

Acts

A Series of 28 Outlined Chapters in Two Parts

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This volume has been a long time in the works. Acts is one of my favorite books both to teach and study. These are my notes I have used to both preach through and teach in class. I have long stated I could teach Acts once a year and be happy. Careful study reveals Acts to be the roadmap of the New Testament. It is my goal, not to do this for self-glory, but to make it accessible for others to come to a better understanding of God's Word. I preach from a strict outline – with as few words as possible to make my mind work more. It is my goal that these notes are both understandable and usable.

I prefer to teach this book using the ABCs of Acts, a teaching technique where each chapter in the book of Acts corresponds to that letter of the alphabet; although there are 28 chapters and only 26 letters, the last three chapters are grouped together in this study. The table of contents, above, illustrates how this method is carried out. I have adapted this to better suit what the Scriptures teach.

This work is a collective effort produced through much careful and thoughtful study of the book of Acts many times in my life. God's Word, the Bible, is always the main source consulted for study. The best way to use the notes ahead is with an open Bible and an open mind. This guide is keyed to the King James Version with other notes interspersed. Commentaries written by the following men, though not inspired, have been great sources of study for the me, listed by author in no particular order: H. Leo Boles, James Burton Coffman, George W. DeHoff, Don Iverson, Wayne Jackson, B. W. Johnson, Moses Lard, David Lipscomb, J. W. McGarvey, David L. Roper, and those whose names escape me.

I frequently use abbreviations – these notes were originally formatted for a PowerPoint presentation. As such, I needed to abbreviate. Common Bible book abbreviations are always used; P often refers to either Peter or Paul depending on the chapter. Chr. stands in for Christian(s). The abbreviations are often first spelled out in the context for better understanding.

Part I: The Growth of the Church – Chapters 1-12

Acts 1: the Ascension of Christ

- Acts: 3rd longest NT Book (LK, MT). MT & AC same length; Luke wrote 30% of NT.
- Penned to Gentile audience.
- Addressed to Theophilis (*one who loves God OR one who is loved by God*)
- Purpose: historical, Christological, missionary, apologetic, didactic
- Written late 62AD/early 63AD – end of the 2 years mentioned in 28:20
- Probably written over an extended period of time – Luke might have kept a journal
- Themes: past times, principles, preaching, prayer, progress
- Ch. 1 prepares for Ch. 2's great events

1. Ascension – v. 1-14

- 1: 1st account (Luke), Gospel told life of Christ
- To be effective in teaching, we must first live what we teach, 1 Tim. 4:16.
- 2: orders/commands: Great Commission
- 3: qualifications of apostleship: witness res. Jesus 40 days of appearances
- Jesus only had one kind of kingdom in mind; apostles had many.
- 4: apostles' lack of understanding is basis for 4-8
- 5: commanded not to leave Jerusalem, starting place for church
- Baptized: HS to guide them as promised in Jn. 14:26, 15:26, 16:13
- 6: minds elsewhere; restoring Israel was only mindset
- 7: times/epochs/ages: both emphasize it is not their place to know the exact time; now HS came with power
- 8: witnesses: nudge to get them started, map: start at home (Jerusalem), expand nearby (Judea, Samaria), reach out to all world (uttermost)
- 9: lifted up: doesn't mean Heaven up
- 10: not 1st time they had seen Him mysteriously depart since res., Lk. 24:31; didn't have to wonder long, angles as witness
- 11: message: 1. challenge, work now up to them; 2. comfort, one day He will return; victory is assured!
- 12: Jerusalem last place they would've chosen to go to.
- 12: (crucifixion, persecution, enemies), home & families in Galilee, no tie to Jerusalem.
- Sabbath's Day Journey: not ascension on Sabbath but a distance, Ex. 16:29, Num. 35:5, about 2000 cubits (18/20in), $\frac{3}{4}$ to $\frac{7}{8}$ mile.
- 13: Apostles staying in Jerusalem (4th & final list). Judas missing. Zealots political group ded. to overthrow Rom. in Palestine; unity
- Staying: kept their belongings, thought it all 120 mentioned in v. 15 here, *not sure*
- 14: helps to wait with others; interesting group, family of Jesus present; last mention of Mary in NT; regardless who was here, ded. to prayer
- *With one mind*: 11x in book

2. Replacement of Judas – v. 15-26

- 15: Peter takes control of group; replacement needed for Judas

- 16: Judas was a guide to those who arrested Jesus in Gethsemane
- 17: counted among us: Judas was an apostle. Warning here: all followers can fall away.
- 18-19: explanation to Gentile readers of death of Jesus
- Compliments Mt. 27:6-7: priests used money from Judas to buy a field, Potter's field, clay removed from soil to make vessels, field worthless – "strip-mined"; scattered body parts would lower value to 30 pcs. silver
- 20: Ps. 65:25, 109:8
- 21-22: did not set a precedent to perpetually reappoint apostles, Judas turned aside (25)
- 3 req: 1. accompanied apostles, man rules out women, 2. been w/ Jesus and apostles during ministry, 3. witness His res.
- Why 12 when HS fell? Why 12 at all? To correspond to 12 tribes
- 23: apparently only 2 qualified: Joseph Justus (Heb) Barsabbas (GK) [son of Sabbath, born on Sabbath?]
- Matthias: trad. one of 70, Luke 10:1
- 24,25: 2 men, 1 position: God decides, 2nd mention of prayer. "To go to one's own place" = "to go to the place one deserves to go because of one's own actions/"
- 26: Lots: not exactly sure, group effort. Did not vote, God chose! Common OT thing, Lv. 16:8, Num. 26:56, Pr. 16:33 God chooses
- Once the HS comes, casting lots never used again.
- One of the 12 – meant to be the 12th – NOT PAUL!
- Matthias' name does not appear again.

Lessons:

- Jesus gave specific commands on how to preach and to whom (1:8). We would do well to obey His commands in all aspects.
- Judas took the wrong way out of dealing with his sins. Taking one's life never solves the problem – it only ever creates more problems.
- God chose Matthias as the replacement for Judas. Ultimately God's Will is always accomplished.

Acts 2: The Beginning of the Church

- James D. Bales: *The Hub of the Bible*
- One of the greatest chapters of the Bible (Gen. 1, Is. 53, Rm. 8, 1 Cor. 15, Heb. 11)

- This day was the pinnacle of God’s eternal plans & purposes, Eph. 3:10-11
- Ac. 11:15: Peter calls this chapter the “beginning”

1. Crowd – v. 1-13

- 1: 3 major feasts: Passover (mid-April), Pentecost (early June), Feast of Tabernacles (Oct). *Purim*, *minor feast*, *Esther 9:29-32*
- Pentecost: Feast of Weeks (Ex. 34:22), 7 wks after Passover. Feast of Harvest: completion of barley harvest, Ex. 23:16; Day of First Fruits Ex. 23:16. GK name, not in OT, 3x in NT: 2:1, 20:16, 1 Cor. 16:18
- Name means “fiftieth,” 50 days after Passover.
- All able-bodied men expected to be in Jerusalem for feast, Ex. 34:23
- 2: not an actual noise! Temple area
- 3: tongues, glossā, muscle in mouth or speech producing muscle. “Glossary.” Speaking in tongues is glossolalia.
- Cloven/dividing tongues: KJV as adj. modifying tongue; NASB as verb, action of dividing apostles
- 4: action: filled w/HS, not gibberish; signifying this is what God approved of
- 5: devout men: only these would make long trip to Jerusalem, most receptive of Gospel
- 6: all bewildered at the events
- 7: Galilean account distinctive. Peter was identified by his speech in Mk. 14:70
- 8: Jews scattered by persecution & economic necessity, spoke Heb, Aramaic, Koine GK; not a miracle of hearing but of speaking
- 9-12: 15 regions/nations present E (Babylon, Persia) to W (N Africa, Rome). Proselytes: Gentile converts to Judaism; Lg pop in Rome
- 13: new wine: audience thought apostles were drunk at 9am

2. Sermon – v. 14-36

- Peter preached the 1st Gospel sermon in its fullness.
- 14,15: immediately dismisses charge of crowd; 3rd hour, 9am (start at 6am). Argument invalid: orthodox Jews didn’t eat or drink before 9am on Sabbath or Holy Day. Most didn’t before 10am, some even before noon on Pentecost.
- 16-18: Joel 2:28-32, qt LXX, not pouring out of fermented drink, but of divine spirit of God (Eph. 5:18); last days: messianic reign; “the moment you have anticipated for years is here! The last days have arrived!” to all men.

- 19-21: finished Joel's qt for context, no expl.; calling on the name of the Lord = submitting in obedience
- 22: told them what they wanted to know; now tells what they need to know! Key: you (5x), finger pointing; signs done openly.
- 23: as a nation, all rejected Him. Godless – Rom. Soldiers, audience painfully aware of Peter's statements. Hurdle: died on Rom cross, cross validated claim to messiah.
- 24: answered questions seen at empty tomb
- 25: verifies claim, qt Ps. 16:8-11
- 26-28: not abandoned in Hades
- 29: Patriarch David – Israel's spiritual fathers spoke of Jesus; D's tomb not empty, they could check it out
- 30-31: prophet, Ps. most qtd book; ref. 2S7 promise; 1st use of Christ (Christos, X = Chi), Lazarus' body began to decay; Christ's didn't.
- 32: proof: apostles, 2/3 witnesses needed, they get 12! Dt. 19:15
- 33: proof: miracles they were witnessing, see and hear *still*
- 34-36: Answers where Christ was, ascended, Ps. 110:1; sit = authority. Footstool reminds of 1 Cor. 15:25-26. Logical conclusion: He is both Lord & Christ – and YOU killed Him!

3. Reaction – v. 37-47

- 37: no mention of direct operation of HS! Heard > asked question, pain in question!
- 38: cannot imagine relief – hope! Repent (change) & baptized (converted) under new authority. For: in order to receive, Mt. 26:28; gift? ~~indwelling~~, forgiveness, miracles
- 39: continuous nature of promise: all are called through Gospel, 2 Thess. 2:14
- 40: gave add'l proofs, perverse – skolios – scoliosis, curving of spine
- 41: 3000 had no problem w/ command, pools
- 42: early church continually worshipped
- 43: reverence
- 44-45: ex. of fellowship, daily, not requirem't
- 47: daily in Temple: only place big enough to fit them all, 1st thing they did was worship – happy to be a Christians! The Lord adds to the church, no voting before a board!

Lessons:

- Although we were not physically in Jerusalem, we are guilty of crucifying Jesus because of our sins. He willingly died for you and me.

- The only way we can be saved today is by repentance and being baptized in the name of JC for the remission of sins. We learn in 4:12 there is salvation in no other.
- We do not join any local congregation; the Lord adds the saved to His church upon baptism. We then submit to a local eldership so they can watch over our souls (Heb. 3:17) and keep us accountable to God.

Acts 3: Crippled Cured

- Unsure of time passage between Ch. 2 & 3
- This miracle has a negative impact on the Jewish leaders.
- Persecution was foretold in John 15:20

1. Healing – v. 1-11

- 1: Peter & John fishing partners (Lk. 5:10), followers, inner circle, prepared last Passover feast (Lk. 22:8), ran together to see empty tomb (Jn. 20:3-4), now going to Temple together.
- Met daily in court of Gentiles, 5:12, 60,000ft²
- 9th hour = 3pm; large crowd together
- 2: 40yo (4:22) lame man at Temple to survive, similar to man in Mk. 2:1-5, Beautiful Gate: 75ft tall, Corinthian bronze, plated in silver & gold, face East, rising sun reflect off of.
- 3: eagerness of receiving alms
- 4: most did not see beggars
- 5: apostles not much time to “make living”
- 6: great emphasis on the Name!
- 7: only place ankles mentioned in NT (Dr. Luke’s medical diagnosis); scrawny legs had blood flow again, immediate, all could see.
- 8: more than healing of flesh and bones, never had strength – no therapy needed! Praises God for newfound health!
- 9,10: imagine the reaction of the crowd!
- 11: clinging, not wanting them to leave him. Portico of Solomon: trad. held part of original Temple. Peter has the audience’s full attention, and they were ready for a sermon.

2. Sermon – v. 12-26

- Emphasis on the name; 2nd sermon goes unfinished

- 12: they had seen Jesus heal the sick in Jerusalem before, apostles had argued who would be greatest, Mk. 9:34, now they deflect the authority – a contrast to so many “healers” of today!
- 13: uses way God introduced Himself at Bush, Ex. 3:6, 15; suffering servant, Is. 53; what did God do? Glorified Him as opposed to what the leaders of the day did
- 14: holy: set apart; righteous: one against whom no charge can be brought
- 15: contrast w/ Barabbas, he took a life while Jesus gave life. The Jews murdered Jesus.
- 16: everything building to Name of Jesus; awkward working in GK/Eng, orig. qt.; healing came through faith in Jesus & His Name; logic: none could deny man healed; healed through Name of Jesus; therefore, Jesus must be the Messiah!
- 17: not to be overwhelmed by their guilt, being kind, leaders also acted in ignorance
- 18: can't stay behind veil of ignorance! Reading the prophets would clear all up!
- 19: parallels 2:38 perfectly; wiped away, GK ancient writing could be scraped off tablets; be converted – return to God
- 20: for you: God did specifically for you!
- 21: restitution of all things: Jewish idiom, Messianic term; national hope to personal
- 22-23: calling attention back to Moses and following prophets; God never left His people without an inspired spokesman; take Jesus seriously or be condemned
- 24: summary of remaining prophets
- 25: hearers spiritual heirs of the prophets
- 26: Jews 2nd chance; first hints at Gentiles; individual emphasis; invitation should follow

Lessons:

- The healing of the crippled man was immediate. There was no delay, and it did not hinge upon the faith of the sick. Lastly, the healing was irrefutable.
- Peter placed great emphasis, rightly so, upon the Name/Authority of Jesus. Everything we are to do today is to be done under His authority, Mt. 28:18-20, to give glory and honor to His Name, Col. 3:17.
- Today, if we desire to have our sins forgiven, we must repent and be converted. We cannot desire to be saved if we are not willing to change from our sins!

Acts 4: Determined Disciples

Satan's efforts to destroy the church are on full display.

Peter's sermon was brought to an abrupt end in Ch. 3.

