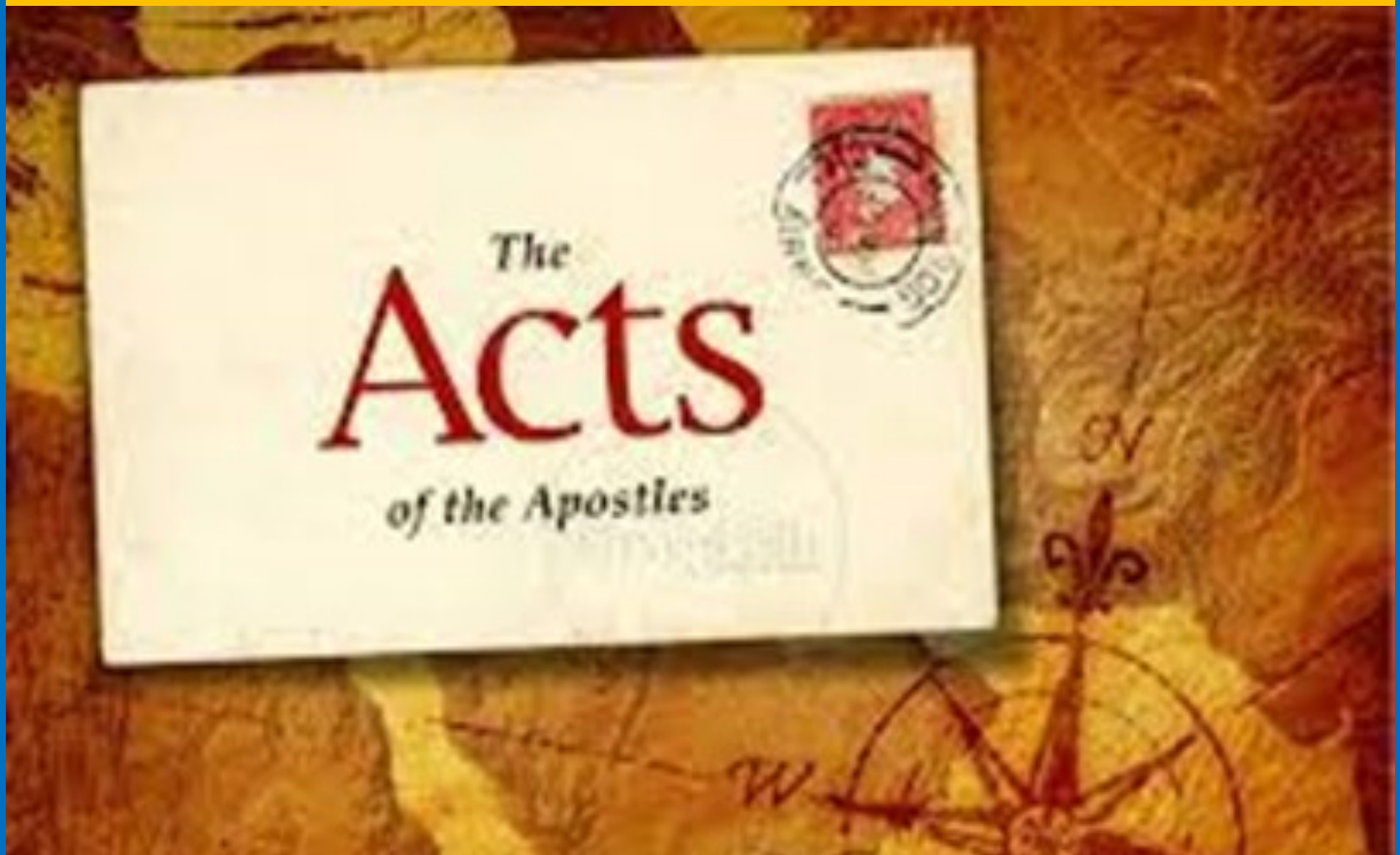


**The Only Unfinished Book  
In The Bible!**

***ACTS 28:31***



**The Apostles Have  
Handed The Baton To Us!**

***Let's Run The Race  
To Win The Prize!***



**THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**LESSON #1**  
**Acts 1:1-10**  
**INTRODUCTION**

Several times I have heard people say they think the book of Acts "does not fit" in the location in which it is placed in the Bible. The Book of Acts is exactly where it should be in the Bible and it "fits perfectly!"

- I. The Book of Acts is a "Bridge" that links the Book of John to Romans.**
  - A. Think of the confusion if we went from the Gospel of John to the Book of Romans.
  - B. The book of John closes with Jesus on the shores of Galilee talking to the disciples.
  - C. The book of Romans begins with Jesus gone from earth and the church in His place.
  
- II. The Book of Acts is the only "Unfinished Book" in the entire Bible (Acts 28:30-31).**
  - A. Acts is where Jesus "begins" to build the New Testament church.
  - B. Acts is where the church "begins" preaching the Gospel to every creature.
  - C. The last chapter of Acts does not conclude what was started in the first chapter.
  - D. The command to "preach the Gospel to every creature" **has been handed to us!**
  
- III. The Book of Acts was "Humanly Penned" by Dr. Luke (Acts 1:1).**
  - A. Luke 1:3 identifies the author of the Book of Acts as being Luke, the Beloved Physician.
  - B. Luke begins by saying...
    - 1. *"...of all that Jesus **began** both to do and to teach..."*
    - 2. Jesus said, " ... *I will build my church*" (Matthew 16:18).
  
- IV. The Book of Acts is Divided into "Two Parts."**
  - A. **Part #1**
    - 1. Peter is mentioned 56 times from Acts 1:13 - Acts 15:7. (None from there to the end.)
  - B. **Part #2**
    - 1. Paul is mentioned once, as a believer, as "Saul" in Acts 9:8.
      - a. Paul was saved and changed in Acts 9:4-6.
    - 2. Paul is mentioned 129 times from Acts 13:9 - Acts 28:30.

By the end of the book of Acts God used him to firmly establish the church. At the end of his life, he had shaped Christianity by "the use of his pen." If not for the book of Acts, there would be many unknowns about the church and when and where it started.
  
- V. The Book of Acts is About "Changing Knowledge - into Action."**
  - A. Acts could be rightly named, "Christian Life in Action."
    - 1. Action by the Apostles and disciples "Is the theme of the book of Acts."
  - B. There were only about 120 disciples present when the church began (Acts 1:15).
    - 1. Those 120 risked their lives to carry out the Commandment of God.
    - 2. We read of the FIRST Martyr's blood (Acts 7:54-60).
    - 3. We read of the GREAT PERSECUTION they suffered (Acts 8:1-4).

- C. We also read that "they turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6).
  - 1. Don't forget "The baton has been handed to you and me!"
- D. The Book of Acts covers from 33 AD to about 65 AD.
  - 1. During that time, all of the Church epistles were written.
  - 2. All of the churches in the New Testament were established.
  - 3. Only I, II, and III John, Jude and Revelation were not written.

**VI. The Book of Acts is a "Book of Transition" from the Old Testament to the New Testament.**

- A. THIS IS VITALLY IMPORTANT.
  - 1. Never base a doctrine on the Book of Acts.
- B. **We will deal with and illustrate this in detail when we reach Acts Chapter 8.**

**THE PROMISE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**I. The "Forty-Days" between the Resurrection and the Ascension.**

- A. Christ was giving commands to the Disciples (Acts 1:2-3).
- B. Confirming the Resurrection by many infallible proofs (Verse 3).
  - 1. Christ made at least 10 appearances: (**Many Infallible Proofs**).
  - 2. These took place over 40 days:
 

John 20:14-16 –	Mary Magdalene
Matthew 28:9 –	Mary, Mother of Jesus – Salome & Joanna
Luke 24:34 –	Peter
Luke 24:13-19 –	Two disciples on the road
John 20:19, 20, 24 –	All Disciples – Minus Thomas
John 20:26-28 –	All Disciples
John 21:1-3 –	Two Disciples (1-14).
Matthew 28:16-17 –	On Mount in Galilee
I Corinthians 15:6 –	500 people at once
I Corinthians 15:7 –	James
Luke 24:50-53 –	Before His ascension
- C. These appearances were made under all possible circumstances.
  - 1. From "1 to 500."
  - 2. In the night - in the daytime.
- D. Paul recounts those appearances in I Corinthians 15:3-8.
  - 1. Think of the "thrilling fellowship" with someone who returned from the dead!
    - a. Their faith knew "NO BOUNDARIES."
    - b. They had faith to "Live for him and Die from Him."
    - c. The resurrection left NO DOUBT - "Jesus was the Christ!"

**II. The Promise of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-5).**

- A. Jesus had said, "*It is expedient that I go away*" (John 16:7).

- B. This was a crucial event for the disciples.
  - 1. It was the source of individual power.
  - 2. It unified believers (I Corinthians 12:12-13).

**III. The "Last Words" Spoken by Jesus Christ While He was on Earth (Acts 1:8).**

- A. EVERY Christian is to "...witness unto Christ...".
  - 1. Jesus has the "authority" to Command us to witness (Matthew 28:17).
- B. Jesus gave you and me the "ability/power" to witness.
- C. The word "witness" comes from the Greek word: "Martus."
  - 1. The word "martus" means to "give our life for. To be martyr for."
- D. At the Close of the fifty-days, the disciples had...
  - 1. Understood the COMPLETE Gospel.
  - 2. Understood that they had been given the COMMANDMENT to serve.
  - 3. Understood that they had the CONFIDENCE and power to carry out the commandment.

**THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**LESSON #2**  
**THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST**  
**Acts 1:9-11**

- I. The "Region" Where Christ's Ascension Took Place** (Acts 1:12).
- A. The Mount of Olives (Luke 24:50).
1. Christ will return to the Mount of Olives.
  2. It was prophesied (Zech. 14:4).
- II. The "Response" to the Disciple's Question** (Acts 1:6-7).
- A. The Disciples still did not understand "The Church."
- B. Today, we still do not know when the Master will return!
1. Jesus said, "...Witness (martus) unto me..." *"Be willing to be a (martyr) for me..."*
  2. He said, *"Occupy till I come."*
- III. The "Redemption" of Believers was a Complete Redemption** (Mark 16:19).
- A. Jesus stated, *"I have not yet ascended..."*
1. This was stated between the resurrection and ascension (John 20:17).
- B. Christ has "presented" the Blood to God the Father (Hebrews 9:24).
1. God said, *"When I see the Blood, I will pass over you."* (Hebrews 9:12).
  2. Christ "sat down on the right hand of God" (Hebrew 10:12).
- IV. The "Redemption" of Believers is a Continuing Redemption** (Hebrew 7:25).
- A. Redemption is "Finished" in the sight of God.
- B. Redemption is "being finished" in the daily life of man (I John 2:1- Philip. 1:6).

**TWO COMMANDMENTS CHRIST GAVE TO HIS DISCIPLES**  
**BEFORE HE ASCENDED**

**INTRO:** In Verse One Luke refers to "all that Jesus began both to do and teach." Christ continued to do and to teach those things until the day He ascended back to Heaven" (Verse 9). Before Christ ascended, He gave the disciples "two commandments" (Verse 2).

- I. FIRST: Do not depart from Jerusalem - wait for the promise of the Holy Ghost** (Verses 4-5).
- A. The disciples obeyed the commandment (Acts 2:1).
1. They were "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4).
- B. Today, we do not "wait" for the Holy Ghost.
1. The Holy Ghost comes to dwell "in us" at the time of salvation (John 14:17).
  2. We are still commanded, "To be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Ephesians 4:18).
    - a. This is a "daily" ministry for a Christian (I Corinthians 15:31).
    - b. *"Without me ye can do nothing"* (John 15:5).

- II. **SECOND: After ye receive power - "Ye shall be witnesses unto me"** (Acts 1:8).
- A. The disciples obeyed- and - turned the world up-side-down (Acts 17:6)!
- III. **The Elements of the Commandments.**
- A. The Purpose of the Commandments was...
1. *"That repentance and remission of sins should be preached"* (Luke 24:47a).
- B. The People to whom it should be preached (Luke 24:47b) ***"Among ALL nations."***
1. That commandment is re-confirmed in Acts 1:8.
2. Christ "commanded" them to preach the Gospel *"to the uttermost part."* (Not "parts.")
- C. The Proof that the Message is true is found in Acts 1:3.
1. *"...By MANY infallible proofs."*
2. Jesus appeared to people 10 different times (See Lesson #1).
- IV. **The Commandments were followed by the Ascension of Christ"** (Acts 1:10).
- V. **The Disciples were reprimanded for standing - "gazing up to Heaven"** (Acts 1:11).
- A. It was time "for them to begin the work Christ gave them to do."
- B. The Book of Acts does not end with those commandments being implemented!
- C. The Book of Acts is continuing until today!
- D. What do you think the *"two men in white apparel"* would say today???
- VI. **Jesus Promised that He would Return as they had seen Him go** (Acts 1:11).
- A. This indicates that they will be asked to give an account (Matthew 24:14-26).
- B. Each of us will give an account for the commandments (II Corinthians 5:10).

## THE DAY OF PENTECOST

### Acts 2:1-13

**INTRO:** On the 50th day after our Lord's resurrection, there occurred an amazing "one-time event." It was an event that had never happened before and will never happen again! Two of three of the most important events in the history of the New Testament Church have been recorded.

- I. **The Message was Given to the New Testament Church.**
- A. Jesus Christ was crucified (Acts 2:23).
- B. Jesus Christ was resurrected (Acts 2:24 - Acts 2:31).
1. Faith in these two events resulted in:
- a. The sin debt had been paid for the entire world (John 3:16).
- b. The means of having sins forgiven was offered to the world.
- c. The gift of eternal life was offered to *"whosoever will"* (Romans 6:23).
- II. **The Men who were to take the Message to the World were Identified.**
- A. The Apostles were present (Acts 1:13).
- B. There were a total of about 120 people present (Acts 1:15).
- C. This was the total number of people present when the first New Testament Church started.

- D. The Gospel has not yet been preached to "the uttermost part."
  - 1. You and I "**are the men**" that have the responsibility for continuing the message.

### III. The Method that the Men would use to Share the Message to the World.

- A. It has been stated that the method would be "word of mouth" (Matthew 28:18-20).
- B. It had been stated that it was committed to "the entire group of believers."
- C. It had been stated that there would be a "*special power and ability*" (John 16:7-11).
  - 1. In Acts 1:8 the method is "spelled out."
    - a. "*Ye shall receive power.*"
    - b. "*Ye shall be witnesses unto me.*"

## SIX WORDS THAT EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED AT PENTECOST

### I. Pentecost: Pentecost took place exactly seven full weeks after the Passover.

- A. Pentecost started on the "50th day," which is the first day after 7 weeks after the Passover.
  - 1. For this reason, there was a GREAT multitude of Jews in Jerusalem.
- B. The Disciples were gathered - waiting in an upper room - Picture of NT Church.
  - 1. In one place.
  - 2. In one accord.
- C. The Holy Spirit came on the "day of Pentecost."
  - 1. Exactly 50 days after the resurrection of Christ.
- D. Christ "timed" this perfect in order for a Great multitude of Jews to be in Jerusalem.

### II. Wind: Wind is one of the most powerful forces in the world. (Acts 2:2)

- A. Incarnation: The Holy Spirit "*came upon*" Mary at the Incarnation (Luke 1:35).
- B. Regeneration: (John 3:8)
  - 1. The word "wind" and "Spirit" both come from the same Greek word "pneuma."
- C. The Church had been told, "*ye shall receive power*" (Acts 1:8).
  - 1. **GOD NEVER EXPECTED US TO DO HIS WORK ALONE!**
  - 2. **The "day" that power was given is the "Day of Pentecost."**
  - 3. **It is still present today - the SAME power the Apostles had is with us!**
  - 4. **We have the SAME power to witness as the Apostles had!**

### III. Fire: Pictures "purification."

- A. This was foretold by John in Matthew 3:11.

### VI. Filled: "*...they were ALL filled with the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 2:4).

- A. The word "filled" does not mean, "filled as like a glass of water." (Not quarts and gallons.)
- B. The word "filled" means, "occupied - authority - control."
- C. It was not just the "Apostles" or a select group we call clergy.
  - 1. ALL 120 +/- people were filled.
  - 2. EVERY member of the church is to be filled with the Holy Spirit.



- V. Other Tongues: Speaks of the ability to witness (Acts 2:4)!**
- A. Other Tongues - means "other languages."
  - B. There were 16 different groups of people there on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:8-11).
    - 1. They ALL hear the Gospel in "their own language" (Acts 2:6).
    - 2. **The gift of "Tongues" ceased in I Corinthians 3:8).**
- VI. Dwelling: People there on that occasion (Acts 2:5).**
- A. There was a great Multitude.
    - 1. There were 16 different nations and languages present.
  - B. Those people were....
    - 1. Amazed (Acts 2:12).
    - 2. They accused the disciples of being drunk with wine (Acts 2:13).
    - 3. Drunkenness is still a "picture" of "being filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18).
      - a. A "drunk" is "under the control" of wine.
      - b. A "filled" Christian is "under the control" of the Holy Spirit.

**THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**LESSON #3**  
**THE FIRST MESSAGE PREACHED IN THE CHURCH AGE**  
**Acts 2:14-40**

**INTRO:** The Apostle Peter preached the first sermon that was ever preached by the "church." This is also "the first use of the new power given to the New Testament Church."

**PETER'S THREE POINT MESSAGE**

**The Theme of Peter's message is found in verse 36!**

**Peter DID NOT announce the theme, UNTIL he covered the following three points!**

**This was not a message to "please the people."**

**It used words like crucifixion, resurrection, repentance, baptism, and remission of sins.**

- I. Peter's Explanation of the Power that Came at Pentecost was the Holy Ghost!**  
(Verses 14-21).
  - A. Peter explained "the phenomenon" that the people had seen" (Acts 2:12-13).
    - 1. It was not drunkenness.
      - a. Peter called on the prophet Joel to prove the coming of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:16).
      - b. The Jews held strongly to the Old Testament prophets!
    - 2. The Holy Spirit filled EVERY person present. (About 120)
    - 3. The Jews had "no grounds" upon which to deny **their prophet!**
  - B. The Holy Spirit is a "continuing" power today - 2021!!
    - 1. What would happen today if EVERY person acted as the first 120 acted?
    - 2. The greatest need in the church today is "disciples willing to" - USE THE POWER!
    - 3. We HAVE NOT done the "church's work" until we have "done the work of the church."
      - a. The work of the church is for "EVERY Christian to reproduce other Christians."
- II. Peter Effectually Offered Two Proofs that Jesus Resurrected and was Alive**  
(Verses 22-36).
  - A. The works of Jesus proved He had resurrected from the dead" (Verse 22:24).
    - 1. Peter stated that "...ye yourselves also know..." (Verse 22b).
    - 2. Peter stated that "...ye have taken...and have **crucified**..." (Verse 23).
    - 3. Peter stated that "*God raised him up*" (**Resurrected**) (Verse 24).
  - B. King David testified to the fact that Jesus would be resurrected from the dead (Verses 25-31).
    - 1. The resurrection was "foretold" by David (Psalms 16:8-11).
    - 2. The Jews well knew this prophecy.
    - 3 The Jews "would never reject or doubt" anything King David said!

### III. **The Resurrection proved that Jesus was both Lord and Christ**" (Verse 32 - 36).

- A. Peter again states, "*...we all are witnesses...*"
- B. THEREFORE.... (Verse 33)
  - 1. This proved that "David's prophecy was complete."
  - 2. "*God hath made that same Jesus ... both Lord and Christ*" (Verse 36).
    - a. They knew that truth proved that Jesus was "their Messiah."
- C. This is vitally important and will be referred to in the next section!

### **WHAT SHALL WE DO?** (Acts 2:38)

#### I. **Peter's Response to The People's Question, "What Shall We Do"** (Verses 37-38).

- A. Repent!
  - 1. What Repentance "does not mean":
    - a. It does not mean they repented "because of fear of the consequence."
    - b. A person may desire to "avoid going to Hell," but not change his mind about sin.
  - 2. What Repentance "does mean":
    - a. It means "a change of mind" about sin, a change which produces a "hatred for sin."
    - b. It means "a change of mind" about truths they had previously rejected!
    - c. It means "a change of life" from a "sinful lifestyle to a Godly lifestyle" (I Cor. 5:17).

