

Adventure through Acts

“of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles”



I. Overview A: Acts is the record of the Holy Spirit’s **loving, redemptive** work - filling, controlling, empowering, leading, teaching, and comforting those who have yielded to Him. Acts gives us the chronicle of the **spread of Christianity** from the coming of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost to Paul’s arrival in Rome to **preach the gospel** in the world’s capital. Around 30 years covered.

- A. Author: **Luke**. Theophilus: “lover of God”, suggests a Roman official.
- B. Emphasizes the **practice** of doctrine more than the **statement** of doctrine.
- C. Furnishes principles for missionary work and reveals patterns for church life.
- D. Archaeological discoveries **confirm** the historical accuracy of Luke’s writing.
- E. **THIS IS A BIG DEAL!** A believer / follower is now one who **receives** Christ via the pursuing, indwelling, baptizing, sealing Holy Spirit, the 3rd Person of the Holy Trinity. **John 1:12-13** You are now **in** His Body. You are now **in** His Temple! – Not a Temple of wood and stone!

II. Key Elements.

- A. Jesus of Nazareth was Israel’s long awaited Messiah.
- B. Shows the Gospel offered to all people, not just the Jewish people.
- C. Stresses the work of the Holy Spirit (over 50 times!) How often do we stress His work in our lives?
- D. Depicts the New Covenant’s **practical** working in the life of the church.

III. Acts is a book of Transitions.

- A. Ministry of Christ personally to that of the Apostles (Christ in them the Hope of Glory.) **Col. 1:27**
- B. From the Old Covenant to the New Covenant.
- C. From Israel as God’s Witness Nation to the Church (both Jews and Gentiles [non-Jews]). Note: We are not talking in favor of Replacement Theology which is heretical, false teaching.

IV. **Read** Acts 1:1-11 { 3 Promises }

- A. 1st promise: Vs. 4-5 “*Wait for the gift from My Father.*” This is new! Deity choosing and wanting to live in us! Complete, enveloping emersion. Covers and fills. A Brand new closeness, intimacy, and identity. You belong. You are family. You are close and forever now identified. “**I am putting my Name on you! ☺**” **Read Deuteronomy 31:8**
- B. 2nd promise: Vs. 6-8 “*You shall receive power to witness.*” Jesus is not asking or suggesting. He is **declaring!** (**the idea is of commanding**) This is what all of my Followers will be doing. In Acts, we see entirely different men. Supernatural strength to witness, endure, and suffer rejection.
- C. 3rd promise: Vs. 9-11 “*Jesus will come back the same way He left.*” **Purpose? Witness!**

Sources: <https://1drv.ms/f/s!AkyGUvpxGPKyhgtmASCxsD8ktva> Acts 1:1-11, Pastor Paul Vawter MacArthur Bible Series, John MacArthur, Acts.



Adventure through Acts

Acts 1:12-14

They were of one accord...



I. Read Acts 1:12

- A. **They** returned...
- B. What is a Sabbath's day's walk? **Read Exodus 16:29; Numbers 35:5**
- C. Why do you think Jesus prayed a lot? Relationship, unity, example?

II. Read Acts 1:13

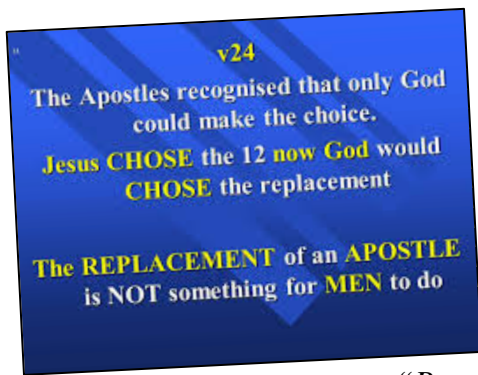
- A. There **they** are again! Could it be there was no dissention in the ranks?
- B. Knowing man's bent toward sinfulness and grudge-holding, what is amazing about these men?
- C. Look! We have Simon, the Zealot (Roman hater) and Matthew, a Tax Collector? And Peter, the denier... and, what? No fist fights? How come?

III. Read Acts 1:14

- A. King James Version: "*They all continued **with one accord** in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.*"
- B. One accord: Greek: *homothymadon*. "with one mind, one passion. This Christian community was unique. (to rush along in unison), the image is almost musical. A number of notes are sounded which, while different, **harmonize in pitch and tone**. As the instruments of a great concert under the direction of a concert master, so the **Holy Spirit blends together the lives of members of Christ's church.**"¹
- C. There is a loving, expectant urgency and fervor in this verse.
- D. How often were they in prayer?
- E. Why didn't Mother Mary hold a hateful grudge against Peter, the denier of her Son? Notice: No barriers between men and women! Equality!
- F. Jesus had brothers. James was His half brother.

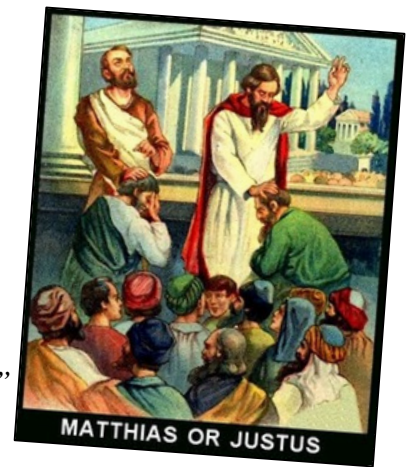
Sources: <https://1drv.ms/f/s!AkyGUvpxGPKyhgtmASCxsD8ktva> Acts 1:12-14, Pastor Paul Vawter MacArthur Bible Series, John MacArthur, Acts.

¹ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G3661&t=KJV>



Adventure through Acts

Acts 1:15-26



"Prayer is actively expressing our dependence on God."

—Pastor Paul Vawter

I. Read Acts 1:15 - 20

- A. What evidence do you see here that God is making Peter into a leader? He does not seem to be brash, impulsive, and fearful.
- B. The Holy Spirit had not come yet and still our loving God is stirring and moving.
- C. Judas's betrayal and demise are predicted in the Old Testament. **Read Psalm 69:25; 41:9; 109:8**
 - 1) Note: Peter, a rugged, loud fisherman, knew the verses.
 - 2) Also, he confirms that the Old Testament is, indeed, Scripture. **Read Psalm 119:89, 160**
- D. Scripture is not given to us by man. God (Jesus Christ, the Word) breathed exactly each Word into the human authors. They were "carried along" by the Holy Spirit. He spoke through man. Each word, comma, jot, and tittle is eternal in the original languages of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek....Jesus, the Eternal Son of God, is also Jesus (God), the eternal Word. The Bible does not **contain** the Word of God. The Bible **is** the Word of God. **Read 2Timothy 3:16-17**
- E. Pastor Paul Vawter shares that the Old Testament verses in "C." above were God-breathed into and thus penned by King David about 1000 years earlier!
- F. We, as Peter and the 120 were, in the mix of God's unfolding will. So what is your part and mine?
- G. Comment on: *"God uses His friends and foes divinely for His glory."*

II. Read Acts 1: 21 - 26

- A. Let's talk about Judas. He looked and probably acted like many church and Bible study attenders.
- B. He was trusted: the treasurer! **Read Matthew 27:4** He even decried that Jesus was an innocent man!
- C. Most likely, he knew Jesus was **the** Savior. But Jesus was not **His** Savior! Let's chat on this.
- D. Eternal tragedy: He refused to believe in and receive Him as His Personal Lord, Master, & Savior.
- E. Why is it we have the most abundantly assessable Nation re: Biblical instruction. Yet our churches are shrinking and many are simply closing? Hmmm! Is it perhaps **The Judas Affect?** Why do you think the church, say, in China is growing?
- F. Why are there no more Apostles today? Here we have Prayer walking with dependent, faithful feet.

Sources: <https://1drv.ms/f/s!AkyGUvpxGPKyhgtmASCxsD8ktva> Acts 1:15-26, Pastor Paul Vawter MacArthur Bible Series, John MacArthur, Acts.

<https://churchpop.com/2016/01/24/how-each-apostle-died-where-you-can-find-their-bones-today-2/> What happened to each Apostle?



Adventure through Acts

Acts 2:1-13

*“One indwelling, baptism, and sealing...
many fillings.”*



I. Read Acts 2: 1-4

- A. In the KJV, Acts 2:1 reads, “*And when the day of Pentecost was **fully come**, they were all with one accord in one place*”. (Bold added) What does “**fully come**” mean? **Read Leviticus 23:15-22**
Note: Pentecost, the Jewish Feast of Weeks, so called because it fell seven (a week of) weeks after The Feast of First Fruits. ¹ There were three mandatory Feasts / Festivals that Jewish men were required to annually attend in Jerusalem. They were called **Pilgrimage Festivals: Passover, Weeks or Pentecost, and Tabernacles (Tents or Booths)**. So during these festivals, the city could team with people like Green Bay, Wisconsin on a football play-off weekend. 😊
- B. In this chapter of Acts, we see the Lord saving 3000 people! This is the launching or inauguration of the Church. When the Holy Spirit comes and indwells (Once) these people and then also fills them (many times by faith), 3000 were saved. **Read Exodus 32:19-28**. When the Law was given by God through Moses, what happened? Quite a difference. The Law never saved anyone!
- C. The emphasis is neither on the sound of wind, nor the appearance of light or fire or even tongues... The emphasis is on the long awaited commencement of the Lord’s Body on earth, THE CHURCH. It should be noted that Jesus left the earth until His promised 2nd coming. But now the Spirit of the Triune, Living God, the Spirit of Christ, lives in each Believer. Each is His Temple. We are guests in His Home. We are His Ambassadors...His Witnesses. We have a new family and a new job. (**Read Galatians 2:20 and Romans 8:9**) Also important is the faith and humble obedience of the 120. By the way, you’d of thought there would be thousands instead of just 120. **Right? Why?**
- D. There is no indication there was actual blowing wind. Just the sound...

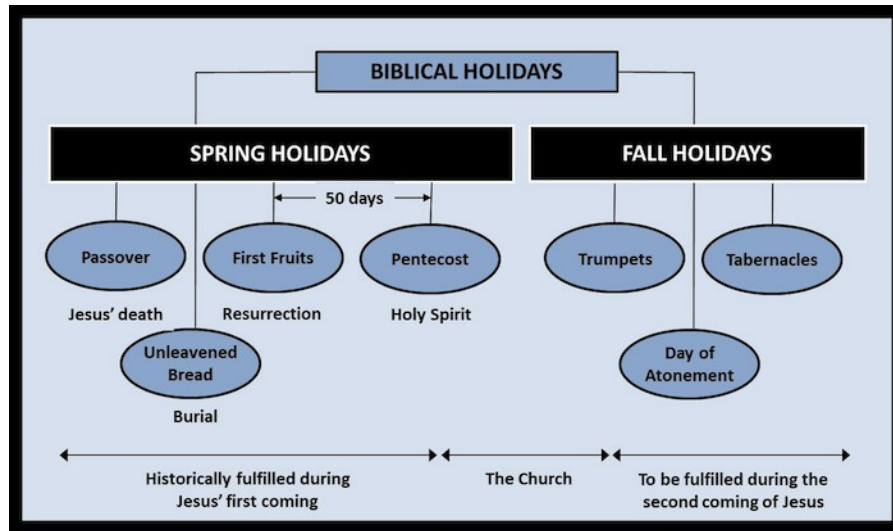
II. Read Acts 2:5-13

- A. V. 5. Every nation under Heaven means the Mediterranean World. See the Map.
- B. Were the newly indwelt and filled Believers babbling incoherently?
- C. V. 7. The bystanders thought of Galileans as country hicks with accents and common clothes.
- D. Who determines the gifting in the Believer? **Read 1Cor. 12:7-11; 12:27-13:3**. Love is key.
- E. V. 13. “If you are not being persecuted, you are not following the Lord.” Thoughts?

Sources: ¹ NIV Ryrie Study Bible Notes pp. 1493-4.

https://www.blueletterbible.org/audio_video/popPlayer.cfm?id=12587&rel=focht_joe/Act
MacArthur Bible Series, John MacArthur, Acts.

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/gotquestions.org/amp/day-Pentecost.html?client=safari>



https://www.google.com/search?q=chart+of+Annual+Jewish+Feasts&espv=2&biw=1280&bih=621&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiek9639N3QAhWoqIQKHbecA74QsAQIOw#imgre=lvOooG_Wv5bvEM%3A

“Today is the day
of Salvation!”

Adventure through Acts

Acts 2:14-41



I. Read Acts 2:14-21

- A. Peter **explains** the prophetic phenomenon they were experiencing.
- B. Jews were not to drink alcohol prior to 10:00 AM, so they weren't drunk.
- C. **Read Joel 2:28-32; Isaiah 45:22, then Isaiah 46:4** If you were a Jewish man, especially if you were taught by Rabbis, these verses would be familiar to you like John 3:16 is to us.

II. Read Acts 2:22-36

- A. Peter **proclaims** the Gospel (Good News) of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- B. What is fascinating about verse 23?
- C. **Read Psalm 16:8-11** Peter, again, is using the unquestioned Old Testament to confirm fulfilled prophesy.
- D. **Read Psalm 110:1** Again, rough fisherman Peter draws upon the Old Testament. Note: It is only the *Son of David* who sits at the Father's right hand in Heaven...not David. [i.e.: Jesus]

III. Read Acts 2:37-41

- A. Now Peter **challenges** the crowd to respond.
- B. Peter leads them by the Holy Spirit to repent and be saved. Note: The mission of the Apostles to be witnesses had now begun in full. See **Back re: True Repentance**
- C. We are to get about the work of being witnesses. Now **Read 2Peter 3:10-18**. The delay of Christ's return (2nd coming) is intended as an opportunity for men to be saved. **Read 2Peter 3:9**. It is the mercy of God that he waits.
- D. Simon Kistemaker, New Testament Scholar Emeritus at the Reformed Theological Seminary says, “*When the Christian lives in the light of God's Word and has fellowship with the Father and the Son, he is at peace with the Creator and the Redeemer. He confesses sin. He receives remission and is purified from all unrighteousness.*”
- E. Our day, no...our hour should be filled with walking in communion with Jesus where we constantly confess, constantly repent, and constantly depend. (moment by moment renewed dependence.) The Holy Spirit will produce Galatians 5:22-23 + Witness +discipling + honor.

NIV Ryrie Study Bible Notes pp. 1494-5 and 1703. Pastor Paul Vawter's sermon:
<https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C>
If time, share the story of Roger Sims and Mr. Hannover.

Evangelical repentance is repentance of sin as sin: not of this sin nor of that, but of the whole mass. We repent of the sin of our nature as well as the sin of our practice.

We bemoan sin within us and without us. We repent of sin itself as being an insult to God. **Anything short of this is a mere surface repentance and not a repentance which reaches to the bottom of the mischief.**

Repentance of the evil act, and not of the evil heart, is like men pumping water out of a leaky vessel, but forgetting to stop the leak. Some would dam up the stream, but leave the fountain still flowing; they would remove the eruption from the skin, but leave the disease in the flesh...

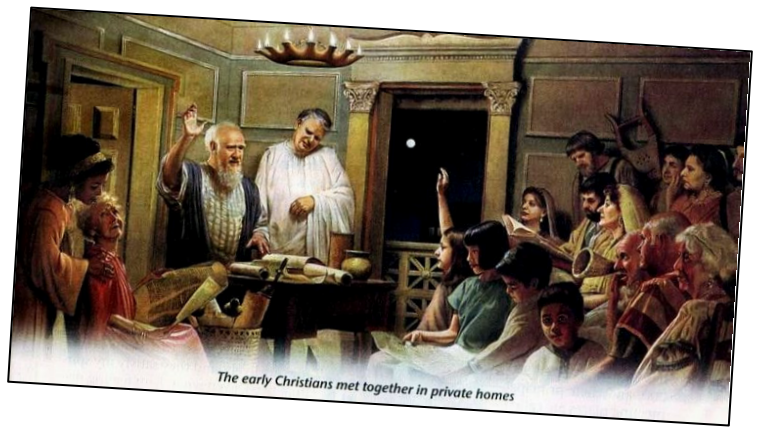
He that repents of sin as sin against God, is no longer sporting with evil, but has come to stern business with it; now he will be led to change his life, and to be a new man: also, will he be driven to cry to God for mercy, and in consequence he will be drawn to trust in Jesus.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1889) {**Bold** added}

Adventure through Acts

Acts 2:37-47

"The church that God blesses"



I. Read Acts 2:36-41

- A. What did God's new church do? How did they respond to God saving them from Hell and for Heaven? Why was a growing community of like-minded believers important?
- B. Heart to action: Repentance reveals humble faith. Obedience leads to immediate baptism by emersion. So why is infant baptism unbiblical and futile? Why do others postpone it?
- C. The Holy Spirit indwells, seals, and baptizes each new believer into the body of Christ.
- D. **Baptism:** What is it? Outward manifestation of an inward faith. Opportunity to identify and begin witness as a reconciling ambassador of Christ to the world. Why important?
- E. **Read Matthew 28:18-20.** This church held to the biblical teaching, doctrine, and pattern of God.

II. Read Acts 2:42-47

- A. Characteristics of the local church. **Look** at V. 42: Note: '*They devoted themselves to*' means to be steadfastly attentive and constant to one, to persevere and not faint, to be in constant readiness for one, to wait on constantly.' ¹
 - 1) **Implies Devotion to the Lord** -leads this Body of Believers to fear: awe of, and reverence toward God and a strenuous honoring and guarding the Apostles teaching (**Biblical Doctrine**). **Read Psalm 86:1-2, 11.** This singular devotion (an undivided, united heart) produces purity and obedience. Why guard sound doctrine? Heresy and false teaching always results! **Read 2Timothy 4:1-5. Read James 3:17.**
 - 2) Fellowship
 - 3) Breaking of bread. (Not just eating but the communal nature of the Lord's Supper: TOGETHER.)
 - 4) Prayer...much prayer.
 - 5) Wonders and miraculous signs. Where God is moving, lives will be touched in miraculous ways.
 - 6) They spent time together and shared voluntarily with all who had need. Probably many poor. ²
 - 7) Glad, sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the community's favor.
- B. Note what the Lord did in V. 47b. He added to their number daily those who He was saving. ³

Discuss being **in** the Word verses **under** the Word. Then let's pray.

¹ <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G4342&t=NIV>

² David Guzik Commentary at www.blueletterbible.org

³ <https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C>
Pastor Paul Vawter's sermons on Acts.

Adventure through Acts

Acts 3:1-16

*“In the name of Jesus
Christ of Nazareth...”*



I. Read Acts 3: 1-5

- A. Time frame: About 2 months after the resurrection.
- B. 6 AM: early prayer; 3 PM: Evening sacrifice; 6 Pm last prayer time.
- C. Let's chat about the life of a beggar back then. What did they have to look forward to?
A person with a noticeable physical deformity was **excluded** from the inner courts and thus from worship and meaningful fellowship with other Jewish people: **Humiliating, degrading, boring routine**. Have you ever been in a situation where you were humiliated and degraded? Why was the beggar's location important? What would it be like to be considered unnoticed furniture, or unfortunate trash?
- D. How about beggars today? How do you deal with beggars on the street? Difficult question!
- E. This day something different happened regarding this poor beggar. What was Peter's first command in V. 4? What did the beggar do? V. 5. What was he expecting that was in line with his bottom role in society?

II. Read Acts 3: 6-10

- A. Why didn't Peter say, "In the name of God Jehovah, or Adonai...?" V. 6.
- B. Why did this man start jumping?
- C. What would you have done? Do you think he would have been healed if he thought Peter was nuts?
- D. Was the beggar's greatest need money, food, clothes, or shelter? Were Peter and John cold-hearted conservative, nimrod, evangelical, Alt-right wing, "turn or burn" Bible thumpers?

III. Read Acts 3: 11-16.

- A. What was this healing event a prelude to? What was the most important thing that Peter and John wanted the people to focus on? **Read Mark 2:1-12**
- B. What is the first of two components of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ present here? The second vital component will appear in Acts 3: 17-26 for next week's study. Why are two components of the Gospel needed? What is sorely lacking in some "so called" Gospel presentations these days?

¹ <https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C>
Pastor Paul Vawter's Messages on Acts

Adventure through Acts

Acts 3:11-4:22

“Salvation is found in no one else...” Acts 4:12a



I. **Read Acts 3: 11-26**

- A. V. 12: Who is staring and marveling at whom? Why?
- B. V. 13: When Peter said, “**servant Jesus**”, what should the Jewish men who knew the Old Testament have done? What should they have known? **Read Isaiah 52:13-14; 53:3-6**
- C. V. 14: The listeners should have known the Old Testament references here: “**Holy and Righteous One**” - **Read Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 51:5-6; Zechariah 9:9.**
- D. V. 15: Author of Life? **Read Genesis 1:1; Now New Testament: Colossians 1:16; John 1:1-5; Hebrews 12:2-3; Hebrews 2:10; Hebrews 1:2.** (A.K.A.: Prince, Source, Originator of life.)
- E. Peter answers clearly in V. 16.
- F. V.17-26: **Read Deuteronomy 18:15.** Peter is saying, Wake up! Listen up! Jesus is **The One!!!**

II. **Read Acts 4: 1-12**

- A. How did the Big Wigs (High Priest and Jewish leaders) persecute Peter and John?
- B. V. 6: Annas and Caiaphas...Jesus met these spiritually dead Big Wigs too. **See John 18:13; 24.**
- C. This simply gives Peter and John a fresh opportunity to share with these Big Wig’s their need for repentance and salvation through the only Hope of eternity...Jesus, the Savior!
- D. Why is verse 12 so significant then and today?

III. **Read Acts 4: 13-22**

- A. The Big Wigs thought their **warnings** carried weight. Wow...were they mistaken!
- B. V. 19-20. Peter and John nail it on the head. ¹

¹ <https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C>
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Adventure through Acts

Acts 4:23 – 5:11

“Pretending?
Reputation your idol?
Putting on a front?”



I. Read Acts 4:23-31

- A. Is this a prayer of complaining or of thanksgiving? **Read Psalm 2:1-2**
- B. Are they crying out for deliverance as we do sometimes? What are they asking God for? V. 29.
- C. V. 31. What were these beloved followers filled with? **Read Acts 2:2** “filled” = Gk: *plēroō* [*Play-Rah’ O*] {to make full, to fill up, to cause to abound, to furnish, to supply liberally.} ¹

II. Read Acts 4:32-37

- A. Describe what is going on here in this imperfect, yet amazing young Jerusalem church.
- B. V. 36-37. Acts is spearheaded much by Peter, then Paul. This ‘behind the scenes’ Barnabas had a quieter, mostly unseen role. Is he of less importance...of less value to God and the church?