1. Arrest – v. 1-12

- 1: priests: chief priests (23), 24 in total, each served a week at a time; captain: head of sec. at Temple; Sadducees: small, powerful sect, did not believe in resurrection.
- 2: no law broken, but they posed a threat; a. teaching people b. proclaiming Jesus c. rose from dead
- 3: placed in a chamber in Temple, stopped 6p
- 4: result: many believed, audience saw P&J arrested, but this didn't deter them from becoming Chr.; believed: rep. of whole; 5000 men (specific gender), women often more
- 5: arrest just the start of Satan's attempts
- 6: HP: hon. title (President), Ananias Ex-HP, Caiaphas, Ananias' son-in-law; influential men
- 7: Sanhedrin Council: 70 members + HP, intimidating for 2 apostles; this? Give reason. Power – same word for miracle
- 8: responds with respect, HS provided for them, Lk. 21:14-15
- 9: Spirit interpreted "this" to mean healing
- 10: "I want everyone to know this!" points finger at audience
- 11: QT Ps. 118:22, Jesus applied to Himself, Mk. 12:10, rejected because of their misconceptions about Him
- 12: play on words: "saved" some root word as "made well" in v. 9. "Salvation" is same root family. Narrow-minded but true – Jn. 14:6; we: all inclusive

2. Reaction – v. 13-22

- 13: uneducated men showed boldness, courage, confidence; no mistaking they had been with Christ
- 14: painful pause
- 15: P&J, healed man leave, they begin to discuss what had happened. God knows what goes on behind closed doors.
- 16: no denying the miracle: exhibit A just walked through the door; unlike 'modern' miracles, NT miracles were immediate (3:7), complete (4:10), & convincing (4:16)!
- 17: council knew he was healed > P&J's preaching was true ∴ Jesus had been raised from the dead

- 18: highest court verdict; illegal to preach JC
- 19: Jesus had trapped the council before, Mt. 21:24-27
- 20: cannot stop being a witness for Christ
- 21: more legal threats would await them; council intimidated by the people
- 22: age emphasized because everyone knew him

3. Prayer – v. 23-31

- 23: immediately sought their own Chr. Family
- 24: another source of strength: prayer; 2nd prayer in book; Lord: ruler who has absolute power; address all God created
- 25,26: Qt. Ps. 2; rage: neighing of a spirited horse; ref. to a period of confusion during the interim between 2 kings
- 27: Ps. 2 specifically foreshadowed Christ; Jesus anointed at His baptism. When Israel rejected Christ, it became a heaven nation.
- 28: stressed reliance on God
- 29,30: leaving the matter to the Lord's hands; not concerned about the council, they were concerned they would be equal to the challenge
- 31: tangible way of showing God is with them; not another Pentecost, but simply under the control of the spirit; now all apostles speak with confidence

4. Unity – v. 32-37

- 32: whole cong. united; not every Chr. Immediately sold all they had, sold as needed
- 33: result of all the love & liberality exhibited
- 34: ideal condition; don't need more gov't programs, need more of the Spirit of Christ!
- 35: money given to apostles; they help when the need(s) arrive, 6:1-4
- 36: specific example of giving Joseph, born on isle of Cyprus, Barnabas 25x in Ac. 5x epistles
- 37: gave all to the apostles, great contrast to 5:1-12; Levites usually didn't have land – giving up even bigger accomplishment

Lessons:

- Peter correctly observed in 4:12. We would do well to quit trying to find other ways of being saved because no others exist, John 14:6.

- Just like it was with the council, it is impossible to deny the evidence of Jesus, His teachings, & the miracles.
- There is never a bad time to spend in prayer; it is effective, James 5:16.
- Ps. 133:1 “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” Divisions destroy unity, so we should destroy the divisions and seek after unity.

Acts 5: Empty Cells

- Satan could not tolerate good things happening to the church.
- He tried to destroy from without (persecution), now tries from within (pretension).

1. Church Discipline – v. 1-11

- 1: But: contrasts w/ Barnabas; Ananias: “Jehovah has been gracious;” Sapphira: Aramaic: “beautiful;” sold a tract of land.
- 2: 1st recorded sin in the church; sin is not: owning land, making a profit, giving only some to the Lord. Sin is: lying about it. Cf. 1 Tim. 6:10
- 3,4: God knows hearts of men; God, HS Same
- 5: no curse pronounced. Peter prob. just as surprised as everyone else; result: great fear
- 6: young men: not done in private; no funeral is abnormal, like Nadab/Abihu, Lv. 10:5
- 7: Act II: 3 hours later, she doesn’t know
- 8: Sapphira goes along w/ fabricated lie
- 9: imagine Peter shaking his head; shock upon shock
- 10: immediately she fell over dead
- 11: public record: great fear; 1st appearance of GK word ekklēsia (church)

2. Popularity – v. 12-16

- 12: apostles capitalize off Word spreading of Ananias & Sapphira
- 13: appears enemies kept their distance
- 14: 1st mention of women, no longer using numbers
- 15,16: popularity & power; 1st mention of demon possession; Dr. Luke differentiates physical & spiritual illness; all were healed

3. Persecution – v. 17-42

- 17: probably Caiaphas; sect (hairesis) heresy; also jealous of Jesus’ popularity, Mt. 27:18

- 18: all apostles in public prison
- 19: God had other plans
- 20: 3 instructions: 1. go 2. stand 3. speak
- 21: wasted no time from a sleepless night; most powerful body in for a shock
- 22,23: confused when they found none inside
- 24: wish to see their faces!
- 25: could not believe their ears! Expect escapees to leave, not be next door preaching – commanded not to do!
- 26: commanded to arrest those who healed lame and cured sick; afraid of crowds; apostles chose not to cause trouble
- 27: brought before council
- 28: 2 charges: 1. strict orders not to continue teaching; 2. apostles tried to hold them accountable for Jesus' death
- 29: minced no words!
- 30: preaches mini-sermon
- 31: 1st mention of Savior; forgiveness possible by sacrifice of Jesus!
- 32: following instructions from 1:8
- 33: cut to the quick "sawed through" lit. taken a saw to their hearts
- 34: 1st mention of Pharisees: Heb. "separated ones," arose during period of Maccabees. Gamaliel I (the Elder) "Rabbaic" title: most respected teacher of the Law
- 35: "stop and think what you are doing!"
- 36: Theudas: false prophet, Mt. 24:4,5,23,24
- 37: Judas of Galilee: rebelled against new tax laws in 6 AD
- 38: advice: leave apostles alone: if of men, it will fade away
- 39: if of God, no good in opposing it
- 40: took his advice; beat them to show we mean business
- Some who were flogged were crippled for life; died at the whip; all bore the scars, physical & emotional, for life (done to Jesus); renewed rule: no preaching
- 41: Christianity could not be stopped by beating "dignified by the indignity," rejoicing in persecution, tough to learn, Mt. 5:10-12
- 42: teach publicly & privately, cf. 20:20

Lessons:

- Ananias & Sapphira lost their lives because of their sin. Too many people don't regard lying as a sin, but it is a habit Christians shouldn't engage in. Rev. 21:8
- When evangelizing, we would always do well to capitalize on every moment possible.
- When we choose to obey God rather than men (29), we must be willing to serve Him even when conditions are not favorable to us – and be happy about it (41)!

Acts 6: First Servants

- Satan continues to disparage the church.
- Again, he fails miserably as the church continues to grow – so much they need help as seen in this chapter.

1. Selection – v. 1-7

- 1: preaching and teaching the truth always increases the number. Possibly 5yrs have passed, thousands of members; enough widows needed assistance it became too much for the apostles. Hellenistic Jews: Greek-speaking, scattered native Hebrews, spoke Aramaic, those remained; murmured against the “neglect”
- 2: immediately called the congregation together; needed to continue being witnesses of the resurrection (1:8), taking them away from this it would be a victory for Satan.
- 3: trust in the congregation; how to choose leaders: from the congregation. Why 7? Perfect number, Jews had committees of 7 ...
- Best answer: they needed 7 for the job.
- Qualifications: 1. Man, not woman. 2. needed servant hearts (serve [diakonos, deacon] are they? Fit qual. 1 Tim. 3:8-13? No called the “7” in Ac. 21:8). 3. good rep: you rep. JC/church. 4. full of Spirit: not miracles, spiritual maturity; 5. wisdom: practical qualification
- 4: selection allows apostles to do their job
- 5: “one of the greatest NT miracles [*jest*], everyone agreed and got along!” Stephen: full of faith implied earlier, mentioned 1st, star of Ch. 6, 7; Philip, star of Ch. 8; nothing else recorded of other 5; Trad: Prochorus, martyred at Antioch; Nicolas, proselyte, 1st mentioned of in the church
- 6: set in place with a ceremony to show the importance and seriousness of the task; laying on of hands: imparted miraculous gifts to the 7, cannot pass to others
- 7: Gospel again victorious; chief priests becoming obedient – great credence to teaching

2. Arrest – v. 8-15

- 8: 2 words for crown in NT: 1. diadēma: diadem, crown placed on heads of kings, Rv. 19:12; 2. stephanos – crown of victory, placed on winner’s heads (Olympic games, Rv. 2:10). Stephen also full of grace. Not told what miracles he did, but he did them!
- 9: serving tables did not detract him from preaching & teaching. 1st mention: synagogue
- Trad: 480 synagogues in Jerusalem; Libertines: freedmen (from slavery); Cyrene & Alexandria: N Africa; Cilicia & Asia: Roman provinces in Asia Minor. Stephen did not back down even when people objected!
- 10: Stephen won the victory on his own merit, not the HS
- 11: could not get Stephen to stop, so they tried any way possible to stop him; underhandedly: bribed; blasphemous words: speaking contemptuously of things divine. He did not blaspheme Moses or God!
- 12: accusations were enough; dragged: not kicking and screaming, but seized him
- 13,14: now Stephen stands before the Sanhedrin; correct: spoke about Jesus
- 15: serious charges filed, now turn to accused to see how he reacts.
- Instead of a trembling convict, they saw a transformed Christian!

Lessons:

- We all have a job to do in the service of the Lord. Let us not shirk our responsibilities.
- When choosing those to serve the congregation, it is always beneficial to choose those from among the congregation. Those outside do not know the members like one of their own do.
- Stephen caused a ruckus by preaching the truth. They eventually seized him, but he never quit preaching what is true. We would do well to emulate his example.

Acts 7: Great Sermon by Stephen

- Non-apostle sermon; longest in book
- 3 parts to defense: a. defended himself, b. emphasized accusers were guilty of the same charges they brought against him, c. lesson was Christ-centered.
- Allen: interrupted before finished, no resurrection mentioned.

1. Sermon – v. 1-50

- 3-point sermon: 1. Abraham, v. 1-8; 2. Egypt, v. 9-43; 3. Temple, v. 44-50

I. Abraham, v. 1-8

- 1: either Annas or Caiaphas
- 2,3: not required by law to answer; showed respect for council; begins and ends on the glory of God; 'experts' find 7 errors in sermon, scribes hearing it did not object
- 4: Southern Babylon; Canaan in days of Abraham, Palestine to Greeks/Romans
- 5: every Jewish mind recalled the land promise of Gen. 12:7, etc.
- 6: Egyptian bondage: there for 430yrs (Ex. 12:40,41), but the Jews often rounded off numbers
- 7,8: Gen. 15:14, Ex. 3:12; Patriarch theme

II. Egypt, v. 9-43

- 9,10: jealous because of favoritism shown to Joseph from Jacob
- 11-13: in accordance with Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dream: 1. rejected Joseph, 2. God gave them to Egypt, a 2nd chance, 3. 2nd time had to accept Joseph as their redeemer or die (of starvation)
- 14-15: Heb. Bible mentions 70 (Gen. 46:27), LXX has 75 and gives add'l names,
- 16: land purchases & 2 burial places
- 17-19: background of Moses
- 20-21: expose (19) and set outside (21) same family. "Instead of being exposed to the elements, Moses was exposed to Pharaoh's daughter." Roper
- 22: info not in Exodus, respect for Moses
- 23: also not in Exodus
- 24,25: Moses had a sense of divine message before the burning bush
- 26,27: Moses' 1st attempt to deliver Israel, rejected by His brethren
- 28,29: Midian: NW Arabia, E shore of Gulf of Aqaba; 2 sons: Gershom, Eliezer (Ex. 2:21-22)
- 30-34: God gave His people another opportunity; angel not in Ex.; Sad., Sanhedrin controllers, did not believe in angels.
- 35: bluntly stated Moses was God's deliverer
- 36: sins and wonders: 10 plagues
- 37,38: congregation: not a church but assembly; spoken words: living words.
- Moses was a ruler (35), deliverer (35), miracle-worker (36), prophet (37), had a congregation *or church* (38), relayed God's message to the people (38).
- 39-41: didn't press the parallel, reminded listeners about rejecting God.

- Instead of living words, the Israelites accepted dead idols.
- 42: 2nd rejection brought God's wrath; Qt Amos 5:25-27 LXX; victims: innocent animals had to suffer for guilty
- 43: Molech: Ammonite god, 1 Ki. 11:5,7,33; Rompha: GK god Saturn

III. Temple, v. 44-50

- 44-45: reminds fathers worshipped God long before temple built in Jerusalem
- 46,47: David had desire to build permanent house of worship; Solomon built
- 48: most scandalous statement; Paul would make the same, 17:24
- 49,50: Isa. emphasized the same truth, 66:1; ideal time to teach God dwells in church

2. Rebellion – v. 51-53

- Could sense the audience's hatred
- 51: OT terminology for stubborn, prejudiced, disobedient: Ex. 33:3,5; Lv. 26:14, Jer. 6:10, Ezek. 44:7; stiff-necked: ox refuse to allow yoke on neck; uncircumcised in heart & ears: yielded to God only in flesh, not spirit
- 52: doing what fathers had done; Jewish people responsible for prophet's deaths
- 53: accused of not keeping the Law

3. Stephen's Death – v. 54-60

- No Gamaliel to stand up and cool the flames of hatred
- 54: cut to the quick: furious & ready to kill; grinding teeth: rage, Job 16:9, Ps. 35:16 or despair: Lk. 13:28
- 55: ugly faced faded; all 3 Godhead present; Jesus returned to sit, Mk. 16:19, here standing out of respect
- 56: Son of Man: only ref. out of Gospels
- 57: equivalent to Supreme Court justices leaping over table, pulling guns from their robes, and gunning defendant down before them.
- 58: illegal acc. to Roman Law: Luke does not record the Roman gov't reaction to crime; illegal acc. to Jewish Law: no vote, discussion
- Punishment for blaspheming was stoning, Lv. 24:10-23; Dt. 13:6-11; a terrible way to die: (Josh. 7:24-26) 1. taken to place of stoning; 2. pushed off cliff; 3. boulders rolled down to crush; 4. pelted with stones until breath gone
- Stephen knelt, stoning probably wasn't as bad
- 59: prayer directed to Jesus, few in Scripture

- 60: died with w prayer on his lips for his murderers, like Jesus (Lk. 12:34,46)
- Saul could never erase this scene from his mind.
- Augustine: “the church owes the preaching of Paul to the prayer of Stephen.”