**EXPLANATION:** Peter's message was directed to the same people who were responsible for the terrible crime of crucifying an innocent man, Jesus. In answer to their question, "What shall we do?" the first step for these people was to repent and to TOTALLY SEPARATE THEMSELVES from this horrible sin, which was produced by "religious hatred." These people and their leaders had rejected John the Baptist and had murdered "their own Messiah." Above all - they need to repent! By saying what he did, Peter said, "They need to show a change of mind about who Jesus was, a change of heart, and a change of actions." They had to show a "deliberate turning" away from their previous conduct, and to "deliberately and publicly" demonstrate that their "repentance" was real and was without question.

- B. Be Baptized!
  - 1. Two Biblical truths that baptism is not essential for Salvation!
    - a. Salvation is "Christ" plus nothing!
    - b. The people in the home of Cornelius "received the Holy Spirit."
      - 1). They did that BEFORE they were baptized (Acts 10:44-48).
    - c. If baptism was necessary for salvation, none of those in Hebrews 11 were saved!
      - 1). **NOT ONE of them was baptized!!!**
  - 2. What baptism WAS in Acts 2:38!

**EXPLANATION:** Baptism, at that time, was different from the baptism of John the Baptist. Baptism in Acts 2:38 was "**in the name of Jesus Christ.**" The great multitude at Jerusalem were devote Jews who totally and publicly rejected Jesus as the Christ. Being baptized was "absolutely essential" to prove to the multitude who were gathered at Jerusalem that they had truly repented, that they had a change of mind about Jesus, that He WAS the Christ. Baptism was necessary, not for salvation, but to "**publicly proclaim**" that (1) their repentance was real, (2) that they were no longer trusting in the "law of Moses, and that (3) they had "accepted Jesus as the Christ," and now believed that He was their Messiah. You have to remember, everyone in that multitude was a "devote Jew" and committed to the law and totally rejected Jesus as their Messiah. Baptism was the "public proof" that by faith, they had "repented and had changed their mind about Jesus."

## **II. This is the Visible Beginning of the First Church Established.**

- A. Verse 41 states: *"They gladly received..."*
- B. Verse 41 states: *"They were baptized..."*
- C. Verse 41 states: *"...there were added unto them about three thousand souls."*
- D. Verse 47 states: *"they were praising God and having favor with all the people - and the Lord added to **the church** daily such as should be saved!"*

### **THE FIRST NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH**

**(Acts 2:41-47)**

#### **I. The Church was Foretold by the Prophets in the Old Testament (Isaiah 2:1-4).**

- A. Isaiah referred to three clear pictures of the New Testament Church.
  - 1. *"...the mountain of the LORD'S house..."* The picture of a "house" far about all other gov't.
  - 2. *"and all nations shall flow unto it."* No other place on earth can make this claim.
  - 3. *"...and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."* This mountaintop house will start in Jerusalem.

#### **II. The Church was Foretold by Christ in the New Testament (Matthew 16:16-18 & Luke 24:44-49).**

- A. There had never been a New Testament church before!
  - 1. This was the first time the world even "heard of a church."
- B. This is the first time humanity had even heard of "The Gospel of Jesus Christ."
  - 1. There were no false preachers.
  - 2. There was no false Gospel.
  - 3. There was no "watered-down" Gospel.
- C. There had never been a more difficult time to start a church.
  - 1. They faced Religious Jews who hated them.
  - 2. They faced Radical Pagans who hated them.

### III. The Church was Built on Seven Principles.

- A. Those seven principles are:
  - 1. The crucifixion of Christ.
  - 2. The resurrections of Christ.
  - 3. The ascension of Christ.
  - 4. The sending of the Holy Spirit by Christ.
  - 5. The repentance and forgiveness of sin by faith in Christ.
  - 6. Salvation in the name of Christ.
  - 7. Baptism by the authority of the church, which was given by Christ.
  
- B. Those seven principles are all found in Acts Chapter 2!
  - 1. This is "the first time" these seven principles are found together and being used!
  
- C. The first church obeyed the command Christ gave to the disciples Matthew 28:19-20!
  - 1. The Great Commission was given to the "disciples of Christ."
    - a. IT WAS NOT GIVEN to any group outside the church!
  - 2. Those disciples evangelized the known world. They did that with...
    - a. No buildings
    - b. No organization
    - c. No radio station
    - d. No television
    - e. No newspaper
    - f. No printing press
    - g. No Bible college
    - h. No advertisement
    - i. No promotions.
    - j. No airplanes
    - k. No buses
    - l. No help from "worldly things."
  - 3. They evangelized the known world by obeying Christ's command.  
*"If I be lifted up... I will draw all men"* (John 12:32).
  - 4. The results of the second message - 5,000 men were saved (Acts 4:4)!
    - a. They went "EVERYWHERE" preaching the Gospel (Acts 8:4).
    - b. They "turned the world up-side-down" (Acts 17:6).

**THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**LESSON #4**  
**THE HISTORY OF THE FIRST CHURCH**  
**Acts 2:42-47**

**I. The Founding of the Church in Jerusalem Brought the Following Results:**

- A. People repented (Verse 2:38). **(Change of mind & life)**
  - 1. New believers were baptized (Verse 2:41).
  - 2. New believers "continue steadfast in church doctrine" (Verse 2:42).
  - 3. New believers "fellowshipped" together.
  - 4. New believers "prayed" together (Verse 2:42). **(Acts 12:5)**
  - 5. New believers "had reverential" fear and respect (Verse 2:43).
  - 6. New believers "cared for one another" (Verse 2:44-45).
  - 7. New believers "began attending church **daily**" (Verse 2:46).
  - 8. New believers "were in one accord" (Verse 2:46).
  - 9. New Believers "were praising the Lord" (Verse 47).
  - 10. New believers "became witnesses for Christ" (Verse 2:47).
- B. These **resulted** in "The Lord adding to the church daily" (Verse 47).

**II. The Faith of the First New Testament Church.**

- A. The early New Testament church based their faith on ...
  - 1. The Crucifixion.
  - 2. The Resurrection.
- B. The Result of their faith was ...
  - 1. Strong enough to Live for.
  - 2. Strong enough to Die for.
  - 3. Strong enough to Produce Action!
- C. What we believe in "determines" how we live.
  - 1. EVERY message in Acts includes the "Crucifixion and the Resurrection."
- D. Their faith was in a "Person."
  - 1. Acts 1:8: "...ye shall be witnesses **unto me**."
  - 2. The working of the Holy Ghost is mentioned 41 times in Acts.
- E. What did the first church believe? "The gates of Hell shall not prevail against their church!"
  - 1. **They showed NO FEAR of people of the world!**

**THE BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH SINCE ACTS 2.**  
**The Book of Acts and the Church are a Continuing story Until Today!**

**I. The New Testament was Completed About 96 AD.**

- A. By the time it was completed - the seven churches listed below had been planted.
  - 1. They were all planted during the 33+ years of the writing of the Book of Acts.

2. They each picture what the churches would be like from 63 AD until 2021.
3. These churches are listed in Revelation Chapters 2 and 3.

B. Each of those churches, **hypothetically speaking**, "wrote a chapter" of the Book of Acts.

1. The church at **Ephesus** wrote Acts Chapter 29 - (Revelation 2:1-7).
  - a. About 33 AD - 100 AD.
  - b. Sound in doctrine but - - - They left their first love.
2. The church at **Smyrna** wrote **Acts Chapter 30** - (Revelation 8-11).
  - a. About 100 AD - 315 AD.
  - b. A period of great persecutions - people ready to die for their faith.
3. The church at **Pergamos** wrote **Acts Chapter 31**- (Revelation 2:12-17)).
  - a. About 315 AD - 605 AD.
  - b. Some willing to suffer - others accepting the world.
  - c. This church broke down the walls of separation (Balaam) – (Revelation 2:14).
4. The church at **Thyatira** wrote **Acts Chapter 32** - (Revelation 2:18-29).
  - a. About 605 AD - 1520 AD.
  - b. Trusting Christ - vs - adding works - Continued false doctrine
  - c. There was a remnant that remained faithful (Revelations 2:24).
5. The church at **Sardis** wrote **Acts Chapter 33** - (Revelation 3:1-6).
  - a. About 1520 AD - 1750 AD.
  - b. They had a name - they were alive but were dead (Revelations 3:1).
  - c. The Protestant Reformation Movement began about 1517 AD.
  - d. Purgatory began about 1593 by the Catholic Church.
6. The church at **Philadelphia** wrote **Acts Chapter 34** - (Revelation 3:7-13).
  - a. 1750 AD - until -- ??? - fading today!
  - b. The Philadelphia church continued but faded until... 1980-90s.
  - c. Missions spread throughout the entire world, China, Japan, Africa, and beyond.
  - d. Adoniram Judson - Hudson Taylor - David Livingston - William Carey.
  - e. There are some "lingering effects" today, but...
7. The church at **Laodicea** wrote **Acts Chapter 35** - (Revelation 3:14-21).
  - a. About 1900 - 1930 +/- AD until today!
  - b. They were - and still are - lukewarm!
  - c. The Church age of Laodicea is the age in which the church is today.  
(More in following section)
8. This church says they are "Rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing!"

- a. This church is "building million dollar launching pads - lighting fire-crackers."
- b. They are "dressed up like a deep-sea diver - pulling stoppers out of bathtubs."

9. You and I are continuing to write Acts Chapter 35!

## THE SADNESS OF THE FIRST CHURCH

### I. Paul Traced the Steps of his First Missionary Journey, 8 years later.

- A. He found:
  - 1. By 54 AD - Apostasy had set in (II Thessalonians 2:3).
  - 2. By 58 AD - A "false gospel had formed" (Galatians 1:6-9).
  - 3. By 63 AD - At the close of the book of Acts, miracles had diminished.
  - 4. By 66 AD - Paul said, *"All those in Asia have turned against me"* (II Timothy 1:15).
  - 5. By 66 AD - There were false teachers in the church (II Timothy 3:1-9 and Jude 1:4).
- B. That led to the "**Neo-Evangelical**" movement which started slowly and silently about the 1900s.
  - 1. The term was coined by **Harold Ockenga** in 1947 - Died in 1985.
  - 2. The Neo-Evangelical movement was started as a "split from Fundamentalism."
  - 3. That movement was designed to make the church "**User Friendly**."
  - 4. Its purpose was "to make people of the world feel comfortable in the church."
    - a. It is a sad commentary on the church when "lost people feel comfortable."
  - 5. About the same time, various "perversions" of the Bible started being printed.
    - a. ASV - 1901
    - b. RSV - 1952
    - c. NASV - 1971
    - d. NIV - 1973
    - e. NKJV - 1982
    - f. ESV - 2001
  - 6. The movement continued from Harold Ockenga 1947 - to Billy Graham – Feb. 2018.
    - a. It was a combination of Liberalism, Modernism, neglect of doctrine.
    - b. It is still in effect today in 2021!
- C. Four major events are yet in the future:
  - 1. The Rapture.
  - 2. The Tribulation Period.
  - 3. The Judgment Seat of Christ.
  - 4. The Great White Throne of Justice.



**THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**LESSON #5**  
**THE SECOND SERMON PREACHED IN THE CHURCH AGE**  
**Acts 3:1-26**

**INTRO:** Acts Chapter Three covers (1) The First Miracle performed in Acts by one of the Apostles, and (2) The second message preached during the "Church age." We will begin our study by looking at the details of the "First Miracle" which was performed, by God, through Peter and John in Acts 3:1-11.

**PETER, JOHN AND THE LAME MAN**

**I. Peter Never Missed "an Opportunity" to Witness of Jesus (Acts 3:1-11).**

- A. This man was born lame from his mother's womb.
  - 1. This man never had a happy day in his life - no playing – no joy or any peace in his life!
    - a. Lost people may have "fun" but they never have "Joy & Peace"
  - 2. He was placed at the gate entering the Temple.
    - a. A place where hundreds of people were passing by daily
    - b. The man was "a beggar" and was asking for "for money"
- B. Peter and John could have easily passed by and "excused themselves" - Going to the Temple!
  - 1. BUT, Peter never missed an opportunity!
  - 2. Peter said, "**Look on us.**" He got the man's attention - because he expected money!
    - a. He had never had anyone say "Look on us" before!
    - b. Do you and I dare say, "**Look on us?**"
- C. Peter declared "**He was broke!**" *"Silver and Gold have I NONE!"*
  - 1. No doubt the man was disappointed!
    - a. But then said to the man "Such as I have - I give!"
  - 2. The man got "a gift" he did not expect!
    - a. Peter said, "in the name of Jesus Christ ... rise up and walk!" (Verse 6)!
    - b. Reached out his right hand to the man and lifted him! (Verse 7)!
      - i. What do you think the man thought???
  - 3. The man "leaped, stood up, walked," and entered the Temple!
    - a. It was not a gradual change. Picture salvation! A changed life (II Corinthians 5:17).
- D. The man immediately started "*walking and praising God*" (Verse 8).
  - 1. The man "immediately" **kept company** with "Believers" (Verse 8:11).
    - a. It showed his life had changed.
    - b. He was clinging to those who led him to Christ (Acts 4:14).
  - 3. The people were astonished (Verse 9-10).
    - a. Why? "*And they knew that it was he ...*"

- b. The "miracle" of salvation should always get people's attention!
  - 4. When the man "passed by the gate" where he had lain (his old life):
    - a. He had NO DESIRE to return to his old way of Life!
- E. Peter was a "Nobody!" How did he change this man's life?
  - 1. *"Such as I have give I thee... In the name of Jesus Christ..."*
    - a. Each of us "have the same thing Peter had!" - **GIVE "Such as we have."**

**Let's look at how important it is "Not to miss an opportunity to Witness."**

## **YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN**

### **D. L. Moody Illustration**

This man's salvation by Peter sharing, "**Such as I have**" led to five thousand plus being saved (Acts 4:4).

### **Acts 3:11-26**

**INTRO:** These verses are the "second message" preached by Peter in the "Church Age." The message covers from the Old Testament Prophecy to the Return of Christ. In the English language it contains 390 words! Reading it very slowly, it takes ONLY about 5 minutes! It magnifies the Word of God and the Power of the Holy Spirit! Preach the Word! (**Heb. 4:12**)

## **PETER'S THREE POINT MESSAGE**

- I. Peter Pointed out that they had Rejected Jesus as their Messiah (Acts 3:12-17).**
  - A. The Sadness of their Actions (Verses 12-13).
    - 1. It was sad "the man they rejected, was worshiped by Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob."
      - a. Those men KNEW the Old Testament Scriptures!
    - 2. Peter plunged the "sword of conviction" deep in their soul.
      - a. They had "REJECTED" Jesus as their Messiah!
        - i. Pilate was going to release Him.
        - ii. The Jews cried "Crucify Him."
  - 3. **Peter forced them to look "face to face" at their sin!**
  - 4. What crime could be any sadder? - **To reject the one your fathers glorified!**
- B. The Seriousness of their Actions (Acts 3:14-15).
  - 1. Jesus was...
    - a. The Holy One (Isaiah 6:3).
    - b. The Just One (John 8:46).
    - c. The Pleasing One (John 8:29).
    - d. The Faultless One (John 18:38).

- e. The Sinless One (I Peter 2:22).
  - 2. They desired a murderer over their Messiah (Verse 14).
    - a. The cried "Crucify Him!" (Jesus)
  - 3. What crime could be more serious? - to murder an innocent man!
- C. The Sinfulness of Their Actions (Acts 3:15).
- 1. This man, Jesus, was the one who "gave them life" (Hebrews 2:10)!
  - 2. Instead of accepting His offer of "eternal life" they cried "crucify him!"
  - 3. What crime could be more sinful??? To murder the very one who gave you life!

## II. Peter Pointed out Three Proofs that God had Raised Up Jesus Christ (Acts 3:15-18).

- A. "...whereof we are witnesses." (Verse 15).
- B. Twelve witnesses **proved** Jesus was resurrected and was alive.
  - - - **Twelve witnesses will stand up in any courtroom!**
  - 1. Mary Magdalene saw Him alive (John 20:11-18).
  - 2. Women at the Sepulcher saw Him alive (Matthew 28:9-10).
  - 3. Peter saw Him alive. (I Corinthians 15:5). Cephas is Peter (John 12).
  - 4. The Twelve saw Him alive (I Corinthians 15:5).
  - 5. Five-hundred people saw Him alive (I Corinthians 15:6).
  - 6. James saw Him alive (I Corinthians 15: 7).
  - 7. Emmaus Road - (Luke 24:13-34).
  - 8. To the ten, minus Thomas (Luke 24:36-43).
  - 9. Thomas and Disciples - (John 20:26-29).
  - 10. Shores of Galilee - (John 21:3-14).
  - 11. His Ascension - (Luke 24:50-51).
  - 12. Paul on the Road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6).
- C. The Miracle **proved** Jesus had resurrected and was their Messiah! (Acts 3:16).
  - 1. Faith in the name of Jesus - caused the lame man to walk! - **"Whom you see and know."**
- D. The Prophecy **proved** that Jesus was alive and was their Messiah. (Acts 17-18)
  - 1. Peter charged the Jews with "Ignorance of the Scriptures."
  - 2. Of all people, the Jews knew that their Messiah would suffer and be crucified.

## III. Peter Pointed out that God has Promised that Jesus Christ would Return (Acts 3:19).

- A. The "time of refreshing" speaks of "before the coming of the Lord" MANY Jews will repent.
  - 1. Prophesied: Deuteronomy 30:1-3; Joel 2:28, Zech. 12:10-14).
  - 2. Revelation verifies that truth (Revelation 7:4-8).

- B. Moses, one of the men whom they greatly admired and trusted, had foretold this (Acts 3:22-26)
  - 1. Deut. 18:15.

#### **THE RESULT OF PETER'S MESSAGE.**

- I. **"One" being saved - Resulted in "over 5000 men being saved".**
  - A. This does not include women and children!
  - B. The number could go as high as 10,000+
- II. **Remember, "The next person you win to Christ - May be another D. L. Moody!"**

**THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**LESSON #6**  
**THE FIRST PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH AND CHRISTIANS**  
**(Please remember - We are part of the church.)**  
**Acts 4:1-33**

**THE SETTING OF THE PERSECUTION.**

The persecution took place in Jerusalem and was against the first church ever established in the entire world. The persecution against the church was led by a religious Jewish group called the Sadducees. In the Gospels the Pharisees were in power and led the first rejection of Christ. The Sadducees were now in power and were leading Israel in the second rejection of Christ. The Sadducees had great wealth and they greatly influenced the Roman Government (Acts 12:1-2).

The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of Christ nor in the super-natural. The resurrection of Christ had proved them wrong. Rather than admit they were wrong, they were determined to destroy the teaching "in Jesus name" from among the nation of Israel. They were confident they could win the conflict, as they were facing no more than "two unlearned and humble fisherman," whom they considered no match for themselves. Also, being the ruling party, they had the Sanhedrin on their side. The Sanhedrin was the same as our "Supreme Court," and was the highest authority in Israel. That group was controlled by the Sadducees.

**THE SOURCE OF THE PERSECUTION**  
**Acts 4:7**

Peter had healed the man sitting at the gate of the Temple, who was lame from his birth. Of all things, the miracle of healing a lame man resulted in this first major persecution of the Church. That was because the Sadducees did not believe in "a super-natural" power that was stronger than their power! As we study, let's keep in mind that we, the church in 2021, are a part of that same church which was in Jerusalem, and we must expect to face the same hatred today that they faced in that day. Keep in mind, the persecution which our "founding fathers" went through for us in that day, was for the sake of the Gospel being preached. Because they "died to self" and let the Holy Ghost control their lives, they fulfilled Ephesians 6:13-18. They won the battle and because of them - we still have a church that has freedom to meet, worship, and preach the Gospel today!

**I. Worrying and Being Jealous Caused the Persecution (Acts 4:2).**

- A. The Greek word "dispono" means "worried."
  - 1. Worried about what?
    - a. The man being healed by super-natural power. (40 years old – Vs. 22)
    - b. The super-natural was done in "the name of Jesus."
  - 2. Their jealousy is found in Acts 5:17 (indignation).
    - a. "*Indignation*" is translated from the Greek word "zelos" and it means "Jealousy!"

