 6 centurions which would have given them 600 men in that Regiment.

**We see in v.2 that...**even though Cornelius was not a Jew he taught his family about the living God instead of all the false god's that most Roman citizens followed. There were many gentiles that sought to worship God, but not according to the Jewish Law and traditions such as circumcision.

When the Scripture refers to Cornelius as "fearing" God, it means that he highly respected Him. He not only feared God, he taught his whole household, which would have been his family and servants to fear Him also.

Cornelius performed many charitable deeds for both the Jews and the Gentiles and he was highly respected by the people for doing so.

It says that Cornelius prayed "always" so he was very much so a praying man. How often do you pray to God? What do you pray about?

**We see in verse 3 that...**it was the ninth hour (which was 3 PM) when God sent an angel to Cornelius. The ninth hour was one of the hours the Jews would stop and pray each day. Even though Cornelius was not a convert to Judaism, as far as we know, he would have still possibly followed their tradition in prayer to God at this time of the day. God sends an angel to him while he was praying.

**We see in verse 4 where...**Cornelius calls this angel lord, but since the letter "l" in lord here is small we know Cornelius is not referring to him as, "the Lord", but rather referring to the angel as someone to be held in high esteem.

We see in this verse that God had been acknowledging his prayers and his generous giving.

**We see in verses 5-6 that...**the angel tells Cornelius what he needs to do. The city of Joppa is about 30 miles south of Caesarea. They would have most likely rode horses so it would have just taken them a few hours to get down there.

Simon was a popular name during this time. As we see **in verse 5** Peter was also known as Simon.

Jesus actually had a half brother by the name of Simon. **Mark 6:3** and **Matthew 13:55**

We see here that the angel tells Cornelius that Peter will tell him what, "he must do." The angel is referring to what he must do to become a Christian so that he may obtain eternal life.

**v.7-8...**Cornelius was a centurion, but he must of been a fairly wealthy man also. We have seen that he gave money and other gifts to help with the poor. Here the Scripture says that he sent "2" of his household servants, meaning that he must have had quite a few. The Scripture refers to this soldier that Cornelius is sending as "devout", just as Luke referred to Cornelius as being devout **in verse 2** of this chapter. The word devout means that he had a religious conviction about him.

**v.9-16....**Many houses at this time were build in a way where the roof top was practically level with just a slight pitch in them and people would sit up on top of the house like it was a porch. We see here that Peter went up to the rooftop to pray to God. The sixth hour (12:00 noon) would have been one of the hours that Jews took time in the day to pray to God.

**We see in verses 10-11 where...**God waits until Peter gets very hungry before He shares with him that nothing that He has made is "unclean". A "trance" possible means a semiconscious mental state which allowed God to speak to his subconscious as He gets ready to explain why He has sent Cornelius to him.

This "trance" would have been like a dream to Peter. Peter sees something that appears to be like a blanket being let down from heaven.

**We see in verse 12 that...**this sheet is like one of the nets that Peter would have used when he was fishing. It is full of most every kind of animal that a man would eat, except for the Jews,.

Under Jewish law (**Deuteronomy 14:3,7**) there were certain meats that were forbidden to eat and Peter was still practicing and living under the Jewish law as far as he was concerned, so it did not make sense for Jesus to tell him **in verse 13** to kill and eat some of these forbidden animals.

However, Jesus was using this analogy to show Peter that there is no longer a difference between the Jews and the Gentiles because up to this point a Jew considered a Gentile "unclean" and would not even go into his house. Therefore, for God to be sending this Gentile (Cornelius) to him did not make sense to Peter initially.

**We see in verse 14 that....**Peter "talks back to Jesus", so to speak, not thinking who it was that was talking to him and tells Jesus that he is not going to eat anything that is "unclean". Please note here how Jesus waited until Peter got hungry before he told him to, "Rise, kill, and eat."

**We see in verse 15 where...**Jesus tells Peter, "what He has cleansed", he must not call common. Jesus is telling Peter here that His blood will not only cleanse the sins of the Jews, it will also cleanse the sins of the Gentiles.

**We see in verse 16 that...**Jesus done this 3 times. We do not know why Jesus did this 3 times. It could possibly be because Peter had denied the Lord 3 times and Jesus was "stirring up his mind" by way of remembrance. The same way that Peter "stirred up the minds" of those he was writing to **in 2 Peter 1:13** and **2 Peter 3:1**

I am reminded how Jesus also asked Peter 3 times if he loved Him **in John 21:15-17**

**v.17-18...**Peter was born Jewish and raised Jewish. He had been taught from the day he was born that he was not to eat anything "unclean". He is perplexed as to what this vision he had meant. He knew that the Lord had talked to Him in this vision and now he is trying to understand what it was about.

Since these three men who were sent to Peter were Gentiles they were not allowed to come into the house. Jews felt as though Gentiles were "unclean" and they would not even let them come into their house. These men are waiting for Peter to come out to them.

**We see in verses 19-20 how...**the Holy Spirit intervenes with Peter and tells him not to worry or be afraid of anything because He had sent these 3 Gentile men to him on behalf of Cornelius. Peter may have been scared because the Jews would possibly persecute him since he was associating with Gentiles. He may have also been scared since he didn't know Cornelius or anything about him. Especially since Cornelius was a Roman Soldier and a centurion.

**We see in verses 21-22 that...**Peter goes down to greet these men as the Holy Spirit has instructed him to do. Peter seems to have overcome any fear or uneasy feeling about being around these men, so now he very curiously asked them specifically why they had come to him.

**We see in verse 22 that...**they share with Peter what kind of man Cornelius is and how an angel had instructed him directly to have him, that is Peter, come and tell him basically what he needed to do to become a Christian.

It is worth remembering that up to this point Peter, as well as all other Jews believed that the living God was their God only and that Gentiles were all infidels, that is, unbelievers. Therefore, for these men to be telling him that an angel of God had appeared to Cornelius was something that Peter was possibly struggling with, but since he was told to go with them, he was obedient to the Holy Spirit.

**We see here verse 23 how...**Peter fully accepted what the Holy Spirit had told and instructed him to do because as noted before, Jews had nothing to do with Gentiles, not only would they not eat with them, they would not even go into their house, but now we see Peter not only inviting them into the house, they actually spent the night together under the same roof.

**We see in 24 where...**they set out for and arrive in Caesarea. Once again it was about 30 miles from Joppa to Caesarea and they would have most likely been riding horses so it would not have taken them long to get there.

Cornelius has called his friends and family together so that they could meet, greet, and listen to Peter. This is a good example as to how we can invite someone to simply go to church with us to listen to a message about the Good News.

**In verse 25-26 we see how...**Cornelius and the others treated Peter like he was divine and even worshipped him. I believed that this could have both scared Peter and made him angry.

It may have possibly scared him because he knows God alone is worthy to be worshipped and if he accepted this worship from Cornelius, God may hold him, that is Peter, accountable for it.

And it may have made him angry because his heart's desire was for God alone to be worshipped.

**We see in verse 26 where...**the Scriptures say that Peter "lifted him up". When Peter saw Cornelius bow down to him he very quickly grabbed him and lifted him back up to his feet and reminded him that he was just a man, not a god, or the living God.

**We see in verse 27 that...**Peter may have been surprised as to how many people had gathered together. Those 3 men had told him that Cornelius had sent them to bring him there to Caesarea. Peter may have possible thought he was just coming to see Cornelius.

**In v.28-29...**Peter reminds them of his Jewish heritage and how it is forbidden for Jews to have anything to do with Gentiles. I am reminded of how the Samaritan woman reminded Jesus **in John 4:9** how Jews didn't have anything to do with Gentiles. I am also reminded of how the Sanhedrin would not go into the Praetorium **in John 18:28** because they felt they would be defiled.

Now here is Peter not only lodging and eating with those 3 Gentiles sent to him. He has now gone into the house of a Roman soldier. This would have filled the Jewish religious leaders with great hate and anger towards Peter, but the Holy Spirit has Peter showing them and us that the Gospel is for everyone who will accept it.

**We see in verse 29 where...**Peter tells Cornelius that he came without hesitation or objection. The Lord had showed Peter in a vision that nothing He has made was unclean, but he is still not sure why Cornelius sent for him, so he asked specifically why he was brought there.

**v.30-33...**we see that Cornelius also practiced the part of the Jewish religion of "fasting".

Cornelius tells Peter about how a man, which was an angel who took on the form of a man, had appeared to him at the ninth hour, which would have been at 3:00 in the afternoon and instructed him to send for him, that is for Peter.

Cornelius tells how he was obedient to what the angel instructed him to do and all of his friends and family had open hearts to hear whatever it was that Peter was going to share with them.

This would have definitely got Peter's attention because he would have known that God was opening up a door for him to share the Gospel with Cornelius and those gathered there with him.

**v.34-35...**Peter doesn't tell them the vision he had of the four-footed animals. He didn't tell them that God had showed him nothing He made is unclean. Peter simply tells them that God shows no partiality and that He is the living God to all those who fear and obey Him.

**v.36-38...**Peter tells them how God first sent the Gospel to the children of Israel, that is the Jews. Peter reminds them that they had heard about Jesus because Jesus taught throughout all of Judea during his lifetime. **Luke 4:14**

He tells them they heard about John the Baptist. How he told everyone about the coming of Jesus.

Peter also reminds them about how some of them may have even seen some of the miracles that Jesus had performed, but even if they had not personally seen the miracles, they heard from reliable sources that these events had taken place showing that God was with Him.

**In v.39...**Peter tells them how "we", that is he, and the other apostles walked and talked with Jesus when he was on the earth and how they were witness' to His death and those miracles.

The apostles not only spent time with Jesus during His ministry they watched Him as He was taken up into heaven **in Acts 1:9-11**

**In v.40-41...**Peter tells them about how God raised Jesus from the dead and how he and the other apostles walked and talked with Him again after He was raised from the dead. Not only did they see Him after He was raised from the dead, but so did others.

Paul also reminded the Corinthians **in 1 Corinthians 15:6** that Jesus was seen by over five hundred brethren at one time.

**In v.42-43...**Peter tells Cornelius and those who had gathered together with him how Jesus had commanded him and the other apostles to preach Jesus crucified and raised from the dead. Peter tells them that Jesus will be the Judge of the living when he comes back and those who have died.

Peter tells his readers **in 1 Peter 4:5** the same thing and Jesus says the same thing **in John 5:22**

Peter tells them how all of the prophets told about His coming and whoever believes in His name will receive the forgiveness of sins. **John 3:16, 36**

**Hebrews 4:12 tells us....**that God knows the thoughts and the intents of the heart and...

**We see in verse 44 how....**Cornelius and those gathered with him believed in what Peter was saying so much that the Holy Spirit "fell upon them" before he even finished talking.

**In v.45-46...**We see how those Jewish believers who had came with Peter were amazed that the Holy Spirit fell upon these Gentiles. Those Jews who had come with Peter believed in Jesus as the Son of God, but they still felt as though Jehovah God was the God of the Jewish people only.

By them seeing this happen to these "Gentiles" they would have no doubt shared what they had personally seen with others, thus helping strengthen the message that the Gospel is for all people.

**v.47-48...**Jewish believers were filled with the Holy Spirit on The Day of Pentecost, but now these Gentiles were also. This showed all of the Jews who had converted to Christianity that the Gospel is not only for the Jewish people, but for Gentiles also. This showed them that Gentiles were not consider "unclean" in God's eyes and they were to now embrace Gentiles as their brothers and sisters in the body of Christ.

**We see in verse 48 where...**Peter, speaking on behalf of the Holy Spirit, commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus.

They possible asked Peter to stay a few days to help them share the Gospel with other's there. This was a great opportunity for those who had just become Christians to build a strong foundation for the church there in Caesarea.



## Acts 11

**v. 1...**The first Christians were Jews, so we see here why it says "the brethren" in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. The Bible had not been written yet, therefore the "word of God" here refers to the message, Christ was crucified and God raised Him from the dead.

**v.2-3...**Peter most likely stayed in Caesarea for a little while after Cornelius accepted Christ and shared the Gospel with others. He would have most likely taught the new Christians more about the Lord also. After spending some time with them he heads back to Jerusalem.

It is about sixty miles from Caesarea to Jerusalem. If they were walking it would have taken them about 4-5 days to get there. If they were riding horses they would have got there quicker. We see that before Peter even got back there they had already heard about Peter going and sharing the Gospel with Cornelius and other Gentiles. They, the Jews who had become Christians, met Peter when he got to Jerusalem and started attacking him for eating with them and being around them in general. Even though these Jews had become Christians they still wanted to cling to their Jewish religion, which practiced circumcision and did not allow Jews to be associated with Gentiles.

**We see in verse 4 where...**Peter obtained a complete understanding of what the vision he had was about. He is going to explain to these Jews why he embraces the Gentiles himself now.

**v.5-11...**Peter begins telling them about the vision God gave him showing that the Gospel is not just for the Jews, but it is also for the Gentiles.

**We see in verse 5 where...**Peter tells these Jewish converts how he saw this great sheet let down from heaven and laid before him. Peter describes it in detail by telling them it had four corners.

This reminds me how John talked about the, "City Four Square", **in Revelation 21:16**

**We see in verses 6-8 where...**Peter tells them how Jesus showed him all of these unclean animals which represented the Gentiles. Then he tells them that Jesus told him to rise, kill and eat, and how he told Jesus, "No!", because his Jewish upbringing taught him that Jews were not to eat anything "unclean."

These Jews would have been listening intently because they knew Peter had always observed and submitted to the Jewish laws and traditions. They knew that he had walked and talked with Jesus when He was on the earth. They also knew that Peter was a, "man of God". They had seen God work miracles through him, in the name of Jesus.

**In verse 9...**Peter tells these Jewish believers how Jesus had shown him that He had come down from heaven to die for both the Jews and the Gentiles. He tells them that the blood of Jesus cleanses the sins of both the Jews and the Gentiles.

**In verse 10 Peter...**tells them this was done 3 times. As we mentioned back **in chapter 10:16**, Jesus did this 3 times. It could possibly be because Peter had denied the Lord 3 times and Jesus was "stirring up his mind" by way of remembrance. The same way that Peter "stirred up the minds" of those he was writing to **in 2 Peter 1:13** and **2 Peter 3:1**

I am reminded how Jesus also asked Peter 3 times if he loved Him **in John 21:15-17**

**v.11-14....**We see here how Peter points out in detail how God sent three men to him on behalf of Cornelius to get him to go and tell him and his household what they must do to have eternal life.

**We see in verse 12 where...**Peter reminds them of what Jesus had said **in John 16:13**

Jesus had told the apostles that the Holy Spirit would guide them as to where they were to go and what they were to say.

Peter points out that there were six others who went with him. So there were seven in all that went to Cornelius' house. Peter would have pointed this out so he could tell them he had witness' as to what had happened. He does not try to hide the fact that he went into this Gentile's house.

He very boldly tells these Jewish Christians in Jerusalem that he did. He is vividly pointing out that he now understands that the Gospel is for the Jews and the Gentiles and he wants them to understand this.

**We see in verses 13-14 where...**Peter tells them how Cornelius had seen an angel standing in his house and instructed him to send for him so that he could share, "the words by which you and all your household will be saved."

This would have very much so have gotten these Jewish believers in Jerusalem's attention because they could not have imagined that an angel of God would have ever appeared to a Gentile.

**We see in verse 15 and verse 16 where...**everything begins to change for these Jewish believers in Jerusalem as Peter tells them that the Holy Spirit, "fell upon the Gentiles", just as he did on them in the beginning. Then Peter tells them **in verse 16** that he remembered how the Lord Jesus had told them they would be filled with the Holy Spirit.

**Then Peter tells them in verse 17 that...**he was not going to argue with God about it, so to speak.

This reminds me of Gamaliel's advice **in Acts 5:39** when Gamaliel said, "...if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it lest you even be found to fight against God."

Peter realized that he would be sharing the Gospel with both Jews and Gentiles from this point on.

**We see in verse 18 where...**the Jews who had become Christians in Jerusalem accepted that there was not a difference between the Jews and the Gentiles as far as the Gospel is concerned.

Paul would later tell the Jewish believers in Rome as well as the Gentiles that there is no distinction between Jews and Gentiles. **Romans 10:12**

**v.19-24...Romans 1:16 and 2:10** say that the Gospel was for the Jews first and then the Gentiles.

**We see in verse 19 that...**after Stephen was stoned to death, many of the Christians left Judea and began to spread the Gospel in the surrounding area as stated **in Acts 8:1,4**

They preached the Gospel only to the Jews in those cities.

**In verse 20...**we see where they shared the Gospel with Hellenist. Hellenist were those who were born Jewish, but had been brought up or adapted to the Greek culture instead of the Jewish faith, that is, the Jewish religion. Some of these Hellenist could have possibly been the ones who were referred to **in Acts 6:1 and Acts 9:29**

**In, 1 Corinthians 3:6...**the Apostle Paul said he planted "the word of God" in the hearts of the Corinthians, Apollos watered it, but that God gave the increase.

We see the same thing taking place **in verse 21** where they are planting and watering the word of God, but it is God Himself that is giving the increase.

Our responsibility today is to do the same thing they were doing here and that is to simply share the Gospel with others. We may be the one who is planting the word of God in someone's heart, or we may be the one who is adding water to the seed that is already planted, but it will be God Himself who gives the increase.

**In verses 22-24...**we see how the Christians who made up the church in Jerusalem heard about what was going on in these cities so they send Barnabas out to encourage and teach them even more.

This is similar to how the apostles sent Peter and John down to Samaria to help Philip **in Acts 8:14**

Since Barnabas could speak Greek he would be able to speak directly to the Hellenist and others who spoke Greek there in Antioch.

We will see in **Acts 14:14** that Barnabas himself was an apostle so he would have also had the same abilities that Paul had as far as healings and other miracles.

**We see in verse 24 where...**the church is growing abundantly there in Antioch and abroad.

**v.25-30...**Tarsus in the city that Saul, who becomes Paul, was born and raised in. It had been approximately 7-8 years since Saul had become a Christian and he had been back in his home town for a while now preaching the Gospel.

The Gospel was spreading fast and Barnabas knew that he needed help so he no doubt remembers Saul's conversion and how Saul had been preaching and teaching since his conversion so he decides to go solicit Saul's help **in verse 25**

**We are told in verse 26...**that after Barnabas finds Saul, he goes with him to the city of Antioch. There were many different "religions" in Antioch so the people in that city decided to mock those who were going around telling everybody about Christ by calling them, "Christians".

The word Christian only appears 2 other places in the bible, **in Acts 26:28** and **1 Peter 4:16**

**We see in verses 27-30 that...**a prophet by the name of Agabus tells about a great famine that was going to take place throughout all the world. Therefore the Christians in Antioch decide to take up a collection of money and send it to their brothers and sisters in Jerusalem to help during this time of famine. They ask Saul and Barnabas to go and give it to the elders of the church there.

Paul would later on emphasize the financial responsibilities of Christians by having the church in Corinth send financial assistance to the church in Jerusalem. **1 Corinthians 16:1-4**

## Acts 12

**v.1...**Herod was the family name of several Roman rulers who served as governors of Palestine. It is similar to how the Egyptians called their ruler Pharaoh. **Verse 1** refers to Herod Agrippa I. He reigned over different areas of Palestine from the years 37-44 AD. This Herod was a grandson of the Herod the Great. Herod the Great was the one that had the infants of Bethlehem from age 2 and below put to death that we read about in **Matthew chapter 2:1-18**

Herod Agrippa I is also a nephew of Herod the Tetrarch. The Herod who had John the Baptist beheaded for taking his brother, Herod Philip's wife, to be his wife. **Matthew 14:1-12**

**v.2...**James was the first apostle to become a martyr. Using a sword generally meant that he had his head cut off just like John the Baptist did. The Jewish religious leaders hated James since he was one of the leaders telling people about Jesus. Herod wanted to keep a good relationship with these Jewish leaders so this could have possibly been the reason he cut James' head off.

James is the brother of John, the sons of Zebedee, who are mentioned in **Matthew 4:21**

**v.3...**When it says it pleased the Jews here, it meant the Jewish leaders who would have been the Pharisees, Sadducees, and members of the Sanhedrin. Once again, Herod wanted to do things that made the Jewish leaders happy so he set out to arrest Peter now.

This is Peter's third time to be arrested. The first time was in **Acts 4:3**; and the second time was in **Acts 5:18**.

The Days of Unleavened Bread was a 7 day Holiday that the Jews celebrated each year. It was in recognition of when God delivered the Jews from bondage in Egypt. God instructed them to hurry up and leave. They were not to use leaven to bake their bread, but just cook it, pack it up, and go. **Exodus 12:15** and **Exodus 23:15**

**v.4...**Since Herod arrested Peter during The Days of Unleavened Bread Holiday, he had to wait until it was over before he puts Peter on trial, so he locks him up in prison.

Four squads of soldiers equaled 16 men. This shows Herod's concern over Peter's possible escape like he did back in **Acts 5** when an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and let him out.

The Passover celebration took place during the 7 day celebration of The Days of Unleavened Bread, but the Passover itself was just a one day celebration.

Herod was going to kill Peter, just as he had killed James, after this Jewish Holiday was over.

**v.5...**Peter's brothers and sisters in Christ were gathered together and they were praying for Peter. They were possibly praying that he would not be killed like James. They knew that he had escaped from prison before, so they may have also been praying for his escape again this time.

**v.6...**Peter possibly thought he was going to be killed the next day just like his friend and fellow apostle James was killed, but we see he is not worried about dying. He is at peace and sleeping without any concerns as to what might happen to him.

This verse shows that Herod must have been expecting an attempt to rescue Peter. He had Peter securely chained up with two guards sitting beside him and two guards guarding the door.

**We see in verse 7 that...**the angel was ready to do his job so he told Peter to, "get up quickly", and the chains fell off miraculously. The Scripture does not tell us the name of the angel.

It could possibly be the same angel that delivered Peter from prison **in Acts 5:19**

**We see in verse 8 that...**Peter was possibly thinking this was just a dream that he was having and he wasn't responding in the way the angel wanted him to. Therefore, the angel tells him to get dressed and follow him.

**We see in verse 9 that...**Peter seems to think he is having a vision, just like he did **in Acts 10:9-16** when he saw the "great sheet" descending down to him from heaven. However, he still follows the angel.

**We see in verse 10 that...**they have to go by 2 sets of guards before they get to the main gate. After they get to the main gate, the Lord opens it for them so that they can go out. I would think that Peter is walking on his toes trying not to make any noise. He was most likely looking around to see if anyone saw them. Then he looks up, and the angel is gone.

Once again, an angel has delivered him from prison, just like he did **in Acts 5:19**

**v.11-12...**Suddenly, Peter realized that the Lord had delivered him from the harm that the Jewish leaders were planning to do to him! There is no doubt that Herod had planned on killing Peter just like he did James to appease the Jewish religious leaders. Now he was out in the streets and he knew he had to find a place to go before he was seen and caught.

He decides to go to a lady's house by the name of Mary. This is possibly Barnabas' sister since we are told **in Colossians 4:10** that Mark is his cousin.