Lessons:

- We must be willing to always preach the truth, even if the audience gets mad. If we truly care about others, we will try to save their souls, Eph. 4:15, Js. 5:19-20.
- Stephen accused his audience of rebelling against God. Today, we rebel against God every time we decide to follow after worldly things.
- Even in his death, Stephen was forgiving of those who wronged him. We would do well to not hold anything against anyone.
- Stephen died prepared to meet God, Amos 4:12. Are you?

Acts 8: How to Become a Christian

- Stoning of Stephen for him was a coronation, for the Jews it was a condemnation.
- Several years gone by – witnesses 1:8 – to Samaria.
- God used persecution to spread the church, cf. Rm. 8:28

1. Persecution – v. 1-4

- 1: Saul: Sanhedrin’s hitman; Chr. fled for safety/possibly thrown out
- 2: battered, blood-soaked body left; Jewish law allowed for proper burial of criminals, but no mourning
- 3: Chr. sad, Saul mad; havoc: beasts savagely tearing & ripping the bodies of their prey; see Paul’s prison statements: 22:4, 19; 26:10-11
- 4: not: “Look what the world is coming to!” but “Look what is coming to the world!”

2. Samaria – v. 5-25

- 2nd detailed conversion in book
- Samaria: 1. between Galilee & Judea; 2. race result of Jewish captivity. Remaining Jews in Palestine intermarried Gentiles; 3. not far removed from God-worshippers, but not far removed from pagan-worshippers, either; 4. returning Jews refused Samaritan help – schism

- 5: Philip: not apostle, one of 7 (6:5); Hellenistic Jews born outside Palestine, not strong prejudices toward Samaritans; went down: all roads from Jerusalem are down
- 6: he could do miracles after apostles laid hands on him, couldn't pass on; credibility
- 7: demons: limited to time of Christ/apostles; Dr. Luke makes distinction spiritual/physical
- 8: natural reaction
- 9: magic: deadly-serious business, passed generations; pretended to come from God
- 10: convincing story
- 11: worshipped God, read Pentateuch that strongly condemned sorcery (Ex. 22:18)
- 12: real miracles; 1st mention of kingdom since Ch. 1; heard, believed, baptized > citizens
- 13: Simon: "hearing with acceptance," he was converted; magician astonished at real miracles
- 14: irony: John wanted to send fire on Samaritans (Lk. 9:52-54), needed to pass on miracles in Samaria
- 15: help strengthen church & message
- 16: those on outside cannot see one's obedience, miracles shows God's approval
- 17: God approved of actions: Samaritans in church; bestowing gifts allows it to function without Philip, or Peter & John
- 18: tried to buy gift from apostles; simony: sin in Middle Ages, buying or selling of church privileges; why? Anyone could do miracles now
- 19: wanted to be like apostles
- 20: lit: "May your silver go with you into eternal destruction!" Not automatically sent to Hell, but indicative based upon lifestyle.
- 21: "Your heart is not straight." Simon was converted but has fallen away.
- 22: if possible: not on God's part but Simon's; repentance & prayer were his only hope!
- 23: extreme; gall: bitter liquid; Heb: the greatest bitterness; sin enslaves
- 24: 1 John 1:9; genuine response from a pricked heart
- 25: P&J stayed a bit longer then preached all the way back to Jerusalem

3. Eunuch – v. 26-40

- Now going south of Jerusalem
- 1:8: End of the earth: Ethiopia considered colloquially as the end of the earth
- 26: direct command from an angel; Gaza: ancient Philistine coast city, Gen. 10:19, 2 Ki. 18:8

- 27: great concern for souls; Eunuch: castrated man (Mt. 19:12), not tempted in position of power; cannot enter sacred assembly, Dt. 23:1
- Couldn't be a priest, Lv. 21:20; Candace: title like Pharaoh, Caesar; travelled 1500 miles, couldn't worship with rest of people
- 28: wealthy man to own scroll of Isa. > tells of eunuchs one day being in God's fold
- 29,30: spirit now tells Philip; McGarvey: he left 1½ days before eunuch did to meet him – no wonder he ran!
- 31: one must hear to understand, Rm. 10:14
- 32,33: no ch/v break, Luke records section so we know, Isa. 53:7-8
- 34: Jewish teachers struggled with Isa. 53, couldn't understand the suffering part of the suffering servant.
- 35: what a sermon! Not recorded, but we know what he preached because we know the end results. Best is to start where people are and bring them to Christ!
- 36: valley of Elah? David & Goliath. "Some, when they learn they should be baptized, look for a way out; the eunuch looked for a way in." Roper
- 37: some trans. don't include this verse, 2nd C qtd by Irenaeus; confession: essential to salvation – 10 most important words!
- Philip didn't interrogate about his life or understanding of great Bible doctrines – he has a lifetime to correct understanding & behavior.
- 38: immediate baptism; much water: both are fully immersed, no sprinkling!
- 39: came back out of water; spirit caught Philip away, gave instructions to go somewhere else; eunuch rejoices, sins gone!
- 40: Philip at Azotus: another Philistine city, North of Gaza.
- We meet Philip again in 21:8

Lessons:

- When persecuted, we are to be happy (Mt. 5:12, 1 Pet. 4:16), and go preach the Gospel everywhere we go!
- We learn from Simon: 1. the way to be saved (hear, believe, baptism); 2. the way to be restored (repent, pray). We would do well to learn from his story and realize we can fall away from obedience (Gal. 5:4).
- Skeptics claim the eunuch was sprinkled in the desert. If true, how could he & Philip both go into their canteen? Stop trying to make the Bible say something other than what it plainly does!

Acts 9: Into Damascus

- Barclay: "Most famous conversion story in history."
- Roberts: "One of the most important events in human history."
- Paul retells in chapters 22 and 26.

1. Conversion – v. 1-19

- 1: Saul born to Jewish parents in Tarsus, capitol of Cilicia, of tiny Benjamin; named for king, "called of God." Roman citizenship and wealth; Pharisee: very strict. Raised on OT, writings include over 200 ref. from almost all OT books. Occupation: tentmaker. May have been a member of the Sanhedrin council.
- 2: Damascus had a large Jewish pop. and many synagogues, 140 mi NNE of Jerusalem, 1 week trip by foot.
- 1st time "the way" refers to Christianity, a fav. expression of Luke; Sanhedrin could punish, all Jews worldwide subject to HP, under Roman Law all Chr. were Jews
- 3: noon (22:6), last day of journey, Saul's world turned upside down
- 4: no room for doubt; heard Heb. dialect, in Luke's writings, double name means someone is in trouble (Lk. 10:41, 13:34, 22:31). Pricks: goads, long pointed stick tipped with iron used to prod animals
- 5: followers claimed Jesus was alive – right!
- 6: must: strong word, not optional. God's plan is for people to tell people how to be saved, not Jesus.
- 7: companions heard, did not understand
- 8: led into the city as a sorrowing sinner
- 9: Day 1: Lord appeared to Saul; D2: day after appearance; D3: Ananias came to Saul
- Fasted as a sign of penitence: Jonah 3:7; Saul was left in the dark (literally, spiritually, intellectually) for 3 days.
- 10: Ananias: "Jehovah is gracious"
- 11: Straight St. still exists in Damascus, 1mi.; Judas' home: where Saul was probably going
- 12: Ananias told in a vision about a vision
- 13: reluctance; 1st use of saints for Christians
- 14: Ananias had received word of Saul's auth.

- 15: For the Lord, *“no is not an answer.”* Vessel: instrument, valuable container filled w/ precious contents. 1st mention Gentiles in plan.
- 16: agony: not a false picture. *“When the Lord calls us to serve, He calls us to suffer.”* Roper; 2 Tim. 3:12
- 17: brother: Jewish designation, not Chr.
- 18: immediately regained sight; commanded to be baptized, 22:16, and immediately was!
- 19: regained strength; Saul spent rest of his life spreading the faith he had once tried to destroy.

2. Labors – v. 20-31

- 20: next Sabbath day Saul in synagogue; 1st time preached as *“Son of God”*
- 21: amazed at the message
- 22: moved from milk to meat; baffled Jews by proving Jesus is the Christ
- 23: returned from Arabia (Gal. 1:17), former allies now sought to put him out.
- 24: word of execution plan reached Saul; see his notes on this in 2 Cor. 11:32
- 25: escaped through a window, 2 Cor. 11:33
- 26: passing the place where the Lord appeared to him 3 years earlier (Gal. 1:18) (year appeared, last year, this year), desired to be with fellow Chr., a man without a friend in Jerusalem.
- 27: Barnabas takes up for Saul; last mention of apostles alone as leaders of Jer. Church
- 28: stayed w/ Peter, Gal. 1:18
- 29: Hellenistic synagogue the most dangerous place Saul could be
- 30: providentially plot known again; back home
- 31: progress report: church existed, enjoyed peace, grew, encouraged

3. Journeys – v. 32-43

- Early church glimpse here; *“The Acts of Peter, Ac. 9:32-11:18”* nothing on him since ch. 5 save going to Samaria
- 32: regions: Judea, Samaria, Galilee; Lydda: 26mi NW of Jerusalem, OT: Lod
- 33: Aeneas GK name, possibly Hellenistic Jew, don’t know if Chr. or not; Dr. Luke: paralyzed for 8 years
- 34: *“Get up and make your bed!”* immediate healing
- 35: entire area took notice of the healing, and they obeyed the Lord
- 36: 12mi W, seacoast town of Joppa, Jaffa today, a suburb of Tel Aviv; Tabitha: 2nd named woman since Pentecost (Sapphira), means gazelle; serving others

- 37: 1st mention of member dying naturally; code: burial had to be the same day
- 38: word quickly got to Peter; no mention of raising from the dead yet
- 39: wearing what she had made for them
- 40: 1st recorded apostle raising from dead; Peter may have remembered how Jesus raised: Mk. 5:40, Lk. 8:51; immediate, complete, convincing
- 41: Peter shows her alive to all; logic:
 1. healing Tabitha no harder than healing Aeneas; 2. Dorcas had no faith to be healed; 3. raising not the climax of the story
- 42: end result: many believed
- 43: Simon Peter stayed with Simon the Tanner and sets up ch. 10

Lessons:

- The “chief of all sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15) became a Christian. God was willing to forgive him, and He is willing to forgive you, too!
- Immediately after Saul was baptized, he went to work for the Lord. We need to begin laboring for Him and keep going until our last breath.
- Although there is no miraculous healing today, we can read those recorded and believe just like the crowd did!
- Bonus: Tabitha’s works were remembered in her death. Our works for the Lord will be remembered as well, Rv. 14:13.

Acts 10: Journey into Joppa

- Gentiles not included in OT plan, they could become proselytes
- Dividing wall came down theoretically at Calvary, practically at Caesarea or in the mind of God in Luke 23 and in the mind of men in Acts 10.

1. Peter Sent for – v. 1-8

- 1: God approaches Gentile first; Caesarea HQ of Rom. Gov’t; band: between 600-1000 soldiers, 1/10 of a legion (6000); recruited in Italy; Cornelius a common Latin name.
- 2: God-fearer: Gentile who believed in Jehovah, embraced Law, not circumcised to become proselyte; an all around “good guy”
- 3: 3pm, Jewish hour of prayer; not imagined

- 4: lit. afraid, like rising smoke of a sacrifice, God had seen Cornelius' actions
- 5,6: given specific instructions
- 7,8: some today would be offended they were told they needed to be saved! Soldiers offer protection; 30mi journey, avg person 20/25 mi/day; sinner was ready; God has to get the preacher ready.

2. Peter's Vision – v. 9-23A

- 9: noon next day, travelled all night to make it; houses had flat roof, low edge wall around
- 10: Peter very hungry, God uses to teach him; trance: ecstasy: heightening of Peter's senses
- 11: imagine the sight
- 12: represents every kind of animal on earth, mixing clean & unclean (Lv. 11) would make the clean unclean. Noah's ark in the world's largest bedsheet!
- 13: "I know you're hungry – eat!"
- 14: "I never have, and I never will!"
- 15: God speaks again
- 16: repeated 2x, 3x total; getting the preacher ready took 3x, sinner only 1x
- 17: God's remarkable timing
- 18: Gentiles had to stop at gate and be welcomed in
- 19,20: mystery deepened in Peter's mind
- 21: curious to know why all is happening
- 22: Gentile sent for him; purpose of vision to change his direction, not his diet
- 23A: hospitality a way of Jewish life, yet shocking Jew invited Gentiles in.

3. Cornelius' Conversion – 23B-48

- 23b: Ch. 11 reveals 6 people went back w/ Peter, probably anticipating criticism, 3 from Cornelius = 10 total
- 24: an influential inviter
- 25: Cornelius overwhelmed, worshipped
- 26: only God should be worshipped, Mt. 4:10, proof Peter not Pope, all bow to him *sadly*.
- 27: 3 days before, Peter thought it impossible to be where he is now!
- 28: benefit for the 6 & Gentile audience
- 29: gainsaying: to speak against

- 30: 4 days: Day 1: angel appeared to C; D2: Peter's vision; D3: day of travel; D4: arrival
- 31-33: preacher's dream: large crown came to hear God's commands
- 34,35: open his mouth: important statement to follow; respecter of persons: *face + to take or receive*, lit. "to take at face value," judging solely by face; Micah 6:8.
- 36: began by outlining life & works of Jesus
- 37: audience knew: 1. 70mi from Jerusalem; 2. Jesus travelled widely; 3. Philip preached in Caesarea; similar outline to Mark
- 38: anointed Him: "God made Him the Messiah," emp. on teaching than actions
- 39: "You've heard, we've seen!"
- 40: visible: He will be visible again to all upon His return
- 41: phantom/ghost can't eat or drink
- 42: wraps up sermon at Great Commission
- 43: Jesus is the fulfillment of OT scriptures
- 44: ready to tell audience what to do to be saved & he gets interrupted
- 45: all amazed: HS outpouring was to convince the preacher of the audience approval by God
- 46: tongues: same gift apostles had at Pentecost
- 47: Rhetorical question: not asking for permission, HS came on them; they had already believed > not saving them!
- 48: commanded them to be saved; probably the 6 that accompanied Peter did the baptizing. They wanted to learn more so Peter stayed a few days.

Lessons:

- Cornelius was by all definitions a good person – yet he was still lost when we meet him. One must do more than be a good person to be saved!
- God removed the barrier between clean and unclean. Yes, we can now eat all kinds of animals, but more importantly all can truly be one in Christ.
- The HS falling on Cornelius did not save him from his sins, and we cannot expect some direct operation from God to save us, either. He has already done His part, and we must do ours: we must be baptized!

Acts 11: Kingdom Includes Gentiles

- God had to overcome Peter's objections in ch. 10.

- Other Jewish Christians were skeptical when Peter returned home.