**II. Being Proven Wrong Caused the Persecution (Acts 4:10).**

- A. Peter and John "preached the resurrection."
  - 1. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection (Mark 12:18-27).

- B. The resurrection, AT THAT TIME, had "been proved beyond reasonable doubt."

**III. Having a Guilty Conscience Caused the Persecution (Acts 4:10).**

- A. The Sanhedrin apparently realized they had crucified an innocent man.  
1. They made no reply to the statement of Peter in Verse 10.
- B. There was a hatred of religion toward anyone following Jesus Christ.

**TODAY THE NAME JESUS IS HATED, AND PERSECUTION WILL CONTINUE!**

**THE SANHEDRIN ARE LEFT SPEECHLESS!**

**I. The Question asked Peter by the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:7).**

- A. "*By what power, or by what name, have you done this?*"  
1. They revealed their motive!!!

**II. The Answer by Peter to the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:8)!**

- A. He answered respectfully and with no sign of anger (Verse 8)!
1. "*Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel.*"
  2. "*...if we be examined of this good deed...*"
    - a. Are you saying it is wrong to do something good???
  3. "*...by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth...*"
    - a. You want to know where the power came from? "*It came from Jesus Christ...*"
    - b. Who is this Jesus? You know well enough who he is - "*He is the man...*"
  4. "*...Whom ye crucified...*"
    - a. What boldness!
  5. "*...Whom God raised for the dead...*"
  6. "*...by him doth this man stand here before you whole*" (Acts 4:14).
    - a. They KNEW the truth of the miracle (Verse 16)!
- B. Peter continued his response to their question...
1. "*...This is the stone which was set at nought by you builders*" (Verse 11).
    - a. They KNEW that phrase - (Psalms 118:22).
  2. "*Neither is there salvation in any other... name...*" (Verse 12).
    - a. The resurrection of Jesus was a proven fact.
    - b. This rebuked their teaching of "keeping the law."
- C. The Sanhedrin acknowledged that this poor, unlearned man had "been with Jesus." (Vs. 13)
1. No higher compliment could be paid!
  2. God uses "*weak things to confound the mighty*" (I Corinthians 1:27).
- D. **What made the difference in Peter on this occasion compared to Luke 22:55-60?**
1. Peter was "Filled with the Holy Ghost" (Verse 8).
  2. The Holy Ghost empowered Peter to fulfill Ephesians 6:11-13.
    - a. **Peter was BOLD with no fear and with no apology!**

3. **You have the SAME power available to you** (Ephesians 5:18)!
4. **Will you and I let the Holy Spirit change our lives like He changed Peter???**

**III. The Sanhedrin commanded that Peter and John were not to speak or teach in Jesus' name (Acts 4:18).**

- A. Peter knew that they claimed to "strongly believe in God."
  1. Therefore, Peter gave them a choice, "**obey them or obey God.**"
    - a. **They made no response.**

**THE SURPRISING RESPONSE TO PERSECUTION**

**I. Peter and John "Reported" to Their Own Company (Their sending church) (Acts 4:23).**

- A. The Church responded in three manners (Verses 23-26).
  1. They "lifted up their voice in one accord..."
  2. They "acknowledged God as the creator of the heaven, earth, and sea and all that is in them."
  3. They "rejoiced that they had seen the prophecy of David fulfilled" (Psalms 2)!
- B. The "multitude" prayed, and the place was shaken (Verse 29-31).
  1. That is proof that...
    - a. God heard their prayer.
    - b. God gave them great joy.
    - c. God answered their prayer.
    - d. God delivered them "in the midst of persecution."
    - e. God worked "all things for their good" (Romans 8:28).
- C. Persecution "strengthened their faith and greatly increased their **boldness** to witness (Acts 4:33).
  1. ***"They that suffer with Christ shall reign with Christ"*** (II Timothy 2:12).

**THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**LESSON #7**  
**THE FIRST RECORDED SIN IN THE CHURCH**  
**HYPOCRISY!**  
**Matthew 23:28**

**INTRO:** Chapter Four concluded with great unity and dedication. The members had "all things common." (Acts 4:33) They had "great power" and "great grace." (Acts 4:34) No one lacked the things they needed to live. Those that had possessions, as land, sold the land and placed the money at the feet of the Apostles for distribution to those in need. Acts 5:1 begins "*But...*" which is generally "the hinge" which brings about change in the church.

**SATAN STRIKES AGAIN!**  
**Acts 5:1-10**

**I. Ananias & Sapphira's Deliberate Deception (Acts 5:1-2).**

- A. It appears they were trying to "get in the spotlight" with Barnabas. (Acts 4:36)
  - 1. Ananias and Sapphira sold a possession - land (Verse 8).
  - 2. They met together in their home and decided to keep part of the price.
    - a. God heard the discussion! - As always!
  - 3. Ananias claimed they were giving it all (Verses 2-3).
- B. Satan is always behind deception in the church (Acts 5:3).
  - 1. That started in the Garden of Eden and continues until today (I Timothy 2:14).
- C. The Church is safe as long as Satan is attacking "From the Outside" (Matthew 16:18).
  - 1. Gates of Hell shall not prevail!!!
  - 2. When Satan attacks "from the inside," the church is in danger.
  - 3. This was "the first attack on the church" that came from within!
- D. They forgot that the Holy Spirit was in that Meeting (Acts 5:3)!
- E. How sad that people fail to remember that the "Holy Spirit is 'in us and with us at all times'!"

**II. Peter Exercised "the Spirit of Discernment" (I Corinthians 12:10)!**

- A. Peter discerned and declared, "*Thou has not lied unto men, but unto God*" (Verse 4).
  - 1. These were the last words Ananias heard on earth!  
**SERIOUS!**
  - 2. He never got to enjoy "one penny" of the money he kept by deception!

**III. Sapphira "When She Got What She Wanted - She Did Not Want What She Got" (Acts 5:7-10)!**

- A. Peter gave her every possible opportunity "to have a second chance."



1. He asked her, *"Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much?"*
    - a. She answered, *"Yes, for so much!"*
  2. The last words Sapphira heard on earth is recorded in Acts 5:7-10!
- B. Sin will always take you: -Further than you meant go.
- Leave you longer than you intended to stay.
  - Cost you more than you want to pay!
- C. Never cause the Holy Spirit to choose between "His wisdom and power and His mercy and grace!"
1. The church needed a serious warning - we need to heed the warning today!

## **WHY WAS THIS SO SERIOUS AND WAS SWIFT DISCIPLINED?**

### **Acts 5:5 & 10**

#### **I. The Holy Spirit Acted Swiftly! - He did Something the Lord Jesus Had Never Done!**

- A. He "struck down a human being in judgment - and did it SUDDENLY" (Acts 5:5)!
- B. When such discipline happens - the church needs to "sit up and take notice!"
  1. Sodom & Gomorrah (Genesis 19).
  2. Uzzah - for touching the ark (II Samuel 6:7).

#### **II. The Sudden and Serious Discipline Accomplished Four Things in the Church.**

- A. Great fear came upon the church (reverential fear) (Verses 5 & 11).
  1. Sadly missing in churches today!
- B. It taught the people how serious it is to lie to the Holy Spirit.
- C. It taught the people how serious it is to "exalt one's self!"
- D. It taught the people that "the love of money is the root of all evil" (I Timothy 6:10).

#### **III. Why Did the Holy Spirit Act in Sudden and Serious Judgment???**

- A. Because "intentional sin in the church" quenches the Holy Spirit (Extinguished).
  1. *Him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not - sin!* (James 4:17)
  2. When this happens - you will not feel the Holy Spirit's presence!
  3. Sin was judged and removed!!!
- B. Sin Removed! - "Holy Spirit was Free to Bless and to add to the Church (Acts 5:11-14)!"

#### **IV. Great Fear Came Upon All the Church (Verse 11).**

#### **V. The Church, the House of God, is a Holy Place! - Let people beware!**

- A. People come to church today - they talk more about the world than they do the Lord.
  1. Today, "great fear does not come on the church!"
- B. Christians should come to church "and act like" it is God's House!
  1. How will we act when we "appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ?"

## THE SECOND PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANITY

### Acts 5:17-42

#### I. Why Were the Apostles Arrested and Put in Prison?

- A. The Religious leaders were angry because "the Apostles obeyed God instead of them" (Acts 5:28).
  - 1. This was CONTRARY even TO THEIR OWN BELIEFS ABOUT GOD!

#### II. What and Who Delivered the Apostles from Prison (Acts 5:19)?

- A. Their Faith delivered them.
  - 1. The Apostles had been raised believing the Old Testament.
- B. They no doubt remembered:
  - 1. God delivered Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (Daniel 3:17).
  - 2. God delivered Daniel from a den of lions (Daniel 6:22).
- C. **God has promised** us the same deliverance **(II Timothy 4:18)**.

#### III. The Apostles did not "Ask for Deliverance, but ...

- A. God Knows what we have need of before we ask (Matthew 6:8).

#### IV. The Church and all Christians have been Warned of Coming Persecution.

- A. Jesus warned of at least two things:
  - 1. Jesus warned: If they hate you, it is because they hated me first (John 15:18).
  - 2. Jesus warned: "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:20).
    - a. They will kill you and think they are doing God a service.
  - 3. Remember: Psalms 2:4 "God is laughing at them!"

## THE RESULTS OF THE PERSECUTION

#### I. The Apostles Rejoiced that "they were Counted Worthy to Suffer Shame for his Name" (Verse 41).

- A. Many Christians will not even "hand a person a Gospel tract" for fear the person will laugh or rebel.

#### II. The Apostles *"Daily ... ceased not to Teach and Preach Jesus Christ"* (Verse 42).

**THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**Lesson #8**  
**WHY DEACONS ARE VITALLY IMPORTANT**  
**Acts 6:1-7**

**INTRO:** There had been a "sin" problem in the church involving Ananias & Sapphira about lying to God. Chapter Six of Acts is a different type of problem. It covers a problem within the church.

- I. The "Word "serve" in Acts 6:2 comes from the Greek Word "Diakoneo"!**
  - A. It means "an attendant - a minister - a host - a servant".
  - B. This same word, "Diakoneo" is found 28 times in the New Testament.
    - 1. In each case, it is translated "Servant - Minister - Deacon".
  - C. The seven men selected were later called "Deacons".
  
- II. The Purpose for Appointing Deacons (Acts 6:1).**
  - A. When the church was small, the Apostles apparently took care of all needs.
    - 1. The Apostles were "doing it all".
  - B. Now, the small church had grown from 120 to above 10,000.
    - 1. The Apostles **DID NOT HAVE TIME** to "do it all"!
  
- III. The Qualification of Men who would be Selected as "Servers" (Deacons) – (Acts 6:3 & 5).**
  - A. They must be men "full of the Holy Ghost" (Verse 3) - (Ephesians 3:18).
  - B. They must be men "full of faith" (Verse 5) - (I Timothy 3:13).
  
- IV. The "Deacons" in any church should be Examples of "Faithful, Spirit-Filled Men" (Verse 5).**
  - A. They should picture "men of faith".
  - B. They should picture "men controlled by the Holy Spirit".
  
- EXAMPLE: Stephen's Life "Demonstrated" Faith and The Filling of the Holy Ghost.**
  - A. Stephen did not preach because he was a "deacon".
    - 1. He preached because he was a "Christian". (Like Christ.)
  - B. He "did great wonders and miracles" among the people (Acts 6:8).
  - C. He "witnessed to the people with great wisdom" (Acts 6:10).
  
- V. The Reason Deacons are Vitally Important.**
  - A. Deacons are NOT important "because they serve tables - witness or preach," but they should!
  - B. Deacons are NOT important "because they have Deacon's meetings".
  - C. The Apostles said...
    - 1. ***"It is not reason that WE should leave the Word of God, and serve tables"*** (Verse 2).
    - 2. The Apostles DID NOT HAVE TIME to "serve" tables.
    - 3. The Apostles were called by God to "pray and to minister the word".

- D. Deacons are VITALLY IMPORTANT because...
  - 1. They RELIEVE the pastor of doing THINGS THAT GOD DID NOT CALL HIM TO DO!
  - 2. This allows Apostles/pastors to "DEVOTE THEMSELVES TO PRAYER AND MINISTRY"!
- E. No pastor is able to be prepared efficiently to teach and preach to their church 4-5 times a week ...
  - 1. If they have to do all the things necessary in the organization and upkeep of the church.
  - 2. A pastor's calling is to "prepare and to pray".
- F. If a deacon serves according to the scriptures, he receives rewards compared to the pastor!

**VI. The Seven men selected were (Acts 6:5):**

- A. Stephen      B. Philip      C. Prochorus      D. Nicanor      E. Timon
- F. Parmenas      G. Nicolas

**THE FIRST DEACON BECAME THE FIRST MARTYR OF THE CHURCH**

**I. Stephen's "Answer" when the High Priest asked, "*Are These Things So*" (Acts 7:1)?**

- A. He was gentle and respectful in answering their question (Acts 7:2).
- B. He pointed them to the men they trusted and based their beliefs on:
  - 1. Abraham (**Acts 7:1-8**).
    - a. They claimed to be "children" of Abraham.
    - b. He explained that Abraham was "not saved by circumcision or by the law".
    - c. He explained that Abraham was "saved by grace and faith" (Romans 4:1-8).
  - 2. Joseph (**Acts 7:9-19**).
    - a. Joseph was "God sent" to their fathers as their deliverer. (A type of Christ.)
    - b. Joseph's brethren rejected him, hated him, and would not accept him the first time.
    - c. God used Joseph to deliver them from famine.
    - d. The "second time" they accepted him (Verse 13).
  - 3. Moses (**Acts 7:20-36**).
    - a. Moses was "God sent" to deliver their fathers from the bondage of Egypt.
    - b. The Jews in bondage rejected Moses the "first time" (Exodus 2:11-22).
    - c. When Moses came to them "the second time" they accepted him (Acts 7:35).

(Joseph and Moses illustrate how Israel rejected Jesus Christ, whom "God sent" to them to be their "deliverer!")

- C. He pointed out that they had disobeyed their own law (**Acts 7:40-43**).  
1. Contrary to their law - they asked Aaron to make them idols (**Verse 40**).
- D. He pointed out that they had desecrated the Temple of God (**Acts 7:40-50**).  
1. They brought idols into the Temple which Solomon built (**II Kings 21:1-9**).
- E. He pointed out that they had despised the prophecies of their own prophets (**Acts 7:51-53**).

## **II. Stephen was Stoned to Death for "Being Honest, Doing Good, Being Godly"** (Acts 7:54-60).

- A. What type of world do we live in, when they stone such a man as Stephen?
- B. Those who stoned him to death - had SEEN him - as an angel (Acts 6:15)!
- C. They "knew" he was a good and godly man!

### **THE RESULTS OF STEPHEN BEING STONED TO DEATH** **Acts 7:54-60**

**INTRO:** The results show that Stephen, the first deacon, had been "conformed" to the likeness of God's Son, Jesus Christ (Romans 8:29).

#### **I. What Were the Results "for Stephen" (Acts 7:54-56)?**

- A. Stephen saw "the Glory of God"!
- B. Stephen saw "the Son of Man" - STANDING on God's right hand to welcome him.
- C. Stephen heard "Jesus Christ confess him" to the Father (Luke 12:8).
- D. Stephen received "grace from God to ask forgiveness" for those who murdered him!
- E. Stephen received "A Crown of Glory" (Revelation 2:10).

**Missionary Jim Elliot** was martyred in the Amazon jungle by the Auca Indians in 1948. After his death, they found a diary he had kept for years. In the diary were found these words:

***"A man is no fool to give that which he cannot keep, to gain that which he cannot lose."***

#### **II. What Were the Results "For the Church" (Acts 8:1-4)?**

- A. It freed the church to go to "the Samaritan" (Verse 1).
- B. It freed the church to preach the Gospel "around the world" (Verse 4).

### **III. What Were the Results "for Israel"?**

- A. Israel was blinded to the truth by God.
  - 1. This is the last time the phrase "Son of Man" is used until Revelation (Acts 7:56).
    - a. Revelation is where the eyes of the Jews are opened (Revelation 1:13 and 14:14).
- B. Israel was "set aside" by God until the Tribulation Period.

**CLOSING NOTE:** This is the pattern that deacons and all Christians should follow (I Corinthians 10:31)!

**THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**Lesson #9**  
**GOD'S GRACE FOR EVERY RACE**  
**Acts 8 - 9 - 10**

**INTRO:** The Church in Jerusalem was established about 29 AD. Acts Chapter 8 took place about 35 AD. The church started with "about 124 people" (Acts 1:15). There were "about 3000" added in Acts 2:41. There were "about 5000 men" added in Acts 4:4. The Scriptures make a point that those 5000 were "men." There is no recorded number of women in that number. It is reasonable to estimate that there may have been "at least 5000" others added. The church in Acts 8 may have grown to "about, or at least, 13,000-15,000 plus members." Acts Chapter 8 opens with "**Saul continuing to persecute the church.**"

**SAUL'S PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH**

- I. Saul, the Great Enemy of the Church** (Acts 8:1-3).
  - A. Saul was "present" when Stephen was stoned (Verse 1).
  - B. Saul continued to "make havock (lomainomai in Greek) of the church" (Verse 3).
    - 1. Meaning: Break, wreck, tear apart, or dismember."
- II. Saul's Persecution Produced the Exact Opposite of what Saul and the Pharisees Intended!**
  - A. Acts 8:1 describes Saul's actions as "*Great Persecution.*"
  - B. Saul was determined to destroy the church (Acts 9:1-2).
- III. Saul's Persecution Produced the "First Mission Movement" of a church** (Acts 8:4).
  - A. Church members were "scattered abroad!"
  - B. They "*went everywhere preaching the Word.*" (See Acts 11:19-21.)
  - C. A better "English" understanding of the above phrase is "*preached everywhere they went.*"
    - 1. Phenice (Phoenicia) and Antioch were about 300 miles north of Jerusalem.
    - 2. Cyprus is an island about 200 miles from Jerusalem.
      - a. About 150 miles off the coast in the Mediterranean Sea.
- IV. Saul's Persecution Resulted in "The Gospel Being Preached "to every Race"** (Acts 8,9,10).

**EVERY PERSON ALIVE TODAY CAN BE TRACED TO NOAH'S THREE SONS!**

(See Genesis 6:10 and Genesis 10:32.)

**Three men in Chapters 8, 9, & 10 represent the "Three Races of the World Today."**

**Ham** - Represents the Negroid Race - Africa (Acts 8:26-35).

**Shem** - Represents the Mongoloid Race - Middle East (Acts 9:1-6).

**Japheth** - Represents the Caucasian Race - Europe & USA (Acts 10:1-6).

**In Chapters 8, 9, and 10, the Grace of God is Illustrated to ALL People in the world.**

**I. All of These Three Races had Four Things in Common.**

**A. Common Problem #1:**

1. They did not have a Culture Problem.
2. They did not have an Environment Problem.
3. They did not have a Poverty Problem.  
The Fed Gov. and the UN have spent billions "TREATING THE SYMPTOMS".
4. They all had a "Sin" problem (Romans 8:23) - The result of sin is – (Romans 5:12).  
A. Sin is slaying over 153,408 people every day. **(1.8 per second.)**  
**(6,000 during our class today)**

**B. Common Problem #2:**

1. All three were in search of God.
  - a. The Ethiopian - Africa - traveled to Jerusalem to worship (Acts 8:27-28).
  - b. Paul - Israel - devoted to Religion (Acts 9:1-3) **(Acts 22:1-3).**
  - c. Italian - Gentile - feared God and prayed (Acts 10:1-2).
2. Every person in the world is "searching for God."
3. Tribes in Jungle - worship and pray.
4. **Remember**, those in white shirts and ties - searching for something.  
Peace - happiness - satisfaction with life...

**C. Common Problem #3:**

1. Nothing they found could satisfy the problem or need in their life.
  - a. Ethiopian Ham Money (Acts 8:27) (Bezlos - Gates)
  - b. Paul (Jew) Shem Religion (Acts 9:1-3) Muslims
  - c. Cornelis Japheth Power (Acts 10:1) Clinton

**D. Common Problem #4:**

1. All three men had their problems solved by Jesus.
  - a. Ethiopian Ham Acts 8:35 Jesus Christ
  - b. Paul Shem Acts 9:5-6 Jesus Christ
  - c. Cornelis Japheth Acts 10:36 Jesus Christ

No other name under Heaven whereby we must be saved (Romans 5:12).  
No other religion can meet their need.  
Hindu - Airport in Detroit - "No Provision for his sin."

