



Overseas Ministries Training Course

Acts

ROYER & REYNOLDS & TOOLE

Acts

Darline Kantola Royer
Ralph Vincent Reynolds
Jet Witherspoon Toole



An OVERSEAS MINISTRIES TRAINING COURSE Publication
in association with
Global Association of Theological Studies

GATS Edition
© 2012 United Pentecostal Church International

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Royer, Darline Kantola, 1936-

The Book of Acts / Darline Kantola Royer, Ralph Vincent Reynolds, Jet Witherspoon Toole. --
GATS Edition.

pages cm

ISBN 978-0-7577-1355-2

1. Bible. N.T. Acts--Introductions. I. Reynolds, Ralph Vincent, 1913- II. Witherspoon, Jet, 1897-
1992. III. Title.

BS2625.55.R69 2012

226.6'061--dc23

2012018044

Sponsor's Page

Rev. and Mrs. Allan Shalm

Missionaries to Pakistan/Afghanistan

The printing of this GATS course was sponsored by Reverend and Mrs. Allan J. Shalm, missionaries to Pakistan, in honor of their parents, Reverend and Mrs. George Shalm and Reverend and Mrs. William Cooling.



George and Margaret Shalm began their missionary career in India in 1949. George Shalm served as principal of the Bible school in Adur, India, and also Pentecostal Bible Institute in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada. After serving many years as missionaries, they became regional field supervisor for Asia and served in this capacity until Brother Shalm's death in 1988.

William and Georgina Cooling started their ministry in a home missions church in Kenora, Ontario, in 1953. They pastored in several different cities in Canada, and as Home Missions director in Ontario, Brother Cooling was responsible for opening dozens of new churches. He later served for twenty-two years as district superintendent in Ontario, and during that time was principal of Apostolic Missionary Institute for a number of years.



While in Karachi in 1982, William and Georgina Cooling listened to a Pakistani girl recite the Christmas story from Luke 2.

Our parents were always supportive of our call to missions. We especially honor them for their godliness, integrity, and spirit of sacrifice. Because of their example and influence, we gladly picked up their torch and are carrying it forward.

CONTENTS

PART I

The Church Is Born

Page 7

PART II

The Church in the Jewish World

Page 35

PART III

The Church in the Gentile World

Page 69

PART I

THE CHURCH IS BORN

Acts 1-2

PART I

THE CHURCH IS BORN

Acts 1-2

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The Name
- B. Summary of Content
- C. Purpose and Importance
- D. Date and Scope of the Book
- E. The Author
- F. An Outline of the Book of Acts
- G. Acts as a Scripture Textbook of Salvation and Evangelism

II. THE PRELUDE TO PENTECOST

- A. The Testimony of the Risen Lord
- B. The Command of the Risen Lord
- C. The Ascension of the Risen Lord
- D. The Return of the Disciples to Jerusalem

III. THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH AT PENTECOST

- A. Jesus Promised to Establish the Church
- B. The Meaning of Pentecost
- C. The Outpouring of the Holy Ghost
- D. The Results of Pentecost

IV. THE APOSTOLIC GOSPEL FULFILLED AT PENTECOST

- A. Definition of the Apostolic Gospel
- B. The Keys to the Kingdom
- C. The Door of Salvation Opened to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost
- D. The Door of Salvation Opened to the Samaritans

- E. The Door of Salvation Opened to the Gentiles
- F. Entrance to the Kingdom
- G. The Church Is that Body of Believers Born into the Kingdom of God

V. A SUMMARY OF SALVATION AS RECORDED IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

- A. Salvation in the Early Church
- B. The Jews on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2)
- C. The Samaritans (Acts 8:4-25)
- D. The Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-39)
- E. Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:1-19; 22:3-21)
- F. Cornelius and His Household (Acts 10)
- G. Lydia (Acts 16:14-15)
- H. The Philippian Jailer (Acts 16:25-34)
- I. The Ephesians (Acts 19:1-6)
- J. Summary of These Instances of Salvation Being Received

PART I

THE CHURCH IS BORN

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Name

The fifth book of the New Testament is commonly called the “Acts of the Apostles.” A more accurate title would be “The Acts of the Holy Spirit,” for the book describes the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing about the birth of the church.