III. Read Acts 5:1-11

- A. What is going on in this section? Where’s God’s grace? It seems like mostly **Judgement!** ☹
- B. V. 3. What is interesting about V. 3? - “*Satan has so filled your heart*” That word “filled” is the same in I. C. above. (Acts 4:31). **Read John 16:6; Acts 5:28-29; Job 31:1-8.**
- C. Ananias and Sapphira were pretending to be more devoted to Christ than they actually were. They were more concerned with their reputation (approval from people) than honoring God! ²
- D. **Read 1Corinthians 11:27-32.** Are you or am I harboring deceit or unworthiness in our hearts?
- E. “An idol or giant is a false god. It will draw you further and further away from loving the Lord Jesus. If you have idols in your life, you are struggling. Yes, you will want Jesus, BUT you may not be willing to part with your idols. **Isaiah 44:15 says,**

*‘...But he also fashions a god and worships it;
he makes an idol and bows down to it.’*

- F. ARE YOU BOWING DOWN TO ANY IDOLS?” ³

¹ www.blueletterbible.org – interlinear online Greek Acts 2:2

² <https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C>
Pastor Paul Vawter’s Messages on Acts

³ *Embracing the Truth* by Jim and Barbara Grunseth, VIII-157



Adventure through Acts

Acts 5:12-16

“Mastered by His Love”



I. Read Acts 5:12-16

A. What are the facts found in this passage? Let's list some of them:

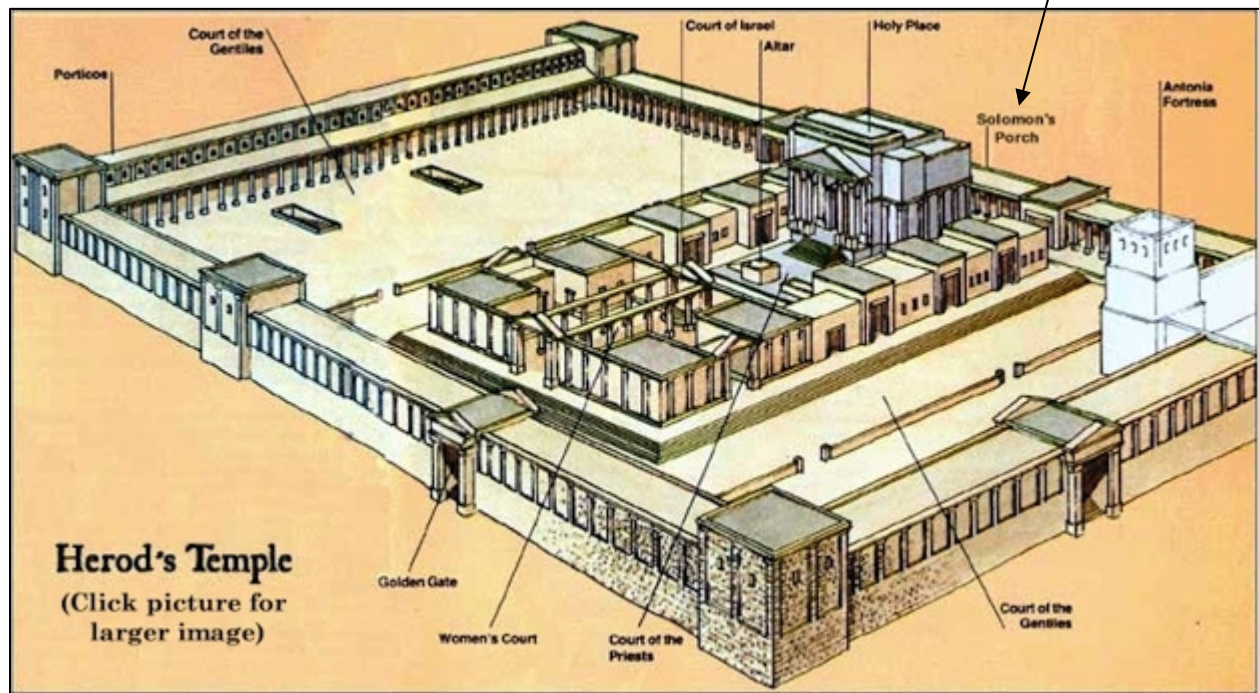
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_____	_____

- B. Why is there so much fear? **Review Acts 5:1-11.** Describe what would happen in your church should a husband and wife fall dead for hiding sin through deception.
- C. Rev. George Campbell Morgan, pastor of Westminster Chapel in the early 1900's stated, *“What filled me with awe regarding this story was not the death of Ananias and Sapphira, but it was the condition of the church. It was dominated by His Spirit and so mastered by His love that it walked in His light and it was energized by His life.”* **Discuss**
- D. Imagine. Many people were afraid to join the church! Why? How does this square with today's modern church and its miserable attempt at packing people in: **“Seeker Sensitive / Seeker Driven / Open and Affirming”** How does fear mesh with trying to attract unbelievers? Very interesting.
- E. So how, in this post-Christian culture, do we attract people to church? **Discuss**
- F. This early church sought the purity, righteousness, and the holiness (separateness: in but not of the world) as a nonnegotiable attribute. **“Sinners welcome! But lie to God and deceive and cover up your stench with no broken repentance and refuse to repent and come clean, you will be cut off from the fellowship or worse.”** – Done in firm, patient love.
- G. When God, through His church leaders, protects the church; He grows it in depth of purity.
- H. V. 15: Nothing magical about Peter's shadow. **Read Luke 1:26-38.** The Apostles were not the source of miracles. They were the Lord's witnessing, reconciling ambassadors. It is He who heals. **Read Ephesians 6:19-20; Acts 1:8.**
- I. Note: in Acts 5, we have one combined act (Ananias and Sapphira) of discipline and judgement. Many feared but God still grew the church in purity, quality, and yes, numbers.
- J. **CONCLUSION:** The Holy Spirit will not be present in a church body in the company of unconfessed and unrepentant sin. Either the Spirit or Ananias and Sapphira had to go. If we endure, accommodate, and God forbid, promote and celebrate sin and hypocrisy, there will be no power, there will be disunity, there will be a dying, soon to be dead and destroyed church: Souls lead to hell. Key? = **Read Luke 6:39-42; Matthew 18:15-17; Luke 6:37.**
- K. *“Discipline is not punishment. It is training to become like Christ. –Not optional; mandatory!”* Pastor Paul Vawter

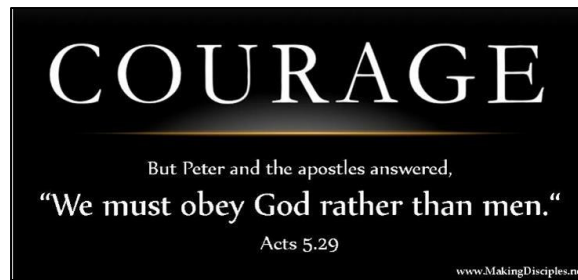
L. Rev. George Campbell Morgan... *“The church obedient is the church Spirit-filled. The church Spirit-filled is the church pure, and the church pure is the church powerful.”* **Numbers are nothing. Quality is everything!**

¹ <https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C>
Pastor Paul Vawter's Messages on Acts

Solomon's Porch or Colonnade (East side) where Jesus and the Apostles taught. ²



²https://www.google.com/search?q=solomon%27s+colonnade+picture&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjG6PWFq43SAhVEKiYKHbmEChkQ_AUICCgB&biw=1256&bih=682#imgsrc=BZgbzBxXAfsC-M



“What is success?”

“Faith does not use gimmicks and leans not on reason.”

I. Read Acts 5:17-26

- A. What groups of people are involved in this passage? Who were the Sadducees? -High Priests, Priestly class at odds with the Pharisees, the teachers of the Law. Why? Sadducees= No resurrection; very materialistic, naturalistic, and secular. They reject the supernatural. The Pharisees believed in the supernatural, angels, miracles, and the resurrection. The Herodians were a political party probably supportive of King Herod (4 B.C. – A.D. 39). They favored submitting to Herod and thus to Rome. Therefore there was much disagreement...just like today. ☺ “Many scholars believe that the Herodians looked to Herod as a **messiah**, a savior of sorts who would put the Jewish land in favor with the Roman Empire and bring blessings to them. That’s why they wanted to kill Jesus.”¹
- B. V. 18. What was a public prison? Why throw the Apostles in there?
- C. V. 20. What did the angel command them to do? **Read John 6:66-69; John 6:40; John 10:27-29**
- D. V. 26. See any similarities with protest control today? If a criminal escapes from prison, would they hang around?

II. Read Acts 5:27-32

- A. Why did Peter share the complete, pure Gospel point blank with those going to Hell?
- B. How might V. 33 have been different?
- C. Note: Peter told them they cursed the Promised, Anointed Messiah of God! Hanging on a tree. **Read Galatians 3:13; Deuteronomy 21:22-23** He was not afraid to give them the bad news.

III. Read Acts 5:33-42

- A. What do you think about Gamaliel’s reasoning? Could his logic be based on a humanistic concept of success? Do God's plans always succeed? Yes! But if something fails, is it not then of God? Not necessarily. Why? **Read Proverbs 14:12** You can’t always judge based on short term results.
- B. Pastor Paul Vawter: *“The measure of success is not whether it works but whether it conforms to the will of God.”* **Question:** Am I and are you willing to surrender not to reason, nor to logic but to Jesus, Himself, with utter abandon and with His joy and peace that passes **all** understanding?
- C. Gamaliel’s approach was additionally flawed. They already had abundant evidence to repent and believe in Christ! What evidence? Healings, feedings, raising Lazareth, Jesus’ resurrection, etc. **Read Isaiah 55:6-7; Joel 2:32a; Acts 4:12; 1John 5: 11-13**

¹ <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.gotquestions.org/amp/Herodians.html?client=safari>

² <https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C>
Pastor Paul Vawter’s Messages on Acts



Adventure through Acts

Acts 6:1-7

“Culture Wars”

“Sinners + differing backgrounds often lead to grumbling and conflict.”

“The rock of disunity will reveal what is slithering under it.”



I. Read Acts 6:1-4

- A. V1. What is going on here?
- B. What may be the bigger story here?
- C. The Hebraic Jews (in and around Jerusalem) tended to look down at the Grecian or Hellenistic Jews because they thought them as compromisers of culture, dress, traditions, and the general way of Jewish life: Too open-minded! Examples today? ☺
- D. The Grecian or Hellenistic Jews looked down upon the Hebraic Jews as narrow-minded, limiting, closed, somewhat backward thinkers! Examples today? ☺
- E. Why, on earth, would these 7 selected men have to possess wisdom and be known as full of the Spirit? Widows, the poor, waiting on tables? Can't anyone do these menial tasks?
- F. Why was prayer and the ministry of the Word so important to the Apostles, to the church, and, thus, to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission? Without these 2 priorities the following would not happen: **Read 1Thess: 5:17; Luke 10:27; Roots? = Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:34.**
- G. Additional reasons: **Read 2Timothy 3:14-17; Colossians 1:28-29; John 13:34-35; Matthew 28:18-20** **Are we congruent people?**

II. Read Acts 6:5-7

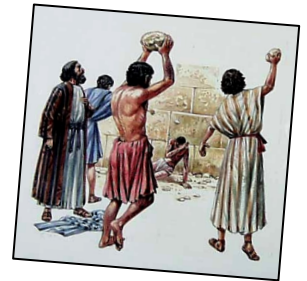
- A. Why did the Apostles lay hands on these 7 men?
- B. V. 7: Do you think the Word of God, the saving and discipling of souls, and the advancement of the church's mission would have grown and spread without prayer, the teaching of God's Word, and unity? Why? **Where does the devil attack?**
- C. How can differing backgrounds, cultures, and even doctrinal differences lead to conflict & disunity?
- D. What are some of the areas of conflict and disunity that arise in churches today? {Music?}
- E. When we take our eyes off of Jesus, His Word, and matters of eternity, we focus on everyone else's warts and ear hairs. **Major on the majors. Minor on the minors.**
- F. The absence of conflict is not necessarily a sign of unity. True Heaven blessed unity results when eyes are on Jesus, His Word, and matters of eternity and there is a godly response to both **conflict** and **need**. **Read Philippians 2:1-5**



Adventure through Acts

Acts 6:8 – 7:60

“Making a God to suit yourself.”



” Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” 2Timothy 4:2

I. Read Acts 6:8-15

- A. V.8: How do we know that Stephen had a fire in his belly?
- B. V.9, 10: Why did the arguments of the men not stand up? Have you ever seen or experienced this?
- C. V.12: Have you ever experienced angrily being **stirred up**? Wickedness almost always stirs things up. Ray Comfort says, *“All hypocrites end up in hell.”* Let’s discuss this. **Hypocrisy: ‘the practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one’s own behavior does not conform; pretense.’** -Safari Online Dictionary
- D. V. 15: “Like the face of an angel.” -My mom’s face her last day...

II. Read Acts 7: 1-53

- A. Stephen was accused of what? **Read V.6:11.**
- B. Did Stephen answer them? Instead, what does he do?
- C. **Read Isaiah 66:1-2; Proverbs 15:33** This is Stephen in a nutshell.
- D. Is there any section or aspect of Stephen’s ‘non-answer’ sermon that stands out to you? Why?

III. Read Acts 7:54-60

- A. **Read Matthew 23:23-39** Like Jesus, Stephen, in firm love, shared the bold truth with these lost hypocrites. Stephen was the first martyr killed after Jesus for his faith and for the truth.
- B. Have you ever suffered for your faith and the truth?
- C. These hypocrites did not like hearing the truth couched in firm love. **That is not our problem.**
- D. V.60: Do you know of anyone like this today? How about you?
- E. He fell asleep. Discuss: *“You cannot kill a Christian.”* ¹ ²

¹ <https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C>
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² https://www.blueletterbible.org/audio_video/comfort_ray/act/Studies_in_Acts.cfm#Acts_6 -Ray Comfort



Adventure through Acts

Acts 8:1-4

“Have you asked the Lord Jesus to fully change you?”



I. Read Acts 8:1-3

- A. What do you observe is going on in this passage?
- B. Go back to V. 7:58. Looks like another half-baked mock trial. Witnesses?
- C. What do you think the average church attender was like in the 1st church of Jerusalem?
- D. V.1: When did persecution break out in Jerusalem? What do we know about public opinion, the crowd, and even polls. Polls drive me insane!!! ☹
- E. V.1: What type of persecution was it? Public opinion rapidly changed. When have been some times in our own country when attitudes, opinions, and actions have changed. How did you feel?
- F. V.2: Many believers were scattered where? **Read Acts 1:8** Look at map at top right.
- G. V.2: Godly or “devout” men: “Gk = **eulabe’s**” = ‘taking hold well’...carefully, cautiously, reverently, surely, unwaveringly. Ever had high quality aged, properly temperatured beef?
- H. Note: These devout men mourned and grieved publicly. Against Jewish custom. Risky!

II. Read Acts 8:4

- A. Who was in control of the **scattering**?
- B. Saul began to destroy or ‘make havoc’ like a wild beast with merciless abandon! God was even using unsaved Saul’s rabid, aggressive search and arrest policy to scatter the seed and increase the field and harvest. **Read Matthew 28:18-20; Colossians 1:28-29**
- C. **Big Point #1: Persecution does not change who we are. Christ does.**
 1. Many today lack devotion to Jesus. They are either unsaved or if they are saved, they are baby Christians who are carnal, worldly, fleshly. They have little fellowship with God and His Word.
 2. Pastor Paul Vawter asks, “*How is it possible to believe what Jesus did for you and you not be transformed?*” What would a transformed soul, one that is being transformed all the day long, day after day, look like?
 3. Pastor Paul says, “*If you’ve heard about Christ, but your life is no different, then you need to turn to Christ!*” **Read Matthew 5:6; Joel 2:32b; Isaiah 45:22**
 4. We must stop holding onto our own righteousness. Rely on the fact that Jesus did it all for us! He paid the price. He took our sins and, in exchange, free gave us His Holy, Pure, Perfect Righteousness...unearned, undeserved, all grace. Our response should be gratitude and quick obedience.

- D. **Big Point #2: Persecution doesn’t stifle our witness. Fear does. Lack of love for God, His Word, and for lost souls does. If time, read Matthew 10:22-33** **Fear God or fear man?**

¹ <https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C-> Pastor Paul Vawter



Adventure through Acts

Acts 8:4-25

*“Even so, every good tree produces good fruit;
But the corrupt tree produces evil fruit.” — Matthew 7:17 World English Bible*

I. Read Acts 8:4-17

- A. Who was this Philip? He was not the Apostle but a Deacon and an Evangelist. He had 4 daughters. **Read Acts 21:8** Note: The same man, Saul to Paul, who so persecuted Christians was now staying with Philip. Amazing!
- B. V.5: How can Philip go down to Samaria if it is North/Northwest of Jerusalem where he was?
- C. Vs.5-8: How rare was a full blown, God-anointed revival in those days? How about in our day? Why was it so odd and unlikely that such a Spirit-directed revival would occur in a place such as Samaria? (*“Those dogs!”*, some Hebrews would shout.)
- D. What is going on with this guy, Simon? V. 13 says he believed but what actually did he believe and what is a work of the saving Holy Spirit? Note: V.12: Belief in Christ precedes Baptism.
- E. A major revelation- V.14-17: Now anyone from any background could be equally and most assuredly saved for all eternity and enter the Body of Christ. No exclusivity here! Yet becoming a member of the family of God (Child of God) was very exclusive! **Only through faith in Jesus!**
- F. Normally, after Pentecost, The believer is baptized, sealed, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit at Salvation. **Read Acts 10:44**; and yet **Read Acts 19:2** which might just be lack of adequate teaching. **Read Ephesians 1:3**.

II. Read Acts 8:18-25

- A. V.18-19: Why was Simon blaspheming God here? Is this the action of a *born from above* believer?
- B. It is clear to Pastor Vawter, to me, and to many that Simon was not a believer.: False Conversion!
- C. What was Simon focusing on? Was this focus on external things or on internal matters of the heart? Simon wanted to make a name for himself and make a ton of money too. **Read James 2:14-20**
- D. V.20: “let your money go with you into perdition! = ‘a state of eternal punishment and damnation into which a sinful and unrepentant person passes after death.’ – Online Safari Dictionary. What Peter is saying to Simon is, in essence, “You are headed for Hell and your money will go with you.”
- E. V.22: Salvation is a two-sided coin: Repentance + Confession. **Read 1John 1:8-9; 1Peter 1:22-23; Job 34:33; Isaiah 59:20** Salvation is a gift from God through Christ by grace through faith. It cannot be earned or lost. It must be humbly & freely received. **Read Ephesians 2:8-9, John 1:12-13.**
- F. “What happened to Noah’s carpenters?” – a good question from Pastor Paul Vawter. ¹

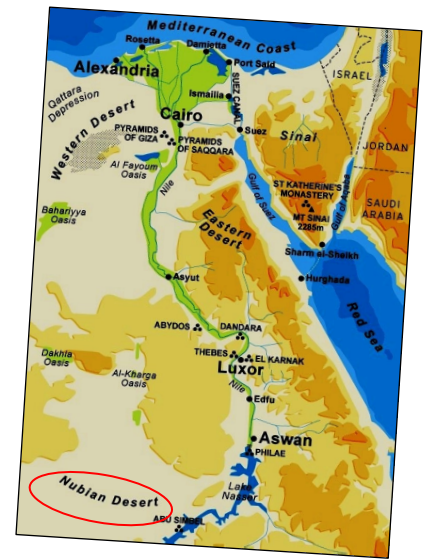
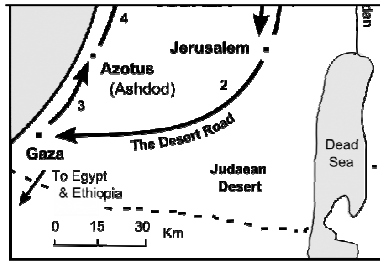
¹ <https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C>
Pastor Paul Vawter



Adventure through Acts

Acts 8:26-40

“Good News for Outcasts!”



I. Read Acts 8:26-33

- A. Who was this Eunuch? Why was he never to be accepted into the Jewish Faith?
Note: **Candice** was a title like Pharaoh, President, or Prime Minister. Since Eunuchs were usually castrated, they were considered incomplete, not whole people...thus rejected. Well, what about circumcision then? He was an outcast, an outsider. He may not have been allowed near the Temple.
- B. This story shows how far the Gospel was spreading. To the known ends of the earth.
- C. Why do you think this was quite a shock to Philip? Why do you think God honored Philip?
- D. Who else in the Bible said “Yes” to obeying God but did not know where God was leading? **Read Isaiah 53:7-8**. This chapter is bread and butter to the Jewish people.
- E. Doctor Luke in his writings seems to care for outcasts...the Rejectables. Discuss. The Gospel is for not just outsiders, outcasts, and the rejected. It is for all of us. In fact, Jesus, the Rejected One, gave us the Gospel!
- F. The proud, the foolish, the arrogant, the hardened heart, and the lover of sin will work to block the Gospel and the conviction it brings. Without the Holy Spirit-wrought conviction, there is no brokenness, no humility, no desperate thirst that only Jesus can quench. You cannot come and stay with Jesus in sweet fellowship if you are cradling and nursing wickedness and offending Him at the same time you are attempting to call Him Lord. **Read Luke 16:13** **Read 2Chronicles 7:14** This is not to be meant as judgmental. It is meant to throw a rescuing lifeline. Turn from all known wickedness and call upon Jesus to save and rescue you. **He will! Read Joel 2:13; 32a**
- G. I want to expose a **demonic gospel**. It says, “*Jesus loves you and saves you from all the hate, intolerance, bigotry, judgmentalism, hypocrisy, race privilege, exclusion, and ____ phobias that seek to hurt you, harm you, and outcast you, mock you, and label you, you poor thing in need of love, compassion, full acceptance, and never ending kindness. You are perfect and acceptable just the way you are to God. Heaven will welcome you when you die.*”
- H. Embracing this evil doctrine which now permeates our culture and much of the world will lead a soul straight to Hell. Souls will die in their sin and will receive the full, never ending wrath and punishment of God. They will have never turned from their sin and self and never cried out to welcome and receive Christ’s free gift of salvation, forgiveness, grace, and righteousness. They will not have new, eternal life in Christ. They will not go to Heaven. They will remain to experience the horrors, misery, damnation, and utter, endless despair of ever present separation from Jesus, joy, peace, and love. They will have been deceived into abandoning all hope.

The truth? 1John 3:8, “The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.”

II. Read Acts 8:34-40

- A. V. 34: The Eunuch asked a very sincere question. Was Isaiah talking about himself in **Isaiah 53:8** or someone else?

*“By oppression and judgment he was taken away.
Yet who of his generation protested?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was punished.”*

- B. The Jewish people still cannot, in general, accept the idea of their promised Messiah dying. He is to usher in the Kingdom. No more Roman rule or any domineering, anti-Semitic rule over them!
- C. What a glorious Gospel it is! We believers and followers of Jesus have the...

Right to Receive the Gospel = Right to Share the Gospel

Responsibility to Receive the Gospel = Responsibility to Share the Gospel

Grateful to Receive the Gospel = Grateful to Share the Gospel.

- D. John 6:37-40 Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB)

“37 Everyone the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will never cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 This is the will of Him who sent Me: that I should lose none of those He has given Me but should raise them up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of My Father: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” **Read 2Peter 3:9**

- E. Finally, in light of V. 37, what do you think is the difference between:

Immediate obedience vs. Delayed obedience? ¹

¹ <https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C>
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Adventure through Acts

Acts 9:1-9

*"I was blind but
now I see!"*



I. Read Acts 9:1-4

- A. Note: Chapter 8 God is expanding the Gospel beyond Jerusalem to Samaria and then to the Ethiopian Eunuch in the Southwestern desert. He, of course, would travel back to the Egyptian Nubian Desert later and most likely began to spread the Good News there. How could he contain it?
- B. Question: If you have received the Good News, how can you keep it contained to just you and your heart? What shall you and I do with this Good News!
- C. Saul to Paul: Merely the Hebrew form verses the Greek form of the name. That's all.
- D. Saul / Paul: Acts central figure, believe earnestly that this **WAY** had wickedly perverted the truth of faith in God Jehovah and the Hebraic Jewish faith. He, like ISIS today, and the Nazis of the past, felt he was right, righteous, and duty bound. I believe...sort of like a Knight in Shining Armor out to slay dragons and save fair maidens.
- E. Saul could not stop the spread of the Holy Spirit's Gospel and Eternal plan. Nice try Saul. Nice try ISIS. Nice try Nazis!!!! You were all and are all very sincere and earnest. But you are all dead wrong?
- F. V. 4: What would you do if you were Saul and Jesus **suddenly** appeared to you? Can you think of any people today or in history that you would have loved for Jesus to 'suddenly appear to'?

II. Read Acts 9:5-9

- A. Contrast: The Ethiopian Eunuch from Chapter 8 was a mutilated 'less than a whole man' outcast who was humbly searching for the **Truth**. (By the way, God will always find this type of person.)
Verses- Saul, an insider, fully accepted with great notoriety, was committed to suppressing Truth.
- B. Discuss: *"As long as a person thinks she is good enough to be accepted by God, she can never be."*
- C. We must come to our own reckoning: *"I am deserving of Hell. I am a worst type of sinner but, by grace alone, loved by this Holy God. He gave His only Son to die and go to Hell in my stead. Amazing!"* ¹ read **John 3:16-21**

¹ <https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C> Pastor Paul Vawter

² https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Sinners_in_the_Hands_of_an_Angry_God by Jonathan Edwards, July 8th, 1741



Adventure through Acts

Acts 9:10-19

138 miles from Jerusalem to Damascus



as the crow flies.