**GOD'S PLAN TO MEET THEIR NEED**  
**(Acts 1:8)**

**I. God plans to meet their need by using "one common group" THE CHURCH.**

- |    |           |         |            |                      |
|----|-----------|---------|------------|----------------------|
| A. | Ethiopian | Ham     | Acts 8:29  | God used a Deacon.   |
| B. | Paul      | Shem    | Acts 9:10  | God used a Layman.   |
| C. | Cornelis  | Japheth | Acts 10:20 | God used a Preacher. |



**II. God had a "common" plan to meet their need.**

- |    |                                 |                             |               |
|----|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| A. | God said to Philip, the deacon  | <i>"Arise and go..."</i>    | (Acts 8:26).  |
| B. | God said to Ananias, the layman | <i>"Arise and go..."</i>    | (Acts 9:11).  |
| C. | God said to Peter, the preacher | <i>"Arise and ...go..."</i> | (Acts 10:20). |

**III. God has a "common" plan for EVERY MEMBER OF EVERY CHURCH.**

- A. *"Here am I; send me."* (Isaiah 6:8) (Romans 12:1-2).
- B. Give, that others may go (Romans 10:15) (Luke 6:38).
- C. Pray for God to call forth laborers (Matthew 9:38).

*"Pray ye therefore that the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest."*

**Dedicate Yourself to the Cause of Christ.**  
***"How shall they hear without a preacher?"***  
**(Romans 10:14)**

**THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**Lesson #10**  
**GOD USES "THINGS WHICH ARE NOT!"**  
**(No Bodies)**  
**(Acts 9:1-6)**

**INTRO:** Saul's Salvation was the most Amazing Salvation Ever Recorded (Acts 9:1-6)! Saul's testimony of salvation is given three times: Acts 9, 22 & 26. Those will be discussed as we go through the lesson. To begin, we want to look at:

**I. Who is This Man "Saul of Tarsus" Who Persecuted the Church?**

- A. The Things Saul was Before Salvation (Philippians 3:4-6).
  - 1. Saul was circumcised the eighth day.
  - 2. Of the stock of Israel.
  - 3. Of the tribe of Benjamin.
  - 4. A Hebrew of the Hebrews.
  - 5. As touching the law, a Pharisee.
  - 6. Concerning zeal, persecuting the church.
  - 7. Touching the righteousness, which is in the law, blameless.
- B. The things Saul was in a practical way of life.
  - 1. Saul was Devoted to God.
    - a. He thought he was "doing God a favor" to persecute the Church.
  - 2. Saul was Religious.
    - a. *"...after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee"* (Acts 26:5).
  - 3. Saul was Educated.
    - a. He was a man of "great learning" (Acts 26:24).
- C. The things Saul was changed to after Salvation (II Corinthians 5:17):
  - 1. Saul to Paul.
  - 2. Sinner to Saint.
  - 3. Religious to Righteous.
  - 4. Haught Slander to Humble Servant.
  - 5. Mocker and Murderer to Missionary.
  - 6. Greatest Persecutor to Greatest Preacher.
  - 7. Greatest Enemy of Christ to Greatest Exalter of Christ.
- D. The things Saul/Paul was and did after salvation (Verse 15):
  - 1. "Saul was chosen of God" (John 15:16).
    - a. Saul had been "apprehended by God for a special purpose" (Philippians 3:12).
  - 2. Saul would preach the Gospel to the Gentiles.
  - 3. He would preach to kings (Acts 9:15).
  - 4. He would preach to the entire nation of Israel (Acts 9:15).

5. He was the "human penman" for 13 Epistles in the Bible.
  - a. Those 13 books cover the organization, doctrine, and lifestyle of the church.
6. By the end of Paul's life, he is believed to be the greatest Christian on record!

## II. **A Certain Disciple Named Ananias Who was in Damascus** (Acts 9:10-11).

- A. Ananias had heard of Saul of Tarsus but had never seen him (Verse 13-14).
  1. The Lord called Ananias by name and said, "*arise and go*" (Verse 11).
  2. Ananias was "available" but not "anxious" (Acts 9:10, 13 and 14).
    - a. God spoke to Ananias about going to help Paul.
    - b. Ananias attempted to "make an excuse."
      1. Many times God speaks to us about witnessing.
      2. We make "excuses" and justify not witnessing!
  3. When God "speaks to us about speaking to another person ..."
    - a. You can be assured that God has prepared that person's heart. (Acts 9:12)
- B. What Ananias did when God sent him to Saul:
  1. He put his hands on Saul, and called him, "Brother Saul..." (Verse 17).  
(Obedience)
  2. Saul received sight, filling of Holy Ghost, baptized, and preached (Verse 18-20).
  3. Imagine the surprise and blessing that was to Ananias!!!
- C. Who was Ananias?
  1. Ananias was a "common disciple" (I Corinthians 1:28).
  2. His name had never been mentioned before Acts 9:10.
  3. He is mentioned once more in Acts 22:12 when Paul was giving his testimony.
    - a. To Paul, Ananias was very important!!!
    - b. Ananias is never mentioned or referred to again.
  4. Ananias' name has been recorded in the "Inspired Word of God".
    - a. His name has been read thousands of times over 2000 plus years.
    - b. He has become part of the history of the Apostle Paul.
    - c. He has become part of the history of the New Testament Church.
  5. He has become a part of the ministry of Paul everywhere Paul is studied.
  6. He will receive rewards in Heaven for all Paul did throughout eternity!
- D. Who was Ananias?
  1. Ananias was among "*things which are not*" meaning never heard of" (I Cor. 1:28)!
    - a. If it had not been for Saul's salvation, we would never have heard of Ananias.
    - b. Behind many "well-known, big name" Godly men are "disciples, who helped."
    - c. God used Ananias in a great way to "form Saul's early life".
- E. How does Ananias' life apply to our life?
  1. We should never be afraid to obey God's Word and the Holy Spirit's leadership.

- a. When God speaks to you, "Realize that God is in control."
  - b. Realize that God is working in the heart of the other person.
2. Never underestimate the value of witnessing to "one person."

### **ILLUSTRATION:**

On April 21, 1855 a Sunday School teacher led one of the boys in his class to Christ. That young man's name was D. L. Moody. D. L. Moody was preaching in the pulpit of the distinguished Englishman, F. B. Myer. Mr. Moody's English was bad, and F. B. Myer was glad when he finished. The next day Mr. Myer was visiting a group of ladies who had met at his church for lunch. One of the ladies ran up to him and said, "Oh, Pastor, when Mr. Moody spoke yesterday, God so spoke to my heart and I went out this morning and led three girls in my Sunday School who were not saved, to Christ." Mr. Myer said in his heart, "I learned to speak the language that 'the people understand!'" Two years later, F. B. Myer was preaching in the Philadelphia College of the Bible. He closed his message by saying, "Young man, you are here today, but you are discouraged in the ministry, and you are ready to quit." He continued by saying, "If you are, come to this altar and die to self, and let 'God do it through you.'" Wilbur Chapman said, "I was that young man." He went to the altar and gave his life to God. Chapman traveled the country preaching. He hired a man named Billy Sunday to travel with him and helped arrange each meeting. When Chapman got too old to travel, Billy Sunday "Took Chapman's notes" and continued traveling and preaching. In 1926, he was preaching in an outdoor football stadium in North Carolina. At one of the meeting nights, Mordecai Haman came forward, trusted Christ and surrendered to preach. Mordecai Haman preached for 40 years, and thousands were saved.

I feel sure that most Christians know the names of D. L. Moody, F. B. Myer, Wilbur Chapman, Billy Sunday, Mordecai Haman. But how many know the name of the Sunday School teacher who God used to "start this unbeliever chain of men" who preached to literally millions? His name was Edward Kimball! Few have ever known or heard his name. God knew Edward Kimball! His name is written in "God's book of Remembrance"(Malachi 3:16)! Edward Kimball has a part in that long line of preachers that began in 1885! Remember, the next person you witness to may be another D. L. Moody!

### **THE THEME OF PAUL'S LIFE FROM SALVATION, UNTIL HIS DEATH**

- I. Paul realized that God had "Apprehended him for a Purpose"** (Philippians 3:12-14).
  - A. Realizing that, Paul "pressed toward the mark for the high calling in Christ Jesus."
- II. Realize that God "Apprehended You" for a Purpose.**
  - A. Realizing that truth, you should "press toward the mark," as Paul did.
    1. Under the inspiration of God, Paul wrote...
      - a. *"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."* (I Corinthians 11:1).

**THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**Lesson #11**  
**ANOTHER FIRST IN THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**(Acts Chapter 11)**

**INTRO:** In Genesis 12:1-3, more than 4000 years ago, God promised that "the gospel of faith" would be preached to the Gentiles. That promise is clearly verified in Galatians 3:8. *"And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."* As shared before, Acts is a book of transition. A number of things changed in the Book of Acts. This is one of those changes and it was one of the "major" changes from Genesis 12 unto today!

- A. **4000 years later**, God uses Peter to open the door to the Gentiles (Acts 10-11).
- B. Acts 10 & 11 take place about 10 years after Pentecost.
  - 1. Pentecost took place about 30 AD.
  - 2. Acts 10 took place about 40 AD.

**THE CRITICISM PETER RECEIVED**  
**(Acts 11:1-3)**

- I. Peter was charged with the most serious of the Jewish religion.**
  - A. He had eaten with uncircumcised Gentiles (Verse 3).
    - 1. They would have excommunicated him!

**PETER RECOUNTS THE LEADING OF GOD**  
**(Acts 11:4-12)**

- I. The Jews were Silenced!**
  - A. They saw that Peter had been praying (Acts 11:4-5).
    - 1. He had not acted in "self-will."
    - 2. He was acting on the leading of the Holy Spirit (Acts 11:12).
  - B. They knew the dietary laws of Leviticus 11.
    - 1. The "sheet" descended from Heaven with **unclean beasts...**
      - a. Was pronounced "Clean" by God!" (Acts 11:9-10)
    - 2. They also knew the meaning of "three times"(Ecclesiastes 4:12)!
      - a. In Israel, "threefold" established a "truth from God."
  - C. Peter closed his case by saying, *"What was I, that I could withstand God?"* (Acts 11:17)
  - D. Years later, Paul explained the "one-body" of believing Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 2:11-3:12).

## **GOD PREPARES CORNELIUS' HEART**

- I. The Heart of Cornelius Was Prepared by God in a "Vision"** (Acts 11:13-14).
  - A. Cornelius was religious but lost!
    - 1. He was "searching" for God - doing all he could to find peace with God (Acts 10:2).
      - a. "... *in thy light shall we see light*" (Psalms 36:9).
  - Example: Jim Curtis - New Tribes Mission**
  - B. Today, God stills convicts men's heart in the same way.
  - C. When we do our part - **God ALWAYS does His part!**

## **GOD PREPARED PETER'S HEART**

- I. The Heart of Peter Was Prepared by God in a "Vision"** (Acts 10:9-16).
  - A. God's vision gave Peter understanding of the Scriptures.
    - 1. There was "No difference between Jew and Gentile" (Romans 10:12).
  - B. Peter's response to God's Vision was "*Not so, Lord!*"
    - 1. "You can say: "Not so," and then say, "Lord."
      - a. Peter "*doubted...*" (Verse 17). - (He was perplexed.) **BUT...**
    - IMPORTANT: Peter obeyed, went** (Acts 10:34-36).
    - 2. What would have happened if Peter had not obeyed???
      - a. We will never know, because it is "not for us to know."
  - C. When God impresses on us to "witness" **what is our part?**
    - 1. We are "to obey!"

## **PETER SEES THE LIGHT**

- I. Peter was "Perplexed" (doubting) about What God was Doing** (Acts 10:17).
  - A. He was confused and doubting the vision God sent him.
- II. Peter "Petitioned" Cornelius about why he Requested him to Come to Joppa** (Acts 10:28-29).
  - A. Cornelius had prayed and asked God to show him how to be saved (Acts 10:2 & 11:14).
    - 1. Peter was not aware of that prayer.
- III. Peter "Perceived" that God Was Fulfilling His Promise to Abraham** (Acts 10:34-38)!

## **GENTILES ARE ACCEPTED BY THE JEWS AND BY THE CHURCH FOR THE FIRST TIME**

- I. The Jews Accepted the Gentiles and Glorified God** (Acts 11:18).
- II. The Jerusalem Church Accepted and Sent Help to the Gentiles.**

- A. The church sends Barnabas to help the new Gentile brethren (Acts 11:19-26).

**BARNABAS - A PATTERN FOR US TO FOLLOW**  
*"For he was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith."*  
**Acts 11:24**

**I. Barnabas was an Obedient Man** (Acts 4:36).

- A. No land was given to the Levites (Joshua 13:33 - 14:3).  
B. Barnabas Obeyed - We are to obey!  
    1. We are commanded to die to Self. Romans 12:1-2  
    2. We are commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:1  
    3. We are commanded to witness. Acts 1:8

**II. Barnabas was a Generous Man** (Acts 4:35-37).

- A. Tithe is not being generous. (It belongs to God.)  
    1. Generosity is found in II Corinthians 9:6-7.

**III. Barnabas was a Humble Man** (Acts 11:25).

- A. Barnabas sent for Paul - He knew Paul had more to offer.  
B. Many today would have built "The First Baptist Church of Antioch!"  
C. Key: Philippians 2:3 (Freely Received - Freely Give – Matt. 6:20-21.)

**IV. Barnabas was a Helpful Man** (Acts 9:26-29).

- A. He went and helped Paul be accepted.  
B. Today, churches have "clicks."  
    1. We need to understand the Scriptures (I Corinthians 12:18-25).  
        a. "...no schism." (No Division.)  
C. Every Christian should always be looking for someone they can help.

**V. Barnabas was an Encourager of the Brethren** (Acts 4:36).

- A. The brethren saw him and changed his name.  
    1. Be thou an example (I Timothy 4:12).  
    2. Exhort one another (Hebrews 3:13).  
    3. That is the purpose of the church (Hebrews 10:25).  
B. If the people of your church were going to change your name, ...  
    "...What would they change it to???"

## A NEW NAME FOR BELIEVER

### Lesson # 12

#### "THE DISCIPLES WERE CALLED CHRISTIANS FIRST IN ANTIOCH"

(Acts 11:26)

**INTRO:** Up until this time, all of those who had received Christ had been referred to as "those of this way." (Acts 9:2). In Verse 26, those people were given a new name; "Christians."

**I. The Name "Christian" is only used three times in the New Testament.**

- A. Acts 11:26 - Used by the people in Antioch after watching their lifestyle.
- B. Acts 26:28 - Used by Agrippa to Paul.
- C. I Peter 4:16 - *"If any man suffer as a Christian..."*

**II. To be Worthy of Being called a "Christian" is to Have Certain Qualities in your Life.**

- A. It should not be based on "What we believe" but "what we do and how we act."

#### THE COMBINING OF NINE NAMES DETERMINES IF WE ARE A CHRISTIAN

**I. Disciples (Act 11:26).**

- A. The word "disciple" comes from the Greek word "mathetes."
  - 1. It means, "a learner - a pupil - a follower."
  - 2. A "disciple" is one who is "continually growing and learning.
  - 3. It is not just coming to Sunday School! It is done by study (II Timothy 2:15).
- B. It begins the "day" we receive Christ.
  - 1. We should continue to "learn" until the day we are called home to Heaven.
    - a. A "Christian" should NEVER be satisfied - never feels he has arrived!
    - b. A Christian should bear that "mark" every day of his life.
- C. The people of Antioch **SAW** them continually "**learning**" and being more like Jesus!

**II. Brother (Mark 3:35).**

- A. The word "brother" comes from the Greek word "adelphos."
  - 1. It means "a connective part of..."
  - 2. A "brother" does not refer to "the brotherhood of man by birth."
    - a. It refers to "brothers by spiritual birth."
  - 3. It also "pictures unity" among those of the new birth.
    - a. It is described and explained in I Corinthians 12:12,13 & 25.
- B. The people of Antioch **SAW** them "in one accord" **caring for one another!** (Acts 4:32-33).

**III. Believer (Mark 9:23).**

- A. The word "believe" comes from the Greek word "pisteuo."
  - 1. It means to "have faith in... to put our trust in..."
- B. A "Christian" is not a person who "believes what he wants to believe."
  - 1. True belief must be based on the "Bible - The Word of God."
- C. True belief means we believe "all things are possible."



1. **IF we truly believe that** - our beliefs will automatically turn into works (James 2:17-18).

D. The people of Antioch **SAW** them "**zealous for good works**" (Titus 2:14).

#### IV. **Witness (Acts 1:8).**

- A. The word "witness" comes from the Greek word "martus."
  1. It means "a witness."
  2. In this context it does not mean to "die" for him.
    - a. It means "we should **be willing** to witness" of him EVERYWHERE (Acts 5:31-32).
- B. The people of Antioch SAW them "witnessing" for Jesus **everywhere they went** (Acts 11:19)!

#### V. **Saint (I Corinthians 1:2).**

- A. The word "saint" comes from the Greek word "hagios."
  1. It means, "sacred, pure, morally blameless, consecrated, holy."
- B. The name "saint" was not given to a select few or given after they died.
  1. A saint was one who displayed "characteristics" of "Jesus."
  2. Every person who is saved, should be identified by "saintly characteristics" (Romans 8:29).
- C. The people of Antioch **SAW** their "**saintly characteristics**" and called them "Christians."

#### VI. **Son of God (John 1:12).**

- A. The word "son" comes from the Greek word "teknon."
  1. The word "God" comes from the Greek word "theos."
- B. Together they mean "a child of Supreme Divinity."
- C. The people of Antioch **SAW** them Glorifying God their Father (Acts 2:32-33; 11:18).

#### VII. **Steward (I Corinthians 4:1-2 & I Peter 4:10).**

- A. The word Steward comes from the Greek word "oikonomos."
  1. It means "a manager, a treasurer, and a distributor."
- B. The responsibility of a "steward" covers three basic categories.
  1. He is to be a "good manager of his time" (Ephesians 5:16).
  2. He is to be a "good manager of his talents" (Luke 12:48).
  3. He is to be a "good manager of his money" (Matthew 25:14-26).
- C. The people of Antioch **SAW** them "manage" **their time, talents, and treasure.**

#### VIII. **Members of the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:27).**

- A. The above Scriptures make it clear that ALL believers are "members of one body."
  1. One Head - Obedient to the "Head" (Colossians 1:18).
  2. One accord - Every member Following the "chain of command" (I Corinthians 11:2).
  3. One mind - Every member thinking like Christ thinks (Philippians 2:5).

- 4. One body - Every member serving the "Head" in unity (Acts 4:24).
- 5. One goal - Every member determined that every person hear the Gospel (Acts 8:4).
- B. The people of Antioch **SAW** them "as one body" **following the commands of Jesus.**

**IX. Strangers and Pilgrims (Hebrews 11:13).**

- A. We are Strangers in relationship to earth.
- B. We are Pilgrims in relationship to Heaven.
- C. We are identified by:
  - 1. The "destination" on our ticket. (Your "ticket" should show you are "headed for Heaven.")
  - 2. The "companions" we are traveling with. (Come out from among – (II Corinthians 6:17).
  - 3. The "baggage" we are carrying. (*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth.*)
- D. The people of Antioch **SAW** them as "Christians" **showing their ticket, companions, baggage.**

- X. If you were arrested for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?**

**That is a good question that we need to ask ourselves daily!**

**THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**Lesson #13**  
**GOD HEARS AND ANSWERS OUR PRAYERS**  
**Acts 12:1-25**

**INTRODUCTION**

**INTRO:** Acts Chapter 12 records one of the answers to prayer. God answered the prayers of the church, IN SPITE of the fact that those early believers did not have the faith to believe God would answer "their particular" prayer. However, the Scripture states that "*prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.*"

**I. The Last Major Persecution of the Church Was Political. (Acts 12:1-10).**

- A. The Death of James (Verses 1-2).
  - 1. The Murderer was Herod!
    - a. This was Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great.
    - b. He murdered James to "be popular with the Jews."
    - c. Herod was persecuting "harmless people who were doing good!"
  - 2. The Martyr was James (Verse 2).
    - a. James was John's brother.
    - b. James and John were the two sons of Zebedee (Mark 1:19).
      - 1). James was one of the Apostles.
- B. The Detention of Peter (Acts 12:3).
  - 1. Peter was placed in "solitary confinement."
    - a. Peter was in jail before but was mysteriously freed (Acts 5:17-20)!
    - b. Herod was making sure that would not happen again.
    - c. **16 soldiers** were assigned to make sure Peter was "Kept in jail" (Verse 5).
    - d. He was "chained" to two of the soldiers (one on one side - one on the other).
    - e. There was a guard on the first door, second door, and gate to the city (Vs. 10).