This is the same Mark who wrote The Book of Mark, one of the four Gospels.

Mary's house was possibly used as a church building where Christians assembled to worship God since many of them had gathered there to pray for Peter.

**v.13-19...****We see in verses 13 and 14 that....**when Peter knocked at the door, Rhoda recognized Peter's voice. She was so excited that Peter had escaped from prison that she was not thinking straight so she ran and told the other Christians who had gathered there that Peter was here.

They had been praying for Peter, but they just couldn't believe that their prayers had been answered.

It can be the same way with us sometimes in that we pray to God about something and when He answers our prayer we may seem to doubt that He really did answer it for some reason.

**We see in verse 15 that...**Luke may possibly be referring to the scripture found in **Matthew 18:10** which talks about having an angel who watches over us. Those gathered together believed it was Peter's angel who was at the gate.

**We see in verse 16 that...**Peter is probably getting scared thinking that someone is going to see him any minute now and he is going to be caught, so he is possibly knocking with more urgency now. When they finally open the door they are amazed that their prayer was actually answered.

**We see in verse 17 that...** Peter knew that Herod would have known that he and other Christians met at Mary's house frequently to worship God. He also knew it would be one of the first places they would look for him, so he tells them to keep their voices down and he shares with them how the Lord had delivered him from Herod.

Then he tells them to tell James that he had escaped. This would be James, the half brother of Jesus, and the same James who wrote The Book of James and was one of the leaders of the church in Jerusalem.

**Galatians 1:17 and Galatians 2:9**

**We see in verses 18-19 how...**the soldiers talk amongst themselves and ask each other how Peter was able to escape. Roman law was that if a prisoner escaped, the guards on duty would be executed. Even if this would not have been the law Herod was a ruthless man and he was going to have them killed anyway since he was not going to be able to kill Peter now.

Herod gives up on trying to find Peter and leaves Judea and goes down to Caesarea, the city by the Mediterranean Sea that Cornelius the centurion and Philip the evangelist lived in.

**v.20...** Tyre and Sidon were coastal cities on the Mediterranean Sea also. These two cities were a little north of Caesarea in the country known as Phoenicia which is the modern day, Lebanon.

We are not told why Herod was angry with them. It could possibly be because they were taking some of his business away from his seaport there in Caesarea and since he had no jurisdiction there, there was nothing he could do about it. For whatever reason, he was angry with them.

Wheat was grown throughout the territory that Herod was over and the people of Tyre and Sidon got their food from Herod so they wanted to make peace with him.

**We see in verses 21-23...**that they gave a party honoring him. It could have possible been his birthday or they may have just been having a party to honor him as the king. The people actually suggest that he is more than a man, he is a god. Herod enjoyed being WORSHIPPED and we see it will cost him dearly for it.

Since he decides not to give God any glory an angel of the Lord strikes him with worms.

The worms began eating him from inside out. This would have possible taken several hours and it would have been very painful. Herod was a brutal king and now he is going to die a brutal death.

**We see in verse 24 that...**Christianity continued to grow abundantly even though Herod tried to stop it.

**We see in verse 25 that...**Barnabas and Saul has delivered the money that they were sent to deliver to the church in Jerusalem concerning the famine of which Agabus prophesied about **in Acts 11:28** that was going to take place.

They decide to take Mark with them as they head back to Antioch.

# The Apostle Paul's First Journey

As You Read When You Come Across The Name Of A City  
Follow Paul's First Journey As He Goes From City To City

## Acts Chapter 13 and Chapter 14



## Acts 13

### Paul's First Journey

When you come across the name of a city as you read, look at the map and follow Paul's First Journey as he goes from city to city.

Paul was about 40 years old when he embarks on his first trip. It starts from Antioch in Syria.

Antioch is about 15 miles from the Mediterranean Sea and 300 miles north of Jerusalem.

It had a population of about 500,000 and it was the third largest city of the Roman Empire.

**v.1...**The men mentioned here **in verse 1** are most likely the leaders of the church there in Antioch and this is the same Herod who had John the Baptist beheaded. **Luke 3:19-20**

This Herod is the same Herod who was also at the trial of Jesus. **Luke 23:7-12**

**v.2-3...**Most people think of going without food as fasting, but fasting is actually going without something for a period of time, like maybe not using your cell phone for a month, a week, hmm.... in some peoples case, a day.

We see here **in verse 2** where they had been fasting and the Holy Spirit tells them that He is going to use Barnabas and Saul to help Him spread the Gospel. After those at the church there in Antioch had concluded their fasting and praying, they send Barnabas and Paul on their way as the Holy Spirit had instructed them to do.

**v.4-5...**We see here the Holy Spirit is now doing His job as He sends them on their mission.

They go down to Seleucia which is about fifteen miles from Antioch, so it would have taken them a little less than a day to walk down to there. Cyprus is about 100 miles away from Seleucia.

Cyprus is where Barnabas is from so Barnabas would have known a lot of the people there. **Acts 4:36**

This may be the reason he wanted to start their journey there. Many of the people on that island would have been his friends and family so he may have had high hopes of converting them.

**We see in verse 5 where...**they preached in the Synagogues which would have been a building much like the church meets in today.

John is also known as Mark, Barnabas' cousin. He wrote The Book of Mark. **Acts 12:25**

**v.6-7...**Paphos was the capital of Cyprus. They have traveled across the island which is about 120 miles long. "A day's journey", back then would have been 20 miles, so this would have been about a 6 day's journey. However, they most likely took their time and shared the Gospel along the way.

They come across a sorcerer who practiced magic just as Simon the sorcerer did back **in Acts 8:9**



**In verse 7...**The word proconsul simply means he was the Governor of the island and he wants to hear from Paul and Barnabas. This sorcerer was a Jew and he knew that sorcery was forbidden. This sorcerer was employed by a man by the name of Sergius Paulus.

**v.8...**Elymas was the personal sorcerer of the proconsul and if Barnabas and Saul converted him to Christianity he would lose his job since sorcery was not allowed to be practiced in Judaism or in Christianity. Therefore, we see Elymas is trying to stop the Governor from listening to Barnabas and Saul.

**v.9-12...**We see here that Saul, through the power of the Holy Spirit, caused Elymas to become blind. Maybe Saul wanted him to have the same helpless feeling he had when he was blinded trying to stop the spread of Christianity.

**We see in verse 10 the...**difference between Saul and Elymas. Saul thought he was doing a good thing trying to stop the spread of Christianity because of his commitment to the Jewish faith, but Elymas was practicing witchcraft and Saul calls him out on it in a very aggressive way.

**We see in verse 11 where...**Saul pronounces blindness on Elymas. Paul was blind three days, but the Scripture doesn't tell us how long Elymas was blind. We do know that he eventually got his sight back because Saul told him he would not see the sun, "for a time". I can't help but wonder if Elymas became a Christian when he got his sight back, just as Saul did.

**v.12...**Even though the proconsul was not blinded, you could say his eyes were opened here. He had been impressed by all of the tricks that Elymas had done, but now he has seen the power of God at work. It convinced him that Jesus was the real thing and he believed in Him.

**v.13...**Perga is the capital city of Pamphylia and it is up in the mountains about 12 miles from Attalia.

This is where John Mark leaves Paul and Barnabas? Why did John Mark leave?

The Scriptures do not tell why Mark left, but tradition suggest it could have been because he was scared of the journey they were on and how they would be persecuted. While other traditions suggest that he had a tendency to having health issues. Either way, Paul was upset about it and later on we see in **Acts 15:36-40** that he doesn't want Mark to go with him and Barnabas any longer.

However we know that Mark stays faithful because **in 2 Timothy 4:11** Paul ask Timothy to get Mark and bring him along because Mark is useful to his ministry.

**v.14-16...**There were several cities called Antioch back then. Paul and Barnabas had came from Antioch in Syria. **In verse 14..** Luke clarifies that this is Antioch in Pisidia. It is about 100 miles from Perga to Antioch so it would have taken them about a week to get there.

**We see in verse 15 where...**the Jewish leaders read from the Jewish Law as they were accustomed to doing each time on the Sabbath day. It appears as though Paul and Barnabas had asked for permission to speak to the rulers of the synagogue as well as others who had gathered.

They didn't know that they were about to hear Paul preach his first recorded sermon about Jesus.

**We see in verse 16 where...**Paul addressed the Jews when he says, "Men of Israel", and he address' the Gentiles when he adds, "and you who fear God, listen." When Paul says, "you who fear God", he meant those who have a reverence for Him, just as Cornelius did **in Acts 10:2**

**v.17-24...**Paul begins by reminding those Jewish leaders as well as the other Jews who were gathered at the synagogue of their history, just as Stephen had done back **in Acts 7** to the Sanhedrim.

Paul would have known the night before what the message was that he was going to share with those at the synagogue. Therefore, I bet that night he was reminded how he participated in the stoning of Stephen for saying the same thing he was about to say to those gathered at the synagogue.

He begins sharing his message **in verse 17** by reminding them how powerful God is by pointing out that He brought them out of Egypt with, "a mighty arm!" **Exodus 14:8**

**In verse 18 we see...**Paul tells them how God put up with their rebellious ways for forty years in the wilderness as He led them to the, "Promise Land".

Have you ever thought about how God puts up with our rebellious ways also?

**In verse 19 we see...**how Paul reminds them that it was God who destroyed seven nations, that is, seven different groups of people in the land of Canaan (**Deuteronomy 7:1**) and gave the land to them fulfilling His promise to Abraham.

**In verse 20 we see...**where Paul tells them how God was their King and that He used judges for 450 years to carry out His rulings for them. **Judges 2:16**

Then Paul points out how God lifted up Samuel to be a prophet to them. **1 Samuel 3:20**

**In verse 21 we see...**where Paul tells how their fore-fathers rejected God as their King and begged for a king like all of the other country's around them had so God gave them king Saul.

**In verse 22 we see...**where Paul tells how God removed Saul because of His lack of faith and his disobedience. **1 Samuel 15:23**

Then he tells them how He raised up David to be king, a man after His own heart! **1 Samuel 13:14**

**In verse 23 we see...**where Paul moves in towards the core of his main message by telling them how God raised up a Savior-Jesus from the seed of Israel, from David. Paul would have possible pointed to **Isaiah 11:1** showing that Jesus would come from the seed of David and that Jesus had fulfilled the prophecy.

**In verse 24-25 we see...**how Paul reminds them of John the Baptist and how he had set the stage for Jesus' coming, so to speak. John had preached the baptism of repentance. **Luke 3:3**

Many of those gathered there would have remembered hearing about John or those who were older may have even heard John personally when he was preaching about the coming of the Messiah, Jesus, the Christ.

**In verse 25 Paul...**reminds them of how John said he was not the Christ and that he was not even worthy to loosen the sandals on His feet. **John 1:20 , John 1:27 , Mark 1:7**

**In verse 26 we see...**where Paul address' the Jews gathered there by calling them brethren. He reminds them of their heritage concerning Abraham. Paul then address' the Gentiles by saying, "you who fear God." He is telling them that the message of salvation is now being sent to them also.

**In verse 27-28...**Paul tells how the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem rejected Jesus because they didn't know who He was. Jesus said the same thing **in Luke 23:24**

It was the same way with the Ethiopian eunuch **in Acts 8:26-39** when he read from **Isaiah 53:7**  
The eunuch asked Philip was the Prophet talking about himself or someone else.

Then Paul tells them that those in Jerusalem didn't even recognize as they read the Scriptures where the Prophets talk about the Messiah that they were talking about Jesus.

Paul then points out **in verse 28** that they even asked Pilate, a Roman who they despised, to kill Jesus.  
**Matthew 27:22-23**

**In verse 29-30 we see...**how Paul tells them they, the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem at the time, fulfilled the prophecy concerning Jesus when they had Him killed. Then Paul delivers the powerful message **in verse 30** that God raised Him from the dead. Eternal life is found in His resurrection.

**In verse 31 we see...**where Paul shares with them how those, the apostles, who walked and talked with Jesus during His ministry saw Him alive after Pilate had killed him. Paul tells how He, that is Jesus, was seen by many people after he was raised from the dead.

**Acts 1:3** says that Jesus stayed on the earth for 40 days after His resurrection and **1 Corinthians 15:6** says that over 500 people saw Him at one time.

**In verse 32-35 we see...**where Paul declares "glad tidings" to them. "Glad tidings" simply means "good news". This reminds me of when Gabriel brought "glad tidings" to Zacharias **in Luke 1:8**

I am reminded of how the angels brought "good tidings" to the shepherds in the field **in Luke 2:10**

I am also reminded when Luke said Jesus took the "glad tidings" to every city **in Luke 8:1**

I am reminded as well of these, "glad tidings", **in Romans 10:15** and **Isaiah 52:7**

Paul points to the scriptures as to how and why God raised Jesus from the dead.

When we share Jesus with people it is best to do the same as Paul and that is, point to the scriptures, because it is the word of God that will convict someone of their sins, not anything that we may say.

**In verse 36-37 we see...**how Paul basically does the same thing that Peter did **in Acts 2:29** when he points to king David. David is the most beloved king of the Jewish people. Paul points to how David died and saw corruption, but that Jesus saw no corruption in that God raised Him from the dead.

Corruption here simply means that David's physical body decayed, but that Jesus' physical body did not decay because God raised Him from the dead.

**In verse 38-39 we see...**how radical this message is to those gathered together, especially to the Jews who were there listening. Paul is telling them about this man called Jesus and that their sins can all be forgiven just by believing and accepting Him as their Savior. **Jeremiah 31:34**

It is amazing how people saw Jesus and rejected Him while He was alive, preaching and teaching. It is amazing how they rejected Jesus as Paul and others preached, taught, and share the Good News. It is amazing how today that a majority of the people still did not accept Jesus' free gift of eternal life.

One of the difference between those back then and a majority of the people today is most of the people back then didn't believe who He said He was, so they rejected Him, but today, a majority of the people do believe who He is, but they still reject His free gift of eternal life.

**In verse 40-41 we see...**where Paul has been telling them how so many other Jewish leaders during the time Jesus was alive did not pay attention to the prophecies in the Old Testament concerning Jesus. Paul cuts to the chase and he is warning them that they better believe what he is telling them. He tells them what Habakkuk said **in Habakkuk 1:5**

**In verse 42-43 we see...**when Paul and Barnabas finished speaking that the Jews left the synagogue. However, the Gentiles were open minded and they wanted to hear more about this message of eternal life. The Scripture says that they actually begged Paul and Barnabas to tell them even more about Jesus and **verse 43 says** that even many of the Jews accepted Jesus that day after hearing Paul preach Christ crucified and He has risen from the dead.

We see that Paul and Barnabas encouraged them to "continue in the grace of God". This was the same thing that Barnabas encouraged them to do back **in Acts 11:23**

**In verse 44 we see...**that almost the WHOLE CITY came together on the next Sabbath day to hear them preach. The Scripture does not tell how many people were in Antioch, but it had to be thousands.

This shows us that the message of the cross and the resurrection can convict peoples heart when we keep it simple and put the focus on Jesus.

**In verse 45-46 we see...**what jealousy can do to someone. We saw it even in heaven in that Satan was jealous of God and wanted to be worshipped himself so he tried to overthrow God.

We saw where Pilate knew the Jewish leaders were jealous of Jesus. **Matthew 27:18** and **Mark 15:10**

These Jewish leaders were jealous and filled with jealousy because they were use to getting the praise and being honored and now they are pushed to the side and made to listen to these men telling everyone about Jesus.

Paul goes as far as to tell them that since they judge themselves unworthy of eternal life that they would turn to the Gentiles which caused even more hatred to flourish in these Jewish leaders hearts.

**In verse 47-49 we see...**how happy the Gentiles were and that when they heard what Paul said they glorified the word of the Lord. This shows us that they were not only excited about the prospect of eternal life, they were excited also about their new found relation with Jesus the Christ, their Savior.

**We see in verse 49 that...**the message that Paul and Barnabas were delivering was connecting with people and Christianity was growing rapidly throughout the region. Once again, this teaches us that the "simplicity of Christ" will prick and convict people's hearts more than clever words.

**In verse 50 we see...**how much influence the Jewish leaders still had. It tells us here that they were able to stir up a bunch of the devout and prominent women as well as the chief men of the city and that they expelled Barnabas and Paul from their region.

These women were possibly women who were married to very influential men who pushed their husbands to persecute Paul and Barnabas or they could have been business women like Lydia was, that we read about **in Acts 16:14**

These women and men had enough influence in Antioch that they were able to have Paul and Barnabas "kicked out of town".

That was OK with Paul and Barnabas though because their job was to spread the Gospel to other parts of the world as well. The message connected well enough there in Antioch that there would have been a lot of people there who would not let the message die out so they were ready to go to the next city now anyhow.

**In verse 51-52 we see...**that Paul and Barnabas were simply practicing what Jesus said to do in...

**Mark 6:11...**"And whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!"

So they head towards Iconium with a smile on their face and joy in their heart as they let the Holy Spirit lead them with each step they took.

Iconium was about 80 miles south east of Antioch so it would have taken them about four days to have walked there if they didn't stop anywhere in between.

## Acts 14

**v.1...**We see once again how Barnabas and Paul went to the synagogue that was in Iconium. This is where the Jewish leaders assembled to teach the law of Moses and other parts of the Old Testament so they knew they would meet resistance, but they also knew there would be those who would listen to them. There were a lot of people there. We see that there were some Jews and some Gentiles who accepted the Gospel and became Christians that day.

**v.2-3...**There are always trouble makers in a group and we see here that the trouble making, unbelieving Jews, poisoned the minds of those who believed. That is, they created doubts as to if Jesus really was the Christ, the Son of God.

Luke says "brethren" **in verse 2**. This could possible mean against Paul and Barnabas specifically, or it could mean against those who had become Christians.

Have you ever been around a trouble maker?

It seems as though they are always negative and are always trying to tear down those around them.

That's when we have focus on things above, not on things of this earth. **Colossians 3:2**

**Then in verse 3...**We are told that the Lord was inspiring Paul and Barnabas to speak boldly and without fear. God was working miracles through them that no one had ever seen before to show that they were indeed, "men of God".

**v.4...**We see here how the non-believing Jews were able to sway many people there and that the city was divided. Some of the people sided with the Jews and some of them accepted Jesus as their Savior based on what the apostles had preached on. Jesus had said there would be a division concerning the Gospel **in Luke 12:51**

**v.5-7...**We see here how the people were raising up to stone Paul and Barnabas. The people gave Stephen an (unjust) trial and then they stoned him, but they were not going to give Barnabas and Paul a trial. They stirred the people up and were determined to stone them to death right there.

So Barnabas and Paul "got out of town" so to speak and went down to Lystra and Derbe and started preaching there.

Lystra was about 20 miles south of Iconium which was a "days journey" for Paul and Barnabas. Lystra was a Roman city and since Paul was a Roman he probably felt he would be safe there so they continued preaching the Gospel.

**v.8-10...**This miracle is very similar to the healing Peter performed **in Acts 3:1-11**

Just as the people were amazed when Peter healed the lame man **in Acts 3** the people here in Lystra were greatly amazed as well, seeing something they had never seen before and most likely thought just couldn't happen.

Once again, the Lord was performing this miracle through them to show that they were truly sent by Him to do His will and to preach "the free gift" of eternal life. **Romans 5:15-18**

**v.11-13...**When the people saw this great miracle they quickly reverted back to their Greek mythological gods and begin to shout that the gods have come down to them in the form of these 2 men. Since the people were speaking in their native Lycaonian language, Barnabas and Paul would not have known what they were saying at first.

**In verse 12...**we see where they called Barnabas, Zeus and Paul, Hermes. Hermes was the son of Zeus. Hermes was the Greek god that was known to deliver a message on behalf of the gods. They may have possibly called Paul, Hermes, because he was the one doing the preaching.

**In verse 13...**we see where the priest who made offerings to Zeus were getting ready to make sacrifices to Barnabas and Paul.

Barnabas and Paul could not speak or understand the Lycaonian language so they didn't know exactly what was going on at first, but now they begin to understand what was happening.

**v.14-18...verse 14...**tells how Barnabas and Paul tore their clothes. This represented in Jewish culture how disgusted one was with someone else or with a group of people. It was usually done when they felt as though someone had blasphemed God just as the High Priest did **in Matthew 25:65** and **Mark 14:63**

In this case it was done because, well, they were blaspheming God by wanting to worship Barnabas and Paul.

**v.15...**They were not talking to a Jewish audience or to a group of God fearing Gentiles, but rather to a group of people worshiping pagan gods as their fore-fathers did. Therefore, Paul doesn't remind them how the prophets of old told about the coming of the Messiah. He starts telling them about the living God, the God who created all things.

**In verse 16 - 17....**Paul tells them how that the Most High God allowed people to do whatever they wanted to do in the past. Paul tells them how God still took care of mankind even though many of them did not worship Him.

God makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.  
**Matthew 5:45**

**v.18...** These pagans did not know who the living God was. As Barnabas and Paul continued telling them about the Most High God and who He was, this seemed to make them want to sacrifice even more so to them since they felt they were gods themselves. They may have possible thought that Paul and Barnabas were sent by this "living God", just as Hermes was sent by Zeus.

**v.19-20...**Antioch and Iconium are about 100 miles north of Lystra. We are not told how long it was before these Jews came down there. We are also not told why the Jews from Antioch and Iconium came down there. It could have been that they were following Barnabas and Paul or they may have came down there just for business purposes. Either way, when they got there they persuaded the people to stone Paul.

On the surface it may seem hard to understand how these people who had been praising them and wanted to worship them, could turn right around and stone Paul.

It could possibly be that when the Jews from Antioch and Iconium came down there they told the people about how they had kicked them out of their cities. They may have told them that Paul and Barnabas were "false prophets" or some other misleading entity.

The people may have felt embarrassed about how they lifted Barnabas and Paul up like they did so now they take their anger out by stoning Paul.

The reason they may have stoned Paul and not Barnabas may have been because he was the "chief speaker".

He possible loss consciousness from being stoned. They thought they had killed him so they dragged him out of the city. When some of his brothers and sisters in Christ gathered around his body, he stood up. Then he actually goes back into the city.

Then the next day he goes down to Derbe with Barnabas. Derbe was about 60-70 miles from Lystra so this would have been about a 3-4 day's journey.

**v.21-22...verse 21** says after they had preached the gospel and made many disciples there in Derbe they headed back in the direction they came from.

Look at the map and notice how easy it would have been for them to go straight on down to Tarsus and then sail over to Antioch.

Not only would it have been easier, they decide to go right back, "into the lion's den", so to speak.

They are going right back through the cities where the Jews live who had persecuted them physically and spiritually.

Even though those Jews who persecuted them would be there, they had established churches in these cities so they would have had people there who would have tried to protect and support them.

Either way, Barnabas and Paul were not worried about the persecution. They had built great relationships with many of these people who were now their brothers and sisters in Christ so they felt compelled to go back through those cities to offer them encouragement. They would also have a chance to teach and train some of the church leaders in those cities.