1. Convicts Critics – v. 1-18

- 1: rumors spread
- 2: circumcised = Jewish Christians
- 3: Cornelius not a proselyte; accusation not of baptizing Gentiles but eating with them.
- 4: Peter not offended or retaliates; gives in chronological order
- 5,6: vision
- 7,8: shows he shared their thinking at start
- 9,10: 10+ times mentions God/Divine messenger; defense: not done what he wanted to do, did what God told him to do
- 11,12: stresses providence; provides witnesses as proof; did not mention Cornelius' outstanding character, they didn't care – he was a Gentile!
- 13,14: key: words; Peter & Gentiles were God-motivated
- 15: at the beginning: Pentecost
- 16: recited a frequent promise of Jesus
- 17: same gift, equal: isos (isosceles triangle), 2 equal sides; "If you had been in my place, would you have stood in the Lord's way?"
- 18: willing to hear audience quiets down; Pr. 15:1 "soft answer turns away wrath."
- Conclusion: 1. God had given the Gentiles the opportunity to repent; 2. He provides that which produces repentance – the Gospel.

2. More Preaching – v. 19-26

- Shift from Jerusalem to Antioch; Ch. 13 on Antioch is Paul's base
- 19: picks up thought from 8:4; Phoenicia: 15mi wide, northern edge of Palestine, goes 120 mi N; Cyprus: island, Barnabas' home; Antioch: 1st in 6:5, Nicator from there
- 20: Cyrene: N. Africa, Jews present at Pentecost (2:10); GK speaking Gentiles
- 21: divine approval
- 22: good news travelled; Barnabas sent to Antioch, he can't do miracles, but he can preach!
- 23: the great encourager encouraged them to continue and persevere
- 24: spiritual snapshot of Barnabas, only one called 'good' by Luke; dem. Fruit of Spirit

- Emphasis on spiritual growth resulted in spiritual growth.
- 25: for 7 years, Saul labored in obscurity. Barnabas travelled 100mi to find him.
- 26: not a simple task to find Saul, successful; assembled, taught 1yr.; “Chr.” a well-known designation when Luke wrote. *Christos* (the anointed one) + *ianos* (signifies ownership).

3. Gentiles Send Help – v. 27-30

- 27: 1st mention of prophets in the church
- 28: Agabus: well known prophet, shows up again in 21:10,11; Claudius Caesar (AD 41-54) faced many famines. Josephus 45-47AD.
- 29: relief: non-perishable foods more than money: 1. all members troubled and gave. 2. gave as they had prospered.
- 30: good intentions never filled an empty stomach or put clothes on a shivering body!
- Saul & Barnabas entrusted with carrying relief back, taken to elders not apostles – 1st mention of church leaders called elders.

Lessons:

- We must always be willing to give an answer to all we do, 1 Pet. 3:15. Peter did not lash out against those asking questions, but he did provide them proof.
- Since there is no other name but Christ, 4:12, why would we want to wear the name of anyone or anything else? Calvin, Wesley, Luther, Smith, Clarke, Gandhi, Buddha, Meno Simons, Jakob Amman never died for your sins!
- The true Christian is always ready to help those in need. This might consist of giving our time, resources, or funds to offer relief to those in need.

Acts 12: Led by an Angel

- Emphasis on importance of power & prayer.
- This may be the most striking story on prayer.

1. Death & Prison – v. 1-5

- 1: Herod Agrippa I died 44AD, persecution occurred 43/44AD; 4th persecution in Acts, 1st not by Sanhedrin.
- Herod Agrippa I: grandson of Herod the Great (ordered baby Jesus killed), family thought they were gods. 11 members of family mentioned in Scripture, 10 by name.

- Sister: Herodias (married one uncle, Herod Philip I, then a second husband, Herod Antipas > death of John the Baptist).
- 4 kids, 3 in Acts: Drusilla (wife of Felix, 24:24), Herod Agrippa II (25:13-26:32), Bernice (25:13, incest relationship shocked even the heathen).
- 2: NEB “beheaded,” James, brother of John, 1st death of an apostle, ‘inner circle.’ No indication for a replacement, no apostolic succession.
- 3: people’s response everything Herod could have hoped for. Feast of Passover: why Herod was in Jerusalem, also have a bigger audience.
- 4: public execution during feast time would be offensive. Plan: keep Peter imprisoned for the week of feasting, execution after everyone leaves. KJV error in translation: Passover not Easter; makeshift max. sec. prison, 16 total soldiers taking shifts
- 5: what to do? Pray!
- No doubt they had prayed for James, but he died (disappointment), prayed for a week (delay), would be easy to give up (discouragement), but they kept praying!

2. How God Answers Prayer – v. 6-17

- 6: how could anyone sleep the night before execution? Showed confidence in God and slept so hard on the cold floor between two soldiers the angel had a hard time waking him up!
- 7: fervent prayer & patient endurance are always rewarded by God; upon Peter’s obedience, the chains fell
- 8: sandals would normally make noise; almost speaking like a parent to a drowsy kid
- 9: Peter may have thought this was a great dream – “hope to never wake up!”
- 10: iron gate: taken up to 25 men to open/close; by itself: automatos (automatic)
- Travel down 7 steps (traditional) and angel leaves.
- 7 miracles: 1. angel appeared; 2. light in cell; 3. chains fell off; 4. those chained to Peter did not wake up; 5. passed one guard and another (6.) without them knowing; 7. outer gate automatically opened
- 11: plan of action: tell brethren, then hide
- 12: Mary: prob. widow, John Mark’s mom (Peter’s convert? 1 Pet. 5:13) spent time there
- 13: door/gate: one large one to allow wagon/animals; 2nd smaller door for people; Mary prob. well off financially; Rhoda: little rose
- 14: so excited, she ran to tell others and left Peter outside
- 15: prayed to God and were surprised when He answered prayer; assumed Peter dead
- 16: pounding at gate

- 17: Peter tried to quiet excitement, knew this was a miracle; James & brethren (15:2,22): James, ½ brother of Jesus, author of *James*, and elder at Jerusalem church > tell elders
- Mary's house well known place of Christians, would've searched there for Peter first! Last major incident of Peter.

3. Death of Herod – v. 18-25

- 18: classic understatement: can you imagine the disbelief of the soldiers?
- 19: massive search commences, Herod Agrippa looked the fool; examined: GK question thoroughly; blamed the guards instead of believing a miracle
- 20: principal city of Phoenicia; prob. bribed chamberlain for a meeting
- 21: Josephus: garment wholly silver, illuminated by sun and reflected sun's rays
- 22: calling him a god should have scared him to death!
- 23: see Is. 42:8, 40:23; struck as in v. 7; there a blessing, here a curse. Josephus: severe pain in belly violently, carried to palace, 5 days of pain, died at 54, 7 yrs into reign
- Could literally have been eaten by worms/parasites; also, a punishment from the Lord, Mk. 9:48; died 44AD, important for dating other events in Acts; beginning of the end for the Herods and for the Jews: he held Rom gov't off, 26 years later they would destroy Jerusalem
- 24: non-Chr. Saw Herod's death & believed, would've been frontpage headline news! Herod thought he could destroy the church, but instead, he was destroyed.
- 25: picks up where 11:30 left off; Saul & Barnabas arrived in Judea about the time James was killed; not told how meeting & giving of funds went
- John Mark is Barnabas' cousin, sets up 2nd half of the book and missionary journeys.
- Journey #1 is Paul, Barnabas, John Mark (who will desert and cause a rift between P&B).
- Journey #2 is Paul & Silas and Barnabas & John Mark go on their own journey.

Lessons:

- James lost his life for the Gospel. Peter would later write we must suffer as a Christian, 1 Peter 4:16, cf. Ps. 116:15.
- We learn a valuable aspect about prayer: it works! Sometimes God grants our petitions, and at others He denies them – but He always answers according to His will.
- God used the gruesome death of Herod to increase people's belief in the Gospel. Opposition to God never yields desired results.

Acts 13: Missionaries Sent

- Acts in 2 sections: Ch. 1-12 “The Beginning of the Church” & Ch. 13-28 “The Growth of the Church”
- Watershed in book: before Peter is key figure, Jerusalem is key city, key recipients are Jews. After it is Paul, Antioch in Syria, and Gentiles.
- Ultimate fulfillment of 1:8
- “By studying these missionary trips, Christians today can regain the excitement of taking the Gospel to a lost and dying world.” Roper
- 1st Journey – C. 46-48 AD

1. Selection – v. 1-3

- 1: Antioch of 11:19-30; prophets & teachers spoke by insp. (1 Cor. 12:28-29).
- Barnabas: son of encouragement
- Simeon: prob. from Cyrene
- Niger (long i): Latin from Black, Cyrene in Africa, darker skin.
- Lucius of Cyrene: may have est'd congregation
- Manean: may have been part of Herod Antipas' court, or ref. for Luke
- Saul: last, protégé
- 2: 1st mention of fasting in Ac.; church may have been assembled as HS spoke
- Jesus sent Limited Commission by 2s (Mt. 10)
- 3: not conferring gift (already had); confirming action of HS – not in a rush!

2. From Antioch – v. 4-13

- 4: result of God's direction; incl. John Mark (JM); 15-16mi to Selucia
- Cyprus: 140mi long, 60mi wide; copper mines, ship building, B's hometown; “The Happy Isle”
- 5: Salamis: metropolis part on E end of Cyprus; JM: helper/assistant (McCord)
- 6: preached 90+mi; Paphos: W end port, capitol; sorcerer: practicing magic, Simon (8)
- 7: spotlight not on conversion but confrontation; wanted to hear preaching
- 8: Elymas knew his position in trouble if Sergius Paulus converts; Satan couldn't discourage P&B so he tried defamation

- 9: 1st Paul – Rm. Name, many people had 2 names; under HS control
- 10: deceit: “to trap with bait;” Bar-jesus (son of Jesus) now called son of the devil; among strongest NT words
- 11: only apostle miracle for someone’s detriment; mist: GK eye disease, only time used – not a permanent blindness
- 12: miracle left great impact; might’ve become a Chr., cf. 16:33-34, 18:8, 1 Cor. 1:14
- 13: P usually will now come 1st
- N sailing 150mi, port of Attalia, 7mi to Perga (cap. Of Pamphilia)
- Not known why JM left: homesick, found work hard

3. To Antioch in Pisidia – v. 14-52

- 2 point sermon: Review History (14-25) & Messiah has Come (26-41)
- 14: didn’t quit after JM left
- Pisidian Antioch: chief city of Rm. Province of Galatia, elev. 3500ft, hazardous trek there.
- After reading of Law, an explanation could be given by reader, leader, or male present.
- 15: exhortation = encouragement in 4:36; 1st recorded sermon by P
- 16: JC sat (Lk. 4:20-21) but P stood
- 17,18: uplifted arm: anthropomorphism for “with great power”
- 19: 450yrs: 400 in Egypt, 40 wilderness wandering, 10 in Canaan conquest – not period of Judges
- 20,21: similar to Stephen (7), both reviewed OT history; 40yr reign not found in OT
- 22: exact qt not in OT, gist of 1 Sam. 13:14 & Ps. 89:20
- 23: listeners enjoy up to here; 2 surprises: 1) past tense of “has brought” (fulfillment) 2) the One names as David’s offspring
- 24: John paved way; preaching > repentance
- 25: using John’s words as proof
- 26: God included all in His overall purpose
- 27-30: P had hurdles to overcome; far from Jerusalem, uses 3rd person ‘they;’ execution didn’t disqualify Jesus as Messiah: 1. death fulfilled Scriptures 2. Jesus didn’t deserve to die
- 31: proof: rose from the dead
- 32-33: preach the good news: GK evangelize (gospel), Ps. 2:7 begotten as a new king

- 34: cf. Isa. 55:3; resurrection necessary
- 35-37: same conclusion as Peter (2); Ps. 16:10; David couldn't be ref. to himself
- 38-39: spiritual freedom only in Him
- 40: good news could be bad if they didn't take advantage of it!
- 41: LXX; Hab. 1:5: God sent a heathen nation, Babylon, to punish His people; Israelites didn't believe this was possible and were punished!
- 42: initial reaction all could be desired; most don't beg for same sermon again
- 43: invited to speak again
- 44: busy preaching all week; whole city ready to accept or reject Gospel
- 45: division starts immediately; Jews had been evangelistic (Mt. 23:15), but never got whole city; blaspheming name of Jesus
- 46: couldn't complete sermon; push aside – repudiate
- 47: applied to Jesus in Lk. 2:29-32; in qt (Is. 49:6) God speaking to Jewish nation
- 48: receptive Gentiles
- 49: work bearing fruit
- 50: Jews tried to silence missionaries
- 51: familiar ceremony for Jews (Mt. 10:14, Mk. 6:11, Lk. 9:15); God rejected them for rejecting His message
- 52: new Chr. were undeterred by actions of Jews

Lessons:

1. We must place high importance on taking the Gospel to all parts of the earth. Mark 16:15.
2. No opposition to the cause of Christ will be successful – and God can always use any situation for good!
3. Not every sermon is well received by the audience; however, when the truth is preached to honest and sincere hearts, souls are always saved.

Acts 14: Not gods but Men

- 1st Journey – C. 46-48 AD

- Ch. 13: starts journey, ½ way done, John Mark leaves during the journey – “from Antioch to Antioch”
- Ch. 14: trying times for Paul & Barnabas – but the Gospel must still be preached!

1. Iconium – v. 1-6

- 1: 90mi E to ancient city of Iconium, largest and most important city of Asia Minor; eikon (icon) image, follow pattern from Antioch
- 2: Satan wouldn't allow much success; NIV *poisoned their minds*; disbelieved from word for disobey
- 3: great opposition lead to great opportunity
- 4: apostles: generic sense (*ones sent*, from Antioch)
- 5: stoning: form of Jewish punishment (7:58)
- 6: providence revealed?; cf. Mt. 10:23; Lyconia = ‘wolf country’

2. Lystra – v. 7-20a

- 7: 18-20mi S/SW of Iconium; P mentions trauma here, 2 Tim. 3:11 (T=native), 2 Cor. 11:23-26, Gal. 6:17
- 8: Dr. Luke describes man physically, similar to man in Ch. 3
- 9: man had faith. From where? Rom. 10:17; GK “had faith to be saved;” P demonstrates JC can heal physically & spiritually
- 10: 1st rec. P miracle > immediate
- 11: performed to convince audience they were messengers of God; instead, thought they **were** gods.
- 12: Jupiter (Latin), GK Zeus, chief deity; B more imposing than P? Mercury (Hermes), chief speaker, interpreter for the gods; Hermeneutics – science of interpretation
- Legend: Jupiter & Mercury visited a Phrygian village disguised as mortal men.
- 13: Zeus patron god of Lystra; decorated oxen
- 14: 2nd time (of 2) L uses *apostle* to refer to others than the 12; rent clothes, expression of grief and dismay. McGarvey: last time appears – Christian faith departs from Jewish customs
- 15: not gods, bringing a message from God; vain things, common term for idols (Ps. 31:6)
- 16: started where audience was: began on nature, preached the One who made it all

- 17: blessings came from God
- 18: audience didn't understand 100%; saw 'gods,' came to worship, & were rejected
- 19: Jews followed to cause trouble, must've led in stoning; didn't follow legal code of taking him outside city (7:58); P's mind rushed back to Stephen
- 20a: Chr. came to bloody body, Timothy, Lois, Eunice could've been there; P goes inside the same city that just stoned him!