The book could also be called “The Acts of the Risen Lord.” Acts 1:1 declares that Luke’s previous writing, the Gospel of Luke, spoke of what “Jesus began both to do and teach.” The Book of Acts shows what He continued to do through the power of His Spirit in the lives of the apostles and other believers.

B. Summary of Content

The Book of Acts gives the history of the birth and early days of the church. By no means does it give a full history of the period it covers. It gives selected incidents to show the development and growth of the church from the ascension of Christ to Paul’s imprisonment in Rome and the beginning of his ministry there.

The book describes the first generation of Christians. It becomes evident that God ordained the Book of the Acts of the Apostles as the source for knowing and understanding the true foundation of Christianity.

This inspired book is God's infallible guide to true Christianity and is an accurate historical record of the church's beginning.

C. Purpose and Importance

The Book of Acts is the bridge that connects the Gospels and the Epistles. The Gospels record the life and ministry of Jesus while He was here on earth. After His death, burial, and resurrection, He ascended that He might fulfill His purpose in the hearts of men (John 16:7). The Book of Acts records this fulfillment of promise as it pictures the birth of the church. The Epistles that follow are letters of instruction to individuals and churches who had been born into the church from the Day of Pentecost onward.

The Book of Acts is important first as a doctrinal commentary on how any individual is born into the New Testament church. We can expect to find the description of the new birth in the Book of Acts, for it is the history of the church's birth. The Book of Acts vividly shows how a person may be saved or born again. The Epistles give instructions for the person who has been born again.

The Book of Acts is also a textbook of evangelism and missions. It sets forth a pattern of church government and establishes principles for evangelism and missionary work.

In brief, these pages of inspired church history reveal the true meaning and mission of the church and show how men are born into that church.

D. Date and Scope of the Book

The events of the Book of Acts cover a period of about thirty years, extending from AD 33 to 63.

The book is dated about AD 63. Since the book does not mention the burning of Rome in AD 64 and the great persecution of the Christians that followed, it can be assumed that it was written prior to these events. History indicates that Paul arrived in Rome early in AD 61, and the book closes with a statement about Paul's "two whole years" of imprisonment, thus placing the date of writing about AD 63.

E. The Author

Luke authored both the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts. He opened the Acts account by referring to “the former treatise,” which was the Gospel of Luke.

The fact that the author was a companion of the apostle Paul and joined Paul at Troas points to Luke’s identity as the author. The personal pronoun *we* reveals when Luke was a companion of Paul (Acts 16:10-17; 20:5-21; 27:1-28). By the process of elimination, the author has to be Luke, for these *we* sections mention all the other companions of Paul. In addition, it is evident that the same author who wrote the Gospel of Luke wrote this book.

His character and personality may be discerned from his writings and from the few scriptural references to his person (Luke 1:3; Colossians 4:14; II Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24).

Luke answered the Macedonian Call along with Paul and later was in charge of the church at Philippi for about six years. He was with Paul during his second imprisonment (II Timothy 4:11).

Luke was able to write the latter part of this book through his own personal knowledge and experience. He possibly kept some sort of diary. For the Gospel of Luke and the first part of this book, he had access to the information that Paul could give him along with that of others such as Silas and Philip. Above all, he was inspired of the Holy Ghost to write this record of the beginning of the church.

F. An Outline of the Book of Acts

A simple outline of the book identifies its main movements. The book divides naturally into two parts. The first division shows the apostolic ministry in and near Jerusalem among the Jewish world. The second part deals mostly with the apostolic ministry to the Gentile world. Peter is the prominent minister of the first period among the Jews. Paul is the central minister in the second part in the Gentile world.