I. Read Acts 9:10-14

- A. Who in the world is Ananias? **Read Acts 22:10-16** He is a regular guy from Damascus, yes, devout and respected, but none the less, an 'old shoe' like the rest of us. ☺ Not famous, not a Big Wig, no pizzazz, no big name super Christian...probably not in or on the news. Probably not even published!
- B. What are some other people in the Bible who were not famous, not a big deal according to worldly standards, perhaps weak and fumbling that, by His grace, God chose to use?
- **Gideon** (Judges 6 and beyond) – a simple, young wheat thresher in a wine press.
 - **Ruth** (Book of Ruth) – a Moabite Widow, a very low person in society, and a pagan!
 - **David** (1Samuel 16 and beyond) a small, ruddy, dirty shepherd boy...the least of the sons.
 - **Daniel** (Book of Daniel) – a teen slave became a key Old testament figure. – He had character!
 - **Amos** (Book of Amos) –just a shepherd, wine keeper, and simple farmer became a prophet.
 - **Esther** (Book of Esther) – a wife of a king, one of many, who he king could have killed easily.
 - **Mary** (Luke 1 and beyond) – a lowly handmaiden with a servant's heart.-Mother of Jesus
 - **The Apostles** (New Testament)

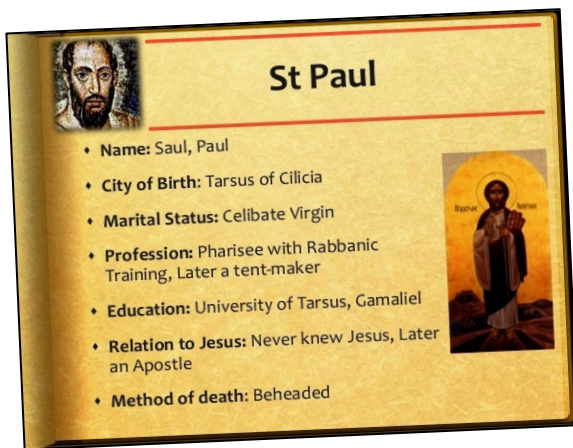
C. Read 1Corinthians 1:26-31; Psalm 25:12 and Psalm 32:8

- D. Vs. 13-14: Who else in the Old Testament was fearful and good at giving excuses?

II. Read Acts 9:15-19

- A. V. 15: How did God respond?
- B. What kind of servant does God choose to work through? – weak, inarticulate, stuttering, questioning?
- C. What things contend for getting you to take your eyes off of the Lord?
1. Do you think Ananias was afraid? Would you have been? ☺
 2. What are your greatest fears and apprehensions today?
- D. **“Worship: A preoccupation of the soul not with God's hand, nor with our need, but with God Himself.”**
This was stated by a Christian eye surgeon from Little Rock, Arkansas who is now in Heaven. ¹

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Adventure through Acts

Acts 9:20-30

"No Greater Proof..."



I. Read Acts 9:20-25

- A. The greatest confirmation of the truth of the Gospel is the power to change your life. Your personal life change is the greatest evidence that the Gospel is real, true and powerful. How has this Gospel changed your life?
- B. Was Paul rejected by many? Why? Are you afraid to share the Gospel? We have the truth. No need to be afraid. If you don't have all the answers, that is OK. Just tell the person you will look to the Bible, and in time, find the answer.
- C. V. 22: Saul used the Old Testament and, through rational and logical argument, proved that Jesus fulfilled the O. T. promises about the coming Messiah (Anointed One) They were confounded!
- D. V. 23: **Read Galatians 1:15-18**

II. Read Acts 9:26-30

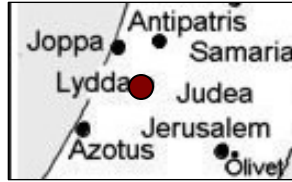
- A. Three lessons to learn.
 1. The Gospel is **reasonable** and **rational**.
 - God created men and women to be in sweet, abiding fellowship with Him.
 - Adam and Eve rebelled through sin and fellowship was broken. **Read Romans 3:23**
 - We have inherited this eternal death and sin nature. We deserve just condemnation and wrath. **-Read Romans 6:23**
 - This Creator God loves His creation and wishes to this day that none would perish. **2Peter 3:9**
 - Being a just and loving God, He initiated His eternal plan of redemption. **Read Romans 5:8; John 3:16-18; John 1:12-13**
 2. -He is God's only provision for forgiveness, redemption, and eternal life. **John 14:6, Acts 4:12**
- B. The Gospel is **confrontational**. Why? Either trust God, fear God or trust man, fear man. That's it! You are forced to make a choice. **Read 2Corinthians 6:2**
- C. The Gospel is **unifying**. Let's keep our focus on Jesus and His Word. **Read Psalm 86:11** Equal recipients, no better, no more deserving, amazed and grateful He did not destroy us or confine us to Hell! **Read Titus 3:5-7** ¹

¹ <https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C> Pastor Paul Vawter



Adventure through Acts

Acts 9:31-43



I. Read Acts 9:31-35

- A. V. 31: Why is this verse vitally important to the early church and us today? We cannot overestimate the Holy Spirit's strengthening and encouraging of us in this great battle for souls that we are in. The battle is fierce, dark, and often miserably discouraging. Just ask any pastor, missionary, or anyone taking their Christian faith and obedience to God seriously. Can you relate? According to this verse, how should we live today?
- B. Where is Lydda? (see map)
- C. **1st Miracle:** Aeneas's physical healing by Jesus through imperfect Peter. Result? V. 35.

II. Read Acts 9:36-43

- A. Tabitha: Aramaic name = Dorcas. {means 'gazelle'} What is going in this passage?
- B. **2nd Miracle:** Jesus physically raising this generous, kind woman to life from being dead.
- C. What was the result of this 2nd miracle: See V. 42.

III. Read Luke 5:17-26 and Luke 8:49-56

- A. Compare these two miracles performed directly by Jesus with the two miracles in our lesson today? What do you notice? Note: 'Talitha' in Luke 8:49-56 ('My child, or Maid') with 'Tabitha' in Acts 9:36. Very similar indeed! ☺
- B. **Read what Jesus promises in John 14:12-14.** What do you think He is talking about here?
 - 1. More miraculous than physical healing is **repentance and Holy Spirit renewal.**
 - 2. and far more miraculous than raising somebody from physical death is the **salvation of a stone cold dead soul that is given fresh, new eternal, spiritual life in Christ!** ¹

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Adventure through Acts

Acts 10:1-16

“What’s missing?”



I. Read Acts 10:1-8

- A. Cornelius was a **semi-proselyte** (a partial convert...not circumcised) to Judaism.
- B. An Italian Regiment = 1000 soldiers. Cornelius was most likely in charge of 100.
- C. He was a genuine searcher...a good, moral man who feared / respected God. He rejected Roman polytheism. He is on the **cusp of salvation. – A ripe pear.** 
- D. Seems like God is rewarding or blessing his hungry, teachable heart.
God is bringing him to this next, vital step: Forgiveness, relationship, faith in Christ, salvation.
- E. V. 3: **ODD...** Why didn't God just have the angel tell Cornelius about the saving Gospel of Jesus? Why doesn't God use angels directly today or just have His own deep voice shout to the lost from Heaven to get them saved? He wishes that none would perish. Right? On rare occasions, God does use angels or Jesus does appear in a vision or dream...especially in the Middle East where there are few Bibles or believers.
- F. **The truth?** God has, in general, clearly chosen His people (His chosen children) to be the Messengers of (bringers of the message of) salvation through personal faith in Christ by His grace. God is relying on you and me to witness, share, salt down, and get the word out concerning Jesus and His Gospel. **Read Luke 19:10**
- G. Had Cornelius's good works, sincere heart, and submissive attitude been enough to get him into Heaven, there would have been no need to bring Peter from Joppa 30 miles away. What else was needed? What is the final step required? **Read John 1:12-13; Ephesians 2:8-10; Acts 4:12**
- H. **Hell is waiting** for those who think they are good enough for Heaven by worldly standards.
1) Stop trying to be good enough. 2) Start resting in your Savior's love, grace, and righteousness!

II. Read Acts 10:9-16

- A. Peter is praying. **Why?** 1) Custom? ____ 2) Duty? ____ 3) To please people and look good? ____ or 4) He was truly dependent on God, needing His fellowship and presence. ____
- B. Want peace and direction? Seek Him. Meditate on His Word. Rest in His Presence quietly.
Read Luke 11:5-13 He is a good and kind Father...He is not harsh or punitive. He gives Cornelius and Peter exactly what they need.
- C. Why did God give all these dietary and other laws to the Chosen Jewish People? Healthier is not the reason. He wanted to separate and protect them from the corruption / wickedness of the world.
1) There is grace for us parents. God was the perfect parent, yet, His children disobeyed **often!!!**
2) You are not defiled by what you eat but what is in your heart. **Key to the New Covenant through Christ, the Promised Messiah, the Anointed One: Read Jeremiah 31:31-34.** The Mosaic Law was never intended to be the final statement and demand from God, rather a tutor to point us to our desperate need for Jesus who makes the new and lasting Covenant. Eternal, secure, familial salvation!
- D. God can make all men clean! *“The Lord is ...not willing that any should perish...”* 2Peter 3:9 ¹

¹ <https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C> Pastor Paul Vawter

Adventure through Acts

Acts 10:17-48

“Can the new faith (still so closely associated with Judaism) admit into fellowship an uncircumcised gentile?”¹



I. Read Acts 10:17-33

- A. What is going on in this passage?
- B. Why do you think Peter says “No!” to God so often? How are you and I similar to Peter? Examples?
- C. Was Peter’s vision about the sheet of clean and unclean animals really about animals and food?
- D. If Jews almost never associated with Gentiles (almost as if they were infidels to them), and you were Peter, would you be thinking that God had lost His mind or bumped His head or something?
- E. V. 20: Why do you think the Spirit said to Peter, “Do not hesitate”? Examples from your life?
- F. Where are you and I, perhaps, too rigid, stodgy, or stuck in our thinking? How have we maybe put God in a Box? When have we said “No!” to Him?
- G. V. 23: Peter invited these Gentiles in as guests! His heart is changing!

II. Read Acts 10:34-48

- A. Vs. 34-35: Why is this one of the anchor passages of the New Testament? How does it differ from the main way of thinking by the Jewish people in the Old Testament?
- B. Vs. 42-43: **Read Job 19:25-27; Isaiah 59:20-21**
- C. *“The principle subject of this chapter is not so much the conversion of Cornelius as the conversion of Peter.”* (Stott) Amazing! Peter not only **entered** a Gentile’s house but shared the Gospel too!!!
- D. How are we, as believers and followers of Jesus and His Word, the Bible to think outside the box of rigidity with dealing with the lost and carnal and at the same time maintain a proper balance between truth and mercy? (i.e.) How should we deal with gay marriage and the entire LGBTQ community and issues of bathrooms, etc?^{2, 3}

¹ Ryrie NIV Study Bible notes p. 1509

² https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide_Act/Act_10.cfm?a=1028001

³ <https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C> Pastor Paul Vawter



Adventure through Acts

Acts 11:1-18

“Are you headed in God's direction?”



I. **Read** Acts 11:1-3 Peter hears objections to his association with Gentiles.

- A. In those days in that culture, sharing a meal together was a special sign of fellowship. Peter eating with Gentiles and going into a Gentile's home were great offenses to the Jewish folks of that day.
- B. Note: In the Eastern cultures, people lived to avoid shame and embarrassment and to promote and protect family and religious honor. It still is a **Shame – Honor based culture**.
- C. What examples do we see today of Eastern based cultures or religions living out this way of thinking?
- D. How do you know if the discord or confrontational attitude in your heart is of the Spirit and not of your Flesh? Have you ever lost your cool or confronted someone harshly or in an untimely, unkind manner? What was the response?
- E. Why was it wise of Peter to take 6 men with him to Caesarea to meet with Cornelius?

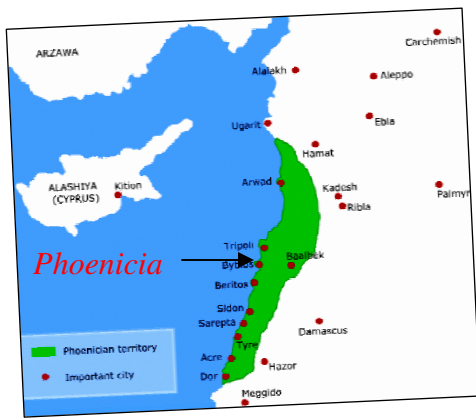
II. **Read** Acts 11:4-15 Peter explains his ministry to the Gentiles.

- A. Why do you think God has this detailed story of events explained a second time from Acts 10: 9-43?
- B. Note: The sheet Peter saw with all the kosher and unkosher animals has little to do with food. The sheet is like **the Church** having both Jews (kosher) and now Gentiles (unkosher) on it or in it **with no distinction!** This is a big deal! Why?
- C. What is the importance of the Holy Spirit falling upon them (entering them, if you will)? How could these believing Jews withhold their approval when God had given His?

III. **Read** Acts 11:16-18 Peter interprets these events by remembering the words of Jesus.

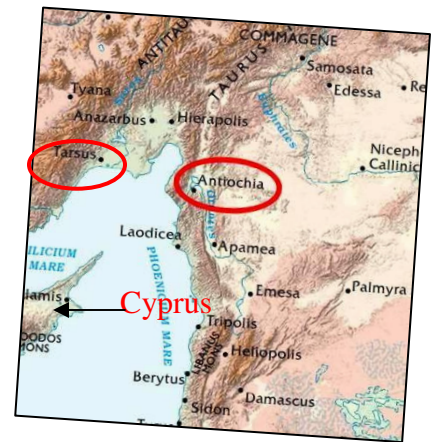
- A. **Read Mark 1:8 and Isaiah 49:6** God's direction and plans are honored by Scripture.
- B. “Activity alone isn't enough to validate a work of God. It must also be in line with God's Word.”
- C. Powerful passage! The hearts of the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem were soft enough to be guided by God. “It is a glorious thing when God's people will allow their prejudices and traditions to be overcome by God's Word and God's work.”¹

¹ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide_Act/Act_11.cfm?a=1029001



Adventure through Acts

Acts 11:19-26



“Encourage, strengthen, build up!

Seek first the King, seek Him this afternoon, and seek Him last!”

I. **Read Acts 11:19-21** A. D. 45 (‘Anno Domini’ = years after Christ’s birth)

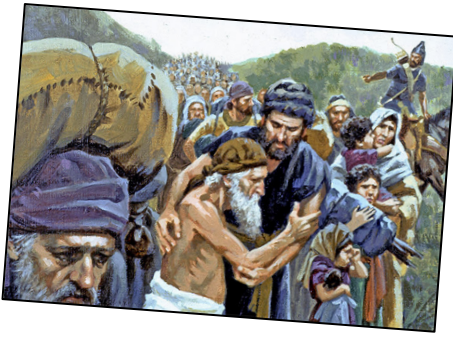
- A. Why is this new Way or faith to believe in and follow Messiah Jesus spreading north away from Jerusalem? Stephen’s Martyrdom caused it. Followers feared for their lives so many fled Jerusalem. Fled to cities near water ways. I wonder why? 😊
- B. Why was Antioch not a logical choice to spread the Gospel? Melting pot of the world, 3rd largest city in the Roman world after Alexandria and the largest Rome. Filthy, immoral, pagan, prostitution, human sacrifice etc. (Corrupt!) Gee! We were corrupt and, yet, Jesus came to save us! 😊 **Read Romans 5:8**
- C. First time the Gospel is preached and spread in a totally Gentile City.
- D. Which verse in this section is the most important? **Why?**

II. **Read Acts 11:22-24** (Barnabas: Nickname which means *Son of Encouragement*) Real name is Joseph.

- A. V. 23: What do you think the ‘grace of God’ looked like? How about today?
- B. Why do you think God used Barnabas who was probably quite a bit older than Paul? V. 24.
- C. Note: Barnabas’s qualifications were similar to those of Stephens. Not so much with education, or great talents, but humble character of the inner man...the heart that is sold out to Jesus.

III. **Read Acts 11:25-26**

- A. Why do you think Barnabas went to enlist Saul, now Paul (Greek) a 2 day’s journey on foot to Tarsus, Paul’s home stomping grounds?
- B. 3 principles re: the life of Barnabas:
 - 1] Recognized the importance of discipleship, mentoring and building up with coaching and encouragement.
 - 2] Recognized hidden talent and heart in other people. He saw potential in others that many would discard.
 - 3] Never interested in receiving credit or being in the spot light.

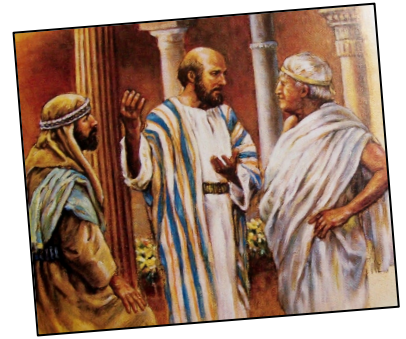


Adventure through Acts

Acts 11:27-30

“Stewardship: Never wallet; Always heart.”

“Gratitude”

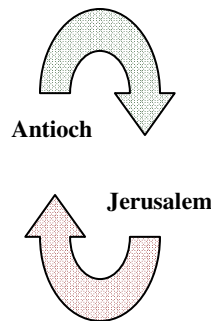


I. **Read** Acts 11:27-28 Three elements unique and fascinating.

- A. This is one example of a New Testament use of the gift of prophesy. (Agabus)
If God is in it, how accurate must the prophesy be? 90% 95% or 100% ?
Back then, if you prophesied something and it did not come to pass...Death!
Most likely Agabus stood up during a church service.
- B. Historically, a famine did occur! 44-48 A.D. –Josephus: historian. Reign of Claudius 41-54 A.D.
Have you ever seen this done in a church or over your life? What was the result?
Dr. Luke who wrote ACTS is a very accurate writer. His patients were glad, I’m sure! ☺
- C. We see the power of God's grace to forge a bond between these gentiles and Jews of love, unity, and generosity. First, these Gentile believers in Antioch were built up and encouraged by Barnabas. Now...1 year later, along with Paul, this new church is returning the blessing by helping the suffering Jews in Jerusalem.

Note: Why should the Gentile believers in Antioch give? Wouldn't the famine also strike their region?

Providential Care:



Interesting: Saul approves Stephen's stoning. Persecution begins. Christians, probably the wealthy ones especially, flee to places like Antioch. Later Barnabas and, now, Paul, bring their generosity and help back to the persecuted, poor Jerusalem church. **Amazing!**

II. **Read** Acts 11:29-30

- A. God often does not give us specific instructions on what to do or how to do it. Note: There was the famine predicted and experienced. – of God. But the Christians had to lean on general biblical wisdom, insight, and love as to how to help. Let's meet a need.
Read Matthew 25:34-40 Any time we care for someone in need, we are doing God's will. ¹
- B. 4 Principles here.
 - 1) They gave, led by God, as individuals.
 - 2) They each gave according to their ability. **Read 1Timothy 6:6-12**
 - 3) They determined to do it. Then they did it! *“The road to Hell is paved with good intentions.”* ²
Read Proverbs 3:27
 - 4) They gave with care and wisdom picking two accountable, trustworthy men.
- C. Remember: Are you giving out of gratitude for Jesus or trying to impress Him with good works?

¹<https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C>

Pastor Paul Vawter

² Cistercian Abbot Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) Safari



Adventure through Acts

Acts 12:1-19

*“Why is prayer so difficult?”
“We are not limited to human means.”*



I. Read Acts 12:1-10

- A. What jumps out at you in this section?
- B. Why didn't Herod have Peter put to death immediately? V. 3.
- C. If the Jerusalem Christians prayed for Peter, don't you think they prayed also for James who was executed by having his head cut off? Hmmm...Why didn't the pray-ers just give up?
- D. Homer Kent in his commentary on Acts says, *“We have no other weapon with which to combat such powerful opposition than prayer.”* **Discuss**
- E. If we will admit it, the threat of discouragement and despair if not somewhat upon us, is seemingly always knocking on our door. This is why we must pray. God is our only hope! **Read Psalm 46:1-3; 7** Have you ever lost your keys? Barbara did just this morning.
- F. Share an example from your life in which a trial or struggle **never released** or took many years to finally release and go away. Do you still have some PTSD? I do.

II. Read Acts 12:11-19

- A. V. 11 & 12. Share a time when you were a bit confused, dazed, numbed, or thick in the head? If you are a parent, you will raise your hand. Right? ☺
- B. Rhoda, a young slave-servant girl, probably lived in Mary's home. Mary, most likely a well off widow, probably had Christians meet regularly. Remember: There were no church buildings yet.
- C. If the Saints called her “Crazy” or “Nuts”, why were they praying for Peter? Did they underestimate God? **Discuss: Why would God rescue Peter, but not James from the sword? It was God's will. Period. Prayer is not about getting a satisfactory outcome. God is not a vending machine. “Name it Claim it” is heresy.**
- E. **PRAYER:** **1)** We are inviting God to act where we cannot. **2)** Prayer unleashes the power of God to act in time of need. *“Like unleashing a chained, barking guard dog to act upon the intruder.”* **3)** Demonstrates our faith in and dependence on God. No other recourse, but to pray. It is submission and surrender rolled into one act of humility before God leaving the timing, the quality, and the quantity of all results up to Him. **4)** Is about humbling ourselves before God who, often, we simply do not understand. If God does not answer the way we wish, it is often **His Mercy**. **5)** Prayer aligns us with God's will enabling us to see His work done His way in His time. **6)** For us, prayer is trust at work. ¹ **Read Hebrews 11:32-40**

“To God be the glory!”

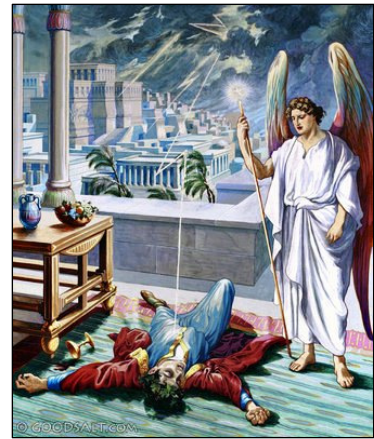
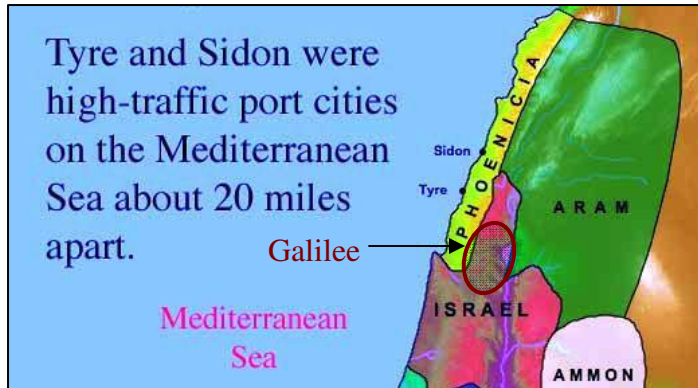
Adventure through Acts

“Let’s barter!
Flattery for food.”

Acts 12:20-24

“Herod’s Pride: Ingested the poison of **Flattery**.”

“Are you serving the god of pride?”



“5 days to die.” –Historian Josephus

I. Read Acts 12:20

- A. What is going on in this verse? Mercantilism, trade, and commerce, including bartering have been going on for how long? Tyre and Sidon, port cities, had to import grain from Galilee.
- B. Who, in their right mind, would want to go into politics anyway? All the squabbling, cover-ups, back-stabbing, sucking up, slander, lies, corruption, flattery, etc. **It’s a blood sport.**
- C. **Read I Kings 5:8-9.** Trade agreements occurred back ‘in the day’.

II. Read Acts 12:21-24

- A. What human sinful trait surfaces in this section? Who was susceptible? How do you know? Who, in this room, is susceptible? Can you share a time when you fell for it’s magic or of someone, unnamed, that you know of that swallowed it’s sweet poison?
- B. What was Herod’s Downfall here? “*He cared more about what others thought of him than doing what was right in God’s eyes.*” –Pastor Paul Vawter
- C. Herod did not react the way of the **penitent** heart but of the **proud** heart.
- D. How can rewards, praise, achievements, trophies, applause, getting your ‘name up in lights’ be a real trap or danger to you personally? Has the ugly snake of flattery ever bitten you deeply?
- E. Why do you think Herod refused to give the glory to Almighty God? Who, in the Old Testament, also struggled with this? **Read Daniel 4:28-37; 5:5-6 & 5:22-31** – Like father - like son. The apple does not fall far from the tree. Hmmm. Any examples today?
- F. **Humility:** Knowing who we are in light of who God is.
Read Proverbs 15:33; 2Corinthians 4:5-6



Adventure through Acts

Acts 12:25

“The young ‘tag-a-long’ learned, over time, to become faithful and dependable.”