3. Derbe – v. 20b-21a

- 20b: 60mi SE of Lystra, small town
- 21a: Lystrans didn't know how P had been revived

4. Return Trip – v. 21b-28

- 21b: so close to Cilicia (Tarsus), in far E of Galatia – easiest trek back home. Instead, retraces their original steps to stoning city. Why? Returned to make disciples, Mt. 28:18-20
- 22: confirming/strengthening to stay faithful in tribulations
- 23: 1st note of P&B est. cong.; didn't last long without elders, Titus 1:5
- Leaders called **Elders** – plural – in each cong. didn't serve over multiple but one; didn't take long to develop qualified men; appointed: set in place – with much prayer
- 24: reach Perga where JM left them
- 25: 1st time to preach in Perga
- 26: return by ship to Antioch
- 27: gone over a year, up to 3; gave missionary report (Scriptural); open door: opportunity – 1 Cor. 16:9, 2 Cor. 2:12. Col. 4:3, Rev. 3:8
- 28: 1300mi covered, 500 over water, 800 over treacherous terrain.
- Galatians may have been written during “long time”

Lessons:

1. When the truth is taught, it divided the audience. Although there are always those opposed to the Gospel, it remains powerful.
2. We would do well to not treat anyone or anything with the same reverence that should be given to God.
3. Each opportunity should be seized to teach the Gospel.

4. It is important to receive updates from those that are taking the Gospel to the lost. We entrust the Lord's money to them, and we are to be good stewards of His money, 1 Corinthians 4:2.

Acts 15: Old Law Not Binding

- 1st trip went well! Cong. established
- **May** tell the events of Gal. 2:1-10
- No one likes controversy; 2 examples: v. 1-35 doctrinal disagreement; v. 36-41 difference of opinion
- "Question is not: 'Will we have controversy in the church?' but 'How will we deal with controversy when it comes?'" Roper

1. Conference – v. 1-29

- 1: word spread during the journey; more Gentiles in world (and church) than Jews. Solution of some was to have G become J.
- Circumcision: an essential part of OT. Gen. 17:10-14, 23-27; given to Abraham but they linked it to Moses (Law came 500yrs later)
- 2: P&B see this an attack on their work; didn't go to find truth but discuss it.
- Titus probably went (Gal. 2:13)
- 3: church furnished supplies for trip
- 4: 300mi trip; eldership in every decision: v. 2, 4, 6, 22, 23; gave mission report
- 5: public meeting; Pharisees didn't talk about how good it was to convert or the value of obedience – they taught the essentiality of becoming a Jew. Necessary: not optional.
- 6: whole church present
- 7: debate: noisy, heated; Judaizing teachers must've thought Peter to be sympathetic
- [Peter's arguments in brackets.]
- 8: [1] Jews looked at superficial characteristics, God looks at the heart. 2nd time God called a "heart knower"
- 9: God made no distinction, Rm. 3:22; [2] hearts cleansed by faith.
- 10: [3] trying to bind parts of Old Law put God to the test; [4] placed yoke too great for any Jew to bear. Fault not with the Law, but man's failure to keep law perfectly.

- 11: only way we can be saved is through grace.
- 12: Peter's speech quelled crowd, P&B had great opportunity to tell of journey
- 13: James: ½ brother of Jesus, Mt. 13:55, Ac. 12:17, 21:18, 1 Cor. 15:7, Gal. 1:19. Js. 1:1 (other James beheaded in ch. 12); a pillar of the church, Gal 2:9
- 14: Heb. Name of Simon Peter; Jews disappointed again, Js. used Scriptures to show Gentiles always intended to be a part of God's plans – and they didn't have to become Jews to do so!
- 15: quotes Amos 9:11-12, may have used more (Is. 2:2-4, 49:6, Micah 4:1-4)
- 16-18: Cornelius conversion a fulfillment of prophecy
- 19: should not trouble them by binding circumcision; didn't force opinion on them
- 20: doctrinal resolved; how would Jews coexist? Avoid meat sacrificed to idols (Gentiles ate all their lives, offensive to Jews)
- Avoid fornication (porneia): illicit sexual relations, thoughts (Lv. 18:6-18, avoid close relations)
- Strangled by blood: Gentiles would eat animals still with blood in it and drink blood.
- Why these 3? Sins they struggled with, affected "table fellowship"
- "We've done you a favor in deciding in your favor; you do us a favor by abstaining from what makes us uncomfortable."
- 21: reassure the Law to be taught
- 22: wonderful: whole cong. came to an agreement; send letter to whole church; wisdom in sending letter with representatives
- Little known of Barsabbas (Son of the Sabbath), may be brother of Joseph (1:23); Silas, more familiar – 2nd journey onward; both leaders, same as Heb. 13:17, 24, may have been elders
- 23: common greeting, eventually reached whole brotherhood by journeys
- 24: intense controversy threatened to rip apart
- 25,26: both risked lives on many occasions
- 27: confirm letter genuine, answer ?s
- 28: note inspiration
- 29: remind God did not require Gentiles to be circumcised and keep Law of Moses

2. Letter Delivered – v. 30-35

- 30: went down(hill); read in early assemblies

- 31: rejoiced at decision made, controversy over, requests made not difficult.
- 32: Judas, Silas strengthened audience
- 33: *Go in peace* common farewell
- 34: Silas may have left and later returned
- 35: not sure how long here; Galatians here?

3. Disagreement – v. 36-39

- Ending on a shock as P&B have worked so well together; recorded to allow brethren to learn how to settle disagreements
- 36: indefinite period of time; thought during winter months as travel was difficult; cannot baptize people and ignore them!
- 37: B agreeable but wanted to take JM, his cousin, Col. 4:10 [turned back at Perga 13:13]
- 38: P not happy; kept insisting, imperfect, continuing action. B kept saying take him, P kept saying not
- 39: RSV “a sharp contention,” “an angry feeling” Rotherham, “a sharp clash of opinions” Phillips. GK: loss of temper, heated exchange, cutting words; spilt: B a native of Cyprus would take up the work there; 2 teams

4. 2nd Journey Begins – v. 40-41

- 40: Silas one of the earlier leaders, a prophet; he could speak by inspiration; 16:37 a Rom citizen, could confirm the letter; may have been P’s penman for 1 & 2 Thess. Was penman for 1 Peter (5:12)
- 41: P visits home area of Cilicia as journey begins

Lessons:

1. This chapter is a handy reference for how to deal with disagreements. When they occur over doctrine, we should always consult God’s Word – then do what it says.
2. We are always wise to heed the advice of the elders and those who are well-studied in the Scriptures.
3. A disagreement between two personalities should not detract us from serving God. Instead, like Paul and Barnabas, we should continue serving the Lord in every circumstance.

Acts 16: Philippians Converted

- Ch. 15 ends with conflicts resolved: Paul takes Silas and begins 2nd journey & Barnabas takes John Mark to evangelize Cyprus.
- 2nd journey will see similar cities and the “Westward Expansion.”
- 49-52AD

1. Meet Timothy – v. 1-3

- Timothy from Lystra; “the dearest friend [Paul] ever knew.” McGarvey
- Mother: Eunice; Grandmother: Lois [2 Tim. 1:5]; likely conv. by P on 1st trip; McGarvey estimated T was 15 on 1st trip; arranged marriages common, usually financial reasons
- 2: sadness & joy when you revisit places; elders laid hands on T [1 Tim. 4:14]
- 3: dad likely dead; tough decision to send him; had him circumcised, would now be allowed in synagogue – helpful on journeys

2. Macedonian Call – v. 4-12

- 4: they [P,S,&T] each had a specific role
- 5: progress report going well as churches grow
- 6: heading W, God blocks their way; not sure how HS revealed this, answer was ‘not now’ not ‘no’
- 7: wanted to go to rich N Rom. Province of Bithynia – not the Lord’s plan!
- “Spirit of Jesus” same as “the HS” in v. 6
- 8: W only direction; Troas: Rom. Colony, busy seaport near ancient Troy
- 9: Macedonia: made famous by Philip II of Macedon & his son, Alexander the Great; took the call to convince to cross Aegean Sea
- 10: we: Dr. Luke joins, maybe sought a Dr for travels or waiting for ship back home
- The Gospel was going to Europe!
- Samothrace: mountainous island ½way; straight course: wind behind them, 2-day trip [return trip 5 days (20:6)]
- Neapolis: “New City” Kavalla today, seaport for Philippi [9-10mi inland]
- 12: NW to Philippi – “Little Rome” self-ruling, didn’t have to pay taxes

3. Miracles in Philippi – v. 13-40

- 13: 10 men req'd for a synagogue; during exile, when Jews couldn't go to synagogue, they gathered by nearest river to pray (Ezra 8:15, 21; Ps. 137:1); Jewish teachers sat
- 14: Lydia, from Thyatira in Asia; seller of purple: expensive; God fearer: Sabbath not a holiday, willing to close business for worship; opened heart: unique to here, credit to God
- 15: 4 household baptisms: Cornelius, 10:24,48; Lydia; jailer, 16:31-34; Stephanas, 1 Cor. 1:16, 16:15
- 16: LK still there, place of prayer prob. river banks; GL Pythian spirit – python – made owners much money
- 17: tried to ignore girl; similar language to Mark 5:7; salvation, see James 2:19
- 18: greatly annoyed/disturbed [4:2], took pity
- 19: 'came out' same as 'was gone;' "If you want to make a man your enemy, hit him in his pocketbook." Only seized P&S not T&L; marketplace – town square – ½ football field
- 20,21: taken before Rm. Colony generals; didn't mention real reason: \$\$ loss
- 3 triggers: 1] decency and order; 2] anti-Semitism; 3] nationalism
- 22: trials always attracted a crowd; sergeants [NASB policemen 35,38] rod holders carried bundle of sticks thumb thickness, axe in center
- 23: stripped back rec'd 39 stripes [Jewish]; Rm beatings as officer's discretion
- Illegal to beat a Roman citizen – both P&S !! 3rd person in Ch. the Gospel changed life
- 24: inner prison: no light, fresh air; tied on dirty floor, couldn't lay on back due to lashes
- 25: what would you do in this situation?
- Instead of singing the blues, they sang praises. Others took note of their situation and attitude.
- 26: Philippi in earthquake territory; powerful enough to strike foundations & unlock locks
- 27: Rm. Law decreed one in charge to receive punishments if one escaped. Suicide never the "honorable way out." This jailor almost died unprepared to meet his God!
- 28: how wonderful P's voice must've been!
- 29: soul shaken more visibly than prison
- 30: realized he needed to change & realized P&S knew something
- 31: [4:12] only through JC! Why not told same words as Pentecost? He wasn't ready to repent – he had to believe first!

- 32: Rm. 10:17 – had to be taught the Word!
- 33: 2 or 3am! Immediate proof of sincerity: washed stripes – sorrow & submission
- 34: all household were 1st taught & believed; P&S not had anything to eat since arrest; when people stop at v. 31, they “leave jail too soon!” McGarvey
- 35: humor: release free men
- 36: apparently returned to cell after meal to not embarrass new brother
- 37: magistrates locally chosen; if word reached Rome, they would lose jobs/heads.
- 38,39: RSV: “they came and apologized to them.” Imagine the pleading to leave; death was penalty for falsely claiming Roman citizenship – seldom did anyone make a false claim.
- 40: Coffman: one of the greatest statements in Scripture
- Concerned not for their mistreatment, but for babes in Christ.

Lessons:

1. One never knows the future impact their efforts will have. Paul converted Timothy; he would go on to do great work for the Lord.
2. Honest people, like Lydia, when they hear the Gospel preached will always be receptive and obedient.
3. The jailor was seconds away from eternity and he was willing to end his life to avoid facing punishments. Thankfully, he was willing to change his ways and become a Christian.

Acts 17: Questions on Mars Hill

- 2nd Journey: 49-52AD
- Parable of the Sower – Luke 8:15 – “good and honest hearts” on prime display in early part of chapter.

1. Thessalonica – v. 1-9

- 1: day’s journey [30mi] to Amphipolis, capitol of district where Philippi located; almost another day’s journey to Apollonia; 30mi more to capital of Macedonia [Thess.]
- Named after Alex. the Great’s sister, sided w/ Rome, “free city,” autonomous, could mint own coins, major rival of Ephesus & Corinth

- 2,3: 1st 3wks of stay; note the **verbs**: reasoned, explained, proved, proclaimed. Prove: from OT, the Messiah had to suffer & rise again, then prove JC = Messiah.
- Giving evidence: GK *lay alongside*; qt. OT, lay JC facts next to.
- 4: joined P&S; sm. # Jews, lg. # Gentiles; wives of leaders of the city joined
- From 1&2 Thess. we learn they preached a lot [1Th. 1:6, 2:2,14], performed miracles [1:5], and loved them [2:7-8]
- 2 obedient there: Aristarchus [20:4] & Secundus [27:2]
- 5: angry Jews found those ready for mischief; Jason [stayed in house, v.7] was attacked, prob. a Chr. [Rm. 16:21]; people: *dēmos*/democracy
- 6: P&S not at home; complaint meant to be derogatory, actually a compliment!
- Turn upside down: fishing term of turning boat over to scrape bottom, make repairs to boat. Jews didn't realize sin turned the world upside down and the Gospel was turning it right side up!
- 7: Jews should've choked on this: Claudius = enemy [18:2]; 2 charges *in absentia*: 1. causing trouble 2. claimed JC a king, rival to Caesar
- 8: ignorance and prejudice triumphed
- 9: pledge: similar to posting bond

2. Berea – v. 10-15

- 10: 50mi W, at foot of Mt. Olympus
- 11: Berean Jews more noble-minded than Thess. Jews – Lk. notes their character. Thess. demonstrated how Gospel should be **preached**; Berea demonstrated how Gospel should be **received**.
- 4 great qualities: 1. Reception 2. Diligent
3. Cautious 4. Loyal
- 12: some [Thess] vs. many [Berea]
- 13: those causing trouble continued to follow P
- 14,15: tried to send P as far away as possible; Athens S part of Greece called Achaia. Silas & Timothy stay behind to help new Chr.

3. Athens – v. 16-34

- 1st time P has been on his own in one of the most influential cities of the world; some want to call this stop his biggest failure – not so; it was a success as the Gospel was preached. God gives increase, 1 Cor. 3:5-9.