**A PATTERN FOR PRAYER BY THE CHURCH**

**I. The Dedication of the Church to Praying (Acts 12:5).**

- A. The early church gave us a "pattern" of prayer which the church should follow.
  - 1. Prayer was made. (I Timothy 2:8)
  - 2. Without ceasing. (I Thessalonians 5:17)
  - 3. By the Church. (Matthew 18:19-20)
  - 4. Unto God. (Luke 1:37)
  - 5. For Peter. **(Be Specific!)**

**II. The Demonstration of God to Answer Prayers (Acts 12:5-11)!**

- A. "...BUT prayer" was the turning point in Peter being set free (Verse 5).
  - 1. NEVER underestimate the power of "a praying church" (Jeremiah 33:3).

## A PILLOW OF PEACE FOR A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

### I. The Amazing Miracle of a Sleeping Apostle (Acts 12:5-17).

- A. Peter Slept in Perfect Peace (Verse 6). (**Who could have slept under these circumstances?**)
  - 1. The church knew Peter was in prison. They prayed (Acts 12:10-12)!
  - 2. Peter knew the church was praying, therefore...
    - a. Peter remembered and claimed Psalms 4:8.
  - 3. Peter knew that Herod could not put him to death (**John 21:18-19**).
  - 4. All together, God gave Peter "perfect peace" and he slept!

## A PICTURE THAT WE ARE TO DO OUR PART

### I. Peter Submitted to his Assigned Angel - And Did His Part. (Verses 7-10) (Psalms 34:7).

- A. Some Christians say, "I'll just pray and trust God."
  - 1. Sometimes that is not what God wants.
  - 2. Sometimes that is "dodging our responsibility." **Examples:** Joshua 7:8-10  
    - a. **God EXPECTS US "to do our part."** I Cor 3:6
- B. To be delivered and set free, Peter had to submit in four things. The angel said:
  - 1. "Gird thyself." (Fasten one's belt.)
  - 2. "Bind on thy sandals."
  - 3. "Cast thy garment about thee."
  - 4. "Follow me."
    - a. These were all "ordinary things" that we can do without "supernatural power."
      - i. God alone can do the supernatural, but ...
      - ii. God always "expects you and I to do our part."
      - iii. Many say, "I'll just pray and trust God!"
- D. Every time Peter "put on his shoes" in the future - no doubt he REMEMBERED.

### II. Peter Sought for the Praying Saints (Verses 12-15).

- A. The angel's work was done! He departed (Verse 10)!
- B. Now, Peter had to use his common sense and Trust God (Verse 12).
  - 1. Since it was prayers that set him free, "he went where the people ..."
    - a. Prayed earnestly.
    - b. Prayed without ceasing.
    - c. Prayer specifically for him.
  - 2. **Peter used "common sense" - and "trusted the Lord!"**
  - 3. Peter wanted them to know that "God had answered their prayers!"

### III. Peter Shared the Answer of their Prayers (Verse 17).

- A. It is almost comical that the answer to their prayer was at their door.
  - 1. But, they would not open the door.
  - 2. But, "Why would an angel bother to knock???"
- B. When they opened the door, they were excited - Peter held up his hand

(Verse 17).

1. Peter shared the amazing answer to their prayers.
2. Peter instructed them to "share it with James, the half brother of Jesus.
3. Peter departed - went to another place (Verse 17). (Mentioned once Acts 15:7)

### **A PROMISE OF PROTECTION FROM GOD**

- I. God Always Honors His Word** (Psalms 7:15) - (Acts 12:23).
  - A. *"The Face of the Lord is against them that do evil"* (I Peter 3:12).
  - B. Instead of Peter being killed by Herod - Herod was killed by Peter's God!
- II. The Result of the Last Major Persecution.**
  - A. Herod is dead - The Word of God grew and multiplied (Acts 12:24).
- III. The Secret to Victory - A Praying Church!**

With the close of Chapter 12, the Apostle Peter "leaves the scene" and Paul takes his place as the leader.

**THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**Lesson #14**  
**THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH**  
**Acts 13:1-13**

**INTRO:** The book of Acts is divided into two parts. In this chapter we change to the second part of the book. In Chapters 1-12 Peter was the leader of the church and the church in Jerusalem was the center of all activity. Now, in Chapter 13, Paul becomes the leader and the church at Antioch in Syria becomes the center of operation. The church at Antioch was founded in Acts 11:19-26.

- I. The Organization of the New Testament Church (Acts 13:1-3).**
  - A. The church has been established for about 12-13 years.
    - 1. The church had no building but had grown by leaps and bounds.
      - a. The first church building was built about 320 A.D.
  - B. The church now has the following leaders in place.
    - 1. Elders (Acts 11:30).
    - 2. Deacons (Acts 6:1-7).
    - 3. Prophets and teachers (Acts 13:1).
    - 4. Every believer was a member of a "Royal Priesthood" (I Peter 2:9).
      - a. Every member was involved and active (I Corinthians 12).
      - b. Every member had been given "power and wisdom" (I Corinthians 1:30).

**THE FIRST WORLD-WIDE MISSION MINISTRY**  
**Acts Chapter 13 - Acts Chapter 21**

**INTRO:** As stated, Acts is a "book of transition." The book has now changed from "preaching the Gospel to the Jews, to preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles." From Acts 13 through Acts 28, we have the history of the "First World-Wide Mission Ministry. During that time Paul could look back and say, *"So that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ"* (Romans 15:19). The Gospel was ON THE MOVE! At least forty different cities are named during this period of time!

- I. The "Call of God" to be a Missionary (Acts 13:1-3).**
  - A. God calls men who are faithfully serving in their church (Verse 1).
    - 1. There **MUST** be a call from God to be a missionary (Acts 2).
    - 2. When a man is "called" to be a missionary, the church **MUST** confirm the call!
  - B. It is "A MUST" that a missionary **KNOW** he is "called of God" to be a missionary.
    - A. If he cannot go back to "where he was and when God called him" he will quit!
  - C. The Church now has "authority to send missionaries" (Acts 13:3).
    - 1. The church:
      - a. Fasted.
      - b. Prayed.
      - c. Laid hands on them.
      - d. Sent them away!

- D. The church IS THE ONLY institution that has authority to send missionaries.
  - 1. A Mission Board is "unscriptural" if it is not under the authority of the church.
  - 2. A Mission Board is "not a sending" agency, but a "service agency" to the church.
    - a. A Mission Agency is to "assist the local church in sending their missionary."
- E. The church now has its "first missionaries" to send forth (Acts 13:1-3).
- F. This is the first time since creation that "men have been separated to go to other countries."
  - 1. The Gospel has been preached to both Jew and Gentile, but - -
  - 2. There had NEVER been any plan for the church to send men to "the heathen."
    - a. It was filled with dangers and hardships, however...
- G. The world is greatly indebted to the church for this ministry.
  - 1. Imagine what the world would be today without a missionary program!
  - 2. Imagine what the world would be today if this type of mission ministry continued!
- H. This is the "ONLY HOPE" that the world must have to be happy and enjoy life on this earth.
- I. This is the "ONLY HOPE" the world must have to overcome Communism and Paganism.

**II. When you say, "God has Called Me - I will Go" Be Prepared for Opposition!**  
(Acts 13:6-11)

- A. This opposition was not from Jewish religion or pagan hatred as it had been in the past.
  - 1. It was from a "sorcerer" who claimed to have occult powers. (Vs. 6)
  - 2. Paul, as an Apostle, using the Power of the Holy Ghost, blinded the opposition!
    - a. This was later proof that Paul was indeed "an Apostle."

**PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY**

**I. Paul Departed from Antioch in Syria and traveled to the Island of Cyprus**  
(Acts 13:4).

- A. This was common since as this was the home of Barnabas (Acts 4:36)
- B. They preached in two cities on the island: Salamis & Paphos (Acts 13:5-6).
  - 1. Paul and Barnabas remained on the island for about 2-3 months.
- C. They encountered opposition in Paphos.
  - 1. A sorcerer named Bar-jesus, a false prophet (Verses 6-8).
    - a. The sorcerer had a friend with him, a "deputy" of great authority.
  - 2. Paul STRONGLY rebuked him and asked the Lord to strike him with blindness (Verse 11).

- D. The deputy then believed and was astonished - at the doctrine of the Lord (Acts 13:12)!
  - 1. Paul had apparently preached the Gospel in Paphos.
  - 2. Deputy, in that day meant a "Proconsul".
  - 3. A Proconsul was either the Governor or the military leader of the providence!
- E. There is no record of a church being planted in either of those cities.

**II. Paul and Barnabas Traveled to Perga, a city in the country of Pamphylia (Verse 13).**

- A. They stayed in Perga for "several days."
- B. There is no record that they preached in that city.
- C. There is no record of a church being planted in that city.
- D. John Mark departed from Paul and Barnabas and returned to Jerusalem (Verse 13).

**We will continue Paul's First Missionary Journey next week.**

**We will also study the First Message ever preached by a missionary!**



**THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**LESSON #15**  
**PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY CONTINUED**  
**Part #2**  
**Acts 13:14 - Acts 14:28**

**INTRO:** Paul and Barnabas Departed from Perga and Traveled to Antioch in Pisidia. (Verse 14). Upon their arrival, they preached in the Jewish Synagogue (Verse 14). This is Paul's first recorded message as a missionary (Acts 13:16-43).

**PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY MESSAGE**  
**A THREE POINT MESSAGE PREACHED TO THE JEWS IN ANTIOCH OF PISIDIA**  
**(This was preached in the synagogue on the sabbath day - Verse 14.)**

**REMEMBER:**

(Paul did not have one book from the New Testament.)

- I. First Point: The Root of the Message was Foretold in the Old Testament**  
(Acts 13:14-26).
  - A. Moses and Joshua leading God's people out of Egypt to The Promised Land (Verse 16-21)!
  - B. David became their King.
    - 1. EVERY Jew knew that their Messiah would come from the line of David.
      - a. The promise of a Saviour, Jesus (Verse 23).
    - 2. The Word of Salvation was preached to them (Verse 26).
- II. Second Point: The Crucifixion of Christ in Jerusalem was Foretold in the Old Testament.** (Verses 27-29)
  - A. God raised Jesus Christ from the dead (Verse 30-31).
- III. Third Point: The Message was Applied to them Personally** (Verses 38-39)!
  - A. Paul extended an invitation for them to believe and be justified.
    - 1. There was opposition from the Jews (Verses 44-45).
    - 2. Paul and Barnabas turned to the Gentiles (Verse 46).
  - B. Paul preached to "his own people" first, but they, the Jews, rejected the truth.
  - C. This was God's will for Paul (Acts 9:15).
  - D. The Word of the Lord spread (Vs. 49)

**CHURCHES ARE ESTABLISHED**

- I. Paul and Barnabas Departed from Antioch of Pisidia** (Acts 13:43-49).
  - A. Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch of Pisidia for possibly 3-4-5 months.
  - B. **A church was established in Antioch of Pisidia.**
    - 1. That is confirmed in Acts 14:21-23.
  - C. The Jews continued to stir up trouble (Acts 13:50).

## **II. Paul and Barnabas Shook the Dust off Their Feet and Depart to Iconium**

(Acts 13:51 - 14:1-6).

- A. A great number of Jews and Greeks (Gentiles) were saved (Acts 14:1).
  - 1. **There was a church established in Iconium** (Acts 14:21) (Acts 16:2).
  - 2. The "unbelievers" assaulted them and threatened to stone them (Verse 5).

## **III. Paul and Barnabas were Aware of the Threat and Depart and Traveled to Lystra** (Acts 14:6-7).

- A. They preached the Gospel throughout the city (Verse 7).
  - 1. Paul may have been in "the city's market-place."
- B. A man crippled from his birth - apparently heard Paul preaching (Verse 14:8-10).
  - 1. The crippled man's response to the Word of God.
    - a. Paul "perceived" he had faith.
    - b. His faith healed him!
    - c. The proof of his faith, "*...and he leaped up and walked.*"
  - 2. The crowd's response to the Miracle (Acts 14:19)
    - a. One minute they called him **a god** (Acts 14:11).
    - b. The next minute - **they stoned him and left him for dead!**

### **PAUL MAKES A "SIDE TRIP TO HEAVEN"?**

#### **I. Paul was Stoned and left for Dead** (Acts 14:19).

- A. II Corinthians 12:1-5 strongly indicates Paul died in Lystra and was referring to that day.
  - 1. Paul was "stoned in Lystra" in 45-46 A.D.
  - 2. II Corinthians was written about 60 A.D.
- B. The disciple's response to Paul's stoning (Acts 14:20)!
  - 1. Christians should always "gather around a suffering brother" (II Corinthians 12:26).
- C. God did a Miracle (Acts 14:20)!
  - 1. God either "raised Paul from the dead,"
  - 2. Or God "raised him up after being stoned - and left for dead."
- D. **There was a church planted in Lystra that continued** (Acts 14:21-22) (Acts 16:2).

#### **II. Paul and Barnabas departed from Lystra and traveled to Derbe** (Acts 14:20).

- A. A church was planted in Derbe that continued (Acts 14:21).

### **PAUL AND BARNABAS RETURN TO ANTIOCH IN SYRIA**

#### **I. Paul and Barnabas returned from Derbe to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch of Pisidia** (Acts 14:21).

- A. The Scripture states they did four things in each of those cities:
  - 1. They confirmed the souls of the disciples.

2. They exhorted them to continue in the faith.
3. They ordained elders in every church.
4. They commended them to the Lord.

**II. Paul and Barnabas travelled to Perga in Pamphylia (Acts 14:25).**

- A. They preached the word to that city (Verse 25).

**III. From Perga in Pamphylia they traveled to Attalia (still in the country of Pamphylia (Verse 25).**

- A. And from Attalia they sailed to **Antioch in Syria** (Acts 14:26).

**IV. It was the church of Antioch in Syria which had sent them on the missionary journey.**

- A. They gathered the church together and "reported" on all they had done (Verse 27).

**SUMMARY**

As we go through Acts Chapters 13 and 14, we now have a "well organized group of believers" with power, wisdom, and authority to "preach the Gospel to every creature"! The church still did not have a building to meet in, but they were a church that literally "preached the Gospel" to the then known world. They were ALIVE! They were "ON FIRE" for God. They are an example of what the church should be today!

**SEVEN CLEAR PIECES OF EVIDENCE THAT A CHURCH IS ALIVE AND ON FIRE:**

**I. When Every Member is Continuing "Steadfast in Doctrine and Fellowship (Acts 2:42).**

- A. Every member must "die daily" (I Corinthians 15:31).
- B. Every member must "present their body" (Romans 12:1-2).
- C. *"The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out."* (Leviticus 6:13).
  1. This produces LIFE and FIRE.

**II. When Every Member is Committed to "Prayer without Ceasing" (Acts 2:42) – (Acts 12:5).**

**III. When Every Member has "Spiritual Fellowship" with Every other Member (Acts 2:44-45).**

- A. There can be "no respect of persons" in fellowship.

**IV. When Every Member is "...in one accord..." and in "...singleness of heart" (Acts 2:46).**

- A. Spiritual leadership MUST give themselves to "Prayer and Preparation."

**V. When Every Member is "Functioning" and using their Spiritual Gift (I Corinthians 12:4-11).**

- A. A believer, using their gift, empowered by the Holy Ghost, produces LIFE and FIRE!

**VI. When a Church has Faithful Leadership, "100% Devoted to Pleasing God"**  
(Acts 6:4).

- A. A Leader MUST do all he does to "Please God" (I Corinthians 10:31).
- B. A Leader MUST not be a "people pleaser" (Galatians 1:10).
- C. A Leader MUST not be "self-willed" (Titus 1:7) (Romans 15:1).

**VII. When a Church is "100% Committed to a Missionary Vision"(John 4:35).**

- A. The field of the local church "is the world!"
- B. The church will one day give an account for "the world."
- C. The focus of the church MUST be "the world."

**THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**Lesson #16**  
**THE CASE IS APPEALED TO THE SUPREME COURT!**  
**Acts Chapter 15**

**Introduction:**

- I. Acts 15 occurred about 20 years after Pentecost.**
  - A. At that time the church did not have any part of the New Testament.
  - B. It was 60 years before the books of the New Testament were complete.
  - C. It was about 300 years before the New Testament was "canonicalized."
    - 1. Canonicalized means "put together in orderly form in "one book."
- II. The Supreme Court of the Church was the Apostles and the Church in Jerusalem. (Acts 15:2)**

**THE CASE THAT WAS APPEALED**

**Salvation by Grace through Faith - vs - Salvation by Faith Plus Circumcision and Works.**

- I. The Plaintiffs in the Case (Acts 15:1 & 5).**
  - A. These were Jews who had converted to Christianity.
    - 1. This is established by the fact that they were willing to take their case to Jerusalem (Verse 2).
    - 2. They appeared to have identified with the "Pharisees" which believed (Verse 5).
    - 3. Both groups were believers but were "legalists."
  - B. They believed "circumcision & and keeping the law of Moses were necessary for salvation" (Vs. 1).
    - 1. Some from Jerusalem had traveled to Antioch to promote "circumcision."
      - a. BUT, they were not authorized by the Jerusalem church (Acts 15:24).
- II. The Defendants in the Case (Philippians 1:17).**
  - A. Peter took the witness stand and testified that the Gentiles were saved faith (Acts 15:7-11).
    - 1. Peter testified to the Jews that God had chosen him to preach to the Gentiles (Verse 7).
      - a. Peter had preached the "Gospel" to the Jews (Acts 2).
      - b. Peter had preached the "Gospel" to the Samaritans (Acts 8:14-17).
      - c. Peter had preached the "Gospel" to the Gentiles (Acts 10).
    - 2. Peter testified that God had given them the Holy Ghost the same as He did to them (Verse 8).
      - a. The Jews could not deny this truth (Romans 8:9).
      - b. They did not receive the Holy Spirit by the Law (Acts 10:43-48).
    - 3. Peter testified that God had "erased the difference between Jews and Gentiles" (Vs. 9 & 11).
      - a. Peter learned that in Acts 10:9-27.

4. Peter testified that God had removed the yoke of the law (Verse 10)!
    - a. That yoke had been taken away by Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:21 - Gal. 4:1-7 - Roman 1:4).
  5. The multitude was astonished - **and sat in silence** (Verse 12).
- B. Paul and Barnabas took the witness stand and testified (Acts 15:12).
1. The Lord, through the pen of Dr. Luke, only allotted "one" verse to their testimony.
    - a. No doubt Paul and Luke recounted Acts Chapters 13 and 14.
  2. Paul and Barnabas testified of the miracles and wonder God wrought among the Gentiles.
    - a. The Miracles were "Proof" that God was pleased with "salvation by faith" (Gal. 3:5).
  3. Question: Does God give his Spirit and work miracles because you observe the Law?
    - a. They had preached "grace" and not law!
      - 1). Peter reviewed God's ministry in the past to the Gentiles.
      - 2). Paul and Barnabas review them "up to that present day."