1. The church in the Jewish world (chapters 1-12)
 - a. The birth of the apostolic church in Jerusalem (1:1-6:7)
 - b. Its extension into Samaria and Judaea (6:8-9:31)
 - c. Its transition into the Gentile world (9:32-12:25)
2. The church in the Gentile world (chapters 13-28)
 - a. The church in Asia Minor (13:1-16:5)
 - b. Its development into Greece (16:6-19:20)
 - c. Paul's journey to and arrival in Rome (19:21-28:31)

(This outline introduces the content of the book. The Bible student can develop outlines that are more detailed after he gains an understanding of the overall message and content of the book.)

G. Acts as a Scripture Textbook of Salvation and Evangelism

1. An introduction to the plan of salvation
 - a. The opening chapters reveal the plan of salvation that Jesus Christ came to provide for all humankind. The Gospels reveal Jesus as the Messiah, and the Book of Acts opens the door to that salvation provided by His death, burial, and resurrection.
 - b. The writer clearly reveals how salvation came to humanity. Acts 2:1-4 gives the initial account of the birth of the church as the Spirit of God entered the hearts of men and women. Peter's sermon that follows the account of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost (2:14-36) explains this as the fulfillment of God's Word in providing a Savior and salvation. Peter leaves no doubt about the meaning of his message in its practical application. He pointedly states what man's response must be to the coming of Christ to bring salvation.

“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).
2. A textbook on evangelism
 - a. The Book of Acts teaches that the work of the church is evangelism. It traces the workings of the Holy Spirit as it

operates through men to carry on the work of the Lord Jesus on earth. The whole book illustrates Mark 16:20 and shows how the power of the Holy Ghost made evangelism possible.

“And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following” (Mark 16:20).

- b. A key verse of the book is Acts 1:8, which identifies the power of evangelism as being the operation of the Holy Ghost in the believer to make him a “witness.” The word *witness* appears more than thirty times in the book.

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

II. THE PRELUDE TO PENTECOST

A. The Testimony of the Risen Lord (Acts 1:1-3)

The Book of Acts opens with an account of the risen Lord. It testifies that Jesus showed Himself alive after His resurrection by many “infallible proofs.” In the forty days between His resurrection and ascension, He appeared from time to time to the company of believers to prove to them beyond any question that He actually had arisen from the dead.

Many people received infallible proofs of His resurrection. We can note some of them:

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. To Mary Magdalene | John 20:14-18 |
| 2. To the women | Matthew 28:8-10 |
| 3. To Peter | Luke 24:34 |
| 4. To the Emmaus disciples | Luke 24:13-31 |
| 5. To the apostles | Luke 24:36-43 |
| 6. To the apostles except Thomas | John 20:19-24 |
| 7. To the apostles on the shores of Lake Galilee | John 21:1-23 |
| 8. To the apostles on a mountain in Galilee | Matthew 28:16-20 |
| 9. To about 500 at once | I Corinthians 15:6 |

The key word in Acts 1:3 is *alive*. Jesus showed Himself alive. Here are some of the infallible proofs He showed to verify His resurrection.

1. He was seen alive.
2. He spoke to them concerning the kingdom of God.
3. He walked with them.
4. He ate and drank with the disciples.
5. He blessed His disciples and ministered to them.
6. He restored Simon Peter.
7. He dried Mary's tears.
8. He invited them to touch His resurrected body.

Entrance into the new birth experience comes only through a personal conviction that Jesus Christ really is alive and has provided resurrection life for all who will obey the plan of salvation as it was revealed to that first-century church. God's plan has not changed since the day it was first opened up to the believers as recorded in the Book of Acts.

B. The Command of the Risen Lord (Acts 1:4-8)

Jesus left no doubt about the importance of the Holy Ghost in the lives of His disciples. His very last instruction to His disciples was that they should not depart from Jerusalem until they were baptized with the Holy Ghost.