They would also get another opportunity to share the Gospel with others who may not have heard them the first time they were there, or if they heard them, they may not have responded the first time.

**We see in verse 23....the reason for appointing elders in every city was...**

1) It was what the Lord had told them to do.

2) The new born churches there needed guidance and leadership to be able to grow spiritually.



**v.24-28...**Luke, the physician, the writer of The Book of Acts very quickly leads us on the journey back to Antioch of Syria. He does not go into much detail about what took place when Barnabas and Paul go back through these cities, but we can be assured they were persecuted.

**In verse 27 we see....**that Barnabas and Paul gave a full detailed report to the church and the elders who made up the church in Antioch, much like missionaries do today for churches who support them.

**Verse 28 tells us....**Paul and Barnabas stayed a "long time" with the disciples in Antioch after they got back. They no doubt would have been very tired physically and possibly spiritually in some ways. They stayed in Antioch for about 3 years before the second journey started.

## Acts 15

**v.1...**The certain men referred to here are some of the Jews in Jerusalem that had converted to Christianity. Since so many Gentiles were now becoming Christians these Jews wanted to address that issue themselves. Even though these Jews had become Christians they still felt the Messiah was for the Jewish people only. The Jews felt in order for the Gentiles to become Christians, they had to become Jewish first. Since Gentiles could not be Jewish by birth, the Jews required the Gentiles to be circumcised as the law teaches. They felt after they were circumcised then they could become Christians. They felt they could not be "saved" without doing so.

They were going to Antioch to tell those Gentiles this. The journey from Jerusalem was about 300 miles. So since a "days journey" back then was about 20 miles they were looking at about 15 days before they got there. You can look at Paul's second journey map showing the distance.

**v.2-5...In verse 2...**we see that Paul and Barnabas confronted them and challenged their demand. These Jewish men who had come down from Jerusalem were most likely members of the church there in Jerusalem so they insisted that Paul and Barnabas go back to Jerusalem and discuss the matter with the leaders of the church located there. These Jews may have felt Peter, James, and possibly some of the apostles there in Jerusalem had more "say so" than Paul and Barnabas.

**We see in verse 3...**that they had to pass through Phoenicia and Samaria so Paul and Barnabas took advantage of this and preached Christ crucified and raised from the dead to the people in that area.

Some churches would have been established there in Phoenicia and Samaria and the Scripture says that the brethren, that is the Christians there, rejoiced mightily in hearing about how the Gentiles were accepting the Gospel.

**In verse 4-5 we see...**that the brothers and sisters of the church there, as well as the leaders were excited to see and hear from Paul and Barnabas, but some of the Pharisees who had become Christians were determine to cling to the old Jewish law. Since Paul was a Pharisee himself he would have understood their convictions, but he was there to clarify the difference between the Jewish law and the "new law". The old law had been crucified to the cross. **Colossians 2:11-14**

**v.6...**We don't know how many of the apostles were still in Jerusalem since their mission was to spread the Gospel to the whole world, but the ones that were still there assembled with the elders of the church in Jerusalem to discuss the matter that was been disputed. This was a major decision to be made. A large portion of the Jews who had converted to Christianity believed that the Gentiles had to be circumcised so this could cause a major division in the church as a whole.

**v.7-11...we see in verse 7 where...**Peter reminds them about how God had sent him to Cornelius, (as we read back **in chapter 10**), to show that the opportunity for eternal life is for everyone who believes and accepts the Gospel. Therefore the Gentiles did not need to be circumcised.

**Then in verse 8 and 9 we see where...**Peter reminds them how that God knows the intents of the heart and that He knew many of the Gentiles would embrace the message so He wanted the simplicity of Christ preached to them also. **2 Corinthians 11:3**

**In verse 10-11 we see...**that Peter reminds his Jewish brothers that they as well as their fathers were not even able to stick to the law of circumcision so why should they try to insist that the Gentiles do so. **Matthew 23:4**

Then Peter reminds them that the grace of God has replaced the old law and that through the grace of Jesus everyone can receive the free gift of eternal life. **Romans 5:15**

**v.12...**After Peter finished speaking we see that Barnabas and Paul stepped forward to speak.

Since Barnabas' name is mentioned first, he may have possibly been the first one to speak, leaving the closing argument, so to speak, to Paul. Both of them declared the many miracles that God had done through them on behalf of the Gentiles, showing that the Gospel is for them also.

**v.13...**the James referred to here is not James, the brother of John, but rather James, the half brother of Jesus. **Mark 6:3**

James, the brother of John, as we read back **in chapter 12** was killed by Herod.

After James finished listening to the Jews who had converted to Christianity, and to Peter, Barnabas, and Paul, he steps forward to share his thoughts concerning the matter.

**v.14-18...**James begins by reminding them about how Peter was sent to Cornelius and that the Gospel is for the Gentiles also. Then James quotes from **The Book of Amos chapter 9:11-12** where Amos prophesied about the Gospel being for the Gentiles as well.

**In verse 18 we see where...**James reminds them that God knew of His plan of salvation for mankind before He even created the earth.

**v.19-21...**Here we see how James understood the concern of the Jews as far as keeping the law of Moses as far as circumcision goes. However, he tells them that circumcision for the Gentiles should not be enforced. Then James tells them that the Gentiles do need to abstain from things offered to idols, as well as from sexual immorality and things that were strangled or from drinking blood. James was not saying they must do this to have eternal life, he was most likely trying to appease the Jews that obeyed these laws from the Old Testament so that they would embrace the Gentiles.

**Then in verse 21 we see...**where James tells them not to be concerned about the law of Moses not being taught any longer by pointing out how the law of Moses is read in the synagogues every Sabbath Day.

**v.22-29...**We see here the matter has been addressed and settled. The apostles who were still in Jerusalem as well as the elders of the church there choose 2 men to go with Paul and Barnabas to deliver the letter to the church in Antioch.

**We see in verse 23-29...**the letter offers encouragement as well as instructions for the church there.

**We see in verse 24 where...**they mention "some who went out from us." These men were not sent by the church in Jerusalem and they had no authority to be doing what they were doing.

**Titus 1:10-11**

However, these two men, Judas and Silas, did have authority and they would confirm the things in the letter that Paul and Barnabas were delivering to them.

**We see in verse 25 where...**they tell the church there that they had met concerning this matter and that they were all in agreement to the contents of the letter.

**In verse 29...** the letter points to the Scripture found in **Leviticus 17:13-14** concerning blood.

**v.30-31...**After the writing of the letter was completed Paul, Barnabas, Judas and Silas were sent to Antioch to deliver it. Look at Paul's second journey map and you will see the 300 mile journey they were going to make from Jerusalem to Antioch.

When the letter was read to the church there in Antioch the Gentiles were very happy to hear that circumcision and having to "become a Jew" first was not going to be required of them. The 4 things that were suggested to them not to do were probably things they were not doing anyways so they gladly embraced them.

**v. 32-35...**We see here that Judas and Silas were a great help to Paul and Barnabas by being able to preach and teach the Gospel as well, taking part of the load off of them. After a while though it says they were going to be sent back to Jerusalem, but Silas decided he would stay.

**We see in verse 35 that...**Paul and Barnabas also stays in Antioch to preach the Gospel.

The "others" would have possible been Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen mentioned in **chapter 13:1**

**v.36...**We see here that the focus is not specifically to preach the Gospel to those who may not have heard it yet, even though they would be sharing the Gospel of course, but rather to help, strengthen, and encourage the churches that they had established.

**v.37-41...We see in verse 37-38 that...**Barnabas wanted to take Mark with them again, but Paul was adamantly against it. Paul was still upset that Mark turned back on their first journey (**Acts 13:13**) and he may not have thought he would continue again. For whatever reason Paul was not wanting to give Mark a second chance.

We see later though that Paul embraces Mark again and calls him a fellow laborer in **Philemon 24** and in Paul's second letter to Timothy, (**2Timothy 4:11**) he asked Timothy to bring Mark with him because he is a great help with his ministry.

It may have been because Mark was Barnabas' cousin (**Colossians 4:10**) that he, Barnabas, did not hold the grudge so fiercely.

**We see in verse 39...**it became such an disagreement that Paul and Barnabas, "agreed to disagree".

Barnabas took Mark with him and Paul chose Silas to go with him. Barnabas was born and raised in Cyprus so he decided to go visit and strengthen the churches there.

**Then we see in verse 40-41 that...**Paul and Silas go through Syria and Cilicia strengthening and encouraging the churches there that Paul and Barnabas and started.

You can follow Paul and Silas on the map showing Paul's second journey.

# The Apostle Paul's Second Journey

As You Read When You Come Across The Name Of A City  
Follow Paul's Second Journey As He Goes From City To City

## Acts Chapter 15:39 - Chapter 18:22



## Acts 16

### Paul's Second Journey

**v.1-6...**As we look at the map we can see **in verse 1** where Paul has gone through Syria and Cilicia. We see that he went through his home town of Tarsus. The Scripture doesn't mention Paul going through Tarsus and it may be because of what Jesus had said before.

But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house." **Mark 6:4**

Paul has now come back to Derbe and Lystra. This could have brought back some bad memories since Paul had been stoned and left for dead in Lystra. This is the first time Timothy is mentioned. His mother and grandmother are mentioned **in 2 Timothy 1:5**

By it saying Timothy's father "was Greek", it could possible mean that his father had passed away or Luke could simply be pointing to the fact that he was not a believer, that is, a Christian.

**We see in verse 2 that...**Timothy had a good name among the Christians there in Lystra and Inconium. This may have been one of the reasons Paul singled him out to help him with his ministry.

We don't know how old Timothy was at the time, but Paul refers to his youth **in 1 Timothy 4:12**

Timothy would have been raised in the Greek culture since his father was Greek and in the Jewish culture by his mother and grandmother. **2 Timothy 3:14-15**

This would have given him the ability to relate and communicate with both Jews and Gentiles.

**In verse 3-4 we see...**where Paul decides to circumcise Timothy. They also share the decrees that the Jerusalem council passed back **in chapter 15**. The reason for circumcising Timothy is not told in the Scriptures, but it could be because since Timothy's mother was Jewish. Timothy would have been considered Jewish since his mother was, so he should have been circumcised shortly after birth.

It may have possible been that his Greek father did not allow it. Paul was not contradicting the councils degree because their degree was that "Gentiles" did not need to be circumcised. Another reason he circumcised Timothy may have possible been that Paul did not want to get tied down in a debate with the Jew's who were part of the church there, especially since the matter had already been settled.

Paul may have possible circumcised Timothy so that they could move on.

**In verse 5 we see...**that the churches in that area were being strengthen by Paul's message and they were growing in numbers every day. We can learn from this in that the message of preaching Christ crucified and raised from the dead works if/when we stick to the message and do not try to add to or take away from it.

**v.6-10...**Looking at the map we can see that Paul and Silas were moving pretty quickly through the region of Galatia. The Book of Galatians is the only book that Paul wrote that was not directed to a specific congregation or person. This could be because there were several churches in the region of Galatia. Paul would have most likely spent a little time with them as he continued his second journey.

As you look at the map you can see Paul was in the heart of the Asian region and was getting ready to preach to the surrounding area, but the Holy Spirit forbade them from doing so. We are not told in the Scriptures exactly why, but we can conclude in the next few verses as to one of the reasons why. God was wanting Paul to take the message to Macedonia.

We see that the message of salvation was eventually delivered to the souls in that area, including Asia.  
**1 Peter 1:1**

**In verse 8 we see...**on the map where they came down to Troas. The ancient city of Troy would have only been about 4 miles from the city of Troas. Troas was a major seaport. A lot of people would have been going through Troas from Macedonia to Asia and vice versa.

**In verse 9-10 we see...**where God used a "man of Macedonia" to get Paul to come and help them. We do not know who this man was. He may have possibly been an angel that the Lord had to appear as a man to show Paul where He wanted him to go next. It could have possibly been a vision like Cornelius had back **in Acts 10:3, 30**

Notice the shift from "they" **in v. 8** to where the Scripture starts saying "we" **in verse 10**. This could possibly be when Luke joined them and he started writing from an eye witness experience.

**v.11-15...**Samothrace is an island in the Aegean Sea, a stopover point on the way between Asia Minor and the Grecian coast. It doesn't say, but Paul possible spread the Gospel to some people there as well. Neapolis would have been the seaport for Macedonia.

**verse 12...**Philippi was named after Alexander the Great's father, King Philip! Philippi was located about 10 miles inland from Neapolis.

When the Scripture says it was the foremost city it means it was the first city founded in that area. We are not told how long Paul was in Philippi, but it would not have been for a very long time.

**In verse 13 we see...**it was the Sabbath day, but Paul did not go to the Synagogue like he normally does. This could possibly be because there was not one there. The Jewish Law required at least 10 Jewish men to have a Synagogue. Since Paul went down to the riverside to meet with the women there, this would suggest there was not one in the city.

**In verse 14-15...**we are introduced to Lydia. She owns her own business and sells purple garments. Purple was the color known for royalty and for the higher class. It was expensive, so Lydia was most likely a very successful business lady monetarily.

She was from Thyatira. Thyatira is one of the seven churches of Asia mentioned in Revelation. It is mentioned **in Revelation 1:11; 2:18, 24**

Thyatira was a long ways from Philippi. Lydia most likely set up her business there in Philippi because of its great location. She "worshipped God", which means she feared God just as Cornelius did back **in Acts 10:2**.

However, she did not know who Jesus was so Paul would have shared the Gospel with her and when she heard it, she, as well as her household accepted Jesus as their Savior.

She would have most likely had a very nice house and she persuaded Paul and those traveling with him to spend time there with her. We are not told for sure, but since the Scripture says Paul accepted her invitation, he most likely stayed for a few days or a little longer and preached Christ crucified and raised from the dead to those in the city and the surrounding area.

**v.16-24...**Paul and Silas were staying at Lydia's house. We do not know how long they stayed, but since **verse 16** says they "went to prayer", it is possible that this was the Sabbath day again.

We see **in verse 17-18** that a demon possessed girl was following Paul around town telling everyone that Paul and those with him were, "servants of the Most High God." This reminds me of when the demons recognized Jesus **in Mark 4:33-34, 41** and **Mark 8:27-28**

Since Paul was wanting the people in the city to know who they were and why they were there you would think that Paul would not have minded this girl telling everyone who they were, but it began to really irritate Paul so he calls on the name of Jesus to cast out this demon. **Mark 16:17**

Another reason Paul may have possibly cast this demon out was he may not have wanted the message concerning Jesus to be connected with demonic power. For whatever reason, he had enough of this girl following them around so he cast the demon out of the girl.

**We see in verse 19-21...**that those who owned the girl didn't really care about the girl, they just got really mad because their source of income had just been eliminated so they take Paul and Silas before the magistrates there in the city. A magistrate was basically the same thing as a judge. They could decide legal matters and these men were filing charges against Paul and Silas.

These men would have been Roman citizens and most Romans had a great dislike for Jews. We see **in verse 20** how these men try to stir the magistrates up by saying, "These men, being Jews."

**We see in verse 21 how...**these men don't even talk about why they brought Paul and Silas before the magistrates concerning the girl, but rather charge them with a more serious crime. It was against the Roman law for Jews to try and convert Romans to Judaism and it was also against the Roman law for Christians to try and convert them as well. They were probably thinking the magistrates would be more likely to punish Paul and Silas because of this.

**We see in verse 22-23 that...**these men were successful in doing so and that Paul and Silas were beaten with rods. Being beaten with rods was not as severe as being scourged, but there were no limits on how many times they could be hit with the rods, so the beating would have been really bad.

**In verse 24 we see...**Paul and Silas had their feet put in stocks. The stocks were usually mounted deep into the concrete wall so when someone was fasten to these stocks, they were not going anywhere. They were also put in the "inner prison" which would have most likely been the dungeon.

**v.25-34...**At midnight most people would be asleep, but we see here **in verse 25** that Paul and Silas are actually singing. It could be that they were hurting so bad after the beating they took, that they simply could not go to sleep because of the grimacing pain they were in or they could simply be singing praise songs to God because they knew He had saved them from death and they counted it a JOY in suffering for His sake. Either way the other prisoners heard them singing spiritual hymns.



**We see in verse 26...**that an earthquake hits the city. Earthquakes were common in Philippi, but this earthquake had the hand of the living God on it. It opened all of the prison doors and shook all of the chains loose from the prisoners.

You would think the non-Christian prisoners would have tried to get away, but they stayed there with Paul and Silas. They had seen that there was something different about Paul and Silas. They may have possibly been wanting to know more about the message of salvation that Paul and Silas were talking about.

**In verse 27-29 we see...**where the earthquake woke the prison guard up. Roman law was that if a prisoner escaped who you were guarding, you would be put to death. This prison guard knew the law. He possibly did not want to be executed himself so he decided he would commit suicide since he thought all of the prisoners were surely gone.

However, Paul knew that God was at work and that it was not His will that they be released from prison by the earthquake. He yells out to the prison guard telling him to stop and not to kill himself. Paul tells the prison guard that they are still there.

**We see in verse 29 that...**since they were in the "inner prison", the prison guard had to call for a light so he could go in and check to see if all of the prisoners were indeed still there.

The prison guard could have possibly heard Paul and Silas preaching the Gospel before in the city. He may have even believed what they were saying, but since he was a Roman guard in charge of the prison, he was just doing his job by locking up Paul and Silas.

However, when the earthquake opened the doors and knocked the chains off of the prisoners, this moved the prison guard not to worry about what the consequences may be.

**We see in verse 30...**he asked the most important question in life, "What must I do to be saved?"

**In verse 31 we see...**where Paul and Silas tell him to, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and your household." **John 3:16, 36; and John 6:47**

**We see in verse 32 that...**Paul and Silas shared God's plan of salvation for mankind in detail with the jailer and all of those in his household.

**We see in verse 33...**the jailer took them somewhere, maybe down by the river where Lydia and her friends met for prayer and they were baptized into the family of God.

**In verse 34 we see...**that the jailer takes Paul and Silas to his own house and feeds them as they rejoice in the fact that the jailer and his family were now born again Christians. We don't know exactly when, since the Scriptures doesn't tell us when, but we do know that Paul and Silas were taken back to the prison before anyone knew they were gone.

**v.35-40....**The magistrates had beaten and imprisoned Paul and Silas because those slave girls owners had created a mob and they were afraid the mob may turn on them. After the people had calmed down the next day, we see **in verse 35-36** the magistrate sends the officers to set Paul and Silas free.

**We see in verse 37...**that Paul tells the officers how the magistrates had illegally beaten him and Silas since they were Roman citizens. Then Paul uses this to his advantage and tells the officers that the magistrates were going to have to come down to the prison personally and let them out.

Paul knew the magistrates illegally beat them since they were Roman citizens and now he was going to put some fear in them.

**In verse 38-39 we see...**where the magistrates were deeply afraid because they know since they had Paul and Silas beaten, that they could now be put to death themselves for doing so if Rome found out about it.

Since the Scriptures does not tell the whole conversation with Paul and the magistrates we don't know exactly what was said. I would think it was possible that Paul used this occasion to his advantage and warn the magistrates that they better not "bully" his brothers and sisters there any more or he would report this beating incident to the officials in Rome.

Even if Paul didn't suggest this to them, they would have probably had that thought in their head and they would have been very cautious about persecuting Christians as much in the future.

**We see in verse 39 where...**they came to Paul and Silas and apologized to them. Then they "begged" them to leave Philippi.

**Then in verse 40 we see where....**Paul and Silas visits with Lydia and some of the other brothers and sisters there before they leave, encouraging them to remain faithful and to grow in Christ.

## Acts 17

**v.1-9...In verse 1 we can see...**on the map where they went through Amphipolis and Apollonia as they headed towards Thessalonica. A "days journey" back then was 20 miles and it was 33 miles from Philippi to Amphipolis so it was about a day and a half journey. Then it was another 30 miles to Apollonia and another 37 more miles on to Thessalonica. It was a total of a 100 miles from Philippi to Thessalonica which would have taken them about 5 days if they walked it straight without stopping in Amphipolis or Apollonia!

Thessalonica is a city that still exist to this day in Greece. It was founded in 315 BC by Cassander of Macedon. Rome made it the capital of Macedonia.

Paul always sought out synagogues which would have consisted of at least 10 male Jews or more even though God had him sharing the Gospel specifically to the Gentiles now.

**v.2...Luke 4:16** says it was Jesus' custom to go to the synagogues also!

The Sabbath day was the seventh day of the week, so we see Paul met with the Jewish leaders there for three weeks in a row. He may have figured he had done all he could do as far as explaining from the Scriptures how Jesus was the Messiah so he decided to just preach to the Gentiles and the "God fearing" Jews. Since the Scriptures don't say how long Paul stayed there, he may have left the city after meeting with the Jewish leaders for three Sabbaths.

**We also see in verse 2....**how Paul didn't try and use persuasive words to tell them about Jesus, but he instead used the Scriptures to reason with them? **Hebrews 4:12**

**In verse.3....**Paul explains to them how it was prophesied that the Christ had come for a specific reason and that Jesus is, the Christ. The word "Jesus" means "Savior", and the word "Christ" means anointed one, so we see Paul telling them that Jesus is the Savior and the Anointed One.

**Verse.4...**tells us that some of the people were persuaded. It is a lot like that today. People hear Jesus preached and "some are persuaded" while a majority do not respond to it. If someone is truly looking for Jesus, the Savior of the world, they will find and accept Him.

These leading women could have possible been women like Lydia, that we read about **in Acts 16**. These women may have owned their own successful business or they may have been married to prominent men at the time

**We see in verse 5 that...**the Jews who were not persuaded were very jealous of Paul's popularity!

Rome ruled Thessalonica, but Rome let Greek officials run the day to day business there, as long as there was not any trouble taking place. Well, the Jews there knew if they could stir up a mob which would turn into a riot, they could then turn and blame it on Paul. Then the Greek officials would turn on Paul and punish him so that Rome would not intervene.

What does it mean they took some of the evil men from the market place?....These would have been men who would have done anything to make a dollar, steal, kill, lie....whatever it was, they would do it for money. Hear we see the Jews use them to tell a bunch of lies about Paul and to stir up a mob.

Remember what James said in **James 3:5**... "See how great a forest a little fire kindles?"

They go looking for Paul and Silas at Jason's house thinking they would find them there.

**In verse 6 & 7 we see...**they could not find Paul and Silas so they decide to grab Jason since he had helped them. The Jews have got the people stirred up into a mob and now we see how they make reference to Caesar. Since Rome ruled Thessalonica they possibly thought the Greek officials would quickly step in to restore order so that it would not be reported to Rome. The Jewish religious leaders were hoping these officials would stop Paul from preaching.

**In verse 8 & 9 we see...**they took something from Jason. It could have been money, property, or something else of value. They may have done this to punish Jason, while calling it a "bond" to make sure he didn't help Paul or Silas anymore.