### III. The Closing Argument (Acts 15:13-18) - The Key Word is "Agree."

- A. James **agreed** with Peter (Verse 14).
1. He **agreed** with Peter that God was saving the Gentiles "by grace" (Acts 10:1-24).
    - a. *"...to take out of them a people for his name."* (Act 15:14)
  2. The Jews did not understand God bringing them together with Gentiles.
    - a. The church is "one body" (Ephesians 3:1-6) (Romans 9:24).
- B. James declared that "the prophets" **agreed** with Peter (Acts 15:15).
1. James was careful "NOT to point to Peter."
  2. James quotes from Amos 9:11-12, which foretold that God would save the Gentiles.
    - a. These verses speak of the "end times" when God will restore Israel.
- C. God agreed with James that He planned this before the foundation of the world (Acts 15:18).
1. The crucifixion was "planned in eternity past" (Acts 2:23)!
  2. The salvation of the Gentiles was "planned in eternity past" (Ephesians 1:4 & Acts 4:27-36).

### IV. The Supreme Court's Final Decision was "Two-Fold" (Acts 15:19-25).

- A. The decision was agreed upon by the ENTIRE church (Verses 19 & 22).
- a. The Church in Jerusalem was "in one accord."
- B. The First Decision was Doctrinal (Verse 19).
1. The Decision was "that salvation was by grace through faith."

2. The "Court" was led to that decision by the Holy Ghost (Verse 28).
  - a. This decision was for both Jews and Gentiles.
  - b. That decision was given in Verse 13-18.
- C. The Second Decision was Practical and is "two parts" (Verse 20 & 29).
  1. Part one was two common sins they needed to abstain from.
    - a. They were to abstain from (1) worshipping idols.
    - b. They were to abstain from (2) fornication."
      - 1). These were both common sins among Gentiles in those days.
  2. Part two was that they were to agree to two practical concessions (Verses 20 and 29).
    - a. They were to abstain from eating "things strangled."
    - b. They were to abstain from eating "blood."
    - c. The Gentiles had always eaten things that the Israelites would not eat.
    - d. The purpose for these concessions was to:
      - i. To keep "peace" in the church.
      - ii. To keep from "offending" a Jewish brother in the Lord.
    - e. These concessions are explained in Romans Chapters 14 and 15. (Clearly in 15:1-3).

## **BROTHERLY LOVE PRODUCES A BEAUTIFUL LETTER**

- I. **This "Beautiful Letter" Produced at Least Three Important things:**
  - A. It strengthened the unity in the church.
    1. Doctrinal compromise is always wrong (Jude 3).
    2. This kept the church from splitting over extremes of "Law & Grace."
    3. It is learning to agree over Bible principles.
  - B. It made it possible for the church (Jew and Gentile) to enter the Synagogues and witness (Verse 21).
  - C. It strengthened the church. It abounded in witnessing, and God adding to the church (Acts 16:5).

**THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**LESSON #17**  
**PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY**  
**Part #1**

**INTRO:** Paul and Barnabas returned from their first missionary journey and had spent time in Jerusalem. While in Jerusalem they met together with the Apostles, especially with James, who was the leader of the first New Testament Church for the purpose of "settling, once for all, that salvation was 'by faith' - totally apart from works." Once that was settled, they agreed to make a trip and visit the cities where they had preached and had planted churches. (Acts 15:36) They had a disagreement about taking John Mark, Barnabas' nephew with them or not taking him. Due to the disagreement, they agreed to "go separate ways."

We should note that they both, apparently, had a Christian attitude when they departed. From this point on, neither Paul nor Barnabas are recorded as making any negative statements about each other. Later, Paul saw that young John Mark had grown in the Lord and proven himself faithful. (II Timothy 4:11)

**PAUL'S FIRST STEP IN HIS SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY**  
**(Acts 15:40-41)**

- I. Paul and Silas Depart from Antioch (15:35) and Travel by Land to Syria & Cilicia (Acts 15:40 - 16:5).**
  - A. They most likely stopped in Tarsus, as that was Paul's hometown.
  - B. They continued from Cilicia to Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium.
  - C. Timothy joins Paul and Silas at Lystra (Verse 1-2).
    - 1. Paul spent time "**delivering the decrees of James**" to the churches (Acts 16:4).
- II. Paul Enters in to "New Territory." (Acts 16:6-8)**
  - A. They traveled through Phrygia and the region of Galatia and continued toward Mysia (Verse 7).
    - 1. Luke makes no comment, but they were forbidden to preach the Word in Asia (Verse 6).
  - B. From Mysia, they "assayed" to go "**East -North-East**" into **Bithynia!** (**IMPORTANT**)
    - 1. They were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to go to Bithynia.
    - 2. They passed by Mysia and traveled to Troas.
- III. God Opened the "Door to the World" for the Gospel to be Preached (Acts 16:9-12).**
  - A. God appeared to Paul "in a vision" (Verse 9).
    - 1. God directed Paul to Macedonia.
    - 2. The next day they sailed to Neapolis, in Macedonia.
    - 3. From Neapolis to Philippi, in Macedonia, which was the CHIEF CITY in Macedonia.
      - a. Macedonia is to the "**WEST**" - the exact opposite of Bithynia!



- b. Macedonia is "part of Europe!"
  - c. That "open door" opened the door to England - Later to the United States.
    - 1). Paul mentioned **Spain** (Rom. 15:24) - No proof he went!
    - 2). 39,000 Gospel preaching missionaries sent from USA since beginning
    - 3). America has missionaries in 185 countries today, 2021!
- 4. Imagine what the world might be like if God had allowed him to go East?
  - a. That would have led to China and India!
- 5. Luke "joined" Paul and Silas at that point (Verse 10). Changes from "they" to "us."
- B. America has been the "greatest missionary country in the world."

#### IV. **Lydia, the First Recorded Convert in Europe** (Acts 16:13-14).

- A. On the Sabbath day Paul always went into the Synagogue.
  - 1. There was apparently NO Synagogue in Philippi, which was a "Roman colony."
- B. The first convert in Europe was led to Christ "**on a riverbank.**"
  - 1. They found Lydia on the riverbank, "*whose heart the Lord opened*" Acts 16:14.
- C. It is important to note that "*she was a worshipper of God*" **BEFORE she was saved!**
  - 1. God had prepared her heart before Paul arrived (Verse 14)!
  - 2. She had "obeyed" the light she had - God gave her more light. (Psalms 36:9)
- D. If God did what He did, starting with "4 missionaries" on a river bank...
  - 1. He could (and would) do it again "through our church" if we would let Him!
- E. Paul was arrested for casting a demon out of a young damsel!
  - 1. They beat Paul and Silas and cast them in prison.

#### V. **God "Opened the Prison Door"**(Acts 16:26).

- A. Paul and Silas "*sang a song in the night*" (Job 35:10 & Psalms 42:8).
  - 1. What would YOU do if you were put in prison for doing "a good thing?"
    - a. Would you "sing and pray" aloud? Or complain?
- B. Paul KNEW God had a "purpose and a plan."
  - 1. Paul could have stopped his arrest - if he had told them he was a Roman!
    - a. He did that later!
    - b. For the present, he "waited on the Lord" to fulfil His purpose. **SAVE ONE MAN!**
  - 2. Prayer and praise are powerful weapons (II Chronicles 20:1-22) .
  - 3. God answered their prayer (Acts 16:26).
    - a. Shaking the foundations.
    - b. Opening all the doors.
    - c. Loosening the prisoner's bonds.

- C. Paul delivers the "keeper of the prison" from harming himself.
  - 1. If a Roman guard allowed them to escape, he had to pay the escaped prisoner's sentence.

**VI. God Used this to "Open the Door to the Philippian Jailer's Heart" (Verse 27-34).**

- A. One night in prison led to the salvation of the Philippian jailer and his family.
  - 1. NO doubt - the Jailer heard them singing and praying (Verse 25)
- B. The Jailer asked, "What must I do to be saved?"
  - 1. Believe - thou and thy house... (Verse 31)

**VIII. When God's Plan was Complete - God Freed Paul and Silas (Acts 16:35-40).**

- A. Paul was "a Roman."
  - 1. It was "100% against Roman law to punish another Roman without a court trial!"
- B. From this we see that God uses good things and bad things to allow His work to progress.
  - 1. God uses difficulties (1) From within, and (2) Problems from without.
  - 2. Either way, God always makes it "work together for good."

**GOD OPENS THE DOOR TO THREE CITIES**

**I. God opened the Door to the City of Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9).**

- A. Paul, released from Prison, travelled to Amphipolis and Apollonia (Acts 16:37-40).
- B. Paul and Silas arrived in Thessalonica (17:1).
  - 1. Thessalonica was a **major city**, the capital of Macedonia.
  - 2. This illustrates the "**Pattern**" Paul set for missionary work.
- C. Paul's message to Thessalonica (Act 17:2).
  - 1. Paul "reasoned" with them (Verse 2). (Meaning questions and answers.)
  - 2. Paul "explained" (opening) the Scriptures. (Verse 3) - (Old Test Prophecy of crucifixion- Vs 3).
  - 3. Paul "Proved" (alleging) that "the Christ" was "this Jesus" (Verse 3).
- D. Paul "Planted a Church" in Thessalonica.
  - 2. (I Thessalonians 1:6-9) - This verse clearly pictures a church.
  - 3. (I Thessalonians 2:13-14) - This verse states they "grew and followed" the pattern of the first churches.
    - a. Missionaries today need to learn to "expect opposition."

**II. God Opened the Door to the City of Berea (Acts 17:10).**

- A. The people of Berea:
  - a. They "were more noble."
  - b. They had a "readiness of mind."
  - c. They "searched the Scriptures daily."
- B. Paul planted a church in Berea.
  - 1. How do we know that?
    - a. They produced laborers (Acts 20:4). - "*Sopater of Berea...*" (Romans 16:21).

**III. God Opened the Door to the City of Athens (Acts 17:15). (A picture of America!)**

- A. Athens was the greatest city in the world at that time.
  - 1. Splendid buildings and Architecture.
  - 2. Brilliant in Science.
  - 3. Great public displays of "fine art."
  - 4. City of great wealth.
  - 5. **Tourists came from the known world to visit.**
  - 6. The people of the city were "highly self-exalting."
- B. The Religion of Athens (Acts 17:16) "A city wholly given to idolatry."
  - 1. Surpassed the known world in "zeal for religion."
  - 2. Had temples on every corner.
  - 3. Had images of gods throughout the city.
  - 4. They were prideful, saying, "We know many gods."
- C. Paul's Reaction to Athens (Acts 17:16).
  - 1. No record of Paul admiring the city.
  - 2. No record of Paul admiring the displays of art.
  - 3. No record of Paul admiring their zeal for religion.
- D. Paul's Reason for being in Athens.
  - 1. Paul's heart was "*stirred...*" (Verse 16).
    - a. "Stirred"(*paroxuno*): Concerned - Pitted - Distressed - Provoked.
- E. Paul's Conclusion about Athens (I Corinthians 1:21).

**THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**Lesson #18**  
**PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY - Part #2**  
**Acts Chapter 18 Has More to Encourage God's Servants Than Any Other Chapter!**  
**Acts Chapter 18:1-23**

**INTRO:** Acts Chapter 18 finds Paul in the City of Corinth. Corinth was well known across the Roman empire as a "city of wickedness." The city was famous for "practicing immorality," as is apparent from Paul's letter which he later wrote to the church in Corinth (I Corinthians 5:1-13). Also, Paul was in Corinth when he wrote the book of Romans, in which he identified the sins of that city as an "abomination (Romans 1:18-32). From Acts 18, Verses 1 and 5, it is apparent that Paul "was alone."

**Intro:** Paul "was alone and lonely" (Acts 18:1-5).

- A. It is ALWAYS difficult to be alone, especially in a city like Corinth. (Strange - Proud - Puffed)
- B. It is reasonable to think that Paul was discouraged - City of 300,000 people!
- C. He may have entertained thoughts of "moving on to another city."

**OUR FATHER KNOWETH WHAT WE HAVE NEED OF BEFORE WE ASK**  
(Matthew 6:8)

**I. God Encouraged Paul by, "Giving him Two Christian Friends for Fellowship**  
(Acts 18:2).

- A. Aquila and Priscilla were "Jewish believers" for fellowship and encouragement.
  - 1. Aquila and Priscilla.
  - 2. They were Jews who had come from Italy (Rome).
- B. It is apparent they were Christians and became very close "co-laborers with Paul."
  - 1. They risked their lives for Paul (Romans 16:3-4).
  - 2. They assisted him in Ephesus (Acts 18:18-28). Encouraged him!
  - 3. They opened their home to him (Acts 18:3).
  - 4. They offered their house for Paul to start "the church in Corinth"  
(I Corinthians 16:19).

**II. God Encouraged Paul by "Providing Him a Place to Live" When He was Homeless"**  
(Acts 18:3)!

**III. God Encouraged Paul by "Giving him a Source of Income When he Had Nothing"**  
(Verse 3).

- A. The thing they had in common was that they were all "tentmakers."
  - 1. Paul "wrought" with them (Verse 3).
- B. Aquila and Priscilla were "part of Paul's team!"
  - 1. Every Pastor and missionary will thank God for team members who encourage them.

**IV. God Encouraged Paul by "Bringing his Co-Laborers" to Him - Just Before Opposition (Verse 5).**

- A. Silas and Timothy had stayed in Macedonia but returned "Just in the nick of time."
- B. They "stood with Paul" and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ."
- C. Paul was no doubt greatly encouraged to have "two strong, bold co-laborers."
  - 1. The Bible strongly indicates that God always wants "two" missionaries to work together.
    - a. Paul and Barnabas.
    - b. Barnabas and Mark.
    - c. Paul and Silas.
    - d. Paul chose Timothy.

**V. God encouraged Paul by "Providing financial support" to Allow Him to Serve Full-Time.**

- A. The financial support was sent from the church in Macedonia.
  - 1. It was delivered by Silas and Timothy (Verse 5). - See **Philippians 4:15-16**.
  - 2. This relieved Paul of "spending time making tents."
    - a. It freed him to give himself "fully to the Gospel" which was his heart's desire.

**VI. Jesus, at the Right Hand of God, was "Touched with the Feelings of Paul's Infirmities" (Heb. 4:14-16).**

**EXPLANATION:** How does the "sinless Son of God" know the feelings of "sinful man???"

- 1. Jesus, as He sits on the right hand of God, is still "The God man."
    - a. He is "very God of very God" and "very man of very man."
  - 2. When he ascended back to Heaven in Acts 1:11, He ascended in the "form of a man."
    - a. As he ascended, they were told, "He will return in like manner as you have seen him go."
  - 3. In between; He sits on the "right hand of God making intercession for us" (Romans 8:34).
    - a. How else would it be possible for Him to "know the feelings of our infirmities?"
    - b. He has to still be in "the form of a man."
- A. Christ made intercession for Paul, and said to God the Father:
- 1. Father, **I know exactly how Paul feels** (Matthews 6:8)!
    - a. He knew Paul was alone and feeling pressure in Corinth.
    - b. He knew Paul had been "manhandled."
    - c. He knew Paul had been lied about.
    - d. He knew Paul had been imprisoned.

- e. He knew Paul had been beaten.
- f. He knew Paul had been threatened.
- g. He knew Paul was fearful and possibly ready to leave Corinth (Verses 9-10).
- h. He knew and was "**touched**" by Paul's infirmities (Hebrews 4:14-16).
  - i. **DON'T FORGET: Paul was human - just as you and I are human.**
  - ii. Jesus was "very God of very God - "very man of very man."

- B. Christ made intercession for Paul and said to God the Father:
  - 1. "Father, **I know exactly what Paul needs** to help him and encourage him"

**VII. God Encouraged Paul by "Assuring Him that he Would be Kept Safe from all Harm"**  
(Acts 18:9-10).

- A. Christ assured Paul that he had "no reason to be afraid" (Acts 18:9).
  - 1. He told Paul "... *be not afraid.*"
- B. Those were "words" which Paul, NO DOUBT, remembered from the Old Testament.
  - 1. God said to Abraham, "*fear not.*" (Genesis 15:1)
  - 2. God said to Joshua, "*be not afraid.*" (Joshua 1:9)
  - 3. God said to Isaac, "*fear not.*" (Genesis 26:24)
  - 4. God said to Jacob, "*fear not.*" (Genesis 46:3)
- C. In the New Testament, Jesus while on earth, said to you and to me, "*fear not*" (**Luke 12:7**).  
("Fear not," is said 15 more times in the New Testament!)
- D. Christ assured him that, "No harm would come to him" (Verse 10).
  - 1. Christ assured Paul saying, "*For I am with thee*" (Verse 10).
  - 2. Christ assured Paul that "**no man shall set on thee to hurt thee**" (Verse 10).
- E. Paul, "by faith, believed the promise of God."
  - 1. **He continued in Corinth for 18 months** (Verse 11).

**VIII. God Encouraged Paul by "Showing Paul that His Promises were Sure"**  
(Acts 18:12-17).

- A. God continued to encourage Paul.
  - 1. The Jews brought Paul before Gallio, the "deputy of Achaia." (Governor of Achaia.)
  - 2. The Jews made strong accusations against Paul (Verse 13).
  - 3. Paul "took the stand to defend himself (Verse 14).
    - a. **God said, "Paul, I'll take care of this!"**
  - 4. Gallio "defended Paul" and "drove them from the judgment seat" (Verse 16).
    - a. **God said to Paul, "See, I told you so!"**
- B. Paul continued in Corinth "**yet a good while**" with "no fear" (Verse 18).

- C. Paul was "no longer alone!"  
1. He had, "Friends - Home - Job - Co-laborers - Finances - Protection - Intercession by Christ". (Verse 18).

**GOD DID ALL OF THAT FOR PAUL –  
GOD WILL DO ALL OF THAT FOR YOU AND ME**

- IX. *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (Hebrew 13:5)*

**PAUL COMPLETES HIS SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY  
(Acts 18:18-22)**

- I. **Paul Departed from Corinth and Traveled to Ephesus** (Verse 19).  
A. They desired him to stay with them, but he refused (Verse 21).  
B. Paul felt compelled to go to Jerusalem.  
C. Luke gives "no further details."
- II. **Paul Departed from Ephesus and Headed to Jerusalem** (Verse 21).  
A. In route, he sailed to Caesarea and then traveled by land to Jerusalem.
- III. **Paul "*Saluted the Church*" in Jerusalem** (Verse 22).  
A. Again, Luke gives no details concerning his time in Jerusalem (Verse 22).
- IV. **Paul Departed from Jerusalem and Returned to Antioch of Syria** (Verse 22).  
A. Paul spent time and gave the church a report on his work.

**NEXT WEEK WE WILL STUDY PAUL'S  
THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY  
Acts 18:23**

**THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**Lesson #19**  
**PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY**  
**Acts Chapter 19:1**

(This journey, by some, is called "The continuation of Paul's second missionary journey, as he returned to the same area to which he had just left in order to make the trip back to Jerusalem. It really makes "no difference" which you call it, as they both give the same account. For sake of clarity, we will call it Paul's Third Missionary Journey.)

**INTRO:** Paul had completed his "second" missionary journey in Acts 18:22. In Acts 18:23 Dr. Luke gives us "NO DETAILS" on Paul's actions when he returned and spent time in Jerusalem and Antioch, but simply states, *"And after he had spent some time there, (Jerusalem and Antioch) he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all disciples."*

Paul had visited and preached in all this area of the world (Acts 16:6). For this reason, many will include his third visit to the area as part of his "Second Missionary Journey."

Paul's ministry "changed" on his second trip back to Galatia and Phrygia. On the first trip, his main purpose was "the preaching of the Gospel and the establishing of a church." On this trip, he was "teaching and strengthening those who had trusted Christ." That was his main purpose (Acts 18:23). That is not to say that he did not "share the Gospel everywhere he went, but his MAIN purpose of this trip was to 'strengthen' the churches."

Paul had "stopped" at Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem. The people in the Synagogue pleaded with him to stay, but he refused and continued toward Jerusalem. However, Paul promised he would return to Ephesus, God willing (Acts 18:19-21). Paul kept his promise. When he departed Antioch, his first stop was in Ephesus (Acts 19:1). Paul continued there until he departed to visit Macedonia in Acts 20:1. That covers a period of about 2 1/2 years. **All of the events of Acts 19 took place in Ephesus.** (Church of: Victorious Christian Living)

**PAUL ARRIVES IN EPHEBUS**  
**Acts 19:1-7**

**I. Asking the Right Question - Leads to Eternal Salvation for 12 Men (Acts 19:1-7)**  
(II Timothy 2:15)!

- KEY: A. Paul asked, *"Have you received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?"* (Verse 1)
1. They were "disciples of John the Baptist" (Verse 3).
    - a. They had been baptized, but *"Unto John's baptism"* (Verse 3) (Matthew 3:2-11).
    - b. Their baptism was "the baptism of repentance" (Verse 4).
  2. Paul knew immediately that these men "were not saved" (Romans 8:9,16).
    - a. A person receives and is sealed by the Holy Spirit at the time of salvation (Eph. 1:13).
  3. This is the "starting point" to lead a person to Christ.