- 16: much of Athens' glory in the past; greatest thinkers lived there; democracy born there; greatest university; ideas spread over.
- 5mi inland from port, P saw Acropolis [high city], Parthenon; upset by vile worship: "the ugliest of error, spiritual pornography, ignorance of the soul." Roper
- 17: reasoning – GK debating
- 18: Epicureans followed GK philosopher Epicurus [340-270BC], "Pursuit of pleasure" absence of pain and suffering
- Stoics disciples of Zeno [c340-265BC], name from Gk word *stoa*, porch, used in ref. to Solomon's porch; fate determined all things
- Idle babbler: compound *seed + picker*, one who took ideas from many sources and formulated a worthless hybrid philosophy
- 19,20: aroused curiosity, taken to Areopagus, from Ares, GK god of war, + hill [=Rm god Mars]
- P may have stood where Socrates stood & was tried for perverting the accepted religion
- 21: editorial note: P has perfect opportunity
- 22: 10 verse sermon, one of greatest preached; very religious, demon fearers – too superstitious
- 23: ignorance: *one who does not know yet*
- Unknown god: *trad* plague swept through, offered to all gods but to no avail, until they made this altar; out of respect to not leave any out
- 24,25: P reminds us to start where people are, not where you want them to be. He wanted to tell them about JC, but he needs to tell them about God.
- [points in sermon, I. God] [A] God made all things; [B] God made all men; how much do you need God? Take a deep breath; He enabled
- 26: from one man: med. sci. has proven this to be true; [C] God controls all things, Dan. 2:21
- 27: [II. What Man Must Do] [A] Man must seek God, Dt. 4:29, Mt. 7:7-8, Heb. 11:6; the "Unknown God" has revealed Himself!
- 28: P qt. 2 poets, Epimenides, c.600BC, & Aratus, c.310BC – showing the people they listened to believed what he was saying
- 29: how we worship God is always based on our concept of God
- [2] Man must worship correctly. How could the inferior (man) create the Superior (God)? Godhead: GK *Theios*, 2 Pet. 1:3-4

- 30: [III. Man Must Repent (Conclusion)] Winked at, overlooked. If what P said was true, the superstitious worship of the Athenians was wrong & they needed to change.
- 3rd time P used GK word for ignorance: 1. in calling God unknown, they admitted their ignorance of Him, 23; 2. they worshipped Him in ignorance, 23; 3. God tolerated their ignorance in the past – but no more excuse, 30, Rom. 1:20
- Repent: turn from idols and turn to God, 1 Thess. 1:9
- 31: told about past, now tells of future: Epicureans thought life as road to extinction, Stoics thought life was a path to be absorbed by a lifeforce. P announced life is a journey to judgment seat of God!
- Now introduces Jesus as the One through which judgment came
- 32-34: 3 responses: 1. mocked [NASB sneer]; 2. waited [like Felix, 24:25, the most dangerous game to play with God]; 3. believed
- Dionysius: member of court, *trad* became elder of church in Athens; street named after; Damaris: female; Others also there

Lessons:

1. Thessalonica: preaching the truth will upset individuals who don't want to change.
2. Berea: we should always check every passage preached to make sure it is the truth.
3. Athens: know your audience and start evangelizing where they are – and take them to where they need to be!

Acts 18: Reasoning with Apollos

- 2nd Journey: 49-52AD
- Ch. 17 ends with Paul's powerful sermon on Mars Hill showing the true nature of God.
- This chapter both ends the 2nd journey and begins the 3rd.
- This journey has been highly successful for the Lord!

1. Corinth – v. 1-17

- 1. Corinth: 40mi W, commercial center of the world, stark contrast w/ Athens. People went to Corinth to "have a good time."

- 2: Aquilla: Jew; Priscilla: assumed Gentile; Pontius: Rom. Province in Asia Minor; Claudius [11:28] only Rom. Gov. mentioned 2x in NT, 49AD imperial banishment of Jews; P&A prob. got to town shortly before Paul
- 3: 1st mention of P's trade; tentmaker also means works in leather; worked so people didn't think he 'preached for the \$' [1 Cor. 9:11-12]
- 4: GKs: God fearers repulsed by ungodly city
- 5: team reunites, revitalizes Paul; last mention of Silas by name; 'absorbed in' spirit
- 6: Jews hostile; uses words from Ezek. 3:18, 33:8: warning to those who fail to heed
- 7: thought it is Titus, not likely, could be Gaius [1Cor. 1:14, Rm. 16:23] Rms had 3 names; irony: God provides Christian meeting place next to Jewish synagogue
- 8: Crispus led services in synagogue; baptized by P himself
- 9,10: P's work progressing but difficult; JC dismissed past, gave assurance for present, & made two promises for the future
- 11: assurance turned anxiety into anticipation; 18 months, writes 1 & 2 Thess.
- 12: Gallio: most important Rom. official P met; took office 51AD [helps date], Achaia = province; wrong kind of unity.
- 13: brought accusations against Rom. Law
- 14,15: enemies face to face w/ honest Rom. Official; didn't hesitate to throw case out
- 16: imagine Jewish shock
- 17: Sosthenes: fellow ruler w/ Crispus; Gallio indifferent, not influenced by Jewish actions; P unharmed & vindicated; God kept His promise! *Trad* brought 10yrs of peace>church

2. Paul Returns – v. 18-23

- 18-22 wrap up 2nd journey
- 18: planned to return to Antioch in Syria; apparently only took P&A; vow: 7x in NT, gen. refers to making a request to Deity. A serious thing; what kind? Not specified.
- 19: sailed from Cencrea: port, later cong. there, Rm. 16:1; limited time in Ephesus
- 20,21: Jews didn't make this request often, he didn't consent. **Important:** he yielded his life to God's Will.
- 22: 1 month of sailing, lands at Caesarea, home of Philip & Cornelius; completed his vow then went to Antioch
- 23: prob. stayed Winter months, leaves for 3rd journey 53AD. Not mentioned companions

- 3rd journey would collect funds for poor in Jerusalem, Rom. 15:26

3. Apollos – v. 24-28

- 24: shortened form of Apollonius: born, reared in Alexandria, largest library in world [700,000 volumes], edu center of the world
- LXX [GK OT] was produced in Alexandria in 200s BC
- 25: mighty in OT Scriptures; only knew up to Matt. 3! John was killed [Mt. 14:1-12] before JC promised to build church [Mt. 16:19], ...
- and long before He died, rose, and gave great commission. [John prepared people for Christ – a fulfillment of prophecy.]
- 26: although he didn't know the whole story, Apollos spoke boldly; A&P took him aside [NIV *invited him to their home*], privately taught him "the rest of the story;" he was willing to change!
- 27: Apollos wanted to share the Gospel; Ephesus cong. sent a letter with Apollos; 1st helped the Christians
- 28: demonstrated Christ through the Scriptures

Lessons:

1. The church at Corinth had many problems they had to work through. The church is perfect comprised of imperfect people.
2. Paul knew the importance of guiding his life after God's Word. On this journey, God kept him out of certain areas and led him to others. We should always do things "if the Lord wills." (James 4:15)
3. Apollos is a perfect example of someone that needed to learn more. He was willing to change to conform to God's Word. We need both more like Apollos & A&P.

Acts 19: Seven Sons of Sceva

- 3rd Journey
- P is going to try to fulfill a promise made on the 2nd journey.

1. Rebaptism – v. 1-7

- 1: P took road less travelled to get to Eph.; Lk wanted to get the story to Eph. as quickly as possible; "perhaps P's most significant work in all 3 journeys." Roper

- Eph. the jewel of Asia, center of trade in that part of the world, tourists to see Artemis' temple, 7 ancient wonders
- 2: too many confuse this: he is asking if they could perform miracles, here he knows their baptism isn't valid, Great Commission baptism tied to the HS
- 3: *lit* "into what were you baptized?" could've been taught by Apollos
- Richard Oster: "Post-Pentecost believers with Pre-Pentecost instruction."
- 4: P didn't criticize them or their teacher, he immediately taught them the truth! Last ref. to John the Baptist
- 5: correct response: baptized for the right reason! John's had no mention of HS and looked forward to coming Messiah; JC's was of faith and points back. Similar: by immersion, for forgiveness of sins.
- 6: carried out original intent: passing on of sp. gifts; only time tongues mentioned as a gift assoc. w/ laying on of hands
- 7: about 12, could've been 11 or 13

2. Paul's Ministry – v. 8-22

- 8: a record for P not being thrown out
- 9: end results the same: some Jews turned away; *the way* = Christianity.
- Tyrannus had a private school P could preach, maybe a gymnasium (mind + body); nothing known of his, Latin for tyrant. Teaching style?
- 10: 2yrs + 3mo + little other time = 3yrs [20:31], longest of any journey stay; Rev. churches?
- 11: life in Eph. revolved around incantations; Shakespeare summed them up in "The Comedy of Errors" 1.2.97-102. P never faced anything like this. Extra-extraordinary.
- 12: handkerchiefs: lg rags used by P, prob. to wipe sweat away while working, aprons would've covered his clothing
- Dr. LK made distinction of sickness vs. demon
- 13: exorcist: *out + oath* only time in NT, casting out by speaking; JC & apostles not exorcists, no oath needed just spoke them out: Mk. 1:25, Ac. 16:8
- 7 sons used secret words, determined P's word he used was Jesus
- 14: HP a self-assumed title, none names Sceva on record (Doc, Professor in wild west)
- 15: wry humor

- 16: demon-possessed used superhuman strength to attack would-be exorcists; inadequately clothed
- 17: 3 results: 1] P God-approved, sons rejected 2] fear upon all 3] magicians learned not to use JC names
- 18: occult: hidden; Eph. brought to senses
- 19: books: scrolls concerning spells, potions, etc.; drachma = 1 day wage; substantial sum then and today
- 20: progress report
- 21: these things: generic summing of work; P serious about future plans: 1] go to Jerusalem 2] on way, go through Macedonia & Achaia & revisit 3] start for Rome; must do
- Pivotal verse: last 1/3 of book gives sequence of events leading to arrival in Rome
- 22: sent Corinth letter via Tim
- Erastus: prob. city treasurer of Cor. [Rm. 16:23]
- Titus later sent to Cor. to follow up on work there [2 Cor. 1:12, 13; 7:5-7; 8:6, 23]
- P stayed to take advantage of open doors

3. Adversaries – v. 23-41

- A major incident during P's ministry in Eph.
- 23: prob. during festival of Artemis, same time as Pentecost
- 24: prob. different Demetrius of 3Jn12. Fertility goddess, giver of life, Eph. claimed her as their own; people bought souvenirs when they visited the temple
- 25,26: P's disdain of idolatry made sales plummet
- 27: pagan lips witness to the impact of Chr.; 40yrs later Pliny the Younger wrote a letter to emperor Trajan that Chr. caused these temples to be deserted
- 28: slogans substituted for reason
- 29: theater seated 25,000, some there today
- Not sure which Gaius this was; Aristarchus would travel with P to Jerusalem & Rome 27:2
- 30: knew there was no reasoning w/mob
- 31: those over worship were sympathetic
- 32: classic mob scene; Ben Franklin defined mob as "a group of persons with heads aplenty but no brain"

- 33: Jews in Eph. had a 'live and let live' philosophy; Alexander the Coppersmith [2 Tim. 4:14, cf. 1:20]
- 34: Josephus: Eph. looked down on Jews
- 35: city HQ a few blocks from theater; town clerk: most important local official, as efficient at quelling a riot as Demetrius had been at inciting one
- 36,37: NCV "Stop and think before you do anything;" temple also serves as a bank, they didn't rob it; claimed they didn't blaspheme but they did. He might lie to end riot
- 38: local courts met regularly
- 39: 2 goals: 1] stressed there was a right way to handle this – and they chose the wrong way!
2] let craftsmen know they'd be held accountable if there were repercussions
- 40: Rom. viewed few crimes worse than civil disorder, a capitol offence to incite; guilty could be imprisoned and even executed, incl. town clerk for letting it happen; fines, taxes, guilds disbanded
- 41: all leave, town clerk relieved
- Aristarchus shows up in 20:4 travelling w/P
- Another victory for the Way – LK shows it was not Christians, but their persecutors, who posed a threat to society!

Lessons:

1. To have the remission of sins, we must be baptized for the right reason – according to God's commands. "It never hurts to make sure."
2. Satan and his associates know who Christ is and what He teaches. We must be the opposite of them, not just believers but also doers – James 2:19, 1:22.
3. At times there may be 'strength in numbers,' but that is not true when a large number is opposed to the truth. God and His Word will always prevail!

Acts 20: Troas on the Lord's Day

- 3rd Journey
- Early church had many needy (2-3), wealthy sold land (4-5).
- When a famine hit, Antioch church sent needed help to Jerusalem (11-12). P worked on collecting these funds during 3rd journey.

1. Macedonia, Greece, Troas – v. 1-6

- 1: open door slammed shut in Eph., going to Macedonia to collect for those in need
- 2: joyful reunion with fellow Christians
- 3: 3mo = winter months; wrote his masterpiece, Romans, here. Wrote he anticipated going to Rome yet knew the dangers ahead.
- Goal: Jerusalem; ship going to Syria.
- 4: Sopater: prob. same as Rom.16:21
- Secundus: father's 2nd son or a slave w/#. (Rm. 16:22,23 Tertius, Quartus)
- Gaius: 19:29
- Timothy: w/ P when he wrote Rom. (16:21)
- Tychicus: w/ P when he was in Rome
- Trophimus: one Jew accused P of taking into Temple 21:29
- 5: providence revealed plans; decided to go long way over land
- 6: sailed from Neapolis, seaport of Philippi
- Trip took 5 days sailing against wind. Previous trip the other way took 2 days (16:11)
- Early Spring; LK present "we"
- 7 days: got there on Monday, wanted to worship – trip took longer than expected

2. Sunday in Troas – v. 7-12

- 7: P didn't use 'out of town' or 'away from home cong.' as an excuse to not attend; command to assemble on 1st day; met at night, worked that morning; came to partake of Lord's Supper; P preached a good sermon!
- 8: purpose of meeting more important than place; prob. apartment-like bldg.; high up & many lamps make for lack of oxygen
- 9: late night, crowded room, low O₂ took toll on Eutychus; drifted off gradually; sleep – hupnos – hypnosis; between 18-40yo, worked all day, exhausted. Window for air?
- 10: like Elijah & Elisha; Dr. LK he is dead, P says life returned to him; shattered bones mended, joints back in place, blood vessels repaired, torn tissue restored, heart start again
- 11: returned to 3rd story room; P enjoyed a good visit
- 12: greatly comforted: typical understatement by Dr. LK

3. To Jerusalem – v. 13-16

- 13: Assos: next port of call, other side of Peninsula from Troas, 20mi by land, 40mi by sea, sent them around
- 14: ship stopped in several cities, like a commuter train
- Mitylene: harbor on SE shore of island Lesbos
- 15: Chios & Samos: islands
- 16: ship didn't stop in Eph; P already missed Passover (6), wants to be in Jerusalem for Pentecost 50 days later. 1/3 of that period already gone.
- Wanted to celebrate Jewish heritage and deliver funds.