*“When Barnabas and Saul **had finished their mission**, they returned from Jerusalem, **taking with them John**, also called Mark.” (Bold added)*

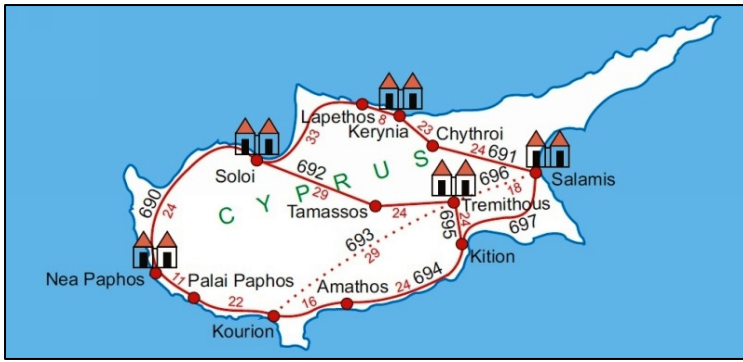
I. Calling and Mission = One’s Designed Purpose.

- A. Let’s ask this question: What was the mission of Paul and Barnabas? **Read Acts 11:27-30.** Once again, **why** do you think these ‘Christians’ in Antioch spent most likely several years collecting money for the church in Jerusalem? The predicted famine would hit them too.
- B. Remember: This was about 300 miles from Antioch to Jerusalem. (from Lake Geneva to Indianapolis.) -Somewhat dangerous, with robbers, and it was arduous by cart, animal, or by foot. Herod died 44 A. D. and there were several thousand Christians in Jerusalem mostly poor. **Why?**
- C. What is God’s calling on your life? What is your mission? **Read John 13:34; Luke 19:10; John 10:10; Matthew 28:18-20; Colossians 1:28-29; Romans 1:1; 1Corinthians 14:1a.**

II. Now who in the world is young John Mark?

- A. **Read Acts 12:12** Peter thought of him as a son. (son in the faith- Ryrie NIV Notes p. 1698) **Read 1Peter 5:13** He was a cousin of Barnabas, and birth son of Mary, a woman of wealth and position. (Ryrie NIV p. 1367)
- B. ‘Mark’: Greek; ‘John’: Hebrew. In his Gospel, he wrote to Gentiles, Romans in particular.
- C. The Jews and the Greeks usually did not get along well. Perhaps a good reason why there are so many verses on ‘Love’. Jews called them ‘dogs’. (Guzik, Mark 7) As then, prejudice, a key characteristic of our sinful nature, is alive and well. Anyone disagree? This very day, there is still racial and ethnic prejudice and misunderstanding between Messianic Jews and Gentile Christians.
- D. Paul and Barnabas took John Mark along, the Tag-a-long. Why do you think they did? **3 Points:**
 1. Mark: Not held up as a shining, extraordinary example of a super star! **Read Ephesians 2:8-10.** Though not dependable yet, he had a desire to make Gospel inroads in Antioch 300 mi. away.
 2. Demonstrates the importance of Christian relationships especially in service.
The many, the 12, then the 3, the then one Jesus loved. **You need a FoxHole Buddy!**
 3. God is looking for servants who will NOT go it alone and are not looking for personal gain.
- E. This little verse 25: What must ministry be about? 1) Love others 2) Help them in time of need 3) Build them up in the faith 4) Lift them when fallen 5) Walk with them thru the trials of life 6) Help each other to fulfill the Great Commission in light of the Great Commandment. ¹

¹<https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C> Pastor Paul Vawter



Adventure through Acts

Acts 13:1-12

Henry Martyn (1781-1812) Missionary to India *“The Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of Missions and the nearer we get to Him, the more intensely missionary we must become.”*

I. Read Acts 13:1-5

- What is going on here? Look at the Map. Seleucia, not on map, east, on the main land, was a port city about 60 across the sea to Cyprus. Salamis is about 90 miles east of Paphos, the Capital.
- Who is the Sender of these missionaries? Who send missionaries today? Who is a missionary today? Whoever is obediently about his or her Master’s Mission. What did they do once there?

II. Read Acts 13:6-12

- What is happening in this passage?
- Commentators believe they spent from several up to 9 months on this island of Cyprus.
- Skeptics believe Luke, the author of Acts, is in error. They say that Cyprus was under the control of the Roman Emperor. Thus there would have been a Roman **Governor**. However, we know Doctor Luke was an exacting, detailed, and very accurate historical writer. Historians found out that 20 years before the birth of Jesus, the Roman Senate took over the control of Cyprus and the Senate assigned a **Proconsul** to govern. And there you have it! Luke’s writings are **trustworthy!**
- There is almost always opposition to the Mission work commissioned by the Mission Commander, the Holy Spirit: (evangelism, discipleship, proclaiming God's Word). What opposition did the devil create? Why do you think the wicked one did this?

E. 3 Principles that encourage us to share the Gospel with boldness:

He calls.

- V. 3-4: The Holy Spirit is the One who chooses to send out his messengers to the lost. Jonah? **Read Luke 2:49 KJV** “And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not I must be about my Father’s business?” What or who’s business are you about? **Read 1Cor. 2:1-5.**

He empowers.

- V. 9-11. He gave Saul the power to overcome Satanic opposition. Discuss.

He saves.

- V. 12. The Holy Spirit overcomes evil, saves, and opens the eyes of the blind. Discuss.¹

¹<https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C>



Adventure through Acts

Acts 13:13-29



LETO was one of the Titanides (female Titans), a bride of Zeus, and the mother of the twin gods Apollo and Artemis. She was the goddess of motherhood and, with her children, a protectress of the young. Her name and iconography suggest she was also a goddess of modesty and womanly demure.¹

*“Perna, a city in the province of Pamphylia (Modern Day Turkey) was known for much Pagan Worship. A prominent, feminine goddess was **Leto** – (to me, in a bazaar sense, almost a Mother Mary figure.) Known as the **Queen of Perna**. Corresponds to: Artemis or Diana of the Ephesians.*

I. Read Acts 13:13-22

- What is going on in this passage? Note: V.13. Why is this verse important? Paul is now the central figure. The others are his company, companions, or entourage. This general area is **Galatia**.
- V.21. Why did God not want his people to crave a human king? Why did God give in?
- When given an opportunity, would you share the raw Gospel? Why? Why not? Fears?
- Paul is telling the listeners how God's work in history leads up to whom? _____ †
- “Jesus is the goal of history, and as we are in Jesus, we are in the flow of God's great plan of redemption.”³*

II. Read Acts 13:23-29

- What is happening in this passage? What things stand out?
- Note: *“Using the examples of John the Baptist and the Jewish rulers, Paul shows how people both received and rejected Jesus.”³* Has your life ever demonstrated both receiving and rejecting?
- Read Deuteronomy 21:22-23; Galatians 3:13-14** Those with darkened, blinded, and self-righteous hearts tend to reject and want to punish. Have you ever been rejected and punished wrongly?
- Read Isaiah 52:13-53:1-12** The listeners should have known this famous passage and its implications..

¹ <http://www.theoi.com/Titan/TitanisLeto.html>

² https://www.google.com/search?q=pisidian+antioch+map&tbm=isch&imgil=63FLDDXlumou8M%253A%253BamZ8stIi1-4SGM%253Bhttps%25253A%25252F%25252Fwww.biblicalarchaeology.org%25252Fdaily%25252Fbiblical-topics%25252Fnew-testament%25252Fpauls-first-missionary-journey-through-perga-and-pisidian-antioch%25252F&source=iu&pf=m&fir=63FLDDXlumou8M%253A%252CamZ8stIi1-4SGM%252C_&usg=__Fd76on3ZLt8E6xVQChm3fydOIV8%3D&biw=1280&bih=621&ved=0ahUKEwi675Owvc_VAhVL0YMKHRzgCTMQjyIMQ&ei=88qNWfqCsujiwScwKeYAw#imgsrc=63FLDDXlumou8M

³ https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Act/Act-13.cfm?a=1031013



Adventure through Acts

Acts 13:30-41



*“God raised Jesus from the dead (Resurrection)= FACT!”
“God has fulfilled His promise! (from Old Testament)”*

I. Read Acts 13:30-33

- A. What is of significance in this passage?
- B. Paul shares the Gospel by retelling the story of Israel’s heritage: Focus: That which leads up to the Messiah’s birth through the **Davidic Line**. God raised Jesus, His Son, from the dead. **Jesus briefly died, yes, but His body never sees decay!**
- C. **Read I Corinthians 15:1-8; 12-19** What is significant here? Why?
- D. V. 32-33: Why significant? **Read Psalm 2:7** Why is Jesus being the Father’s Son (only Son - John 3:16) important to establish here do you think?

II. Read Acts 13:34-41

- A. V. 34: Why is this verse *“The Top of Mount Everest!”* for Paul? This is the fulfillment of God, the Father’s covenant promise (Davidic Covenant) to give the *“sure mercies”* KJV to King David. Note: “sure mercies” is a double whammy! **Read Isaiah 55:3** Ah!!! These “sure mercies” KJV / “faithful love” NIV is one of God’s most beloved Hebrew words, **chesed**. **Read note on p. 1203 of Ryrie’s NIV Study Bible.**
 - 1) **Read Isaiah 54:8**
 - 2) **Read Ruth 1:8; 15-18**
- B. V.35: Who will never see decay? Death has no claim on Him or His beloved Redeemed Ones.
- C. **Read Psalm 16:10.** A continuously dead Savior is no savior at all.
- D. V.38-41: Why is this monumental to the listener and now the reader? God has fulfilled the Davidic Covenant **through Jesus!** He is the only sacrificial Lamb of God. There is no other! Your sins are forgiven! Washed clean forever! You, oh Believer, will never experience decay once you have your Resurrection Body! What? No fat, no pain, no double chin or liver spots?
- E. If Christ has not risen, then God fails to keep His promise to David...and to all of us! If this is the case (its not!) then Jesus is not the Promised Lamb of God, suffering Servant, Redeemer and we are still hopelessly condemned and eternally dead in our sins. We, thus, would have **“Hell Bound”** stamped on our foreheads. God would be found to be a liar and or weak like a pagan deity...God forbid!
- F. What is God’s greatest work? It is the **Work of Redemption!** God has proved powerfully trustworthy. He offers justification, atonement, and eternal forgiveness! **Read Isaiah 43:25.** **We cannot redeem ourselves, can we?** Jump the Grand Canyon, Swim to London, Climb to the moon! ¹
- G. V.40-41: **Warning! Read Habakkuk 1:5...** I sense Paul and Barnabas knew of trouble brewing.



Adventure through Acts

Acts 13:42-52



“God’s plan for the Jewish people was to minister grace to the Gentiles and not to be the gatekeepers to keep all but the Jewish people out!”

I. **Read** Acts 13:42-47

- A. What is going on in this passage? Have you ever been invited back to anything? This does not happen very often...at least not to me. ☺ What does this indicate here?
- B. V. 43. Wherever the grace of God is present, the Word of God closely follows. What did Paul and Barnabas urge the Believers / Followers to do? Why is this important? After I received Christ in 1969 at the ripe age of 18, I receive no follow up discipleship or grounding or mentoring. Painful.
- C. V. 44. Can you imagine the jealousy the non-believing Jewish Leaders felt when almost the entire city showed up to hear the Word of God? Jealousy often produces abuse or violence.
- D. Vs. 45-47. Note the blind prejudice! *“All these lousy gentile visitors! We don’t want them! How dare these pagan, ungodly, worldly people come here!”* (Pastor Paul Vawter) Polluters! Remember: Jews would never enter a Gentile’s home or eat their food. They might not even talk with them! This reaction reveals what? **Their inner hearts.**
- E. Let’s chat about prejudice going on today in the world and in the USA. It is nothing more than sinful pride which almost always is justified by *“comparing ourselves with others and considering ourselves in a more favorable light.”* (Pastor Paul Vawter)
- F. Be reminded: Each of us, apart from Christ, stands guilty, filthy, wretched and vile in our Hell-deserving sin. Death and eternal fire would be our unsaved, unwashed, unredeemed wage. These arrogant lost Jewish men considered themselves **The Gatekeepers of Heaven!** When, in fact, they were sadly the **Ticket Collectors at the entrance to Hell.** **Read Romans 3:23; 6:23.**
- G. The Jewish leaders were dead wrong in trying to protect God's grace from sinful men. (Gentiles) Sin is not a threat to God's grace! Rather, God's grace is a threat to sin. ☺ The Jews thought their being tough gatekeepers and ‘kicker-outers’ of rogues like Paul and Barnabas guaranteed God's favor and entrance into God's Kingdom! Where do we see such blind arrogance and stupidity in other religions today?

II. **Read** Acts 13:48-52

- A. What’s going on here? **Read James 4:6** *“Today only the Grace of God can remove prejudice and racism from the human heart. I have a sufficiently low view of all of us.”* (Pastor Paul Vawter) ☺☺☺
- B. **Read Galatians 3:28-29.** What is shocking and revolutionary about Paul’s (God's) statement? **Read Romans 12:3.** May we confess our pride and walk in humble trust. Remember: We are the Ball Glove. The Holy Spirit is free as we yield, to use us wherever, whenever, however, and why-ever He so chooses each day. After all, it is His ball field. Right? ☺
- C. 2 responses to the Gospel: 1) **Repentance** (Saving Faith revealed) **or Rejection.** At first, many Jews agreed and liked Paul and Barnabas’s teaching. Later they rejected it!
- D. **Read Isaiah 49:6.** This was God's intent. Hmmmm. Well, at least Jewish Paul got it right! ¹



Adventure through Acts

Acts 14: 1-7

“Voicing Gospel Truth will produce fruit and will often be met with division, insult, and possible injury.”



I. Read Acts 14: 1-3

- A. The Peril of Apostasy! **Read 2Timothy 3.** Discuss this chapter in detail. What jumps out at you? How do you see this playing out today in our country, our churches, and our campuses? 100 miles to Iconium.
- B. Timothy is most likely from Lystra. Paul and Barnabas could have felt like the ministry in Antioch was a tragedy and a failure! They could not finish their work or plant a church... Yet we think Timothy was fruit from this troubled journey; dangerous, with divided, hateful responses. Timothy was raised here most likely. He would have a tremendous ministry and be an extension of Paul.
- C. Yes, many turned away but Timothy was an eye witness. He traveled with Paul and Barnabas learning, observing, in a mentoring brotherhood. **Read 2Timothy 3:14.** How does this apply to you and me?
- D. V.1: Paul and Barnabas did not water down their message. No fear! How often do we struggle with fear? How do some of today's churches slip into avoiding anything that makes others **uncomfortable?** *“Talking of sin, repentance, Hell, might offend! It might turn some pew warmer away! And we can't have that!!!”* **By the way, what is a “Safe Place or Zone”?** ☹️
- E. Truth? People are sinners who are sentenced to Hell forever unless they call upon Jesus, the Messiah, the Lamb of God, to forgive and save them. If they refuse to receive and follow Him by faith, they will perish into the Lake of Fire to suffer torment for all eternity. **Read Joel 2:32**
- F. V. 3: They stayed there precisely because of the brazened opposition. Why? Would you? *“Aren't calm waters safer for the boat?”* So Paul and Barnabas chose not to avoid the opposition. Rather they say eternally that God could reveal to hearts the clear contrast between the anger of the Jews and the Gospel of Peace (like a brilliant, cut diamond against a black velvet cloth). They could respond in love, with concern, yet spoke boldly with truth. *“Harry Ironside: ‘It is possible to preach so as to convert nobody.’* Discuss: Many preachers tickle, affirm and comfort. They **do not** preach the Gospel!!! *“They elevate mankind instead of God and His Holy Word. ‘We can follow a preacher who is as flawed as we are especially if he does not lift up Christ and the eternal authority and rule of His Mighty Word.’* We cannot do signs and wonders. They were not in control of them. God proved His Word true thru them.

II. Read Acts 14:4-7

- A. What does it mean to preach or teach the Word of God's Grace and Mercy?
- B. We should look for God's changed lives in the souls of people. No mid ground. ¹ They were not afraid to suffer. Yet, mob violence? Let's get out of here! ☺️



See back

¹<https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C>
<http://marriageanchors.com/2012/05/18/your-anchor-dont-leave-port-without-him/> = **The Gospel Message**
 Is Jesus God or Just a Good Man?

*“The eternal God is your refuge,
and underneath are the everlasting arms.”*

Deuteronomy 33:27a

God’s unconditional love for His children: [Grace + Mercy]

Grace and Mercy: Two great eternal **book ends from God.**

Grace is God giving to us that which we can never earn or merit.

Mercy is God withholding that which we most certainly and continually deserve.

[Safe in His Everlasting Arms.]

We are, indeed, the eternal benefactors of such amazing love, hope, and Heavenly Family Help. As God’s beloved, sought after children, we will want to live lives of thankfulness, and holiness. Note: It is not the sinless heart, but the repentant heart that is the mark of one of God’s children. ([Matthew 5](#))

If you have called upon the Lord Jesus to save you ([Joel 2:32](#), [John 1:12](#)) from your sin, and your condemnable, hopeless condition ([Romans 3:23](#), [Psalm 53:3](#)), then you are now a part of the Family of God ([Ephesians 1:1-23](#), [Romans 6:23](#)). And He will never leave, disown, reject, or betray you. NEVER! ([Deuteronomy 31:8](#), [John 6:39](#))

Gratitude is thus our great and lasting response. Blessings to you this week!



Adventure through Acts

Acts 14: 8-20

*“You will either fear man
or fear God.”*



I. Read Acts 14: 8-13

- A. What is going on in this passage? What is the linear sequence of events once Paul starts to speak?
- B. V.9: How could Paul **see** that the man had faith? What role did the Holy Spirit play in this “**seeing**” and then the **healing**?
- C. Did Paul suggest or command that the crippled man stand up? What did the man do?
- D. Vs.11-13: What was the response of the crowd? Why? The lost, pagan people believed in legends. **Zeus** was the chief God of the Greek Pantheon. **Hermes** was the patron God of orators. In Greek legends, Zeus and Hermes had come down and had ‘become like men’. ¹
- E. Why is it wise to not put too much confidence in what the **crowd** thinks?

II. Read Acts 14:14-20

- A. Why do you think worshipping and appeasing false gods is a preoccupation of **The Flesh** and those who are lost? Blaise Pascal, famed mathematician, physicist, writer and Catholic Theologian from the 1600’s said, “*There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of each man which cannot be satisfied by any created thing but only by God the Creator, made known through Jesus Christ.*” ²
- B. V.15: Paul is calling them to turn. Similar to this is the word “**repent**”.
- C. V.19: Who won the crowd over to evil? Is it any different today?
- D. V.19: **Read 2Corinthians 12:1-5** and **Read Galatians 6:12-17**. Some scholars believe Paul was referring to this stoning experience in Lystra. “*Scars suffered in persecution, which spoke more eloquently than the mark of circumcision that the Judaizers sought to impose.*” ³
- E. V.20: What? Is Paul nuts?
- F. Would you go on such a Missionary Journey? Why?

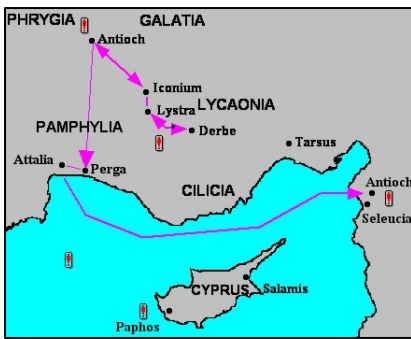


¹ Ryrie NIV Study Bible, Notes on Page 1516

² <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/801132-there-is-a-god-shaped-vacuum-in-the-heart-of-each>

³ Ryrie NIV Study Bible, Notes on page 1612

<https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C>
<http://marriageanchors.com/2012/05/18/your-anchor-dont-leave-port-without-him/> = **The Gospel Message**
 Is Jesus God or Just a Good Man?



Adventure through Acts

Acts 14: 19-23

*Trouble: Expect it.
Tribulations and
suffering: Necessary.*

*“Something will grow
from all you are going
through. And it will be
you.”*

I. **Read Acts 14: 19-23**

- A. Once again, what is going on in this passage?
- B. *“It is necessary for every Christian to face great difficulties in this life as we look forward to our future Heavenly home.”* – Pastor Paul Vawter
- C. V.19: What is with this mixed crowd? Some believed. Most did not. Many were drawn to the miracles. Many were easily swayed against Paul and Barnabas. Not much has changed.
- D. The stoning. Ever been hit by a stone or baseball or golf ball? Traditional Jewish mode of execution. Not judicial, rather, informal mob action like “grab a rope and let’s lynch this guy!!”
- E. Some who hear the Gospel and reject it will get piping mad! We should not be surprised.
- F. V.20. What makes you think Paul and Barnabas were not afraid of persecution? Ever happen to you?
- G. Look at map. Why didn’t they just go east to Tarsus, Paul’s hometown? Would have been easier.
West Point Cadet Prayer: *“...Make us choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong,”*
- H. V.22: **“Strengthen”** = ‘to establish’ or ‘to render more firm’ (make to lean upon). We believe Paul is referring to common discipleship, mentoring, life-on-life, probably small numbers. What is the **Greek** model verse the **Hebrew** model of learning?
- I. Were Paul and Barnabas more interested in establishing these Christians in troubling areas or in moving to safer, sweeter lands to the east? Where are you and I at in our lives right now?

Read Matthew 28:18-20; Colossians 1:28-29

- J. So why would anyone in their right mind sign up to follow Jesus? – Suffering, trouble, trials, rejections, hardships...shipwrecks, stoning, lawsuits, firings, name calling, shaming. Oh Boy!!!
- K. **Read Romans 8:16-39**
 - 1) Vs.16-25 = If we share in His sufferings, this tells us there are better things to come. Glory!
 - 2) Vs.26-30 = Because we have the Holy Spirit, we have hope. And it’s in writing! Scripture!
 - 3) Vs.31-39 = We are the forever recipients of God’s inseparable, unconditional, uncondemnable love. **Read Romans 8:1**

L. **Read 2 Thessalonians 1:3-10** What is promised here? Do you believe this?

M. **Read 2 Timothy 2:8-13** Our persecution will not hinder the Gospel. It may further it. Enduring leads to reigning.

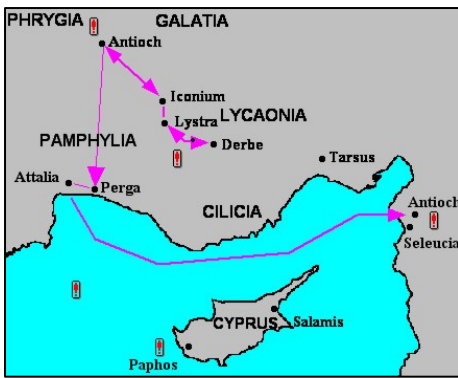
N. **Read the back side of page.**

The most beautiful people I have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of the depths. These people have an appreciation, a sensitivity, and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen!

Roy Nichols, Historian (1896-1972)

Historian Roy Nichols concludes by stating:

“Pain is a great teacher, but most of us would rather learn some other way. We think that happiness comes from a perfect childhood and avoiding mistakes. We don’t like that patched-up feeling that comes with each survival. We would like to be seamless, no patches, no scars. Cherish your hard-won depth and understanding. Some pain is required for the journey. The gifts you see are often disguised as problems. Patches bring strength, whether on our knees or in our hearts.”



Adventure through Acts

Acts 14: 24-28

Do praise, fame, and notice have their grip on you?



I. Read Acts 14: 24-28

A. Whose mission, work, and fruit?

B. Note: Paul, Barnabas and their team walked some 60 days and 1,400 miles probably on foot.

C. Roommates:

1. Planting a church + **Persecution**
2. Evangelism + **Rejection**
3. Discipleship + **Resistance**
4. Seeking God's caring, life affirming ministry + **Discouragement, Lethargy, Spiritual Attack**

D. **V. 26:** “Committed” or “Commended” = ‘to give over into one’s power or use.’ (Blue Letter Bible Interlinear / concordance) Who used Paul and Barnabas? Why? Who should get the glory?