**v.10-15...in verse 10 we see...**the Christians there in Thessalonica secretly send Paul and Silas away at night to Berea. Berea was 60 miles southwest of Thessalonica so it would have taken them 3 days if they were walking and didn't stop anywhere along the way. We see here that they continue to go to the synagogue when they arrive in each city, to preach Christ crucified and raised from the dead first.

**We see in verse 11 that...**the Jews in Berea were more open minded to listen to Paul and Silas concerning Jesus, than the Jews in Thessalonica were. If you have ever tried sharing Jesus with people before you have most likely experienced the same thing. Some people get mad and will even turn on you. Then there are some people who are very happy and open minded to listening to you share the Gospel. That is why we need to try and share it with everyone.

The great thing about those in Berea is that they were not willing to just take Paul and Silas' word about it, they looked into the scriptures to see if everything matched up with what they were saying. That is how we need to do now when someone is trying to share something with us in the Bible.

We see an example of one of the Judges making sure the message was from God in **Judges 6:36-40**

**We see in verse 12 that...**many of the Jews believed Paul and Silas concerning the message of Jesus. We also see where a lot of the Greeks and leading citizens in Berea believed and became Christians. You never know who has an open heart, so we see why we need to share the Gospel with everyone.

**We see in verse 13 that...**the Jewish trouble makers from Thessalonica went to Berea to cause trouble for Paul again! Do you know any troublemakers? Have you noticed that they are always negative and trying to stick their noses in other people's business just like these Jews from Thessalonica did. They lived 60 miles away from Berea. These Jews from Thessalonica should not have cared about what was taking place in Berea, but their jealousy of Paul stirred them up to go to there and cause trouble.

**We see here in verse 14 that...**they were mainly looking for Paul. Therefore, the Christians there sent Paul to the sea to get on a boat and escape the trouble the Jews from Thessalonica were going to try and cause for him. We see here that the Jews from Thessalonica didn't even care about Silas and Timothy so they were able to stay and continue to preach and teach Jesus as the Savior, the Christ, crucified and raised from the dead.

**v.15...**Paul goes on to Athens and then sends for Silas and Timothy. It is about 230 miles from Berea to Athens. There would have been a large gap of time that takes places between **verse 14 & verse 15**, even though Silas and Timothy would have most likely taken a ship to Athens also.

**v.16-21...**Growing up as a boy and teenager Paul would have no doubt heard a lot about Athens. Athens had lost its political power from the time that Alexander the Great was conquering "the world". Rome was now the world power, but Athens was still legendary concerning its Greek Philosophy's and it's worship of idols and false gods. Since this was most likely the first time that Paul had ever seen the city he was probably overwhelmed by the false doctrines and how the worship of idols was a common practice there. This would have provoked him to preach and teach about the living God and His plan of Salvation.

**We see in verse 17 how...**Paul didn't wait on Silas and Timothy to get there. Paul was always on the go! A man on a mission! He sought out the Jews there in Athens. He went to their synagogue to share Christ crucified and raised from the dead. He also shared the message with the Gentiles. Remember, Gentiles are simply everyone that is not Jewish. Therefore, Paul was sharing the Gospel with everyone.

**v.18...**What are Epicurean and Stoic philosophers?

The "Epicureans" taught that the chief purpose of man is to achieve happiness. The Epicureans followed the teaching of the Greek philosopher Epicurus. Epicurus would have lived during 340-270 BC. The Epicureans believed there were "gods", but they felt as though those gods had no interest in people's everyday lives. The Epicureans simply believed that people should try and enjoy themselves as much as they possibly could. They always avoided things that might caused them any fear or pain.

The "Stoics" did not pursue pleasure and pain did not bother them. The Stoics followed the teachings of Zeno. Zeno would have died in 265 BC. The Stoics did however believe that there was a god of gods, a chief god so to speak, but they did not believe in the living God. The Stoics believed that everything happened because of fate.

Where did the word babblers come from?....Do you remember The Tower of Babel? **Genesis 11:1-9**

The word Babel means "confusion" and there was no doubt Paul's teaching about Jesus was confusing the people there.

Since they were not familiar with Jesus, who was the Son of the living God, they called Paul a proclaimer of foreign gods.

**We see in verse 19...**they take Paul to The Areopagus, which was both a hill in Athens, named for the "god" of war, "Ares" or "Mars," and also was the name of the council which met on that hill. It was essentially a court. The hill was also known as, Mars Hill!

**And in verse 20...**they were at least asking kindly about wanting to know more about Jesus. Some of them may have been genuinely interested in knowing about Jesus, but a majority of them were most likely just curious because it was something new they had not heard about before.

**We can sum up verse 21...**by saying Athens was full of Gossipers and Busybodies. **1 Timothy 5:13**

**v.22-34...We see in verse 22-23 where...**Paul begins to deliver his sermon on Mars Hill to the people gathered there who would have most likely been all pagans. Paul begins by praising them by recognizing how "religious" they were!

The Greeks were willing to worship any idol and they were concerned they may have left one out so they marked one of their alters, To The Unknown God. Paul did not mock them for this, he simply told them he wanted to tell them about this God.

**We see in verse 24 that...**Paul does not start by pointing to the Scriptures or by telling them about the Jewish religion concerning the "Messiah". This would not have made sense to them, because they were not familiar with the living God and His plan of Salvation.

This is hard for the Greeks to grasp because Paul was telling them his God was the Creator of the whole world and everything in it. He also tells them what Stephen told the Sanhedrin in **Acts 7:48-50**

Can you imagine what they were thinking as Paul told them about The Unknown God?

**In verse 25...**Paul is telling them the same thing Jesus told the Samaritan woman in **John 5:24...**

"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

**We see in verse 26-28 that...**Paul is talking about how Jesus would provide eternal life to everyone on the earth who receive Him for who He is, the Christ, the Savior of the world.

**In verse 27...**Paul tells them that if they seek Him, they will find Him. **Revelation 3:20**

Paul was a well-educated, freeborn Roman citizen, and as such, he would have been quite familiar with Greek culture so he is still showing them some respect as he quotes the Greek poet Aratus, from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, **in verse 28**

**In verse 29...**we see how Paul is cleverly telling them they are also "the offspring" of this Unknown God he is telling them about and they are worth more than Gold and Silver.

**In verse 30-31 we see...**how Paul lays it on the line to them now. Paul tells them plainly that it has been alright up to now, since they did not know who The Unknown God was, but now that they know of Him, they are going to have to repent of their sins. **Luke 13:3 & 5**

He tells them God is going to judge everyone on the earth by whether or not they accept the Gospel.

Then Paul tells them **in verse 31** the proof is in God raising His Son from the dead!

**In verse 32 we see...**the resurrection of the dead was a hard thing for the Greeks to embrace because the Greek writer Aeschylus, who had lived during 525-456 BC wrote about their god Apollo and in his writing Apollo was to have said that "there is no resurrection". This of course would mean that when someone dies, it over, just like over.

Therefore, some of the people mocked Paul while others wanted to hear more about the resurrection.

**In verse 33-34...**we see that Paul then leaves them. Some of the people believed Paul and became Christians.

# The Apostle Paul's Third Journey

As You Read When You Come Across The Name Of A City  
Follow Paul's Third Journey As He Goes From City To City

## Acts Chapter 18:23 - Chapter 21:17



## Acts 18

....v.1-6...**In verse 1 we see...**the response has not been that good in Athens. The Scriptures do not record a single church being established there. Paul decides to go on to Corinth which is the capital of the province of Achaia. It was a 90 mile journey from Athens to Corinth. If he walked without stopping to preach anywhere it would have taken him about 4 1/2 to 5 days to get there.

Corinth was a Greek city that was destroyed by the Romans in 146 BC and was rebuilt in 46 BC. It became the Roman capital of the province of Achaia.

**In verse 2 we...**are introduced to Aquila and Priscilla who would become Paul's partners so to speak in sharing and spreading the Gospel. Aquila was born in Pontus. It was a large province of Asia Minor, along the shores of the Black Sea. The Holy Spirit did not allow Paul to preach in that area. **Acts 16:6**

Even though Paul did not preach in Pontus, Aquila and Priscilla had heard the Gospel from someone and accepted it. They were Christians when they first met Paul.

Pontus was one of the cities Peter addressed in his first letter. **1 Peter 1:1**

The emperor Claudius forbade proselytizing of any religion. Claudius commanded all the Jews in Rome to leave. This would have happened around the year of 49 AD. The Jews mentioned here **in verse 2** were possibly Jews who had become Christians as Aquila and Priscilla had.

**In verse 3 we see that...**Aquila was a tent maker just like Paul and they began working together. This would have allowed them to talk and get to know each other better.

**In verse 4 we see...**how Paul still preached in the synagogue each Sabbath. There were many Jews and Greeks (Gentiles) who accepted the Gospel there in Corinth after hearing Paul preach. We can learn from this. Even though many, if not most of the people we share the Gospel with will not accept Jesus as their personal Savior, there will be those who will. Therefore, we need to continue sharing it just as Paul did.

**In verse 5 we see...**that Silas and Timothy finally arrive from Thessalonica and Berea. Paul had been spending his time building tents during the week and preaching on the weekends. Silas and Timothy would have brought financial assistance from the churches in the Macedonia area so this allowed Paul to quit building tents and preach everyday now, especially and specifically to the Jews.

**Verse 6 shows us...**how frustrating it became to Paul trying to get these close minded Jews to accept the Gospel. He finally threw his hands up, so to speak, in frustration and decided he was not going to waste his time trying to share the Gospel with the Jews there anymore because they were simply hard-hearted and were not going to accept that Jesus was the Messiah.

Paul shakes the dust off of his clothes. This is what Jesus said to do. **Mark 6:11** and **Luke 9:5**

Paul tells them for now on he is going to just share the Gospel with the Gentiles there.

**v.7-11...In verse 7 and 8 we see...**where Titius Justus (who would have been a Roman) must have heard Paul preaching in the synagogue and accepted Jesus as his Savior. Paul did not have to go far when he decided to leave the synagogue because Titius Justus owned the house right beside it.



We also see that Crispus was one of the few Jews who accepted that Jesus was indeed the long awaited Messiah that the Jewish people had been waiting on. Crispus was willing to give up his high position as ruler of the synagogue. This shows he was open to "the truth". Since all of his household became Christians as well we see the influence Crispus had on those around him.

This is the same Crispus that Paul makes reference to in **1 Corinthians 1:14**

**In verse 9 and 10 and 11 we see...**that Paul was obviously and for good reason afraid for his safety after the way he had been treated in Philippi. Jesus strengthens & encourage him through a vision just as He would do again when Paul was in Jerusalem. **Acts 23:11**

Paul put his trust in Jesus and continues to preach and teach there for another year and a half. This would have been around the fall to early winter of 50 AD and winter to spring of 51 AD.

**v.12-17...In verse 12 and 13 we see...**that Gallio was the proconsul of Achaia. Gallio was the older brother of Seneca, who was a very popular writer and Senator of Rome at the time. The Jews here in Corinth are trying to do the same thing the Jews did in Philippi in that they want Paul arrested and thrown in to prison.

There was not a law in Rome preventing preaching and teaching any religion at the time. The Jews were saying that Paul was breaking their Jewish law concerning how they were to worship God.

**In verse 14 and 15 we see...**that Paul was willing to defend himself to Gallio, but Gallio was not going to listen to the Jews fuss about their religious laws. He had most likely heard them complain in the past about different things and he had had enough of it, so he decides to tell them he was not going to be a judge over their Jewish laws.

**In verse 16 we see....**where Gallio kicks them out of the court room, so to speak. This would be the same thing as a judge deciding to throw someone's case out because they felt it had no merit as far as him making a decision on it.

The Greeks take Sosthenes out and beat him. Sosthenes was most likely chosen to be the ruler of the synagogue after Crispus decided to leave it and become a disciple of Jesus. I would imagine that this beating he took caused him to leave the Christians along for quite some time which would have allowed Paul to be more effective with his preaching the Gospel.

It is possible that Sosthenes himself became a Christian as well since he is one of the men Paul mentions in **1 Corinthians 1:1**

Jesus had told Paul not to be afraid back **in verses 9-10** because he would protect him. And He did.

**v.18-22...We see in verse 18....**that Paul stayed for a good while. We don't know exactly how long, but he was not worried about being persecuted during this time. However, he was now ready to go back to his home congregation in Antioch and give a missionary report to the Elders there.

We see here that Paul took with him Aquila and Priscilla. It is most likely that he left Silas and Timothy there to work with the church since Luke doesn't mention them going with Paul also.

Cenchrea was the main harbor for Corinth. With so many people coming and going through Corinth, it made a great place to establish a church. Paul established one there. **Romans 16:1**

Paul had taken a vow. It may have possible been a Nazirite vow. Samson is one of the individuals we are familiar with who took a Nazirite vow also. You were not to drink any alcohol, you could not touch anything that was dead, and you were not to cut your hair. A Nazirite vow could be a vow for a day, a week, a month, a year, or even for a lifetime like it was for Samson.

We are not told why, but for some reason Paul decides to end the vow there in Cenchrea.

**Then in verse 19 we see....**on the map that they arrive in Ephesus. We see that Paul, as his custom was, goes to the synagogue and shares the Gospel with the Jews there. For some reason he did not take Aquila and Priscilla with him to the synagogue and he also decided to leave them there in Ephesus when he set sail for Syria Antioch.

As mentioned before, Aquila and Priscilla were Christians when Paul first met them. It could be that Paul saw the opportunity to use them to strengthen and help grow the church there.

**We see in verse 21....**that the Christians in Ephesus wanted him to stay longer with them, but Paul was wanting to go on to Jerusalem for the feast. It is not told specifically here in the Scriptures which Feast this is, but it is most likely The Feast of Tabernacles since it is going to be the Fall of the year when Paul gets to Jerusalem. The Feast of Tabernacles was the only major Feast celebrated in the Fall, late September, early October.

Paul tells his brothers and sisters in Christ there in Ephesus that he will come back, if it is God's will for him to do so. It is God's will for him to come back and he does on his third missionary journey.

**In verse 22....**we see on the map where Paul arrives in Caesarea and then goes on up to the meet with the church in Jerusalem. After sharing the great things that had taken place on his missionary journey he heads back to Antioch, his home congregation.

**We see in verse 23....**that after Paul had finished giving his report to those at the church in Antioch he spent some time with them there. He would have got back to Antioch around August to September of AD 52 and possibly stayed there until Spring of AD 53 before heading back out on his third journey.

**v.24-28...In verse 24...**we are introduced to Apollos for the first time. His mother and father were Jewish and they raised him in Alexander Egypt, a city of about one million people at the time.

Apollos grew up there. The Jewish people who lived in Alexander, for the most part, were known to be well educated in the Jewish law as well as the Jewish heritage. The majority of the Jews who lived in Alexander were wealthy for the most part.

We read **in Titus 3:13** that Apollos became a great asset in helping Paul spread the Gospel.

Being "mighty in the scriptures" meant that he was able to teach and even quote the Old Testament in a powerful way!

**In verse 25 we see...**that by Apollos being raised in Alexander with a higher education that he understood the scriptures in depth concerning the coming of the Messiah. He was able to point to the Scriptures in detail when conversing with the Jews showing that Jesus was the Messiah.

Apollos would not have been teaching anything false concerning Jesus, he was just simply teaching what he had learned concerning Jesus. He evidently was taught by some of John the Baptist disciples and they in turn were not fully educated concerning the Gospel either.

**In verse 26 we see....**where Apollos was bold just like Paul was in that he went directly to the synagogue to preach. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him preach in the synagogue they would have seen the zeal and passion that Apollos had concerning the Lord. Since they had spent a lot of time with Paul they learned the "complete story" concerning the Gospel. Aquila and Priscilla saw the genuineness and sincerity in Apollos, so instead of calling him out in front of everybody they waited and took him aside and shared the Gospel in more detail with him.

We possible see here why Paul had Aquila and Priscilla stay there in Ephesus. They were able to help Apollos, and I would think, a lot of others have a full understanding of the Gospel.

We need to learn from Aquila and Priscilla how effective it is, not to try and embarrass someone, but rather talk to them in private if we feel they are teaching a false or incomplete story concerning Jesus.

We also need to learn from Apollos' attitude also. He could have told them his background and how educated he was and that they didn't have anything on him. However, he had an open heart to listen and to learn the Scriptures more accurately.

**In verse 27 we can look at the map...**and see that the Aegean Sea separated Asia and Achaia. We are not told why, but Apollos decided he wanted to leave Ephesus and go to Achaia. When you look at the map you can see that he most likely landed at the harbor in Cenchrea and then went on to Corinth.

He carried with him a letter that the church in Ephesus had written for him encouraging the Christians in Achaia to accept him. They did and he was able to help grow the church there. **1 Corinthians 3:6**

**In verse 28 we see...**because Apollos was "mighty in the Scriptures", that is, he was knowledgeable of the Scriptures, he was able to challenge the Jews there and show that Jesus was/is the Christ, the long awaited Messiah!

We can learn from Apollos that it is our responsibility to study and learn the Scriptures. Then we are to point to the Scriptures concerning the message of eternal life. The word of God is what "cuts the heart" (**Acts 2:37**) of the soul and moves someone to become a born again Christian. **Hebrews 4:12**

# Acts 19

## Paul's Third Journey

**v.1-3...**Apollos has now gone to Corinth. When you look at the map you can see that Paul passed through Tarsus, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch. He is now in Ephesus.

We see here **in verse 1** that Paul met "some disciples". These would have been disciples of Jesus, but they were like Apollos in that they did not know or fully understand the Gospel.

We see **in verse 2 that...** Paul asked them if they had received "the gift of the Holy Spirit" when they became a Christian. They replied by telling Paul they had never heard of the Holy Spirit. We need to remember that the Gospel was being shared with the world at this time in its infancy stage and there were many who had accepted Jesus as their Savior even though they may not have been fully taught the Gospel. Since they were not fully taught the Gospel they were not able to fully teach it to others either.

We see **in verse 3 where...** Paul address' their baptism just as Aquila and Priscilla did Apollos'. They were just like Apollos was **in Acts 18:25**. All they knew about was the baptism of John the Baptist. Paul tells them that Johns baptism pointed towards the One coming after him, which was Jesus Christ.

**v.4...**Paul reminds them of what John the Baptist said **in Matthew 3:11** concerning his baptism.

**v.5...**Knowing the truth and submitting to it are 2 different things. These disciples were openhearted to the Gospel just as Apollos was and they were baptized in the name of Jesus after fully understanding the difference. Now that they knew "the truth", they could preach and teach it more accurately.

**v.6...**Not everyone had the "gift of laying on of hands" as Paul did. We saw in **Acts 8:14-24** where Simon the Sorcerer tried to buy it. The Holy Spirit came upon these men just as He had the apostles back **in Acts 2:4**

**In verse 7 we see...**there were 12 men who accepted "the truth" concerning the teaching of the baptism that Jesus implemented. They may have been disciples of John or just been taught by John's disciples.

**v.8-10...we see here in verse 8...**as we have seen many times now, that it was Paul's custom that he went into the synagogue and taught the Gospel when he first arrived in a city. Since he was allowed to preach and teach in this synagogue for three months we see that there would have been many who were receptive to his message concerning that Jesus was the Messiah.

Paul shared how "the kingdom of God" had come to the earth. **Matthew 2:1-2** and **Matthew 4:17**  
At some point, enough of the Jews in the synagogue turned on him so he no longer preached there.

**We see in verse 9...**that some of the Jews in the synagogue did not believe and began to speak evil of, "the Way", which was Jesus.

Paul had had enough of the Jews in the synagogue who were suppressing him so he decides to no longer go there. He takes the disciples who had accepted the Gospel to a school building called Tyrannus. We do not know anything about this school except that Paul was able to preach and teach there without being persecuted or refuted by the close minded Jews in the synagogue.

We see here that when doors get close by close minded people, God opens doors somewhere else. We see it throughout the Scriptures and we see it even in our own lives.

**In verse 10...**when you look at the map, you can see that Ephesus was centrally located between Jerusalem/Israel and Italy so it was a great place to establish and build a church since people from all over were constantly coming and going through there. We see here that Paul spent 2 years preaching, teaching, and growing the church there.

The seeds that Paul was sowing there were being carried out all over Asia, Greece, Italy, Spain, and throughout the rest of the known world at the time.

**v.11-20...We see in verse 11 and 12...**how the Lord was working through Paul. There was of course no miraculous power in a cloth, Jesus just used it to show people the relationship He had with Paul.

We see the Lord appeared to possibly even use the "shadow" of Peter to heal people. **Acts 5:12-15**

We see where a woman who just touched the hem of Jesus' garment was healed. **Mark 5:25-34**

**In verse 13 and 14 we see...**where there were certain Jewish men traveling from city to city fooling people with their magic tricks just as Simon the sorcerer did. People paid them money to perform their magic/tricks, but these men had seen that the real power was in the name of the Lord Jesus. These men try to use the name of Jesus without permission and without the authority to do so.

**In verse 15 and 16 we see...**where this demonic being calls them out, so to speak. Not only does he call them out, he attacks them knowing they used Jesus' name without having the ability to do so.

**Then in verse 16 this...**demonic being not only beats them, he stripped them of their clothes which exposed their shame even more so as they ran out of the house and through the city.

We do not have the power of the laying on of hands as Paul did, but as children of God, we can and should call on the name of Jesus when we are tempted by Satan. We need to always remember the power of the devil and rebuke him in the name of the Lord, as Michael the archangel did **in Jude 9**

**In verse 17 we see...**how news of this spread all across Ephesus. When people heard how that demonic being had turned on those men for trying to use the name of Jesus when those men didn't even really believe in Him themselves, fear went throughout the area and the powerful name of Jesus was exalted.

**In verse 18 we see...**how this ordeal with the demonic being served as a reminder to those who had accepted the Gospel and became Christians of their reoccurring sins, so they came forward repenting and confessing them.

It would kind of be like a preacher who preached a sermon that someone would call a "fire and brimstone sermon", and it moved many of the people in the audience to re-commit their lives to God.

**In verse 19 we see...**where they may have been some people who had become Christians, but they were drawn into the great sin of practicing witchcraft.

God had condemned anyone who practiced magic. **Deuteronomy 18:10-12**

They, along with the others who were not Christians brought their magic books together and burned them. These books were very expensive books. Fifty thousand pieces of silver would be equivalent to \$364,000 dollars in today's money.

**In verse 20 we see...**the Gospel was growing rapidly and the church was growing all across Asia, Greece, Italy, Spain, and throughout the rest of the known world at the time.

**In verse 21 and verse 22 we see...**that Paul was ready to go on, but he knew there was still something that he had to take care of before he left Asia which we are about to see in the next several verses.

When we look at the map we can see where Ephesus, Macedonia, Achaia, and Rome were. Paul was going to go to Macedonia and Achaia after he took care of the matter he was going to address, but he sent Timothy and Erastus on ahead of him. This may have been the Erastus mentioned in **Romans 16:23**

**We see in verse 22 that...**Paul stayed in Asia for a time. Paul would have possibly not just stayed in Ephesus only during this time. He may have visited what we know as the "Seven churches of Asia" found in **Revelation chapter 2 and 3** during this time as well. **1 Corinthians 16:19**

**In verse 23 we see...**where Luke says, "the Way", which simply refers to what Jesus said about Himself in **John 14:6...** "I am **the way**, the truth, and the life. "The Way" is mentioned several times in The Book of Acts. It is mentioned in **Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22**

"The Way" was how some of the people at that time referred to Jesus and the Gospel.

