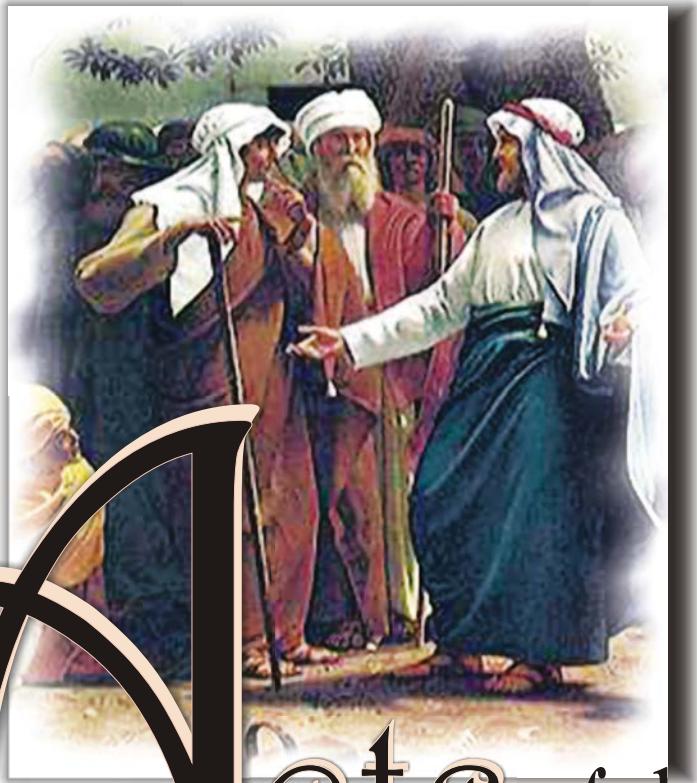


Study Guide



Acts of the apostles

Taught by C. W. "Abe" Lincoln

SUNSET
International Bible Institute



The Book of ACTS



INTRODUCTORY NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

Taught by
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Acts of the Apostles Study Guide

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DISCLAIMER

The textbooks you will be using in this course were selected because we consider them to be some of the best and well adapted to this course of study. The “*Commentary on Acts*” by: Dennis Gaertner and “*The Holy Spirit of God*” by: Richard Rogers each book contains a wealth of knowledge which will increase your understanding of the great book of “Acts”. Although written by Christian brothers, as with all books written by men, there may be some things with which you and I might not agree. The principle, “use what is good and discard what is not good” applies to all textbooks used with our courses. Please be wise enough to discard any and all teaching that is not biblical. Also included with this course for Level III students is the book written by Abe Lincoln entitled, “*Acts*”. This book is an edited transcript of the teaching on the Video course.

Instructions and Assignments for Level II Students (Non Transferrable)

Each lesson is built around the instruction on either the video tape, DVD or the audio tape. Listen to each lecture and follow along in the course Study Guide.

There is a **Self-Exam** at the end of each lesson. Preview each lesson by reading these questions first.

Tests: There will be only two tests to complete this course. The mid-term test is to be given over the first twelve (12) lessons, a final test will be given at the end of the study over the last twelve (12) lessons. The test packet will be sent only to those taking this course for credit. (**This will be 90% of your grade**)

Memory Work: You are asked to write the assigned verses from memory on your test in the presence of the Administrator. After you have completed the test, correct the memory work with a different colored pen. Or you may quote your memory verses to the administrator. The administrator is to keep track of the verses completed and report them to us for a grade. (**This will be 10% of your grade**)

Please be diligent in doing your work. All assignments must be completed to pass this course. You will have a total of nineteen (19) verses to commit to memory.

Due by Mid-term Test: (11 verses)

Acts 2:36-38; 5:29, 32; 6:7; 8:4, 12, 36-38.

Due by the Final Test: (8 verses)

Acts 10:34-35; 11:23; 16:5, 33; 17:11, 30; 20:28.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- ▶ Read the book of Acts in its entirety by the end of the course.
- ▶ All Self Exams in the Study Guide must be completed.
- ▶ All memory verses assigned must be completed, either written or quoted.
- ▶ Level II must obtain a 70% or better on each test to pass this course.
- ▶ **The above assignments must be completed on time to pass this course.**

Instructions and Assignments for Level III Students (Transferable to Resident School)

Each lesson is built around the instruction on either the video tape, DVD or the audio tape. Listen to each lecture and follow along in the course Study Guide.

Reading: Three books will be required reading: “*Acts*” by: Dennis Gaertner (College Press NIV Commentary), “*Commentary on Acts*” by: Abe Lincoln, and “*The Holy Spirit of God*” by: Richard Rogers. These books are supplied with the course and must be read in their entirety by the time the course is completed. You may use Richard’s and Abe’s books to help you with your paper on the Holy Spirit. (**Reading these books will be worth 10% of your total course grade.**)

Memory Verses: Memory work will be done on the honor system. You are asked to write your verses from memory, during the test period, in the presence of the administrator. **After you have completed the test and turned it in**, correct your memory work with a different colored pen. Or you may quote them to the administrator during the course and he will keep track of the verses completed and report them to us. Please be diligent in doing your memory work. All memory work **must be** completed to pass this course. You will have sixty-nine (69) Bible verses to memorize. (**10% of your total course grade**)

Due at with the Mid-term test: (39 verses)

Acts 2:14-16, 22-24, 32-33, 36-41; Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19; Acts 3:18, 24-26; 4:13, 19-20, 32; 5:29, 41-42; 6:7; 8:4, 12, 22, 32-33, 38; 10:34-35.

Due with the Final test: (30 verses)

Acts 10: 47-48; 11:17, 23; 13:48; 16:5, 28-34; 17:11, 24-31; 20:28-35.

Tests: There will be two major tests to complete for this course. The mid-term is to be done at the end of lesson twelve (12), the final will be at the end of the study, after lesson twenty-four (24). **All assignments must be finished by** the time of your final test. Each test must receive a 70% or above to pass this course. (**Your test scores will be worth 60% of your grade**)

Research Papers: You will be required to write two themes.

- 1) ***The Holy Spirit.*** Include in this paper: What/who is the Holy Spirit, the baptism, indwelling and empowering of/by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit’s relationship to the world and to Christians. (Should be 7 to 10 pages – double-spaced) (**Worth 10% of your total course grade**)
- 2) ***God’s providence,*** particularly as revealed in the last six chapters of Acts. (Five to ten pages) To be turned in with your last test. (**Worth 10% of your total course grade**)

You must complete all the “Self Exam” questions in your Study Guide.

Grading:

| | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Reading | 10% |
| Memory work | 10% |
| Research papers | 20% |
| Exams | 60% |
| TOTAL | 100% |

*C*ONTENTS

| | | |
|------------|--|----|
| LESSON 1: | INTRODUCTION & HISTORY OF ACTS | 1 |
| LESSON 2: | THE DAY OF PENTECOST | 5 |
| | (Acts 2:1-13) | |
| LESSON 3: | THE HOLY SPIRIT (I) | 10 |
| | (Acts 2:5-21; 10:1-48) | |
| LESSON 4: | THE HOLY SPIRIT (II) | 15 |
| | (Acts 2, 6, 8, 19; 1 Timothy 1) | |
| LESSON 5: | THE INDWELLING OF THE SPIRIT | 20 |
| | (Acts 2, 5; Romans 8:9-11; 1 Corinthians 3, 6) | |
| LESSON 6: | THE FIRST GOSPEL SERMON | 24 |
| | (Acts 2:22-41) | |
| LESSON 7: | PREACHING PRACTICED | 28 |
| | (Acts 2:42-47) | |
| LESSON 8: | HEALING AND PREACHING | 33 |
| | (Acts 3:1-26) | |
| LESSON 9: | PERSECUTION AND HARASSMENT | 39 |
| | (Acts 4:1-37) | |
| LESSON 10: | DISCIPLINE & PERSECUTION – GROWTH | 42 |
| | (Acts 5:1-42) | |
| LESSON 11: | TROUBLE FROM WITHOUT & WITHIN | 46 |
| | (Acts 5:17-40; 6:1-14) | |
| LESSON 12: | STEPHEN'S DEFENSE AND MARTYRDOM | 51 |
| | (Acts 6:8 – 8:4) | |



CONTENTS CONTINUED

| | | |
|------------|--|-----|
| LESSON 13: | THE CHURCH SPREADS TO SAMARIA | 55 |
| | (Acts 8:1-24) | |
| LESSON 14: | CONVERSIONS: SIMON & NOBLEMAN | 59 |
| | (Acts 8:14-40) | |
| LESSON 15: | SAUL OF TARSUS CONVERTED | 63 |
| | (Acts 9:1-9) | |
| LESSON 16: | PREACHING OF SAUL AND PETER | 68 |
| | (Acts 9:10-43) | |
| LESSON 17: | CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS | 74 |
| | (Acts 10:1-48) | |
| LESSON 18: | PETER'S DEFENSE, CHURCH IN ANTIOCH | 78 |
| | (Acts 11:1-30 – 12:1-25) | |
| LESSON 19: | THRUST TO THE GENTILE WORLD | 82 |
| | PAUL'S FIRST JOURNEY (Acts 13:1 – 14:18) | |
| LESSON 20: | GENTILE CONVERSIONS & JEWISH | 86 |
| | BINDING (Acts 14:19 – 15:34) | |
| LESSON 21: | THE GOSPEL SPREADS TO MACEDONIA | 90 |
| | (Acts 16:1 – 17:14) | |
| LESSON 22: | THE GOSPEL IN ATHENS, CORINTH | 95 |
| | AND EPHESUS (Acts 17:22 – 19:7) | |
| LESSON 23: | THE ONGOING MARCH OF THE GOSPEL | 100 |
| | (Acts 19:8 –21:40) | |
| LESSON 24: | GOD'S PROVIDENCE AND HIS PREACHER | 106 |
| | PAUL'S JOURNEY TO ROME (Acts 22 – 28) | |

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LESSON ONE

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY OF ACTS

INTRODUCTION:

In many ways the book of Acts is the most neglected book of the New Testament. It bridges a deep chasm between the last words of John and the letters to churches. Without this book we would not have examples of conversions and the recorded sermons of the apostles. This book is the divine guide in all matters pertaining to the establishment, growth, organization, worship and activities of the church of Christ. Without this book we would not have an account of Jesus' sending the Holy Spirit, the empowering that comes from the Spirit. We also will learn about the indwelling of the Spirit.

LESSON TEXT: Luke 1:1-3; Acts 1:1-26

LESSON AIM: To examine material which will help us to become familiar with the book of Acts.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Examine material which will reveal to us the writer, date, recipient and purpose of the book of Acts.
 2. Learn of the resurrected ministry of Jesus (1:3-8). When Jesus was raised He appeared to them for 40 days, giving many proofs of His resurrection. He spoke to them about the establishment and nature of His Kingdom (1:1-5). He renewed the promise of the baptizing of the Holy Spirit (1:5) and their empowering from the Spirit as well as their work as witnesses (1:8).
 3. Study the bodily ascension, witnessed by the apostles (1:9-11).
 4. Review the activities in Jerusalem before the day of Pentecost including the selection of Matthias as an apostle in the place of Judas (1:12-26).
-

INTRODUCTORY DISCOVERIES

A. The Writer of Acts

Luke and Acts have a common author (Luke 1:1-3; Acts 1:1-2).

1. External evidence. We have strong external evidence of Luke's writing this book.
 - a. The epistles to Diognetus (130 A.D.).
 - b. The anti-Marcionite prologue states that Luke was the writer.

- c. Such writers as Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen and Eusebius state that Luke is the author.
- 2. Internal evidence.
 - a. We know that Luke was a companion of Paul and a co-worker in the gospel. Colossians 4:10-14; Philemon 24.
 - b. The writer of Acts is referred to in the “we sections” of the book. (Acts 16:10-17; 20:5 – 21:18; 27:1 – 28:16).
 - c. In the stories of diseases, traits appear which declare both the interest and the language of a physician. Luke was a physician.

B. The Date the Book Was Written

It seems that Luke wrote this letter after the end of Paul’s two years of imprisonment (Acts 28:31). We put the date as 63 A.D. Evidence for this date:

- 1. Abrupt manner in which Acts ends show that it was written before Paul’s trial or death.
- 2. No hint of Nero’s persecution of 64 A.D.
- 3. There is no hint of the Jewish war or the destruction of Jerusalem of 70 A.D.
- 4. No discussion of the gnostic heresy of the later years.

C. The Recipient and Purpose of the Book

- 1. The recipient of the book of Acts.
 - a. Theophilus, which means “loved of God.”
 - b. The verses in Acts chapter 23:26; 24:3; 26:25 informs us that the word “excellent” describes a Roman official. Conclusion is that Theophilus was such an official of the government.
- 2. The purpose and design of the book.
 - a. Acts teaches us that Jesus is the long expected Messiah.
 - 1) Proved by prophecy.
 - 2) Proved by the resurrection.
 - b. Acts explains the promise of Jesus to “baptize with the Spirit.” One cannot understand the empowering and indwelling of the Spirit without studying Acts.
 - c. Acts presents to us important actions or deeds of the apostles, especially the deeds of Peter and Paul.
 - d. Acts teaches us about the Christian’s responsibility and privileges to the government. This would be of special interest to Theophilus.
 - e. Acts shows that the whole Jewish economy was fulfilled and superseded by the law of the Spirit on Pentecost.
 - f. Acts gives us examples of conversions and teaches that one comes into the family of God through a process known as conversion in which the new birth is experienced (John 3:3-5). The whole man, heart, life and state of man are changed.
 - g. Acts teaches us about the universal nature of Christianity.
 - 1) That all of the promises and blessings of the gospel are for all people (Acts 10:34, 35; 11:18).
 - 2) Every needed line of information pertaining to the work and worship of the church is given in this book.

THE PROMISE, ASCENSION AND NEW APOSTLE

A. Instruction From the Resurrected Christ (Acts 1:1-2)

1. Acts is a sequel to Luke's former book.
2. Theophilus was a real person, and from all indication a Roman official. Compare "Most excellent" in Luke 1:3 with Acts 23:26, 24:3, and 26:25.
3. The giving of instructions refers to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47).
4. The day of verse 2 refers to the Great Commission, the key to the book. **No great Commission, then: no preaching, no obeying, no Christians, no churches, no epistles, no heaven for Christians.**

B. The Resurrected Ministry of Forty Days (1:3-8)

Luke takes up where he left them in Luke 24:46-53.

1. Five characteristics of the appearances of Jesus. He "presented Himself alive." This He did on at least ten different occasions. Notice the characteristics of these appearances.
 - a. **Visible** (1 John 1:1-2). Jesus appeared alive to the eleven apostles, and to others, inhabiting the same body He lived in before He was crucified, only now it was a glorified body.
 - b. **Audible** – speaking (Acts 1:3). He ate with them, talked with them, meeting them at various times and places.
 - c. **Tangible** (Luke 24:39; John 20:26-29). He was touched and handled by those who knew Him.
 - d. **Sudden** – unexpectedly (Luke 24:13-31).
 - e. **Intermittent** (John 20:19-26). Jesus appeared at intervals to His apostles in a manner which could leave no doubt in their minds that He was alive again, risen from the dead.
2. The main theme of the Bible is **Christ and His Kingdom**. Since the Kingdom or Church is involved in redemption (Matthew 3:2; 4:17) this will be studied in Acts 2.
3. The promise of Jesus and the Father. The Holy Spirit to indwell and empower them to fulfill the work assigned them (1:5, 8).
4. The bodily ascension (1:9-11).
 - a. The New Testament connects Jesus' coronation with this ascension (Acts 2:33; Mark 16:19; Ephesians 1:20). A discussion of His Lordship will be studied in chapter 2.
 - b. The Ascension: While He was blessing them and they were beholding Him, He was taken up to heaven! (Luke 24:50-52). He was taken up and a cloud like a beautiful garment folded around Him, concealing Him from their sight.
 - c. Angelic Messengers: They appear suddenly. The tense of the verb means "Had taken a stand by them." The apostles did not see these servants until they were standing beside them.
 - d. Jesus will come the second time and will appear both visibly and bodily (Acts 1:11; Hebrews 9:28; Philippians 3:20; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9; 1 John 3:1-3).
5. The ten days from the ascension to Pentecost (Acts 1:12-26).
 - a. **Where they met:** in the "upper room."

- b. **Who assembled:** 120 persons – the apostles, disciples, and kinsmen of Jesus.
- c. **What they did:**
 - 1) They all joined together constantly in prayer. Notice the importance of seeking God's will.
 - 2) They selected Matthias as a successor to Judas.

THREE POINT OUTLINE OF ACTS

- A. The Origin, Progress and Dispersion of the Church in Jerusalem (1:1-8:4).
- B. The Spread of the Church in Judea and Adjacent Countries (8:5-12:24).
- C. The Spread of the Church to Rome (12:25-28:31)

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON ONE:

1. List the author, date and recipients of the Book of Acts.

Author: _____

Date: _____

Recipient: _____

2. There are at least seven (7) purposes given for the book of Acts. List five of these purposes.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

3. Give three (3) other places the term “most excellent” is used in Acts and explain the meaning of the term.

4. Give the five (5) characteristics of the appearances of Jesus after His resurrection.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

LESSON TWO

THE DAY OF PENTECOST (I)

INTRODUCTION:

In our second lesson, from Acts chapter 1 beginning in verse 15 following, we learn about the selection, as we said in the first lesson, of Matthias to be an apostle of Christ. The hundred and twenty came together. Peter stood up, he was the spokesman, and he made reference to what the Holy Spirit had foretold through the mouth of David concerning Judas (v. 16).

Now it's very important to observe that God in His attributes is a God who can foreknow the events in the future. I don't know a passage that says He has chosen to foreknow every event, but with regard to prophecy, God in His foreknowledge was able to see the choice that Judas would make in allowing Satan to dominate his life, to be overcome with covetousness and sin in his life. God can foreknow without forcing men like Judas to do what they did. We've got to understand and appreciate God's foreknowledge. We're the elect according to His foreknowledge, Peter said in 1 Peter 1. Yet, we were not forced to become disciples of our Lord. We had the choice. But God in His foreknowledge saw what choice men would make. Peter then told about what happened to Judas.

LESSON TEXT: Acts 2:1-13

LESSON AIM: To examine the nature and character of the coming of the Holy Spirit promised by Jesus and the Father.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn the meaning and time of the Day of Pentecost (2:1-3).
 2. Study the nature and character of the Holy Spirit.
 3. Learn about the event, i.e., the baptizing of the Holy Spirit (2:4).
 4. Study the empowering from the Holy Spirit which came upon the apostles (2:5-13).
-

THE SELECTION OF MATTHIAS TO REPLACE JUDAS – THE FALLEN ONE

A. The Reason Described By Peter

1. Someone to take Judas' place.
2. Judas – the fallen disciple.
 - a. He was given to worldly sorrow which leads to death.
 - b. He tried to return the blood money.
 - c. He hung himself.
3. Potter's field purchased with the money returned by Judas.

B. A New Apostle Chosen – Matthias

1. His qualifications:
 - a. Must have been with Jesus from the baptism of John.
 - 1) The Lord selected the apostles from John's disciples.
 - 2) That would teach that they had been baptized of John.
 - b. Must have been an eyewitness of the bodily resurrection of Jesus.
2. Two men meet the qualifications – Joseph and Matthias.
3. The Lord selected Matthias.
 - a. Through prayer of the disciples and casting of lots.
 - b. He was numbered with the eleven.

THE GREAT AND AMAZING BEGINNING

A. The Apostles Filled With the Spirit on Pentecost (2:1-4)

1. The Day of Pentecost (1).
 - a. The word means FIFTIETH (Leviticus 23:15-24; Exodus 23:16).
 - b. It occurred 50 days after the Passover Sabbath. (Seven weeks plus one day)
 - c. It would always occur on the first day of the week (Leviticus 23:11, 15-16).
2. Four names are given to this feast.
 - a. The Feast of Harvest (Exodus 23:16). It occurred during the wheat harvest.
 - b. The Feast of the First-fruits (Leviticus 23:17). They offered the first fruits of the harvest in a wave offering.
 - c. The Feast of Weeks (Exodus 34:22, Deuteronomy 16:10).
 - d. Pentecost – found only in the New Testament.
 - 1) Many consider this the greatest feast of the year.,
 - 2) It brought most of the people into Jerusalem.

B. The Nature of the Spirit

1. The Holy Spirit is God (possesses the attributes of deity).
 - a. He is ETERNAL (Hebrews 9:14).
 - b. He is OMNISCIENT (1 Corinthians 2:10).
 - c. He is CO-ETERNAL /EQUAL. He has the same nature and essence of God.
 - d. He is OMNIPRESENT (Psalm 139:7-10).
 - e. He PERFORMED MIRACLES (1 Corinthians 12:4-11). The Spirit was the source of these miraculous gifts.
2. The Holy Spirit is a Divine Person.
He possesses the attributes of personality (John 16:13-14). Nine times He is spoken of as a Person. He is life, thought, volition, action, speech, individuality, character and influence.
 - a. He speaks (I Timothy 4:1) and He empowered the apostles to speak (Acts 2).
 - b. He teaches and witnesses (John 14:26; 15:26).
 - c. He hears and guides (John 16:13; 2 Timothy 3:16). These are characteristics of a Divine Person, who possesses intelligence.
 - d. He can be grieved, resisted and blasphemed (Ephesians 4:30; Acts 7:31; Matthew 12:32). Only a personality can be treated in this manner. He is pictured as a divine being, living, speaking, acting, influencing, blessing, reconciling, transforming, and loving.

THE BAPTIZING WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

- A. A Prediction and Promise.** The Father and Jesus promised that the Spirit would come.

1. Predicted by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:7-12; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:15-16; John 1:22-33; Acts 1:4-5.)
 - a. His message – repent, for the kingdom is at hand.
 - b. The prediction – *He will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.*
 - 1) Jesus would be the administrator of it.
 - 2) The promise was made to all who were listening to John (Luke 3:16). *John answered and said to them all...,*

NOTE:

If we just had Acts chapter 1 as the only reference with regard to the baptizing with the Spirit, we might conclude that only the apostles were given this promise. But from Matthew's account, and especially Luke's account, we see that he was speaking to all of the people who were present. Some were impenitent, some were believers – obedient believers – who had been baptized of John and who were anticipating the coming of the Lord's kingdom.

2. The baptizing of the Spirit was not the following:
 - a. **Anything administered by man.** In Luke 3:13-17 and John 1:31-34 John the Baptist declares that Jesus would be the baptizer.
 - b. **Anything that took place before Pentecost** (Acts 1:4-5).
 - c. **The power to perform miracles.** In the Old Testament certain men were given this power as well as the apostles before Pentecost (Luke 10:17-20).
 - d. **Inspiration** (2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Timothy 3:16).
 - e. **Miraculous gifts** (1 Corinthians 12:4-11). Notice the Holy Spirit gave these gifts, while Jesus was to give or send the Spirit – the Power Giver. Jesus referred to the “promise given by the Father” (Luke 24:49). In Joel 2:28-29, Isaiah 44:3, and John 14-16, Jesus as God’s spokesman promised the Spirit. Jesus doesn’t say in Luke 24:49 that the Father’s promise was a “clothing with power.” In Acts 1:8 the coming of the Spirit was to result in the reception of power. Power came after the Spirit came, but there are clear passages which show that Jesus and the Father promised to send the Comforter and the Comforter then empowered or clothed the Apostles with spiritual or miraculous gifts. The miraculous element made the sending or pouring out of the Spirit (the action of Jesus) an indispensable sign of the exalted Christ – they knew that the Spirit had been given because they could see and hear miraculous signs.
 - f. **Their being filled with the Spirit.**
 - 1) This is seen from the fact that certain people were filled with the Spirit before Pentecost (Luke 1:15, 41, 67).
 - 2) This expression means to be influenced by the Spirit through the Word or to be influenced in a miraculous manner. The context determines this influence (Ephesians 5:18).

- B. The Power-Giver is Distinguished from the Power**

1. Jesus was to give or send the Spirit, the power-giver.
 - a. The promise given by the Father (Acts 1:4-5; Luke 24:49).
2. How Jesus referred to this event.
 - a. He called it the sending of the Spirit.

- b. It was to be a future event (John 7, 14, 15, 16).
- c. They were to receive the Spirit as obedient believers (John 7:37).
- 3. The Spirit could not be sent until after the Lord was glorified (John 7:37, *for the Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified.*)
- 4. John 14:26 – The Spirit would be sent by the Father in the name of Jesus unto the apostles and empower them with the gift of revelation.
- 5. John 15:26 – Jesus would be at the right hand side of the Father when He would send the Holy Spirit unto the apostles.
- 6. John 16:7-13 – Jesus would send the Holy Spirit.

C. The Nationalistic Concepts of the Apostles (Mark 10:35)

- 1. Their request: To sit on the right and left hand of Jesus in His kingdom.
 - a. Matthew 19:28 – Jesus had talked about the fact the apostles would sit with Him, ruling in the time of the regeneration.
 - b. The apostles thought that Jesus was going to be ruling upon the earth as a sovereign ruler.
- 2. The Lord's response: You will be ruling through the gospel, through the Word.
 - a. The Spirit will make this possible.
 - b. Jesus would be ruling and reigning from heaven, at the right hand side of God.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

- 1. The Baptizing with the Spirit was promised (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:15-16; Acts 1:4-5).
 - a. The baptizing with the Spirit was simply the promise of the outpouring of the Spirit by Jesus on the day of Pentecost.
 - b. The expressions “**poured forth**” and “**baptizing**” are figurative expressions which described the literal “**sending of the Spirit.**”
 - c. Baptism here is figurative and means a complete overwhelming of one . . . as the apostles with the Spirit.
- 2. The baptizing in the Spirit and the outpouring of the Spirit was the “**one time making available of the Spirit for all believers.**” Look at John 7:37-39; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-13. Also look at Acts 10:45.
 - a. **Not a literal immersion or out-pouring in Acts 2.** In other passages Jesus describes our drinking of living water and communicating with Christ in His Word as eating (John 4 and 6). The actual reality behind figures need have no likeness in appearance to the figure used to convey that reality. In John 14:26 and 16:13 we see and observe that *the Spirit was not given since Jesus had not been glorified.* That event took place on Pentecost.
 - b. **In Acts 2:1-4 both the power giver and the power came.**
 - 1) In Acts 2:38 Jesus sent or poured forth the Spirit and then the Spirit empowered the Apostles (2:4).
 - 2) Peter explains in Acts 2:17 that what Joel predicted had occurred (compare 2:33).
 - 3) The baptizing with the Spirit and the outpouring of the Spirit are but different ways to refer to the same event.
 - c. The expression “poured forth” means to pour forth all of whatever is being poured out (cf. John 2:15; Revelation 16:1-17; Acts 1:17-18, 33).
 - 1) In these passages an unlimited pouring of all the contents is in view.
 - 2) In Acts 2 all of the Spirit that was to be sent, given, or poured forth had been poured out for all men (Acts 2:17,33).
 - 3) In Acts 2:33 Peter says that Jesus “hath poured forth.” The Greek Aorist tense expresses action as a point completed in the past. On this

day – The Day of Pentecost – an event has taken place: Jesus and the Father had poured forth the Spirit.