"The promise of the Father" was a fitting explanation of the Holy Ghost, for God had many times promised it in the Scriptures. Jeremiah said God would write His laws on the minds and in the hearts of His people (Jeremiah 31:31-34). The writer of Hebrews interpreted this as the new covenant in the Holy Ghost (Hebrews 8:1-13). Ezekiel promised that God would put His Spirit within His people to give them a new heart and a new spirit (Ezekiel 36:26-27). Joel promised God would pour out His Spirit on all flesh (Joel 2:28-29). Jesus promised to fill the thirsty with the living water of the Holy Ghost (John 7:37-39). The Holy Ghost was the Comforter that Jesus promised to send them when He went away (John 14:16-20, 26).

The disciples did not grasp what Jesus taught them about "the promise of the Father." They looked for the natural restoration of the kingdom of Israel (Acts 1:6). Even though they had witnessed Calvary, their spiritual understanding was not opened until they were baptized with the Holy Ghost. Jesus did not rebuke them for their question about the

restoration of Israel but commanded that they remain in Jerusalem until they were baptized with the Holy Ghost. In verse 8, He told them what this Holy Ghost would accomplish in them.

Acts 1:8 is actually Christ's final commission to His disciples. He had already commissioned them to go, preach, teach, baptize, and observe all things He had commanded them (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:14-18; Luke 24:45-51). Three words stand out in this final commission:

1. Power—The Greek word for *power* is the same root word from which we get the word *dynamite*. It speaks of an explosive power that will cause the gospel message literally to explode around the world.
2. Witnesses—The Greek word for *witness* is the same root from which we get the English word *martyr*.
3. Both—This word points to the whole world as the mission of the Spirit-filled believers. They were given no choice but to be “witnesses” to all the world.

C. The Ascension of the Risen Lord (Acts 1:9-11)

Immediately after Jesus commanded the disciples to wait for the Holy Ghost that would endue them with power to be witnesses, His feet lifted from the earth and He ascended out of their sight.

Linked with His ascension was a promise of His return. The promise states clearly that “this same Jesus” shall come in “like manner.” This tells us that Jesus will come visibly, in bodily form, and in the clouds.

Jesus commanded those who saw Him go away to be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Those who wait for His return likewise must be filled with the Spirit. The promise of His return has been the hope and comfort of the saints during all the church age. As the church age began with the ascension of Jesus Christ and the promise of the Holy Ghost, so the church age will end with the Rapture of all those who have been filled with the promise of the Holy Ghost.

D. The Return of the Disciples to Jerusalem (Acts 1:12-26)

After the disciples witnessed the Ascension and received the reassuring message from the angels concerning Christ's return, they returned to Jerusalem to wait for the promise of the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:12; Luke 24:52). They went into an upper room in Jerusalem to wait in prayer and supplication. This room seems to have been within the Temple grounds, for they were said to have been continually in the Temple praising and blessing God (Luke 24:52-53).

During those days in Jerusalem, Peter took the leadership in pointing out the need to fill the vacancy left by Judas (Acts 1:15-26). He told of the horrible end of Judas who betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. The account portrays the horrible remorse Judas must have suffered before he committed suicide.

Peter pointed out the qualifications for one to take Judas's place (Acts 1:21-22). Two were appointed (Acts 1:23) and lots were cast to determine the right man. Their prayers indicated they acted sincerely, and God no doubt honored their faith. The lot fell to Matthias (Acts 1:26).

III. THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH AT PENTECOST (Acts 2)

A. Jesus Promised to Establish the Church

Scripture References:

"Upon this rock I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18).

"It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you" (John 16:7).

Jesus indicated that His church was still future when He said, "I will build my church." Jesus had disciples and followers, but He still had no church. The rock that the church was to be built upon was the truth of the deity of Jesus as confessed by Peter. This is noted in Peter's message on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). The church was to be the mystical body of Christ upon earth, a spiritual body indwelt by Christ's own Spirit, the Comforter.