**In verse 24-27 we see...**where a man by the name of Demetrius stirs the people of Ephesus up. Ephesus had a population of 300,000 people during Paul's time there. Paul did not start the church there, it was already in existence when he arrived. It was mostly like founded by Aquila and Priscilla. The church in Ephesus was about two years old when Paul went there.

The city of Ephesus was known as a place where people worshipped Diana which was also known as Artemis. Artemis, that is Diana of Ephesus, was called the mother goddess, so to speak, of Asia. Diana was known as the daughter of Zeus. The temple of Diana in Ephesus was much bigger than the temple that was in Athens. A lot of people made their living by making models of it and selling them. They would make small models of Diana. Some as small as a Barbie Doll or smaller. People would buy them to use to worship her. The idols would be similar to a statue of Buddha.

**v.26...**There would have been people all across Asia coming and going in Corinth so Demetrius tells them how Paul is disrupting their livelihood, not only there in Ephesus, but also throughout all of Asia. Demetrius was going to lose money just like that slave girls owners did in **Acts 16:16-19**

**In verse 27 we see...**that Demetrius' god was money. He is not really worried about offending or defending Diana, but more so about the money he is beginning to lose thanks to Paul preaching the Gospel. Paul preached that there is only one God, the living God and "He is not made with hands".

Demetrius plays on the people's emotions concerning Diana. The temple of Diana was one of the "Seven Wonders of the Ancient World" and Demetrius tells the crowd not only is their way of making money going to be affected, their god is not longer going to be respected. Demetrius gets them emotionally stirred up.

**We see in verse 28 that...**the people began shouting, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

**In verse 29 we see...**where Demetrius caused a great uproar and riot in the city. The theatre in Ephesus held about 25,000 people and it was most likely full now with a lot of angry people. Paul's life and those who were with him were very much so in danger.

The Gaius mentioned here is most likely the same one mentioned in **Romans 16:23** and the Aristarchus mentioned here is most likely the same one mentioned in **Colossians 4:10**

**In verse 30 and verse 31 we see...**that Paul is determined to go into the theatre. He was not afraid of these angry pagans. He would have been concerned for his friends lives and he would have wanted to tell his side of the story. He would have continued preaching Christ crucified and raised from the dead. However, **we see in verse 31** that some of his friends who were actually officials in Asia would not let him go in there. They knew with the mob being stirred up like it was that Paul would have been surely killed.

**v.32...**really sums up the uproar when the Scripture says, "...most of them did not know why they had come together." It is the same way today sometimes. People will stir something up for selfish gain and get everyone in a frenzy and when some of them are asked why everyone is so angry, they will say they really don't know why.

**In verse 33 and verse 34 we see....**the Jews in Ephesus had a problem. Even though they had their own reasons and motives to persecute Paul, they still believed there was just one God, the living God. Therefore they reach out to a man by the name of Alexander to see if he could calm the mob.

We don't know for sure, but it is possible this is the Alexander that Paul refers to **in 2 Timothy 4:14**

The Greeks in Ephesus knew the Jews didn't accept or respect their idol so **in verse 34** we see that when they realized that Alexander was a Jew it stirred them up even more. Think about it for a second, **for two hours** they just chanted, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

I would think the sound coming from that theatre that held 25,000 people was being heard all across the city and even the outskirts of the city. I can't help but wonder what God thought about it as He looked down and watched what was taking place as these pagans defended their handmade god.

**In verse 35 we see...**where the city clerk of Ephesus steps forward to calm the crowd. The city clerk would have been appointed by Rome to oversee matters such as collecting taxes for Rome and making sure no riots happened. Rome would not tolerate riots. They would hold the city clerk responsible first of all and then they would send soldiers there and nobody in Ephesus wanted that.

The city clerk starts out by praising and honouring the idol Diana. This quickly got the mob to quite down. The city clerk refers to Diana, "as the image which fell down from Zeus." During this time, when a meteorite would fall from the sky, pagan people would consider this as something sent from "the gods". Once again, they believed this idol known as Diana, was the daughter of Zeus.

**In verse 36 and verse 37 we see...**since the city clerk knew he would be held accountable by Rome so he wants to quickly calm the crowd down before the riot got any bigger. He points out that most everybody in Ephesus respected and even worshipped Diana so they should not be over reacting like they are doing. Then he points out **in verse 37** that Paul, Gaius, and Aristarchus had not stolen anything from them and that they had not even spoken badly about Diana.

We can learn from what Paul did there in Ephesus. He did not go in to Ephesus and start attacking their goddess Diana, but rather stuck to his message. He preached Christ crucified and raised from the dead. When we talk to someone that has a different belief than we might have concerning religion or the Scriptures themselves, we need to simply talk about Jesus and point to the Scriptures.

**In verse 38 and verse 39 and verse 40 we see...**where the city clerk knew that it was Demetrius who had started this riot and he knew why. It was not about the worship of Diana, it was about the money they were losing by Paul preaching the Gospel. The city clerk reminds them that if they feel they have a case against these men, concerning monetary damages, they need to sue them in court.

The city clerk tells them **in verse 39** that they need to handle this matter in a lawful way instead of creating this public riot. Once again, the city clerk knew he would be personal held responsible for this riot by Rome if news of it got back there.

He points out to them **in verse 40** that the whole city of Ephesus was in danger of Rome sending soldiers there and holding not only him, but Demetrius and everyone else there responsible for it.

**We see in verse 41....**that Demetrius and the others who had stirred up the crowd against Paul realized the possible consequences of their actions so they listened to the city clerk and quietly discontinued their actions against Paul and went their way.



## Acts 20

**v.1-6...**As we look at these first 6 verses **lets first look at the map** of Paul's third journey. He is in Ephesus and we can see the journey he has to make to go to Macedonia. Once he gets to Macedonia, he works his way down to Greece, specifically Corinth. We can see on the map how much easier it would have been for him to have just got on a ship and headed to Syria, but he decides the best thing to do is go back through Macedonia.

**We see in verse 1 that...**after the city clerk calmed the people down and ended the uproar Paul called the disciples to himself. These would have possible been the men mentioned who had been taken in custody as well as other brothers and sisters in Christ that Paul had a relationship with there.

He had spent a little over 3 years with them in Ephesus so this was a sad time for Paul knowing that when he left he would never see most of them again.

**We see in verse 2 and verse 3 where...**Paul arrives in Macedonia. We are not for sure exactly how long he stayed and worked with them there, but it was most likely at least a year. We see that he eventually decides it is time to go down to Greece, specifically to Corinth. He stays there for three months. He spends the winter there. This would be the end of AD 56, to the first part of AD 57

**We see in verse 3 that...**he was ready and wanting to go to Syria, but when he found out that the Jews were plotting against him, to either kill him or put him in jail, he decides to not get on the ship and instead he goes back through Macedonia.

This would have taken longer, but it would have also given Paul another chance to see and encourage his brothers and sisters in Christ in Berea, Thessalonica, Philippi and a few other places.

He possible told them when he went through there earlier that he was headed back to Jerusalem.

He may have also possible told them that he would not see them again. If this was the case they would have been very excited and happy to have got the chance to see Paul again.

**In verse 4 and verse 5 we see...**where Paul mentions some of his brothers who would be travelling with him that are also mentioned in **Acts 19:29, Ephesians 6:21** and **2 Timothy 4:20**

**In verse 5 we can see...**where Paul sends them on to Troas. Look on the map to see where Troas is.

We see here that Luke is travelling with them again as he uses the phrase, "waited for us".

**In verse 6 we see...**where Paul decides he is going to stay in Philippi for The Passover. We saw back in **Acts 16:11-12** that it only took 2 days for them to sail from Troas to Philippi, but here it takes 5 days to sail from Philippi to Troas. This would have mostly like been because of the contrary winds that take place during that time of the year there.

**v.7-12...**in these verses we see the term, "break bread", used twice, in **v.7 and v.11**. Back in the Old Testament, as well as the New Testament time, the term "break bread" was used when people came together to eat a meal.

In the New Testament it is also used when talking about, The Lord's Supper.

**In verse 7 we see...**how the first century Christians came together on the first day of the week, which would have been Sunday. They came together to worship God and to partake of The Lords Supper in remembrance of His death and resurrection. Paul also makes mention of Christians coming together on the first day of the week **in 1 Corinthians 16:2**

Coming together on the first day of the week was in complete contrast to the Jews as far as when they came together, which was the Sabbath Day. It was from sunset Friday night through sunset Saturday. The Sabbath Day was to be observed on Saturday, but the Jews did not go by a traditional clock as we do today, but rather from sunrise to sunset, and from sunset to sunrise. The different days of worship would have been one of the reasons the Jews challenged "the Way", so much.

Paul preached until midnight. Some will say this was a long time, but, we all have possible heard people who speak for 2 minutes and it seems like 2 hours and heard someone speak for 2 hours and it seemed like just 2 minutes. I would think that even though Paul preached deep into the night, he was able to maintain the attention of almost everyone there.

**In verse 8 and verse 9...**we need to remember there was no electricity back then of course so they had to use lamps to light the room. These lamps would have heated the room like a heater and they would have also put off some smoke in the room. Paul continued to preach deep into the night. With a combination of being in a heated room and light smoke in there also from the burning of the lamps, this may have been what got Eutychus to sit over by the window and open it up.

A "story" is generally consider 10 feet, so three stories would have been 30 feet. We don't know that it was actually a 30 foot fall Eutychus had, but it would have been high enough that it mostly likely killed him on impact.

**In verse 10 we see where...** Paul went down stairs and raised him from the dead. The people who saw him starting to do this would have most likely reacted the same way the people did towards Jesus in **Luke 8:49-56** when they thought He was not going to be able to raise Jairus's little girl from the dead. They didn't think he was going to be able to raise Eutychus from the dead, so they would have all been amazed and saw how God was working through Paul.

**In verse 11 and verse 12...**we see where they bring Eutychus back into the room. I can't help but wonder what he must have thought when he was told he had died and Paul raised him from the dead. Paul knew he had a long trip in front of him, so we see he eats a meal as he continues sharing the Gospel with those in the room until the morning light. Then he set out for Troas to join those who he had sent ahead of him.

**v.13-18...**look at the map as we cover the journey from Troas to Miletus.

**Verse 13 and verse 14...**the "we" reminds us that Luke was still with them. It was about 40 miles to sail to Assos from Troas and only 20 miles on land. Paul could have walked there in one day. It would have taken several days by ship because of the contrary winds at that time of year.

It is possible that Paul simply wanted to walk to Assos so that he could spend some time by himself. This would give him to some time to pray to God.

**We see in verse 14 that...** they pick Paul up in Assos and then landed in Mitylene. Mitylene was the port and chief city on the island of Lesbos, in the Aegean Sea.

**In verse 15 we see...**looking on the map that they sailed right pass Chios. Chios was an island in the Mediterranean Sea. Not much is known about it. Being located where it was though they would have most likely been some Christians that had taken the Gospel to the island.

**We see in verse 16 and verse 17...**Paul had decided not to go to Ephesus, but rather land at Miletus. We are told here in the Scriptures he was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem for the Day of Pentecost.

Paul had spent a lot of time with those who made up the church in Ephesus and he loved them dearly, but he may have felt he would get detained by going to see them.

He may have also felt that since it had not been that long since Demetrius had caused that uproar there that the local authorities may have tried to cease him. Since he had been persecuted so many times already he would not have been afraid, he simply wanted to get to Jerusalem as soon as he could.

He sent for the elders of the church there so he could say his last goodbyes to them and offer them encouragement. It was only about 30 miles from Ephesus to Miletus so it would not take long for the elders to come down to see him, especially if they rode horses instead of walking.

**....v.18-38...These 21 verses** were written basically like the many letters Paul wrote and are recorded in the Bible, but just in a shorter manner. Paul is delivering a different message to them here though. They are the elders of the church in Antioch and Paul is reminding them of their responsibilities.

**In verses 18, 19, 20, and 21...**Paul reminds them first of all how he had lived among them and set an example for them to live by. Then he reminds them how the Jews tried to have him put in jail and even killed. He reminds them how he was not afraid to preach the Gospel and that he held nothing back while preaching to the Jews in the Synagogues as well as to the Gentiles.

He tells them how he preached the Gospel so that everyone could hear it. He reminds them he did so publicly and from house to house. He reminded them what part of his message was, which was a sincere repentance of their sins if they wanted to have eternal life. He reminded them that those who repented would have to live a faithful life towards the Lord Jesus Christ.

**In verses 22, 23, 24...**Paul reminds them of how the Holy Spirit had instructed him to go to Jerusalem back when he was in Ephesus working with them and now that is exactly what he is doing. He shares with them that he doesn't know exactly what is going to happen to him except for the fact that the Holy Spirit has told him that he is going to encounter a lot of trouble such as being chained up and beaten again.

Then he tells them that it doesn't bother him knowing this and that he is not afraid of dying.

He reminds them that he has a "race" to finish. **1 Corinthians 9:24 , 2 Timothy 4:7 , Hebrews 12:1**

He tells them he is going to be aggressively persecuted, but that he is going to finish it with great joy. He tells them he will continue preaching the Gospel.

**In verse 25, 26, 27...**Now Paul tells them that he is not going to see them again this side of eternity. This had to be a very sad day for those elders as well as for Paul. For there is no doubt that they were brothers in Christ, but they would have become good friends also.

Then Paul reminds them of how he is innocent of any of those people he has preached to if they go to hell and burn throughout eternity because he has delivered the message God has given him to deliver. Those who reject his message are not rejecting him, but Gods message.

Jesus Himself pointed out during His ministry that it was not His message that He was delivering, but rather His Fathers message. His Father had sent Him down here to earth to deliver it. **John 6:38**

**In verse 28, 29, 30, 31...**Paul first tells these elders that they need to make sure they are spiritually strong so that they will be strong Shepherds of the "flock" there in Ephesus. Paul reminds them of how the Holy Spirit has appointed them to oversee this flock and that He had put a lot of responsibility on them.

Then Paul reminds them of the blood sacrifice that Jesus had made for them and the flock there in Ephesus, as well as everyone who accepts Jesus as the Christ, the Savior of the world.

The elders there in Ephesus were very knowledgeable of sheep and how vulnerable they were to wolves so Paul uses the analogy of "savage wolves" (**Like Jesus did in Matthew 7:15**) coming down upon them and attacking their flock trying to destroy as many as they can.

Then Paul points out how there will be some who are actually in the flock, that is the church, who begin to preach and teach a false doctrine contrary to the Gospel to draw away some of their brothers and sisters in the church there. Then Paul reminds them that he is not telling them anything new, but rather he had been warning them to get ready for this even during the time he was with them and that he even did so with tears.

These tears Paul are talking about reminds me of how Jesus wept over Jerusalem **in Luke 19:41**

**In verse 32, 33, 34, 35...**Paul had told the elders that he would not see them anymore and here he begins to tell them that he is turning them over to God now and God will help them.

Even though it is not the exact same thing, this reminds me of when Jesus got ready to leave His apostles for the last time and He told them it was to their advantage because He would be sending them the Holy Spirit.

Paul then reminds them he was not a peddler (**2 Corinthians 2:17**) of God's Word. He reminds them of how he built tents (**Acts 18:3**) and didn't ask anything from them as far as financial support for him or those with him preaching and teaching the Gospel.

Then Paul reminds them of the importance of supporting the weak. The weak would be people who could not provide for themselves. It could be widows or anyone else who could not physically work.

The statement, "It is more blessed to give than to receive", **in verse 35**, is not found anywhere in the four Gospels, so Paul may have heard one of the apostles quote Jesus saying this, or it could be the Holy Spirit just moved on him to share this with the elders there.

**In verse 36, 37, 38....**The Scripture says Paul prayed with them, not for them, so the elders would have prayed also. We of course can pray sitting, standing, walking, etc...but when you get down on your knees and pray, especially with some brothers or sisters, well...if you have never done so, do so sometime and you will experience the difference.

They finish praying and then they stand up and walk Paul to the ship where they will say goodbye for the last time.

Great sadness abounds here. Reality had set in and they realized they would never see Paul again.

Hopefully, now when you read **The Book of Ephesians**, you will get a better feel of the passion, love, and remembrance, Paul had for the church there as he wrote that letter.

## Acts 21

**v.1-6...Chapter 21** starts off with Luke saying, "we", reminding us again that he is traveling with Paul now. Paul has just left the elders in Ephesus and he, along with his traveling companions are headed from Miletus to Tyre, which is about 450 miles. Look at the map to see the distance and route they would be taking. It would take them about 5-6 days to get there. We see they changed ships in Patara. This could be because that ship had a bunch of cargo on it that needed to be unloaded and Paul was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem and didn't want to wait around, or it may have been that the ship they were on was not going to Phoenicia so they had to change ships. Phoenicia is the modern day, Lebanon.

Looking at the map we see how they sailed right by Cyprus. Cyprus was the island that Paul's first traveling companion Barnabas was born on and he went back there to share the Gospel after he and Paul had their falling out concerning Mark, Barnabas' cousin.

They arrive at Tyre and **in verse 4** we see where they seek out some of the Christians there in Tyre and they met with them for seven days.

The Lord's Day would have taken place at some point during this 7 day stay so that gave the church there an opportunity to worship God together with Paul and partake of the Lord's Supper together.

**We also see in verse 4 where...**some of the prophets of God there tried to talk Paul out of going to Jerusalem, but the Holy Spirit had told Paul he had to go there so he was going to submit to the Spirit.

This reminds me of when Peter tried to stop Jesus from going to Jerusalem **in Matthew 16:21-23**

**In verse 5 we see...**after they finish spending time with their brothers and sisters in Tyre they departed with their wives and children, but not before they got on their knees and prayed to God.

When is the last time you got down on your knees and prayed to God?

**In verse 6 we see where...**after they finished fellowshiping with one another, Paul and his traveling companions get back on the ship and continue their journey to Jerusalem.

**v.7-9...**Looking at the map you can see Ptolemais is right below Tyre. It was 30 miles south of Tyre. Since Paul had never preached there before we can see that the Gospel had already grown into this area since they greeted "the brethren" there. We don't know what day it was, but he could have possibly been Sunday, the Lord's Day, and Paul may have chose to worship with them that one day he was there.

**In verse 8 we see...**from looking at the map that they went on down the Caesarea, the major seaport of Israel at the time. This is the same city that Peter went down to **in Acts 10** to share the Gospel with the Centurion. We don't know for sure, but it is possible that Paul had met Philip before. This is not Philip, the Lord's disciple. This is Philip that we read about **in Acts 6:5** who was chosen as one of the seven men who was of good reputation and filled with the Holy Spirit, (**Acts 6:3**), to serve as what we call Deacons today. He is the Philip that we read about **in Acts 8:5** and **Acts 8:26**. He was known as, "Philip the evangelist." The Scripture tells us **in verse 9** that Philip had four daughters who prophesied.

**v.10-16..We see in verse 10** where the prophet Agabus came down from Jerusalem to prophesy to Paul. This is the same Agabus we read about in **Acts 11:28** who came down from Jerusalem to Antioch to prophesy about the famine that was going to take place on the earth.

**In verse 11 we see...**Agabus using Paul's belt as an example to show what was going to happen to him. This reminds me of when the prophet Ahijah, **in 1 Kings 11:29-39**, took a garment and tore it into pieces in front of Jeroboam, as an example of what God was going to do concerning King Solomon.

**Then in verse 12 we see...**how Paul's companions and the other Christians there tried to stop Paul from going up to Jerusalem after they heard Agabus' prophesy. It is worth noting that Agabus did not try to stop Paul, he simply told him what was going to happen to him when he got there.

**We see in verse 13 and verse 14** that Paul was not angry with them for trying to stop him from going, but rather, he became very distraught seeing how sad they were after hearing about what he was about to go through. Paul reminds them of what he was called to do and that he is not only ready to be bound and beaten again, he is also ready to die for the Lord's sake.

**Luke tells us in verse 14** that, "we", quit trying to stop him from going when "we" realized he was determined to go and they simply said, "the **will** of the Lord be done." **Luke 11:2** and **Luke 22:42**

**In verse 15 we see...**that they head out to Jerusalem. It is 65 miles from Caesarea to Jerusalem which would have been a little over a "3 days journey" if they were walking, but by the Scripture referring to them packing up their things, they may have possibly rode horses since Paul was wanting to make sure he was there for the Day of Pentecost.

**In verse 16 we see...**that Mnason was from the island of Cyprus and that he was "an early disciple." Since he was one of the early disciples, he may have been one of the first ones to become a Christian. The Scripture tells us that they would be staying with Mnason there in Jerusalem.

**v.17-26...in verse 17 we see...**that the day that Paul had been striving for has now arrived. Paul, along with his traveling companions are finally in Jerusalem. Paul really didn't know what kind of reception he may receive. He may have been thinking many of the Jews who had converted to Christianity may resent him now since they had heard so many things about him, that was not true. However, we see that the Christians there in Jerusalem gladly receive Paul.

**In verse 18 we see...**how Luke refers to "us" going in to see James and all of the elders of the church in Jerusalem. This would not have been James, the brother of John, the son of Zebedee, but rather James, the half brother of Jesus, who wrote The Book of James.

Even though it does not mention Peter or John, it is possible they were there at the meeting also. The Scripture says Peter was an elder **in 1 Peter 5:1**, so it is possible he was an elder at the church there. We don't know for sure, but we do know that when the church in Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to talk to the elders at the church in Jerusalem concerning the necessity of circumcision that it was Peter who initially spoke on behalf of the church there **in Acts 15:6-11**

**In verse 19, 20, and 21, we see...**where Paul starts sharing the things that had happened on his third journey and how favorable the Gentiles had responded to the Gospel through his preaching of Jesus crucified and raised from the dead. Those who Paul had went in to see all rejoiced with the good news that souls were being saved and the church was growing. They praised and glorified God with much jubilation.

Then they tell Paul how many of the Jews there in Jerusalem had also accepted the Gospel and became Christians. However, they were upset because they had heard through rumors that he, that is Paul, had told the Jews they were not to keep Moses' Law any more in circumcising their children. They were also upset because they had heard that he had told the Jews they should no longer keep the customs of the Jewish faith. This of course was not true. Paul did not care if they continued to keep their Jewish customs or circumcise their children as long as it did not conflict with the Truth, that is the Gospel.

We saw in **Acts 16:1-3** where Paul even had Timothy circumcised so that they would not offend some of the Jews in that area.

**Then in verse 22** they point out that the Jews were sure to have heard that Paul was in Jerusalem and that they would be meeting soon to discuss what they were going to do concerning him.

**In verse 23 and verse 24 we see...**where they tell Paul about four men who had taken a vow which was possible and most likely an Nazirite vow. They want Paul to show the Jews that he is willing to keep the law and Jewish customs and Paul is willing to as long as it does not conflict with the Gospel.