E. We are all Committed, Commended, Commissioned by God when He saves us.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-20

F. Using an allegory, if Paul and Barnabas were sailors, during this trip would they have been on a cruise ship or a battle ship? Which are you and I on today? Why? What struggle were they in?

G. Were Paul and Barnabas controlled by their flesh or were they yielded to the Spirit? How can you tell? What evidence of this 1st missionary trip is there? Did they emphasize His Grace or their own effort? Are you captured by God? What troubles you the most these days?

Read 2 Samuel 12:26-31

H. Do you think the Christians back at home base Antioch were praying for Paul and Barnabas? Why? Oswald Chambers: “As a saved soul, the real business of your life is intercessory prayer.”

I. Let’s talk about prayer:

1. Penitent Prayer
2. Persistent Prayer
3. Prevailing Prayer
4. Praising Prayer

II. Do you see yourself as a humble, ‘non-limelight seeking’ ambassador?

A. What does it mean to be humble? “Humility: It is an attitude of mind that realizes that one is without any reason for distinction in God's sight.” (Ryrie NIV Study Bible, Notes- p. 1698)

B. **Read Philippians 2:3; and I Peter 5:5-9** **Comments?**



Adventure through Acts

Acts 15:1-2

*Are you leaning on your
goodness or Christ's
finished work and His
Righteousness?*



I. Read Acts 15:1-2

- A. What is the big controversy here? Why? Do you think there exists such controversies and thus divisions in the church today? What are they? Why?
- B. The problem with controversy is that it is prone to spreading...like cancer. (How about the improper use of Social Media today?) The Apostle Paul wrote Galatians to resolve such issues and strengthen the church there. **Read Galatians 2:11-16.**
- C. What is the key verse? (V. 15) Why? What is **“Faith”**? Hebrews 11:1, *“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”*
 1. **Our definition:** “Faith is choosing to live as though the Bible is true, regardless of circumstances, emotions, or cultural trends.”
 2. “Faith is living knowing the Bible is true even when it doesn’t feel true.” **Comments?**
- D. **Read Genesis 17:9-14** Circumcision became a marker: Abraham’s part in the Covenant-making process. These are God's people! If you did not get circumcised, you were to be cut out like cutting out a tumor or growth. (Ryrie NIV Study Bible Notes: pp:29-30)
- E. Note: This is huge! If salvation is faith + works, Christianity becomes just another sect of Judaism.

II. Read Galatians 5:3-6 What is Paul saying here in regards to Christian Liberty?

- A. **Discuss:** *“None of our good works can contribute or take away from what Christ has done for us.”*
- B. Paul is warning people to beware of this arrogant attitude: *‘Jesus! Frankly I don’t need your shed blood and death. I’m trusting in my own works, my own righteousness. Now that I’ve grown in the faith, I can do it on my own!’*

III. Read Ephesians 2:1-16 Thoughts?

- A. Churches have people in them who are what I call **“The Churchy Undead” = “Christian In Name Only” Zombies.** People, even very good, moral people, who are spiritually dead but who think they are alive going to Heaven. Sadly, they are already en route to Hell.
- B. **Saving faith:** have you come to the end of yourself? Will you now willingly welcome Jesus into your life so that you can just rest in Him and His Righteousness, His blood sacrifice, and His resurrection? Are you willing to place all your weight on the finished ‘sacrificial Lamb’ work of what Jesus did on our behalf? Are you done trying to be good enough? You can’t. Rest in Jesus alone. **Joel 2:32: “And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved;”** Repent.

"If your logic and experience contradict God's Word, then they are not true."

"No one has freed themselves from the bonds or wages of sin."

"All sinners are unable to save themselves."

- Paraphrased from Pastor Paul Vawter

Adventure through Acts

Acts 15:1-21

2 Big Questions

1. How are souls saved?
2. How to help Fellowship?



James the Great (anon)

I. Read Acts 15:1-5

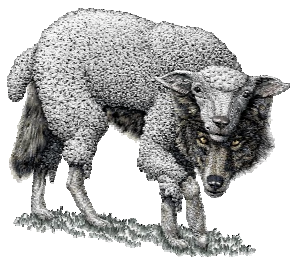
- A. What is the big threat to the Christian faith and doctrine here? It is huge!
- B. V.3: Who sent Paul and Barnabas on their way?
- C. V.4: Who received them first? Why is this important? The congregation was not a group of oafing, dumb, blindly led sheep. Oh no! They play a vital role in things of Christian faith, doctrine, and fellowship, and "big issue" authority. (Annual Business meetings, Key votes, etc).
- D. **Read Key Verse #1: Verse 5.** Why is this key? Why would this be a threat to the Faith?

II. Read Acts 15:6-12

- A. What is the central message or theme of this passage? *"You don't have to become Jews to be a Christian."* The faith would have degraded and splintered with such infighting and division, that the devil would not even have to get on the playing field. He could probably remain in the bleachers.
- B. V 9: What is the vital phrase here? What does this mean?
- C. V. 10: Why would the Jews, having failed regularly and miserably over the centuries in trying to please God now put this terrible burden on the backs of Gentiles. The Law was a tutor God used to point His people to their desperate need for a Savior who DID keep the law ... perfectly. Faith in Him alone! To this day, many Jewish people refuse to turn to their Redeemer. They prefer the miserable burden of failings and sin which only leads to death and Hell. **Pride is such a killer!**
- D. **Read Key Verse #2: Verse 11** Perhaps the most important verse in Acts! Peter's last words in this book are strong and eternally unifying and God honoring! They are what God was trying to get into the hearts of His wayward, stubborn, and disobedient children, the Jewish people! Read this verse again loud and strong!!! ☺

III. Read Acts 15:13-21 James's Argument

- A. Why do the Jews in Jerusalem listen to Brother James? **Notice:** Through respected leader James, (we believe he is the half-brother of Jesus), God ties in Peter's discourse, with the wonderful seasoning of Paul's and Barnabas's Gentile miracle stories, and the **"Agreement"** of the Old Testament quote from Amos 9:11-12 to come up with his conclusion: *"It is my judgement...V. 19"*
- B. **Read Key Verse #3: Verse 19** James's emphasis (**rather to the point!!!**) moves quickly from **Salvation to Fellowship**. Why do you think James directed Gentiles to abstain from activities? *"Let us avoid needlessly offending our Jewish brothers and sisters. Read I Cor. 10:23-24; John 13:34-35"*



Adventure through Acts

Acts 15:22 - 29

Are you willing to put your safety on the line for Jesus?



I. Read Acts 15:22 - 24

A. What evidence do you see here of two **glaring things**?

1. Man's proneness to wander from God's Truth and the leading/filling of the Holy Spirit?
2. Satan's relentless efforts to pervert, corrupt, and breed confusion, bondage, and disunity?

B. When have you experienced such things?



II. Read Acts 15:25 - 29

A. What key things jump off the page at you in this passage? What seems to be of great importance?

B. Note: The Leaders who met at the Jerusalem Counsel do not seem to be lording themselves as **“Big Wigs”** over the northern churches. Rather they seem to be humble men who are, in unity, seeking God's will and desiring to be clearly led by the Holy Spirit. **Comments? Let's talk about your experience and mine.**

C. V.28: How do you think they knew or experienced that *“it seemed good”* to the Holy Spirit?

D. V.29: These Gentile-heavy communities had regular Pagan Festivals where all 4 took place. **Where do you see worldly, godly things occurring openly and with great fanfare today?**

E. What subtle dangers, tugs, and pulls do you feel from the world, the flesh, and the devil? What are you doing to avoid them, flee them, and just plain run from them?

Remember Joseph in the Old Testament? **Read Genesis 39:12**

F. What dangers are there in attending an ungodly, pagan festival, dinner, party, or club?

G. This passage teaches that we need to separate from pagan participation and the False Gospel. **Discuss.**

H. What does it mean to you to: **1)** Draw close to Jesus. **2)** Meditate on His Word. **3)** Turn from sin and **4)** Draw close in submission, love, and humility with our Christian brothers and sisters.

I. How does the Holy Spirit speak to and work in and through us? **In Salvation. In love and unity? Through Meditation on His Word? Read John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-10; Zechariah 4:6; Psalm 119:105; Ephesians 4:32; Ephesians 5:18; Joshua 1:8; James 3:17. Other verses?**



Adventure through Acts

Acts 15:30-41

*Disunity is often destructive.
Not all division is bad.*



I. Read Acts 15:30 - 35

- A. V. 35. What two activities blessed by the Holy Spirit did Paul and Barnabas do in Antioch?
- B. Vs. 30 – 34. Find at least 5 positive words or phrases indicating the unifying, and uplifting nature of the Holy Spirit with the Christians in Antioch.
1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____
- C. Why would these be helpful with these first generation believers? How about for us today?
- D. Go back and **Read Acts 15:24**. What clear evidence reveals that these Judaizers were not sponsored by God? Who do you think sponsored them?
- Discuss:** What can a Christian do to prevent, stop, or hinder such behavior in the church?

II. Read Acts 15:36 - 41

- A. What is going on in this section? Who do you side with? Why do you think John Mark bailed?
- Read Acts 13:4-13**
- B. In what ways might Paul and Barnabas be each right and, at the same time, each wrong? Have you ever had a strong parting of the ways with another Christian? Was there reconciliation or resolution?
- C. Note: This was not a disagreement regarding authority. They were equals.
- D. Discuss: **“Unity does not equal Uniformity.”** {from Pastor Paul Vawter} Neither does it require it.
- E. Do we have to overcome our differences to be united? Church? Marriage? Family? Work?
What would it be like if everyone was **just like you!** ☺ *“I don’t agree with you, but I love you.”*
- F. **Read I Corinthians 3:3-4; Romans 13:13-14; I Timothy 6:11-12; Philippians 2:1-4**
{They apparently learned their lesson!} Note: Acts and Philippians were written roughly the same year...61 A.D. }

III. Not all division is bad however.

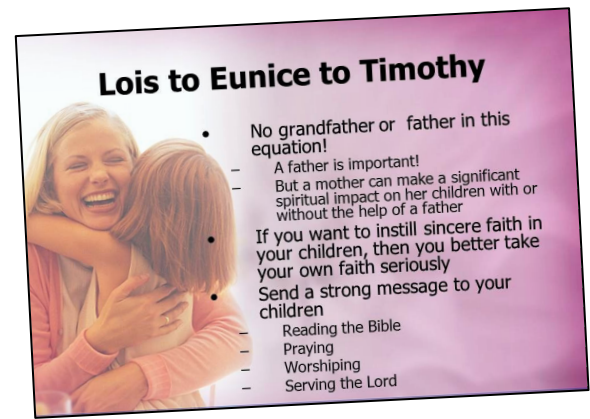
- A. Major issues of doctrine or morality: **Read Galatians 1:8; 2Timothy 2:17-19; Ephesians 5:6-12; Matthew 18:15-17.**



Adventure through Acts

Acts 16: 1-5

Character Counts!



I. Read Acts 16:1-5

- A. What do we know about what's in this passage?
1. 2nd Missionary Trip = Traveled over land through modern Turkey this time.
 2. Paul surrounds himself with certain types of people. What qualities? Why? Modeling is key!
 - a) They **recognize** God-ordained / appointed authority.
 - b) These people **submit** to that authority.
 - c) They **revere** those in authority. (Note: those in authority are not perfect.)
 - d) They and the listeners reverently and humbly **obey**.
 3. What would Paul think of many people's response to authority today, say, in the USA? Why?
- B. Even though Timothy came to saving faith as a result of being immersed in a godly home with his grandma and mother, he grew stronger in the faith via his mentor, the Apostle Paul. (My son)
Read 1Corinthians 4:17
- C. Timothy was probably 18-20 years old. Custom has Timothy being martyred in Ephesus after he tried to stop a pagan ceremony honoring Diana (Idolatry and Wickedness).

II. What set Timothy apart that Paul would want to take him on this 2nd Missionary Journey?

A. Three qualities

1. Timothy was **Spiritually Fruitful**.

V.1: He *is* a disciple: learner, pupil, student Follower of Christ.
 He was not a dead Stump but rather a growing, budding Tree.

Read 2Timothy 1:5-7; Philipians 2:19-24



VS.



2. Timothy was **Morally Faithful**.

V.2: What did the brothers at Lystra and Iconium say?

Note: Silas and others were of similar character. **Read Acts 15:22; 32; 40**
 Someone once stated:

"There are 5 Gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and the Christian.

Many people will never read the first four. What will they see in you?" (from Pastor Paul Vawter)

Are you known as a gracious, humble, faithful disciple of Christ both in public **and** at home?

3. Timothy was **Culturally Flexible**.

Well...he agreed to be circumcised! Why? I thought the Jerusalem counsel made that not a requirement for salvation?

Read 1Corinthians 9:19-23. Timothy was a teachable, obedient apprentice of Paul.

Paul knew his audience. Sharing the Gospel and possibly winning them to Christ was everything!



How far would you go?

Adventure through Acts


Acts 16: 6-15



I. Read Acts 16:6-10

- A. Have you ever had plans that you discovered eventually were not God's plans? Share.
- B. How does the Holy Spirit (A.K.A.: The Spirit of Jesus) guide Paul and his companions? How does He guide us? God will not allow us to put Him in  Should we expect or look for visions, voices, and dreams? Why or why not? obey however he prompts?
- C. We should be asking for and looking for opportunities to witness, share the Gospel, and point to the Word especially to those God has already been working on. Why?
- D. Read 2Timothy 4:1-5. Is this just for pastors and missionaries? 
- E. Read 1Peter 3:14-16 What do you take away from this?
- F. Why is 1st Love personal holiness and being in the Word daily so important for your witness and the Gospel? Read Psalm 86:11. How does this verse apply to your life and your sharing the Gospel?
- G. V. 10: Why is the word “We” intriguing and important? Who wrote Acts? The doctor is in the house!

II. Read Acts 16:11-15

- A. Why was Philippi an important location to share the Gospel? What might be a reason they all ended up at a river outside the city?
- B. V.13: Do you think based on this verse that Paul, as some charge, was a misogynistic chauvinist?
- C. V.14: Can men and women do anything of eternal value apart from Christ? Who opened her heart? Who opened yours? Read Zechariah 4:6; John 15:5; Philippians 4:13; Galatians 6:9 
- D. What evidence confirms Lydia's faith was genuine and God-implanted?

Adventure through Acts

Acts 16: 16 - 18

*“Where God is at work, Satan tries to disrupt.”
“Beware of counterfeits and false teachers.”*



I. **Read** Acts 16: 16-18

- A. Almost every chapter in Acts reveals the resistance, disruption, and outright rebellion of the devil against the Gospel and the work of God. How about today? His methods and tactics are diverse and ingenious. What have you experienced, faced, or are facing today? If not, what's wrong?
- B. Sounds a bit underwhelming. Right? Well, Paul and Silas later were beaten and imprisoned.
- C. What is this passage about? This reveals Paul's commitment to the purity of the Gospel. Is Divination just misdirected sincerity or something else? **Read 1Samuel 15:23**
- D. Chat: **“Protect the church, your family, and your heart from error and drifting.”** Were there times you wandered, drifted, backslid, took your eyes off of Jesus and his Word? Why are we prone to wandering? What motivates diviners, false teachers, fortune tellers, and frauds? Hmmm? In Ancient Paganism and Divination, this divining spirit (demonic) was called **Spirit of the Python**.
- E. Pastor Paul Vawter's definition of a fool: **“A man will not believe God but will believe a charlatan, fortune teller, palm reader, psychic, and an Occultist.”** (Paraphrased) She may seem nice, and helpful. He may even use some Scripture, but underneath in the heart there is death, rebellion and a hatred of the Gospel. – celebrators of and inviters to Hell. Can the devil tell the future? (Answer: No! Not Omniscient)
- F. **Jonestown Massacre:** Nov. 18, 1978, Jim Jones cult leader led 918 to mass suicide in Georgetown, Guyana (North tip of South America). ¹ How could this happen?
- G. **Read I Timothy 6:6-21.** Paul's teaching to Timothy: Heart of a pastor. Aren't we ministers too?
- H. **Read I Timothy 6:3-5.** How are false teachers described? Earth-centered and Hell Bound. **Read II Peter 2:1-10.** What should we be on the look out for? **Read I John 4:2**
- I. **Read Matthew 7:15; 10:16; Read Luke 10:3; Read Acts 20:29-31**
- Profit motive - Pride motive - Power motive - Easily leads to sensuality in some cases. How?
- J. V.18: Paul- deeply grieved. He rejected her proclamations. She was a corrupt messenger. **“The trustworthiness of the message depends on the faithfulness of the messenger. Anyone who speaks for God but lives in unrepentant sin does NOT speak for God! A true message deserves a faithful messenger”** (Pastor Paul Vawter) **Discuss.**
- K. Note: V.17: Her message was misleading. *“Most High God”? Pagan world: Not Yahweh! Could have been Diana, Molech, Asherah and her husband Baal, Ashtoreth, Baal-zebub (lord of the flies, dung: assigned to Satan), etc.* ^{2 3}
- L. Note: Mormon Joseph Smith (1830) said God was once a man but now is an exalted man. **Read Malachi 3:6.**
- M. Mary Baker Eddy: Church of Christ scientist. God is not a person. He is Principle.
- O. Kenneth Copeland: Giddy over his newly purchased \$36,000,000 jet. (Prosperity Gospel?) **Discuss.** <http://deadstate.org/televangelist-is-giddy-like-a-child-over-his-new-private-jet-you-and-jesus-bought-thisfbrefreshforce/> He says “You're a God. I am too.” **Read Exodus 3:14**

P. V.17. "...who are telling you **a way**" *hodos* (Gk)- definite article. **Read John 14:6**

Q. V. 17. "*a way to be saved.*" -saved from what? Deliverance from an enemy, disease? By some type of protection in battle? Preserved in old age? Is it organic health food? ☺ Let's save left-overs!

R. **Read I Peter 2:24.** Note: "*By his wounds (stripes) you have been healed.*" Many distort this. How? This is not **Tractor Salvation!** (Pastor Paul Vawter) **Read 1Corinthians 15:3** Note: Jesus did not die for our physical or emotional healing...He died for our what? Our sins.

S. Are you saved because you attended or grew up in church, were baptized, did good to others, were kind, experienced catechism, your parents told you that you were saved? **Read Romans 6:1-14; 19. Read John 1:12-13; Ephesians 2:8-10.** To be saved = you are converted, transformed instantly into a new creation, re-born, gone from stone cold dead to eternally alive, indwelt, and sealed by the Spirit of Jesus. You are a Child of God. Jesus is your Lord, King, Redeemer, Friend, Forgiver, and Shepherd forever! Go to and read: <http://marriageanchors.com/2012/05/18/your-anchor-dont-leave-port-without-him/> = **The Gospel Message**

T. Satan is still sending a counterfeit gospel. What is it?

1. [God is all love and **unconditional acceptance**. Celebrate your diversity...**there really is no perversion**. LGBTQ_____ is wonderful and to be proclaimed, protected, and lifted high! This is the new Civil Rights Movement. The God of biblical truth and of the Scriptures is very down played or ignored. By the way, there are no illegals...we are all human. Borders should not exist!

They say...after all, we don't take the Bible literally. That would be narrow-minded and judgmental, bigoted and stodgy...stuck in your ways. Much of the Bible was written long ago and the writers were imperfect and no doubt made mistakes in their writings. Like to our U. S. Constitution, we should make corrections, additions, subtractions, and...adjustments to Scripture and allow for upgraded, updated meanings to words and verses. We are more enlightened these days.]

2. [**Tolerance** is the buckle of this new gospel belt and **Social Justice** is the leather. Jesus is or was a good leader. Set a good example. A fine teacher. But so was Gandhi and Confucius, and good folks like Nelson Mandela, President John Kennedy, and Dr. Martin Luther King, JR.. There are many ways or roads to Heaven.

Only really bad people like Hitler, unrepentant murders, rapists, and terrorists will go to Hell...at least until they learn and are re-educated. Who are we to judge? Compassion and love wins!]

None of the above 1. and 2. have anything to do with the true Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. How are we to respond to error, demonic disruption, and false teaching?

- A. Note: Paul in these verses did not respond immediately. Why do you think?
- B. He kept preaching the truth. This produces real disciples over time. Combat error with truth. FBI trains much with authentic paper money so they can easily see the fake and the counterfeit.
- C. Keep reading / listening to the Word. Be immersed in it. Be **in** the Word and **under** the Word. ???
- D. Be on guard. Respond to error firm but graciously with the Truth of God's Word. **Read Ephesians 5:11**

¹<https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/features/jonestown-massacre-what-you-should-know-about-cult-murder-suicide-w512052>

²<https://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?s=references&q=pagan+gods&rc=>

³<https://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?s=references&q=pagan+goddesses&rc=>

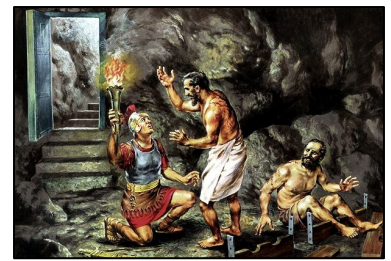
<https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C> Pastor Paul Vawter
<http://marriageanchors.com/2012/05/18/your-anchor-dont-leave-port-without-him/> = **The Gospel Message**

[Is Jesus God or Just a Good Man?](#)



Adventure through Acts

Acts 16: 19-34



“If there is no repentance, there is no belief in Jesus.”

“If there is no hunger for the Word, then something is seriously wrong!”

“If there is no joy, what rules your life?”

I. Read Acts 16:19-24

- A. What often accompanies persecution? V. 20-21. Where in history have we seen such trumped up embellishments? Where even today?
- B. Why is it not wise to put your trust in the “Crowd”? Have you seen the crowd turn before? When? The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem / Anti-Semitism / Racism / Crowd mentality / ???
- C. V.23. Being severely flogged with rods is different than with a whip / ‘cat-O-9 Tails’. No limit of 39. Could easily have died.
- D. V.24. Note: Man’s plans = deep dungeon + stocks. Was this secure from the **reach of God**?
Man’s plans are Seldom God's plans.

II. Read Acts 16:25-34

- A. Why do you think these two beaten, persecuted, imperfect brothers in Christ were praying and singing hymns to God? If we were in that dungeon instead of Paul and Silas, what would we be doing? What have you done when life has turned rotten, bruising, and unfair?
- B. Is it possible they were thanking God that He counted them worthy to suffer? Might they have been praying for the believers outside the prison, and the unbelievers in the prison? They probably did not pray or sing out of vengeance, to be released, or to seek justice. Why? Where was there heart focused? **On Earth or on Eternity?**
- C. Why do you think Vs. 30-31 are central verses to the entire Bible? Like the fulcrum on a Teeter-Totter. This means more than just mental agreement that Jesus is Messiah and Savior. Right? **Rather...is Jesus YOUR Messiah and YOUR Savior?** What has He saved you from?
- D. This is a pursuing, well planned work of the Holy Spirit. **Read Philippians 1:6; 9-11, John 1:12-13, 1Kings 8:47-51** (What is repentance? The Old Mill, Pigeon Forge, TN. Civil War) Why must repentance be an integral part of faith? Two-sided coin → **Trust + Repentance = Faith**
Read Job 34:33; Isaiah 59:20; Ezekiel 18:32; Psalm 23:3; Matthew 4:17; Luke 13:3; Rev. 2:21; 9:21.
- E. Actions reflect faith: How do we know the Jailer ‘trusted + repented’ = Had Faith? Stocks, dungeon? Now tenderly caring for their wounds. Warn hospitality, his family moved by God likewise.
- F. V.34: Why was he filled with joy? What about you and me? Learn: *Love for the Lord, Agony for the lost, reverence for the Word, Run to repentance, Cling to accountability. Paul and Silas.*



Adventure through Acts

Acts 16: 33-40



I. **Read** Acts 16:33-40

- A. What is going on in this passage?
- B. Why do you think the jailer is happily sincere and thankful but rather clueless?
- C. Do you think Paul's actions were somewhat surprising? Why or why not? Discuss. In what ways could he be misunderstood? Shouldn't Paul be happy to finally get out of there? Freedom!