- 4) In Acts 10:45 the words “poured forth” are perfect tense which indicates an action completed in the past but resulting in a continuous and perfect state of being. So the Spirit had on the day of Pentecost been poured out for the Gentiles (Acts 2:17,39) and was thus available for the obedient Gentiles.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWO:

1. The apostleship of Judas was given to another. What was his name and qualifications?

His Name: _____

His Qualifications: 1) _____
2) _____

2. Give the meaning of the word PENTECOST and three other designations by which it was known.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

3. What day of the week did the Day of Pentecost always occur? List two Scripture references which prove this.

4. List five things which would indicate the Holy Spirit is God by nature.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____

5. List four things which show the Holy Spirit has the attributes of personality.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

6. List six things which the “baptizing” with the Holy Spirit was not.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____

LESSON THREE

THE HOLY SPIRIT (I)

INTRODUCTION:

We have seen thus far in our study John the Baptist's statement that Jesus would be the administrator of the baptizing with the Spirit. The Lord would make it possible and Joel said in Acts 2 verse 17 and following that in the last days God would pour forth of His Spirit. Here is the promise that the future pouring forth of the Spirit would occur in the last days. And Peter said, this is that which Joel had predicted and prophesied. This locates the last days as the time in which Peter spoke.

We have seen thus far in our study that the baptizing with the Spirit was simply the expression describing the outpouring of the Spirit by Jesus on the day of Pentecost. And that the expressions, "poured forth" and "baptizing" are figurative expressions used to describe the actual or literal sending of the Spirit by Jesus on the day of Pentecost.

Before we look at the empowering gifts from the Spirit here in Acts 2:1-4, let's go toward the conclusion of the sermon. In verse 33 Peter is getting toward the conclusion of this great Messianic sermon which convicted 3,000 people of their unbelief and unrighteousness, and he said, as recorded in verse 32, "*Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.*"

LESSON TEXT: Acts 2:5-21, 33; 10:1-48

LESSON AIM: To see the meaning and significance of the "sending" or "outpouring" of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn that the Holy Spirit was given one time for all time on the Day of Pentecost on which the church was established.
 2. Discover the effect of the Spirit's coming on the crowd.
-

THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVEN

A. The Promised Spirit Poured Forth As Promised (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Acts 1:4-5)

The baptizing of the Spirit was simply the promise or the outpouring of the Spirit by Jesus on the day of Pentecost.

1. The expression "poured forth" means to pour forth all of whatever is being

poured out, “a complete act in one point of time in the past” (Cp. John 2:15; Revelation 16:1-17; Acts 1:17-18, 33).

- a. In these passages an unlimited pouring of all the contents is in view.
- b. In Acts 2 all of the Spirit that was to be sent, given, or poured forth had been poured out for all men (Acts 2:17,33).
- 2. In Acts 2:33 Peter says that Jesus hath poured forth.
 - a. The Greek Aorist tense expresses action as a point completed in the past.
 - b. On this day — The Day of Pentecost — an event has taken place: Jesus and the Father had poured forth the Spirit.

B. The Promised Spirit is Intended for All People (Acts 10)

- 1. The traits and characteristics of Cornelius.
 - a. A God-fearing man.
 - b. A sinner – a lost man.
- 2. Peter, Cornelius and the Holy Spirit. “*While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message*” (Acts 10:44).
- 3. The astonishment of the Jewish brethren (Acts 10:45). “. . .that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles.”
 - a. The words “poured forth” are perfect tense which indicates an action completed in the past but resulting in a continuous and perfect state of being.
 - 1) So the Spirit had on the day of Pentecost been poured out for the Gentile (Acts 2:17,39).
 - 2) Was thus available for the obedient Gentiles.
- 4. The Spirit came upon Cornelius to empower him with some miraculous gift. “*As I began to speak . . . the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as he did upon us at the beginning.*”
 - a. “Beginning” refers back to Pentecost where the Spirit directly empowered the apostles.
 - b. The Holy Spirit directly, without the laying on of hands, empowered Cornelius with the gift of tongues.
 - c. The purpose: To convince Jew and Gentile that God was going to save the Gentiles just like the Jews.
- 5. Peter’s understanding of the events.
 - a. That when the Holy Spirit was sent by Jesus on the day of Pentecost, it was sent one-time for all-time.
 - b. That it was for all mankind.
 - c. That the sending of the Spirit was an event that took place on the day of Pentecost.
- 6. The act of “being filled” with the Spirit or the Spirit “falling upon” someone means to be influenced by the Spirit through the Word or to be influenced in a miraculous manner. The context determines this influence.
 - a. The effect of the Spirit’s “falling” on them.
 - b. Speaking with other tongues – witnessed by the men who accompanied Peter.
 - c. This is seen from the fact that certain people were filled with the Spirit before Pentecost (Luke 1:15, 41, 67).

NOTE: What we have learned about the out pouring of the Holy Spirit.

1. The sending of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost was one time for all time.
2. The sending of the Spirit was for all flesh.
3. The Spirit may empower Cornelius if it were His will to do so.
4. This shows that the sending of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost was a one time event.
5. It was the promise or the outpouring of the Spirit by Jesus.
6. The terms “poured forth” and “baptizing” are figurative expressions which are used in the New Testament to describe the literal sending of the Spirit.

THE EFFECT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'S POWER ON THE MULTITUDES

A. The Apostles Empowered by the Holy Spirit to Speak in Tongues

1. The apostles “filled” with the Spirit.
2. Means to be controlled and influenced by the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18-19).

B. They Came Together to Where the Apostles Were

1. As a result of the noise (vs. 5-6).
2. Godfearing Jews from every nation of the world.

C. The Effect on Them (vs. 6-7)

1. Bewilderment because they (each one of them) began to hear the apostles speak in his own language (dialect).
2. Utterly amazed because these 12 men were all Galileans (v. 7).
3. The countries represented (vs. 9-11):
 - a. Parthians, Medes, Elamites.
 - b. Residents of Mesopotamia, Judaea, Cappadocia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt.
 - c. Even some proselytes, people from the district of Rome.

D. Their Question (v. 8)

“How is it that each of us hears them in his own native language?”

1. The gift of tongues meant the ability to speak in a foreign language.
2. The Holy Spirit did not will to give such miraculous gifts beyond the apostolic day and age.

E. The Accusation

“They are filled with new wine” (vs. 12-13). They were accusing them of being drunk on grape juice (*sweet wine*). See 1 Corinthians 14:2.

1. The Apostles’ response: *“Men of Judaea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words. For these men are not drunk as some of you suppose for it is only the third hour of the day.”*
2. The explanation by Peter. “This is that” spoken of by the prophet Joel. See Joel 2:28-32 and Isaiah Chapters 10 and 13.
3. The “Day of the Lord” foretold by Joel was the judgment poured out upon Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

- a. Warning to the people of the consequences of their unbelief.
- b. God's judgment, the Day of the Lord would come upon them.

NOTE:

(Hebrews 2:1) "*We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.*"

(Hebrews 2:2) "*For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment,*"

(Hebrews 2:3) "*how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.*"

(Hebrews 2:4) "*God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.*"

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON THREE:

1. Explain what is meant by the phrase “poured forth.”

2. Explain what is meant by the “baptizing of the Spirit.”

3. The act of “being filled” with the Spirit or the Spirit “falling upon” someone means what?

4. The pouring forth of the Spirit meant that how much of the Spirit was given?

5. For whom was the promise of the Holy Spirit or the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit meant? Prove your answer with Scripture and reasoning from Acts 10.

6. Give three things which Peter understood concerning the events which took place at the house of Cornelius.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

7. What was Peter’s explanation concerning the outpouring and empowering of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost? To what prophet did he refer?

8. To what does the “Day of the Lord” refer.

9. What was the gift of tongues given to the apostles on Pentecost?

LESSON FOUR

THE HOLY SPIRIT (2)

INTRODUCTION:

Jt's a delight to welcome you to a continuation of our study. This is our fourth study from the book of Acts. Thus far in our study, we have seen that the Holy Spirit was sent by Jesus on the day of Pentecost. The Spirit was poured forth from Heaven's viewpoint, a figurative expression that is used to describe the actual, literal sending of the Spirit by Jesus on the beginning day, the day of Pentecost. We have seen that it was the will of the Holy Spirit, 1 Corinthians 12:11 and Hebrews 2:4, to give miraculous gifts according to His own will.

We have seen that the Spirit conferred gifts directly upon the apostles, Acts 2, and upon Cornelius and his household with regard to the gift of tongues (Acts 10:44 and 45). And now we're going to see that the Holy Spirit willed to give gifts to people other than the apostles through the laying on of the apostles' hands. This will become a pattern as we'll see in our study from Acts 6, Acts 8, Acts chapter 19 and one reference in 2 Timothy chapter 1.

LESSON TEXT: Acts 2, 6, 8, 19 & 2 Timothy 1

LESSON AIM: To see that the Holy Spirit willed to give gifts to believers other than the apostles through the laying on of the apostles' hands.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn that at the beginning, only the apostles were empowered by the Holy Spirit to work miracles, and that directly.
 2. Study several Scriptures which teach that the Holy Spirit imparted miraculous power to others through the laying on of the hands of the apostles.
-

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND MIRACULOUS GIFTS

A. Miracles, at First, Were Limited to the Apostles

1. The apostles and miraculous power. It was the will of the Spirit to give miraculous gifts unto the apostles only until we get to Acts 6. How do we know this?
 - a. Acts chapter 2, verse one following, it says they were all together in one place. That pronoun "they" takes us back to the noun "apostles" found in the last verse of Acts chapter 1.
 - b. Peter is standing up here with the eleven other apostles (Acts 2:14). Notice only the apostles. Notice verse 43 of Acts chapter 2. Everyone

kept feeling a sense of awe, Luke tells us, and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.

- c. In Acts chapter 3 we have a record of the 40-year-old, a cripple, who was born in that condition who was immediately and completely healed by the miraculous gift of the Spirit through Peter and John, two apostles.
- d. In Acts 5:12, “*. . . and at the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people and they were all of one accord in Solomon’s portico or porch . . .*”
- e. And then further in Acts chapter 5 we read that the people who were sick or afflicted from the cities outside Jerusalem were brought into the city and they were all being healed, by the apostles (v. 16).
- 2. The apostles were empowered directly by the Holy Spirit, apart from any human agent.

B. Seven Deacons and Miraculous Power (Acts 6:1-10)

- 1. Seven men selected by the congregation (vs. 1-2). Their qualifications:
 - a. They were to be men of good reputation.
 - b. Full of the Spirit.
 - 1) They are already filled or controlled by the Holy Spirit’s message.
 - 2) They obviously have the fruit of the Spirit as a part of their lives, a part of their character and personality.
 - 3) Read Galatians 5:22 which shows us that the Holy Spirit through His message produces the kind of fruit listed in Galatians 5:23 and 24.
 - c. Full of wisdom. They had the ability to accomplish the work of the Lord, a certain amount of skill.
- 2. The men selected: Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicholas the proselyte from Antioch. Notice a Gentile believer who had become a proselyte, who had been circumcised, now a disciple from Antioch. He’s one of the deacons.
- 3. Their empowering.
 - a. They prayed for them.
 - b. They laid their hands on them. Now notice what happened through prayer and the laying on of the apostles’ hands.
- 4. The Holy Spirit willed to give gifts to these seven servants of the church.
 - a. Stephen is said to be “full of grace and power” after the apostles laid their hands on him.
 - b. Philip performed miracles in Samaria – after the apostles laid hands on him (Acts 8).

C. The Case of the Samaritans

The Holy Spirit empowers Christians in Samaria through laying on of the hands of the apostles (8:14ff).

- 1. Peter and John, two apostles, are sent to Samaria.
 - a. They pray for them in order that they might receive the Holy Spirit.
 - b. For the Holy Spirit had not yet “fallen” upon any of them.
- 2. When the Holy Spirit “fell” upon people or “came” upon people, it meant to empower them with a miraculous gift or gifts from the Spirit, it doesn’t have reference to the indwelling.
- 3. And Philip, although empowered by the Holy Spirit through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, could not lay his hands upon the Samaritan saints in

- order that they would receive gifts from the Spirit.
4. Two apostles had to come. The Holy Spirit was working now to empower people through the apostles.
 5. Simon's request for power (v. 13).
 - a. He was overcome with temptation.
 - b. He thought the gifts of the Spirit were determined by the apostles.
 6. Peter's response to Simon's request.
 - a. The Holy Spirit is the one who wills to give gifts.
 - b. Repent and pray for forgiveness.

NOTE: This teaches us that after we're baptized into Christ and we become a son and daughter of God in that act of faith, that we have access to throne room privileges any hour of the day or night. And we can beseech God to be merciful to us and give grace and forgive us. We confess our sins and pray for forgiveness only if we are in a right relationship with God. So Simon believed genuinely and he was baptized into Christ. He was not told to start all over again to become a believer. He was told to repent and pray. That proves then that his faith that led him to be baptized into Christ was a genuine faith back in Acts 8:13.

D. The Case of Cornelius (Acts 10)

1. Cornelius received the gift of tongues directly, without the laying on of hands.
2. Peter and his Jewish brethren heard them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Peter concluded that Cornelius had been empowered just as the apostles had on Pentecost.
3. Baptism commanded by Peter. Cornelius is not an exception in any way with regard to gospel obedience.
4. Some exceptional things that took place in Acts 10.
 - a. An angel sent to Cornelius.
 - b. The Holy Spirit empowered him.
5. Cornelius received the Spirit to empower him with the gift of tongues before he was baptized into Christ.
6. At the point of baptism he received the Holy Spirit as a gift to indwell him.
 - a. Before he was baptized he received a gift from the Spirit, the gift of tongues.
 - b. When he was baptized he received the Holy Spirit as an earnest and seal and as a proof of one's sonship.

E. The Case of The Disciples in Ephesus (Acts 19)

1. Paul's question: "*Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?*"
2. Their answer: "*No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.*"
3. Paul's next question: "*Into what then were you baptized?*"
4. Their answer: "*Into John's baptism.*"
5. Paul's explanation.
 - a. John baptized with the baptism of repentance telling the people to believe in Him who was coming after him, that is – in Jesus.
 - b. John's ministry prepared people for the coming of Jesus.
 - c. He taught people to repent. They came confessing their sins and they were baptized according to Mark chapter 1 for the remission of sins.
 - d. They were being baptized by faith looking unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- e. Their repentance and baptism were an expression of their faith in Jesus who was to come and become their atoning sacrifice, their sin barrier, on the cross.
 - f. From Pentecost on anyone who was baptized looked back to the sacrifice that Jesus had made rather than looking forward as the disciples of John were told to look forward to the coming of the Lord.
 - g. Paul explained to them the purpose of John's baptism and that it lasted only until the cross.
 - h. Beginning on the beginning day when the Holy Spirit was promised and given, people were baptized in the name of Christ on the basis of their faith in Jesus, the sacrifice already having been made on the cross, not something yet to be done in the future.
6. Their response to Paul's' explanation: "*And when they heard this they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.*"

SUMMARY:

What have we seen thus far with regard to the Holy Spirit? If the Holy Spirit fell upon or came upon people, that meant the Holy Spirit gave miraculous gifts according to His will. The Holy Spirit came on them and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying. These are two of the miraculous gifts that Paul lists in his list of miraculous gifts in 1 Corinthians 12, verses 4 - 11.

What have we seen now from Acts 6, Acts chapter 8, Acts chapter 19? That the Holy Spirit gave gifts according to His own will through the laying on of the apostles' hands. Now there is one other reference that we might observe and that will conclude our study of how people receive the Holy Spirit to empower them through the laying on of the apostles' hands.

In 2 Timothy, chapter 1, Paul reminds his son in the faith, Timothy, about an event that had taken place when the presbyters, or the elders, had laid their hands upon the young evangelist Timothy. In 2 Timothy 1:6, here is what Paul says, "*and for this reason, I remind you, Timothy, to kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.*" We don't know what gift the Holy Spirit willed to give this young evangelist Timothy. We just know that he received a gift from the Spirit through the laying on of Paul's hands. But this happened at the time that the Eldership laid their hands upon Timothy. In 1 Timothy 4, verse 14, Paul said: "*...do not neglect the Spiritual gift within you which was bestowed upon you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of the hands by the presbytery.*" And of course that has reference to the elders. And so if you can picture in your mind the event that obviously took place as recorded in Acts chapter 16, they came together and the elders laid their hands upon Timothy the young man and Paul laid his hands upon him and it was through the laying on of Paul's hands that the Holy Spirit willed to give Timothy a miraculous gift.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FOUR:

1. Who were the only ones empowered by the Holy Spirit to perform miracles through the first five chapters of Acts? Prove this with Scripture and reasoning.

2. How were the above men empowered by the Holy Spirit?

3. List four (4) cases where the Holy Spirit did not empower someone directly.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

4. Explain how the empowering was accomplished in the above four cases.

5. In what way was the empowering of Cornelius like that of the apostles on Pentecost?

6. Please explain how the men selected in Acts 6 could be “full of the Spirit” and yet not be miraculously empowered by the Spirit.

7. When did the disciples in Acts 19 receive the Spirit to indwell them? _____

When did they receive the Spirit to empower them? _____

LESSON FIVE

THE INDWELLING OF THE SPIRIT

INTRODUCTION:

 e resume our study today from the marvelous book of Acts. And as you have observed thus far, we are looking topically at the Holy Spirit as a divine person of the Godhead. We talked a little bit about the nature of God as seen in the Holy Spirit of God. And we have studied about the sending by Jesus of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, a one time event which took place on that day when Jesus poured forth the Holy Spirit of God on all flesh.

After having seen that the baptizing with the Spirit was simply the promise of Jesus to send the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, we have been studying recently how people received the Holy Spirit to empower them. We've seen thus far that there were two ways by which people in the first century received the Holy Spirit to empower them with miraculous gifts. And that when the Spirit came upon them or fell upon them, you remember from our study of those passages of Scripture, those expressions had reference to the empowering, miraculous empowering, of the Holy Spirit of God.

We want to study now how people, all Christians, receive the Holy Spirit to indwell them.

LESSON TEXT: All the Scripture references in your notes and in Richard Rogers' book *The Holy Spirit of God*.

LESSON AIM: To consider the fact of the Holy Spirit's indwelling each Christian and what then the Spirit becomes to each obedient believer.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn several passages which clearly state the fact of the indwelling Spirit for each obedient believer.
 2. See that the church is also the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit.
 3. Discover that the Holy Spirit becomes at least four things to those whom He indwells.
 4. To study briefly the enabling of the apostles on Pentecost by the Holy Spirit to speak in other languages.
-

THE FACT OF THE INDWELLING SPIRIT

A. The Initial Promise – in the Gospels (Acts 2:38)

1. To receive the Holy Spirit as a gift meant to receive the Holy Spirit to indwell them as a gift. (See John 14, 15, 16)
2. Only those who were saved believers would receive the indwelling Spirit as a gift.

- a. The Holy Spirit does not indwell a Christian separate and apart from the Word of God.
- b. Only those who receive the Word of God are promised the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32).

NOTE: The Spirit actually and really indwells us in conjunction with the indwelling of the Spirit's message in our heart and life. Only those who are saved believers will receive, at that point, the promised gift of the Holy Spirit

B. The Recipients – The Spirit Given to Indwell Obedient Believers (Acts 5:32)

C. The Nature of the Indwelling Spirit (Romans 8:9-11)

- 1. The motivation of Christians.
 - a. Not by the desires and the will of the flesh.
 - b. By and in the Holy Spirit.
- 2. The significance of the indwelling Spirit.
 - a. Not to have the indwelling Spirit means that a person doesn't belong to God.
 - b. To have the indwelling Spirit means resurrection from the dead by that Spirit (v. 11).

NOTE: We are taught in this passage of Scripture that the Spirit in conjunction with the Spirit's message, the Word of God, indwells the child of God.

D. The Spirit Indwells the Church (1 Corinthians 3:16)

The church is the temple of God and the Spirit of God dwells in the church (v. 16).

E. The Spirit Indwells the Individual (1 Corinthians 6:15-20)

- 1. Paul is pleading with God's people not to allow immorality, the sin of fornication, to come into their life.
- 2. Such sin is against God, against one's own body, and against others as well.
- 3. The body is not for sin but for the Lord.
- 4. The body is a temple and a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit (v. 19).

NOTE: The Spirit through the apostle Paul could not have made it any clearer than the way it's expressed here in these words. That the Holy Spirit indwells our spirit which of course is in our body and so our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in us, which we have from God.

- 5. 2 Timothy 1:13-14 – “*Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who LIVES IN US.*”

THE SPIRIT'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHRISTIAN. To Indwell God's People:

A. As A Seal (Ephesians 1:13; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 4:30)

- 1. The purpose of a seal was to make an imprint on a document.
- 2. A seal makes something authentic, genuine.
- 3. Sometimes denotes ownership and security.

NOTE: When we respond to the gospel of Christ by faith, when we trust in the perfect sacrifice of our Lord, and demonstrate our trust and confidence in the Lord's sacrifice by an obedient faith, by acknowledging our Lord, repenting, confessing Jesus, and being immersed into His death, at that point the Holy Spirit is given unto us as a seal.

This is for God's benefit as well as ours. He can look out over the world and see those who have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of God. The Lord can say, those people are my genuine and authentic sons and daughters. Oh how important it is to appreciate what the Holy Spirit has become to us as a seal. When the president of our country speaks there is always, on the podium where he is speaking, the presidential seal. That seal guarantees and authenticates the fact that he is the only one that can use that seal as the head of our state. And so this is very important for us. It reassures us that we are the true sons and daughters of God.

B. As Our Pledge or Earnest (Ephesians 1:14; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 5:5)

1. God's Pledge to us that one day we will be full recipients of all His glory.
(Cf. Romans 8:23; Philippians 3:20-21)
2. Assurance that we are going to get a glorified body.

C. As Proof of Sonship (Galatians 4:3-7)

"Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out ABBA, Father."

D. As an Encouragement to Glorify God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

REVIEW:

1. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2 & 10).
2. Only the people in the apostolic day and age were able to receive the Holy Spirit to empower them with miraculous gifts (Acts 6, 8 & 19).
3. Every Christian, everyone who becomes a saved disciple, has the promise of the indwelling of the Spirit as a seal, as an earnest, as proof of his sonship and also as an encouragement to glorify God in his body.

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ENABLING

Peter explained the coming and empowering of the Holy Spirit and warns of Judgment (2:14-21).

A. Explanation of the Phenomenon

The gift of tongues (Acts 2:4-8) confirmed Peter's claim that Joel's prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh was fulfilled (2:14-21). THIS IS THAT!

1. The word "language" here means "dialect."
2. The proof was in their amazement – "... are not all these who are speaking Galileans . . ."
3. The design and purpose of tongues was **for a sign to the unbeliever**.
4. To speak in a tongue meant to speak in a foreign language.
 - a. It included even the various dialects.
 - b. It was not to speak some ecstatic utterance.

B. Speaking in Tongues Was Toward God Not Men (1 Corinthians 14:1-2)

1. Peter spoke to the multitudes in the Aramaic language.
2. In the temple area they spoke in the Hebrew dialect (Acts 21).

C. The Destruction of Jerusalem Foretold (2:19-21; Malachi 3:1-4:5)

1. There are many Old Testament references in which “fire” is used symbolically of judgment upon wicked nations:
 - a. Isaiah 10:15-19: Judgment of God against Assyria.
 - b. Isaiah 13:6-17: Judgment and punishment of God upon Babylon.
 - c. Isaiah 30:27-31: Destruction of Assyria by God.
 - d. Isaiah 33:11-12: *“You conceive chaff, you give birth to straw; your breath is a fire that consumes you.”*
2. Jesus foretold the destruction of Jerusalem in Matthew 24.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FIVE:

1. List five Scriptures and a quotation from each which clearly states the fact of the indwelling Spirit in the individual and the church..

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

2. List four things the Spirit becomes to us with the Scriptures which states this.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

3. Define what is meant by “speaking in tongues” and the design and purpose of this gift from the Spirit.

4. “Speaking in tongues was _____ God _____ men.”
Give a Scripture reference which proves the above statement _____

LESSON SIX

THE FIRST GOSPEL SERMON

INTRODUCTION:

 y friends I wish that we had the time to go back to the passages that I've referred to in Isaiah, chapter 13 verse 6 following and chapter 10 verse 16 following and other places in the book of Isaiah, chapter 26, chapter 30 verse 27, even chapter 33 which helps us understand what the Day of the Lord meant from Old Testament prophecy. But our Lord during His ministry said that He would give signs that would come prior to the destruction of Jerusalem and the sign would be when you see the army surrounding the city, Luke chapter 21. You need to read Mark 13, Luke 21 and Matthew 24, keeping in mind what Jesus said in Matthew 23:37-39 concerning the future of the beloved city. He said that it will be in this generation when this Day of the Lord of judgment will come upon the wicked nation. So those who respected what Jesus taught concerning the sign and the time element would flee the city of Jerusalem. And this sermon here that we are studying in Acts 2 was being preached in Jerusalem, the condemned city. Those who respected what Jesus taught and obeyed Him and fled the city would be saved. Now we know that in other passages to call upon the name of the Lord, like Romans 10 and Acts chapter 22, means to call upon the Lord to save us by faith at the point of being immersed into the death of Christ. But here from this context, the deliverance and the day of salvation from the Day of the Lord had reference to the judgment of a wicked nation.

And now after giving adequate attention to why the miracle of the languages had occurred, Peter moves to the central theme of his message--the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Peter placed blame for the crucifixion of Jesus on his audience, but argued that God counteracted the deed with the raising of Jesus from death. This balance is seen in later sermons in Acts (see 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:39-40; 13:28-30).