**In verse 25** they remind Paul of the decision they had made concerning the Gentiles as far as keeping the law of circumcision. **Acts 15:22-29**

**In verse 26 we see...**where Paul goes into the temple the next day to announce that the Nazirite vow concerning these four men was now over. **Numbers 6:1-21** covers the details of a Nazirite vow and what one had to do to end it. One of the things that had to be done to end the Nazirite vow was for a sin sacrifice offering be made with a ewe lamb without blemish. **Numbers 6:14**

Paul of course would not have been offering an animal sacrifice for his sins because it is the blood of Jesus which forgives the sins of mankind. It is possible that these four men were Jews who had not become Christians at this point. They were wanting to end their Nazirite vow and the Jewish Christians wanted Paul to show he did not have anything against the Jewish customs so that he could prove the things they had heard about him were false. This is a controversial subject for some people, but we can rest assured that the Apostle Paul was not suggesting that animal sacrifices would be acceptable for the forgiveness of sins.

We saw back **in Acts 18:18** where Paul himself had his hair cut off in Cenchrea before he went to Ephesus signifying that he was ending a vow. This also may have possible been a Nazirite vow. There is no mention of a sacrifice in the Scriptures when Paul ended his vow. He would have no need to since the blood of Jesus covered his sins.

**In verse 27 we see...**that these were Jews from Asia that stirred up the crowd, not the Jews who were there in Jerusalem. These Jews were probably from Ephesus. The reason for this thinking is that they recognize Trophimus who was from Ephesus. If they were from Ephesus they would have also recognized Paul because of the uproar that Demetrius stirred up concerning him. **Acts 19:23-41**

**In verse 28 we see...**where these Jews from Asia make two false charges against Paul. These false charges are similar to the two that Stephen's false accusers levied against him. The first one was that he taught people against the Law of Moses and the second one was he defiled the Temple.

These were two of the most serious charges that could be brought against someone concerning Judaism.



**In verse 29 we see...**where these Jews "assumed", even though it was not true, that Trophimus had went into the temple with Paul. The Jews felt that Gentiles defiled the temple if they went into it so they were not allowed to go in to the temple and they were killed if they violated this. This charge was also frivolous because if Trophimus would have went into the temple, he would have been killed.

**In verses' 30 - 36 we see...**what happens after these Jews from Asia made these false accusations. An uproar like the one that took place in Ephesus breaks out and they go in to the temple and dragged Paul out of it. Notice how it says they close the doors after they did, so that he could not go back in there.

**In verse 31...**they are about to kill Paul when a commander of the Roman army intervenes. He was the commander of a garrison. A garrison was similar to what we call a military post. The Romans would have had about a thousand soldiers or more based there at this time because of the crowds that had gathered in Jerusalem for The Day of Pentecost.

**In verse 32...**the commander immediately takes at least two centurions down to where Paul was at to see what they were doing. A centurion is over one hundred soldiers, therefore the commander would have carried at least two hundred soldiers down there with him. When the Jews saw all of these soldiers they stopped beating Paul.

**In verse 33...**the commander tells his soldiers to put some chains on Paul and then he asked the Jews what he had done so wrong that caused this great uproar.

**In verse 34...**some of the people say he did one thing, while others say he did something else. This reminds me of Jesus' false accusers in **Matthew 26:59-61** They could not agree on anything either.

Since the commander could not find out the truth concerning what Paul had done he decides that he will just take him into custody so that he can stop the uproar that was taking place.

**In verse 35...**the soldiers have to escort Paul because the people were trying to kill him.

**In verse 36...**we see where the people were yelling, "away with him!" This reminds me of how the Jews yelled the same thing about Jesus in **John 19:15**

**v.37-40...**Paul is about to be led away from the screaming mob of people that wanted to kill him when he turns to the commander and asked if he could speak to him. The commander tries to mock him by asking if he can speak in the Greek language. The commander did not realize that Paul was a very educated man and that he could indeed speak Greek.

**In verse 38...**The commander refers to a story the Jewish historian Josephus wrote about concerning an Egyptian. In AD 54 an Egyptian led a lot of men to the Mount of Olives and was wanting to attack Jerusalem. But the Roman ruler at that time, Felix, order the Roman soldiers to attack them. They killed a majority of them, but that Egyptian escaped. The commander seemed to think that is who Paul was.

**In verse 39....**Paul educates the commander as to who he was and asked for permission to speak to the mob who was trying to kill him.

**In verse 40...**the commander lets Paul address them. When the crowd got quite, Paul talked to them in their own language which would have been Hebrew or possible Aramaic. This would have surprised and impressed many of those in the crowd.

## Acts 22

**v.1-16...**The commander gives Paul the opportunity to speak directly to his accusers and Paul does so by respectively calling them brethren and fathers. The majority of the crowd would have been Jews so Paul begins by calling them brethren, since he too is a Jew.

It would kind of been like if you or I said something like, "my fellow Americans". We saw where Paul had got them to calm down in the last verse of chapter twenty-one, and now he asked them to allow him to give his defense, that is, listen to his side of the story.

**In verse 2...**when he begins to speak to them in their own language it caught them all off guard and they listen more intently to what he had to say.

**In verse 3...**Paul begins by sharing some of his credentials. **2 Corinthians 11:22** and **Philippians 3:4-6**

He points out to them that he is as Jewish as they are and that he was raised not only in a very strict way concerning the Jewish law and customs, but that he was also raised at the feet of Gamaliel.

This is the same Gamaliel who offered advice as to how to deal with Peter and John. **Acts 5:34-39**

**In verse 4 and verse 5...**Paul tells them he set out to stop this new religion called, "the Way", and that he had even put both men and women in prison for telling people about it. He tells them that they can even ask the high priest and members of the Sanhedrin as to how he got permission from them to punish those of, "the Way". Paul points out why he persecuted Christians **in 1 Timothy 1:13**

**In verse 6 we see...**where Paul begins to give his testimony. He points out that it was in the middle of the day as he was headed to arrest both men and women who were telling people about, "the Way", and lock them up in prison, when suddenly a "great light", that was brighter than the sun, engulfed him.

**In verse 7...**Paul tells how the "great light" literally caused him to fall to the ground and that he heard someone speak from within this "great light" and ask him why he was persecuting Him.

**In verse 8...**Saul is no doubt terrified like any of us would be, but he was able to still ask who this was coming to him in this "great light". Then Jesus tells Paul who He is.

If you have never done so before, stop right here, and think for a minute or two about what just took place, and that this is not a fable, but a true story. Paul was stubborn and this was Jesus' way of getting his attention. It kind of reminds me of when the donkey spoke to Balaam **in Numbers 22:22-35**

**In verse 9 we see...**that those traveling with Paul saw the great light shining down on Paul. They knew something miraculously was taking place, but they didn't know what it was and they were extremely afraid, but they could not hear Jesus speaking to Paul.

**In verse 10 we see...**that Paul asked Jesus exactly what was it He wanted him to do, but Jesus doesn't tell him. Jesus tells him to go to the city of Damascus and he would be told what He wanted him to do. Jesus was possibly wanting Paul to think about what had just happened, before He told him what He wanted him to do.

**In verse 11...**Paul tells the crowd that he was blinded by that light and those with him had to lead him to the Damascus from that point on. Paul was blind, but he would soon see what Jesus wanted him to do. This reminds me of what the blind man said **in John 9:25**

**In verse 12 we see...**were Paul tells the crowd about how God had prepared a man by the name of Ananias to tell him what he had to do. Paul reminds them of how good of a man Ananias was and that he was highly respected by all of the Jews who lived there in Damascus concerning the Jewish law.

**In verse 13 we see...**that Paul tells them how it was after meeting Ananias that Jesus allowed him to get his sight back. **Acts 9:17-18**

**In verse 14 we see...**that Paul tells the crowd what Ananias told him. Ananias told Paul that Jesus wanted him to hear from His voice directly and that is why He spoke to him through that great light. **Galatians 1:12**

**In verse 15 we see...**Ananias told Paul how God had chosen him to be a witness to all men concerning who Jesus was/is. Paul would start out telling the Jews first, and then the Gentiles. **Romans 1:16**

**In verse 16 we see...**what the first thing that Jesus wanted Paul to do, and that is, to get up and be baptized so that his sins would be washed away as he called on the name of the Lord. The Lord wanted Paul to do what he would be telling the Jews and Gentiles to do so He asked, "...why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

**In verse v.17...**The temple was designated for the Jews to worship the living God. We see here that Paul still acknowledges the "holiness" of the temple, even though he is worshipping God in the temple, as a Christian, not on the Sabbath Day as a devout Jew. Paul tells the audience that while he was in the temple Jesus spoke to him again, just as He did while he was on the road of Damascus to persecute those who were preaching Jesus crucified and raised from the dead.

**In verse 18...**Paul tells them how Jesus had told him that he needed to get out of Jerusalem because the Jews, that is, the audience he is talking to now, will not accept his message concerning Jesus. **Matthew 10:14**

**In verse 19...**Paul tells the audience how he pointed out to the Lord that he was just like them, in that he rejected, the Way, and they knew that he had. Therefore they would be more out to accept him, since he had been just like they are now. **Acts 8:3**

**In verse 20...**Paul tells the Jews that he even reminded Jesus of how he participated in the stoning of Stephen. Paul tells the Jews this because he wanted them to know that he thought he was doing the right thing by persecuting the Christians like he was doing.

**In verse 21...**Paul tells the Jews that Jesus wanted him to go share the Gospel with the Gentiles now. Jesus knew that the Jewish leader as a whole would not accept Him. Jesus knew that a lot of the Gentiles were hungry for salvation so He was going to send Paul to deliver the Gospel to them.

**We see in verse 22...**that a majority of the Jews were listening attentively up to this point. The Jews considered all Gentiles "unholy" and believed the living God was their God only. They were not going to share Him with the Gentiles, so they begin to yell out again for Paul to be killed.

**....v.23-30...We see in verse 23...**where the Jews threw what would have been like a "temper tantrum" when they realize they were not going to get their way in getting the Romans to kill Paul.

**We see in verse 24 that...**the commander had had enough of this so he took Paul into the barracks. This would have been similar to an army barracks that we know of today where the soldiers stay at and no one is allowed in there without proper permission.

Once again the commander was tired of this and he decided he was going to "beat a confession" out of Paul as to what it is that he has done that has caused the Jews to riot like they had concerning him.

**We see in verse 25 that...**they positioned Paul where they could start beating him, when suddenly Paul asked a question that made the centurion tremble. Paul asked him was it lawful for him to beat a Roman citizen who was un-condemned? The Roman law was that no Roman citizen could be beat without having a proper, legal, trial, and Paul reminded him of this law. If the centurion would have continued with the beating, he himself could have been put to death for beating an un-condemned Roman citizen.

**We see in verse 26 that...**The centurion tells the commander he better be careful about what he was about to do, because Paul was a Roman citizen. The centurion was not going to let the commander beat Paul after he realized he was a Roman citizen. The consequences were too great.

**We see in verse 27 where...**the commander point blank asked Paul was he a Roman citizen. Paul told him straightforwardly, "yes!" Paul knew the Roman law and that he could not be beat without a trial.

**We see in verse 28 that...**the commander tells Paul he bought his Roman citizenship. Then Paul tells him that he was actually born a Roman citizen. Paul's father was a Roman citizen so even though Paul was a Jew, he was still a Roman citizen.

**We see in verse 29 that...** being a Roman citizen works in Paul favor here. The commander became afraid because he thought Paul would report him to Rome so he tells the soldiers to unchain him.

**We see in verse 30 that...**the commander still wanted to know what it was that Paul had done to stir up the Jews like he did. Paul spoke to the audience in their own language, which would have been Hebrew or possible Aramaic, so the commander did not know exactly what Paul had said.

Therefore, the commander calls for the chief priest and the Sanhedrin to appear before him. Then he brought Paul and set him before them so that they could make their accusations and Paul could make his defense. The commander was wanting and hoping to get to the bottom of this matter.

## Acts 23

**v.1-11...**Paul starts out **in chapter 23** by looking the members of the Sanhedrin in the eye, so to speak, with a genuine and convicting way. The Sanhedrin liked for people to consider them on a higher level than the common Jew. They like to be called "the rulers of the people", or "the leaders of the people".

**We see in verse 1 where...**Paul calls them brethren which would have meant he considered himself on the same level as they were spiritually, or you could say "religiously". The members of the Sanhedrin would have been very angry with Paul for comparing himself as equal to them.

Paul tells them he has lived his life with a good conscience before God to this very day. When he was persecuting the Christians, before he saw that great light, he genuinely thought he was doing what God wanted him to be doing. He also felt as though he was doing what God wanted him to do when he held the peoples clothes while they stoned Stephen to death. **Acts 7:58**

**We see in verse 2 where...**the high priest had someone slap Paul across the face for talking to him in the way that he was.

The Jews were allowed temple guards so it was probably one of them who slapped Paul.

This reminds me of when Jesus was talking to the high priest **in John 18:19-23** and one of the temple guards slapped Him across the face as He was addressing the Sanhedrin and the high priest.

**We see in verse 3 where...**Paul is basically calling the high priest a hypocrite by calling him a "whitewashed wall". The Jews were not allowed to slap someone like that openly so the high priest was breaking the law himself. Calling him a whitewashed wall reminds me of when Jesus called the scribes and Pharisees "whitewashed tombs" **in Matthew 23:27-28**

**We see in verse 4 where...**some of the members of the Sanhedrin spoke up and rebuked Paul for speaking to the high priest in a way that they felt was offensive and was even against the law since they were commanded in **Exodus 22:28** not to speak in a degrading way to the leader of the people. Paul was not speaking this way, but those who stood by him felt as though he was.

**We see in verse 5 where...**Paul realized he had broken the law in their eyes, so he quickly apologizes and tells them that he did not realize that he was the high priest. The Law didn't allow you to speak evil of the ruler of the people. **Exodus 22:28**

**We see in verse 6 that...**Paul knew there were Pharisees and Sadducees who made up the Sanhedrin so he set out to get the Pharisees to side with him against the Sadducees. He tells them that he is not only a Pharisee himself, but that his father was also a Pharisee. **Philippians 3:5**

The Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection, but the Pharisees did, so he tells them that he is simply being charged with something that they believe in themselves and that was the resurrection of the soul.

**We see in verse 7 that...**Paul's goal worked. The Pharisees quickly began to defend Paul against the Sadducees. Paul had part of the members of the Sanhedrin defending him now. They most likely are not defending Paul because they like him or agree with him. They were possible defending him because this was an opportunity to try and put the Sadducees in their place, so to speak.

**We see in verse 8 where...**Luke points out how the Sadducees didn't even believe in the resurrection. This reminds me of the conversation Jesus had with the Sadducees **in Matthew 22:23-33** as well as **in Mark 12:18-27** and **Luke 20:27-40**

**We see in verse 9 where...**some of the scribes who were Pharisees, tell the members of the Sanhedrin who were Sadducees, that if God has spoke to Paul through a spirit or angel that they better not do anything to Paul. They tell them it would be the same thing as fighting against God.

This reminds me of Gamaliel's advise **in Acts 5:39**

**In verse 10 we see...**the division between the Pharisees and Sadducees became so great that the commander intervened again and had the soldiers move in and get Paul. The commander has Paul taken back to the barracks because he was afraid that he was going to be killed.

**In verse 11 we see...**where The Lord Jesus came to Paul again the following night and told him that everything was going to be alright because he still had to go to Rome and bear witness of Him there. Paul would not have been going to Rome to start a church, the church was already started there.

He had written a letter to the church in Rome a few years earlier, even though he had not been there. Now the Lord wanted him to go and encourage those who he had written the letter to before he dies.

**v.12-22...in verse 12 we see...**the plot that is being put together to kill Paul by some of the Jews. Forty men make a vow, or you could say a pledge/promise/oath, that they would not eat or drink anything until they had killed Paul. This shows the urgency in which they planned to kill Paul.

**In verse 13 we see that...**these forty men were possible radical Jewish Zealots who were part of a group called, "sicarii". This group were like assassins and it is possible some of the Sanhedrin may have hired them to kill Paul or they may have taken it upon themselves to kill him.

**In verse 14 we see where...**these men went to the chief priest and elders and told them of the vow, that is, the commitment they have made concerning killing Paul. They point out to the chief priest and elders that they were not going to eat anything until they have killed him. This would have showed them these men were serious about killing Paul and killing him soon.

**In verse 15 we see...**they suggested to the chief priest and elders to ask the commander to bring Paul before them one more time so they could intricate him again and they would kill Paul when the commander brought him. The commander would not have had a problem granting this request because he was still trying to resolve the matter.

**In verse 16 we see where...**Paul had been placed under arrest and was a prisoner, but he was basically under "house arrest" so he was allowed visitors. When his sister's son, Paul's nephew, heard about the conspiracy, he went and told Paul what this group of forty men planned on doing.

We are not told anything else in the Scriptures about Paul's nephew or his sister. We can see here though that Paul had a close enough relationship with his nephew that his nephew wanted to go and warn his uncle Paul about what he had heard concerning the plot against his life.

**In verse 17 we see where...**Paul calls for one of the centurions to be brought to him and instead of telling the centurion about the plot, he asked him to take his nephew to the commander so that he could talk to him. The centurion does so. This shows the respect the centurion had for Paul because of his Roman citizenship. The commander would have been the highest ranking officer in the Roman army there in Jerusalem at the time.

**In verse 18 we see...**When the centurion took Paul's nephew to the commander immediately. We see in this verse where he is referred to for the first time as, "Paul the prisoner."

**In verse 19 we see...**that the commander takes Paul's nephew by the hand and led him away from everyone else. This would possible show that Paul's nephew was pretty young. Possible ten, eleven, twelve years old. The commander then asked Paul's nephew what was it his uncle wanted to tell him.

**In verse 20 we see...**his nephew tells the commander of the Roman army how the Jews are not really wanting to intricate Paul again, but instead they had put a plot together to kill.

I can almost hear the commander saying, "Go on", as he asked for more details about the plot.

**In verse 21 we see where...**Paul's nephew tells the commander in detail about the plot to kill him. He tells the commander they have put together a plot where forty men were going to rush them and kill Paul just as soon as they bring him to meet with the chief priest and elders.

**In verse 22 we see...**the commander sends Paul's nephew away and instructs him not to tell anyone what he had just told him. He knew these Jewish zealots, sicarii, were determined to kill Paul and they were getting ready to attempt to do so. He knew that he had to do something very quick.

**In verse 23 and verse 24 we see where...**the commander sends 470 soldiers to escort Paul at the third hour of the night. This would have been between twelve o'clock midnight and three o'clock in the morning. There were about 1,000 Roman soldiers in Jerusalem at the time so the commander was sending nearly half of his troops to guard Paul as they took him to Caesarea.

The commander knew that Paul was a Roman citizen and if anything happened to him that Rome would hold him responsible for Paul's death. Think about it for a second. The commander sent 470 soldiers to escort just one man. He didn't want anything to happen to Paul. He must have also known the determination of these forty men and their reputation as being members of the sicarii.

**In verses' 26-30 we see...**the letter that the commander sends to Felix, the governor of the territory of Judea. It was standard during this time to write your name first in a letter so that the person receiving it would know immediately who it was from. Then you write the person's name you are sending it to.

We learn the commander's name here is Claudius Lysias. Lysias shows homage to Felix by addressing him as "most excellent governor". He tells Felix how the Jews had seized Paul and was going to kill him, but that he rescued him since Paul was a Roman citizen.

The truth of the matter is, Lysias did not rescue Paul because he was a Roman citizen. He did not even know Paul was a Roman citizen when he first intervened to save him. **Acts 21:31-33**

Lysias doesn't tell Felix that he was about to beat him because he wanted Felix to think he had done the right thing in rescuing a Roman citizen. Then Felix tells how he brought Paul before the Sanhedrin so that he could see what he had done wrong. He tells Felix that he found out that it had nothing to do with Roman law at all, but instead, just their Jewish law. He tells Felix that Paul had done nothing worthy of death, while hiding the fact that he still put chains on him, an un-condemned Roman.

He ends the letter by telling Felix that he was sending Paul to him after he found out that the Jews were going to try and kill him there in Jerusalem. He tells Felix that he has also commanded Paul's accusers to come before him, that his Felix, to state their charges to him concerning Paul.

The fact of the matter is that he had not at this point told the Jewish leaders they were going to have to go to Caesarea even though he may have planned on doing so. Lysias may have even let Paul go there in Jerusalem if it had not been for the fact that he felt Paul would have been killed.

**v.31-35...**Antipatris was about forty miles from Jerusalem and this was the most dangerous part of the trip to Caesarea. If those forty men were going to try and kill Paul they would have tried to do so in those first forty miles.

**In verse 32 we see that...**after they got to Antipatris, the four hundred soldiers who were walking went back to Jerusalem. It was still about 25 miles from Antipatris to Caesarea, but with them all on horses now, the rest of the trip would go fast.

**In verse 33 we see that...**when they arrived in Caesarea they gave Felix the letter from the commander and turned Paul over to him.

Claudius Lysias was in a sense doing the same thing that Pilate did with Jesus.

He was washing his hands of the ordeal with Paul. **Matthew 27:24**

**In verse 34 we see that...**when Felix read the letter he asked where Paul was from.

The normal custom was to have the trial where the supposed crime took place, or where the accused prisoner was from. Paul was from Tarsus.

**However, in verse 35 we see that...** Felix decides to have the trial there in Caesarea. Paul is kept at Herod's Praetorium which would have been a palace that Herod the Great would have built for himself when he was alive.

Paul was given a place to stay where he would be safe and live comfortable until his accusers had come down from Jerusalem to make their charges against him.



## Acts 24

**v.1-9...We see in verse 1 where...**Ananias, as well as other members of the Sanhedrin did not delay at all their coming down to Caesarea. For Ananias, the high priest, to have left all of his duties in the temple to personally come down to Caesarea shows the great hatred they had towards Paul and how much they wanted to have him killed. Tertullus was possibly a Roman lawyer or a Hellenistic Jew that the Sanhedrin would have hired to prosecute Paul. The fact that they were giving money to Tertullus to try to get him to convince Felix to kill one of their Jewish brothers, Paul, this once again shows the pure hate they had for Paul. Their hate towards Paul was even greater than the hate they had for the Romans. Let us remember the cause for this great hate is ultimately, jealousy. The high priest and other members of the Sanhedrin were jealous of Paul's popularity and how so many Jews had put him on the same level spiritually, that is religiously, as they were on.

**We see in verse 2 and verse 3 where...**He begins with his crafty flattery exercised towards Felix's ego. He talks about all the prosperity Judea is having because of him, even though a majority of the money went to Rome as taxes placed on Judea, in which the Jews hated. He reminds Felix how everything has been quite "on his clock" so to speak, in that they had not been any major riots within Judea. Tertullus is setting Felix up to tell him he is in danger of a great riot breaking out because of Paul.