4. Ephesian Elders – v. 17-38

- 7 sermons by P in Acts – only one to Chr.
- 17: 2- or 3-day layover to exchange cargo; elders travelled 30mi S
- 18: P frequently reminded others of his way of life
- 19: 3yrs in Eph.; serving as slave; 2x P mentions shedding tears – real men cry [Jn. 11:35, 2 Cor. 2:4, Phil. 3:18]
- 20: 'Did not shirk' sailor's terms for 'I did not lower my sails' – P preached everywhere
- 21: stressed he taught all God's Word
- 22: preaching not about security
- 23: knew bonds & afflictions ahead, HS warn?
- 24: P wanted to finish his course, and he would – 2 Tim. 4:7
- 25: he may have visited later [1 Tim. 1:3, 3:14] but didn't know that at the time.
- 26: see Ezek. 3:16-21, 33:1-9; NCV "If any of you should be lost, I am not responsible."
- 27: preacher's 1st responsibility is to God!
- 28: gave them a charge – must 1st care for themselves before caring for the church!
- Elder's job not for glory and honor – dirty
- HS gave qualifications for elders; only time *Church of God* in Acts – a fav. of P; costly price to establish the church
- 29: must remain vigilant

- 30: wolves did enter the flock: 6 mentioned in NT: **Hymenaeus & Alexander** [1 Tim. 1:19, 20], **Phygelus & Hermogenes** [2 Tim. 1:15], **Philetus** [2 Tim. 2:17], **Diotrephes** [3 Jn. 9]
- Gnosticism arose in Eph. (Judaism & pagan philosophies)
- 31: not a 9-5 job
- 32: could be a great place to end: emphasis on God & His Word
- 33: must be free from love of \$\$ - 1 Tim. 3:3
- 34: showed working hands
- 35: same teaching in letter, Eph. 4:28; only place these words recorded [Jn. 20:30] qtd. Christ long before a Gospel account written
- 36: normally stood to pray
- 37,38: kiss a standard form of greeting, implied friendship
- Imagine standing on tiptoe, waving until ship disappeared from their view.

Lessons:

1. Paul showed great care for the poor. We should help both the physically & spiritually poor.
2. Acts 20:7 is book, chapter, & verse proof we are to assemble on the 1st day of the week & partake of the Lord's Supper. Anyone who says otherwise is not living by God's Word.
3. It is okay to make plans, as long as they are in accordance with God's Will – James 4:13-14.
4. Paul's admonition to the elders is still true today; they oversee the flock & must do all they can to keep the wolves out.

Acts 21: Uproar in Jerusalem

- 3rd Journey & trip to Jerusalem – 52-57AD
- End of 3rd Missionary Journey
- Paul has just tearfully left the Ephesian Elders
- He has been warned multiple times of the problems that will await him in Jerusalem

1. All Aboard to Jerusalem – Acts 21:1-17

- 1: Cos: birthplace of Hippocrates (c460-377BC) & famous medical school. Luke = Doc.
 - Rhodes: known for Roses; 105ft tall bronze statue; earthquake destroyed; 7 wonders

- Luke not writing a travel brochure
- 2: joyed to find ocean bound ship
- 3: Crete: P&B started 1st journey there a decade prior
- 4: finding – LG city, SM group; landed 1st day
- 5: 1st mention of children in congregation
- 7: Ptolemais – 10 mi N of Mt. Carmel (Acco)
- 8: principal seaport of Palestine, 60mi to Jerusalem [2 days]
- 9: daughters might be well known
- 10: not common name; prob. Of 11:28
- 11: graphic lesson
- 12: Luke joined in
- 13: break: crush into powder, Esther 4:16; did not die in Jerusalem
- 14: God's will be done
- 15: got luggage & mind ready
- 16: impossible to find lodging at Passover
- 17: Shortly before Pentecost
- We: Luke, Timothy, Paul, at least 6 brethren (20:4-5)

2. Avoid Criticism – Acts 21:18-26

- 18: last time Luke uses 1st person to 27:1
- 19: 15:4 recounted 1st journey; prob. Told 2nd & 3rd – official end of 3rd journey
- 20: gives God the glory; Paul **was** zealous – might have made him nervous
- 21: repeated so much blown out of proportion
- 22: elders knew, others needed to hear
- 23: commanded Paul to do; Nazarite vow
- 24: purification – to enter the Temple (from Gentile area was requested to cleanse)
- 25: to the benefit of the Jewish Christians
- 26: Paul came to Jerusalem to bring **peace** and he was accused of promoting **disharmony**

3. Arrest & Defense – Acts 21:27-40

- 27: almost, did not finish. Jews (Eph.?) rejected him [19:8-9], plotted against [20:18-19], & rioted [19:23-41]
- 28: in Court of the Women; Jews held Nation, Scriptures, Temple sacred. Paul accused of dishonoring, destroying, & defiling.
- 29: when you hate you assume the worst
- 30: 27 yrs. after Pentecost; like taking out of church
- 31: God used an irreligious power to subdue a religious people. Rm. 13:3,4 – protect innocent
- 32: at least 2 centurions, 200 men
- 33: not to protect but to quell the right
- 34: most of mob didn't know what was done
- 35: alarmed Paul might be escaping
- 36: [22:22] Away! Almost 30 years earlier in the same area the crowd said the same of Jesus and demanded His death
- 37: Paul was the only calm one
- 38: Josephus: 3 yrs. earlier and Egyptian led army to top of Mt. Olives, threatened to make Jerusalem fall like Jericho; Felix
- 39: as a Jew, he had a right to be in Temple. Tarsus – reputation to not stir up trouble.
- 40: Paul at top of stairway, soldiers between him & crowd, torn clothes, dusty, bloody, bruised – raises his hand and all are quiet as he speaks in their native tongue.
- Rest of the story? Next lesson: Acts 22

Lessons:

1. Always make your plans around when & where you will be worshipping God!
2. Sometimes we cannot avoid criticism. Remember, if we are doing what is right the criticism and criticizer do not matter.
3. Paul had to go to Jerusalem to fulfill God's will; we must always seek to do God's will even if it might be difficult or scary.
4. God plus one is always a majority.

Acts 22: Valiant Defense

- 52-57AD 3rd Journey & trip to Jerusalem
- End of 3rd Missionary Journey
- Paul has just tearfully left the Ephesian Elders
- Ch. 21 ends with Paul being beaten, threatened, and he is at the top of a staircase with his hand outstretched and he begins his speech in Ch. 22.

1. Paul's Defense – Acts 22:1-21

- 1: Defense: Apologia: apology [1 Peter 3:15]
- 2: established rapport
- 3: has to win their confidence before preaching Jesus; Gamaliel died 5 yrs. Ago
- 4: way = Christianity
- 5: Elder = Jewish leader; Ananias HP [23:3]
- 6: Farthest thing on his mind was becoming Christian
- 7: doesn't use "resurrection;" they knew
- 9: companions could still be in Jerusalem
- 10: P always knew what he was doing before
- 11-13: P spoke of Ananias not as a Chr. But favorable to the Jewish audience
- 14: P eyewitness of the Righteous One
- 15: Gentiles included in "all men"
- 16: Paul did not hesitate; spiritual washing
- 17: ready to speak of divine commission
- 18-20: P argued w/ the Lord [Peter, Ac. 10]
- 21: P wanted to stay in Jerusalem but God told him "GO!"

2. Perplexed Commander – Acts 22:22-30

- 22: "Gentiles" as far as P got; revolted
- 23: McGarvey: "Vented their rage like maddened beasts." [New Comm., Vol. 2]
- 24: Roman commander probably did not understand Aramaic; scourging 2nd worst punishment after crucifixion; 1st R beating

- 25: same place Jesus was scourged?
- 26: single question turned torturers into tortured
- 27: might have been hard to believe at first
- 28: citizenship: born in Rome/Roman colony or having it bestowed for unusual service rendered; could be illegally bought (named after emperor, Claudius 41-54AD – scandalous)
- 29: Cicero: misdeed to bind a Roman (Paul bound for 2 yrs. In 28:20)
- 30: Commander now in a bind; P's beaten body stood tall before Supreme Court of Jewish people > stood where Peter, John, other Apostles stood; where Stephen stood; where His Lord had stood.
 - Stood w/ the council yrs. ago; now he is against

Lessons:

1. Don't be afraid to stand up for what you know to be true.
2. The only way to be saved is to "call upon the name of the Lord (obedience: hear, believe, repent, confess, baptism)!"
3. In the face of adversity, stand tall.

Acts 23: Waiting in Jerusalem

- Ch. 22 ends with Paul taken by a centurion and brought before the Sanhedrin to stand trial.
- "Luke devotes as much space for Paul's last few days in Jerusalem as he does any missionary journey." David L. Roper

1. Before the Sanhedrin – 23:1-10

- 1: 1st order of business: who & why?
- 2: goal to punish and silence Paul
- 3: savage blow didn't silence P; Jesus called Pharisees "whitewashed walls" Mt. 23:37
- 4,5: Ex. 22:28
- 6: Sad. the majority; Pharisees vocal minority
- 7: his words divided the audience
- 8: S: no res., angels, spirit. All in physical life; Pharisees believed in them all

- 9: Pharisees find nothing wrong in statement
- 10: 3rd time a Roman officer had to step in

2. Encouraging Vision – 23:11

- “One of the darkest nights in the history of Paul.” G. Campbell Morgan
- Paul’s task not to convert but to preach.
- Paul was doubtful but God encouraged him that he would make it to Rome.

3. Murderous Conspiracy Exposed – 23:12-22

- 12: God’s promise immediately tested
- 13: who?? Hellenistic Jews tried to kill Paul 2 decades earlier 9:29? Asiatic Jews that started riot days ago 21:27? Sad. from council 23:6-9?
- 14: plot required cooperation
- 15: plot: ‘apologize,’ bring Paul into open, 40 mingle, converge w/ hidden weapons
- 16: only certain reference to Paul’s family
- 17-19: must’ve had a concerned look
- 20-21: ready & waiting to put the plan into action
- 22: did not want the council to know he knew the plan before it happened

4. Paul Taken to Caesarea – 23:23-35

- 23: quickly put into action; 9pm; 470 soldier escort – ½ regiment
- 24: mount – horse? faster journey if mounted
- 25: letter: GK epistolé – standard pattern
- 26: 1st mention of commander’s name; Lysias – Greek by birth
- 27,28: fascinating example of twisting truth for personal gain; no mention of P’s heritage
- 29: only secular letter in NT; not to embarrass but to record
- 30: plan probably not fully known until Paul is safely out of harm’s way
- 31: Antipatris – Aphek in OT; 1 Sam. 4:1; Herod the Great rebuilt
- 32: P retracing route taken 2 weeks before
- 33: must’ve been amazed at Agabus’ prophecy
- 34: province: complicated to determine
 - 1) Cilicia – Roman province

- 2) Paul – Roman citizen
- 3) Offense occurred in Felix’s province
- 4) IF gov’t made Jews go to Cilicia to bring their accusations against Paul, that would make them unhappy – 24:27
- 35: Praetorium: official HQ of Roman gov’t

Lessons:

1. Jesus Christ died and rose from the grave. Denying this is foolish. Without this, we have no hope – 1 Corinthians 15.
2. Don’t make a vow you cannot intend to keep.
3. Don’t try to find every loophole to find a way to disobey God.

Acts 24: X-cuses of Felix

- Ch. 23 ends with Paul being brought before Felix as Paul was ‘Waiting in Jerusalem.’
- Last 7 chapters of Acts deal with Paul as a prisoner: Jerusalem 22:24; 2 years in Caesarea 22:33-24:17; at least 2 years in Rome 28:16-30

1. Accusations Against Paul – 24:1-9

- 1: 5 days – length of time Paul in Caesarea
- 2,3: ushered before Antonius Felix, Roman Procurator of Judea [Pilate]. Barclay: “nauseating flattery’
- 4: as if compliments would harm governor
- 5: 1] personal – plague, pestilence
2] political – greatest interest to Felix; peace. Sect = Greek = heresy
- 6: 3] pious (religious): desecrate temple; Felix’s job was to keep peace
- 6-8: 3 different accounts: Luke’s, 21:27-40; commander’s letter, 23:25-30; lawyer’s prosecution, 24:5-8 – easily confused
- 9: no formal witnesses called against Paul – their plan

2. Paul’s Defense – 24:10-23

- 10: no interrogation of Paul but a simple nod

- 11: 12 days ago went to worship on 1st day in Jerusalem / in Caesarea 5 days = week worth of events in Jerusalem
- 12: P not trying to cause a riot
- 13: accusers put on the spot – brought no witnesses just a smooth-tongued orator. Accusation ≠ Evidence
- 14: plead guilty to being a Christian
- 15: cf. John 5:28-29 – HP a Sadducee
- 16: “I do my best” NASB; spiritual exercise is important – 1 Timothy 4:7-8
- 17: defending temple – at least 4 yrs. since in Jerusalem. Alms – to help. Felix wants \$\$\$
- 18,19: Jews from Asia originally charged Paul with defiling the temple – not there to accuse
- 20-21: concl: a direct challenge to Sanhedrin. “Only thing I am guilty of is doing the job I was told to do.” No answer; should be set free
- 22: more exact – term of comparison
- 23: situation probably similar to later Roman imprisonment.
- Luke may have started writing Acts here. [?]

3. Non-Conversion of Felix – 24:24-27

- 24: Drusilla: member of infamous Herod family. Father killed James, 12:1-2; great uncle killed John the Baptist, Mt. 14:1-12; great-grand father tried to kill baby Jesus, Mt. 2. Jewess – great-grandmother a famous Jew
- Felix on 3rd wife. He seduced her at age 16 from her husband, now almost 20 “as fair outwardly as she was rotten inwardly.” Chappell
- 25: “stopped preaching, started meddling”
- 3 point sermon: 3 false accusations against Paul; now, 3 painfully true accusations against Felix & Drusilla
- Righteousness – one of P’s fav. Words. 60x
- Self-control – fruit of spirit, Chr. Graces – physically, sexually, & spiritually
- Judgment – not live in moment. Same 17:30-31
- 26: didn’t find time to talk with Paul about salvation only about trying to get money
- 27: days > weeks > months > 1 year > 2 years
- 2nd hearing of v. 22 never happened [?]

- Sec. history: Felix deposed by Nero, summoned to Rome, AD 59. Paul arrested AD57, Felix to Rome 2 years later. AD59. Journey to Rome AD60. Book closes AD62.