LESSON TEXT: Acts 2:22-41

LESSON AIM: To analyze this sermon and to learn about apostolic preaching and how to reproduce it today.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn about apostolic preaching and how to reproduce it today.
 2. Investigate the factors in the establishment of the New Testament church.
 3. Discover that the law of pardon and the gift of the Holy Spirit are inseparably related.
 4. See that the natural outflow of salvation is to glorify God in the Church.
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THE FIRST GOSPEL SERMON

Know the content, aim and results of the first gospel sermon.

A. Christ the Fulfillment of Messiah Prophecy (2:22-36)

1. **The aim:** Jesus of Nazareth crucified, raised and exalted (vs. 22-24, 33).
2. **Jesus accredited by God** (vs.22-23).
 - a. *His life and miracles* (v. 22).
 - 1) A man attested to you by God – He had the approval of God.
 - 2) By miracles He worked. (See John 20:30-31; John 3:1-2)
 - 3) God performed them through Jesus in their midst.
 - b. *The foreknowledge of God* (v. 23).
 - 1) According to the predetermined plan and foreknowledge.
 - 2) God can foreknow events without forcing men to do what they choose to do.
3. Proof that Jesus was raised from the dead.
 - a. ***The testimony of the prophet David*** (vs. 25-31). “*David’s testimony*” (Psalms 16:8-11, II Samuel 7:11-14) could not have applied to himself but to Jesus and His Resurrection.
 - 1) David died and his body was buried.
 - 2) David’s tomb was still there with his body still in it – evidence he had not been raised.
 - 3) Jesus had perfect conviction and confidence that His body would be raised again on the third day.
 - 4) Jesus’ hope: “*... thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades.*”
 - b. ***The Apostles’ testimony*** (v. 32). Here are twelve apostles, twelve confident, reliable, trustworthy men. (See 1 Corinthians 15).
 - a. No one in the first century was able to gainsay or to speak against and to prove that the apostles were false or lying witnesses.
 - b. The Sanhedrin threatened and beat them and yet they could not be kept from witnessing to the resurrection of Christ.
 - c. ***The testimony of the Holy Spirit*** (vs. 33).

The Spirit which empowered the apostles was sent from heaven by Jesus who had been raised from the dead and was seated by the right hand of God. “The glorified Jesus is responsible for what you have seen and heard this day,” says Peter, “and what you’ve seen and heard is proof that He is glorified.”
 - d. ***The unarguable conclusion: “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”***

Conclusion (vs. 34-36). Barnes quoted someone, “Convinced by the prophecies, by our testimony, and by the remarkable scenes exhibited on the day of Pentecost, let all be convinced that the true Messiah has come and has been exalted to heaven.”

B. Their Response to the Sermon (v. 37)

The Jews’ response to the sermon – conviction of sin. The verb “pierced” means “to pierce, to sting, to stun, to smite.” 1) Of their sin of unbelief, 2) their sin of unrighteousness, and, 3) of God’s judgment that will come upon them because of this.

1. They had understood, they were smitten in their conscience. “*... they were pierced to the heart.*”
2. They are convicted of the terrible nature of their sin.
3. Their question: “*Men and brethren what shall we do?*”

C. Peter's Response to Their Question (2:37-41)

They want to know what to do to avoid the wrath of God upon them.

1. The question: What must we do to be saved?
 2. The answer: (2:38) "*Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.*"
- a. **Repent** – “to renovate your thinking, your mind.”
 - b. **Be baptized:**
 - 1) “In” the name of Christ means on the “basis of” Jesus Christ.
 - 2) Purpose: for the remission of sins. The Greek word “*eis*” (for) is used 1700 times in the New Testament and always means “with a view toward.” It never looks back. (See Matthew 26:28; Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3-6).
 - 3) Same expression when Jesus instituted the Lord’s supper (Matthew 26:28). *“This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”*

NOTE: For whatever purpose Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice on the cross, that’s the design and purpose of our repenting and being immersed into the death of Christ.

- 4) “*EIS*” could never mean “because of” it means “with a view to or unto.”

NOTE: The very common use of *eis* in the New Testament is “for the purpose of, in order to.” In Matthew 26:28 where this exact phrase appears, Jesus says His blood is “poured out” for (*eis*) the forgiveness of sins. It would be absurd to argue that the phrase means “because of” and that Jesus’ blood was poured out because sins had already been forgiven.

c. Receive the indwelling of the Spirit

3. The promise (vs. 39-41). “*The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.*”
- a. Forgiveness of sins.
 - b. The indwelling of the Spirit.

CONSIDER:

Peter’s response to the question asked by the multitude presents the very core of the Gospel, the kernel of the Good News. Something can be done about sin and guilt, even guilt as serious as the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Two imperatives are given, “repent” and “be baptized.”

1. “Repentance” – carries the idea of turning from sin to God. It incorporates a change of heart about unrighteousness and a desire to be reoriented toward the will of God.
2. “Baptism” – Peter’s response makes both of these actions equally necessary. He said “repent AND be baptized” – not “repent OR be baptized.”

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SIX:

1. List two evidences presented by Peter that Jesus was the Messiah.

1) _____
2) _____

2. List the three proofs Peter presents that this Jesus had been raised from the dead.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

3. In what way did the multitude respond to the sermon by Peter?

4. What instruction did Peter give them as to how to be saved?

5. Define the following words:

“Repent” _____
“In the name of” _____
The Greek word “eis” _____

6. Give a biblical illustration of what “eis” means other than in Acts 2:38.

7. What two great blessings/promises are offered in Acts 2:38?

1) _____
2) _____

LESSON SEVEN

PREACHING PRACTICED

INTRODUCTION:

Jn our study thus far, we've seen how the Lord builds His church in the city of Jerusalem. It is very important to understand how Christ built His church in the first century. We will take some time later on when we get to Acts chapter 8 to remind ourselves of how the Lord built the church through the preaching of the gospel of Christ.

You remember back in Matthew chapter 16:18 the promise that Jesus made to Peter. He said Peter through what you will preach, mainly that I am the Christ, the Son of the living God, this will be the foundation of the church, on this the church will be built. Upon this rock I will build my church and I'll give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. We have just seen how the Lord used Peter as he used the keys to the kingdom of heaven to tell people what to do in response to the cross in order to be saved. And when they responded to that, those who received his word were immersed, and there were added that day about 3,000 souls. The Lord built His church through the apostle Peter and the other apostles as they preached Jesus and Him crucified. And they have now responded to the word of the cross by being immersed and now the church has been built and established. Three thousand plus the apostles and others who were already baptized by John and who have been added by the Lord unto the church now constitute membership in the New Testament church. But beginning in verse 42 to the end of the chapter, we learn something about how the church of our Lord in the city of Jerusalem put into practice the apostles' teaching or doctrine.

LESSON TEXT: Acts 2:42-47

LESSON AIM: To see the character of the early church in her devotion and adherence to apostolic preaching, fellowship and unity.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. See the early church as she involves herself in the practice of the Word of God and Worship.
 2. Learn nine things which began on Pentecost.
-

THE CHURCH AND ITS PRACTICE (2:42-47)

A. Devoted Themselves to The Word of God and Worship (v. 42)

1. They were strong toward the **apostles' doctrine**. The word "continued steadfastly" is a word in the original which literally means being strong toward.
 - a. Growth to maturity is through the Word of God – the gospel of Christ.
 - b. Apostles were the only teachers of the Gospel at this time.
 - 1) In Acts 6 there will be seven other teachers added.
 - 2) At this point only the apostles are empowered by the Holy Spirit with the gift of knowledge and revelation.

- c. What is being spoken orally will be recorded to written documents later.
- 2. They were strong **toward fellowship** (v. 42). Love and hospitality.
 - a. Joint participation in the **work of Christ**.
 - b. Joint participation in the **matter of giving** toward those in need.
 - c. Joint participation in the **furtherance of the gospel** (Philippians 1:3).

NOTE: Jointly now all of these believers are participating with the apostles in the work of Christ.

- 3. They were strong **toward breaking of bread** (v. 42). Remembrance and hope.
 - a. This has reference to the Lord's Supper.
 - b. Instituted by Jesus (Matthew 26).
 - c. Paul calls the Lord's Supper a communion (1 Corinthians 10:16).
 - d. To be participated in on the first day of the week in the assembly of the church (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:17ff).
 - e. When we participate in the Lord's Supper we are having communion or fellowship with Christ.
- 4. They were strong **toward prayer** (v. 42). Devotion and trust.
 - a. They continually devoted themselves to prayer.
 - b. The early church teaches us of the significance, the power and the privilege of prayer.
 - c. The apostles devoted themselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word (Acts 6).

B. A Sense of Awe/Wonder (v. 43). Influence of the church.

- 1. Because of the redemptive work of Christ. He had extended to them pardon and forgiveness of sins..
- 2. Because of great miracles and signs being performed through the apostles.

C. They Lived in Unity (vs. 44-46). Jesus prayed for unity in the church (John 17:20-21).

- 1. To glorify God.
- 2. To keep us in a state where we can be built up spiritually.
- 3. For the benefit of the unbelieving world. If the world cannot see unity in us we will not have credibility in the teaching and preaching of the gospel of Christ.

D. They Had All Things in Common (v. 45)

- 1. The disciples were generous with their possessions.
- 2. They chose of their own volition to give this way.
- 3. They were not commanded to sell their possessions and property (Acts 5:1-11).
- 4. They shared with all who had need.

E. Their Daily Activity (v. 46)

- 1. The early church was using the Jewish temple for their corporate worship and assembly.
- 2. The "breaking of bread" has reference to what is later called the "Love Feast" (2 Peter 2; Jude 1).
 - a. They came together to share a meal together.
 - b. They had an attitude of gladness and great sincerity of heart.

F. They Praised God and Grew in Numbers (v. 47)

1. Continual gratitude – “praising God” – in their lives, in their teaching, in their service, in their worship.
2. Continual favor – “having favor with all the people.” *Winsome attractiveness.*
What the people saw:
 - a. Christian fervency.
 - b. Christian unselfish love and concern.
 - c. Praising God in a way they had never seen before.
3. Continual blessing – “*and the Lord . . .*”
4. Continual growth – “. . . added to their number daily. . .”
5. Continual salvation – “. . . those who were being saved.”

PENTECOST – THE DAY OF BEGINNINGS

The following nine things began on this day (cf. Acts 11:15).

- A. **The New Covenant (Hebrews 8:8 – 9:15-17)**
- B. **Preaching in the Name of Jesus Christ (Luke 24:46ff)**
- C. **Baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38)**
- D. **The Sending of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4, 33)**
- E. **The Giving of the Holy Spirit to the Believer (2:38-39)**
- F. **The Reign of Christ on David’s Throne (2:30ff)**
- G. **The Fulfillment of the Prophecies of Joel (2:1-4, 28-33)**
- H. **The Building of the Lord’s Church Through the Apostles (Matthew 16:18-19)**
- I. **The Work and Worship of the New Testament Church (Acts 2:24-47)**

NOTE: The city of Jerusalem was the birth place of the church Christ built. The day of Pentecost was the birthday of the church Christ built. The day of the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ. It came on the first day of the week – Sunday – the Lord’s Day, since Pentecost could not come, according to the prescription of the Law of Moses, upon any other day. This day marks the first time the Gospel of Christ Jesus, in its fullness, was preached. The first time it could be preached in its fullness. Until this time any “Gospel” that was preached was either a “Gospel in Promise” or a “Gospel in Preparation”. The church that Christ built was a new, an original, God-appointed and God-created body. It was not a branch of anything then in existence. It was not a development of anything that had gone before. There was nothing “carried over” into it from any religion then being abrogated. Some former laws were restated. Eternal principles were incorporated therein. But these, not because they had formally been binding, but because they were right within themselves.

It was the day that the power mentioned in Acts 1:8 came, since it was the day the Holy Spirit descended upon them, and overwhelmed the Apostles. See also Acts 1:5.

PREVIEW OF CHAPTER THREE: OBJECTIVES TO BE CONSIDERED:

1. The design and nature of New Testament miracles.
2. How long they were intended to be given to the people in the first century.
3. The purpose of miracles.
4. The Old Testament predicted that the Messiah to come would be rejected by His own people.
5. The Messiah would suffer and die and be raised again on the third day.

HEALING AND FREEDOM IN THE NAME OF JESUS

Understand the circumstances and the significance of the healing of the lame man.

A. A Forty-Year Bondage Turned to Freedom (3:1-8)

1. The place: The temple is still used as a meeting place for the apostles. During the hours of prayer they would find a ready-made audience to whom they might preach.
 - a. The ninth hour, the hour of prayer would be roughly mid-afternoon.
 - b. The Jewish hours of prayer were the third, sixth, and ninth hours as times for private prayer.
2. The Power: God, through the apostles, heals the lame man (vs. 2-10).
 - a. The certain man (v. 2).
 - 1) Lame from birth. His friends and family brought him here “every day to beg.”
 - 2) He begged to sustain life.
 - b. A certain plea (v. 3). “To receive alms” is another way of saying that he was merely asking to be supported in the condition in which he was.
 - c. The certain response – amazing (vs. 4-6). He asked for alms and received something better. Many things are more important than money.
 - 1) Peter and John are the Lord’s agents.
 - 2) A look of compassion – the usual thing is to turn away when passing a beggar, and not look at him.
 - d. The miraculous result (vs. 7-8).
 - 1) The command – *“In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene . . . walk.”* The miracles were designed to glorify Jesus Christ.
 - 2) A hand extended – *“And seizing him by the right hand . . .”*
 - 3) A renewed strength – immediate and complete.
 - 4) Exultation and praise – natural and appropriate expression toward God.

B. The Providential Effect – Wonder and Amazement by the People

1. A witness and testimony for God.
2. A confirmation of the Word preached.
 - a. The Jews denied Jesus from ignorance, but Christ and His death was prophesied.
 - b. Therefore they should have known and obeyed Christ.

C. The Word Miracle Defined

1. Something that a person could observe with his natural senses.
2. Something that was accomplished by divine power – without any adequate or human natural cause.
3. Something that transcended God’s laws of nature.
 - a. The people who observed them knew that they were miracles.
 - b. Even the enemies of Christianity could not deny that they were miracles.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SEVEN:

1. What four things did the early church put into practice in Acts 2:42?

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

2. List nine things which began on the Day of Pentecost.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____
6) _____
7) _____
8) _____
9) _____

3. What two things cause the sense of awe and wonder in the early church?

1) _____
2) _____

4. For what three reasons is unity emphasized in verses 44-46?

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

5. Describe the importance of Peter and John going to the Temple at the hour of prayer.

6. What relation did the miracle have with preaching the Gospel?

7. What effect did the healing of the lame man have on the people? _____

8. Give three things which help define what a miracle is.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

LESSON EIGHT

HEALING AND PREACHING

INTRODUCTION:

The healing of the lame man follows the paragraph which describes the “many wonders and miraculous signs” done by the apostles (2:43). Acts continues to focus on the conversions of those who might be considered unlikely prospects for God’s favor – first the crowd in Jerusalem, which was responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus, and now a lame man whose life seemed to be hopelessly ruined. Many Jews probably considered the man as suffering from the punishment of God. But the apostles were ready to proclaim the gospel to all who would hear them.

This lesson will continue to deal with the nature of New Testament miracles. They were of such nature that even the unbelievers could not deny that they were miracles.

LESSON TEXT: Acts 3:1-26

LESSON AIM: To show the relationship between the working of miracles and preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ in the first century .

LESSON OBJECTIVES You will . . .

1. Learn something of the design and nature of miracles.
 2. See that the Old Testament prophesied the rejection and death of Jesus and then His glorification in heaven.
 3. Discover how this gospel message motivates people to obey the Gospel.
-

THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF NEW TESTAMENT MIRACLES.

A. The Obvious Reality of New Testament Miracles

1. The inability of the Jewish Sanhedrin Council to refute the validity of the miracle (Acts 4:14-16).
 - a. *“...that a noteworthy miracle has taken place through them is apparent to all . . .”*
 - b. They would have liked to be able to deny it because of the confirming effect of the deity of Christ.
 - c. A list of the miraculous gifts given by the Spirit can be found in 1 Corinthians 12.
 - d. The nature of New Testament miracles was convincing. Even enemies could not deny them.
2. So-called miracles of today are not of this nature.

B. The Purpose for Which the Holy Spirit Gave the Gift of Healing to People in the First Century

1. To confirm through signs the words spoken (Mark 16:20).
2. Hebrews 2:1-4: *“God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various*

miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.”

- a. Passage that tells us WHEN they had confirmed the faith (Jude 3).
- b. The system of salvation, that which is believed as the substance of religious truth, was **once for all** confirmed.
- c. The word “faith” in Jude 3 is the substance of Christian faith.
- d. The expression “once for all” literally means “what is done was to be of perpetual validity and never needs repetition.”
- 3. Signs ,wonders and miracles were given to the apostles as credentials.
 - a. 2 Corinthians 12:2: “*The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance.*”
 - b. The words preached were shown to be from God by the miracles performed.
 - c. God gave them the empowering gift of the Spirit to confirm and validate the message.
- 4. The word once confirmed does not need to be confirmed over again.

C. The Purpose for Which Miracles Were Given Was Fully Accomplished in the Apostolic Day and Age

- 1. The Holy Spirit guided the apostles into all truth (John 16:13).
- 2. The faith was “once for all time” delivered to the saints (Jude 3).
- 3. Miracles ceased when the design and purpose for which they were given had been fully accomplished (1 Corinthians 13:8).
 - a. God used miracles to bring new things into existence.
 - b. He never did miracles to confirm things that had already been confirmed.
 - c. Miracles were performed to convince unbelievers that Jesus is the Christ (John 20:30-31).

NOTE:

We're not talking about God at work when we pray. We certainly believe that God works in ways that we may not even fully understand according to the laws of nature. But God uses medication, he uses rest, he uses food, he uses whatever is at His disposal according to what we call natural law to bring about the restoration of health. But a miracle is something that transcends that and it didn't require faith on the part of the unbeliever before they could receive the blessing of a miracle.

“Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.”

PETER'S MESSIANIC SERMON (3:13-26)

A. The Testimony of The Old Testament

- 1. The Old Testament predicted the coming, rejection, suffering and death of Jesus for man's salvation (3:13-18).
 - a. The Suffering Servant is from Isaiah 43:1; 52:13; 53:11. Jesus became our propitiation (Romans 3:25).
 - b. All the prophets predicted the same thing (3:18). (Cf. Luke 24:22-47; 1 Peter 1:10-11). Christ suffered and was glorified by His resurrection.
 - c. Proof that Jesus fulfilled these prophecies are two-fold:
 - 1) The apostles' witness (15b).
 - 2) The lame man healed (16). Only God can work such a miracle.
- 2. Jesus fulfilled these Old Testament predictions in becoming the following things (vs. 18-24).
 - a. **A sin-offering** (vs. 18-21). Compare 18 with 21. We are now in the

- “times of restoration.”
- b. **A savior** (v. 19).
 - c. **A prophet** (vs. 22-24). One who speaks forth the mind or will of God by inspiration. Christ is God’s prophet (vs. 22-23; Deuteronomy 18:18-19).
3. This truth was spoken by all the prophets of old (v. 24, cf. v. 21). These days are the days of the times of restoration of v. 21. **Note all Old Testament prophecy of Jesus has been fulfilled.**
 - a. The prophets’ predictions were of salvation from sin – not of a national kingdom. They spoke of:
 - 1) Repentance and return. (This is what John the Baptist preached.)
 - 2) Sins being wiped away.
 - 3) Times of refreshing.
 - b. Jesus became to us:
 - 1) A sin-offering (vs. 18-21).
 - 2) A savior (v. 19).
 - 3) A prophet (vs. 22-24).

B. Jesus is the Promised Seed of Abraham (3:25-26)

1. The Jews were heirs of the things predicted in the Old Testament. Remission of sins (3:19, 26; Galatians 3:8, 16) and justification, or reconciliation, are the blessings of Jesus.
2. The Old Testament Scriptures foretold the coming of Jesus, His work, and salvation in the Church (3:26, 13:46). The suffering and subsequent glorification of Christ is in harmony with the nature of the Kingdom.

C. The Prophecies of Moses

1. THE LORD GOD SHALL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME.
2. FROM AMONG YOUR BRETHREN – The “prophet” (Messiah) was to be a Jew.
3. TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED IN EVERYTHING HE SAYS TO YOU.
4. AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERY SOUL THAT DOES NOT HEED THAT PROPHET – A warning against disobedience.
5. SHALL BE UTTERLY DESTROYED FROM AMONG THE PEOPLE – The threat of severe punishment, therefore they should repent and seek for mercy.

D. This Was the Testimony of ALL THE PROPHETS

1. From Samuel and all that followed.
2. The Covenant made with the Jews through their father Abraham was the sending of Jesus to turn them away from their wicked ways (vs. 25-26).

SUMMARY:

Jesus is the promised Seed of Abraham (3:25-26).

1. The Jews were heirs of the things predicted in the Old Testament.
 - a. Remission of sins (3:19, 26; Galatians 3:8, 16).
 - b. Justification or reconciliation is the blessing of Jesus.
2. The Old Testament Scriptures foretold the coming of Jesus, His work, and salvation in the Church (3:26; 13:46). The suffering and subsequent glorification of Christ is in harmony with the nature of the kingdom.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON EIGHT:

1. The miracles performed by the apostles were of such nature that they _____

2. The purpose for which miracles were given was _____
in the apostolic age.
3. Of what did/does all the prophets speak according to Peter?

4. What two proofs does Peter give that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies?
1) _____
2) _____
5. The Old Testament predicted the _____, _____,
_____, and _____ of Jesus for man's salvation.
6. What did Christ become to us and for us?

7. What did Peter say was the blessing of Abraham which the Jews were to be first
to receive?

8. What is the meaning of "the times of refreshing" in v. 19?

LESSON NINE

PERSECUTION AND HARASSMENT

INTRODUCTION:



Peter's conclusion to his sermon in chapter three speaks of repentance. Christ's mission included the repentance of the Jews. But the Jews were not his only target. The word "first" implies that the gospel had a wider objective than just the Jews, and events later in Acts will make this point again and again.

Peter's sermon before the temple crowd caught the attention of the temple leaders. The excitement caused by the healing of the lame man and the explanation given by Peter raised concerns among the religious authorities. Thus the account continues with a description of the apostles' hearing before the Sanhedrin, as well as their release and reception by the church.

LESSON TEXT: Acts 4:1-37

LESSON AIM: To see the effect persecution had on the Apostles and the church in its early stages.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn that preaching the gospel brings opposition from unbelievers.
 2. Discover that opposition to preaching brings boldness in the apostles and growth in the company of believers.
 3. Learn that powerful preaching and fervent praying are two ingredients necessary in fulfilling the great commission of Christ.
 4. Find that the early church was unified in purpose and liberal in their giving.
-

THE PREDICTED MESSIAH

A. The Prophecies of Moses

1. THE LORD GOD SHALL RAISE UP FOR YOU A PROPHET LIKE ME.
2. FROM AMONG YOUR BRETHREN – The "prophet" (Messiah) was to be a Jew.
3. TO HIM YOU SHALL GIVE HEED IN EVERYTHING HE SAYS TO YOU.
4. AND IT SHALL BE THAT EVERY SOUL THAT DOES NOT HEED THAT PROPHET – A warning against disobedience.
5. SHALL BE UTTERLY DESTROYED FROM AMONG THE PEOPLE – The threat of severe punishment, therefore they should repent and seek for mercy.

B. All the Prophets

1. This was the testimony of ALL THE PROPHETS from Samuel and all that followed.
2. The Covenant made with the Jews through their father Abraham – the sending of Jesus to turn them away from their wicked ways (vs. 25-26).

C. The Time of the Restoration of All Things

1. “These days” announced by all the prophets.
2. “These days” are the days of the times of restoration of all things.
 - a. It is called the ministry of restoration or reconciliation of all things (2 Corinthians 5).
 - b. It is during the time that the gospel is being preached in this gospel age.
 - c. This gospel age, this period of time from Pentecost until Jesus comes, is the restoration period of time.
3. The Jews were heirs of the things predicted by the Old Testament prophets (vs. 25-26).
 - a. In Abraham’s seed all the families of the earth would be blessed.
 - b. This is the Messianic promise of the coming of Jesus and through Him, salvation.
 - c. In what way? “... *by turning every one of you from your wicked ways.*”

OPPOSITION AND APPREHENSION

This is the first of many attempts to halt the apostles from preaching the gospel.

A. Opposition of the Enemies of the Cross (4:1-4)

1. The Apostles’ activity – speaking to the people concerning Jesus.
2. Leaders of the opposition (v. 1):
 - a. The Priests – probably those who were serving in the temple for the week.
 - b. The Captain of the temple guard – probably a Jewish officer.
 - c. The Sadducees – they controlled the temple area. They denied any idea of a future resurrection of the body for any men. The preaching of the apostles about Jesus’ resurrection was obnoxious to them. Their main concern was their continued relationship with the Roman authorities.
3. The motive of the persecutors (v. 2).
4. Faithful preaching produces conversions (vs. 3-4).
 - a. Many believed and the Christians increased to over 5,000.
 - b. The church is growing day by day.
5. This chapter records the first persecution on the church. Two reasons God allows persecution:
 - a. To strengthen us.
 - b. As an opportunity to promote the growth of His church by the preaching of the gospel.

B. The Apostles’ Defense Before the Council (vs. 5-12)

1. The Sanhedrin in session (vs. 5-6). Those present are:
 - a. The rulers, elders, scribes, Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John and Alexander and all who were of high-priestly descent.
 - b. Their interrogation – “... *by what power or in what name . . .*”
2. The response of Peter and John – their boldness (vs. 9-12). Peter makes four claims for Jesus:
 - a. The lame man was healed in His name (vs. 9-10).
 - b. Jesus Christ was raised from the dead (v. 10).
 - c. He is the cornerstone of the spiritual temple (v. 11; cf. Psalm 118:12; Ephesians 2:20; 1 Peter 2:4-6).
 - d. Salvation is in no other name (v. 12).

NOTE: As Peter had done before (2:23-24; 3:15) he now contrasts what the Jewish leaders did with Jesus and what God did with Jesus. They had crucified Him, but God raised Him from death. He then cited Psalm 118:22, identifying Jesus as “the stone you builders rejected.” God made Him the “capstone” in the resurrection. Salvation, both of body and spirit, could be found only in Him.