D. **Two Motives:**

1. He is either acting on his own and wants to put those Magistrates and community leaders in their place!!! "Why... I'll show them!" or ...
2. He says "No!" and is thus doing this for someone else. Who?

E. **Read** Acts 16:14-15; then 33-34.

1. What of significance is going on here? God is assembling people, saving them, having them baptized and they are in homes. The Church of Philippi most likely was in Lydia's home.
 2. What is Baptism? (to dip, immerse, submerge, to overwhelm) "Outward manifestation of an inward faith, **Death** to sin/self, **Buried** with Jesus, **Rising** to walk in newness of life with the Holy Spirit). Baptism is a **point of entry for the local church**. This new, local home church and others forming similar to it throughout the Roman world were of utmost importance to God and the believers. God is building His Church and Paul wants to protect it as much as possible.
- F. Paul clearly intended to do more than just preach the Gospel! He, with God's help and direction, intended to **form the church, stabilize it, and then make way for the discipling, equipping, and growing of these local churches**. **Read** Ephesians 4:12-16.
- G. In 49 A.D., Emperor Claudia expelled all Jews from the city of Rome for supposedly rioting. Paul arrived in Philippi around 50 A.D. Paul did not want to leave the Jewish new believers in Philippi looked upon as troublemakers supposedly like the ones that were in Rome. It is one thing to suffer rightly for Jesus's name sake. It is another to suffer needlessly or especially if you are disobeying the laws of the government. Be pure, humble, and upright.
- H. Who incited the crowd to action? (The owners of the slave girl and the Magistrates) Of course, who do they try to pin all this on? (Paul and Silas). Paul did not want the new church needlessly persecuted after he left town. Don't we see the same antics today? i.e.: Conservative speaker at Berkley?
- I. Most likely, Paul saw potential danger to this small home church in Philippi. "*He wanted to make sure their release was just as public as their arrest and beatings were.*" {Rev. Paul Vawter}
- J. We should have a reputation as God's good citizens, not picking fights nor causing dissention. **Read the upper right corner verse.** If persecuted, be innocent, praising God all the way.



Adventure through Acts

Acts 17:1-9

“Wrong Kind of Jealousy”



I. Read Acts 17:1-4

- A. What's going on in this passage? Where are Paul, Silas, and Timothy? Scholars think Luke may have been left in Philippi to steady and ground the young house church at Lydia's home.
- B. V. 2. So what was Paul's custom in town visiting and church planting? About 100 miles on the 2nd B.C. Roman Road from Philippi to Thessalonica. **Via Egnatia = 696 miles, 19.6 feet wide.**
- C. Paul reasoned, explained, and proved that Jesus was the Old Testament Christ. He may have referred to: **Read Psalm 22:1, 2, 7, 8, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 31. Isaiah 52:13-14, 53:2-5. Zechariah 12:10.** If you were listening to him, would his clear reasoning convince you? Paul is intelligently comparing these familiar verses with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

II. Read Acts 17:5-9

- A. What is the key phrase in V.5? Why? Hasn't it been this way through history? How about you?
- B. Paul wanted the Jews to be jealous of this Good News that he had: A positive, yearning type. **But** what type of jealousy did some of these Jews cultivate in their carnal, self-centered hearts? Have you ever had people you were sharing with turn on you?
- C. V.6. Once again, they trump up charges with false accusations. (Look at upper right sign) Father of Lies?
- D. V.9. What is posting bond? What do the enemies of Christ try to hit Christians with today?
- E. **Read 1Thessalonians 1:2-4.** Let's discuss **Divine Election** and **Human Responsibility** or, in other words, **Predestination and the Free Will of Man.** – nice, light, easy topics. ☺
- F. **Read Romans 8:29-30, Ephesians 1:5, 11; John 3:16-18; Joel 2:32a**
- G. How does Paul know they are chosen? **Look at 1Thess. 1:3.** Observed:
 1. **Work** produced by faith
 2. **Labor** prompted by love
 3. **Endurance** inspired by hope
 You can't see faith, love, and hope.
- H. How do we know we are saved? **Read Galatians 5:5-6; Colossians 1:4-5, 1Corinthians 13:13.**
- I. Works / evidence find their genesis source in **Faith.** **Read James 2:26; Ephesians 2:8-10; Galatians 5:22-23.** Saving faith produces good works and the Fruit of the Spirit. Martin Luther didn't like the Book of James. He put it in the back of his German Bible Translation. ☺

Egnatian Roman Road





Adventure through Acts

Acts 17:10 - 15

On God's Word

"Let the Lion out, and see who will dare to approach him. The Lion of the tribe of Judah will soon drive away all his adversarie."¹



I. Read Acts 17:10-12

- A. What does it mean to be **"The Berean"**? – A diligent student who respects fully the authority, the eternality, the truthfulness, and the divine inspiration of God's Holy Word, the Bible, in the original languages. Not gullible but humble, welcoming, and discerning. They did not accept Paul's teaching on its merits. They went to the **Source** to prove worthiness and legitimacy of Paul's words.
- B. V.11: What is meant by **noble character**? = "Fair Minded, eager, examining, not in a "gotcha!" sense, but in "submissiveness" to God's authoritative, unchanging, divine Word in the Old Testament Scripture Scrolls.
- C. From Thessalonica to Berea: 45+ miles: takes about 3 days on foot. Paul and Silas followed a similar strategy. What was it?
- D. *"For them, the Bible was not just a pretty book of poetry or mystery or nice spiritual inspiration for thoughts-for-the-day. It was a book of **truth**, and that truth was there to find out."³*

II. Read Acts 17: 13-15

- A. What is similar concerning Vs. 13 and 5?
- B. Jews stirred up crowds against Paul **5 times** to date: Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:45,50), at Iconium (Acts 14:2,5), at Lystra (Acts 14:19) and at Thessalonica (Acts 17:5-8). Berea was the 5th city he *"was run out of by an angry mob, stirred up by envious Jewish leaders."*⁴
- C. Have you had a price to pay for believing, witnessing, sharing, and preaching the truth? If your faith is built upon the Word of God, you have nothing to fear. **Read 2Samuel 22:18; 29-30; Psalm 119:105; 2Timothy 1:7-9; Matthew 14:27.**
- D. How would you feel if almost everywhere you went, there were people who not only strongly apposed you but actively tried to bring harm, ruin, and eviction to you? Is following Jesus worth it? Why? Why not?
- E. The **Central Question** then and now: **Is the Bible eternally true and authoritative?** **Read Psalm 119:89; Psalm 33:4; Hebrews 4:12; Matthew 28:18; John 1:1; 1Peter 1:23.**

¹<https://elliotritzema.com/2012/07/31/spurgeons-let-the-lion-out-of-the-cage-quote/>

²"Triptych monument" in remembrance of St. Paul's work.: Three panels: the Macedonian man vision, St. Paul, and the address to the Bereans. https://www.google.com/search?q=Triptych+monument&tbn=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwifwsDfxZ7bAhUq_IMKHfhgBbEQ7AkIN&biw=1280&bih=620#imgre=iW00kGHZqTXONM:

³www.blueletterbible.org David Guzik Commentary on Acts 17.

⁴www.blueletterbible.org David Guzik Commentary on Acts 17.



Adventure through Acts

Acts 17:16 - 21

-The weighty burden of idolatry



I. Read Acts 17:16-18

- A. V. 16. Why was Paul so distressed in Athens? “to sharpen; angry; provoked”
- B. Isn't it a sin to be angry? Hmm. Why not in this case? Remember Jesus overturning money tables in the Temple? I believe he was provoked because of his love for God and for the lost who were on their way to Hell.
- C. Let's talk about **Righteous Anger**. Do not let the world shut you up by shaming you into believing that you are just an intolerant, bigoted, arrogant, blind, self-righteous, judgmental ‘Holier than Thou’ jerk. **You are not unloving! Your righteous anger is not contrary, but complimentary to love.**
- D. Your anger is a response to evil, wickedness, and idolatry. You love God and His Word and you want people to be able to go to Heaven. Yes, truth and mercy are to never be found separate. **Read Proverbs 3:3 Truth without mercy is punishment. Mercy without truth is perversion.**
- E. V.17. What was Paul's typical approach when he first came to a city? He went beyond this. How? So in what way is Paul opportunistic here? (Positive quality)
- F. V.18. What are **Epicureans**? = *Pleasure is the chief objective, death is the end.* What are **Stoics**? = **Panentheists. = Theism + Pantheism.** *God is the supreme being, a rational principle giving order to all things, All elements of nature are connected, man is part of that connected divine nature. The divine is in everything.*
- G. V.18. These Athenian Pagans called Paul a **Babbler**. *A bird, like a road kill eating crow, a seed collector. A babbler hangs around smart, big people, a suck up wanna be. They enter into discussions trying to impress people that they know a lot but, in fact, they are just gobbling up crumbs to look and feel good.*
- H. Foreign gods? Jesus and the resurrection. Some Nazarene and Anastasis (feminine goddess, ‘stand up’)

II. Read Acts 17:19-21

- A. What is the **Areopagus**? Mars (Ares = rock) Ares was supposedly tried on this rock by 12 gods for trying to murder Poseidon's (Neptune's) son for attempted assault of his daughter. Court, later Senate. **“Let's hear new and novel things!”**
- B. Discuss: Our society has rejected fundamental bed rock truths of past centuries and millennia. It worships pleasure, self, novelty, the temporary, and the perverse. How do we respond? **Read V.30; Isaiah 32:6; 1Peter 1:18-19; Ephesians 5:6; 2Peter2:18-19; Matthew 17:17; Philippians 1:9-11.**

*"You are fettered," said Scrooge, trembling. "Tell me why?" "I wear the chain I forged in life," replied the Ghost. "I made it link by link, and yard by yard; I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it."*¹

¹<https://gretchenrubin.com/2014/12/i-wear-the-chain-i-forged-in-life-of-my-own-free-will-i-wore-it/> / -- Charles Dickens, "A Christmas Carol"
<https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C> Pastor Paul Vawter
<http://marriageanchors.com/2012/05/18/your-anchor-dont-leave-port-without-him/> = **The Gospel Message**

Adventure through Acts

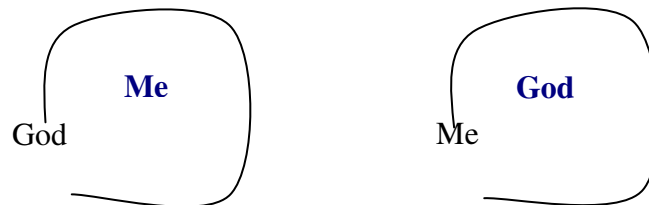
Acts 17:22 - 34

What gods do you serve?



I. Read Acts 17:22-28

- A. What is going on in this passage?
- B. “**Agnostos Theos**” = Unknown God. There was a separate temple for this Un-Greek God. Yes, there were the 12 main deities plus many lesser deities too.
- C. Do you think Paul was persuasively successful here? By human standards? By God's standards?
Read Proverbs 7:21-23; 1Corinthians 2:1-5. We are simple witnesses, messengers, humble ambassadors of Christ.



We are to be filled with the Holy Spirit by faith leaving the timing, the quantity, and the quality of **all results** up to God. He has the power and authority. We do not.

- D. V.28: “*They fashioned a tomb for you, holy and high one, Cretans, always liars, evil beasts, idle bellies. But you are not dead: you live and abide forever, For in you we live and move and have our being.*” **Epimenides**: was a semi-mythical 7th or 6th century BC Greek seer and philosopher-poet.¹

II. Read Acts 17:29-34

- A. What about verse 30 is pivotal?
- B. What are the 3 responses? Have you experienced such responses?
- C. V.34: “*became followers or joined*”= ‘to glue together, cement, fasten together, cleave’
Read Genesis 2:24 similar idea. A radical, irrevocable commitment unto death.
- D. What does it mean for us to be a joined, cleaving, follower of Christ? **Read 1Corinthians 1:1-18.**
- E. Jim Mann is right! Stick with the **Truth of the Gospel, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, etc.**
- F. “*All corruption flows from a wrong view of God*” -Pastor Paul Vawter.
- G. And sharing devotion with other idols will bring despair, fear, isolation, and sin bondage.



Read Romans 3:18; Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 4:6-7; Proverbs 9:10; John 3:16

¹<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greeks>

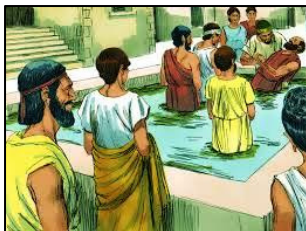
<https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C>
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Adventure through Acts

Acts 18: 1 - 8

By Chance or Hand of God?



I. Read Acts 18:1-5

- A. What are the differences in ministry environment between Athens and Corinth? Corinth was 50 miles due west of Athens. Day and night different! **Athens:** Art, refined culture, upper crust society, educated. **Corinth:** Corrupt, Trade, Temple of Aphrodite (1000 prostitutes to help you pay homage to this goddess), Center of immorality and sensual living. “*Wrong side of the tracks.*” **Big similarity:** Athens: Olympics, Corinth: their sports only 2nd to Athens.
- B. Roman Emperor Claudius expelled all the Jews from Rome: Too much conflict: Jews + Christians!
- C. Do you think the Gospel could take root here in Corinth, a sexual cesspool of wickedness? Why?
- D. Describe how this meeting and resulting partnership between Paul and Aquila and Priscilla is the Providential work of God and not just chance?
- E. Paul stayed 18 months! A long time back then for his planting of churches. How did God provide lodging, food, and \$\$\$? How has He miraculously provided for you in the past? **Read** Philippians 4:14-20
- F. Might there be a reason why Paul did not ask for funding from these immature, worldly, rather small minded Corinthian Christians (not all of them though)? Paul did not want to be accused of being a ministry abuser of their \$\$\$ in order to gain wealth. Why are we tempted in this? Jesus was! **Read** Matthew 4:8-11. **Where have you sadly seen people abusing their position to gain wealth?**

II. Read Acts 18:6-8

- A. What happens in verse 6? Another word for **abusive** is **blasphemous**.
- B. **Read** Ezekiel 33:1-6. In what ways does our culture need to be warned?
- C. Notice Verses 7 & 8: Fruit from Paul’s abrupt move perhaps? **Read** Romans 10:17
- D. In what 3 ways did God's Providence bless Paul?
 1. Aquila and Priscilla. **Read** 1Corinthians 2:3 They basically took him in. Hospitality and work.
 2. Silas and Timothy. Encouragement! Corinth was not a place to minister alone. Why? **Read** Ephesians 4:12
 3. God uplifts Paul’s need through sacrificial giving. He can now devote all his time. See E. above.



Temple of Aphrodite



Adventure through Acts


Acts 18: 9-18

Can we trust God to provide all that we need in life?

*“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”
Philippians 4:19 KJV*



I. Read Acts 18:9-13

- A. What's happening here? Note: the Cult of Emperor was the state religion. Judaism was considered a much lesser cult and Messianic Jews only a sect of the Jewish faith. (Messianic: much later term)
- B. God's calm, rather common place, not overly noticeable hand of Providence is evident through Acts 18 and, in fact, all through the Bible. How and what did God provide in Chapter 18 so far?
- C. **Read 1Corinthians 2:3-5.** What needs other than food, shelter, and money did Paul have? Have you ever been afraid, worried, weary, or fearful? **Share.**
- D. In America, most of us are affluent in comparison to much of the world. **Agree?** My cry to God is this: *“Lord! I need to know that our love and service is of meaningful value to You and is advancing Your Kingdom.”* Yes, the baseball glove doesn't need to know the score, but it does need to know that it is in the game. 
- E. Vs. 9-10: Right when Paul needed it, God provided a vision: *“Keep on speaking. Don't quit!”*
Read 2Timothy 1:7-9. Discuss.
- F. Why do we need provision, encouragement and other supportive people? Because we will suffer.
Read Acts 3:18; Acts 9:15-16; Luke 9:22-24; 2Corinthians 1:6; Philippians 1:29.
- G. God is saying, *“Paul. Don't let your **fear** of the consequences or **lack** of visible fruit stop you from preaching the truth; the work of Christ. Do not become silent.”*
- H. 3 Elements in God's promise to Paul in Vs. 9-10.
 - 1) With Paul. 2) Protect Paul. 3) There will be fruit through Paul. (implied)

***Read Nahum 1:7 Remember Moses, Joshua, and teenager Jeremiah! (Read Jeremiah 1:5-10)**
***Read Isaiah 41:8-15.**
- I. The angry Jews ratcheted things up by going to the Big Whig Gallio, Proconsul of Achaia. Ryrie says in year 51, he was amiable, witty, and a loveable person, but godless and prejudiced (Jews). Paul escapes due to Gallio's bias and God's promise. God uses godless, even wicked people at times.

II. Read Acts 18:14-18

- A. Ah..Sosthenes, the head guy who no doubt was trying to get Paul in trouble. What goes around, comes around. But God even uses this in Sosthenes' life. (If this is the same one in Corinthians. We think so.)
- B. Remember Haman? **Read Esther 6:6; 7:7; 10 ☺** And yet! – **Read 1Corinthians 1:1.** Perhaps God Used his beating to lead him to saving faith in christ!

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greeks>

<https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C>

<http://marriageanchors.com/2012/05/18/your-anchor-dont-leave-port-without-him/> = **The Gospel Message**

Pastor Paul Vawter

When the Philistines seized David in Gath he said, "When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You" ([Psalm 56:3](#)). When he fled from Saul into a cave, he cried out to God. "My soul takes refuge in You; and in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge until destruction passes by" ([Psalm 57:1](#)).

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Many, many years ago, Felix of Nola was escaping his enemies, and he, too, took temporary refuge in a cave. He had scarcely entered the opening of the cave before a spider began to weave its web across the small opening.

With remarkable speed, the insect completely sealed off the mouth of the cave with an intricate web, giving the appearance that the cave had not been entered for many weeks. As Felix's pursuers passed by, they saw the web and didn't even bother to look inside.

Later, as the godly fugitive stepped out into the sunlight, he uttered these insightful words: "Where God is, a spider's web is a wall; where He is not, a wall is but a spider's web."

— Charles R. Swindoll Tweet This

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Adventure through Acts

Acts 18: 18 - 23

*“What does God want
you to do **right now**?”*

**For I decided to know nothing among
you except Jesus Christ and him
crucified.**

1 Cor 2:2



I. **Read** Acts 18:18-23

A. At first glance, what's going on here? During Paul's Journeys, he traveled 3050 miles mostly by foot. Is this a Travel Journal only? Seek Him earnestly. He will take care of the rest.

Read Matthew 6:33-34.

B. **First Prominent Truth:** Paul was confident in God's providence. He was not so concerned with **where** 'God's will' would take him, but with **what** 'God's will' was for him right now.

C. Note: Re: Priscilla and Aquila- no evidence God told them where to go. There was an opportunity to minister the Gospel. They went. Yes. God can and does burden hearts to reach different people groups, countries, places, etc, but our heartbeat should be 1 Corinthians 2:2 (above right photo). Are we willing to be His lights, His witnesses, His ambassadors **right now**? **Here?**

D. We pray and plan but the Lord directs, opens doors, shuts doors, leads and empowers. **Read:** Psalms 17:5; Psalm 37:23-24; Psalm 85:13; Psalm 119:59; Proverbs 16:9; Psalm 119:105,101,89; Ephesians 4:29-32.

E. **Second Prominent Truth:** Paul was more concerned with **doing** 'God's will' than **finding** 'God's will'.



F. Are you willing to be satisfied with the small picture than having to know, see, and experience the big picture? Are you willing to accept how God is choosing to use you rather than complain and demand how you think God should be using you? 😬 Discuss.

G. God wants us focused on doing His will **now**. What is His will for you **now**? **Read** John 13:34; Galatians 6:2; Hebrews 3:12-13; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 14-22; Ephesians 5:18; Matthew 28:18-20.

H. Be not like the Teeter Totter: Rather be like the Fulcrum. The devil and your flesh want you to: **Wallow** in the past **OR** **Worry** over the future. You cannot be filled with the Spirit there. **Rest now.**

II. We avail ourselves to His delight.

A. Not tomorrow, not next week, but **now**. Don't beat yourself up for the past. Yoke up with Jesus right **now**. Seek Him **now**. Love Him **now**. Obey Him **now**. Repent **now**. Make amends with others **now**. Love and help others **now**. Share the Gospel **now**. Pray **now**. **Now** is the appointed time. God's will is **now**.

B. **Read** Psalm 37:4-6 Discuss.

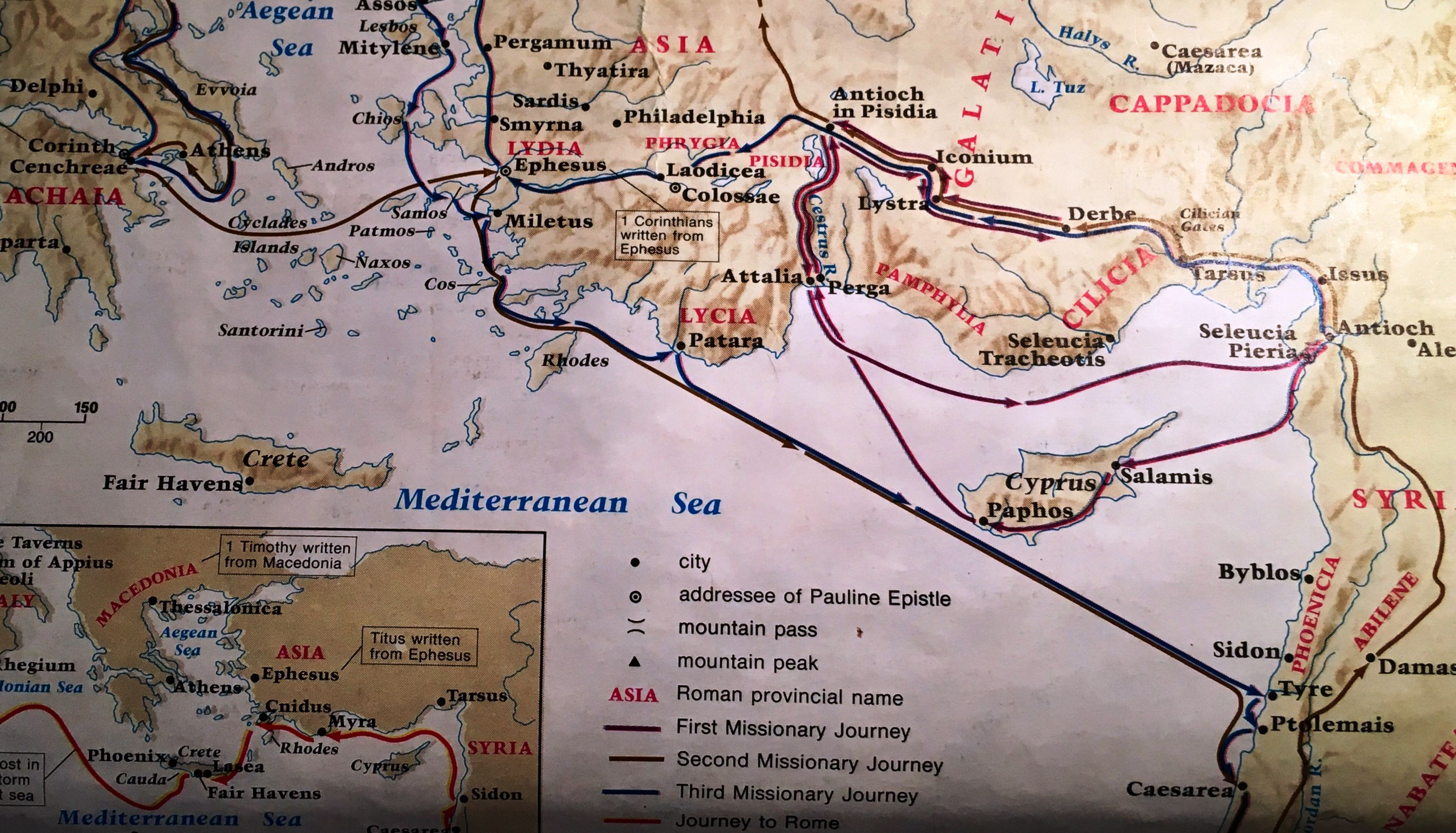
C. V.18: What's with the haircut? **Read Numbers 6:1-21** if interested. Not bondage but to bless and worship God. Voluntary.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greeks>

<https://onedrive.live.com/?authkey=%21AGeYBILGwPyS29o&id=B2F21871FA52864C%21779&cid=B2F21871FA52864C>

Pastor Paul Vawter

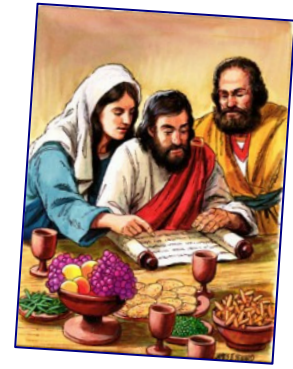
<http://marriageanchors.com/2012/05/18/your-anchor-dont-leave-port-without-him/> = **The Gospel Message**





Adventure through Acts

Acts 18: 22-28



I. Read Acts 18:22-23

- A. V. 22: “he went up...” Where? To Jerusalem to do what? Greet the church there and fulfill his Nazarite vow.
- B. What was so special about the Syrian Antioch church? It was Paul’s home church.
- C. What do you think he debriefed them on? What do you think was their response?
- D. V.23: This is the launching of Paul’s 3rd and final Missionary journey. Where did he go? Why?
- E. So he went back to these church plants to water, to weed, to strengthen and build them up. Why?
- F. Paul obviously believed in Multiplication of the Faith through reproductive discipleship.
Read 2Timothy 2:1-2; Ephesians 4:11-13; Colossians 1:28-29.
- G. David Guzik: “If Paul visited your church today, he might ask you... ‘*How strong of a disciple are you? What can I do to strengthen your walk with Christ?*’” Paul reminds us that it isn’t enough to make a strong beginning with Jesus. Rather, we must always be growing in strength, in truth of God’s Word, in mercy, in grace, in hope, in fellowship, and in love. Growing as an ambassador witness for Christ is every bit as valuable to God as receiving His salvation through Christ! **Discuss.**

II. Read Acts 18:24-26 The Ministry of Apollos

- A. How does author Dr. Luke describe this servant of the Lord? In what capacity do you think he might have been limited in his ability to ministry fully and accurately?
- B. It seems that Apollos was called by **God alone** to be a missionary. Jim’s definition of **Missionary**:
“One who is about his or her Master’s Mission.” Discuss.