- a. Catholics cannot be led to Christ by presenting God's plan of Salvation.
      - i. Catholics "believe they are ALREADY saved."
    - b. You must FIRST make people realize "they are lost."
  - B. Those twelve were men that "had obeyed the light they had been given to that point."
    - 1. God "sent Paul" to "give them the Light" (John 1:9) (Psalms 36:9). (Jim Curtis)
      - a. Paul pointed them to "The One" John said, "*should come after him...*" (Verse 4).
    - 2. The men "immediately" received the truth and were baptized (Verse 5).
  - C. Today, we ask, "If you died today, do you know if you would spend eternity in Heaven or Hell?"
    - 1. If they respond, "In Heaven."
  - D. Then, ask them "Can you tell me how you know you would go to Heaven?"
  - E. From their answer, you can know if they are truly saved or if they are putting confidence in something that is not the true Gospel.
  - F. Paul moved to "The School of Tyrannus" - 2 years - (Verse 9)
    - 1. Training soul winners (Verse 10 - All Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus)

## II. The Amazing Results of "Special Miracles" "wrought by God ... by the Hands of Paul" (Acts 19:11).

- A. These were "**special**" miracles. The Greek word for "special" is from "two Greek words."
  - 1. "*Ou*" and "*tugchano*:" Together it means "**Very different - never done before or after.**"
- B. These people were healed by God using only "*handkerchiefs or aprons*" (Verse 12).
  - 1. Dr. Luke simply says:
    - a. "*diseases departed from them...*"
    - b. "*the evil spirits went out of them...*"
- C. These "special miracles" were proof, "that Paul had the power of God on him."
  - 1. They proved that "the message Paul was preaching was true and sent from God."
  - 2. **God preformed the miracles** - - - by the hands of Paul." (Verse 11)

## III. Special Miracles Produces Startling Results (Acts 19:17-20).

- A. Fear fell upon all the people (Verse 17).
- B. The Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified (Verse 17).
- C. Many believed (Verse 18).
- D. Many Vagabond Jews burned their books of "curious arts" (Verse 19). (Proof of salvation.)
- E. So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed (Verse 20).

## **AN UNBELIEVABLE PATTERN OF DEDICATION THE APOSTLE PAUL**

We take so many things for granted! For that reason, I think we should briefly consider Paul's travel on his 3rd journey. On Paul's 3rd journey, he left Antioch of Syria and traveled an estimated 3000 miles! Consider this, most of that trip was either him walking, or possibly for part of the trip he rode some type of animal. They had no other means of traveling, cross country, in those days. Walking, a man could average about 20 miles per day. That means it took Paul about 150 days to walk those 3000 miles.

Also, in those days, they had no roads, other than dirt. They had no motels or hotels for him to stay overnight. They had no restaurants where he could stop for breakfast, lunch, or dinner! There were no "rest stops" where he might "wash-up and use the restroom." No doubt, Paul carried his food from city to city, most of which were a week or more apart. No doubt he carried a change of clothes, along with other necessary items. No doubt Paul "slept under a tree," or possibly in a small "handmade tent" of some type, as he was a "tentmaker" by trade. At times it was hot and at other times, it was cold.

Even when he arrived at a city, he had no "preplanned" place to stay. He had to, by faith, ask and trust God to open some one's heart to allow him to stay in their home. (Acts 18:1-2)

I believe Paul had some of these things in mind when he wrote I Corinthians 4:11: "Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place." Paul was gone from Antioch, during this 3rd journey alone, for about two and one-half years, not to mention his first two journeys! He never once complained! **THAT IS DEDICATION!**

**This Should Embarrass Most Christians, Including the Writer!**

**THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**Lesson #20 - Part #2**  
**AN ATTEMPT TO DUPLICATE THE SPECIAL MIRACLE**  
(Acts 19:13-17)

- I. Lost Men Tried to Duplicate the Miracle to Enhance their Reputation.**
- A. Their first mistake: "*We adjure you by Jesus who Paul preacheth.*"
1. They **"took the name of Jesus in vain"** (Exodus 20:7).
- B. Their big mistake: "They did not realize that the evil spirits did not know them."
1. The evil spirits knew Jesus and knew His power.
  2. The evil spirits knew Paul and they knew that he had the power of God on him.
  3. The evil spirits said to the men, **"Who are you???"**
- C. Their dangerous mistake: They tamper with evil spirits - which is risky business!
1. Michael, the archangel, did not dare to "dispute with the devil" (Jude 1:9).
- D. Their BIGGEST mistake in trying to "Enhance their Reputation" was ...
1. The man with the evil spirit prevailed against them.
  2. They fled out of that house naked and wounded.
- II. Warnings That We Should Resist Satan** (James 4:7).
- A. Satan is "ever changing" and attacking us in different ways.
1. He may start by "wanting to be friends and help us" (Nehemiah 6:1-4).
    - a. He did this to Eve in Genesis 3:1-5 and deceived her!
  2. When we refuse - He will attack us in a different manner (Nehemiah 6:10-14).
- B. Michael, the Archangel, turned to the Lord to Rebuke him (Jude 1:9).
- C. **Do not forget! "We war against an Unseen enemy!"** (Ephesians 6:12)

**THE CONTINUING WAR BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND FALSE RELIGION**

- I. The War Between Christianity and False Religions Began in the City of Ephesus**  
(Acts 19:23-41).
- A. Ephesus was "home of the goddess Diana" (Acts 19:24).
- a. Demetrius pretended that his "love for Diana" was the reason for him being upset.
    - b. The real reason is found in Verses 25 - 27.

*"The love of money is the root of all evil."* (I Timothy 6:10)
    - c. Demetrius and friends "made and sold "silver shrines for Diana (Verse 24).
    - d. Paul preached "*there be no gods, which are made with hands:*" (Verse 26).
- B. The "makers" of silver shrines (images) "used" the goddess Diana to cause the city to protest (Vs. 29).

1. The "town clerk" (which is today, "the mayor") calmed and ended the crisis (Verse 35-41).
- C. This type of "war and persecution" was "unusual" in the Book of Acts.
1. **It had never happened before!**
- D. The Mayor may have ended the crisis in Ephesus, but "he did not end the conflict today."

## FAST-FORWARD TO 2022 FALSE RELIGION CONTINUES IN AMERICA TODAY

### I. False Religion Continues Today - 2022!

- A. Certain churches today, continue to "charge for images they made to sell."
- B. Certain churches today, continue to "charge for special counseling."

**Example:** A married couple in the Spanish Church at East Side were acquainted with a "lost couple" who were having marital problems. They suggested that they meet with the Pastor of the Spanish church for counseling. They were nice but refused the offer. The man said he had a friend who was a Catholic priest, and he was going to ask him for help. Two or three weeks later, the same couple asked if the offer to meet with the pastor of the Spanish church was still open. Naturally, the reply was "Yes." He continued talking with the couple and asked the man if he had gone to the Catholic priest for counseling. Making a long story short, the man told him that he called and asked for help three times. His "so called friend" politely refused the first two times he asked. On the third time he replied, "Okay. I'll try to help you, but it will cost \$250 per session!" After hearing that, he canceled the appointment and met with the pastor of the Spanish church. They were both led to Christ and joined the church. Their marital problems were resolved, and they are rejoicing.

- C. Certain churches today, continue to "charge for a requested blessing."

### **Example:**

I took a group of people from Memphis to Mexico several years ago. I did that several times. On each trip, I always took them to the top of "The Holy Mountain of God" in Guanajuato, Mexico. That mountain belongs to the Catholic church. There is a large "open-air amphitheater on the top of the mountain along with a motel, restaurant, and living quarters for Catholic priest. It is known all over Mexico. It is the place that the Pope always visits and holds a special mass when in Mexico. The mountain is about 10,000 feet in height and has a "cobble-stone road" of about 10 miles from bottom to top and is VERY steep. One day, we were at the top of the mountain. We had parked and were unloading to tour the amphitheater and various other places on the mountain. When we were unloaded, I noticed a car parked with the hood open and smoke was coming out from the motor. The car had over-heated. The owner, or driver, I do not know which, had gone in the Catholic church, which faces the parking lot, to seek help. As we were standing there, the owner returned and had a priest in a long white robe with him. The owner had asked the priest to please come outside and "bless his car" so it could be driven back down the mountain. The Priest said what appeared to be "a memorized prayer." When he finished, he had a small container, what the

Catholic church calls "holy water." The priest then "sprinkled" some of the holy water on the car's engine. When he finished, he turned to the owner and "held his arm out, his palm open and turned upward." The man, without hesitation, placed some money in the Priest's hand and thanked him. That, and many other things that church does, are common, everyday practices in Catholic countries, like Mexico, Central and South America.

## **FALSE TEACHERS CONTINUE IN AMERICA IN 2022**

### **I. A Commentary Written by Dr. John MacArthur Testifies to That Statement.**

- A. Dr. Mac Arthur uses the NASV, which is perverted version of the Bible
1. An example is Colossians 1:12-14 (We compare these verses in the KJV - vs- the NASV)

#### **KJV:**

*"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:"*

#### **NASV:**

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption \_\_\_\_omitted\_\_\_\_ even the forgiveness of sins:"

The phrase "through his blood" along with MANY other such verses, is omitted in the NASV.

- B. Dr. MacArthur does not believe in the literal "blood of Christ" being essential for our salvation. He teaches that the blood is a "symbol" of the death of Christ.

#### **EXAMPLE:**

MacArthur's commentary on Colossians & Philemon: The three statements below are "quotes" from his commentary on Page 63 (Read)

"Proper biblical teaching on the blood of Christ simply is that His physical blood has no magical or mystical saving power. It is not some supernaturally preserved form of the actual blood of Christ that literally washes believers of their sin."

"To one degree or another, we much acknowledge that there is symbolism in what Scripture says about the blood."

"The literal blood of Christ ran into the dirt and dust, and nothing in Scripture hints that it now exists in any tangible or visible form. Communion wine does not change into blood. There is no

way the actual blood of Christ could be applied to all of us. We must acknowledge at some point that the sprinkling with blood under the New Covenant is symbolic."

John 20:19 makes it clear that Jesus Christ ascended to His Father in Heaven. This was not His final "ascension" back to Heaven to sit on the right hand of the Father. On this occasion, Jesus ascended and was back on earth again and appeared to various witnesses and then ascended back to Heaven in Acts 1:10, That was before a group of his disciples.

Hebrews 9:7-12 & Hebrews 13:7-12 clearly states that Jesus ascended to Heaven and entered into His Fathers presence and presented "his own blood." God said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you."

**THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**Lesson #21**  
**PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY - PART #3**  
**Acts 20:1-38**

INTRO: There is no absolute scripture as to who founded the church in Ephesus. It could have been Apollos, but that is not stated in Scripture. However, we do know that there was a church in Ephesus and Paul stayed in Ephesus about 2 1/2 years. Two of those years were spent working out of the "School of Tyrannus" (Acts 19:10). From that point the Bible declares, *"so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks."*

**PAUL'S JOURNEY AFTER DEPARTING FROM EPHESUS**

- I. Paul Travels to Macedonia** (Acts 20:1).
  - A. Luke only gives one half of Verse 2 concerning Paul's actions in Macedonia.
- II. Paul Departed Macedonia and Traveled to Greece** (Verse 2).
  - A. Paul spends three months in Greece (Verse 3).
    - 1. Paul, most likely, visited and ministered to the church at Corinth.
  - B. Luke gives no details of Paul's actions.
- III. Paul had planned to sail from Greece to Syria, but - -** (Verse 3)
  - A. The Jews laid wait for Paul. (Not stated, but most likely planned to kill him.)
- IV. Paul Changes His Plan and Decided to Return through Macedonia** (Verse 3).
  - A. Paul's traveling companions to Asia:
    - 1. Sopater of the Church in Berean.
    - 2. Aristarchus and Secundus of the Church in Thessalonica.
    - 3. Gaius from the Church in Derbe.
    - 4. Timotheus.
    - 5. Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.
  - B. These companions continued to Macedonia and then to Troas (Verse 5).
- V. Paul Travels from Philippi to Troas and Abode Seven Days** (Acts 20:6).

**THE OFFICIAL CHANGE FROM THE SABBATH DAY TO THE FIRST DAY**  
**Acts 20:7**

- I. The Ceasing of the Sabbath Day.**
  - A. The Sabbath Day was the seventh day of the week.
    - 1. It was associated with creation.
    - 2. It was a "day of rest."
    - 3. The "Fourth Commandment" is not reaffirmed in the New Testament.
    - 4. No Christian in the New Testament is commanded to keep the sabbath.
    - 5. There is "no warning" in the New Testament about "Keeping the Sabbath."

- B. James, in the council in Jerusalem, made "no reference" to the Sabbath day."
  - 1. Not once in the 21 Epistles is the Sabbath regarded as "holy or sacred."
- C. The Sabbath was a covenant between God and Israel (Exodus 31:16-17).

## **II. The Commencing of Worship on the "First Day of the Week" (Acts 20:7).**

- A. The Bible sets the "first day of the week" as the day to bring offerings to the Lord (I Cor. 16:1-2).
- B. Colossians 2:14-17 declares that the "sabbath day" was nailed to the cross.
  - 1. We are clearly told "not to observe the sabbath day."

## **III. The Events which Took Place on the First Day of the Week.**

- A. Jesus Christ arose from the dead on the "first day" (Matthew 28:1).
- B. The Holy Spirit descended from Heaven on the "first day" (Acts 2:1). (Pentecost)
- C. Jesus appeared to his disciples on the "first day" (Luke 24:1 & 36).
- D. The believers met together to "break bread" on the "first day" (Acts 20:7).

## **IV. The Application of "The Sabbath Day - vs - The First Day."**

- A. The "Sabbath Day"- was a day of rest, looking to the "past 6 days of labor."
- B. The "First Day" - is a day of "looking forward to 6 days of serving Christ."

### **PAUL CONTINUES HIS THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY**

#### **I. Paul's Co-Laborers sail to Assos (Acts 20:13).**

- A. Paul, for an unknown reason, walked to Assos (Verse 13).

#### **II. Paul and his co-laborers sailed from Assos to Mitylene (Verse 14).**

- A. From Mitylene, they sailed to Chios and to Samos, and from there to Miletus (Verse 15).

### **PAUL'S FINAL COUNSEL TO THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS Acts 20:17-38**

#### **I. Paul Calls and Meets with the Elders of the Church in Ephesus (Verse 17).**

### **PAUL SHARES A PATTERN THAT EVERY CHRISTIAN SHOULD FOLLOW**

- A. We should all be willing to be a "slave" for Christ (Acts 20:19).



1. The word "serving" comes from the Greek word (douleuo) "a bonds slave."
  2. Bonds slave is a "slave" who had been set free,
    - a. But by his own will chose to be a "slave by choice."
    - b. Proved by the ear mark (Romans 1:1).
- B. We should all be willing to "**suffer**" for the cause of Christ (Acts 20:22-24).
1. Paul describes his sufferings.
    - a. (II Corinthians 11:23-31).
  2. "Yet, always rejoicing" (II Corinthians 6:3-10).
  3. Suffering comes to every Christian who is serving God.
    - a. Many Christians "question God" when rain and storms come.
    - b. Keep in mind, when it rains, it causes things to grow!
      - i. Rain and storms are NECESSARY in every life in order to grow!
    - c. Do not despise the rain - It results in a great harvest of good things in your life.
- C. We should all be willing to be a good "**steward**" (faithful) in all the things of Christ (Acts 20:25-27).
1. What is your plan to be successful in your Christian life?
    - a. It should not be numbers, bigness, or any world standard.
    - b. It should be a testimony that you have "shared the Gospel with everyone possible."
  2. Paul gives the standard when he wrote to the church at Corinth (I Corinthians 3:4-9).
  3. "It is required of stewards that they be found faithful." (I Corinthians 4:2).
  4. We should be faithful to "do our part" in spreading the Gospel.
    - a. "Christ has given unto us the ministry of reconciliation." (II Cor. 5:18)
  5. "We are labourers together with God..." (I Corinthians 3:9)

**ILLUSTRATION** of the importance of you and me doing "our part" as we "labour together with God." This illustration is not true, but is a little humorous, and it does illustrate that God expects us to "do our part." I imagine the illustration was thought up by some preacher to "paint a picture." It does a good job!

There was a gardener who had worked hard and done a good job of planting and caring for his garden. His garden was along side a road by his house. One afternoon he was in the garden working, got tired, and stopped at the end of the rows, leaned on his hoe, and was resting. A man came by and stopped to talk with him. The man started his conversation by commending the man on what a beautiful garden he had. He said, "Wow! You and God have really done a good job on that garden." The gardener thanked him. However, the man kept on commending him. He would tell him how nice the garden was, how the rows were straight, etc. and said, "You and God have REALLY done a good job on the garden. That went on for another few minutes and the man continued to say, "You and God have really done a good job on that piece of ground." After a time, the gardener got a little frustrated with the man. When the man said, again, "You and God

have really done a good job on that garden!" The gardener replied, "Sir, you should have seen the land when God had it by himself!"

God COULD have done it all by himself but chose not to. He chose to give you and me the opportunity to truly be "*labourers together with God.*" Paul said, "*one planteth, one watereth, God giveth the increase!*" (I Corinthians 3:5-8). **Our part:** We are to witness, "plant the seed - water the seed (we do this by praying). **God's Part:** God will "give the increase." We should be THANKFUL that God lets us have a part in his work!

- D. We should all be willing to be a good "**shepherd**" of the flock of God (Acts 20:28-32).
1. This appears to be directed to "church leaders."
    - a. They should "feed the flock of God."
    - b. They should protect the flock of God from the dangers of...
      - i. Grievous wolves. This is a danger from WITHOUT!
      - ii. False teachers, "speaking perverse things." This is a danger from WITHIN!
  2. EVERY leader should be "responsible" for all that God has committed to their trust.
    - a. The GOOD of the church should be foremost in a leader's thoughts and decisions.
- E. We should all be willing to "**serve**" for heavenly rewards (Acts 20:33-35).
1. No Christian should serve for "silver or gold."
    - a. If that is your motive - your life will have no value at the Judgement Seat!
  2. Great rewards may seem to be the natural reward for "great service."
    - a. Paul's states that his goal in the ministry was "giving rather than getting."
  3. Jesus said, "*I came not to be ministered unto but to minister ....*"
    - a. He gave his life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28).

## II. **Paul's Visit with the Elders - Ends with "Broken Hearts and Many Tears** (Acts 20:36-38).

- A. Paul had told the elders in Verse 25, "they would see his face no more."
1. They were sorrowing because of those words.
  2. They were weeping because of their love and their appreciation for Brother Paul!

## **PAUL CONCLUDES HIS PART OF THE RACE**

### I. **Paul Compared His Ministry of Spreading the Gospel to "Running a Race"** (I Corinthians 9:24).

- A. As he neared the end of his race, he said, "*I press toward the mark ...*"  
(Philippians 3:14).

The word "pressing" is a picture of horse racing in that day and also today. Horse racing was common in those days. When the race started, the rider of the horse would "pace the horse"

around the track, running steadily toward the last turn. When they made the last turn and started down the "home stretch" toward the finish line, the rider would "turn the horse loose" and the horse would "give it all he had." It is the same word, "press" used in Philippians 3:14, which pictures Paul as he turned and started down "the home stretch." He turned himself loose, held nothing back, and "gave it all he had" as he headed toward the finish line. (Departure to Heaven)

The work that began in Acts is like a man running a "relay race." He runs "his part" as hard and as diligently as he possibly can. As he arrives at the finish line, "his part" of the race is finished, but - he hands the baton off to the next runner - and he continues the race!