C. The Effect Of Bold Preaching (vs. 13-22)

1. A private consultation and warning (vs. 13-17).
 - a. What the Sanhedrin realized:
 - 1) That the apostles were “unschooled” and untrained men as far as rabbinic training was concerned. They were not considered professional interpreters of the Law.
 - 2) That the apostles had been with Jesus. Only weeks before they had sent the one called Jesus to the cross.
 - 3) They could not deny the miracle done.
 - b. The Sanhedrin’s perception of their own authority:
 - 1) They could shut the mouths of those commanded to speak by God (Mark 16:15).
 - 2) That they could stay the eternal purposes of God.
 - c. The Sanhedrin’s decision: To warn them to speak to no man in this name.

NOTE: Had it been possible to produce the body of Jesus, they could have easily disposed of the testimony of the apostles. They could not do it. They had to be satisfied with giving a warning to the apostles not to speak any more in the name of Jesus.

2. The prohibition against preaching Christ (vs. 18-22) “*... do not speak to anyone in the name of Jesus.*”
3. Peter and John’s response: “*... we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard.*”
 - 1) Truth cannot be chained by civil authorities.
 - 2) Once again they emphasized that they were eye witnesses to all these things.
4. In view of the Jerusalem crowd which had witnessed the miracle, persecuting Peter and John could have been disastrous.

THE RELEASE OF PETER AND JOHN (vs. 23-31)

A. Their Reunion With the Twelve (v. 23) – restored fellowship.

1. The report of all that the chief priests and elders had said to them.
2. They were not given to fear and depression.

B. A Prayer of Conviction (vs. 24-30). Their convictions reflected their faith in God’s power as creator and sustainer.

1. They address God as “Sovereign Lord” (Gr. *DESPOTES*). Without God, life is futile and rebellious.
2. The address is significant here in view of the threats from the Sanhedrin.
3. Powers and authorities of this earth are nothing compared to the God who is sovereign.
4. Christ was set upon the holy hill of Zion.

- a. “The Anointed One,” the “Holy Servant” – a reference to Jesus.
- b. The “rulers” and “kings of the earth,” – Herod and Pontius Pilate.
- c. The “peoples” and the “nations” raging against Him – the Jews and the Gentiles.
- 5. God was not caught by surprise. The “Sovereign Lord” knew that these leaders would oppose the gospel.
- 6. As Hezekiah had taken the blasphemous letter from the Assyrian king to the temple and prayed to God, the believers prayed that God would once again overrule authorities who resisted God’s will.

C. They Prayed for Three Things

- 1. That God would look upon their threats – “*take note of their threats.*”
- 2. That God would give them courage and boldness – “*may speak thy word with all confidence.*”
- 3. That God would continue to confirm His Word – “*. . . signs and wonders take place through the name of Thy holy Servant Jesus.*”

NOTE: Their confidence was firm in the God who had absolute control over these actions by the Sanhedrin. As a matter of fact, God was not caught by surprise. The “Sovereign Lord” knew that these leaders would oppose the gospel. The rulers had acted only in terms of what God’s “power and will had decided beforehand” would happen.

For this reason they requested “boldness” for their preaching. Do you see the concept of this prayer? They are saying Lord we want to praise You for all that you’ve done through the death and the sacrifice of Your Son on the cross. Here were the rulers of the earth setting themselves against You in every way and yet Your will, your eternal purpose, was carried out. We want You to continue to accomplish Your purpose through us as we teach and preach the good news of our Lord.

D. The Answer to Their Prayer (v. 31)

- 1. The place was shaken. “*After they had prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken.*”
- 2. They were all filled (influenced, empowered) with the Holy Spirit.
- 3. They were given great courage (boldness). Along with these signs of God’s presence came a renewed enthusiasm for the proclamation of the gospel.

NOTE: This “boldness” is an outstanding characteristic of the early church.

- 1. Peter on the Day of Pentecost (2:23, 29).
- 2. Peter and John before the Sanhedrin (4:9-10, 13).
- 3. Barnabas and Paul in their missionary work at Antioch and Iconium (13:46; 14:3).
- 4. Philip (8:30-35).
- 5. Apollos (18:26).

“Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch our your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON NINE:

1. What two things resulted from Peter and John's preaching of the gospel in Acts 4:1-4?

1) _____
2) _____

2. What four claims did Peter make for Jesus before the Sanhedrin?

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

3. There were at least three things the Sanhedrin realized concerning the apostles and the event which occurred. List these below.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

4. If what the apostles were preaching about Jesus being raised was untrue, what could the Sanhedrin have done to show them as liars?

5. For what three things did the apostles pray after Peter and John were released?

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

6. List the three things which happened as a result of their prayer together.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

Thought Question:

What, if anything, do you think was significant in the fact that the apostles address God as "Sovereign Lord" on this occasion?

LESSON TEN

DISCIPLINE & PERSECUTION BRINGS GROWTH

INTRODUCTION:

As we develop lesson ten we will see that Luke supplies a summary to describe the progress of the church (see 2:42-47). Here, however, the summary points ahead rather than behind. Luke gives these words to prepare for the accounts which follow – the generosity of Barnabas and the hypocrisy of Ananias and Sapphira. It very well may be that these two, seeing the place accorded to Barnabas in the work of the kingdom (having sold his possession and giving it to the apostles), tried to purchase a similar position for themselves (more about this later).

In contrast to Barnabas' example of sincere generosity, Luke adds an example of the opposite. Ananias and Sapphira represent the spirit of selfishness and personal ambition. But Luke does not describe this unusual event merely for the purpose of urging a higher standard of morals. Both cases advance Luke's primary concern of demonstrating how the witness of the apostles through the Spirit continued. They also show the unity of the church in placing a high priority on ministering to the needy among them.

The link between 5:1 and 4:37 is strong. “Now” in the NIV is the Greek particle *de* and continues the chain of comments from 4:35-36 where *de* is also used.

LESSON TEXT: Acts 5:1-42

LESSON AIM: To see the building attack by Satan on the church through internal troubles and God's continuing providential protection of His people.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. See God's swift corrective discipline and the effect it had on the early church.
 2. Learn that God takes care of those who are proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 3. Know that God saved His preachers then through the efforts of an unbeliever like Gamaliel then and will do so today as well.
-

REVIEW:

A. They Prayed For Three Things

1. That God would look upon their threats – “. . . take note of their threats.”
2. That God would give them courage and boldness – “. . . may speak thy word with all confidence.”
 - a. Boldness is derived through prayer.

- b. Paul , the apostles and others prayed for boldness and asked others to pray for their boldness.
- c. They manifested this kind of boldness before the Sanhedrin and would need boldness from then on.
- 3. That God would continue to confirm His Word – “*. . . signs and wonders take place through the name of Thy holy Servant Jesus.*”

B. The Answer To Their Prayer (v. 31)

- 1. The place was shaken. “*After they had prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken.*”
- 2. They were all filled (influenced, empowered) with the Holy Spirit.
- 3. They were given great courage (boldness). Along with these signs of God’s presence came a renewed enthusiasm for the proclamation of the gospel.

THE UNITY AND GENEROSITY OF THE EARLY CHURCH (4:32-5:16)

A. The Unity and Liberality of the Early Church (vs. 32-35)

- 1. Their unity – one heart and one soul. A congregation of over 5,000 Christians working in union.
 - a. Jesus’ prayer of John 17:20ff was practiced.
 - b. They were one in mind or heart, which was the center of intellectual activity and soul, which was the seat of the will.
 - c. They were just like one person in their mind and heart (1:27; 2:2). A visible unity to outsiders.
- 2. Their unity exemplified – in the stewardship of material things.
 - a. They disclaimed that anything they had belonged to them.
 - b. They loved so much they were willing to give all they had if it would help the other believers.

B. Their Unity Exemplified in the Stewardship of Spiritual Things

- 1. The apostles “went on giving” witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2. Love and benevolence personified in Barnabas, a great servant of God.
- 3. The nature of their giving was voluntary, local, and temporary (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

TROUBLE FROM WITHIN – THE FIRST CHURCH DISCIPLINE

The Church was able to distribute to the needy (4:35) because brethren such as Barnabas gave. In chapter five we have the first sin recorded in the Lord’s church.

A. The Sin and Punishment of Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-11)

- 1. The covetous partnership – Ananias and Sapphira (vs. 1-2).
- 2. Their choice of selling their property and the disposal of the money (vs. 3-4).
 - a. Their seeming liberality – sold property and pretended to give the sale price to the Lord.
 - b. No doubt Barnabas had received the praise and acclaim of the people for his generosity, and Ananias and Sapphira wanted some of the same praise at a cheaper price.
- 3. Peter reveals their plot and announces judgment on Ananias and, later Sapphira (vs. 3-6).
 - a. Satan had filled Ananias’ heart – Ananias had opened himself up to

Satan's influence. We are responsible for allowing Satan to fill our hearts. Rather than operating by the filling of the Holy Spirit, Ananias had allowed Satan to fill his heart. Such an act was equal to rebellion against the Spirit and his work.

- 1) They had no command to sell their land.
- 2) All apostolic examples are not bound upon Christians.
- b. The serious sin was testing the Spirit's power in the apostles and their apostolic authority (v. 9). The lie was to God not simply to man. Three things involved in any sin:
 - 1) **A knowledge of what God has commanded**, for sin is a transgression of God's law, whether by omission or commission.
 - 2) **Satan and his temptation** (v. 3).
 - 3) **The will of the person who submits to the temptation** (v. 4).
- c. Sapphira given the opportunity to repent but chooses not to. She holds to the story. The lack of sympathy in this tragedy implies that the event was understood as God's judgment upon sin.
 - 1) Peter's question to Sapphira followed the same line as with Ananias. Husband and wife had agreed together to commit this sin.
 - 2) Her response reflected her commitment to the scheme .
 - 3) She had decided to "test the Spirit of the Lord," a phrase which means seeing how far He would go in His tolerance.

NOTE: Peter's role as prophet had been carried out with sudden drama. He delivered judgment which was not his own, but that of God. He could do nothing less.

4. The godly effect of church discipline – “*. . . great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events*” (v. 11).

NOTE: Here in 5:11 is the first appearance of the term “church” (*ekklesia*) in Acts. Acts will use the term frequently, sometimes of city assemblies whether legal or illegal (19:32, 39), sometimes of a local congregation of believers (8:1; 11:22; 13:1), and sometimes of the universal church (20:28). In the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament) *ekklesia* was often used to denote the Old Testament people of God (see Deuteronomy 9:10).

B. The Effect of Holy Correction and Preaching (5:12-16)

Holy correction, when done properly, always helps. Great and public sins often kill congregations because the brethren try to pass it over and the influence of the church is cheapened.

1. Confirming signs and wonders by the hands of the apostles (v. 12). If it was the 120 who were involved in the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, why do we read constantly and consistently in the Word, that signs and wonders were done by the apostles only?
2. The fear and awe of the rest of the people (v. 13).
3. Multitudes of people added to the Lord (v. 14).
 - a. The design of the miracles was to confirm the message.
 - b. The effect of the message was that the number of believers increased.
4. The great healing ministry of the apostles, especially Peter.
 - a. Sick laid in the streets on pallets.

- b. People from all the cities around Jerusalem come and bring their sick.
“... and they were all being healed.”

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TEN:

1. What would indicate that Ananias and Sapphira did not have to give all their money to the Lord?

2. What was the sin of this husband and wife? _____

3. From this story what would you say was God’s attitude toward any sin that would hinder the growth of the church? _____

4. What is the general status of the church at this time? _____

5. Contrast the healing by the apostles with that of modern “faith” healers.

LESSON ELEVEN

TROUBLE FROM WITHOUT AND WITHIN

INTRODUCTION:



nce again the anger of the high priest and the Sadducees burned against the apostles. As the believers were filled with the Spirit, the Jewish leaders were also “filled,” but in their case it was with jealousy. Caiaphas, the high priest, and Annas, his father-in-law, were determined to stop this threat to their authority.

Until now the record of Acts has shown a sense of unity in the church which can only be called remarkable. The believers “were together and had everything in common” (2:42). They were “one in heart and mind” and “shared everything they had” (4:32). Their numbers had grown from about 120 (1:15) to over 3,000 (2:41) and then to more than 5,000 (4:4).

Now for the first time internal division made its appearance. At a time when “the number of disciples was increasing” the problem surfaced. Here is the first time the term “disciple” is used of believers in Acts. So rapidly were the converts coming that the church’s desire to minister to needy members was becoming more and more difficult. It was inevitable that someone would inadvertently be left out.

LESSON TEXT: Acts 5:17-42; 6:1-14

LESSON AIM: To see that the advancement of the kingdom always brings opposition from the forces of darkness.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn of God’s sovereignty over ungodly opposition and the fact that He protects those who are serving Him.
 2. Investigate the cause and cure of disunity among believers.
 3. Discover the need of and qualifications of deacons. The apostles were overseers.
-

GOD’S PROVIDENTIAL PROTECTION (5:17-42)

A. God’s Sovereignty Over Ungodly Opposition (5:17-25)

1. Peter and all the apostles are imprisoned (vs. 17-25).
 - a. The antagonists – high priest and Sadducees. The Sadducees:
 - 1) Did not respect the power of God.
 - 2) Did not believe in the immortality of the soul.
 - 3) Did not believe in the resurrection.

- 4) Did not believe in the existence of spirits and angels.
- b. Their motive – jealousy. Three possibilities:
 - 1) An attempt to jealously guard their own beliefs from attack.
 - 2) Angry because the apostles had so little regard for their authority.
 - 3) Envious of the popularity of the apostles and the church.
- c. Their actions – imprisoned the apostles (v. 18). Prisoners were kept in jail overnight because they could not be tried on the same day they were arrested, according to the Law of Moses.
- d. The apostles delivered by an angel of the Lord (vs. 19-21). Commanded to keep preaching “the whole message of this life.” The temple authorities could not even protect their own precincts from the message of Christ.
- e. The perplexed court (vs. 22-28).
 - 1) The vanishing apostles (vs. 22-23).
 - 2) The troubled council (v. 24).
 - 3) The astonishing report (v. 25).
- 2. Peter’s address to the Sanhedrin (vs. 26-28).
 - a. The caution of the arresting soldiers and the accusation of the Sanhedrin (vs. 26-28). Two charges against the apostles:
 - 1) **Disobedience** to the injunction by the Sanhedrin.
 - 2) **Accusing the Sanhedrin.** An attempt to show the Sanhedrin to be guilty of the murder of an innocent man.
 - b. The apostles’ reply (vs. 29-32).
 - 1) Answer to the first charge of disobedience: they pled **guilty**. The reason: “*We must obey God rather than man.*”
 - 2) Answer to the second charge: **Jesus WAS innocent and you are guilty.**
 - 3) Two witnesses of these truths presented: The **apostles** and the **Holy Spirit**.
 - c. **CONTRAST:** They shamed Jesus by hanging Him on a Roman cross – God exalted Jesus to be three things: **Prince, Ruler, and Savior.**

B. The Wise Advice of Gamaliel (5:33-40)

- 1. **The Sanhedrin’s malicious intent** (v. 33). They intended to kill the apostles.
- 2. **The wise admonition of one of their own, Gamaliel** (vs. 33-39). Leave them alone – if they are not of God they will be overthrown, if it is of God you will not be able to overthrow them and you will be found to be fighting against God.
- 3. **The judgment of the council** – flogged the apostles and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus anymore. Then they released them. Note: **There was no resentment by the apostles!**
- 4. **The attitude and actions of the apostles.**
 - a. Rejoiced that they had been counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.
 - b. They kept right on preaching in the temple and from house to house every day.

PROBLEMS FROM WITHIN AND PROGRESS WITHOUT

A. The First Problem of Disunity (Acts 6:1-7). Now for the first time internal division made its appearance. At a time when “the number of disciples was increasing” the problem surfaced.

1. The complaint (v. 1). During the period of tremendous growth the apostles had overlooked some in the daily ministration. The Grecian Jews accused the Hebrews of favoritism.
 - a. Those being overlooked were the Grecian widows. Jews were familiar with the Old Testament commands regarding caring for widows. (See Exodus 22:22; Deuteronomy 10:18; 14:29; Psalm 146:9). The Jewish practice of benevolence was continued by the church in Jerusalem.
 - b. The complaint was against the native Hebrews.
2. The nature of the problem (vs. 1-2).
 - a. The needy Grecian widows neglected. Trouble began when some of the Grecian widows were neglected in the daily ministration. As a result complaints came against the Hebraic Jews and old suspicions were reopened.
 - b. Danger of neglecting the preaching of the gospel by the apostles. The implication is that all gifts and ministries within the church are subservient to “the supremacy of the ministry of the Word.”

B. The Solution to the Disunity (vs. 3-6). “Choose seven men from among you” so that this ministry may be continued under improved supervision.

1. Seven qualified men selected to serve. Their qualifications:
 - a. **Men of good reputation.** “Seven men KNOWN to be . . .”
 - b. **Men full of the Spirit.** A lifestyle in which the Holy Spirit’s presence was obvious to fellow believers.
 - c. **Men full of wisdom.** Men who had skills in ministry and, perhaps, problem-solving.
 - d. **Men full of faith** – boldness and holiness.
2. Responsibility given to these men to deal with the problem.
3. Selected by the congregation of disciples and appointed by the apostles.
4. The apostles attended to prayer and preaching.
5. The problem solved, unity restored, and continued rapid growth, including the obedience of many of the priests (vs. 5-7).
6. Process followed – praying and the laying on of the hands of the apostles.

SUMMARY:

Luke adds at this point a summary of the church’s progress. The Word of God “spread” in the sense that its proclamation reached farther and farther. Luke uses the imperfect tense (“was growing”) to indicate a continuous growth during this period. The same is true with the next two verbs – “increased” and “became obedient.” The numbers “were increasing” continuously and at the same time many priests “were becoming” obedient to the faith. Believers were witnessing growth in the church almost moment by moment. (The College Press Commentary, **ACTS**, by Dennis Gaertner, p. 121)

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON ELEVEN:

1. In Acts 5:17-25 the apostles were put in prison. Who was responsible and what were the three possible motives for their actions? _____

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

2. How did the apostles get out of prison and what did they immediately do on their release?

3. What two charges did the Sanhedrin bring against the apostles and what was the apostles' reply?

The two charges: _____

The response to these two charges: _____

4. What was the apostles' attitude and actions when they were released from the Sanhedrin?

5. What was the problem faced by the church in Acts 6:1-7 and how was it solved?

6. What were the qualifications given for the seven men selected by the disciples?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

7. What three possible motives did the Jewish council have for arresting the apostles?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

8. What two charges did the Sanhedrin bring against the apostles?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

9. What was the apostles' answer to these two charges?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

10. God exalted Jesus to be what three things?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

LESSON TWELVE

STEPHEN'S DEFENSE AND MARTYRDOM

INTRODUCTION:

The death of the first Christian martyr and the causes which led to it, serve as an introduction to Paul's connection with early Christianity, for it is in the events surrounding Stephen's death that we first meet Paul. Before this time, the opposition by the Jews, whether Pharisee or Sadducee, had been limited mainly to threats and imprisonment and beating. But now the frustration and anger will burst forth to be satisfied only by shedding the blood of the Christians. This will be but the first of a whole series of persecutions against Christians that the world has witnessed, persecutions which have called for believers to be faithful even when it means their physical death.

Caiaphas, who was high priest until A.D. 36, was handling still another case associated with the followers of Christ. He had been determined to rid Jerusalem of Jesus (Matthew 26:57-66) and had strictly warned Peter and John not to preach in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:18). He had supervised the hearing in which all of the apostles were punished for preaching in this name (5:40). Now he directed his questions to Stephen.

Stephen's address is a defense of himself only indirectly. The two points he emphasized were that God's presence could not be confined to a place, whether to a particular land or material building. Secondly, Stephen established the record of Jewish hostility to the leaders appointed by God over the nation. To the extent that his preaching had stirred up controversy on these issues, Stephen's address was a defense of his message.

LESSON TEXT: Acts 6:8 – 8:4

LESSON AIM: To learn of the increased persecution of the church and transition from a Jewish emphasis to a Gentile emphasis.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. See Stephen, one of the seven servants, arrested and falsely accused.
 2. Learn of Stephen's reasoning and defense before the Sanhedrin and its result.
 3. Learn that hate, envy and jealousy has no room for truth.
-

REVIEW:

A. The Responsibility of the Church: Select Seven Men

1. Men of good character, good reputation.
2. Men who are full of the Spirit – filled with the Spirit's message.

3. Men of wisdom – skill and good judgment.
4. Men who were bold in their faith.

B. Their Assignment: Daily Ministration to the Needy

C. The Apostles Assignment: the Ministry of the Word and Prayer

1. Praying and preaching go hand in hand.
2. Praying is where they derived wisdom (James 1:5).

D. The Seven Men Selected

1. Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch.
2. Seven men who were filled with the Spirit before they were empowered by the Spirit.

E. A Great Number of Priests Were Becoming Obedient to the Faith

1. Faith to be a living faith has to be an obedient faith.
2. In all the Bible no one was blessed by faith until that faith expressed itself in some bodily action.

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

A. Stephen's Ministry and His Arrest (6:8-14)

1. Stephen's ministry – great wonders and signs among the people (v. 8).
 - a. Exercising spiritual gifts which had been received at the time of the laying on of the apostles' hands.
 - b. First time anyone other than the apostles performed miracles.
2. The accusation (vs. 9-14). Accused of speaking against Moses and God (v. 11).
3. The opposition – Libertines, Cyrenians, Alexandrians, Cilicia, and those of Asia. Possibly this was Saul's synagogue.
4. The methods (vs. 9-12).
 - a. The dispute (vs. 9-10). – “began to argue” but “. . . could not stand before his wisdom.”
 - b. The craft used (v. 11). – “secretly persuaded” – bribed men to lie in court and to stir up the people. This is the first time that the people have been said to be against the apostles or the church.
 - c. The violence (v. 12). – “seized him . . . and brought him before the Sanhedrin.”

B. Accusations Against Stephen

1. The charge (vs. 13-14).
 - a. Blasphemy of the temple and the Law (v. 13).
 - b. That he taught Jesus as destroyer of the temple and the Law (v. 14).
2. His appearance as of an angel (v. 15).
 - a. Light – Matthew 28:3; Revelation 10:1.
 - b. Strength – Psalms 103:20.
3. His spirit was like that of Jesus on the cross – a forbearing, forgiving nature and spirit.

NOTE: The lengthy recording of this speech should manifest its importance. Stephen

recaps the history of the Jews and shows that as God once and again visited Israel with judgment, so now He will bring a full end to the Jewish commonwealth for rejecting their savior and Messiah. Israel had rejected Joseph (v. 9); Moses (vs. 25, 27, 35); the prophets (v. 52); the Law (v. 53); and the Messiah (vs. 52).

STEPHEN'S DEFENSE BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN (7:1-53)

A. Stephen's Line of Defense – The History of Israel (7:1-53). HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF!

1. Stephen's statement: Christianity is the historical fulfillment of God's purpose.
 - a. God's dealings always show constant progress – illustrated by Abraham, Moses, David.
 - b. God never limited Himself to Palestine and the temple, but was manifested in other countries as well – illustrated from Mesopotamia, Egypt, Midian, and the tabernacle in the wilderness.
 - c. God's people had always been perverse in resisting Him and His messengers – illustrated by Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and David.
 - d. God's people, Israel, not Stephen, were opposed to divine revelation – illustrated by the sins of their fathers.
2. Application – “... and now you have betrayed and murdered Him” (v. 52).
 - a. They were “stiff-necked” and had “uncircumcised hearts and ears.”
 - b. They were always resisting the Holy Spirit, that is, they were standing in the way of the Spirit's work.
 - c. Like their fathers they were persecuting and killing the prophets.
 - d. They were guilty of crucifying the Messiah, following in the footsteps of their fathers who “killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One.”
 - e. Those who had accused Stephen of blaspheming the Law are now accused by Stephen of themselves blaspheming the Law.
 - f. Instead of Stephen being on trial, he has now put the Sanhedrin on trial.

NOTE: This nation so favored by God that they received the law “put into effect through angels” was guilty of rejecting the chosen servant of God. They chose the ministration of angels over the ministry of the Son of God!

B. The Opposition – Stephen Stoned to Death (vs. 54-60)

1. Madness of the Jews (v. 54) — anger and action. They were “cut to the heart” with anger.
2. Manliness of Stephen (vs. 55-56) — peace and power.
 - a. Stephen saw the Lord Jesus standing at the right hand of God.
“While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he fell on his knees and cried out, ‘Lord, do not hold this sin against them.’”
 - b. Stephen's vision of Jesus contradicted their position.
 - c. If the vision was true, God was giving a sign of his approval of Stephen.
3. Murder by the Jews (vs. 57-59a) – consent and cruelty.
 - a. It seemed as if the Sanhedrin's members resorted to more of a mob action than the organized procedure called for by Jewish law.
 - b. Consent by a young man named Saul. “Giving approval” (Gk.

suneudokon) – an ongoing determination to oppose any example of this new teaching.

4. Martyrdom (vs. 59b-60) – fearlessness and forgiveness.
5. Persecution and scattering (8:1-4).

NOTE: Here is the first one of many who gave his physical life for the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. Stephen's ministry was brief, but very powerful and meaningful.

LESSONS TO CONSIDER:

Stephen's life and death should be the inspiration of the church's corporate witness.

1. Fearless testimony for God in the face of dangerous foes.
2. Splendid character toward God and man.
3. Readiness to die for sake of truth.
4. Christ-likeness of spirit even when persecuted.
5. Thorough knowledge of Bible truth and power to impart it.
6. Forgiving attitude toward enemies.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWELVE:

1. Who brought accusations against Stephen and what were those accusations?

2. How did Stephen use the History of Israel to show the fulfillment of God's purpose?

3. List four charges brought against the Jewish leaders by Stephen.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)

4. What was the vision seen by Stephen as he was being stoned?

5. List six lessons to be learned by the church concerning Stephen's life and death.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)

LESSON THIRTEEN

THE CHURCH SPREADS TO SAMARIA

INTRODUCTION:

A new division in Luke's material begins at this point. The previous seven chapters of Acts described the success of the gospel in Jerusalem, largely focusing on the ministry of Peter and the other apostles. With the beginning of chapter eight comes a new focus. Now Luke describes the successes of the gospel in areas around Jerusalem, especially in Judea and Samaria, in conformity to his theme statement in 1:8. Now the people carrying the gospel are not just the apostles, but other believers, including Philip, Barnabas, and Paul.

The effects of Stephen's trial and martyrdom were felt in the church immediately. Luke ties together the scattering of the church very closely with the Sanhedrin's action against Stephen. He mentions the persecution and scattering of the church and in the next sentence reports the burial of Stephen. Everyone was dispersed "except the apostles."