III. Read Acts 18:26b-28

- A. Aquila and Priscilla did something valuable for God’s Kingdom. Guzik: “*They helped someone who had a passion for God and at least some power in serving Him; Yet, he had limited resources for truly effective ministry.*” Perhaps, as many Christians lack today, Apollos might not have fully understood Pentecost and the indwelling, sealing, and filling of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ...by faith.
- B. Aquila and Priscilla helped to fill in the blanks and add color in between the lines.
- C. V.27: Even back then, letters of reference were important. **Why?**
- D. V. 28: **Read 1Corinthians 1:12-13; 3:4** What is going on here? Apollos: Trusted Colleague! Some believe he wrote **Hebrews**. **Read Psalm 22; Isaiah 53** Paul and Apollos probably used these.





Adventure through Acts

Acts 19: 1 - 7

Is Repentance Enough?



I. Acts 19:1-3

- A. Why was Paul an **unlikely** candidate to be this Ambassador Witness for Christ? Why **likely**?
- B. Why is verse 2 so important to Christian Faith and Doctrine?
- C. Is it possible today for someone to repent, work at being good, attend church, pay taxes, give mental assent to the truths of the Christian faith but not be saved? Do you maybe know of someone?
- D. If you are a moral, upright, church attender but have not believed on / trusted in Christ or if you are still looking forward to the coming of a Messiah for the first time, you are not saved. **By the way, Baptism won't save you**, but if you say you are saved and have not obeyed here, you are in sin.
- E. A born again person must be **regenerated** by the Holy Spirit. Moral goodness and turning from bad stuff is not enough? What does **regeneration** mean? ***(Click below or turn to back page)**
- F. Note: These 12 men here are not like Apollos. **Read Acts 18:25.**
- G. What is Baptism? **Obedient Identification. An outward manifestation of an inward faith in Jesus. Read John 3:26-34.** What is intriguing here? These men knew they were sinners and were most likely looking for a 'future arriving' Messiah.

II. Read Acts 19:4-7

- A. What were these good, but lost men missing? They met the Forerunner but not the Life Giver!
- B. **Read Acts 16:31; 1John 3:23; John 9:36-37; John 6:29; John 1:12-13. (Jesus)**
- C. **Read Ephesians 3:19; Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:13-26; Acts 16:7; Philippians 1:18-19. (The Spirit of Jesus, The Holy Spirit)**
- D. Following John the Baptist was nice and repentance (change of mind : turning from) is needed! **But this does not save!** Note: John, the Baptist, was pointing away from himself to **Christ!**
- E. V.5: What stumbling blocks do Gentiles and Jewish people today face before they can believe?
- F. V.6: They received what? Is every new believer to be revealed by tongues and prophesy? No! **Read 1Corinthians 12:7-11; 1Corinthians 7:7.** But every new believer should obey: Baptism.
- G. Repentance: Not enough! A good church going life: not enough! The 10 Commandments! You cannot keep them? **Read Joel 2:32; Isaiah 45:22; John 3:7.**
- H. **Lessons of Spirit Generated and Sustained Faith:** 1) Being good and being a 'person of religion' does not mean you are a saved, born again Christian. 2) Details matter when it comes to eternal life. **Read Romans 8:9.** 3) Being a Christian means obeying our Lord in Word and Deed. **Faith follows through.** We believe. Then we obey. One reason why Baptism is so important.

* <https://www.gotquestions.org/regeneration-Bible.html> or see back page.

https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Act/Act-18.cfm?a=1036001

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*** What is regeneration according to the Bible? (www.gotquestions.org)**

Question: "What is regeneration according to the Bible?"

Answer: Another word for *regeneration* is *rebirth*, related to the biblical phrase “born again.” Our rebirth is distinguished from our first birth, when we were conceived physically and inherited our sin nature. The new birth is a spiritual, holy, and heavenly birth that results in our being made alive spiritually. Man in his natural state is “dead in trespasses and sins” until he is “made alive” (regenerated) by Christ. This happens when he places his faith in Christ (Ephesians 2:1).

Regeneration is a radical change. Just as our physical birth resulted in a new individual entering the earthly realm, our spiritual birth results in a new person entering the heavenly realm (Ephesians 2:6). After regeneration, we begin to see and hear and seek after divine things; we begin to live a life of faith and holiness. Now Christ is formed in the hearts; now we are partakers of the divine nature, having been made new creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17). God, not man, is the source of this transformation (Ephesians 2:1, 8). God’s great love and free gift, His rich grace and abundant mercy, are the cause of the rebirth. The mighty power of God—the power that raised Christ from the dead—is displayed in the regeneration and conversion of sinners (Ephesians 1:19–20).

Regeneration is necessary. Sinful human flesh cannot stand in God’s presence. In His conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus said twice that a man must be born again in order to see the kingdom of God (John 3:3, 7). Regeneration is not optional, for “flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit” (John 3:6). Physical birth fits us for earth; spiritual rebirth fits us for heaven. See Ephesians 2:1; 1 Peter 1:23; John 1:13; 1 John 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18. Regeneration is part of what God does for us at the moment of salvation, along with sealing (Ephesians 1:14), adoption (Galatians 4:5), reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18–20), etc. Regeneration is God’s making a person spiritually alive, as a result of faith in Jesus Christ. Prior to salvation we were not God’s children (John 1:12–13); rather, we were children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3; Romans 5:18–20). Before salvation, we were degenerate; after salvation we are regenerated. The result of regeneration is peace with God (Romans 5:1), new life (Titus 3:5; 2 Corinthians 5:17), and eternal sonship (John 1:12–13; Galatians 3:26). Regeneration begins the process of sanctification wherein we become the people God intends us to be (Romans 8:28–30).

The only means of regeneration is by faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross. No amount of good works or keeping of the Law can regenerate the heart. “By works of the law no human being will be justified in [God’s] sight” (Romans 3:20). Only Christ offers a cure for the total depravity of the human heart. We don’t need renovation or reformation or reorganization; we need rebirth.

Recommended Resource: Making Sense of Salvation by Wayne Grudem

More insights from your Bible study - Get Started with Logos Bible Software for Free!

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Adventure through Acts

Acts 19: 8 - 16

*Do you have a teachable,
humble relationship with
Jesus?*



I. Read Acts 19: 8-10

- A. What important things are taking place in this passage? Have you ever taught or shared the Gospel or other biblical truth but the listener became **obstinate** in his/her rejection of this truth? How did you feel? What happened next? Did you give up or plod on?
- B. Have you ever been maligned? (Talk, chatter, gossip that is malignant; defamed, that which is spiteful, critical, destructive. i.e.: trying to ruin your reputation? “The tongue from Hell!” How?
- C. Paul could not reach this region by himself. He had to train or equip others to reach out and spread the truth and teaching. **Read Ephesians 4:11-12** How many Jews and Greeks in Asia heard **Truth**?

II. Read Acts 19:11-12

- A. What can we learn from this passage? How have some misused this passage? David Guzik writes, *“I remember seeing what looked to be loosely rolled up newspapers on a pulpit in Bulgaria, being told they were pieces of fabric (wrapped in newspapers) that the pastor prayed over, and they were taken home to sick people. This was a common practice in these Bulgarian churches.”*
- B. Three key takeaways: **1. extraordinary = unusual.** – not to be applied always. **2.** God, knowing this area was steeped in magic, sorcery, and superstitions, His mercy authorized such usage of artifacts to reach people and do them good with kindness. **3.** It was God, not Paul or his clothing, who healed. God is creative and uses different things and ways to minister. God's not in a box!
- C. **Read Acts 5:15; Matthew 14:36** **Comments?** Is this standard practice? *H2O from the Jordan?*

III. Read Acts 19:13-16

- A. These itinerant (travel from place to place) Jewish Exorcists “tried to imitate what they thought was Paul’s formula for success.” What is wrong with this thinking? What happened? Does the Lord work through double-minded or self-promoting men and women?
- B. Why did they fail? They had no **personal relationship** with Jesus. *“They only knew that Jesus was the God of Paul, not their own God. We could say that the sons of Sceva did not have the right to use the name of Jesus, because they had no real personal connection to Him. In the same pattern, there are many people – many churchgoers – who will perish in hell because they have no personal relationship with Jesus Christ. They only know “the Jesus the pastor preaches” or “the Jesus my spouse believes in” instead of the Jesus of their own salvation.”* –Guzik.
- C. Why should Spiritual Warfare and its dangers **not** be taken lightly? Share your life’s examples. Pray for each other today regarding this.



Adventure through Acts

Acts 19: 17 - 41

Where Good is, Evil lurks.

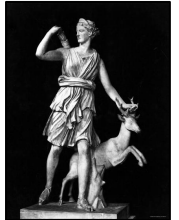
Diana Coin 81 B.C.



Temple of Diana / Artemis - Ephesus
One of the 7 Wonders of the world.

I. Read Acts 19: 17-20

- A. What's going on here?
- B. Many in Ephesus renounce objects associated with the demonic.
- C. What was impressed on the people's hearts here?
 1. Reality of the need to fear the Lord. 2. Reality of the demonic realm. 3. Result? Jesus Magnified.
- D. What do we know of history and life when Jesus is magnified? The devil and his workers of iniquity and unrest are plotting, agitating, and fomenting. **Examples?**
- E. This "Sons of Sceva" event sort of woke up many practitioners of magic to the dark, real world of demons and powers of evil origins and intent. Have you experienced this or seen this? How? When?
- F. Guzik- *"They **renounced** the demonic by **confessing** and by burning their magic books, disregarding whatever value they had. It is significant that these practitioners of magic came confessing and telling of their deeds. It was thought that the power of these magic spells was in their **secrecy**, which was **renounced in the telling**."* See **Note 1 on Back**.
- G. V. 20: Was all of this worth it? Diana was a sex goddess of the hunt, wild animals, fertility, and moon. (Mainly Greek / Roman version) The Ephesian's Diana, was more midwife protector **"who fell from Heaven."** Evidently a sizable meteorite hit, and they formed a grotesque female from it.



II. Read Acts 19: 21-22

- A. Why would Paul want to go way out of his way to finally get to Jerusalem?
Read Romans 15:25-26; 1Corinthians 16:1-4 And why would any follower of the WAY want to go to Rome with all of it's dangers and persecutions?
- B. Timothy and Erastus were true servants of God used simply to help Paul. Like me, do you struggle with servanthood? *"You'll know you are a servant when people start treating you like one."* **Comments?**

III. Read Acts 19: 23-41

- A. Who was this Demetrius and what was his bottom line? **\$\$\$ See Note 2 on Back**
- B. What are your thoughts about the idea that Christianity *"should affect the economy"*? -Guzik
- C. Thank God for the level-headed City Clerk! **Why?** God can use local government officials. He can use you to further the Gospel. **Examples?**
- D. The Ephesus Diana or Artemis started off a wee bit different than the Greek / Roman Artemis. The Ephesus Diana was a fertility goddess near to the hearts of women in labor, sort of a goddess midwife. The Greek / Roman version was more the sexual goddess who was a hunter and courageous! Yet, as time went on, the two versions became similar.

https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Act/Act-19.cfm?a=1037017

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<http://marriageanchors.com/2012/05/18/your-anchor-dont-leave-port-without-him/> = **The Gospel Message**

Note 1

*These books and scrolls full of magic charms, amulets and incantations were well known in Ephesus, and they were valuable. The value of **fifty thousand pieces of silver** today has been estimated at anywhere between **\$1 million and \$5 million.***

iii. Christians must do this also today, removing books, images, computer files, statues, charms, games, or whatever else might have connection with demonic spirits. They should also destroy them so they are of no use to others.

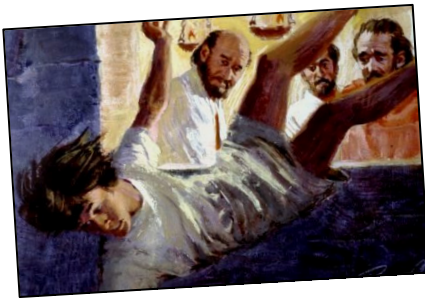
iv. “You will have enough temptation in your own mind without going after these things. Is there any habit, any practice, that you have got that defiles your soul? If Christ loves you, and you come and trust in him, you will make short work of it. Have done with it, and have done with it forever.”
(Spurgeon) from Guzik’s Commentary.

Note 2:

This tremendous temple to Diana (also known as Artemis) in Ephesus was regarded as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was supported by 127 pillars, each 60 feet high, and was decorated with great sculptures. It was lost to history until it was discovered in 1869, and its main altar was unearthed in 1965. (Guzik)

i. “The epicenter of Artemis worship was a black meteorite that either resembled or had been fashioned into a grotesque image of a woman. The lower part was wrapped like a mummy...the idol was covered with breasts, symbolizing fertility.” (Hughes)

ii. “The Temple of Artemis was also a major treasury and bank of the ancient world, where merchants, kings, and even cities made deposits, and where their money could be kept safe under the protection of deity.” (Longenecker)



Adventure through Acts

Acts 20:1-12

Dogged & Resolute!



Via Egnatia

I. Read Acts 20:1-3

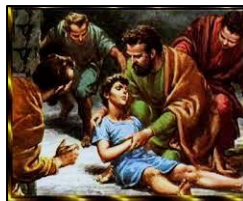
- A. Vs. 1-2: What was one of the main things Paul did here? Why? When have you needed it? When have you given it? Have you ever been encouraged by someone and you knew you really did not deserve it? Have you chosen to encourage someone when they did not particularly deserve it?

Read Hebrews 3:13; Deuteronomy 3:28; 2Samuel 19:7; Psalm 10:17

- B. V. 3: Why do you think those evil-intentioned Jews made a plot against Paul? Has anyone or any group ever made a plot to harm you or your reputation?
- C. How do you demonstrate love and affirmation to the people in your life? Work, home, church, etc.
- D. **Read Romans 15:19-20.** Interesting. We don't see Luke including any trip by Paul to Illyricum in Acts. (Roman Province = Albania) Probably fits here in Acts 20:2-3. **Roman Road: Via Egnatia**
- E. *"Book of Acts, as wonderful as it is, by no means is a complete accounting of all that God did through His people in the first century."* - Guzik

II. Read Acts 20:4-6

- A. Note: These men were most likely representatives from the various churches Paul planted who gave money for the poor Christians in Jerusalem.
- B. **Aristarchus** usually means this man was of the Aristocracy: Rich, ruling, powerful class. **Secundus**, means *"second"*. Usually referred to one who was a slave...second to the top slave, **Primus**, meaning *"first"*. Guzik points out that it is wonderful that people from the powerful to the slave would be together, serving, loving, and advancing God's Kingdom!
- C. V. 6: *"We sailed..."* Can only mean that Dr. Luke, Acts author, rejoined Paul and sailed with him from Philippi.



III. Read Acts 20:7-12

- A. What factors might have contributed to **Eutychus's** falling asleep? Have you ever fallen asleep or known of someone having fallen asleep when they shouldn't have? ☺
- B. Isn't God good to have raised this young man from the dead? The only problem then is that Paul continued to preach...**until daylight? Wow!**

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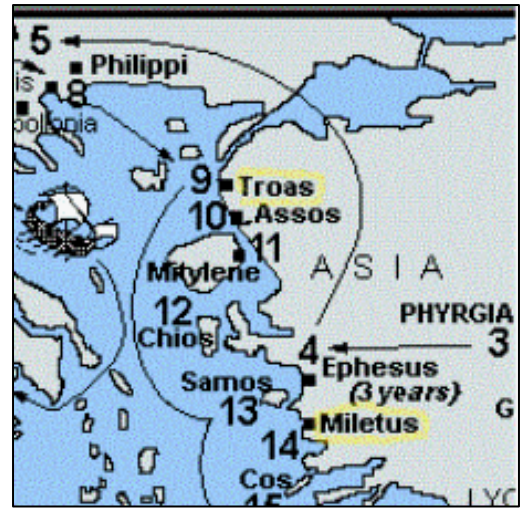
Adventure through Acts

Acts 20:13-38

“None of these things move me.”

“You will see my face no more.”

“Serve humbly with joy.”



I. Read Acts 20:13-21

- A. Why do you think Paul chose to walk from **Troas** to **Assos** while his comrades sailed? Perhaps to check on **Eutychus**? And why do you think he skipped visiting **Ephesus**, but, instead, had the Elders come to him?
- B. Usually Paul is the evangelist but here, he acts more as a shepherd. In what ways do you see this? Note: He served them not as an example instead of Christ, but as one who follows Christ. What is the difference? How does this apply to our own lives?
- C. V.19: Share a time when the Lord allowed you to be severely tested. **Read 2Corinthians 11: 23-30**
You are genuine, my brothers and sisters! By God's grace and His work of solid surrender in you, you have not given up! ...not thrown the towel in!... and not raised an ugly fist to God's face! Yes!
- D. **V.21: A FULCRUM VERSE in the New Testament! WHY?**

II. Read Acts 20:22-31

- A. What are some key elements and powerful declarations in this section that jump off the page to you?
- B. V.24: KJV *“But **none** of these things move me, neither **count** I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish **my course** [**race** = NIV] with **joy** and the ministry which I **have received** of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”* {**Bold** added}
- C. Let's read **Note #1** on the back page from Charles Spurgeon (1834 – 1892 = 58 years old- died of Nephritis)
- D. Why do you think Paul's words in V.25 were so gut wrenching? Have you ever said “Good Bye” for good...until Heaven? Paul's pouring into the Elder's and others lives in Ephesus was effective and bonding!
Read Acts 19:10
- E. V.28: What does it mean to keep watch over yourself and be a good shepherd toward others? **Handout**
- F. V.29-30: How do today's **savage wolves** of the devil distort the truth, draw people away, and tickle ears?

III. Read Acts 20:32-38

- A. Let's chew on V. 32: Why is this encouraging to them and to us?
- B. V.35: Why is this verse so very important for those Elders and for us to remember?

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Pastor Paul Vawter

Note #1

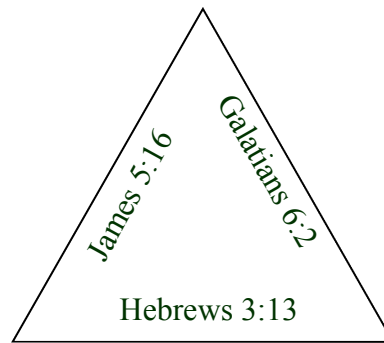
Circle the False Gospels in the middle section that you believe are most prevalent today and share why.

iii. This shows that even at this point, Paul had his death in mind. It would be many years until he actually died, but he considered that what he did with his life now was worth dying for. In the words of Spurgeon, he preached a gospel worth dying for. It is a worthy challenge to any preacher: Is the gospel you preach worth dying for?

- The gospel of moral reform? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of save yourself through good works? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of social action and improvement? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of religious traditions? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of merely having spiritual conversations? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of mystical mumbo-jumbo? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel seeking the church of true hipness? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of self-esteem? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of ecological salvation? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of political correctness? Not worth dying for.
- The gospel of emergent church feel-goodism? Not worth dying for.

iv. "Yet there used to be a gospel in the world which consisted of facts which Christians never questioned. There was once in the church a gospel which believers hugged to their hearts as if it were their soul's life. There used to be a gospel in the world, which provoked enthusiasm and commanded sacrifice. Tens of thousands have met together to hear this gospel at peril of their lives. Men, to the teeth of tyrants, have proclaimed it, and have suffered the loss of all things, and gone to prison and to death for it, singing psalms all the while. Is there not such a gospel remaining?" **(Spurgeon)**

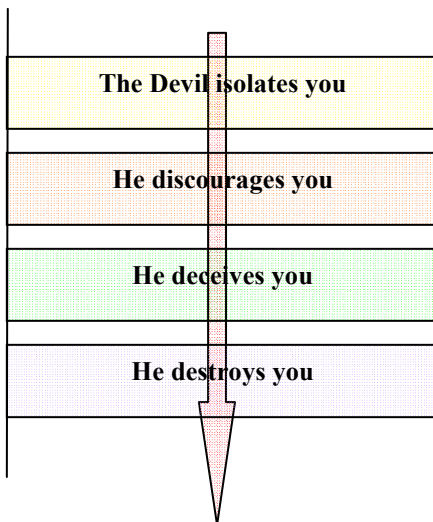
Find a Foxhole Buddy!



Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

DEVIL'S LADDER

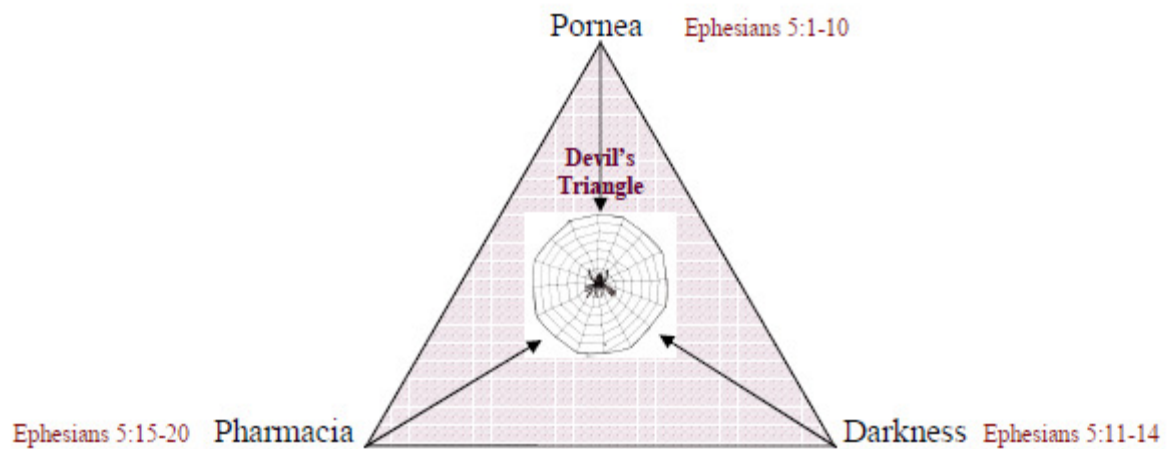
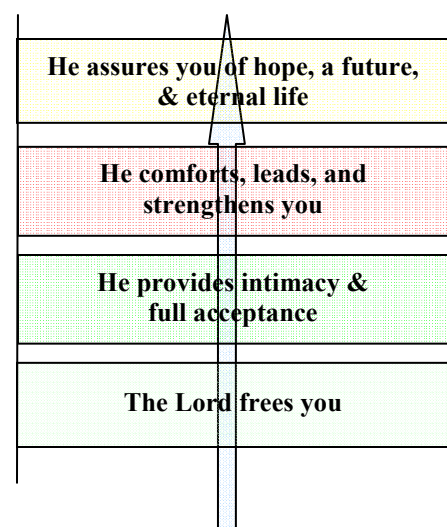
He pulls you down.