**We see in verse 4 where...**Tertullus then launches forward with his assertions concerning Paul. He begins by telling Felix that he does not want to be tedious, that is long winded, or tiresome to him, and he knows that Felix is allowing him to bring this before him, when in fact, Felix did not have to do so.

**We see in verse 5, verse 6, verse 7 and verse 8 that...**Tertullus makes three charges against Paul.

1) "Paul causes riots among the Jews everywhere he goes." He knew this would get Felix's attention because Rome does not tolerate riots.

2) "Paul was the leader of a group that causes these riots." We saw **in Acts 21:38** that the commander actually thought Paul was that Egyptian that stirred up trouble in Judea before and that Felix had tried to kill, so Tertullus felt he could show the threat that Paul could create against him, that is Felix, and Rome. Tertullus calls the group, "the Nazerenes", because Jesus was known as, "Jesus of Nazareth."

3) "Paul had tried to bring a Gentile into the temple." This would not have been against Rome's law, but Tertullus knew that Felix knew, the serious matter that it could cause within the Jewish community, since Gentiles were not allowed into the temple, and it was such a serious crime for them to do so that they were killed if they indeed did go into the temple. Even though Tertullus knew that Felix didn't care about the Jew's religious laws, he did care about making sure no riots broke out and Tertullus uses this charge to remind Felix that a major riot could break out if Paul was not killed.

Tertullus then tells how they seized Paul and wanted to prosecute and put him to death in Jerusalem, but that the commander, Lysias, came and took him away from them. He then asked Felix to pointedly ask Lysias if this was not the case, hoping that Felix would be sympathetic towards the Jewish leaders.

**We see in verse 9 where...**the high priest, members of the Sanhedrin, as well as the other Jews who had came down to Caesarea from Jerusalem all join together saying that is exactly what happen. The Scripture does not say so, but I could see Felix, very aggressively telling the Jews to be quiet to show his power and because he now wanted to hear Paul's side of the story.

**v.10-21.....in verse 10...** Paul is not offering idle flattery like Tertullus was. Paul is actually pointing to the truth in that Felix had been a "judge" of the territory of Judea for several years so he would have had great knowledge of the Jewish customs, laws, and their religion. He may not have been interested in any of it, but he would have learned much about it simply because of the job he had as governor of Judea. Since Felix has had this experience through the years, Paul tells him he is very glad that he is getting to defend himself before him.

**We see in verse 11 where...**Paul begins by telling Felix that he had only been in Jerusalem for twelve days and that was not enough time to have caused any of the trouble they were claiming he had caused, especially since he had been a prisoner for six of those twelve days.

**We see in verse 12 where...**Paul tells Felix that he went to Jerusalem to worship God like the other Jews do and that they did not find him in the temple stirring up any trouble with anyone. He tells Felix they also did not find him arguing with or stirring up trouble in the streets or in the synagogues.

Paul was not causing any trouble, the Sanhedrin simply did not want Paul sharing the Gospel with anyone and the best way they knew how to stop him, was to kill him, or have him killed by Felix.

**We see in verse 13 that...**Paul tells Felix that he is not guilty of any of those false accusations and that none of the Jews there can prove he is. Paul is basically asking Felix to dismiss this case.

**We see in verse 14 where...**Paul says he will confess something to him though. He says, concerning "the Way", (remember, this is the same thing that we call Christianity today), that is he guilty of believing the things that were written in the Jewish Law and what the Prophets had said concerning the Messiah, that is, Jesus.

**We see in verse 15 where...**Paul tells Felix that he has the same hope that the Pharisees have as far as believing in the resurrection, that is, that there is life, after death, and that everyone, both the just and the unjust will give an account as to how they lived their life.

**We see in verse 16 where..**Paul tells Felix that is the reason he strives to live a life where his conscience doesn't bother him, whether it be concerning men or God. We know that Paul's conscience didn't bother him when he participated in the stoning of Stephen **in Acts 8** because he thought he was doing the right thing. Therefore, the conscience is not always the best guide. However, the Holy Spirit is now guiding him, not just his conscience.

**We see in verse 17 where...**Paul tells Felix that one of the reasons he was going to Jerusalem was because his brothers and sisters in Macedonia and Achaia had took up a collection and wanted him to deliver it to the poor who were among the Christians in Jerusalem. **Romans 15:25-26**

**We see in verse 18 where...**Paul then points out that it was not even those Jews who had come down from Jerusalem to Caesarea that had made the charges against him. Instead, it was some Jews from Asia, and that they had not seen or heard him do anything that went against the Jewish law or customs.

**We see in verse 19 where...**Paul tells Felix that since it is the Jews from Asia who had made these charges against him that they should have come down to Caesarea themselves to appear before him and present proof that the charges against him are true instead of these Jews from Jerusalem.

**We see in verse 20 where...**Paul says that since those Jews from Asia are not here, that the Jews that did come down need to specifically point to where he went against the Law or customs of the Jewish religion. Paul was not against any of the Jewish religion, after all he was Jewish. He was simply saying the Scriptures had been fulfilled through the coming of the Messiah, Jesus.

**We see in verse 21 where...**Paul pits the Pharisees against the Sadducees again by pointing to the fact that he is simply being charged and judged for believing in the resurrection of the dead. That is the only accusation that is true. Felix may have not been a "spiritual man", but he was married to a Jewish woman, which we will read about at the end of this chapter and he knew that the resurrection was the core belief of the Jewish religion and that even though the Sadducees didn't believe in the resurrection, all the others Jews did.

**v.22-27...**Felix was very familiar with the Jewish religion since his wife was Jewish. This new "doctrine" known as, the Way, was something he had most likely heard of before since he was the governor of Judea, but he had never heard it preached or taught, especially by a man of Paul's caliber.

**We see in verse 22 where...**Felix says that he would make a decision on the case when Lysias comes and testifies, but he was just stalling because he did not need to hear from Lysias in person, he had already received the letter from him sharing in detail the thoughts Lysias had on the case.

**We see in verse 23 where....**Felix commanded a centurion to take care of Paul. Paul was still under arrest, but it was possible like a "house arrest" and he could come and go when he wanted to and any of his friends that wanted to come visit with him at the palace where allowed to.

This makes me think about Cornelius that we read about **in Acts 10**. The Scripture does not say it was, but I can't help but wonder if God allowed the centurion spoken of here, to take care of Paul, to have been Cornelius. I of course am not implying that it was the same centurion, but God does work in mysterious ways, and this would have been a great blessing for Cornelius to have help take care of his brother in Christ, Paul.

We are introduced to Drusilla **in verse 24**. She was Herod Agrippa I's, daughter. The Herod that was "eaten of worms" **in Acts 12:23**. She was Felix's second wife. She was already married to another man, but Felix persuaded her to leave her husband and come marry him.

This reminds me of the Herod and Herodias in **Mark 6:14-29**

Herod the tetrarch had taken his brother Philip's wife, Herodias, to be his wife and John the Baptist had told him he was violating the law and was living in adultery.

Drusilla is the sister of Bernice and King Agrippa which we will read about in **Acts 25:13**

**We see in verse 24 where...**Felix sends for Paul to be brought to him and Drusilla so they can learn more about, the Way. Both Felix, and Drusilla, would have known that the Jewish faith placed their hope on the coming of the Messiah and here is a man, Paul, that is stating that Jesus was/is the Messiah. They may not have been real interested in becoming Christians, especially since they were living in adultery, but they would have been interested out of curiosity's sake as to know more about, the Christ.

**We see in verse 25 where....**Paul may have not pointedly addressed the adulterous relationship that Felix and Drusilla were living in like John the Baptist did concerning Herod the tetrarch and Herodias, but we do see that he talked a lot about living a life filled with righteousness and practicing self control.

We see here also that Paul had possibly talked about the lake of fire and the judgment to come to those who do not accept Jesus as their Savior and become a Christian because after listening to Paul, Felix was afraid and realized he was in danger of this judgment. He sends Paul away and tells him he will call him back to hear him again, "when he has more time to listen to him".

Felix was governor of Judea so time was not a factor for him, he could do as he pleased. He was just not wanting to make a change in his life even though he knew he was living in adultery.

**We see in verse 26 where...**Felix would send for Paul with hopes that Paul or some of his friends would pay him some money to set him free. Felix didn't understand that Paul was not interested in being "set free", for the Holy Spirit had told him that he was going to have to go to Rome and that was going to happen no matter what.

**We see in verse 27 where...**Felix was replaced as governor of Judea. Felix was a dishonest man in many ways and Rome had finally had enough of him, so after two years he was removed as the governor of Judea and replaced with Festus.

Felix could have set Paul free, but...

- 1) It was not God's will that Paul was to be set free.
- 2) Since he was married to a Jewish woman and had many Jewish friends he wanted to do them one last favor by keeping Paul as a prisoner.

## Acts 25

**v.1-12...We see in verse 1 where...**Festus has now taken Felix's place and is the governor of the territory, that is, Judea. He would not have known all the details concerning Paul and the charges against him, but after he was briefed he realized that it was something that he needed to apply his attention to immediately so after just three days on the job, he leaves Caesarea and goes to Jerusalem. It was about a 65 mile trip, but they would have most likely been riding horses so they would have gotten there pretty quick.

As soon as Festus arrives in Jerusalem the high priest and some of the top members of the Sanhedrin go to meet with him concerning Paul. They started telling him their accusations against Paul and then they ask a "favor" from Festus which was for him to bring Paul to Jerusalem for a trial.

However, they were planning an ambush where they could kill Paul before he got there, just like they tried to set the trap for the commander Claudius Lysias back **in Acts 23:12-22**

**We see in verse 3 and verse 4 where...**Festus most likely wanted to remind them that he was in charge of Judea so he denied their request to put them in their place, so to speak. He tells them that he is going back down to Caesarea very soon and if they want to they can have some of their top officials in the Sanhedrin go down with him to make the charges against Paul there.

**We see in verse 5 where...**Festus says..."to see if there is any fault in him." Festus had just taken the job as governor over Judea and he would want to get along with these "leaders of the Jewish people", but he would have still said and did things to show them that his word was the law as far as anything goes in Judea. That is one of the things the Jewish leaders despised the most about being under Roman occupation, but they knew there was nothing they could do about it.

**We see in verse 6 where...**Festus stayed in Jerusalem for ten days and then headed back to Caesarea. The next day after he gets back he calls for Paul to be brought before him. He knew this matter was not going to go away. Festus knew just like Felix did, that Rome held the governor responsible for any riots that may occur there so he wanted to get this resolved as soon as he could.

**We see in verse 7 where...**the Jews make their accusations against Paul. Since the high priest is not mentioned he would have most likely not have made the trip to Caesarea this time, but instead sent his top officials. They made the same accusations that they had made before Felix with hopes that Festus would see it differently and have Paul put to death.

**We see in verse 8 where...**Paul then reminds the Jewish leaders as well as Festus that he has not broken the laws of the Jews, he hasn't defiled the temple, and he hasn't broken the laws of Rome.

Festus would not have respected Paul at all, but since he was a Roman citizen he could not condemn him so he thought the easiest way out of this would be to have Paul go to Jerusalem for the trial.

**We see in verse 9 where...**Festus asked Paul if he would be willing to go up to Jerusalem and **be judged before him** concerning these accusations. When Festus says, **be judged before me**, he is not saying be judge by me. What he meant here was that he would watch the Sanhedrin try him and he would make sure he got a "fair trial". However, Paul knew that he would not receive a fair trial.

**We see in verse 10 where...**Paul knew as a Roman citizen that he could make an appeal to have his case heard before a court in Rome. He knew he had not done anything wrong, but that the Sanhedrin would have him put to death. Paul reminds Festus that he knew that he had not done anything wrong.

**We see in verse 11 where...**Paul tells Festus that if he has done anything worthy of being put to death that he did not object to dying, but since these were just a bunch of lies made up about him that he wants his case to be heard in Rome.

Paul knew that it was his destiny to go to Rome because Jesus had told him that he must bear witness of Him there **in Acts 23:11**

**We see in verse 12 where..**Festus talks it over with the council. Festus would have most likely told the Jews he couldn't do anything even if he wanted to since Paul was a Roman citizen and he had appealed his case to Rome. Therefore Festus said, "You have appealed to Caesar? Then to Caesar you shall go."

**v.13-22...In verse 13 this...**King Agrippa would have also been known as Herod Agrippa II. He was the son of Herod Agrippa I, that we read about back **in Acts 12:1** who had the apostle James killed and the one that was eaten by worms. Bernice was the oldest daughter of Herod I and the sister of Herod II.

She was also Drusilla's sister that we read about **in Acts 24:24**.

Drusilla was Herod Agrippa I's youngest daughter. Both Herod II and his sister Bernice were Jewish and were well educated in the Jewish law and customs. Festus had just got the job as governor of the territory of Judea and both Herod II and Bernice had come to Caesarea to offer their congratulations to him. King Agrippa would have descended from Herod the Great's Dynasty, who was king when Jesus was born. He was the last king to rule from that dynasty.

**We see in verse 14 and verse 15 where...**Felix tells King Agrippa about Paul and how he had met with the Jewish leaders and they wanted him to pronounce a guilty charge and have Paul put to death.

**We see in verse 16 where...**Festus tells King Agrippa how he explained to the Jewish leaders that it was not lawful to condemn a Roman citizen without the accused being able to tell their side of the story concerning the accusations made against them.

**We see in verse 17 where...**Festus tells the king that the Jews came down from Jerusalem. He tells him that he assembled court, so to speak, and had Paul brought in before the judgment seat so that he could listen to their accusations.

**We see in verse 18 where...**Festus basically told the king that this didn't have anything to do with Roman law just as he had suspected.

**We see in verse 19 where...**Festus tells the king that it was a religious dispute. He tells the king that at the core of the whole matter was that Paul was saying this Jesus, whom he says the Jewish leaders killed, is still alive, in that He had been resurrected.

**We see in verse 20 where...**Festus tells the king that he didn't know anything about their religion so he tried to get Paul to go to Jerusalem to stand trial before the Sanhedrin concerning the charges that they were making against him.

**We see in verse 21 where...**Festus tells the king that Paul was not willing to go to Jerusalem to appear before the Sanhedrin and that he, that is Paul, appealed to Caesar, so he was holding him until he could send him to Rome.

Festus was not sharing this with King Agrippa because he was hoping the king would make a ruling on it, the decision had already been made when Paul appealed to Caesar. He was telling him about it because he had to write a report about why he was sending Paul to Caesar and he was hoping that King Agrippa could help him understand what he needs to write in the report that would satisfy the Roman officials.

**We see in verse 22 where...**King Agrippa tells Festus he would like to hear what Paul has to say about Jesus . So Festus said, "Tomorrow, you shall hear him."

Since King Agrippa was Jewish and raised in a Jewish community he would have possibly heard many things about Jesus. Since this man Paul was preaching that Jesus is still alive he would have really been looking forward to meeting and listening to him.

**v.23-27....**Felix took Paul aside along with the members of the Sanhedrin to hear the case, but Festus is making a big event of it.

**We see in verse 23 where...**King Agrippa and Bernice dress in their best "royalty clothes" and enter the auditorium as though it was a parade on their behalf. This was like a big party and all of the rich people who had influence as well as the top political people had also come to the "event" to see and hear Paul give his defense to the charges the Jews were making against him.

Festus then has the soldiers bring Paul in to the auditorium.

**We see in verse 24 where...**Festus begins to tell those who had gathered for the event how the Jews tried to get him to have Paul put to death when he went up to Jerusalem to listen to the charges made against him and now they have come down to Caesarea and were still trying to have him killed.

**We see in verse 25 where...**Festus tells them after he listened to their charges that he did not find anything that Paul had done to be worthy of death and even if he did, Paul had appealed his case to Caesar so he couldn't pass judgment on him even if he wanted to and that he had to send him to Rome.

**We see in verse 26 where...**Festus tells those gathered and especially King Agrippa, that he didn't have anything to charge Paul with concerning him breaking any of Rome's laws and he is hoping after they listen to the case they would help him figure out what he should say in his report that he would be sending to Rome concerning Paul.

**We see in verse 27 where...**Festus tells them it seems unreasonable to send a prisoner and not specify the charges against him. Festus was hoping Agrippa would suggest something to him about what he should do. Then he would have used King Agrippa's suggestion as to why he sent Paul there to Rome.

Festus had just taken Felix' place as governor of Judea and he was possibly afraid that Rome would look at him as incompetent as far as being able to handle the job he had been given.

## Acts 26

**v.1-11...we see here in verse 1 where...**King Agrippa takes charge of the proceedings. He tells Paul he can now speak for himself and tell his side of the story. During this period of time a person would stretch out their hand in a gathering like this towards the person they are about to speak to as a way to show respect for someone. It would be similar to a person tipping their hat to someone today to acknowledge them.

Paul had went before Felix and Festus, but they were Romans and they were not educated in the Jewish laws and customs like King Agrippa had been since he too, was Jewish.

**We see in verse 2 and verse 3 where...**Paul tells King Agrippa that he is very happy that he can now talk to someone who could understand the charges the Jews had made against him. Paul knew once he explained in detail what the Jews were accusing him of that King Agrippa would see and know those charge are baseless.

Paul has a detailed story to share with King Agrippa so he asked him to be patient as he shared it with him. He was ready to share his testimony.

This reminds me of how Peter was inspired to tell us to be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that you have. **1 Peter 3:15-16**

**We see in verse 4 and verse 5 where...**Paul tells King Agrippa that those who were making these false accusations against him have known him every since he was very young and if they were honest they would tell King Agrippa they did.

Then Paul tells him he was raised by one of the strictest Pharisees there were, Gamaliel.

The same Gamaliel that we read about **in Acts 5:34** and **in Acts 22:3**

**We see in verse 6 where...**Paul tells King Agrippa that he is simply being charged for believing what God had told them in the Scriptures concerning the Messiah and the resurrection. This is the same thing Paul told the high priest and the Sanhedrin back **in Acts 23:6**

**We see in verse 7 where...**Paul reminds King Agrippa about how all twelve tribes of the Jewish nation had this same hope concerning the Messiah and eternal life, that is, the resurrection.

Paul was a member of the tribe of Benjamin. **Romans 11:1**

**We see in verse 8 where...**Paul asked him why he and the Jewish leaders, members of the Sanhedrin, thought it was not possible that God could raise someone from the dead.

The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. **Luke 18:27**

**We see in verse 9 where...**Paul tells King Agrippa that at first he too persecuted the Christians just as the Jews are persecuting him now because he did not believe the story concerning Jesus.

Paul shared with Timothy about how he was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a violently arrogant man towards Christianity, but that he did so ignorantly in unbelief. **1 Timothy 1:12-13**



**We see in verse 10 where...**Paul then tells King Agrippa that he even got permission from the chief priest to persecute the Christians there in Jerusalem. Paul is making his point even bigger in that those accusing him of these false charges know him very good and if they were willing to admit it, they would tell him how he use to be just as zealous as they are as far as trying to stop, the Way.

He tells King Agrippa he not only voted to have Christians put to death, but that he even participated in doing so as we saw concerning Stephen **in Acts 8:1-3**

**We see in verse 11 where...**Paul tells King Agrippa that he was so convinced that he was doing the right thing that he persecuted the Christians even in to foreign cities. Paul tells him that he persecuted Christians so brutally that they actually blasphemed God.

Paul had told the mob that was trying to kill him the same thing **in Acts 22:4** and **in Acts 22:19**

**v.12-23...We see in verse 12 that...**this is the third time that Luke writes about Paul's testimony.

The first time that Luke wrote about it was **in Acts 9:1-18** where he records the event as it happened.

The second time is when Luke writes about how Paul shared it with the mob **in Acts 22:1-16** who were trying to kill him before the commander Lysias intervened and saved him. The commander let him talk to the mob before he carried him to the barracks. The majority of that crowd where Jewish so Paul wanted to tell them some things that would be significant to them as Jews. He told them that he was a Jew himself and that he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. Paul told them that he was taught the Jewish law, history, and customs from an early age and that he had been very zealous like they were.

The third time is here in **chapter 26**. Most all of them here are Gentiles so he didn't tell them about how he had become blind and was instructed to go see Ananias, because they didn't know. However, the Jews in **Acts chapter 22** would have known Ananias personally so that is why Paul told them about having to go see him. Paul emphasized more to these Gentiles of what Jesus had told him such as he was going to be a witness to not only the Jews, but to the Gentiles also.

**We see in verse 13-18 where...**Paul shares his testimony with these Gentiles, including King Agrippa and Porcius Festus. He tells them that Jesus basically set him straight, so to speak. Then he tells them how Jesus told him that he was going to be a minister and a message barrier to both the Jews and the Gentiles concerning the Gospel.

**We see in verse 19 where...**Paul tells King Agrippa and those gathered there that he was not going to be disobedient to the Lord. I am reminded of when God told Jonah to go deliver a message to those in Nineveh, but he was initially disobedient. God had to teach Jonah a lesson and then Jonah obeyed God and did as He instructed him to do. Paul could have been stubborn just like Jonah, but then, Saul, saw "the light", so to speak, and obeyed Jesus from the beginning.

**We see in verse 20 where...**Paul tells them how he first shared the Gospel in Damascus, the city where he was going to arrest Christians and throw them in prison. Then he tells them after that, he delivered the message of salvation to those in Jerusalem and throughout all of Judea.

Paul tells them that he then started sharing the Good News (Gospel) with the Gentiles also.

He told them part of his message was that everyone was to repent of their sins, turn to God and obey Him, and then live the kind of life that people would know that they sincerely did repent of their sins.

This is the same message John the Baptist proclaimed **in Matthew 3:8**

**We see in verse 21 where...**Paul tells King Agrippa, Bernice, Festus and those gathered with them that is the reason the Jews seized him in the temple and tried to kill him. The Scripture does say in detail, but I would think that those Jewish leaders were part of the people Paul was telling that they need to repent of their sins, turn to God, and live a righteous life. The Jewish leaders, especially those who made up the Sanhedrin were furious that this man, Paul, had come into the temple and tells them, "the leaders of the people", that they need to repent. They were wanting to kill him for saying such a thing as this.

**We see in verse 22 and verse 23 where...**Paul especially tells this to King Agrippa and Bernice, who were Jewish just like him and knew the Scriptures as good as he did. Paul tells them how God had been taking care and delivering him from being killed while he has been going from city to city, preaching Christ crucified and raised from the dead.

The small and great **in verse 22** possible refers to the common man/woman and to people of great importance such as kings and other rulers, as well as to the Sanhedrin, the religious Jewish leaders.

He tells them he is simply saying the same things that the prophets and Moses said would take place. I am reminded of what Jesus said, "For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote about Me." **John 6:46**

He reminds them of how the Scriptures had told that, the Christ (Christ means anointed one) would suffer, die, and be raised from the dead. **Hosea 6:1-2**

Jesus also said..."Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem." **Luke 24:46-47**

Even though the Gentiles in the room probably did not know or understand the prophesy of the Scriptures, there is no doubt King Agrippa and Bernice did and I imagine they had become convinced that Paul's message was true, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, the Son of the Most High God.