LESSON TEXT: Acts 8:1-24

LESSON AIM: To understand that persecution of the believers in Jerusalem at the death of Stephen caused the gospel to spread to Samaria.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. See that the consequences of the persecution of God's people is victory not defeat as the gospel spreads to Samaria.
 2. Learn that when the gospel of the kingdom is preached and obeyed in any nation the result is the New Testament church.
 3. Discover that the providence of God is involved in taking the gospel to all who would seek it.
-

THE JERUSALEM CHURCH SCATTERED

A. Saul Leads the Jews in Persecution (8:1-4)

1. The church is scattered (v. 1).
 - a. A great persecution against the church in Jerusalem.
 - b. Saul "ravaged" the church. Saul raged against the church like a wild beast.
 - c. Imprisoned both men and women.

- d. Did a house to house search.
- 2. Stephen is buried (v. 2).
 - a. The first believer to receive the martyr's crown.
 - b. By devout Jews most likely. If it had been Christians Luke would probably have said "brethren" or "believers."

B. Persecution Results in Scattered Seed

- 1. Saul takes the lead in the persecution (v. 3; 26:9-10; Galatians 1:13-14).
- 2. Apostles remain in Jerusalem while the church is scattered.
 - a. Persecution accomplished the further spread of the gospel.
 - b. Believers went everywhere in Judea and Samaria carrying the good news of Jesus.

THE LORD BUILDS HIS CHURCH IN SAMARIA (8:5-13)

The life and service of Philip constitute a sort of pivot in the story of the early church. The persecution following the death of Stephen had led to the scattering of the Jerusalem Christians and thus led to the first evangelistic tour, with Philip as the first evangelist.

A. The Evangelist and the Crowd (8:5-8). Philip, the evangelist, the man God uses in Samaria.

- 1. Who were these Samaritans?
 - a. They were descendants of the northern tribes of Israel.
 - b. They had remained in the land after the Assyrian captivity had removed much of the nation.
 - c. Partly because of their intermarrying with the Canaanites, they were looked upon with suspicion.
 - d. Jews frequently avoided any contact with Samaritans.
- 2. The Samaritans and Jews were similar in their belief and practice.
 - a. They both accepted the first five books of the Old Testament.
 - b. They both practiced circumcision.
 - c. They both had a temple of worship (different temples).
 - d. They both were looking for the Messiah.
- 3. Philip preached concerning the Kingdom and God confirmed his message (8:5-8; Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4). Philip had been empowered by the Spirit through the laying on of the Apostles' hands (6:5-6).
- 4. The Samaritans hear and obey Christ (8:12-13).
 - a. They saw the signs he was doing.
 - b. Miraculous gifts given to Philip by the laying on of the apostles' hands.
- 5. Satan was allowed to have unusual powers of demons.

NOTE: The importance of this evangelistic thrust should not be missed. Jesus had promised that the apostles would be witnesses first in Jerusalem, and then in "all Judea and Samaria." At this point Luke shows how the gospel began to leave Jerusalem and expand its influence into ever-widening territories.

The gospel shows no favoritism. Salvation is intended for all nations. The cross of Christ is long enough to bridge any chasm between people.

B. The Evangelist and the False Teacher (8:9-13)

1. Simon's influence was great, (vs. 9-11). Sorcery, as a magical practice, is of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-20).
 - a. He claimed to be someone great.
 - b. His reputation: as having great power from God.
2. Simon's influence weakened (v. 12).
 - a. The greater power – “... but when they believed Philip . . . concerning . . . the name of Jesus Christ.” What was preached:
 - 1) The “name” of Christ.
 - 2) The “kingdom” of the Christ.
 - b. The immediate result:
 - 1) They “believed.”
 - 2) They were “baptized.”
3. Simon's influence transformed (v. 13). “*Simon himself believed also and was baptized.*”
4. Simon saved through obedience to the Gospel message (8:9-11).
5. The Bible makes no distinction between Simon's faith and the faith of the rest of the Samaritans.

C. The Second Law of Pardon (vs. 18-24)

1. Simon offered Peter money to purchase what he may have considered a trade secret.
 - a. Peter's response: “*May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!*”
 - 1) You have no part or share in this ministry. Greed had been the downfall of such New Testament people as Judas (1:18), and Ananias and Sapphira (5:1-11).
 - 2) He commanded him to repent. Simon was “full of bitterness,” a phrase translated “bitter poison” in Deuteronomy 29:18, and “a captive to sin.”
 - b. The phrase “perhaps” God will forgive indicates that God's forgiveness cannot be taken for granted.
 - c. It implies that even this serious sin can be pardoned.

D. The Holy Spirit Gives Spiritual Gifts Through the Apostles (8:14-25)

1. The Samaritans had received the gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:38; 5:32; 8:16); but notice that the Spirit had not as yet “fallen upon” them. This always means the “empowering”, not the “indwelling.” Even Simon could see with his physical eyes that power from the Spirit was received through the laying on of the Apostles' hands (8:1-19).
2. If Philip had this power, then why did Peter and John come to the Samaritans?
3. The restoration of an erring Christian (8:20-23).
4. Simon's response, and the Apostles continue preaching (8:24-25).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON THIRTEEN:

1. Who led the persecution against the church in Jerusalem in Acts 8 and what resulted from this persecution?

2. Who took the gospel into Samaria? _____

3. Describe the Samaritans. Why were they despised by the Jews? _____

4. The Jews and the Samaritans were similar in what four areas?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

5. When and how did Philip receive the power to perform signs and wonders?

6. Who was Simon in Acts 8 and what was his response to Philip's preaching?

LESSON FOURTEEN

CONVERSIONS: SIMON AND THE NOBLEMAN FROM ETHIOPIA

INTRODUCTION:

After concluding his preaching to the Samaritans, Philip now heard from “an angel of the Lord.” Another occasion for preaching was about to take place, this time with a foreigner from far to the south. Philip was commanded by the Spirit to go south to the road which ran from Jerusalem to Gaza, a road that Luke notes was “a desert road,” meaning it was not heavily traveled. Before we study this section, let’s review some things we have already seen concerning the conversion of Simon. We will rehearse the events surrounding the following three things:

1. The Holy Spirit imparts gifts to the Samaritan Christians through the laying on of the apostles’ hands.
 2. Simon tries to purchase this gift with money.
 3. Peter’s rebuke and Simon’s response.
-

LESSON TEXT: Acts 8:14-40

LESSON AIM: To learn of the effect of the gospel as it spreads from the Jewish environment to people like Simon and the Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace the Queen.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Review the way the Holy Spirit empowered people in the first century.
 2. Review the action of Simon in response to hearing the gospel and in relationship to the Holy Spirit empowering.
 3. Study the conversion of the Nobleman from Ethiopia.
-

REVIEW:

A. The Spread of the Church in Samaria

1. Churches can cooperate together for the furtherance of the gospel.
2. Peter and John sent to Samaria by the church in Jerusalem.

B. The Purpose of the Apostles Going to Samaria

1. To impart the power of the Holy Spirit upon the new Christians in Samaria.
 - a. Holy Spirit does not “fall” upon the believer at baptism.
 - b. Holy Spirit given at baptism to “indwell” the believer.
2. Holy Spirit (power) is imparted by the laying on of the apostles’ hands.
 - a. It was not the decision of the apostles to give gifts.

- b. It was the will of the Spirit whether or not a person would receive a gift and what that gift was.
- c. The apostles were the servants through whom the Spirit bestowed gifts.

C. Simon's Response to What Was Occurring (vs. 18-24)

- 1. He offered money to purchase this power.
- 2. He was able to see with his eyes the power being given.
- 3. Peter's rebuke concerning Simon's request.
 - a. Your money perish with you.
 - b. You have no part nor lot in this matter.
 - c. Repent of this wickedness.
 - d. Pray the Lord for forgiveness.
- 4. This infers Simon reverted back to his old way of life – that he had an evil intent in his heart.

D. Simon's Response to Peter's Rebuke

Pray to the Lord for me yourself so that none of these things come upon me.

E. The Apostles and Evangelism (v. 25)

- 1. Personal testimony – “when they had testified.”
- 2. Speaking and preaching – The Word and the gospel.

NOTE: Luke's account of the apostles' work in Samaria comes to an end with this summary statement. Their service as “witnesses” (1:8) is again alluded to here. They “testified” and “proclaimed” the gospel. On their way back to Jerusalem, Peter and John even continued the ministry to the Samaritans by preaching in their villages. No longer would there be any barriers to having these people reached with the gospel

This mention of John is the final one by name in Acts. The focus shifts from the twelve and Jerusalem to the ministries of other key servants in the spread of the gospel, including Philip, Barnabas Paul, and others.

THE CONVERSION OF THE ETHIOPIAN NOBLEMAN (vs. 26-40)

Since God is interested in the individual, we see God's miraculous providence at work.

A. The Preacher – Philip (v. 26)

- 1. The Holy Spirit did not convert people directly, but always worked by speaking the Gospel though human instrumentalities (2 Corinthians 4:7).
- 2. The Spirit convicts, converts and leads today only through His Word.

B. The Earnest Inquirer (vs. 27-28)

- 1. His nationality – an Ethiopian, a country south of Egypt bounded on the east by the Red Sea.
- 2. His position was one of great authority, the Secretary of Treasury.
- 3. His religion was Jewish. A devout worshiper – either a Jew or a proselyte. (A Bible reader!)

NOTE: The Ethiopian is also described as a “eunuch.” The condition of the eunuch would have served as a barrier of sorts in his worship at the temple. Deuteronomy 23:1 placed restrictions on anyone “who has been emasculated by crushing or cutting.”

C. A Lowly Learner (vs. 29-34)

1. Opportunity (vs. 29-30). A meeting planned by God.
2. A willing student (v. 31).
3. Question: (vs. 32-34). “*Of whom is the prophet speaking?*”
4. The desire (v. 36). His response to the gospel – request for baptism.
5. The confession (v. 37). The eunuch was convinced that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah – the Son of God. (Verse 37 is not in some of the manuscripts.)
6. The determination (v. 38).
7. The joy (v. 39).

D. The Sermon (vs. 32-38). Notice how the Old Testament predicted the coming, suffering, death and resurrection of the Messiah (Isaiah 53). The Old Testament prophesied redemption from sin through the atoning death of Jesus.

1. The Nobleman believes and is baptized. One cannot preach Jesus without telling sinners how to respond to the Cross by being baptized into Christ’s death (Romans 6:2-3).
2. Baptism is the moment that one is saved by grace.
3. He baptized him. Here we have the proof of immersion. All Greek authorities say the word *Baptizo* means to “dip or immerse” (Romans 6:4). One has not obeyed the Lord until he has been buried and raised, immersed in water.
4. Philip departs and comes to Caesarea (vs. 39-40; cf. 21:8-9). Philip was the local preacher there for about 20 years or more.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FOURTEEN:

1. For what reason was Peter and John sent to Samaria by the Jerusalem church?

2. Explain the difference between the Spirit “indwelling” believers and the Spirit “falling” on believers.

3. How does the Holy Spirit convert people today?

4. What Scripture was the eunuch reading and what did it say about Jesus?

5. How did the eunuch respond to Philip’s preaching? _____

6. What was the eunuch’s nationality? His position? His religion? _____

LESSON FIFTEEN

CONVERSION AND GROWTH SAUL OF TARSUS CONVERTED

INTRODUCTION:

Luke now continues the story of Saul, which began in his introductory words in 8:3: "Saul began to destroy the church." So crucial is Paul's conversion to the story of the early church and the spread of the gospel, that Luke repeats the full record of Saul's conversion three times in Acts. No single event is given more attention.

The account of Saul's conversion appears also in 22:3-21 and 26:4-20. In each case Luke presents the story in a way which suits the purpose of the situation. All three passages, however, tell the story of a Jewish leader whose mind and heart were filled with a rage against Christians which drove him to great lengths in crushing the life from this new movement.

Before we look at the conversion of Saul, we want to preview the many churches which will be built in the various provinces of Rome. We will discover that in every place it was the same old Church which was originally established and began in Jerusalem and was to spread throughout the world on down into the 20th century.

LESSON TEXT: Acts 9:1-9

LESSON AIM: To review the character and nature of the gospel and its fruit and to see its effect on an individual named Saul.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. See that wherever the gospel was preached the same church was brought into being.
 2. Study briefly the conversion of Saul of Tarsus.
-

AN OVERVIEW OF THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH IN ACTS

A. In Jerusalem. The Promise to Build the Church (Matthew 16:18)

1. The church-promise of Matthew 16:18 is fulfilled in Acts two.
2. The church is built by the preaching of the gospel by the apostles.
3. By the response of faith and obedience to the gospel.

B. The Church in Samaria (Acts 8)

1. The some old original church.

2. Not a denominational church.
 - a. This is the church that the Lord promised to build.
 - b. The same church that He had built in Jerusalem.
 - c. He has built the same church in Samaria through His servant, Philip.

C. The Church in Damascus (Acts 9)

1. Saul travels the 140 miles from Jerusalem to find the “holy ones.”
2. The saints, those who are members of the church, in order to persecute them.

D. The Church Among the Gentiles in Caesarea (Acts 10)

1. The gospel was preached by Peter – the keys of the kingdom were used.
2. People obeyed, the household of Cornelius, and the church was built in Caesarea.

E. The Church Built in Antioch (Acts 11)

1. When they believed they turned to the Lord.
2. They repented of their sins by faith and by faith they were immersed into Christ.
3. The Lord builds the old “original church.”

F. The Church Built is the Same Church Wherever Paul Preached (Acts 13)

1. Warnings not to change the doctrine of the New Testament Church (Galatians 1:8; 2 John 9).
2. Whenever and wherever the gospel was preached the church was built when people believed and obeyed the gospel.

G. The Church Built in Philippi (Acts 16)

Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke will go into the area that we know of as Europe and they will go to Philippi and Christ will be preached. Lydia and her household will hear the gospel, will respond to it, and the Lord, through the apostle Paul and his co-laborers, will build His church in the city of Philippi.

H. The Church Built in Thessalonica and Berea (Acts 17)

1. The Lord through Paul and his co-laborers built the old original church in these cities.
2. What is the church of Christ? It is the “called out”. It is made up of those who really belong to Jesus and those who responded to the good news of our Lord. So now the church of Christ has come to these cities.

I. The Church is Built in Corinth (Acts 18). The old original church.

J. The Church is Built in Ephesus (Acts 19). The old original church!

In this province, in a new city, the old original church has been built by the Lord through the faithful ministry of the apostle Paul.

1. What church was it that the Lord built through Paul in the city of Ephesus? The old original church, the church that the Lord had built through Peter and the other apostles in the city of Jerusalem as recorded in Acts 2.
2. Into a new city, a different city, the same message is preached. It is responded to in the same way, the new birth process, being born of the water and the

Spirit. And so the Lord through his faithful servant Paul builds the old original church in the great city of Ephesus.

K. The Same Original Church Built in Rome (Acts 28)

What church was it that was in existence in the city of Rome at that time? The old original church. It had now been established in the capital city of the Roman empire, Rome itself.

NOTE: When people are convicted of their unrighteousness, unbelief and of the judgment to come and as believers they inquire men and brethren what must we do, when we tell them exactly the same message that is recorded here which the apostles spoke, tell them by faith to repent and to be immersed in the name of, on the basis of their faith in Christ to obtain the remission of their sins, in that new birth process, in their being born of the water and the Spirit, the Lord will build today the old original church in whatever city that message is preached. Now when we see that concept from the book of Acts, we can see that the church of the New Testament is not a denomination.

SAUL, THE PERSECUTOR AND HIS TRIP TO DAMASCUS (9:1-7)

A. The Persecuting Saul (vs. 1-2)

1. Persistent in mistaken zeal – “yet.”
2. Intense in vital expression – “breathing out.”
3. Fierce in vindictive strength – “murderous threats.” A phrase which means that “threatening and murder was the atmosphere which he breathed and by which and in which he lived.”
4. Aggressive in initiative – “went to High Priest.”
5. Extreme in lengths – “to the synagogues in Damascus.”
6. Cruel in extent – “whether men or women.”

NOTE: Paul’s rage had already been evident in his consent in Stephen’s death. Now he was pursuing new targets for his wrath.

B. Authority and Commission From the Chief Priests

1. Saul went to the high priest, probably Caiaphas, and received letters addressed to the synagogues in Damascus.
2. Believers are referred to as “the Way.” A designation which may be traced back to the words of Jesus (see Matthew 7:13 & John 14:6).

C. A Life-Changing Confrontation (vs. 3-7)

1. The place: Near the city of Damascus.
2. The light (v. 3) – sudden, startling, supernatural. The suddenness and the overwhelming brightness forced him to his knees. It may well be that this moment finds expression later in Paul’s letter to the Corinthians: “God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness, made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the glory of God in the face of Christ’” (2 Corinthians 4:6).
3. The voice (v. 4) – personal, probing, challenging Saul to give account for his actions.

4. The revelation (v. 5) – requested and received. “*Who are you, Lord?*”
5. The surrender (vs. 6-9) – prompt, practical.

NOTE: Though Saul’s fellow travelers did not see the vision of Christ, they could verify its effects. Saul was immediately effected physically. He was blinded, humbled and made helpless. His companions led him by the hand the rest of the way into Damascus.

In Damascus he was “three days” in fasting, indicating how completely devastated was his spirit. This time was likely a time for much reflection on what he had witnessed and what it meant regarding his place among the people of God.

NOTE: Paul was convinced that he had been permitted to see the resurrected Christ, just as the other apostles had seen him (1 Corinthians 15:3-8). See also Galatians 1:10-13.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON FIFTEEN:

1. What church was being built in all the places where Paul and the other evangelists traveled in the first century?

2. What was the medium through which God built His church in all these places?

3. Give a description of Saul as he traveled on the road to Damascus.

4. By and under what authority was Saul operating in his pursuit of Christians?

5. List some things that happened to Saul in his meeting Jesus on the road to Damascus.

6. What instructions from Jesus did Saul receive and how did he respond?

7. Trace the first 30 years of church building by naming the cities that Abe talks about from Jerusalem to Rome.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

8) _____

9) _____

10) _____

11) _____

LESSON SIXTEEN

THE PREACHING OF SAUL AND PETER

INTRODUCTION:

he next servant whom the Lord calls is Ananias. From the information given here it appears that Ananias was not one of the believers who had fled Jerusalem when the persecution of Christians began (8:1). He “had heard many reports,” but apparently had not experienced the crisis directly.

Ananias was well informed about the conditions in Jerusalem. He knew that believers were being persecuted and that Saul had been given “authority from the chief priests” to arrest Christians who had fled from Jerusalem to Damascus. It is not surprising that he hesitated in going to see Saul.

“Saul was no longer his own, so he was praying for further light and leading. He was not praying to ‘get religion’ for religion is something one does, not something one gets! (See James 1:27). He was in sorrow over his mistaken past and waited in prayer to the God he had always trusted and followed for the information Jesus had told him he would get in Damascus.” (Dale, p. 104)

LESSON TEXT: Acts 9:10-43

LESSON AIM: To see the early ministry of the converted Saul and the continued spread of the kingdom through the preaching of Peter.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn of the part played by Ananias in the conversion and commission of Saul.
 2. See that Saul’s immediate action following his conversion was to preach that “Jesus is the Son of God.”
 3. Discover that before he goes to Jerusalem he goes to Arabia for three years.
 4. See that the “persecutor” now becomes the “persecuted” and must flee for his life.
 5. Learn of Peter’s healing and preaching ministry as it spreads from Jerusalem into western Judea.
-

PREVIEW:

Saul's fanatical manner of life as an ignorant Jew was violent, outrageous, and ungovernable (1 Timothy 1:13f). Since he would not listen to a man, the Risen and Glorified Lord would have to convict him. Hence the supernatural appearance of Jesus Himself to Saul, which will also serve to qualify Saul as an Apostle. Saul's conversion is an important link in the chain of proof that Jesus arose from the dead.

THE COMMISSION OF ANANIAS TO SAUL (9:10-15)

A. The Message to Ananias Given in A Vision

1. The disturbing knowledge. Ananias was well informed about the conditions in Jerusalem. He knew:
 - a. That the believers were being persecuted.
 - b. That Saul had been given "authority from the chief priests."
 - c. That he would be arresting Christians who had fled from Jerusalem to Damascus.
2. The startling command. Commanded by Jesus to go to the place in Damascus where Saul was staying.
 - a. A street called "straight."
 - b. To the house of a man named Judas.
 - c. The objective of Ananias was to lay his hands on Saul so that he could receive his sight.
3. The amazing revelation. Saul would serve as a chosen instrument in taking the gospel to the Gentiles and Israel.
 - a. He would be an apostle. He had received a call directly from God to preach the gospel (Galatians 1:15).
 - b. He who was the **persecutor** would now be the **persecuted**. He would receive the same kind of suffering he had inflicted on others.

B. The Visit From Ananias (vs. 17-19a)

1. Ananias' conversation with Saul.
 - a. His message given: "*The Lord Jesus – the One who appeared to you on the road – sent me. . .*" Ananias gives further evidence that Paul actually saw the risen Lord on the Damascus road.
 - b. His purpose revealed: Two purposes stated by Ananias:
 - 1) So you may see again.
 - 2) Be filled with the Holy Spirit.
2. The result of Ananias' action.
 - a. Scales fell from Saul's eyes – he could see again. "*And at that very time I looked up at him*" (Acts 22:13).
 - b. He arose and was baptized (Acts 22:16). Apparently it was in his baptism that Saul received the Spirit both to indwell and to empower.
 - c. He ate and regained his strength. That he now eats following his baptism implies that the sense of burden and remorse is gone.

THE PREACHING OF SAUL IN DAMASCUS (vs. 19b-22)

A. The Depth of Saul's Conversion

1. He began to preach in the Synagogues.
 - a. **The content** of his preaching – that “Jesus is the Son of God.”
 - b. **The power** by which he preached – the Holy Spirit.
 - c. **The response.** Astonishment was the response of the crowd – not at his message but at the one doing the preaching.
3. Saul became stronger and stronger in his preaching (v. 22). See Galatians 1:15.
 - a. Saul would give the reasons for the change he had made, the reasons for believing that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God.
 - b. Opposition would increase against him, and Saul would necessarily have to increase “the more in strength” if he were going to be convincing.
 - c. Saul “confounded” them “proving that this Jesus is the Christ.”

B. Saul's Escape From Damascus (vs. 23-25)

1. Saul is driven from the city and goes to Arabia (Galatians 1:17-18). He spent a total of three years in Damascus and Arabia immediately after his conversion.
2. When Saul returned to Damascus from Arabia, Aretas IV tried to have him arrested (2 Corinthians 11:32).
3. Robert Jones discusses the best date for this event and arrives at a date of between A.D. 37 and 39. See *A Chronology of Paul's Life* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), pp. 30-33.
4. He escaped to Jerusalem. Through the efforts of “his disciples.”

NOTE: Imagine the trip from Damascus to Jerusalem.

“Early in the night’s journey he passed the spot where Jesus had appeared to him. We shall not attempt to depict his emotions when the walls of Jerusalem and the battlements of the temple came once more into view. As he approached the city, he saw the place of the crucifixion; and he may have passed near the spot where Stephen was stoned, and where he himself was consenting to his death. He was about to meet again, on the streets and in the synagogue, his old allies whom he had deserted, and some of the disciples whom he had persecuted.” (McGarvey, p. 187)

SAUL’S MINISTRY IN JERUSALEM (vs. 26-30)

A. Paul’s Relationship to the Church in Jerusalem (vs. 26-27)

1. He wanted to be a part of the fellowship of believers. Saul was seeking full communion with the disciples.
 - a. They were afraid of him.
 - b. Thought his conversion could have been a hoax – “...not believing that he really was a disciple.”
2. Barnabas convinced the brethren in Jerusalem of the genuineness of Saul’s conversion.

NOTE: The Christians had misgivings for several reasons: they remembered his former violence against Christians. He had been absent for three years. Had they heard of him during that time? Even if they had heard rumors about his conversion, might they not be suspicious?

B. Saul's Ministry in Jerusalem (vs. 28-30)

Paul stayed in Jerusalem for 15 days (Galatians 1:19).

1. Spoke boldly in the name of the Lord and getting acquainted with Peter and James.
2. Talked and debated with the Grecian Jews. (Perhaps in the very same synagogue where he had disputed with Stephen.)
3. His life threatened by the Grecian Jews. Paul went up to the temple to pray, and there the Lord appeared to him, telling him to flee from Jerusalem (Acts 22:17-21).
 - a. Saul tries to argue with Jesus – he wanted to stay in Jerusalem.
 - b. Jesus tells him "*Go! For I will send you far away to the Gentiles.*"
4. Leaves for Tarsus – sent by the brethren.

NOTE: Here the record leaves Saul until Barnabas will bring him back to Antioch in Acts 11:25-26, some ten years later. Subsequent events in Saul's life lead us to the conjecture that his parents did not accept him when he arrived home to Tarsus, (*Philippians 3:8 . . . for whose sake I have lost all things*), but rather disinherited him when they found out he had become a Christian.

C. Peace and Prosperity for the Church (v. 31). The church was:

1. **Being built up** – both in holiness of life and in numbers.
2. **Going on in the fear of the Lord** – reverence for Him and scrupulous obedience to His commandments.
3. **In the comfort of the Holy Spirit** – the words of counsel and encouragement which came from the Holy Spirit as He spoke through the apostles and the New Testament prophets, were the chief agents in the expansion of the church.
4. **Continuing to increase** – involved both an increase in the number of places to which the gospel was successfully carried, and a gain in the number of believers in the places where the gospel had previously been preached. The reasons for the growth – the Christians were walking in the fear of the Lord, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit!

PETER'S MINISTRY IN WESTERN JUDEA (9:32-43)

A. Peter's Ministry at Lydda (vs. 32-35)

1. Lydda was some twenty-five miles northwest of Jerusalem.
2. A man named Aeneas (a Greek name, probably a Grecian Jew) – paralyzed for eight years.
3. Aeneas healed by the power of Jesus Christ. Be sure to see that here we have another example of an instantaneous healing.
4. His healing caused many to turn to the Lord (v. 35). In the word "turn" we hear Luke telling us they heard the gospel, repented of their sins, and were

baptized into Christ, thus becoming part of the Church.

B. Peter's Ministry at Joppa (vs. 36-43)

1. Tabitha – a certain disciple (Dorcas in Greek). The “bereaved” disciples.
2. A benefactor of poor widows (v. 39). “Abounding with” tells us her life was characterized to a very high degree by these acts of kindness and charity to the poor.