Lessons:

1. Always be willing to stand up for the Lord and the things He has said to be right!
2. We cannot live in the moment only – we must be willing to live now to prepare for eternity!
3. Do not put off your obedience to the Gospel. We don't have it recorded Felix ever obeyed! The Gospel invitation is constantly available!

Acts 25: Yet Untried by Caesar

- 24 ends with the 'X-cuses of Felix' as he delays obedience to the Gospel. Paul is imprisoned and Festus takes Felix's place.
- 25 parallels previous chapters and can feel like watching a rerun on TV.

1. Appeals to Caesar – Acts 25:1-12

- 1: Festus: not much known. Josephus: wise, fair, agreeable.
- 2: met by Sanhedrin; Ishmael now President
- 3: favor = concession/ *quid pro quo*/ something for something; same plan.
- 4,5: Festus probably didn't know of the Jew's plot but he can see a power play
- 6: cleared his calendar – "the next day"
- 7: No orator this time; proper procedure was to remain seated
- 8: accused Paul of sin [breaking Law of the Jews], sacrilege [defiling the temple], & sedition [stirring up trouble for Rome]. *Caesar*
- 9: 1] religious, not political issue; 2] Paul not a criminal; not given a choice to go to Jer.
- 10,11: reminder of 1 Cor. 10:13; right to appeal
- 12: not Sanhedrin but his own advisors
- 28:19 – Paul says he was forced to appeal
- By appealing, Paul gets to preach to Agrippa [26:1], remains under Roman protection [v21], extend Gospel's influence to Caesar's palace [Phil. 4:22], preach to Nero's tribunal possibly Nero himself.

2. Perplexed Festus – Acts 25:13-22

- 13: Agrippa: Herod Agrippa II in history. Father Herod of Ac. 12, killed Jas., attempted to kill Peter. G-grandfather tried to kill baby Jesus. Dad died at age 17, slowly given kingd.
- Julia Bernice: his sister, lived in open incest with brother. Had husband, died, another, died, with Agrippa, married again, died, back to Agrippa. She is 32, he is 31. Scandalous.
- 14: met because of the title of Herod
- 15,16: Roman viewpoint of case
- 17,18: Festus probably expected charges of murder, theft, etc.
- 19: religion, superstition [KJV], trans. Demon worship. Heart of matter: was this Jesus alive or dead?
- 20: conveniently left out pleasing the Jews [v9]
- 21: God's providence a practical result
- 22: Agrippa would've heard who Paul was

3. Faces Royalty – Acts 25:23-27

- 23: Pomp [show, display] where we get fantasy, fantastic. Great contrast dignitaries vs. Paul entering.
- 24: Festus fell into trap of generalizing "all"
- 25: Paul's appeal took the decision out of his hands but he still wanted to appear decisive
- 26: official report was expected to be sent; Festus had no clue.
- 27: truly absurd thing is not releasing Paul as a free man
- Admission of Paul's innocence came too late to save Paul

Lessons:

1. God provides for His children.
2. We should look for ways that we can take our current situation and use it to the benefit of God, like Paul when he went before all these different audiences preaching Christ and Him crucified.
3. Those in authority are put there for a reason, Romans 13:1ff. We should thank God for them and pray for them.

Acts 26: Zealous Towards God Part 1 of 3

- 25 ends with Paul being brought before Agrippa and Bernice by Festus. Agrippa desires to hear Paul tell his story.
- 2nd time in Acts Paul tells it. Happened in 9, told in his defense in 22, retold to prick Agrippa's heart here in 26.
- 26-28 are grouped together in our study of the "ABCs of Acts" – Zealous Towards God

1. Paul's Opening Remarks – 26:1-8

- 1: most magnificent audience P had stood before
- 2,3: personal plea to Agrippa. Fortunate he understood situation & P [desired to convert]
- 4: Nation: Tarsus but also Jewish comm. 9:1
- 5: if all Jews [4] told truth instead of condemning P, they would let him go
- 6,7: doesn't address charges but insists he wouldn't mistreat Jews, disparage the Law, or defile the temple. *Accused by Jews of all people!*
- 8: you – plural – you people, y'all – addressing whole crowd momentarily

2. Saul's Persecution & Conversion – 26:9-18

- 9: P admits he had once been where they are
- 10: Saints – now realized they were innocent
- 11: lit: "I tried to force" – admitting he was sometimes unsuccessful. *Emotional past*
- 12-14: everything in P's upbringing was the Lord's prodding him to accept Jesus, Gal. 1:15
- Goads/pricks: pointed sticks 6-8ft farmers would use to prod ox pulling the plow
- 15: divine goad pierced his heart, scalpel that reshaped his life
- 16: minister – different than normal GK word – one who serves a higher will; witness allowed P to be an apostle [1:22-23]
- 17: P frequently rescued
- 18: P's mission was to open the eyes of the Jews & Gentiles alike

3. Preaching the Resurrection – 26:19-23

- 19: "How could I do otherwise?"
- 20: obedient to commands [baptized at once, 8:18, 22:16] and commission [preached]

- 21: A needed to know changing to Christianity wouldn't make an easy life
- 22: also needed to know the Lord's hand with him
- 23: next logical step: invitation/challenge

4. Paul Challenges Agrippa – 26:24-27

- 24: Festus [out of view] becomes agitated. Actions catch us off guard; statement doesn't
- 25: P answers calmly with respect. Insane before he obeyed, now in 'right mind' Mk. 5:15
- 26: Christianity no secret order. A's birth coincided with beginning of Jesus' ministry
- 27: if he said he didn't believe, lose credibility of Jews; if he did, next step was to obey

5. Almost Persuaded – 26:28-29

- 28: everyone waiting for his response!
- 2nd use of Christian in Acts [11:26; cf. 1 Pet. 4:16]. Wish we had the tone of his voice.
- "If you kept going, I would become a Christian."
- 29: all: incl. distinguished guests
- Paul's life defines what a Christian should be

6. Next Stop: Rome – 26:30-32

- 30: Agrippa thought he had said too much – abruptly stood up; interview over
- 31: unanimous verdict – a victory for Paul, but not the victory he desired.
- Festus still has no charge to put in his official letter
- 32: almost unbelievable: a Herod commending a follower of Jesus. What might've been?

Lessons:

1. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and **be ready always to give an answer** to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:" 1 Peter 3:15 [emp. JR]
2. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Romans 8:31
3. "Almost Persuaded" is to be completely lost!

Acts 27: Zealous Toward God – Part 2 of 3

- 26 ends with Paul being sent to Rome to appeal before Caesar.
- He just gave a great sermon to Agrippa – “almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian.”
- God had promised Paul [23:11] that he would make it to Rome. Acts 27-28 records trek.
- 26-28 are grouped together in our study of the “ABCs of Acts” – Zealous Towards God

1. Journey Begins – Acts 27:1-8

- Few weeks journey that took months.
- 1: We – Luke now on trip; Aristarchus [20:4] also on trip, probably paid for passage. Other – Greek – different kind; cohort – 600-100
- 2: Caesarea – principle seaport of Palestine; Adramyttium – W Coast of Asia, near Troas
- Aristarchus – “my fellow prisoner” Col. 4:10
- 3: Sidon: trading stop in Phoenicia; most prisoners stayed below deck, P allowed out
- 4: Summer winds were from W – impossible to enter in Med. Sea. P used these winds 2 yrs. ago to his advantage
- 5: N of Cyprus – familiar spots to P; Cilicia – Tarsus here; Pamphylia – P&B landed on 1st Missionary Journey; Myra – SW Asia Minor
- 6: cargo of wheat [38]; homebased of ship – Alexandria [28:11]; 180ft X 45ft X 43ft
- 7: Cnidus: Southern tip of Roman province of Asia. 170mi from Myra
- 8: Fair Haven – ½ way across island of Crete

2. Warned by Paul – Acts 27:9-12

- 9: hope to get to Rome by Oct. diminished daily; bad sailing on Med. Sea mid-Sept. to mid-Nov.; fast: Jewish Day of Atonement – Lv. 16:29 – Ramsay: AD 59 October 5.
- 10: P upset of news of leaving
- 11: captain: owner of ship
- 12: Phoenix: [Phineka] protected from winter blasts from E & NE

3. Adventures on the Sea – Acts 27:13-44

- 13: “Calm before the storm”
- 14: few hours away disaster struck; Euroclydon – sailor’s name for typhoon, like “Northeaster;” hybrid of Greek for East wind & Latin for North wind
- 15: ship at mercy of wind and waves

- 16: SE for several hours
- 17: Shallows of Syrtis – sandbars N. of Africa
- 18: heard howling winds, cracking timbers, straining ropes; livelihood depends on cargo
- 19: everything not needed thrown; Greek – tackle – household furnishings, Matt. 12:39
- 20: no compass, sexton – nav. depended on sun & stars; waterlogged wheat
- 21: low point of story. Luke included himself in giving up. P not to scold but to encourage
- 22,23: confidence rang about howling winds
- 24,25: extending courage given earlier, 23:11
- 26: Good news & bad – saved but not easy
- 27: island [Malta, 28:1] 500mi W of where storm first struck; Adriatic Sea – E Central Section of Med. Sea, not b/t Greece & Italy
- 28: fathom: ropes with knots 6ft apart; 20 fathoms = 120ft; 15 fathoms = 90ft
- 29: literally “prayed for the day”
- 30: desperate plan almost guaranteed to fail
- 31: no sailor = no hope of navigating
- 32: exhausting all attempts at desertion
- 33: 3 step plan; 1] strengthen body
- 34: 2] strengthen their spirits
- 35: 3] demonstrated he believed the promise
- 36: calmness courageous
- 37: Luke might’ve done a headcount to see how much food was needed
- 38: tossing cargo over made ship higher
- 39: “St. Paul’s Bay” – NE coast of Malta
- 40: 3 more steps: 1] cast off 4 anchors; 2] move rudders; 3] hoisted sail for extra power
- 41: sand and rocks piled up
- 42: panic reigned again – soldiers panicked not sailors – wanted to kill
- 43: God intervened through Julius
- 44: P survivor of 3 shipwrecks might’ve given Julius this suggestion.
- 2nd headcount of water-logged people showed none were lost at sea!

Lessons:

1. God has used all sorts of people to accomplish His Will all throughout the history of the world – from the best of the best to the lowest of the low.
2. When God makes a promise, not one word of it will fail – 1 Kings 8:56.
3. Since we know God’s promises are true, we should learn the promises and use them to grow stronger in our faith.

Acts 28: Zealous Toward God Part 3 of 3

- 27 ends with Paul being shipwrecked on the island of Malta – a few weeks journey that took a few months.
- Ends the book looking at the final leg of Paul’s journey to Rome.
- 26-28 are grouped together in our study of the “ABCs of Acts” – Zealous Towards God

1. Adventures on an Island – Acts 28:1-10

- P not where he wants to be – Malta
- 1: Melita [KJV] = Malta [NASB]; 18mi long, 8mi wide; 58mi of Sicily; ‘refuge’ in Canaanite lang
- 2: extraordinary – not in the ordinary; kindness – Greek – philanthropy. ~50°F chilly
- 3: vipers only cling if they bite – skeptics; none there today, 3000 people/mi²
- 4: islanders somehow heard of P’s past
- 5: see Luke 10:19; Mark 16:17-18
- 6: swell up – Dr. Luke giving medical terms. Die instantly as swells; McGarvey: “Lystra reversed;” Satan’s last effort to stop P > Rome
- 7: Providence of God puts him at Roman appointed governor of Malta, Publius
- 8: Dr. Luke – Malta fever, 2/3 yrs., 1887 disc.: caused by microorganisms in goats milk
- 9: word of healing spread fast; cured – Greek – to treat medically; Luke – medicinally; Paul – miraculously [?]
- 10: many honors

2. Arrival at Rome – Acts 28:11-16

- Finally in Rome – fulfillment of God’s promise
- 11: 3 mo. – perhaps Nov., Dec., & Jan.; Port Valletta – Twin Brothers: Castor & Pollux, sons of Zeus – Gemini constellation

- 12: 60mi to Syracuse, capital of Sicily
- 13: Rhegium – toe of Italian boot; Puteoli – principal port between Bay of Naples and Rome; walk 75mi to Rome
- 14: stay to worship; Non Appian Way – most famous Roman Road
- 15: Rom. 16 – P mentions 26 friends in Rome; Appii forum/Market of Appius - 43mi from Rome; Three Taverns/Inns – 33mi from Rome
- 16: last of “we” passages in Acts; P lived under house arrest.
- Today: walk Non Appian Way, same gate

3. Awaiting Trial – Acts 28:17-31

- 17: called Jewish leaders – synagogue first [17:1-3]; denied all rumors about him
- 18: everyone found P innocent
- 19: distinction between his audience and accusers – the Jews (back in Judea)
- 20: prob. showed his chain as he spoke
- 17-20: 3 points: 1] committed no crimes against the Jews; 2] Romans had nothing against him; 3] had no charges to press against the Jews
- 21: surprising Jerusalem Jews didn’t send word to Rome – sufficient time to do so
- 22: heard nothing about P but had heard negative reports of what he espoused
- 23: another day for hearing; lodging different than v. 30
- 24: typical – some believed, some didn’t
- 25: argument arose; credit to insp. of Isa.; distanced himself from them – “your fathers”
- 26,27: Isa. 6:9-10 – danger of trifling with God’s Word; Jesus applied: Mt. 13:14,15; Mk. 4:12; Lk. 8:10 [soils]; John: 12:40
- 28: Gentiles more receptive than them
- 29: Gentiles made them depart; Jews could not force P out or stone him [13:50; 14:5,19]
- 30: why so much time pass? No clue; financial aid come from Philippi, Phil. 2:25, 4:10-18
- 31: openness – preaching candidly, clearly, and confidently
- While in prison, Paul wrote:
 - Eph: Christ & His Church
 - Phil: Paul’s love letter to the church at Philippi
 - Col: combat heresy by exalting Jesus

- Philemon: personal letter to a friend
- P refers to his imprisonment in each of these
- Old friends there: Luke, Timothy, John Mark, Aristarchus, Epaphroditus, Tychicus, Justus, Epaphras, Demas
- Abrupt ending – what happened before Caesar? Sequel? Purpose: tell how the Gospel reached & prospered in Rome

Lessons:

1. If we are faithful to God's commands, He ***will be*** faithful to us. He has demonstrated this in the Old and New Testament.
2. We should never be afraid to speak about the truth of the Gospel – even if our audience will not like to hear it! Everyone needs to hear the Gospel!
3. We need to make the most of every situation that we find ourselves in – Paul wrote some of his best writings in prison.

End of Acts Notes.

Also available:

- *402 Questions on Acts*
- *Reading through Romans* (complete book outline)
- *The Successes and Sins of King David* (complete outline of 2 Samuel)

A PowerPoint for the whole book (453 slides) and each individual chapter is available online,
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