Today, in the year of 2022, that baton has been handed to you and to me. We should "run the race" as Paul did, "pressing toward the mark (giving it all we have) *for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus!*"

**Let's live our lives today so, in that day, we will be able to say with Paul,  
*"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."***

**BOOK OF ACTS**  
**Lesson #22**  
**CHAPTER 21 - 26**

**INTRODUCTION:** In this section, we will combine the closing verses of Chapter 20 with Chapters 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and Chapter 26 of Acts. All of this deals with Paul being arrested, beaten, and appealing to Caesar in Rome. We will stop at certain sections which I feel need to be explained, but I will not go into "verse by verse" through these chapters as there is much duplication. After covering these chapters, we will pick up at Acts Chapter 27, and separate that chapter into two lessons as we bring our study in the Book of Acts to a close!

**CHAPTER 21**

**I. Paul left the Elders in Ephesus (Acts 20:35-37).**

- A. He traveled back to Jerusalem.
  - 1. Paul was "warned" by disciples there that he should not go up to Jerusalem (Acts 21:4).
  - 2. Paul was "warned again" by his friend Agabus, a prophet from Jerusalem (Acts 21:10-13).
    - a. This is not to be understood as a "command" from God not to go.
    - b. It was a warning that he "would be bound" if he went to Jerusalem.
  - 3. Paul understood this warning (Acts 21:13).
    - a. He chose to "be bound and to risk his life" to go to Jerusalem.
  - 4. Instead of accusing Paul of being disobedient, we should applaud him for his courage!
  - 5. Paul went to Jerusalem because:
    - a. He knew there was a problem between "legalist Jews and believing Jews and gentiles."
    - b. He knew that he was "part of the problem." He taught "the new way."
    - c. He knew he was not only a part of the problem, but that he must try to resolve it.
- B. Paul was taken into custody by the Jews (Acts 21:27-32).
  - 1. He was beaten, and they were going to kill him.
  - 2. The chief captain sent soldiers and rescued him (Verse 31-32).
- C. Paul was bound in chains (Acts 21:33).
  - 1. He was taken before the chief captain.
    - a. He requested permission to speak to the people and it was granted (Acts 21:39).

**CHAPTER 22**

**I. Paul Declared He was a "Jew" and Then Gave his Testimony of Salvation (Acts 22:1-16).**

- A. They bound Paul and were going to beat him (Verse 22-23).
- B. The chief captain had him bound and intended to "scourge" him (Verse 23).
- C. Paul declared he was a "Roman Citizen" (Verse 25).
  - 1. The chief captain was then afraid (Verse 29).
  - 2. The next day the captain arranged to bring Paul before the Sanhedrin.
- D. The "Sanhedrin" was like the Supreme Court of the Jewish Religion!
  - 1. The "Sanhedrin" was made up of 70-71 judges, half Pharisees, and half Sadducees.
  - 2. Paul had been a member of the Sanhedrin in past years (Acts 26:10).

## CHAPTER 23

### I. **The People Were Reviled and Wanted Him Killed.**

- A. Paul's opening word, "conscience" infuriated Ananias, the "high priest" (Acts 23:1).
  - 1. Conscience was used by Paul 21 times in his letters. - It was important to him.
  - 2. Conscience means: the inner judge or witness that approves when we do right or wrong."
  - 3. Before Paul was saved, "He lived by his conscience." He lived by the light that he had!
- B. The ENTIRE problem was about "The Resurrection of Christ" (Acts 23:6)!
  - 1. This GREATLY divided the Pharisees and Sadducees.
  - 2. The Pharisees believed in the resurrection! The Sadducees did not (Acts 23:7)!
- C. The chief captain removed Paul to protect him (Verse 10).
- D. God gave Paul a promise that he would go to Rome to preach the Gospel (Acts 23:11).
  - 1. This was Paul's assurance that he COULD not die before going to Rome!
- E. The Jews banded together and planned to take Paul and murder him (Verses 12-13).
  - 1. Paul's sister's son was used to expose their plot (Verse 16).
- F. **Again, God used the chief captain to rescue Paul.**
  - 1. The chief captain placed Paul with 2 Centurions and 70 horsemen (Verse 23).**
  - 2. He included 200 spearmen.**
- G. **This tells us how large the crowd of "Paul haters" was!!!**
  - 1. He was taken to appear before Felix at Caesarea (Acts 23:24).
    - a. Felix was the Governor of Judea!
  - 2. The chief captain wrote a letter and explained Paul's situation (Verse 25).

- a. The Governor read the letter and placed Paul in Prison (Acts 23:33-35).

## **CHAPTER 24**

- I. Paul testified and defended himself before Felix twice.**
  - A. The first time in Acts 24:10-13.
  - B. The second time, after certain days, again (Acts 24:26).
  - C. Paul spent another 2 silent years in Caesarea (Acts 24:27).

## **CHAPTER 25**

- I. Felix finished his term as governor of Judea and was followed by Festus.**
  - A. The Jews then appealed to Festus who was in Jerusalem (Acts 25:1).
  - B. They encouraged Festus to send to Caesarea and bring Paul to Jerusalem.
    - 1. They planned to "lay wait" and kill Paul (Acts 25:2-3).
  - C. Festus traveled to Caesarea to examine Paul (Verse 4).
  - D. Paul appealed his case to Caesar in Rome (Acts 25:10-27).
    - 1. Festus approved him going to Caesar, as Paul was a Roman (Acts 25:12).

## **CHAPTER 26**

- I. Paul said, "Follow me, even as I am also of Christ - (I Corinthians 11:1).**
  - A. Jesus Christ, "*The same yesterday, to day and for ever*" (Hebrews 13:8).
    - 1. I am the Lord, I change not (Malachi 3:6).
  - B. Paul follows in Christ's steps as he stood before Agrippa (Acts 26:1-3).
  - C. Paul defended himself by giving Agrippa his personal testimony in "five steps."
    - 1. "*After the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee*" (Acts 26:4-11).
      - a. The Jews all knew his background (Verse 4).
      - b. Philippians 3:4-6
      - c. Paul had lived in total darkness, but:
      - d. He thought he was being obedient to the light that he had.
    - 2. He saw a light from Heaven (Acts 26:12-13).
      - a. The light was "supernatural."
      - b. It blinded him for 3 days (Acts 9:8-9).
      - c. Seeing a supernatural light was not enough.
    - 3. He .... *heard a voice speaking unto me...* (Acts 26:14-18).
      - a. This let Agrippa know that God "speaks to his enemies - if they will listen."
      - b. God had BEEN dealing with Paul, but Paul had been "kicking against the pricks."

4. He was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision (Verse 19).
  - a. Not disobedient to what?
  - b. Paul had said, "*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do (Acts 9:6)?*"
  - c. God answered Paul's question...

*"But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and the kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."* (Acts 9:15-16)

5. He continues unto that very day (Acts 26:22).

*"I continue, unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles."* (Acts 26:22-32)

- D. Paul drove the dagger into Festus's heart (Acts 26:24-26).
- E. Paul drove the dagger into King Agrippa's heart (Acts 26:27).
- F. When Paul had finished, Festus, his wife, Bernice, and Agrippa admitted that Paul was right. However, there is no indication that any of the three trusted Christ (Acts 26:30-32).

**HOWEVER**, Paul had "done his part." He had witnessed to Kings! Paul is not responsible for the hardened heart and rejection of truth which they knew to be true. **He had "done what he could."**

**THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**Lesson #23**  
**STORMS IN THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN**  
**Acts 27:14-25 ---- Nahum 1:3**

**INTRODUCTION:** Today, there are storms in the World, in Government, in Churches, in Homes. and in the lives of Individual Christians. However, God never moves without "purpose and plan."

- A. Everyone here: (1) Going through one (2) Just came out of one (3) Just wait – one coming.
- B. Purpose of Storms – Much misunderstanding.
  - 1. Some people say, “God’s whipping him”. – Not necessarily.
  - 2. Others say, “Devil’s on his back”. – Not necessarily.
  - 3. People shout and run the aisles – God’s blessing. – Not necessarily.
- C. Three types of storms:
  - 1. Temptations            James 1:13            Come from Satan.
  - 2. Tribulations            Revelations 1:9            Come from men.
  - 3. Trials                    I Peter 1:7                    Come from God.
- D. Trial is a “test” – For our good and growth - some fail and must repeat the grade!
  - 1. Trials are getting you ready for something bigger.

**I. God Sends Detecting Storms in Our Lives ...** Not so He will know what you are made of – but that YOU will know. Most of us are not made from as good of stuff as we pretend to be!!!

- A. Expose Your Character
  - 1. If you quit, you were a quitter from the beginning –just took a storm to show it.
  - 2. Peter was shouting when feeding 5000. Storm came – said, “*go fishing*”.
  - 3. “Faith that fizzles before the finish had a flaw from the first”  
(I Corinthians 15:58).
- B. Expose your Confidence
  - 1. Have you been disappointed in: Preacher –Missionary - Teacher - Deacon – Friend?
  - 2. Sad – No excuse. But if you are the right kind of Christian, be in church on Sunday.
  - 3. (Philippians 3:3) “*Have NO confidence in the flesh*”.
  - 4. (Jeremiah 2:5) “No excuse until you find a problem with God.”
- C. Expose your Capabilities
  - 1. Some Christians say, “I can’t” (Philippians 4:13) "I can't" should NOT be in your vocabulary!
  - 2. People say “I can’t” because they have a fear of failing.
    - a. II Timothy 1:7 “God has not given” ... came from somewhere else!
  - 2. Famous Lockheed Aircraft -  
When it is built – before giving flying status – put in a wind-tunnel for testing.



Turbines are turned up to 800-1000 mph.  
Plane shakes, but if it pops no rivets – it is given flying status!  
If it “pops” rivets” it is put back in the hanger for more work!  
Too many Christians “pop rivets” when a storm comes!

## **II. God Sends Developing Storm in Our lives:**

A. Stabilize you (I Corinthians 15:58).

1. I read this in a book in Corpus Christi:

There are hundreds of Palm trees along the coastal highway called Tropical Trail,

in Texas, planted there when 12” tall - Have been through storm after storm coming in off gulf. None ever blown out of where they were planted. Article stated: Because of the pressure of the storms. They grew a root down in sand 12” for every 12” you see above ground. The Storms stabilized them. Same trees planted 50 miles inland only have a root of 3-4 feet. A storm like those that come in off the gulf would blow those trees away.

Storms are used by God to “develop” and “stabilize us” (Ephesians 6:13).

B. Sanitize you.

1. When Preaching of the Word of God won’t work in your life.

2. God has another way (Hebrews 12:10-11)!

a. God speaks to your heart and you say, “No”.

b. When they take your little girl to the emergency room and the doctor comes out and says, “Not sure what’s wrong, but you might need to pray!”

3. You’ll get your heart right with him – then – and quickly!

4. God KNOWS exactly what it will take for you to repent and change (Romans 8:28).

C. Synchronize you.

1. Example:

a. Acts 1:8 God said, go and preach the Gospel *"to the uttermost part....*

They did not go! They all stayed in Jerusalem – enjoyed their life.

b. Acts 8:4 God sent a storm.

They went *"every where preaching the word..."* (the Gospel)!

## **III. God Sends Directing Storms in Our Lives - God has prepared something better for you.**

A. Directs you to the PLACE of God.

1. Jonah (Jonah 1:2 *“Arise and go to Nineveh...”* Jonah went the exact opposite way.

2. God sent a storm (Jonah 3:1-2). Jonah went where God wanted him to go.  
What brought that about? The storm!

B. Directs you to the Purpose of God (Genesis 37:5).

1. Joseph: Went through five Storms.

a. Hated by his brethren (Genesis 37:4 & 5).

b. Left in a pit to die (Genesis 37:22).

- c. Sold to slavery in Egypt – never to see family again (Genesis 37:28).
  - d. Lied about by Potiphar's wife when he was trying to do right (Gen. 39:7-20).  
(Most Baptists would have said, “I do right, and this is what I get!”  
“It’s just not worth it to live right!”)
  - e. Forgotten by the butler (Genesis 40:23)
2. Genesis 41:14 (They sent for him).
- a. When you’re ready, you won’t need to volunteer! They will send for you!
  - b. Genesis 50: 19-20, “*I am in the place of God*”.
  - c. **Purpose:** “To save much people alive”.

There are three types of Birds:

Sparrow: Storm comes he will run and try to hide in a bush.

Crow: (Chicken bird) Will try to “outrun the storm”

You’ve seen a crow in a field, feathers all turned inside out. Storm caught him!

Eagle: Sits on highest point of a cliff – points their beak into the storm. Storm gets so strong he can’t stay on nest, spreads wings - filled with wind of storm. The Eagle USES the storm to LIFT him off the nest – and the Eagle rides the winds – till he is ABOVE the storm – and the sky is blue, and the sun is shining. God give us Eagle Christians.

**THE BOOK OF ACTS**  
**Lesson #24**  
**HOW TO HAVE PEACE IN THE MIDST OF THE STORM**  
**Acts 27:14-25**

**Intro:** We have read of many serious storms. However, we have never read of a storm like this storm. The storm lasted:

- A. 14 days (Verse 27).
- B. 276 People (Verse 37) - Sick, wet, no hope.
- C. Storms in: The World, The Government, Homes, in this case – Your Church!
  - 1. Lost people have storms (Isaiah 57:20) – BUT - NO HOPE!
  - 2. However, FOR US! “*There remaineth therefore a rest...*” (Hebrews 4:9).

**FIVE STEPS TO HAVE PEACE IN THE MIDST OF A STORM**

**I. You Must Lighten the Ship. (Clean Things out of Your Life.)**

- A. Boats leave Cuba - Sink! Why? They are overloaded. (Not enough hours in a day!!)
  - 1. Not talking about sinful things.
    - a. Satan uses “Good things against the Church”.
  - 2. Good Things - Verses 17-19.
    - a. Cast out the wheat (Verse 38). TEXT: I Cor. 10:31
    - b. (I Samuel 15:3-9) – Saul kept good things.)
  - 3. Church is about one thing.
    - a. Schools – Activities - Good things.

**II. You Must Spend Time with God ... After long abstinences (Acts 27:21).**

- A. How did Paul find a place and time?
  - 1. He was not on deck battling the storm. (I Thessalonians 5:17 - Pray without ceasing)
- B. Storms are calmed by Jesus, **not by battling (Mark 4:39).**
- C. **Illustration:** Alone **UNTIL** you get something.
  - 1. **(Rhema)** – (Romans 10:17 – Eph. 6:17).
  - 2. (Isaiah 46:4 - 47:2) Bare the leg!!!!
- D. If you're going through a storm.
  - 1. **Get alone with God UNTIL you get something!**

**III. You Must Realize that God is with you (Acts 27:23). 276 + God equals 277.**

- A. Afraid in the dark if alone! **(God - Please don't move)**
- B. Psalms 23:4 “... *though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death....*”

- C. Hebrews 13:5 "*... I will never leave thee...*"
- E. II Kings 6:13-17 "*...they that be with us are more...*"
- F. Isaiah 26:3 – "*Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace...*"

#### IV. You Must Believe His Promises (Verse 25).

- A. Philippians 1:6 - What does that mean? (It won't sink!)
- B. Taking the Shield of Faith (Ephesians 6:16).
  - 1. "*...ye SHALL be able to quench all the fiery darts...*"
    - a. Your life won't be ruined.
    - b. Your home won't be ruined.
    - c. Your church won't be ruined.
  - 2. The gates of Hell WILL NOT prevail... (Matthew 6:18).
    - a. "*Who shall separate us...*" (Romans 8:35).

#### V. You Must Give Thanks to God (Verse 35).

- A. How did he give thanks? 14 days, sick, wet, hungry, no sleep.
- B. Storms are opportunities.
  - 1. Captain would not listen (Verse 11).
  - 2. 276 listened! Why? THE STORM!!!!
- C. **Storms are for your good** (I Peter 1:4-8).

#### PERSONAL ILLUSTRATION

- D. Storms are for the good of others (II Corinthians 1:4).
  - 1. **Jack Parchman** and 2nd Baptist Church - Results...Gambrells!

One night shortly after the night shift began about 11:30 PM, there was a huge fire that appeared to be about a half-mile from the plant. The flames were clearly visible in the sky from the front of the plant. I was not overly concerned about the fire for two reasons. First, it was in the opposite direction from where I lived. Second, I was not from West Helena, therefore I did not know many people who might be affected by the fire. However, all of the men in the plant were from West Helena and most of them lived in the direction of the fire. Several of them asked me to leave the plant and find out what was on fire. At first I brushed it off as I really did not care. However, they continued saying it might be their house, etc. so I decided to drive over for them and find out what was on fire.

I left the plant, signed out at the gate, and drove toward the fire. I got as close as I could, but not being familiar with that area of West Helena, I still did not know what was on fire. I parked as close as possible and walked about a block to the fire. It was Second Baptist Church on Baldwin Street that was "going up in flames." I learned, by listening to people talk who were standing close by, that they had completed a new church building and auditorium

that week and were planning on moving into the building for their first service on the following Sunday morning! As I watched, I thought it was sad, but I was not terribly concerned, in spite of the fact that I was saved but I was not faithful in church. Therefore, I was not growing.

As I watched the fire there were three men standing a few feet in front of me and to my right, who were talking. They were all dressed nicely, but I especially remember one man. That man had on a light grey suit with a white dress shirt and no tie. As I listened, I heard him make several remarks that, to me, were strange. He said, "Men, we need to thank God for this fire. Our church needed this! We have forgotten how badly we need God's blessings. We have gotten proud of our new building and felt we had become self-sufficient. Let's thank God for burning our building down!"

I could not believe what I was hearing! I had never known anyone who thanked the Lord for burning down a brand-new church building! As I said, he was dressed nice, but I thought, "There must be something wrong with that man! He must have a mental problem or something." After a few minutes, one of the men standing with him moved a few steps away to the left and started talking to another man. As he came back by where I was standing, I had an opportunity and without sounding critical, I asked him, "Sir, who is that man over there in the grey suit that you were just talking to?" He responded, "Oh, that's Brother Jack Parchman. He's our pastor...!"

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That hit me like a "ton of bricks!" All of a sudden, I thought I was the one who must be crazy. I thought, "I could not be understanding all of this right. That man is the pastor of a church that was burning to the ground, and he was thanking God for burning the church's brand new building down." I said to myself, I better ask these guys about this again. I did, and again I got the same answers. I thought, "All of these people must be crazy!" I returned to my car, drove back to the plant, and told the men that it was Second Baptist Church that was on fire and that it had burned to the ground! I DID NOT tell them about the crazy men I encountered at the fire. I might have told them, but I knew I could not explain what or why those men were talking the way they were talking and why they were thanking God for burning their building down.

The remainder of the night, I could not get away from what I had seen and heard. I went home at 7 AM the next morning and had breakfast with my wife. I shared with her what had happened. That afternoon, after I had slept, we drove back to the site of the church. It was beyond repair. However, a large group of men and women from the church were running back and forth setting up a large tent across the street from the church, carrying chair after chair. They had a big sign on the corner saying they would have services as usual on Sunday morning! They were all singing and rejoicing!

At supper on Saturday evening, I told my wife, Diane, to get the kids up in the morning – we were going to church. She was shocked. Even though we went occasionally, it was not like me to tell her we were going. She asked me what caused me to want to do that. I told her about that man, Jack Parchman, the pastor, and I thought he was either crazy or he knew something I did not know! I told her we were going to church to find out which one was true – and why! That morning, sitting in a folding metal chair under a tent, God, for the first time since I was saved, spoke to my heart. I do not remember exactly what the preacher spoke on

or what God convicted me of, but I did know that my life was a mess and that I was not right with God. When the service was over, we left and went home. We returned to the church the next two weeks. On the third morning, I went forward, knelt at the altar, asked God's forgiveness, and my wife and I joined the church that day!

The following Sunday, we joined a Sunday School class. I went to a men's class where a man named Windon Baker was the Sunday School teacher. For the first time in my life, I began to learn things from the Bible. One thing I learned that I had never been told before, was that "God had a plan for my life." To me, that was almost unbelievable! At that time, I was not far enough along in the Bible to look back and see that God had already been working in my life. It was not until a few years later that I understood that the things I had gone through, being fired, having to move to West Helena, Arkansas to get a job, were all "for my good."

**WARNING: Do not leave the ship! (Acts 27:31)**