NOTE: In many congregations there are thoughtful women like Dorcas who seem to have a knack for doing the beautifully helpful thing just at the right moment. What a blessing a woman like this is to the congregation, and what a loss is felt when such a woman dies.

3. The miracle performed by Peter.
 - a. Like the one done by Jesus – the raising of Jairus’ daughter (Luke 8:49-56).
 - b. The similarity: Jesus: “*Talitha cumi!*” and Peter: “*Tabitha cumi!*”

NOTE: We see again the nature and purpose of miracles, and how these signs confirmed the Word (9:42). All through the book of Acts, Luke emphasizes over and over again the purpose of miracles is to credential the message. And here, when the message is credentialed by the raising of Dorcas, there is a multitude of people who become believers.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SIXTEEN:

1. What three things did Ananias know concerning Saul of Tarsus?
 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____

2. List at least three things that Ananias would relate to and accomplish for Saul in Damascus.
 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____

3. Complete the following sentences concerning Saul's preaching in Damascus.
The content of his preaching was that _____
The power by which he preached _____
The response _____

4. Why did Saul depart from Damascus and where did he go?

5. What happened when Saul returned to Damascus some three years later?

6. How long did Saul stay in Jerusalem on this occasion, who did he get acquainted with and why did he leave?

7. List four things that was happening to the church during the period of peace and prosperity in v. 31.
 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____

8. By what is Peter's ministry characterized in the cities of Lydda and Joppa?
 Lydda: _____

 Joppa: _____

LESSON SEVENTEEN

THE CONVERSION OF CORNELIUS

INTRODUCTION:

Luke now focuses attention on one of the most significant events in all of Acts—the conversion of the first Gentile. The language used of Cornelius sets him apart for this honor. Caesarea was predominantly a Gentile city and the position of Cornelius in the Roman army betrays his Gentile background. The term “God-fearing” (*phoboumenos*) also denotes a Gentile because of its technical application to non-Jews who had not become full proselytes.

The issues raised by this event were far-reaching for the church. Would Christianity continue to be a largely Jewish phenomenon, confined for the most part to Palestine? Would believers continue to be dominated by the Jewish notion that salvation must include circumcision and the laws of separation in matters of table fellowship? Luke points to the preaching by Peter to the household of Cornelius as the resounding answer to these questions. As a matter of fact, reference will be made to this event at the conference in Jerusalem (15:6-11) where these very issues will be discussed in detail.

LESSON TEXT: Acts 10:1-48

LESSON AIM: To see the eternal purpose of God to provide salvation to Gentiles as well as Jews being carried out in the conversion of Cornelius the first Gentile convert.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Examine the character and nature of the Roman Centurion, Cornelius and how that relates to his salvation.
 2. See God’s working in the life of His apostle Peter as He uses him to bring the Gentiles into the faith.
 3. Discover that salvation for the Jew and Gentile alike is accomplished in the same way, by faith in Jesus Christ.
-

UNIVERSAL CHRISTIANITY – THE GENTILES ARE CALLED OF GOD

A. Cornelius, the Man (10:1-8)

1. An officer in the Roman army (v. 1). A centurion of the Italian band. They were usually good leaders with a steady and prudent mind, and courageously

steadfast.

2. A God fearing man (v. 2).
3. A devout and benevolent man.
 - a. He had attached himself to some of the Jewish teaching but had not become a proselyte.
 - b. He was seeking after God, and was a praying and kind man.
 - c. God heard his prayer (v. 31) since he was obviously praying for the truth or for someone to teach him the truth.
4. He saw a vision (vs. 3-6). Instructed to send for a man called Peter.
5. Cornelius' response (vs. 7-8), obedience and action – he sent servants to Joppa for Simon Peter.

NOTE: Cornelius had a beginning faith and an inquiring faith and a sincere faith, but he did not have a saving faith. This is evident from the fact that he was directed in a vision to send for Peter, the messenger of God and the preacher of the gospel and find out from him what he must do to be saved.

B. The Spirit's Instructions For Peter (vs. 9-16)

1. The men from Caesarea approach Joppa about noon (vs. 9-10). The distance from Joppa to Caesarea was 28 miles. The soldiers set out one day, came to Caesarea the next ("on the morrow"), returned with Peter the third, and reached Cornelius on the fourth day.
2. Peter is informed that he should not call any man common or unclean (vs. 11-16, 28). This was repeated three times.
3. Peter had been summoned by both man and God to go to Caesarea to the house of Cornelius.

C. Peter's Journey to Caesarea (vs. 17-24). Peter is perplexed about the vision but the Spirit, (v. 19) instructs Peter to go to Caesarea.

1. Peter took with him "certain (six, 11:12) brethren from Joppa."
2. The preparation of Cornelius was to have all his household ready to hear Peter.

D. The Providential Opportunity of Teaching and Learning, Peter and Cornelius (10:25-33)

1. Cornelius' attempted worship of Peter stopped (10:25-26).
2. Cornelius' vision and experience restated – eagerness to hear the Gospel (10:27).

E. The Conversion of the Gentiles (10:34-48)

1. God's attitude toward man (vs. 36-37).
 - a. For the first time Peter saw the universality of the gospel.
 - b. This was a fulfillment of the promise to Abraham: "*In thee shall all nations be blessed*" (Genesis 12:3).
2. A review of their present knowledge (vs. 36-43).
3. Jesus of Nazareth, Messiah, Judge and Redeemer (vs. 36-43).

- a. The promised Messiah (vs. 36-37).
- b. God anointed and seen by witnesses (vs. 38-39).
- c. His death on the cross (v.39).
- d. Able to save (v. 43).
- 4. Evidence to His deity (vs. 39-43).
 - a. The Apostles' witness (vs. 39-41). They were reliable witnesses of His life, miracles of healing, death and resurrection.
 - b. The Old Testament Prophets spoke of Him (v. 43; cf. 3:24).
- 5. The divine proof – Spirit's power was then manifested (vs. 44-47). The Holy Spirit is seen:
 - a. Witnessing to the truth – full, uncompromising (v. 44).
 - b. Bestowing power – immediate, definite (vs. 45-46).
 - c. Warranting discipleship – unhesitating, complete (vs. 47-48a).
 - d. Creating fellowship – desired, granted (v. 48b).

F. A Review of 10:44-48

1. Re-study briefly notes on Chapter 2. The Spirit was poured forth or sent by Jesus on Pentecost. Since that day the Spirit had empowered saints with miraculous gifts through the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 6:6; 8:18); but the way or manner in which the Spirit empowers Cornelius is just like the empowering of the apostles on Pentecost. In Acts 11:15, “even as” means “adverb of manner” or “in the same way.” So without the laying on of Peter’s hands the Spirit gave Cornelius the gift of tongues.
2. In 10:44 the expression “fell on” denotes empowering not indwelling. We know that they received the Spirit to empower and not indwell because they heard them speak in tongues (10:46). Cornelius merely received a gift from the Spirit and then when baptized received the Spirit as a gift (10:49; 2:38; 5:32).
3. Cornelius was not an exception to Gospel obedience (11:14). He heard, believed in Jesus, repented (11:18) and was commanded to be baptized into the name or possession of Jesus Christ (2:38).
4. Note the empowering from the Spirit did not:
 - a. Come to save him (11:14).
 - b. Sanctify him (John 17:17).
 - c. Purify his heart (Acts 15:9).

SUMMARY POINTS:

1. A good devout man is also a sinner in need of Christ.
2. God’s minister always obeys God’s message no matter how it seems to go against previous knowledge.
3. There is a difference between the Holy Spirit’s empowering and the Spirit’s indwelling. The Holy Spirit empowers whomsoever He wills to empower. The Holy Spirit indwells all baptized believers.
4. All men must obey the gospel to be saved and appreciate the universal nature of the Kingdom.

“... God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him”
(Acts 10:34-35).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON SEVENTEEN:

1. Describe the character of Cornelius.

2. God's instruction to Cornelius was what? _____

For what purpose? _____

3. List three characteristics of Cornelius' faith given in your study guide book.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

4. Describe the vision given to Peter to convince him to go to the house of Cornelius?

5. Define and explain the following words/phrases:

“Even as” _____

“Fell on” (in relation to the Holy Spirit) _____

6. Discuss briefly the means by which Cornelius received salvation.

LESSON EIGHTEEN

PETER'S DEFENSE AND THE CHURCH BUILT IN ANTIOCH

INTRODUCTION:

The eleventh chapter of Acts continues (11:1-18) the story of the conversion of Cornelius, relating Peter's defense of the case before the brethren when he returned to Jerusalem. Following this, the story shifts to Antioch and narrates the founding and early history of the first Gentile church, which was in this city. Included here is the story of the joint efforts of Saul and Barnabas and the giving of the name of Christian (11:19-26). Finally, the chapter tells of the prediction of a famine in Palestine and of the church at Antioch sending relief to meet the need of Palestinian Christians (11:27-30).

Luke next turns attention from the famine-relief work of the church of Antioch to describe how the early church was met with persecution at the hands of King Herod Agrippa I. Two serious crises in the life of the young Jerusalem church had been met already: (1) Persecution by the Jewish ecclesiastical authorities (chapters 3-4), and (2) Pharisaic narrowness shown by some Jewish Christians (chapters 10-11). Now comes a conflict with the State; and Peter, as one of the church's leaders, is again brought into prominence.

LESSON TEXT: Acts 11:1-30; 12:1-25

LESSON AIM: To see the cooperation of the saints as God builds His church in the Gentile world and persecution and release of Peter.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Hear Peter defend his actions at the house of Cornelius as the fulfillment of God's purpose of salvation to all men.
 2. See the effect of preaching in Antioch of Syria and the concern of the Jerusalem brethren for these new Christians.
 3. Learn that one effect of the gospel in the lives of men and women is in the area of sharing benevolence.
 4. Observe that persecution drives the Church to fervent prayer.
 5. Understand that God is in control of His work and He brings deliverance to His people and judgment upon His enemies.
-

THE ENDORSEMENT OF PETER'S MINISTRY BY THE JERUSALEM LEADERSHIP

A. Peter Explains and Justifies His Visit To The Gentiles (11:1-18)

1. The reflection of the Jewish thinking (vs. 1-3).
 - a. Alarmed at Peter's actions. The disputing was sharp and prolonged.

Luke uses the imperfect tense (literally “were disputing”) to describe the give and take of the controversy.

- b. “*They that were of the circumcision*” would refer to Jewish Christian leaders in the church.
- 2. Peter’s defense (vs. 4-18).
 - a. He reviews and explains the vision (vs. 4-10). He states that his explanation is in orderly arrangement.
 - b. Peter had six Jewish brethren to establish every word and deed (vs. 11-13).
 - c. Peter was to preach the Gospel so that the Gentiles might be saved along with the Jews (v. 14).
 - d. The empowering of the Holy Spirit (vs. 15-17). After an exchanging of words with Cornelius – Peter got to the message of faith in Christ and at that point the Spirit fell on the Gentiles to empower them with the gift of tongues. Peter then reflects back upon his previous experience and preaching (cf. Acts 2:17-39).
 - e. The like gift of tongues convinces the Jews that they were to be saved by faith in Christ and did not have to become a Jewish proselyte to obey the Gospel (vs. 11-18).

B. The Lord Builds His Church in Antioch (vs. 19-21)

Luke here implies that at Antioch the evangelizing of Greeks was undertaken on a broad basis for the first time. This was another step forward in world evangelism.

- 1. See Acts 8:4. Some of these faithful brethren went to the large and beautiful city of Antioch and preached the same Gospel to Jews and Greeks.
- 2. The response (v. 21). Compare Acts 2:38; 3:19.

C. The Church in Jerusalem Dispatches Barnabas (vs. 22-24). “Officially sent”

- 1. Barnabas had the spirit and qualifications for such a work (11:22-24).
- 2. Note his message – “*cleave with determined heart and mind to the Lord.*”

NOTE: They had also done this in the case of the Samaritans (Acts 8:14). We need to understand this in the light of apostolic oversight of the churches (2Corinthians 11:9) and not in any sense of Jerusalem as the “mother church.” The apostles wanted to be assured that everything was in order.

D. Barnabas Secures a Co-worker (11:25-26)

- 1. Saul and Barnabas worked in and with the local church (v. 26).
- 2. The name CHRISTIAN is given (v. 26). By comparing the use of the word CALLED – we believe that God gave this new name to His followers (1 Peter 4:16).

E. Church Co-operation (11:27-30)

- 1. It was the work of one church to send, and for the receiving church to spend.
- 2. Antioch gave according to their ability and they sent to the elders of the receiving and spending Church. This is the first mention of elders in the Church.

F. Antioch – the First Great Gentile Church

- 1. It was the place of many beginnings:

- a. The first Gentile Church.
 - b. The name CHRISTIAN is first used here.
 - c. The first systematic effort of Saul.
 - d. A new foundation for world evangelism.
2. The secret of its growth.
- a. Great preachers and teachers (11:26; 13:1).
 - b. A Church that could be exhorted (11:23, 26).
 - c. A Church that cared about others (11:28-30). They gave!
 - d. A Church that prayed for and sent men to the lost (12:1-3; 14:26).

THE PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH BY HEROD AGRIPPA I (12:1-25)

“About this time” is an indefinite way of referring to the occasion of the famine-relief effort with the churches in Judea. The death of Herod (12:23) can be accurately dated at A.D. 44, and thus these events may have occurred during A.D. 43.

A. Herod, the Persecutor, Afflicts the Church (12:1-4)

1. Herod Agrippa I (v. 1). Read in a Bible dictionary about this man.
 - a. Raised and educated in Rome.
 - b. Grew up with the Roman aristocracy, becoming friends with Claudius and Gaius (Caligula).
2. James (v. 2). the brother of John, and son of Zebedee. Note Mark 10:39 – James had fulfilled his ministry and Peter had not yet accomplished his work.
3. Peter (v. 3). Observe Herod’s motive – to please the Jews.
4. Passover and Jewish feast day (Matthew 26:2; Mark 14:1; Leviticus 23:4-8). Note Herod’s hypocrisy – pious regard for Passover (v. 4) while plotting against God’s children.

B. God’s Protective Care Over Peter (vs. 5-19). Peter’s escape from prison (5-11).

1. A time of prayer. Peter was guarded in prison, but the church was in earnest prayer.
 - a. United prayer – “the church” (v. 5); “many” (v. 12).
 - b. Unceasing prayer.
 - c. Earnest prayer.
 - d. Definite prayer.
2. A time of peace (v. 6) – Notice Peter’s three sleeps.
 - a. Of unripe experience – Luke 9:32.
 - b. Of unfaithful life – Mark 14:37.
 - c. Of unquestioning trust – Acts 12:6. Peter was sleeping on the night before he was to die!
3. Peter’s deliverance (vs. 6-11).
 - a. Peter was at peace, (Philippians 4:6-7), although death was near.
 - b. Joy among the brethren (vs. 13-17).
 - c. Peter instructs the believers to give the news to James (the Lord’s brother) and to the brethren.
 - d. Confusion among the enemies (v. 18).

C. God Visits Herod (12:20-24)

1. The occasion (v. 20).
2. The cause of God's judgment (v. 23).
3. The effect of God's judgment (v. 24).
4. Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch (v. 25).

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON EIGHTEEN:

1. For what reason was Peter called to task in Acts 11:1-18? _____

2. Who did the church in Jerusalem send to Antioch to encourage the new Christians there? _____
3. Who joined him there in the work? _____
4. What two significant things happened at this time in Antioch?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
5. Antioch was the place of many beginnings. List four of these beginnings:
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
6. Four things indicate the reason for the growth of the church at Antioch. What are these four things?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
7. What are the major events occurring in the 12th chapter of Acts?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____

LESSON NINETEEN

THE GREAT THRUST TO THE GENTILE WORLD

INTRODUCTION:

 ne thing which grows increasingly evident in the growth of the early church is the fact that it was an organized body of people. When we come to this point in Acts we enter its second and last division, extending to the end of the book. In the first division the church was centered in Jerusalem. In the second, it was in Antioch. In the first the church was made up largely of Jews; in the second, of Gentiles. In the first, the leading figure was Peter; in the second, it is Paul.

With this chapter of Acts a new division begins in this book. Luke has recorded the witness of the gospel in Jerusalem (chapters one through seven), as well as in Judea and Samaria (chapters eight through twelve). Now the spotlight swings toward the progress of the gospel as it reaches to the wider targets of the Roman world. Luke is fulfilling his theme as recorded in 1:8 in the quotation of Jesus. “*. . . and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*”

LESSON TEXT: Acts 13:1 – 14:18

LESSON AIM: The Church which began in Jerusalem is spread into the regions of the Gentile world by Barnabas and Paul.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. See how God matures a church and prepares it for evangelistic work.
 2. Discover that the gospel has a hardening effect on those who oppose it and a saving effect on those who will accept it.
 3. Learn that Paul’s sermon in Antioch of Pisidia is designed to convey the meaning of the Law and the prophets.
 4. See the gradual transition of the gospel from Jew to Gentile.
-

THE FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

A. The Great Thrust to the Gentiles (vs. 1-3)

1. Prophets and teachers are worshiping and fasting (v. 1).
 - a. Barnabas’ name stands before Saul’s.
 - b. Many good teachers equal a very mature church.
 - c. Antioch of Syria – 15 miles from Mediterranean on the Orontes River. On a fertile plain between the Lebanon and Taurus Mountains. It was

- founded about 300 B.C. It was the third largest city in the Roman Empire. Capital of the Province of Syria.
- d. Teachers were used by God in building the church (1 Corinthians 12:28-29).
 - 2. The work, the call, and the commitment (vs. 2-3).
 - a. The choice made by the Holy Spirit – Barnabas and Saul (v. 1).
 - b. John Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, also goes (vs. 5, 13).
 - c. Fasting, prayers, commitment and assignment (v. 3; cf. Mark 2:18-20).
 - d. Committed by the church at Antioch (Acts 14:26-28).

B. The Missionary Message in Seleucia and Paphos (vs. 4-13)

- 1. Evangelization (vs. 4b-6).
 - a. Barnabas and Saul go to Seleucia, the sea port of Antioch, which was 16 miles away on the mouth of the Orontes river (v. 4).
 - b. Sailed about 75 miles to Salamis on the Isle of Cyprus. Barnabas evangelizes his homeland first (4:36). They preached in the Jewish Synagogues.
 - c. John Mark, in whose home the apostles prayed, went with them as a helper (v. 5; cf. 12:25).
- 2. Inquiry and opposition (vs. 6-8). – Sergius Paulus and Elymas (Bar-Jesus – a Jewish false prophet).
 - a. They pass through Cyprus from Salamis to Paphos about 100 miles.
 - b. In Paphos they met a sorcerer, a Jewish false prophet called Bar-Jesus (vs. 6-7).
 - c. In those days the statesmen used the prophets as their chief advisors and Paulus did not know that Elymas was a false prophet (v. 7).
 - d. Sergius Paulus wanted to hear Barnabas and Saul, but Elymas knew it would cause him to lose his job so he hindered him (v. 8).
- 3. Judgment – how Saul (Paul) met this opposition (vs. 9-11).
 - a. Saul, who becomes Paul and the leader from now on, saw it was time for action (v. 9).
 - b. Paul charged Elymas, to his face, with four wicked descriptions (v. 10). He was:
 - 1) Full of subtlety and mischief.
 - 2) A child of the devil.
 - 3) An enemy of all righteousness.
 - 4) A perverter of the right ways of the Lord.
 - c. Paul showed Elymas to be a fake by blinding him and rendering him helpless for a time (vs. 11-12). This is the only recorded miracle that an apostle ever worked to the injury of one's person, but it completely convinced the proconsul.
- 4. Conversion – belief instilled (v. 12).
- 5. Disappointment (v. 13) – John Mark turns back. (Cf. 15:37-40; 2 Timothy 4:11 – consider Paul's request a few years later – John has a new nature).

C. The Missionary Message in Antioch of Pisidia (vs. 14-41)

- 1. The scene – teaching in the Synagogue in Pisidia (v. 14). Antioch was a great trade center of Asia Minor.
- 2. The custom – in the Synagogue, reading the Law and the Prophets (v. 15; cf. Luke 4:16-21).
- 3. The subject (vs. 15-41).

- a. A review of Jewish history from Egypt to David (vs. 15-22).
 - b. Presentation of Jesus as David's seed (vs. 23-35).
 - c. Declaration of salvation based on the resurrection (vs. 36-37).
 - d. Offer of gospel and warning against refusal (vs. 38-41).
 - If Jesus was sent as God's Holy One, then "forgiveness of sins" can be found only in Him.
4. The design of Paul's sermon – to explain the basic meaning of the Law and prophets:
- a. Jehovah is a benevolent deliverer and Savior (vs. 17-22).
 - b. Messiah was promised in the Old Testament (v. 23).
 - c. The testimony of John the Baptist (vs. 24-25).
 - d. The Old Testament Scripture fulfilled in Jesus (vs. 26-29).
 - e. The resurrection and many appearances of Jesus (vs. 30-37).
 - f. Remission of sins through Jesus (vs. 38-39).
 - g. Conclusion and warning (vs. 40-41).
- D. The Missionary Results in Antioch (vs. 42-52).** As Paul fully intended, the Gentiles were captivated by the idea that salvation also included them.
1. Hearty acceptance by the Gentiles (vs. 42, 44, 48-49).
 2. Intense opposition by the Jews (vs. 45-47, 50).
 3. Great opportunity (vs. 46-48, 51-52).
 - a. For Gentiles (vs. 46-48, 51).
 - b. For the gospel (v. 49). Word spread throughout "all the region."
 - c. For gospel preachers (v. 52). Disciples filled with joy and Holy Spirit.

THE EFFECT OF THE GOSPEL IN ICONIUM & LYSTRA (14:1-18)

- A. The Progress of the Gospel (vs. 1-7).** The events and results in Iconium.
1. The success of the gospel (v. 1). A great multitude believed, both Jews and Greeks.
 2. Opposition to the Gospel (v. 2). Disbelieving Jews and embittered Gentiles.
 3. Testimony accompanied by confirming miracles (v. 3).
 4. Threatening danger and escape (vs. 4-7). Activity caused division among the city.
 - a. Persecution by Jews and Gentiles and rulers.
 - b. Departure of Paul and Barnabas to Lystra.
- B. Success and Failure at Lystra (vs. 8-18)**
1. The Power (vs. 8-10) – healing of a lame man at Lystra.
 - a. Lame from birth.
 - b. Faith enough to be made well.
 - c. Immediate healing.
 2. The popularity (vs. 11-13) – "worshiped" at Lystra.
 - a. Mistaken identity – (Paul – Hermes and Barnabas – Zeus).
 - b. Misdirected worship.
 3. The plea (vs. 14-19) – preaching at Lystra.
 - a. Note the application: God of nature (v. 15) and of history (v. 16) is also God of providence (v. 17) and grace (vs. 21-23).
 - b. Note the results: Persecution – death – resurrection.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON NINETEEN:

1. What church became the great missionary church to the Gentiles?

2. From 13:1-3, what were the ingredients which made this church mature and evangelistic?

3. Who was chosen to begin this great evangelistic thrust and how were they commissioned?

4. What was the first stop of the missionaries and what two people did they encounter there?

5. What two significant events happened on this first stop?
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____
6. Where was their second stop, where did they preach and of what four things did the subject consist?
 The Place: _____
 Where they preached: _____
 Four things covered by the sermon:
 1) _____
 2) _____
 3) _____
 4) _____
7. What two results did Paul have concerning his preaching in Antioch of Pisidia?
 1) _____
 2) _____
8. What were the next two stops on this missionary journey?
 1) _____ 2) _____
9. What remarkable event occurs at this last place? _____

(Consult a map of Paul's first missionary journey in your Bible or a Bible atlas)

LESSON TWENTY

THE GREAT THRUST TO THE GENTILE WORLD (II)

INTRODUCTION:

Trouble would not stay away from the apostles. Though the word “then” may imply some time lapse in which Paul and Barnabas ministered in Lystra, the work was cut short. Paul was stoned and left for dead at Lystra. However he got up went back into the city and left the next day for Derbe. Here the apostles preached “the good news” and saw “a large number of disciples” won for the Lord. From here they begin their journey back to Antioch strengthening the churches as they went appointing elders in each church and encourage them to remain committed to the Lord.

Luke now reports on the event which paves the way for the rest of the Book of Acts. The conference at Jerusalem makes it possible for the mission efforts of Paul. These efforts dominate the rest of Luke’s report on the spread of the gospel. He has related how the interest in converting Gentiles began with the conversion of Cornelius (10:1-11:18) and the outreach of Antioch (11:19-24). Then came the first missionary journey with its concentration on Gentiles (13:1-14:28). Appropriately enough, Luke now turns to some of the dissension caused by the entrance of Gentiles into the church and how it was handled.

LESSON TEXT: Acts 14:19-28; 15:1-34

LESSON AIM: To discover that the Gentiles and Jews are to be saved in the same manner, by God’s grace by faith apart from the Law.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Discover that new Christians need to be confirmed and strengthened in the faith.
 2. Learn that the problem of “grace plus law” in Antioch results in a conference at Jerusalem to resolve the issue.
 3. See the solution to the problem according to Peter and Paul.
 4. Learn of James’ judgment and its agreement with the Old Testament prophets.
 5. See the conclusion according to the Holy Spirit and the effect of the letter in Antioch.
-

LYSTRA, DERBE AND RETURN TO ANTIOCH (14:19-28)

A. The Stoning of Paul. Four possibilities:

1. Paul was not dead but only knocked out. This seems to minimize the severity of the stoning which Paul considered to be one of his greatest persecutions.

(See 2 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Timothy 3:11).

2. Some say that Paul was just playing “possum.” This is wholly improbable.
3. Others say that he was badly hurt but that Lois and Eunice quickly administered first-aid and revived him. Verse 20 will not allow this to be the case – “he got up and walked back into the city.”
4. Others understand that Paul was actually dead, and that his soul went out of his body and went up into what he calls the third heaven (paradise). (See 2 Corinthians 12:1ff) **This can be the only correct conclusion!**

B. More Conversions and Strengthening the Converts (vs. 20-28)

1. The program (vs. 20-21a).
 - a. Preaching and teaching (vs. 20-21a).
 - b. Discipling (vs. 21b-22). Encouraged to continue in the faith.
 - c. Organizing (v. 23). They appointed elders in every church.
2. The praise (vs. 24-28).