Genesis 2 / 3

Lord's Ladder

He lifts you up!

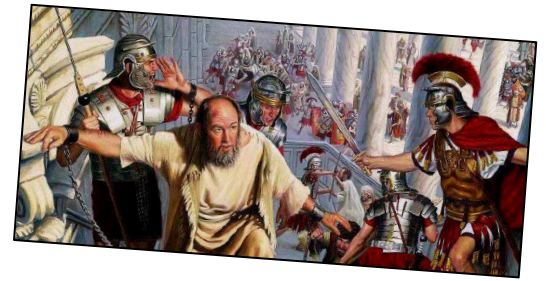




Adventure through

Acts 21:1-40

Rumors spawned in Hell.



I. Read Acts 21:1-14

- A. What is happening in this section?
- B. Why were the words “**torn ourselves away**” used do you think?
- C. V.4: If the Holy Spirit was directing Paul to go to Jerusalem, how can the same Spirit urge Paul not to go?
- D. V.8: Philip, the Evangelist. What a great title! **Read Acts 8:40.**
- E. V.11: Has someone with a Prophetic gift ever prophesied over you or someone you know? Result?
- F. The warnings of the Holy Spirit “were intended to **prepare** Paul, not **stop** him.” We never choose suffering. Rather, we choose God's will whether it involves suffering or not. Your life examples?
- G. At times, we find it all too easy to “judge God's will for someone else.” **Examples?** ☹

II. Read Acts 21:15-26

- A. Probably around A.D. 57 and about 25 years after Acts began. Thus, **an early disciple.**
- B. Have you ever had bad rumors circulating about you? Want to share? ☹ How do false rumors and gossip start? What 2 enemies of ours consort together to foster these tools of Hell. (False Rumors and Gossip.)
- C. Paul did not have a problem with Jewish Christians [**Messianic Jews**] who wanted to continue to observe old customs and laws...as long as they didn't think “*it made them more right with God.*”
- D. V.25: Paul did not falter from the decision at the **First Jerusalem Counsel.** **Read Acts 15:20.**

III. Read Acts 21:27-40

- A. Why is it not a good idea to trust the crowd? Any other biblical examples?
- B. These charges against Paul were **an echo** of the charges Stephen was executed for. **Read Acts 6:13**
- C. V.33: Read it. Then go back and **Read Acts 21:11.**
- D. “*Away with him!*” meant- Remove him from the earth! They wanted Paul dead, like Jesus and Stephen.
- E. Jewish historian Josephus mentioned an Egyptian who led a ragged army of four thousand men to the Mount of Olives where they declared they would take over the temple mount. They failed. The leader got away.

https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Act/Act-21.cfm?a=1039001

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Pastor Paul Vawter



Adventure through Acts

Acts 22:1-30

Tell your story + stand on the Word.



I. Read Acts 22:1-11

- A. V.1: What is endearing, humble, and penitent about Paul's first words here? **Read Acts 7:2**
- B. V.3: "*I am **indeed** a Jew,*" Why would our brother Paul say this phrase to his listeners?
- C. Interesting! David Guzik says this regarding the sharing of Paul's **story**.
 - 1. **Acts 9**: Luke shared the story of Paul's conversion.
 - 2. **Acts 22**: Paul tells his story to persuade the Jews.
 - 3. **Acts 26**: Paul tells his story to persuade the Gentiles.
 - 4. **Philippians 3**: Paul tells his story for theological understanding.
 - 5. **1 Timothy 1**: Paul tells his story to give encouragement.
- D. Would anyone care to share "their story" to edify each other?
- E. V.3: Paul called the crowd "*zealous for God*". Why is that noteworthy?
- F. V.4-11: Why did Paul empathize with the crowd? What happened to make Paul different?

II. Read Acts 22:12-21

- A. V.14: What about this verse indicates that neither Ananias nor Paul had rejected Judaism. Yet many Jews rejected and still reject their "God as revealed in Jesus Christ." **Note**: Tragically, for 2000 years, what have the Gentile Christians done to the Jewish followers of Christ? {Un-Judaize them by Gentile Christianizing them or just by down right persecuting, exiling, and/or exterminating them. **TJCI** }
- B. V.14: Ananias's exhorts all of us: **1)** To know God's will. **2)** To see the Just One (Jesus)... and to **3)** Hear the voice of His mouth (His Word.) The following are what I urge people to do:
 - a)** Spend time with the Master **b)** Read His Word **c)** Do what He says.
- C. Even though Paul shares his story, as we need to, he most readily relied more on the Truth of that which is written: The Scriptures. God can use dreams, visions, and whisperings...but He wants us to be **Men and Women of the Word**. "It is written! It is written! It is Written! Luke 4.
- D. V.16: Although an important act of obedience, why does water baptism **not** contribute to one's salvation?
- E. V.21: Jesus had different plans for Paul. ☺ It took **20 years** to season and age Paul and the Jews. It was not Paul's idea to go and reach the Gentiles. **When has your plans differed from God's?**

III. Read Acts 22:22-30

- A. What **one word** caused the Jews to riot and erupt into a rage? **Why?** Who saved Paul's life here?
- B. V.25. What does this say about the Apostle Paul? *He weren't stupid!* Why was the Commander alarmed?
- C. How would you describe the Apostle Paul to someone who has never heard of him?



Adventure through Acts

Acts 23:1-35

“Be of Good Cheer.”



I. Read Acts 23:1-10

- A. God clearly is setting up Paul's circumstances in order for him to tell his story, preach the Gospel, and stand on the Word of the existing Testament (Old). How has God aligned you amidst your circumstances?
- B. V.1: Why do you think Paul addressed this esteemed group of Judges as brothers? The normal style would have been to say, *“Rulers of the people and elders of Israel”* = Equal Footing / William Barclay. Josephus, Jewish historian, tells how Ananias *“stole for himself the tithes that belonged to the common priests.”*
- C. V.2-3: Why was Paul ticked when hit do you think? It hurt and it was illegal. Hughes says the Jewish Law states *“He who strikes the cheek of one Israelite, strikes as it were the glory of God.”* **Pulpit Commentary** says Ananias ben Nebedeus was a *“violent, haughty, gluttonous, and rapacious man, and yet looked up to by the Jews.”* **Ananias was hunted like an animal and was murdered by his own people in @ 66 A.D. (1st Jewish-Roman War)** God takes those who offend His Children seriously!
- D. So what does it mean to be called *“a whitewashed wall”*? **Read Deuteronomy 25:1-2**
- E. V.6-7: Why do you think Paul knowingly said something that would divide and cause a dispute? **Sympathy?** Guzik: Sadducees: theological liberals: No life after death. No resurrection. Pharisees: Yes! Align with Paul.
- F. The Pharisees were more the Bible believers, yet, like some today, they erred by adding the traditions of men.
- G. **Read Matthew 16:1.** Isn't it odd how people who were bitter enemies **unite** in opposition against Jesus?
- H. Yet some of the Pharisees' Scribes called on the advice of a Pharisee named Gamaliel. **Read Acts 5:38-39.**
- I. This crowd clearly was not open to hearing the Gospel! One day, they will wish they had been. When?

II. Read Acts 23:11-24

- A. Like Paul, have you ever been lonely, spent, having messed things up pretty bad? Any Sharers? ☺
- B. How has the Lord Jesus brought you encouragement (the courage of hope)? Perhaps in *"the darkness..."*
- C. **Read Matthew 28:20.** What strength, encouragement, and hope does this give you? Why? Share?

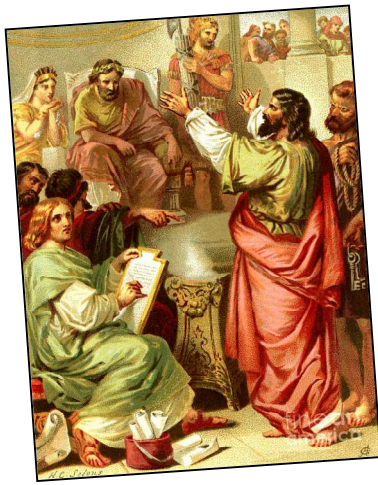
While John Bunyan, was in jail (where he wrote *Pilgrim's Progress*), a man visited him and said, *"Friend, the Lord sent me to you, and I have been looking in half the prisons in England for you."* John Bunyan replied, *"I don't think the Lord sent you to me, because if He had, you would have come here first. God knows I've been here for years."* Guzik writes, *"Better to be in jail with the Lord than to be in Heaven without him."*

- D. When was the last time you wanted God to deliver you out of a circumstance? Anyone? Perhaps He wants to meet us **right in it.** – Guzik.
- E. When things are crummy and you're in a fix...when things are not looking good, do you groan in anger, self-loathing, and despair? Or have you discovered a better response? Anyone? Bueller? Bueller? ... Bueller? ☺
- F. Vs.16-21: Have you ever had a relative or friend like Paul's young nephew that God used to defend you, rescue you, or back you up? Have you ever been that helpful person? Anyone?
- G. **Read Romans 8:28.** God breathed this eternal verse into the Apostle Paul. In what ways did God drill the efficacy of this verse into Paul's heart? How has God drilled this truth into you? Pain often leads to purity of heart. **Read Matthew 9:22; 14:27; John 16:33.** Will you obey His command? ***"Be of good cheer."*** What faith step, trial, or adventure is He speaking directly to you today: ***"Fear not! Be of Good Cheer?"***

III. Read Acts 23:25-35

- A. What do you think of this Roman Commander? V. 27.
- B. Sometimes, as I get older, more weather-beaten, and more weary, I say, *"Well. I've done enough for the Lord. Now it's my time."* Then God reminds me, *"Jim. I'm not done with you."* Guzik writes: *"It can be said to every child of God: There is more for you to do. More people to bring to Christ, more ways for you to glorify Him, more people to pray with, more humble ways to serve His people, more hungry to feed, more naked to clothe, more weary saints for you to encourage."* **Comments?**
- C. Spurgeon writes: *"A divine decree ordains for you greater and more trying service than as yet you have seen. A future awaits you, and **no power on the earth or under the earth** can rob you of it; therefore **be of good cheer.**"* {**Bold added**} **Comments?**
- D. So what's it like to have the Hand of God upon your life guiding you step by step? He's got you by the hand. His other hand is upon your shoulder. Fear not. The best from Him is yet to come.

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Adventure through Acts

Acts 24:1-27

“Mankind hasn’t changed a bit!”



I. Read Acts 24:1-12

- A. What is going on in this section?
- B. Was Ananias serious about obtaining a conviction against Paul? How do you know?
- C. What kind of man do you think Felix was? He was the first slave to rise to be Governor of a Roman province. His brother Pallas was a brother of Emperor Claudius, and he, thus gained his freedom. But his **slave** mentality stayed with him. *“Tacitus, the Roman historian, described Felix as ‘a master of cruelty and lust who exercised the powers of a king with the spirit of a slave.’” (Historiae 5.9 cited in Longnecker)* He was a real piece of work! Because of his infamous brother Pallas, *“he indulged in every license and excess, thinking ‘that he could do any evil act with impunity.’” (Tacitus, Annals 12:54 Williams)*
- D. V.2: Ananias is a big, buttering up liar! Why? He was responsible for putting *“down several insurrections with such barbarous brutality that he earned for himself the horror, not the thanks, of the Jewish population.”* (Stott) He also ordered the genocide of thousands of Jews in Caesarea where many of the homes were looted by guess: Roman Soldiers. **Read Romans 16:18; Jude 1:16; Proverbs 20:19; Psalm 78:32-37. Discuss.**
- E. Tertullus was not unlike some big wig lawyers today. Ancient Judea had many would be messiahs and revolutionaries plaguing the government. Tertullus wanted to treat Paul like one of them.
- F. V.5: Have you ever been called a troublemaker or a ringleader? **Read John 1:46** Nazareth where Jesus and this sect, **The Way**, came from had a very poor reputation. (Wrong side of the tracks!)
- G. V.6: Note Paul was accused without evidence. What modern day example of this are we seeing before our very eyes today? Paul no doubt knew as do today’s politicians, media, and lawyers, that **truth does not always win out.**

II. Read Acts 24:13-27

- A. V.13: Why is this Paul’s greatest defense? Interesting that they could not have paid off some liars.
- B. When have you told the truth and paid a severe price for it or been praised for it.
- C. V.25: Aren’t these 3 topics what many pastors avoid? Why? What other topics do they avoid? Why?

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*Sister &
lover Bernice*



Adventure through Acts

Acts 25:1-27

“God Orders Our Steps”



I. Read Acts 25:1-12

- A. A.D. 58 there was the transition of governorship: From **Antonius Felix** to **Porcius Festus**. Note: Felix was a truly bad man but according to history, Festus was basically a good man.
- B. Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea was a *“providential provision of protective custody against the murderous intentions of the religious leaders. It was also a season of rest and replenishment after his years of hard missionary service, preparing him for the challenges in the years ahead.”* **Discuss**
- C. Why do you think the religious leaders plotted to kill Paul on the way back up to Jerusalem?
- D. Guzik rightly suggests something about religious people and religious leaders that have all the ornaments and titles of religion, but lack true contact with God. Why was this dangerous in Paul's day, throughout church history, and today? Examples?
- E. V.8: What do you like about Paul's defense? Many in the Bible were target of false accusations. (O.T. Joseph, Daniel, and who else? Who is your accuser? **Read Revelation 12:10-11**; Thankfully we have Who? For He is our defense against condemnation and false accusation. **Read Romans 8:1-2; 33-38.**
- F V.11: Appealing to Caesar was like appealing to our Supreme Court. Paul had the valuable right as a Roman Citizen. Guzik – *“For the first 5 years of Nero's reign, under the influence of good men around him, Nero was regarded as a wise and just ruler. Paul had no reason at this time to believe that Nero would be anti-Christian.”* How can some people change? What do we know from history about man and power? How did Nero eventually change? Name some historical figures who could not handle the power given to them in an honorable fashion? **The History of Man!!!**

II. Read Acts 25:13-27

- A. King Agrippa had an incestuous relationship with sister Bernice. 😞 His kingdom was Northeast of Festus' province. He was an expert on Jewish customs and religious matters...helpful to Festus.
- B. I'm sure Paul was thrilled! King Agrippa's *“great-grandfather, (Herod, the Great) had tried to kill Jesus as a baby; his grandfather (Herod Antipas) had John the Baptist beheaded, his father had martyred the first apostle, James. Now Paul stood before the next in line of the Herods, Herod Agrippa. Oh Goodie! If you were Paul, what would you be feeling right about now?”*
- C. V.19: *“...a dead man named Jesus”* or *“a certain Jesus”*. Festus did not know much about this Jesus. *“It is good to remember that the great and important people of Paul's day didn't know much about Jesus, and they had to be told. Spurgeon said, “Brethren, this is why we must keep on preaching Jesus Christ, because he is still so little known. The masses of this city are as ignorant of Jesus as Festus was.”* Let us keep sharing the Gospel! Even if only one soul is saved! **Worth it!**

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Adventure through Acts

Acts 26:1-32

YOU ARE ON TRIAL TOO.



I. Read Acts 26:1-18

- A. What is happening in this section? **Read Acts 9:15-16** Who is saying this? What is this anyway? Is Paul fulfilling the Lord's prophesy? **Question: What prophesy have you fulfilled and are fulfilling right now?** **Read Luke 19:10; John 1:12-13; Joel 2:32a; Matthew 5:14-16.** Other verses?
- B. V.6: What is Paul saying here? Carnal or lost natural people do not think this way. Did you know right now, and more so in the future, you **are on trial**? Why? In what ways have you suffered for your faith in Christ? **Read Philippians 1:29-30; 1Peter 1:6-7; 1Peter 2:20-21; Hebrews 5:8.**
- C. V.8: What does this say about their view of God or a Higher Power? Agrippa was well acquainted with the Hebrew faith and customs. He should have heard of Lazarus and others being raised from the dead. He should have also heard of the stories of "this Jesus" being seen by 500 witnesses! **Read Job 19:25-27.**
- D. V.15: Guzik writes, *"These words changed Paul's world. He immediately understood that Jesus was alive, not dead. He understood that Jesus reigned in glory instead of being damned in shame. He realized that in persecuting the followers of Jesus he persecuted Jesus, and in persecuting Jesus he fought against the God of his fathers."*

Paul had to repent – make a transformation of mind leading to transformed action – instantly. Paul lived a moral life, so he didn't have to repent of immorality – but of misguided religious zeal and wrong ideas about God."

- E. V.18: What 4 results would God do to the unbelievers when He (The Holy Spirit) opened their eyes?
- F. **Question:** Are you sanctified by works, personal morality, or self-achievement or by your unbreakable connection of love, trust, new life, and God's family to Jesus? How do you know?

II. Read Acts 26:19-32

- A. What are the main reasons the Jews wanted Paul tried and/or dead? Look at the last part of V.23.
- B. V.24: Has anyone ever told you that you were nuts, crazy, out of your mind, or a right wing fanatic? Reasons Festus probably thought Paul was crazy: **1.** Though in chains, happy! **Acts 26:2.** **2.** He insisted God could raise the dead. **Acts 26:8; 23.** **3.** He experienced a heavenly vision and changed his life because of it. **Acts 26:14-19.** ***4.** He was more concerned about proclaiming Jesus than his personal freedom. **5.** He believed in a message of hope and redemption for all humanity, not only Jews or Gentiles. (Guzik)
- C. Some people will think we are **Wacko** when filled with the Holy Spirit and we are properly living and proclaiming the Gospel. Some of your relatives might distance themselves from you too. Examples?
- D. V.28: How close do you think King Agrippa was to being saved?
- E. V.32: How do you see the guiding hand of God in verse 32?

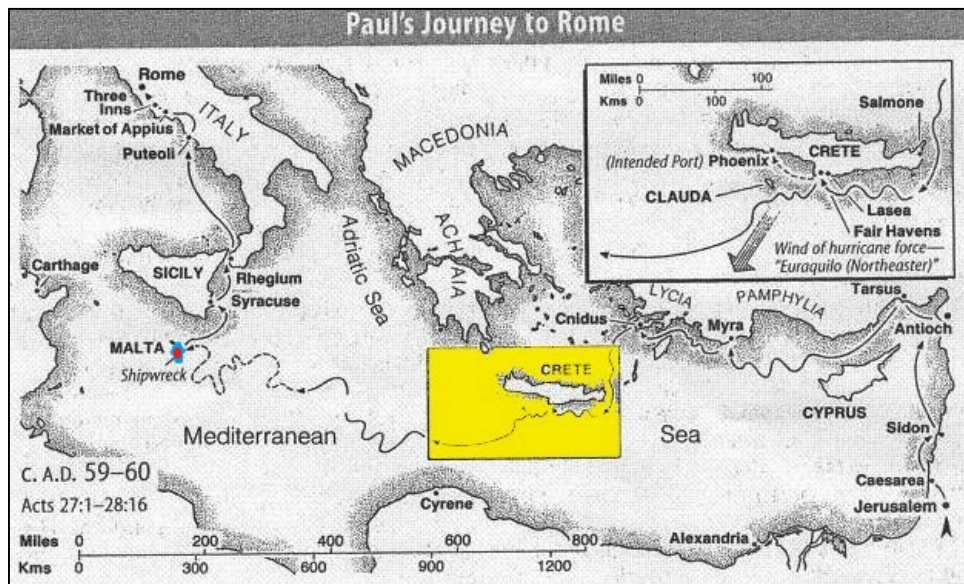
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Adventure through Acts

Acts 27



I. Read Acts 27:1-26

- A. In what ways do you see / sense God's loving, guiding, and protecting hand in this section?
- B. V.10-11: What word here stands out to you as the key word? Why do you think the centurion did not take Paul's advice? Have you ever been not listened to, ignored, emotionally trampled over, shamed or discounted? **Please share. And have you recovered...with scars? Open wounds still? Pain hurts.**
- C. V.20: Have you ever been so down, depressed, or despairing, that you either gave up all hope, or considered giving up all hope? Have you ever cried out to God authentically, *"I can't take any more of this! I've had it! Where are you God? Why won't you help me? I feel so alone and forsaken!"*
- D. This grain freighter ship was probably 140 feet long and 36 feet wide. (Hughes) Sturdy, but could not sail directly into the wind.
- E. V. 9: The **FAST** was probably the **Day of Atonement**, October 5th, A.D. 59. (Guzik) - also called **Yom Kipper** (Oct. 8th, 2019). What is The Day of Atonement? Sept. 14 – Nov. 11 sailing was dangerous. After that date, they did not sail until after *"They wintered."*
- F. V.21-23: How could Paul tell the hopeless crew **"Take heart, men!"** Why might they listen to him now?

II. Read Acts 27:27-44

- A. What would it be like to be on board this ship with Paul in this long lasting storm? Ever been sea sick? ☹
- B. V.29: Why do you think they prayed? *"They say there are no atheists in Foxholes."* **Discuss**
- C. V.35-36: What does this scene remind you of? **Read Matthew 14:16-21; Matthew 26:26-30**

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Adventure through Acts

Acts 28

“Malta: Refuge. For Paul and the others, This refuge provided kindness and rainy cold, snakes and an estate’s hospitality.”



I. Read Acts 28:1-16

- A. What is happening in this section? What jumps out at you...besides **snakes**? ☺
- B. Why do you think Paul fetched firewood?
- C. What is notable about the **snake bite incident**? Did Paul grumble and complain and accuse God of not looking out for him? Like me, do you struggle with obstacles that seem to get in your path to serve God, do work, and live life? Why is moaning, groaning, complaining, blaming, and stewing so displeasing to God? Why do we often choose these first? How does God move us to repentance?
Read Philippians 2:14-17.
- D. V.4-6: *“Murderer or a god: Which is it!”* Why do you think these lost people vacillate to such extremes?
Note: verse 4. **Justice**: is actually a reference to the Greek goddess of justice = **Dikee**. *“She’s gettin’ him!”*
- E. V.8: Most likely **Malta Fever**, comes from a microorganism found in the milk of Maltese goats. Lasts 4 mo.
- F. Interesting note: V.9: The word *“healed”* or *“cured”* means *“to receive medical attention.”* Luke may have served here as a medical missionary. **Read Colossians 4:14.**
- G. Syracuse, important capital city of Sicily, was the home of Archimedes, murdered in 212 B.C. by the invading Romans. **“Archimedes’ Principle**. If the weight of the water displaced is less than the weight of the object, the object will sink. Otherwise the object will float.” He shouted before the Soldier cut his throat, *“Stop, you’re disturbing up my equation!”* A true Math Man.
- H. When Paul arrived in Rome: The Coliseum was not built yet. Population: 2 million // 1million slaves and 1 million free. Three classes: small upper class, a large class of poor, and slaves.

II. Read Acts 28:17-31

- A. V.20: What is the *“hope of Israel”*? Ryrie says, *“The messianic hope, incarnate in Jesus Christ and climaxed in His resurrection.”*
- B. In prison, Paul had his own rented house (living space) yet every 4 hours a different guard would be lightly chained to Paul’s wrist. Captive audience!
- C. V.22: And they are still talking against us born again, conservative, Bible believing Christians. In what way?
- D. V.26-27: **Read Isaiah 6:8-10**. Paul’s final shot over their bow...Supersessionism or Replacement Theology is false teaching and bad doctrine. Although God and Paul were moving on to the Gentiles who might not be as stubborn, stiff-necked, and ear-blocked as the Jewish people, God was not eternally through with the Jews. The Gentile Church **does not** replace Israel in prophesy. Remember **Hesed**.
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