**v.24-32...we see in verse 24 where...**Festus rudely interrupts Paul and accuses him of being insane, a mad man who has lost all perspective of reality. Festus was not familiar at all with the living God or with any of the prophets who had written about how God was going to send the Messiah and when He comes He is bringing with Him eternal life.

Festus' heart was harden and not open to the Gospel, unfortunately like so many are not today.

**We see in verse 25 where...**Paul responds by telling Festus that he is not a mad man, or insane, but that he is simply sharing what the Scriptures said concerning Jesus, the Christ, who would be, and is the Savior of the mankind.

**We see in verse 26 where...**Paul tells Festus about how King Agrippa would back him up, so to speak, in that he knew that King Agrippa knew the same Scriptures and the same prophecies that he knows concerning the coming of the Messiah, which was the hope of the Jewish faith.

Paul had pointed out back **in Acts 26:3** how King Agrippa was an expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews.

**We see in verse 27 where...**Paul takes his focus and attention off of Festus and turns to King Agrippa and pointedly asked him if he believes the prophesy concerning Jesus.

This was a very bold move for Paul, because people did not talk to the king like this and they could be punished for doing so. However, Paul would have said it in a respectful way. He most likely had been watching King Agrippa's body language and he may have felt King Agrippa was being moved with emotion as he listened to him. King Agrippa doesn't answer Paul, so Paul quickly follows up by telling him that he knows he believes the prophecy had been fulfilled through Jesus of Nazareth.

**We see in verse 28 where...**King Agrippa tells Paul that he has almost persuaded him to become a Christian. King Agrippa knew "the truth" and it would have set him free, (**John 8:32**) but he was possible like the young rich ruler **in Matthew 19:16-22** and he wasn't willing to let go of those worldly materials so that he could have everlasting life.

**We see in verse 29 where...**Paul tells him that he wishes not only would he become a Christian, but that all those who had just listened to him would also become a Christian as well, just as he had become when he "saw the light."

**We see in verse 30 where...**King Agrippa stands up. This signified that the event, or the gathering for the purpose of listening to Paul's story was over.

**We see in verse 31 where...**they walked outside or in to another room and they talked about what they had just heard. They seemed to be sympathetic to Paul's case and they all agreed that Paul had not done anything to be put to death for.

**We see in verse 32 where...**King Agrippa turns and tells Festus that if Paul had not made an appeal to Caesar they could and would have set him free. However, what they didn't know is that it was the Lord's will that Paul was going to go to Rome.

Jesus had told Paul that he must go to Rome to bear witness of Him just as he had done in Jerusalem **in Acts 23:11**

Therefore, they could not have even stopped Paul from going to Rome even if they wanted to.

# The Apostle Paul's Fourth Journey

As You Read When You Come Across The Name Of A City  
Follow Paul's Fourth Journey As He Goes From City To City

## Acts Chapter 27 and Chapter 28



## Acts 27

**v.1-12...**The day has now arrived where Paul would be going to Rome, just as Jesus had told him he would **in Acts 23:11**

**We see in verse 1 where...**there were going to be many other prisoners traveling on the ship as well with Paul. These would have most likely been prisoners who were already found guilty of whatever they had been charged with and were going to prison, in Rome. Paul was going there for his trial.

The Augustan Regiment would have been a Regiment most likely name after Caesar Augustan and would have been a branch of the Roman military just like the Italian Regiment that Cornelius was a member of that we read about **in Acts 10:1**

**We see in verse 2 where...**they got on a ship from Adramyttium. Adramyttium was an old port city that was in the Roman Province of Asia. It was located just south of Troas in the Aegean Sea and it was west of the Island of Lesbos. Aristarchus was mentioned in **Acts 19:29** as a traveling companion of Paul when he was in Ephesus. He was with Paul when Demetrius started that uproar in Ephesus.

**We can see in verse 3 where...**they first stop at Sidon. Looking at the map you can see where Sidon is located. It is just 70 miles north of Caesarea. It is possible the Lord had put this man Julius in Paul's life and he was treating him with kindness and respect, something Paul was not use to for the most part. Paul would have sought out brothers and sisters in Christ that he may have known there in Sidon and Julius allowed him to spend time with them before they set sail again.

**We can see in verse 4 where...**they head back out to sea. Looking at the map you can see where they are sailing just north of the island of Cyprus. It was late August and the winds this time of year were brutal and the island of Cyprus would have sheltered them from the hardest part of those winds.

**We can see in verse 5 where...**they are sailing across the northern part of the Mediterranean Sea. Looking at the map you can see where they were traveling just south of Pamphylia to the city of Myra. Myra was 150 miles north of Cyprus. It took two weeks for them to get there. Under normal weather conditions they would have gotten there in no more than two days.

**We see in verse 6 where....**they change ships. It could be that the ship they were on was going to be in Myra for longer than they wanted to stay there since they were wanting and needing to get to Rome. An Alexandrian ship would have been an Egyptian ship from the city of Alexandria there in Egypt. Egypt supplied Rome with its grain so this ship would have been going to Rome.

**We see in verse 7 where...**they were having difficulty sailing. Looking at the map we can see where Cnidus was and when it says they arrived there, it doesn't mean they went to the city there, but rather they were passing by it.

Luke tells us the winds were so strong that they could not continue going directly west towards Rome, but rather they had to go south, that is they would have been blown off course to the south by those winds. They used the island of Crete to shelter them from the winds as much as possible.

**We see in verse 8 where...**Luke tells us how the head wind had blown them way off course.

They docked the ship at the port of Fair Havens near the city of Lasea.

**We see in verse 9 where...**Luke mentions that the Fast was now over. Luke is talking about, The Day of Atonement, which was the holiest day of the year in Judaism. It lasted for 24 hours. Its purpose was for repentance and it was a day set aside for nothing but fasting and prayer.

**We see in verse 10 where...**Luke continues to remind us of how dangerous the voyage has become and Paul warns the helmsman, the owner of the ship, and the centurion, that if they continue the voyage in these conditions that not only would they lose all the cargo aboard, everyone would also be killed.

**We see in verse 11 that...**even though the centurion had been very kind and respectful to Paul, he is more convinced that the helmsman and the owner of the ship knew more what they were taking about than Paul did. It could have been that there was a timetable for him to get these prisoners to Rome and he didn't want any kind of delays.

The owner of the ship was most likely wanting to get his grain to Rome also as soon as possible so that he could get paid for it and head back to Egypt.

**We see in verse 12 where...**they didn't feel as though Fair Havens was a good place to dock for the winter. Looking at the map you can see further west of Fair Havens was a city called Phoenix, a harbor that allowed people to chart a course straight to Rome in normal weather conditions.

The majority of those on the ship decided they were not going to listen to Paul and they were going to go to Phoenix, which was only 40 miles west of Fair Havens. However, as we see they were not able to make it there.

Paul advised against this and all the warning signs were there not to try and do it, but they ignored Paul and the signs. It is kind of like how God warns us against certain things through the Scriptures and the warning signs are there, but we sometimes ignore God and the warning signs.

**v.13-20...we see in verse 13 where...**the south winds blew softly, fooling them. They probably said, "See Paul, we told you so." They sailed close to the island of Crete to help block the wind.

**We see in verse 14 that...**their goal was to go Phoenix and dock at the harbor there. However, a little less than half the way to Phoenix an aggressive wind that Luke calls, Euroclydon, hit them head on and they could not go any further. The Euroclydon was a known wind condition that happens in this area. It is kind of like the winds out in California that we call the Santa Ana winds.

**We see in verse 15 that...**the wind was so strong they had to let the ship go in the direction the wind was taking them. They had lost control of the ship.

**We see in verse 16 where...**they were wanting to go straight to Phoenix, but the wind was so strong it blew them southwest until they came under the partial shelter of an island called Claudia. They were able to secure the skiff, which was the life boat that would have been tied to the side of the ship.

**Then we see in verse 17 where...**they took ropes or chains to tie around the ship to try and keep it together. Being under the shelter of the island of Claudia was helping some, but the storm was still raging and they were afraid they were going to run up on Syrtis Sands. Syrtis Sands was actually rocks that barely stuck up above the water and sometimes they were just under the top of the water. Either way they would have ripped that ship to pieces.

**We see in verse 18 and verse 19 where...**they realize they are about to capsiz because they had a lot of cargo on the ship and it was weighing them down so they started dumping the grain they were carrying from Egypt to Italy overboard. Then they started throwing any and everything else that wasn't tied down overboard to try and keep the ship from capsizing.

**Verse 20 tells us...**that they had not seen the sun or the stars for many days now so at this point they had completely lost track as to where they were. Sailors will use the sun, the moon, and the stars to navigate, but since they had not seen them for many days now they really didn't know which direction they were going in or which direction they would like to go. Now they realize they should have listened to what Paul was telling them as they lose all hope of surviving this storm.

**v.21-26...we see in verse 21 where...**they had been without food now for a long time so they were hungry and I would think soaking wet from the storm and they would have also been very cold. I would imagine that the last thing they would have wanted now is for Paul to tell them, "I told you so!" But that is exactly what Paul tells them. Paul basically tells them that if they would have listened to him that they would not be in this predicament right now.

**We see in verse 22 where...**Paul tells them to be brave or courageous, so to speak, and that no one was going to die. Paul tells them the only thing that would be lost would be the ship itself.

**We see in verse 23 and verse 24 where...**Paul tells everyone about God and this angel that He sent to him to tell him that no one was going to die. There were two hundred and seventy-six people on the ship and most likely the only Christians on the ship would have been Paul, Luke, and Aristarchus.

**We see in verse 25 and verse 26 where...**Paul tells them again to take heart because he believed what the angel sent from God told him. Paul tells them that they would still be ship wrecked on an island.

I would think this ordeal may have created some "believers" since they had nothing else to attach their hopes to, but I would think a majority of them would still not have believed Paul. Even though the Scriptures does not tells us they did, I would think that it is possible there would have been quite a few who would have told Paul to, "shut up" and let them all die in peace, so to speak.

**v.27-38...We see in verse 27 where...**they had left the Mediterranean Sea and had entered the Adriatic Sea. Look at the map and you can see where the Adriatic Sea separates Greece from Italy and then pushes straight down. What started out as a few days trip had now turned into fourteen days and nights. It was now midnight and the sailors had a sense they were coming near some land. Even though they were still being toss around in the Sea like a boat in a tub, it must have been a great feeling for them to sense that dry land was close by, even though they would not have known what or where the land was since they had no idea as to where the storm had taken them to.

**We see in verse 28 where...**they sense they were close to dry land so they dropped a rope in the water to see how deep the water was. A fathom is six feet and it was twenty fathoms, so it would have been 120 feet. They continue to drift a little furthered towards this land and check the depth of the water again and it is now just fifteen fathoms which would have been 90 feet.

**We see in verse 29 that...**they knew they were getting closer to land and they were afraid they were about to come upon some rocks which would have tore the bottom of the boat open so they decide at this point to drop their anchors and pray for day to come. You can imagine how these people felt. They had given up hope of surviving this storm and now even though it is so dark that they can barely see each other, they have a little hope.

**We see in verse 30 where..**the sailors were wanting to get off of the ship and see if they could make it to land. They acted like they were lowering the anchors, but they were actually lowering the life boats. They were going to use them and leave Paul, Luke, Aristarchus, Julius, the prisoners and everyone else on the ship and wish them luck, so to speak.

**We see in verse 31 and verse 32 that...**when Paul saw this he told Julius the centurion that unless they all stick together, that they would all die. Julius listened to Paul this time and he had the soldiers cut the ropes that the sailors were using to lower the life boats.

**We see in verse 33 and verse 34 where...**they had been on rations of food and had become very weak. They most likely were on rations because if they did survive this storm, they didn't know where they may end up and how long it would be before they would find some food so they needed to save this food and make it last as long as they could.

Paul tells them right before day break to eat something now because they will need their strength for what is going to take place this day. Then Paul reminds them that none of them are going to die.

**We see in verse 35 where...**Paul prays to God as they all watched him and he thanks God for the food. God had lifted Paul up in the eyes of these people so they knew he was truly, a man of the living God.

**We see in verse 36 that...**they are all starting to think that they just might survive this storm after all.

**We see in verse 37 that...**there were two hundred and seventy-six people on the ship, so we see this was a bigger than normal ship at the time. Even though it was a bigger and stronger ship than the average ship it still took the hand of God to save them from that storm Paul warned them about.

In **verse 38 we see where...**after everyone had eaten enough that they were full, they lighten the ship by throwing the rest of the wheat overboard. What Paul had told them **in verse 22** was coming true. The ship and all of the cargo on board would be lost, but none of them would die.

**v.39-44...we see in verse 39 where...**they see some land. They didn't know where they were. They didn't know if they were somewhere off the coast of Africa, Asia, or Europe. They also didn't know if there were anyone on this land, and if so, if they were friendly, but to see dry land after what they had been through must have been a great sight to behold. They wanted to run the ship up on the beach.

**We see in verse 40 where...**they cut the brake lines, so to speak. Then they pushed the pedal to the metal, again, so to speak, with intentions of getting a running start and landing as far up on the beach as they could.

**We see in verse 41 that...**there were two waves coming together at the same place and they were creating a great sea billow. They had also came upon a reef that they had not seen and they were now stuck on it. The ship was being torn to pieces.



**We see in verse 42 where...**the soldier's planned on killing the prisoners. As mentioned before, under the Roman law, if a prisoner or prisoners escape, the guard or guards on duty were put to death and these soldiers knew this and that is why they decided to kill all of the prisoners.

**We see in verse 43 where...**Julius had grown to like and trust Paul so he stops the soldiers from killing the prisoners. Then he tells everyone that can swim to jump over board and swim to the shore. There were obviously broken pieces of the ship everywhere so for those who could not swim, they could grab a hold of a board and float to shore.

**We see in verse 44...**that they all make it to the shore and survived. Not one of them dies, fulfilling what Paul had told them.

## Acts 28

**v.1-10...**Look at the map and you will see the island they landed on was Melita, which is also called Malta. You can see here on the map how far they had been blown off of course as they were heading to Rome. Paul had told them back **in Acts 27:26** that they were going to run aground on an island.

**We see in verse 1 where...**that island would be Malta. Malta was 500 miles west of Fair Havens.

**We see in verse 2 where...**Luke calls the natives on that island, barbarians. Luke was not belittling them. Barbarians was actually what Greeks called people who they felt were not "civilized" and Luke uses this phrase in his detailing those on the island. By the natives/barbarians being so kind to these people who they were not familiar with is possible the hand of God moving on them to do so.

There were two hundred and seventy-six people who had just shipwrecked on to this island and they were soaking wet with no dry clothes. It would have taken a lot of fires to dry them out and help them to get warm.

**We see in verse 3 where...**Paul was the ready worker in that he immediately stepped right up and helped in gathering some wood to burn. The "viper" that came out of the wood stack that Paul had gathered would have been a very poisonous snake and it not only bit Paul, it kept it's fangs in him.

**We see in verse 4 where...**this snake was hanging from Paul's hand as the natives looked on at him. The natives knew that Paul was a prisoner and assumed he was a murderer and they felt as though "justice" had taken place. They felt that Paul survived this devastating shipwreck to only have justice catch up with him by having this poisonous snake bite him. Jesus had talked about **in Mark 16:18** how there would be some who will be bitten by "serpents" and it would not bother them.

**We see in verse 5 how...**Paul just shakes the snake off of his hand as though it was just a fly that had landed on it. It is possible God had this snake to bite Paul in front of these people so that He could lift Paul up in their eyes. I am sure Paul took advantage of being shipwrecked on this island to share the Gospel with the people there.

**We see in verse 6 where...**all of the natives, as well as the two hundred and seventy-five people who were on the shipwreck were looking at Paul, waiting for him to drop dead at any second. When the natives saw that this deadly poisonous snake that just bit him had no affect on Paul, they changed their minds concerning him to be a murderer that justice had caught with. They now consider him a god!

**v.7-10...we see in verse 7 that...**Rome was ruling this island because Publius, which is a Roman name, was the Magistrate or you could say Governor on the island. Luke shares with us how Publius showed great kindness to them when he didn't have to. I am sure that Julius, the centurion, would have told Publius about Paul and where they were headed, which was to Rome.

**We see in verse 8 that...**after three days of entertaining and I imagine feeding them good, Publius must have told Paul, or Paul heard it from someone else, that Publius' father was very sick, even to the point of death. When Paul heard about it he returned Publius' kindness and generosity to him by going to where his father was and healing him. Good news travels fast and when the people on the island heard how this man, Paul, had healed Publius' father, they came and brought all those who were sick and had diseases to Paul to be healed by him.

**We see here in verse 9 how...**God had raised Paul up in the eyes of the natives and those two hundred and seventy-five men who were shipwreck with him to truly be, a man of the living God. He healed all the people on this island who were sick or had some other kind of infirmities.

**We see in verse 10 where...**they lost everything they had on that ship, but God, working through Paul, provided them with everything they needed to complete their journey to Rome.

**v.11-15...we see in verse 11 where...** they stayed there in Malta three winter months because it would have been dangerous for them to have tried to sail. It would have been February when they decided to set sail for Rome. It was only 80 miles from Malta to Sicily so it would not take them long to get there.

The “Twin Brothers” would have been statues or symbols of “Castor and Pollux,” which were considered to be sons of “Jupiter” or maybe “Zeus.” These Twin Brothers, Castor and Pollux were thought to be “gods” who would help sailors in their time of need. This was of course idols and false worship, but thankfully Paul and those on that other ship had the living God helping them through their tempestuous journey.

**We see in verse 12 where...**they landed in Syracuse. Looking at the map we can see that Syracuse was located in Sicily. Sicily was a Greek island and the ship most likely stopped there because they had grain and/or other supplies they were dropping off. They may have also been picking some things up while they were there to take to Rome. This would have been similar to how a truck driver does today with their freight. After spending three days there they head on to Rome.

**We see in verse 13 where...**they go back out to sea and circle on around to Rhegium. It was 180 miles from Rhegium to Puteol. The south wind was at their back now, instead of in their face like the Euroclydon wind was that we read about **in Acts 27:14**

Therefore, they made good time to Puteoli. It took them just one day to get there.

**We see in verse 14 where...**they found some brothers and sisters in Christ there and stayed with them seven days. The reason they possibly stayed seven days is because they wanted to share in the partaking of the Lord's supper when the saints came together on Sunday to do so. **Acts 20:7**

They also possibly wanted to worship God with them on Sunday before they headed on to Rome.

**We see in verse 15 where...**they had been in Puteoli for seven days now. There is no doubt the church in Rome had heard Paul was nearly there. Three Inns was only 30 miles from Rome and Appi Forum was just 40 miles. Therefore, some of the members of the church came down there to meet Paul.

Paul had never been to Rome before so this would have been a special moment for them to meet the man they had heard so much about and the same goes for Paul as he gets to meet those he had written a letter to that we know as **The Book of Romans**.

**v.16 -20...we see in verse 16 where...**The journey is now completed and Paul has arrived in Rome, just as the Lord had told him he would do. When the Lord first told him that he was going to go to Rome to be His witness he probably thought he would be going there as a free man, instead of a prisoner.

All the prisoners were turned over to the captain of the guard to be put in prison, except for Paul. He was allowed to live by himself. The reason for this could be because of the good things that Julius had told them about Paul, as well as the fact that he was a Roman citizen. He was a prisoner, but he had not been convicted of any crime against Rome.

**We see in verse 17 where...**Paul did as he always does, and that was, he met with the Jews there first. He called the Jewish leaders together so he could explained why he was considered a prisoner.

Paul begins by telling them that even though he had not done anything against the Jewish law or customs the Jewish leaders had him arrested and that is why he has come to Rome as a prisoner.

**We see in verse 18 where...**Paul tells them how he went before Felix, Festus and King Agrippa and was examined by each of them. He tells them how they wanted to let him go when they realized that he was not guilty of these false accusations the Jews in Jerusalem had made against him.

**We see in verse 19 where...**Paul tells them the Jews there in Judea were determined to have him put to death so he had to appeal his case to Caesar.

He then tells them he isn't accusing "his nation" of doing anything wrong because he knew that he had to come to Rome anyway because Jesus had told him he had to do so.

**We see in verse 20 where...**Paul then tells them the same hope of eternal life that he has because of Jesus, is the reason he has called them together. He wanted to share the Gospel with them. Paul tells them he is only guilty in believing the prophecy concerning the Messiah and that is why he is in chains.

**v.21-31...We see in verse 21 that...**the Jews in Rome had not heard anything about Paul's case. During the winter months, ships would not have been coming to Rome, so it is possible that the ship Paul was on was one of the first ones to arrived in Rome and that could be a reason that the Jews there had not heard anything from the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem. It is also possible that the Sanhedrin didn't write a letter to the Jews in Rome because they were afraid the Roman government may intercept it and since Felix, Festus, and King Agrippa felt Paul was not guilty of anything the tables may get turned on them and the Roman government may have punished them.

**We see in verse 22 and in verse 23 where...**the Jews there in Rome had of course heard about this "new religion" and since Paul seemed to be the main leader of this "sect" they wanted to set up a meeting where they could listen in detail about it from him. When they set a day for him to do so, Paul explained in detail, using the Scriptures and showing that Jesus was/is the Messiah that the prophets had prophesied about. He met with them from the morning to the evening, a full day, showing them how the prophecy had been fulfilled in the coming of the Christ, Jesus.

**We see in verse 24 where...**some of the Jews believed Paul and became Christians, while a majority of them did not accept the Gospel. People still respond to the Gospel the same way today when they hear it. Some people accept it, but a majority do not.

**We see in verse 25 where...**many of these Jews were not even able to agree among themselves on the things that Paul was telling them. When Paul starts to tell them what Isaiah had said about them they all decide they had heard enough and they leave.

**We see in verse 26 and verse 27 where...**Paul points to the prophet Isaiah's prophecy **in Isaiah 6:9-10** when he said they will hear the Gospel and not believe it because their hearts had grown hard hearted and that the Lord would like for them to accept the Good News, but they would not be willing to do so.

**We see in verse 28 where...**Paul tells them that is why he has been and will continue to share the Good News with the Gentiles instead, because they will be open hearted to hearing it.

**We see in verse 29 that...**when Paul finished telling them this that the Jews left, but they continued to argue amongst themselves concerning the message Paul had shared with them which was that Jesus had fulfilled the prophecies concerning the Messiah.

**We see in verse 30 and verse 31 where...**Paul stays in his own rented house for two years and continued preaching that the kingdom of God had come down from heaven in the form of a man, Jesus.

Paul continue doing preaching without being persecuted by the Roman government or anyone else.

Luke concludes **The Book of Acts** without telling us what became of Paul. We can conclude though that since he mentions the two years he spent in his own rented house that it is possible he left Rome after this and continue sharing the Gospel in other parts of the known world at the time.

Nero began to persecute Christians in Rome around 64AD and continued doing so until he committed suicide four years later. Tradition suggest that he may have had Paul executed just outside of Rome, by beheading him, the form of capital punishment for Roman citizens.