NOTE: This is the record of the first missionary meeting in the church, with the report from the field. These men had done all that the Holy Spirit had intended for them to do. They had accomplished the missionary task to which they had been assigned.

3. God had protected and guided them during the journey (v. 27). “With them” is an interesting expression; it loses some of its force in English. I can drive a nail “with” a hammer – but in Greek that would take a different preposition. Or I can spend an evening “with” my family. This is the word used here. They had gone on the mission and God had gone **with** them. While He was **with** them, He performed His wonderful and gracious acts – acts of saving, of healing, of watching over His own, of advancing His redemptive purpose in this world.
4. A time of rest and renewal (v. 28). It is not possible to say with any certainty how long Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch, and expressions like this make a chronology of Acts extremely difficult to make. We hear no more about them until the council at Jerusalem in the next chapter. The first missionary journey started, probably, in 45 A.D. (just after the death of Herod in 44 A.D., Acts 12). It probably lasted through 47 or 48 A.D., or perhaps 49 A.D. As the Jerusalem conference was held in 50 or 51 A.D., we find a period of from two to four years passing in the words of this verse.

(Gareth L. Reese, *New Testament History, Acts*, College Press, Joplin, Missouri, p. 525.)

DISCUSSION AMONG BRETHREN ABOUT GENTILE FREEDOM (Acts 15)

In chapters 10-11, the Gentiles had been shown to be entitled to eternal life. But what were to be the conditions?

A. The Battle for Gentile Christians (15:1-35)

1. The problem stated and discussed (vs. 1-6).
 - a. The difficulty (v. 1) — “On what grounds are Gentiles to be saved?”
 - b. The protagonists:
 - 1) **Paul and Barnabas** – lawyers for the accused.
 - 2) **Certain believing Pharisees** – the prosecutors.

2. The deputation (vs. 2-4) – The issue taken to the elders and apostles in Jerusalem.
 - a. The appointment (v. 2) – the church sends Paul and Barnabas (Paul went by revelation also, Galatians 2:2).
 - b. The journey (v. 3) – they told their story on the way and “caused great joy” in Phoenicia and Samaria.
 - c. The arrival (v. 4).
 - 1) Received by the church, apostles, and elders.
 - 2) They rehearsed all things God had done by them

B. The People Involved and the Problem Considered (vs. 5-21)

1. The discussion (vs. 5-21). The real issue was the all-sufficiency of the Cross.
 - a. The contention (v. 5). Circumcision and the Law is essential to salvation.
 - b. The conclave (vs. 6-21).
 - 1) Address of Peter (vs. 6-11). Peter rehearses God’s initial work among the Gentiles.
 - 2) The testimony of Barnabas and Paul (v. 12). God is continuing His work with word and wonders among the Gentiles.
 - 3) The judgment of James (vs. 13-21).
 - a) Assent to Peter’s argument (vs. 13-14).
 - b) Appeal to Scripture (vs. 15-18).
 - c) Agreement between the two (vs. 19-21).
2. Four arguments presented:
 - a. **Peter’s apostolic endorsement** (vs. 7-11).
 - 1) The example of Cornelius.
 - 2) God’s approval shown by the Holy Spirit given.
 - 3) Conclusion: Don’t test God!
 - b. **God’s endorsement through miracles** (v. 12). In the ministry of Paul and Barnabas.
 - c. **The agreement of Old Testament prophets and the judgement of James** (vs. 13-21).
 - 1) Amos 9:11-12 (prooftext).
 - 2) Stay away from association with idols.
 - 3) Do not eat certain meats.
 - d. **The decree of the Holy Spirit** (vs. 22-29).

C. Communication From the Jerusalem Meeting to the Gentile Churches

1. The decision (vs. 22-29). Note the results:
 - a. Pharisees silenced and the rest soothed.
 - b. Gentiles reassured by letter that:
 - 1) Legalist had not been authorized in their teaching (vs. 22-27).
 - 2) Compromise needed on their part because of Jewish associates (vs. 28-29).
2. The development (vs. 30-35).
 - a. Return with letter caused great joy “for consolation” (vs. 30-31).
 - b. Confirmation by Judas and Silas safeguarded and set forward principle of liberty and love (vs. 32-34).
 - c. Continuation by Paul and Barnabas of teaching and preaching the blessed aspects of body life.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWENTY:

1. In what city was Paul stoned and what are four possible explanations concerning his stoning?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
2. In Acts 14:20-28 there is a program of strengthening the converts. List the three things Paul and Barnabas used to accomplish this.
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
3. What problem arose in Antioch which caused Paul and Barnabas to be sent to Jerusalem to find a solution?

4. What was the real issue of this problem? _____

5. What was Peter's observation and conclusion concerning this problem? _____

6. What was Barnabas' and Paul's argument concerning this problem? _____

7. How did James address the problem? _____
What Old Testament prophet did he quote? _____
8. What were the four requirements for the Gentiles sent in the letter?
1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

LESSON TWENTY-ONE

THE GOSPEL SPREADS TO MACEDONIA

INTRODUCTION

After spending some time in Antioch, Paul approached Barnabas regarding a return trip to the churches they had established on their first tour. Paul's policy was not to abandon the churches he founded (see 1 Thessalonians 2:17-20; 2 Corinthians 13:1). He looked forward to strengthening these congregations.

A major disagreement developed, however, when Barnabas wanted to take John Mark along and there was no reconciliation on the issue. **Possibly the matter of the withdrawal by Barnabas from eating with Gentiles also entered into this conflict** (Galatians 2:11-12). So "they parted company," but the result to the kingdom was two mission teams instead of one. Barnabas and Mark visited the churches on the island of Cyprus.

Paul chose Silas to accompany him "through Syria and Cilicia." They departed Antioch, being "commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord." Paul and Silas would be traveling through the same cities as had been visited in the first journey. At Lystra he met Timothy, a young man "whose mother was a Jewess and a believer." Paul had him circumcised and took him along.

As Paul and Silas "traveled from town to town," they delivered "the decisions" which had come from the Jerusalem Conference.

LESSON TEXT: Acts 16:1-40 – 17:1-14

LESSON AIM: The continued spread of the gospel to the gentiles as the Holy Spirit guides Paul as to where he should preach and establish churches.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Learn of the background of Timothy and the purpose of his circumcision.
 2. Discover that the Holy Spirit led and directed Paul in his preaching.
 3. See the circumstances surrounding the conversion of Lydia.
 4. Investigate the conversion of the Philippian jailor and his household.
 5. Study the message, and effects of Paul's sermon in Thessalonica.
 6. See the attitude of the Bereans in studying God's Word and the powerful effect of the gospel in Berea.
 7. Preview Paul's approach to teaching the people of Athens.
-

PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY TOUR (Acts 16:1-40)

A. The Churches of the First Tour Revisited (vs. 1-5)

1. Timothy's parentage and circumcision (vs. 1-3).
 - a. His mother was a Jewess and a believer.
 - b. His father was a Greek and, seemingly, an unbeliever.
 - c. A young man with a good reputation among his brethren.
 - d. Until this time he was uncircumcised.
2. Apostolic decree delivered to all the churches (v. 4).
3. Churches strengthened and growing daily (v. 5). This summary follows a long list of such summaries so far in Acts (2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 9:31, 42).

B. The Spirit's Call to Evangelize Macedonia (vs. 6-10)

1. Spirit forbade Paul to preach in Asia and Bythynia (vs. 6-8).
2. Spirit leads them into Macedonia (vs. 9-10).

NOTE: This incident may answer one question relating to how the Spirit was directing the missionaries. A “vision” had been experienced once in Acts already (10:3). The Spirit now used a vision again to reveal his will for future travel, communicating to Paul the need for evangelism in Macedonia.

THE GOSPEL IN PHILIPPI (16:12-40)

A. Conversion of Lydia – First Fruits of Macedonia (vs. 11-15)

1. PHILIPPI – the chief city of Macedonia (vs. 11-12).
 - a. Philippi was “a Roman colony” and enjoyed a rich history.
 - b. Named after the father of Alexander the Great, Philip II.
 - c. Because of its status as a colony, the city was populated with many retired Roman soldiers, but there were few Jews.
2. Prayer meeting by the riverside (v. 13).
 - a. Reason: Probably no Jewish Synagogue in Philippi.
 - b. Location: Gangites River about a mile south of the city.
3. Lydia – a seller of purple (vs. 14-15).
 - a. From Thyatira, a city in Roman Asia.
 - b. A woman of some wealth.
 - c. She was a “worshiper of God” – a phrase used of Gentiles like Cornelius who were informally connected to Judaism.
 - d. The Lord opened her heart and she was baptized along with “the members of her household.”

B. The First Persecution in Greece. Paul and Silas are scourged and imprisoned (vs. 16-24).

1. A demon cast out of the slave girl (vs. 16-18). She kept following Paul “for many days.”
 - a. Paul hesitated several days – he may have known what would happen.
 - b. Paul was troubled, and he did not desire the cooperation of demons and evil people lest he would be identified with such.
 - c. The owners of the girl were furious.

2. The apostles are falsely accused (vs. 19-21).
3. The apostles are beaten and thrown in prison (vs. 22-24). Paul remembers this incident when he writes to the Corinthians about his hardships for Christ (2 Corinthians 11:25).

C. Conversion of the Jailer and His Household (vs. 25-34)

1. The joy of salvation. Paul and Silas are singing and praying in the midst of suffering as the prisoners listened. As Christians they were not cursing and demeaning those who had treated them spitefully, but singing and praying to God (cf. Philippians 4:6-7).
2. The power of God seen in an earthquake. All the prisoners released.
3. The action of the Jailer. The great question – “What must I do to be saved?” (vs. 28-30).
4. The answer of Paul and the response of the Jailer (vs. 31-34).
 - a. He believed (v. 31).
 - b. He repented (v. 32). The action of repentance – “washed their wounds.”
 - c. He was baptized – along with his household. The response of an obedient faith.
 - d. He served – The evidence of conversion – the jailer was “filled with joy” and ready to offer his home as a way of assisting the missionaries.

D. Vindication of Paul and Silas (vs. 35-40)

1. The officers offer to let Paul and Silas sneak our of town (vs. 35-36).
2. The un-condemned men demand to be publicly absolved of any guilt (v. 37).
3. The demands of Paul and the reaction of the fearful officers (vs. 38-39).
 - a. Paul and Silas were Roman citizens (v. 38).
 - b. Against Roman law to beat an un-condemned Roman citizen.
4. Paul and Silas move on.

THE GOSPEL IN THESSALONICA AND BEREIA (Acts 17)

A. Success and Persecution in Thessalonica (vs. 1-9)

1. They arrive in Thessalonica (v. 1; cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:1-13).
2. Paul preaches in the Synagogue (v. 2).
3. The content of his message (vs. 3-4).
 - a. His message was the gospel (v. 3). Notice the syllogism used by Paul: The Old Testament prophesied the Messiah must die and rise again. Jesus is the only one who did this. Therefore, Jesus must be this Messiah.
 - b. Some were persuaded (v. 4).
 - 1) A multitude of **devout Greeks**.
 - 2) Many **chief women**.
 - c. Aristarchus and Secundus of Acts 20:4 probably converted at this time.
4. The reaction of the unbelieving Jews (vs. 5-9). Motivated by jealousy enlisted bad characters from the marketplace and started a riot.
 - a. Search for Paul.
 - b. Jason and other brethren taken.
 - c. The accusation:

- 1) **They are turning the city upside down.**
 - 2) **They are opposing Caesar's decrees.**
 - 3) **They claim another king – Jesus.**
 - 4) **They trouble all the people and rulers.**
- d. Jason and the other brothers posted bond and was released.

B. Success of the Gospel at Berea (vs. 10-14)

Berea was about fifty miles from Thessalonica, a three-day journey.

1. The gospel considered (vs. 10-11). A receptive audience with reverent attitude. The Bereans did not reject the gospel on impulse, but exhibited a freedom from prejudice in their willingness to examine his message.
2. The gospel accepted (v. 12).
 - a. Converts from among the ranks of the Jews and prominent Greeks.
 - b. Resistance from Jews from another location (v. 13).
3. The gospel hindered (vs. 13-15). Notice the Berean attitude:
 - a. They were receptive – reverent attention.
 - b. They researched – involved reasoning activity.
 - c. Their responsiveness – resulting acceptance.
4. The Jews of Thessalonica cause trouble and Paul leaves.
5. Timothy and Silas stay in Berea.

C. Paul and Silas in Athens (17:16-34). Preaching in the market-place.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWENTY-ONE:

1. What was Paul's policy concerning churches he had established? _____

2. Explain why Paul and Barnabas ceased traveling together on missionary tours.

3. Give one significant event in the travels of Paul in the following places.

Lystra: _____

Troas: _____

4. Who were the first fruits of Macedonia and in what city were these converts made?

5. What was the fourfold response by the Philippian jailor to the gospel spoken by Paul and Silas?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

6. What was the four accusations made against Paul in Thessalonica?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

7. Describe the entrance of the gospel into Berea.

LESSON TWENTY-TWO

THE GOSPEL IN ATHENS CORINTH AND EPHESUS

INTRODUCTION:

he last word Paul had for his companions when they arrived in Athens was a message for Silas and Timothy to meet him in Athens as soon as possible. Silas and Timothy had “stayed at Berea.” In 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2 Paul describes how he sent Timothy to Thessalonica.

The condition of the city “greatly distressed” him. Athens was “full of idols.” No matter where he looked there were herms (pillars on which the head of Hermes was mounted). (*Acts*, Dennis Gaertner, College Press, pg. 271) Temples stood in tribute to deities with altars available to pagans for sacrificing what was really an offering to demons (see 1 Corinthians 10:20). The results of Paul’s ministry in Athens is reflected in Luke’s statement that “a few men” became followers.

Leaving Athens, Paul walked fifty miles due west to Corinth, where a great and effective work was accomplished. He had two co-workers in Corinth, Aquila and Priscilla, with whom he plied his trade of tent-making. In spite of his own fear and persecution from unbelievers, Paul stayed in Corinth “for a year and a half, teaching them the Word of God.” His next effective work was in Ephesus where he stayed only for a short time but returned latter to continue his ministry to the Gentiles.

LESSON TEXT: Acts 17:22 – 19:7

LESSON AIM: To see the effect of the Gospel as it bears fruit in the Grecian world and how it affected different cultures.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. See that the Gospel has limited effect on the intellectual folk in Athens.
 2. Learn how the Church is built in the pagan city of Corinth in spite of opposition.
 3. Discover the necessity of being baptized in the correct way and in the correct name – the name of Christ.
-

PREVIEW:

Paul in Athens, Greece (Achaia) (17:15-21).

1. Athens – center of human learning.
 - a. A city given to idolatry (v. 16).
 - b. A people given to religious activity (v. 22).

2. Paul reasons in the Synagogue and marketplace.
3. Encounters the philosophers (v. 18).
 - a. Epicureans – They viewed pleasure as the chief end of life.
 - b. Stoics – They were fatalists, living according to nature. They held that the acceptance of whatever occurs was the only rational attitude to hold.
4. Paul taken to the Areopagus (vs. 19-21).

NOTE: Council of Areopagus was powerful Athenian court. It had jurisdiction over homicide and moral questions and had great respect because of its antiquity (as the Supreme Court in the U.S.). The Romans respected it. Had supreme authority over religious matters and power to appoint public lecturers and control them.

Here assembled the noblest blood of Athens, the politicians of highest rank, the best orators, and most profound philosophers. Think of Paul being surrounded by philosophers and professors of the Athens University and lecturers who occupied chairs in the University. (For detailed study, see Cyclopaedia of Biblica, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature, McClintock and Strong, Pages 382-385.)

PAUL'S SERMON ON MARS HILL (17:22-34)

A. Paul Declares the Unknown God to Them

1. He is the Creator of all things (v. 24).
2. He is Lord of all (v. 24).
3. He is omnipresent (everywhere) (v. 24).
4. He is self-sufficient (v. 25).
5. He is the giver of life (v. 25).
6. He is the maker and determiner of nations of men (v. 26).
7. He made us to seek after Him (v. 27).
8. He will judge us through Christ (v. 31).

B. Paul Quotes One of Their Own Poets – Epimenides (v. 28)

C. He Contrasts Their Idols to the True Deity (v. 29; cf. Isaiah 44:15ff)

D. God's Desire and Demand (vs. 30-31)

1. God had every right to destroy the world, but because of His promise He had not (v. 30).
2. God has never overlooked sin that man did not bear the responsibility of it.
3. God's command to repent (v. 21). (See Acts 2:38; 2 Peter 3:9; Luke 13:3,5).
4. A day of judgment appointed (Romans 2:5,16; 1 Corinthians 1:8; Philippians 1:6,10; etc.).
5. Confirmed by the resurrection of Christ (v. 31).

E. The Consideration of the Resurrection and the Response (vs. 32-34)

Some mock, but some believe:

1. Dionysius – a member of the Areopagus.
2. Damaris – a woman.

3. A number of others

PAUL'S WORK CONTINUED IN CORINTH (18:1-17)

A. Paul's Beginning Work in Corinth (vs. 1-6)

1. The City of Corinth was 40 miles from Athens and a large seaport town.
 - a. It was noted for commercial enterprise.
 - b. Corinth was also had a wide reputation for being a very immoral city.
 - c. It is believed that Paul wrote the letters of 1 and 2 Thessalonians from the city of Corinth.
2. His co-workers in Corinth were Aquila and Priscilla (vs. 2-3).
 - a. They had the same craft as Paul – tentmaker.
 - b. They were great workers in the church. (Acts 18:24-28; Romans 16:3; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19)
3. His plan. He begins his preaching/teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath.
4. His encouragement and help. Silas and Timothy arrive and the preaching of the Christ is increased (v. 5).
5. His opposition. The unbelieving Jew's persecution and Paul's reaction (v.6).

B. The Fruit of Paul's Labor (vs. 7-8)

1. The Gospel wins over opposition (1 Corinthians 1:26).
2. Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his whole household believe.
(See 1 Corinthians 1:14)
3. Many of the Corinthians believed and were baptized.

C. The Apostle's Vision (vs. 9-11)

1. The nature of the vision – divine manifestation.
2. The exhortation to not be afraid and assurance given.
3. The result – Paul stays in Corinth for a year and a half preaching and teaching.

D. Paul's Arraignment Before Gallio (vs. 12-17)

1. His accusers – the unbelieving Jews mount a united attack against Paul (vs.12-16).
2. Gallio, a disinterested proconsul. Sosthenes (probably the instigator of the attack against Paul) beaten (v. 17; see 1 Corinthians 1:1).

E. Paul Returns to Antioch of Syria (vs. 18-22)

1. He takes Priscilla and Aquila and goes to Ephesus (v. 18).
2. Paul shaves his head – he had a vow. See Numbers 6:1-21 for a description of the Nazarite vow.

NOTE: Paul's participation in this vow demonstrated his continued sense of being Jewish. This perception is reflected in his letters, as well (see Philippians 3:4-6; 1 Corinthians 9:20-21). Though saved by faith, he saw no contradiction in participating in some of the rituals of the law of Moses.

3. He preaches in Ephesus (vs. 19-20).
4. Reports to the church and leaves on his third missionary journey (vs. 22-23).

F. Apollos in Ephesus and Achaia (vs. 24-25)

1. Apollos – the mighty preacher (vs. 24-25). “*... a learned man, with a knowledge of the Scriptures.*”
2. Apollos – the student (v. 26). Priscilla and Aquila explained “the way of God more adequately.”
3. Apollos – the defender of the faith (vs. 27-28).

G. Paul at Ephesus – Christian Experience Enlarged (19:1-7)

1. Apollos had already worked at Ephesus (See 18:24).
2. Paul’s probing question regarding the Holy Spirit.
3. Their ignorance of the Holy Spirit.
4. They were disciples having received only John’s baptism. John’s baptism – “believe on Him who IS TO COME.” They are now baptized “into the name” of Jesus placing their faith in Him who HAS ALREADY COME and died for their sins.
5. The Holy Spirit empowers them through the laying on of Paul’s hands.

H. Paul Preaches For Over Two Years in Ephesus (vs. 8-12)

1. Paul preached for 3 months in the synagogue (v. 8).
2. Paul taught for two years in the school of Tyrannus (vs. 9-10).
 - a. Discussions daily for two years.
 - b. Resulting fruit – all in Asia heard the Word.
3. God works special miracles by Paul.
 - a. Means – handkerchiefs and aprons.
 - b. Results – diseases healed and spirits cast out.

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWENTY-TWO:

1. Trace Paul's route from the time he entered Macedonia until he leaves giving the name of each city in which he preached._____

2. List eight main statements Paul makes as he declares the "unknown God" to the people of Athens.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____

3. Who were Paul's co-workers in Corinth initially?_____

4. What noted person in Corinth obeyed the gospel with his whole house?_____

5. What kind of encouragement did Paul receive in the city of Corinth?_____

LESSON TWENTY-THREE

THE ONGOING MARCH OF THE GOSPEL

INTRODUCTION:

After teaching and baptizing the disciples he first met in Ephesus, Paul's ministry in Ephesus moved to the synagogue where he was able to continue his witness for three months. After this time he moved into the hall of Tyrannus and continued to preach the Gospel for two years during which time Luke tells us that "all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the Word of the Lord." In Ephesus God worked "extraordinary" miracles through Paul, perhaps because of the strong influence of "magic" and "black arts" which was apparently very prevalent in Ephesus. A strong church was raised up here which would effectively influence the Gentile world. Luke sums up this part of Paul's work by writing, "*In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.*"

Near the end of his ministry in Ephesus a decision was reached by Paul. By now his work had established churches in provinces from Antioch to Troas and also in a ring around both sides of the Aegean Sea. Paul thus began looking for new territories to plant the gospel seed. He now concluded that he would press his mission westward to Rome. See Romans 15:23-33.

Before going to Rome he would visit Jerusalem to take the gift from the Gentile churches. With v. 16 of chapter 21, the third missionary journey of Paul comes to an end. His ministry as apostle to the Gentiles now begins a brand new phase. No longer will he travel among the churches as a free man. His apostolic climax, however, is still before him, since the Lord had determined he will preach the gospel in Rome.

LESSON TEXT: Acts 19:8 – 21:40

LESSON AIM: To see the working of God as He directs Paul's work and life in further preaching the gospel to the Gentiles.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. See that Christianity is victorious over paganism in the city of Ephesus as is manifested in the accounts of the sons of Sceva, the special miracles and the disturbance of the silversmiths.
 2. Learn of Paul's concern for the church as he instructs the elders of the church in Ephesus.
 3. Discover that Paul's third missionary journey ends at Jerusalem and he begins his five year imprisonment here in the great city.
-

PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY (Acts 19 – 21)

A. Paul Preaches For Two Years in Ephesus (19: 8-12)

1. Paul preached for 3 months in the synagogue (v. 8).
2. Paul's work in the school of Tyranus (vs. 9-10).
 - a. Discussions daily for two years.
 - b. Resulting fruit – all in Asia heard the Word.
3. God works special miracles by Paul.
 - a. The means – handkerchiefs and aprons.
 - b. The results – diseases healed and evil spirits cast out.

NOTE: Ephesus was known for its sorcerers and black arts. It is not surprising, then, that Paul came into conflict with these practitioners of magic arts. Perhaps for this reason the Lord performed special, extraordinary miracles in this place. The contrast between the power that energized Paul's ministry and that which the sorcerers trusted now became evident.

B. False Exorcists Exposed and Books of Magic Burned (vs. 13-20)

1. Seven sons of Sceva – Jewish exorcists (vs. 13-14).
2. The attempt and failure of the exorcists (v. 15).
 - a. They used the name of Jesus without authority to do so.
 - b. Evil spirits knew Jesus and Paul and was under their authority (v. 15).
 - c. Evil spirits were not under authority to these men and overcome the exorcists (v. 16).
3. The result:
 - a. Name of Jesus was magnified (v. 17).
 - b. Many openly confessed their sins.
 - c. Many believers brought their books of magic and burned them (vs. 18-20).
 - 1) Amount – 50 thousand pieces of silver.
 - 2) Result: "*So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed*" (v. 20).

C. Paul Plans to Visit the Cities of Jerusalem and Rome (vs. 21-22)

1. He sends Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia – Corinth (1 Corinthians 4:17; 16-8-10).
2. Paul stays in Ephesus a little longer.
3. It was here that Paul wrote the book of 1 Corinthians.
4. He plans to go to Jerusalem for Pentecost.

D. The Gospel's Effect on the Stronghold of Satan (vs. 23-41)

The uproar at Ephesus caused by Demetrius and the silversmiths furthered the gospel in Ephesus.

1. The mob and the silversmiths (vs. 23-41).
 - a. The speech of Demetrius (vs. 23-27). Perhaps the letter of Ephesians, glorifying Christ and His name, was written to counteract the common belief expressed in the cry "Great is Artemis (Diana) of the Ephesians."
 - b. The reaction from his fellow craftsmen (v. 28).
 - c. Some Christians taken into custody (v. 29).
 - d. Paul not allowed to appear before the crowd (v. 30).

- e. Confusion of the mob inside the theater (vs. 32-34).
- 2. The quieting speech by the town clerk (vs. 35-41). His message was two-sided.
 - a. No reason to fear for the well-being of Artemis, since she was revered in “all the world.”
 - b. Assemblies in Ephesus were required to be handled according to legal procedures.

THE CHURCH AT TROAS & ELDERS OF EPHESUS (Acts 20:1-38)

A. Paul Visits Macedonia and Achaia (vs. 1-5)

- 1. He exhorts the brethren and leaves (v. 1).
- 2. He travels through Macedonia and strengthens the church (v. 2).
- 3. He visits Greece then goes on to Troas (vs. 3-5).

B. Paul Worships With the Saints in Troas (vs. 6-12)

- 1. Paul and company stays in Troas seven days (v. 6).
- 2. Paul eats the Lord’s Supper intending to depart on the morrow (v. 7).
- 3. Death strikes during the preaching (vs. 8-10).
- 4. Paul spent all night in his farewell meeting (vs. 11-12).

C. The Journey From Troas to Miletus (vs. 13-16)

- 1. Paul walks about 20 miles to Assos after being up all night (v. 13).
- 2. Sails to Miletus in 3 days (vs. 14-16).
- 3. Did not stop at Ephesus – in a hurry to get to Jerusalem for Pentecost (v. 16).

D. Paul’s Farewell Meeting With Ephesian Elders (vs. 17-38)

- 1. Paul calls the Ephesian elders to Miletus (v. 17).
- 2. Admonition, encouragement, and warning (vs. 18-35).
 - a. Paul’s manner of life in Ephesus (vs. 18-19).
 - b. The manner and quality of preaching in Ephesus (vs. 20-21).
 - 1) Bold to preach the whole gospel.
 - 2) Taught privately and publicly.
 - 3) To both Jew and Gentile.
 - 4) The content of preaching – repentance and faith in Christ.
 - c. Paul pictures imprisonments and afflictions for himself in Jerusalem (vs.22-24).
 - d. They were not to expect to see him again (v. 25).
 - e. He testifies to the fact that he had preached the whole will of God (vs.26-27). Cf. Ezekiel 3:16-21.
 - 1) He is innocent of all men’s blood.
 - 2) He did not shrink from preaching Christ.
 - 3) He taught ALL the counsel of God.
 - f. He tells them of their duty and responsibility (v. 28).
 - 1) Give heed to yourself, watch your own life, live right yourself.
 - 2) Give heed to the church, care for it, watch over it, and help it.
 - 3) Shepherd, protect and feed the church.
 - 4) The church is precious because it cost the blood of Jesus Christ.

- g. Warning of coming apostasy (vs. 29-30).
 - 1) It will be deadly and dangerous.
 - 2) It will be from within.
- h. Be alert and remember my work among you (v. 31).
- I. Paul commends them to God and the Word of His grace (v. 32).
 - 1) It builds up.
 - 2) It gives an inheritance.
- j. Paul's attitude toward their possessions (vs. 33-35).
 - 1) He did not covet their silver and gold.
 - 2) He supported himself and others.
 - 3) The saying of the Lord concerning giving.
- 3. He closes with a prayer (vs. 36-38).
 - a. He prayed with them.
 - b. Brotherly love shown between Paul and the elders of Ephesus.

THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY ENDS AT JERUSALEM (Acts 21:1-38)

A. Paul Journeys From Miletus to Jerusalem (vs. 1-16)

- 1. From Miletus to Tyre (vs. 1-3).
- 2. Events at Tyre (vs. 4-6).
 - a. Church was at Tyre (v. 4).
 - b. Stayed seven days and is warned by the Spirit (v. 4).
 - c. Another sad parting (women and children) (vs. 5-6).
- 3. Brethren at Ptolemais (v. 7).
- 4. Paul visits Philip at Caesarea (vs. 8-16).
 - a. Philip the evangelist (Acts 8:39-40).
 - b. Philip had four prophesying daughters (v. 9).
 - c. Paul stays there several days (v. 10).
 - d. Agabus' prophecy of Paul's coming imprisonment in Jerusalem (v. 11).
 - e. The brothers' reaction (v. 12).
 - f. Paul's willingness to die for his Lord (v. 13).
 - g. Ultimate decision – “The will of the Lord be done” (vs. 14-16).

B. Paul's Conference With the Elders at Jerusalem (vs. 17-26)

- 1. Paul meets with James and the elders (vs. 17-18).
- 2. Charges against Paul: forsake Moses. Note: not to circumcise their children and observe the customs refers to “forsaking Moses.”
- 3. Paul's vow (vs. 23-26).
 - a. Purpose: to show that the charges against Paul were false.
 - b. Four men were under the Nazarite vow and became unclean before the termination of the vow (Numbers 6:2-12). They had to:
 - 1) make a sacrifice and,
 - 2) shave their heads.
 - c. Paul had two jobs to perform:
 - 1) Pay their expenses (v. 24) for their sacrifices.
 - 2) Notify the priest when the seven days of purification were completed (v. 26).
 - d. Paul could purify himself in a single day by washing his clothes, bathing his flesh and remaining unclean until evening. (Leviticus 15:1-30)

4. Explanation of Paul's actions: a matter of indifference to Paul.
 - a. Teaching on circumcision. (See 1 Corinthians 7:19; Galatians 5:6; Acts 16:3; Galatians 2:3-5).
 - b. Teaching on the Law (1 Corinthians 9:20).
 - c. Practice of vows (Acts 18:18).

C. Paul's Arrest and the Beginning of His Imprisonment (vs. 27-36)

1. Troublemakers: Jews from Asia (Acts 20:19).
2. Charges against Paul:
 - a. Teachings are false.
 - b. Brought Greeks into the temple.
3. Paul is rescued by Roman soldiers (vs. 31-34).
 - a. Cohort is leader of 1,000 men.
 - b. Stayed in tower of Antonia which stood on the northwest corner of temple and stood about 20 feet above level of court.
 - c. Paul carried out by the soldiers (v. 35).

D. Paul's Request to Speak (vs. 36-40)

1. Accused of being an Egyptian and a leader of revolutionaries (vs. 37-38).
2. Paul stands on the stairs ready to speak to the people in the Hebrew tongue (vs. 39-40).

EXTRA NOTES:

SELF EXAM FOR LESSON TWENTY-THREE

1. List at least four things that had a significant effect on the preaching of the Gospel in the city of Ephesus.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____

2. Tell why Paul stayed in Troas for seven days and explain what is significant about his stay there. _____
- _____

3. List five of the ten things Paul told the elders of Ephesus as he met with them in Miletus.

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____
4) _____
5) _____

4. Who is Agabus and what was his relationship with Paul? _____
- _____

5. What did the Jerusalem leaders ask Paul to do and for what reason? _____
- _____
- _____

6. What two charges were brought against Paul in Jerusalem and who were the ones bringing these charges?

1) _____
2) _____
3) _____

LESSON TWENTY-FOUR

GOD'S PROVIDENCE IN THE LIFE OF HIS PREACHER

INTRODUCTION:

In our study in Acts chapter 22 through chapter 28, the theme is God's providence in the life of his servant Paul. Let's pause for a moment and talk about the word providence. Romans chapter 8 verse 28 has this to say. "*And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose.*" The whole context lets us see how God works in all of these external circumstances together for our good if we love the Lord and if we are called according to His purpose.

The word providence means that God works indirectly in a non miraculous way for the accomplishment of His will in our lives. We've read in our study of the book of Acts that there were miraculous providential events where an angel would appear unto the servants of the Lord or those who needed to hear the gospel. The angel of the Lord doesn't appear and speak to people today. We have angels who minister to us and strengthen us in our work according to Hebrews 1 verse 14, but we're talking about something non-miraculous and indirect so that God will accomplish His will in and through our lives. We want to illustrate about 4 ways that God's providence cared for His servant Paul.

LESSON TEXT: Acts 22 – 28

LESSON AIM: To see four illustrations of God's providential protection of Paul as he travels to Rome.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: You will . . .

1. Wonder at God's providential oversight of Paul as he deals with the opposing Jews in Jerusalem and Caesarea..
 2. Learn of Paul's boldness as he gives his defense before Felix, Festus and Agrippa..
 3. Discover that Paul journeys to Rome to be tried before Caesar and that he will be a prisoner there for at least two years.
-

NOTE:

Since this is the last lesson in this study and since this lesson covers so many chapters, you will need to study the outline in this study guide carefully. Some of the questions will not be covered in the lecture.

GOD'S PROVIDENCE IN THE LIFE OF HIS SERVANT, PAUL (Acts 22-28)

Paul's Speech and its Effect (Acts 22)

A. Introduction: Paul's Life Before His Conversion (vs. 1-5)

1. Speaks in the Hebrew tongue and quiets the crowd (vs. 1-2).
2. His birth and education in the Law (v. 3).
3. Reminds them that he was once a persecutor like they are (vs. 4-5).

B. He Describes His Own Conversion (vs. 6-16)

1. He explains the reason for his change from a persecutor to a Christian.
2. He reviews his experiences on the road to Damascus (vs. 6-16). Cf. Acts 9:3-8.
3. Review his conversion from Acts 9.
4. Question by Saul, "What shall I do, Lord?"
5. "Arise and be baptized."

C. Paul's Mission to the Gentiles (vs. 17-21)

1. Tells about his vision (vs. 17-21).
2. Paul thought from the first that he could convince the Jews by showing them he had a reason for the change to Christianity. Cf. Acts 9:28-30.
3. The Lord sent him "far hence unto Gentiles" (v. 21).

D. The Effects of the Speech (vs. 22-30)

1. These Jews went wild at the argument that God had sent Paul to the Gentiles as he had claimed (vs. 21-24).
2. The captain's decision to scourge Paul (vs. 24-25).
3. Paul, for the second time, makes known his Roman citizenship (vs. 26-27). Cf. Acts 16:35-40.
4. There were three ways to enjoy Roman citizenship:
 - a. Conferred by the Senate for meritorious conduct.
 - b. Inherited from father who was a Roman citizen.
 - c. Birthright of one born in a free city, a city which, for some special service to the empire, was rewarded by granting citizenship to all born within its limits.
5. He could not be scourged so the captain brings him before the Jewish Council to try to learn the truth (vs. 28-30).

PAUL'S IMPRISONMENT IN JERUSALEM (Acts 23)

MAIN POINTS:

1. The Council of the Jews versus the wisdom of Paul.
2. God protects his preacher from the conspiracy of the forty.
3. Rome, the minister of God, delivers Paul, the preacher of God, to Caesarea.

A. Paul Before the Chief Priests and Council (vs. 1-11)

1. Paul has served God with a clear conscience (v. 1). A man might be a murderer and still have a clear conscience; Paul did.
2. Paul is slapped in the mouth (v. 2). Why?
 - a. Ananias could not disprove his claim.
 - b. Insult to the Council to say he lived in a good conscience to God and at the same time be brought before the Council as a criminal.
3. Paul severely rebukes the judge (vs. 3-5).

- a. Against the law to be smitten (v. 3).
- b. Apologizes to the office of High Priest (v. 5).
- 4. Paul causes dissension among the Council (vs. 6-11).
 - a. Sadducees – did not believe in a resurrection.
 - b. Pharisees – believed in a resurrection.
- 5. Paul taken by the soldiers again (v. 10).

B. A Conspiracy Exposed and Paul is Removed to Caesarea (vs. 12-22)

- 1. Paul's vision and assurance by the Lord (v. 11).
- 2. Forty Jews take an oath to kill Paul (vs. 12-15).
- 3. Plot to kill Paul discovered by Paul's nephew and he tells Paul and chief captain (vs. 16-22).

C. Paul's Journey to Caesarea (vs. 23-35)

- 1. The captain, Lysias, had the choice of one of three things that confronted him:
 - a. He could let them carry out their plan to kill Paul.
 - b. He could fight and kill the mob, knowing their plans.
 - c. He could do the wise thing – which he did.
- 2. Provisions for the journey to Caesarea (vs. 23-24).
- 3. Lysias' letter to Felix (vs. 25-30).
 - a. Misrepresentation: he rescued him because he was a Roman citizen.
 - b. No charge worthy of death (v. 29).
- 4. Paul was taken to Antipatris which was half way between Jerusalem and Caesarea.
- 5. In Caesarea (vs. 33-35).
 - a. Presented to Felix with the letter (vs. 33-34).
 - b. Kept in Herod's Judgment Hall (v. 35).

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

PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE FELIX (Acts 24)

MAIN POINTS:

- 1. More false accusations against the man of God.
- 2. God's providence protects Paul in the person of Felix.
- 3. A sermon on righteousness, temperance and judgment.

A. Paul is Accused Before Felix (vs. 1-9)

- 1. After five days his accusers arrive in Caesarea (v. 1).
- 2. They bring a lawyer by the name of Tertullus to plead their case (v. 1).
- 3. Tertullus' introductory speech (vs. 2-4).
- 4. The accusations against Paul:
 - a. A troublemaker.

- b. A mover of insurrections throughout the world.
- c. A ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes.
- d. A profaner of the temple.
- 5. When you examine him (by scourging), you will find these things are true (v. 8).
- 6. The Jews all assented and joined in the charge (v. 9).

B. Paul's Defense Before Felix (vs. 10-23)

- 1. His answer to the first accusation: That of being **an agitator of the Jews throughout the whole world** (an insurrectionist) (vs. 10-13).
 - a. Only 12 days since he went up to Jerusalem, therefore he could not have stirred up trouble in that area.
 - b. He had been away 5 days (v. 1).
 - c. In prison one day.
 - d. Leaves only six days in Jerusalem (Acts 21:27).
- 2. His answer to the second accusation: That of being **the ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes** (v. 14).
 - a. He is a member of the “way” called a sect.
 - b. However he:
 - 1) Believes in all the Law and the prophets (v. 14).
 - 2) Believes in a resurrection of just and unjust (v. 15).
 - 3) He has a good conscience toward God and man (v. 16).
- 3. His answer to the third accusation: That of being **a profaner of the temple** (vs. 17-21).
 - a. “I was in the temple making offerings” (v. 17).
 - b. “I was purified” (v. 18).
 - c. The Jews of Asia should be here to make this accusation (vs. 18-19).
 - d. The Council found no evil in him in Jerusalem (vs. 20-21).
- 4. Felix’s conclusion (vs. 22-23).
 - a. He had an accurate knowledge of this way. He did not receive all this from Paul, but by his living the past six years in Judea, therefore, he decided in favor of Paul.
 - b. Paul had liberty and was allowed to see all those who came to minister to him.

C. Paul Preaches to Felix and Drusilla (vs. 24-27)

- 1. Felix and Drusilla send for Paul to hear him concerning the faith (v. 24).
- 2. Who are Felix and Drusilla?
 - a. Felix – a slave who had been appointed governor of Judea.
 - b. Drusilla – youngest child of Herod Agrippa I (the one who had killed James and imprisoned Peter). She had forsaken her husband for Felix and was living in open adultery with him (**International Bible Encyclopedia**, pg. 881).
 - c. Felix was governor of Judea 53-60 A.D. He had the “authority of a king and the low, vile spirit of a Roman slave.”
 - d. His rule over Judea was mean, cruel, and full of trouble.
 - e. Wicked rulers like Felix have little interest in holy things.
- 3. Paul reasons with Felix and Drusilla in three areas:
 - a. Righteousness.

- b. Temperance.
- c. Judgment.
- 4. Results of Paul's sermon.
 - a. Felix shook in his boots.
 - b. Postponed his decision (vs. 25-26; cf. v. 22).
 - c. Paul imprisoned for 2 years at Caesarea (v. 27).

PAUL'S DEFENSE BEFORE FESTUS (ACTS 25)

MAIN POINTS:

- 1. God, through the low character of Festus, arranges for Paul to go to Rome.
- 2. The case of Paul causes Christianity to be discussed among governors and royalty.

A. Paul's Defense Before Governor Festus (vs. 1-12)

- 1. The Jews wanted Paul taken to Jerusalem. Even the long imprisonment had not cooled their hatred for Paul (vs. 1-3).
- 2. Festus refuses and invites the Jews to come and make their accusations at Caesarea (vs. 4-5).
- 3. Paul is arraigned and accused before Festus and he answers about the same charges that had been made before Felix (vs. 6-8). Cf. 24:10-21.
- 4. Festus – same character as Felix – willing to please the Jews at Paul's expense (v. 9).
- 5. Paul refuses to go to Jerusalem and appeals to Caesar (vs. 10-12).

B. Festus Tells Agrippa About Paul (vs. 13-22)

- 1. Agrippa and Bernice arrive (v. 13).
 - a. King of Chalcis – small district east of Jordan.
 - b. Bernice and Drusilla are his sisters (Josephus).
 - c. Son of Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:1-2).
- 2. Festus relates to Agrippa his experience with Paul.
- 3. Agrippa wants to hear Paul.

C. Paul's Case Stated Publicly by Festus (vs. 23-27)

- 1. A royally magnificent audience (v. 23).
- 2. Festus truthfully explains the accusations before that audience and Paul (vs. 24-27).
- 3. Festus is seeking something to write to Caesar concerning charges against Paul (vs. 26-27).

PAUL'S SERMON ADDRESSED TO KING AGRIPPA (ACTS 26)

MAIN POINTS:

- 1. Paul's sermon to Agrippa is designed to convert the king.
- 2. Paul is on trial for the hope of Israel.
- 3. The great appeal of Paul and the gospel to a lost and condemned soul.

A. Paul Relates His Manner of Life Before His Conversion (vs. 1-11)

- 1. Introduction (vs. 1-3). (Paul had hopes of converting Agrippa)

2. Paul's Jewish background (vs. 4-8).
 - a. Known by all his Jewish brethren (vs. 4-5).
 - b. The promise and hope of Israel (vs. 6-7).
 - c. Paul's question regarding the resurrection (v. 8).
3. Paul's former position toward Jesus (vs. 9-11).
 - a. He thought he ought to persecute Jesus (v. 9).
 - b. This he did – in Jerusalem and foreign cities (vs. 10-11).

B. Paul Reviews His Experience on the Road to Damascus (vs. 12-18)

1. Paul anticipates Agrippa's question as to why he changed.
 - a. He tells him of the light he saw (vs. 12-13).
 - b. What Jesus said to him on the road (vs. 14-18).
2. This should have convinced Agrippa.

C. Paul Now Explains Why He is in Bonds (vs. 19-23)

1. What did the vision teach him (v. 19).
 - a. Showed him his ignorance (I Timothy 1:13).
 - b. Showed him that he was a sinner (I Timothy 1:15).
 - c. His training was wrong (Acts 22:3; Galatians 1:16).
 - d. That he would have to give up his parents' religion in order to be a Christian.
 - e. His personal responsibility to divine authority.
2. Paul did only what Jesus told him to do and for this he is being tried by the Jews (vs. 20-21).
3. What Jesus told Paul to do was the same as what the prophets and Moses said should come (vs. 22-23).

D. The Conclusion of Paul's Defense (vs. 24-29)

1. Festus thought Paul was crazy. Why?
 - a. From his youth he had believed in a resurrection (see v. 5) which the pagans denied.
 - b. He persecuted to death his present friends.
 - c. His sudden change – claiming to have seen a man who had been resurrected from the dead.
 - d. Suffered danger and persecution in order to preach this resurrection.
2. Paul directs his remarks to Agrippa (vs. 26-29).
 - a. Not done in a corner (v. 26).
 - b. Agrippa believes the prophets.
 - c. Agrippa's reaction indicates he sees the purpose of Paul's speech.
 - d. Paul's desire – all men to be Christians (v. 29).

E. Agrippa's Judgment (vs. 30-32). INNOCENT!

PAUL'S VOYAGE TO ROME – WINTER OF 60-61 A. D. (ACTS 27-28)

MAIN POINTS:

1. God's providential care over Paul in his voyage to Rome.
2. Even the storm and sea cannot defeat the purpose of God.
3. The purpose of God and the prayers of Christians are fulfilled in Rome.

A. Caesarea to Fair Havens (27:1-12)

1. Paul's journey to Rome fulfilled two items:
 - a. Paul's purpose and prayer (Romans 15:30-32).
 - b. Promise of God (Acts 23:11).
2. Paul's traveling companions:
 - a. Luke – Acts 27:1 “We...”
 - b. Aristarchus
 - 1) Had come up to Jerusalem with Paul (20:4).
 - 2) He is a fellow-prisoner (Colossians 4:10).
3. Adramyttium was on the western coast of Mysia.
4. Board a large wheat freighter from Egypt at Myra.
5. From Myra to Cnidus was 130 miles. The “many days” indicates some difficulty they had (v. 7).
6. Sailed to Fair Havens (vs. 9-12).
 - a. Day of Atonement (v. 9; Leviticus 23:26).
 - b. Did not listen to Paul's advice.

B. Storm and Shipwreck (27:13-44)

1. Euroclydon (“Northeaster”).
2. Three precautions were taken:
 - a. Brought the lifeboat on board (v. 16).
 - b. Undergirded the ship by passing cables underneath.
 - c. Lowered the rigging of the ship.
3. Following day two attempts to lighten ship:
 - a. Freight thrown overboard.
 - b. Tackling thrown overboard.
4. Paul assures the crew of their safety (vs. 21-26).
5. Ship is anchored and sailors try to leave ship (vs. 27-32).
6. The people eat and wheat thrown overboard (vs. 33-38).
7. Shipwrecked on island (vs. 39-44).

C. Paul on the Isle of Melita (Malta) (28:1-10)

1. Thought he was a murderer (vs. 1-4).
2. Thought he was a God (vs. 5-6).
3. Healing of Publius (vs. 7-8).
 - a. Chief man of the Island.
 - b. Had a fever and dysentery.
4. Healed others who were sick (vs. 9-10).

D. Paul's Journey Completed (28:11-16)

1. Ship of Alexandria (vs. 11-12).
2. Brethren at Puteoli (vs. 13-14).
3. Paul is allowed to dwell by himself (v. 16).

E. Paul's Imprisonment in Rome (28:17-22)

1. Interviews with the leading Jews (vs. 17-19).
 - a. Proclaims his innocence (vs. 17-19).
 - 1) Committed nothing against the people.
 - 2) Neither against Caesar.
 - 3) Because of Jews – appealed to Caesar.
 - 4) Bound for the “Hope of Israel”.

- b. Jews' reaction
 - 1) No word from Jerusalem.
 - 2) Wanted to hear Paul regarding Sect.
- 2. Second interview with Jews (28:23-28).
 - a. Paul preaches all day.
 - 1) Kingdom of God.
 - 2) Jesus.
 - a) Law.
 - b) Prophets.
 - b. Paul quotes Isaiah 6:9-11 (cf. Matthew 13:14-15).
 - c. Results – some believe – some disbelieve.
- 3. Summary of Paul's Roman activity (28:30-31).
 - a. He dwelt two years in Rome.
 - b. He preached with freedom concerning:
 - 1) Kingdom of God.
 - 2) Lord Jesus Christ.
 - c. To all who came to him. (cf. Philippians 4:21-22).

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL (Taken from Ed Wharton's notes on God's providence in the book of Acts)

PURPOSE AND PROVIDENCE (1)

(Deliverance at Jerusalem)

(Acts 19:21-23:35)

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

I. DEFINING PURPOSE AND PROVIDENCE

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

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

II. PAUL'S REQUEST OF THE ROMAN BRETHREN (Romans 15:30-32)

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

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

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

- A. Seized in the Temple (Acts 21:17-22:29).** Delivered from the Jews the first time.
 - 1. The Occasion (21:17-26) – In the Temple.
 - 2. The Jews' Reaction (21:27-30) – Attempted to kill him.
 - 3. Paul Rescued (21:31-36) – By the Roman Tribune.

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

- B. Dissension in the Council (Acts 22:30-23:10).** Delivered from the Jews the second time.
 - 1. The occasion (22:30).
 - 2. Paul's defense (23:1-6).
 - 3. Reaction and rescue (23:7-10).
- C. A Plot to Kill Paul (Acts 23:12-35).** Delivered from the Jews the third time.
 - 1. The plot against him (vs. 12-15).
 - 2. God's deliverance (vs. 16-35).
 - a. Through Paul's nephew (vs. 16-21).
 - b. Through Claudius Lysias and 470 Roman soldiers (vs. 22-30).
 - c. Through Felix the governor (vs. 31-35).

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

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

PURPOSE AND PROVIDENCE (2)

Paul's Deliverance In Caesarea (Acts 24-26)

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

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

Rome.

I. CHRIST PROMISED DELIVERANCE

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

II. PROVIDENCE AMONG KINGS (Acts 24-26)

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

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

A. Paul and Felix (Acts 24:1-27)

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

The real character of Felix is revealed in verses 26-27. William Ramsay tells us that bribery was commonplace among Roman officials, and thus it is apparent that bribery would have set Paul at liberty. When Porcius Festus succeeded Felix, Felix "desiring to gain favor with the Jews...left Paul in bonds." It seems apparent that Felix could have released Paul quite easily but for reasons of his own did not.

B. Paul and Festus (Acts 25:1-12)

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

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

C. Paul and Agrippa (Acts 25:13-26:32)

When King Agrippa came to Caesarea, Festus reviewed Paul's case before him. Agrippa showed interest in the matter and arrangements were made for

Agrippa to examine Paul (25:13-27). Paul's defense revealed that the Jews' real agitation against Paul was religious jealousy and that he was not guilty of their trumped-up charges against him. At this "Agrippa said to Festus, this man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar" (26:32).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PURPOSE AND PROVIDENCE (3)

THE VOYAGE TO ROME, (Acts 27-28).

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

As seen previously in the period from Acts 21:27 to 26:32, God overruled in the puny affairs of Jews and Gentiles to send His preacher, not merely to Rome, but to the

Roman emperor himself! He even turned the ill winds of hell's fury to fill the sails of the ship that carried Paul to Rome.

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

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

This drama seems to fall into three divisions:

A. The First Voyage by Sea (27:1-44)

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

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

C. The Second Voyage by Sea (28:11-15)

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

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

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

A. Paul Preaches to the Chief Men of The Jews At Rome (vs. 16-28)

B. He Finds Rest Among His Brethren (vs. 30-31)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Truly all things work together for good for them that love the Lord. **BELIEVEST THOU THESE THINGS?**

QUESTION:

Write a summary of the last 8 chapters of Acts as it relates to the providence of God. Show God working in the affairs surrounding Paul's desire and intention of going to Rome. Be specific and thorough. This paper should be at least 3 pages and no more than 5 pages in length. Turn this in with your final test paper.

We hope and pray that this study has benefitted you and that it will be used to the glory of God.

Study Guide

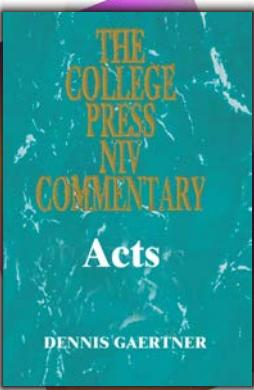
C. W. "Abe" Lincoln

Abe was born and reared on a farm near Sweetwater, Texas. He graduated from Sweetwater High School and earned a scholarship to TCU. He later transferred to Abilene Christian College and received his B.S. Degree in 1950. While at ACU, Abe met and married Dot Dollar. They had a son, Steve, and a daughter, Becky.



After college his first job was as a high school principal and football coach. Sundays were always devoted to a greater contest than athletics, as he proclaimed the Gospel of Christ. After a short time he dedicated himself full time to the work of an evangelist.

Abe's more than forty years as an evangelist took him to works in Iowa, and Odessa, Midland, and Fort Worth, Texas and over twenty-five years teaching in the *Sunset International Bible Institute* in Lubbock. In the late fifties, the Lincoln family labored with the Tex Williams family in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, for three years. The Lincolns were working locally as both evangelist and elder with the church in Seminole, Texas along with his teaching duties in the *Sunset International Bible Institute* when he went to be with the Lord in 1997.



☞ The College Press NIV Commentary on Acts is a companion book to this study.

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