The church would not be born until the Comforter had come, and this could not be until Jesus ascended and the Holy Spirit came. This happened at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).

B. The Meaning of Pentecost

The events recorded in Acts 2 took place on the Day of Pentecost. The Feast of Pentecost was one of Israel's three main feasts observed yearly. It was called "Pentecost" because it was observed fifty days after the Feast of Firstfruits (Leviticus 23:15-16). The name *Pentecost* simply means "fifty."

Pentecost was actually an event planned by God and pictured in type in Leviticus 23. The firstfruits was a type of the resurrection of Christ (I Corinthians 15:23), and Pentecost took place fifty days after the Resurrection. Jesus showed Himself alive for forty days following His resurrection, and then the disciples waited ten days in Jerusalem for the outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

The disciples had not known when the Holy Ghost would come, but they tarried in faith. In God's appointed time, He poured out His Spirit. Now we can observe the significance of the Old Testament occasions that spoke of things to come.

The Feast of Pentecost, which celebrated the end of the harvest season, has significance for the twenty-first century church. Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection and the resultant outpouring of His Spirit provided for a harvest of souls for eternal inheritance. Jesus said, "Look on the fields' for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35).

Acts 2:1 pictures about 120 disciples (Acts 1:15) together on the Day of Pentecost "with one accord." In this setting God chose to bring forth His church. Thus the church was born, neither by formality nor creed, but by the baptism of the disciples with the Holy Ghost. Pentecost was the birth of the church.

C. The Outpouring of the Holy Ghost

Three effects marked this initial outpouring of the Holy Ghost:

1. It filled all the house where they were sitting (Acts 2:2). First Corinthians 3:16 describes the church as the "temple of the living

God.” Where the church is gathered, the presence of God’s Spirit will come.

2. It sat upon each of them (Acts 2:3). Luke 24:49 indicates that the believers will be endued with “power from on high.” The Holy Ghost was not meant for just a select few.
3. All of them were filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:4). Jesus had promised that His Spirit would indwell all the believers (John 7:38-39).

Three phenomena accompanied the outpouring of the Spirit (Acts 2:2-4):

1. They heard a sound from Heaven as of a rushing mighty wind. Jesus had told Nicodemus that the new birth would be like the blowing of the wind, or the breath of God (John 3:8). God marked His initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit with this tangible phenomenon that was not repeated in the accounts of other outpourings as recorded in Acts.
2. Cloven tongues like as of fire sat upon each of them. God chose a second miraculous happening to mark that first outpouring of His Spirit. They heard a sound; they saw tongues like as of fire. Like the first phenomenon, this sign was not repeated.
3. They all “began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” God chose to manifest the indwelling of His Spirit by Himself speaking through these disciples in another language. Isaiah prophesied of this sign: “For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people” (Isaiah 28:11). This sign was repeated on other occasions of the Spirit’s outpouring. In three of the five accounts in Acts of people’s being filled with the Holy Ghost, the record specifically states they spoke with other tongues (Acts 2:4; 10:44-46; 19:1-7). The Bible accounts show that God ordained tongues as the permanent sign that would testify of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Many Jews and Jewish proselytes from different nations were in Jerusalem at this time of the Feast of Pentecost. They heard the Spirit-filled disciples, many of whom were uneducated Galileans, speaking in their

languages. They knew the Galileans had no opportunity to learn these different languages, and they did not understand the meaning of the miracle.

Though they heard the disciples speak of the wonderful works of God (Acts 2:11) in languages they did not know, some were not willing to accept what they saw and heard as being a work of God. They accused the disciples of being drunk on new wine.

Some today admit this early church did speak in tongues, but they contend that this manifestation has ceased. They cannot find any scriptural authority for this supposition. The Spirit that was poured out on the saints of apostolic times was given as a result of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, and was intended for the entire church dispensation. The outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:45-46; 11:12-18) was accompanied by tongues as was the outpouring upon the Jews. The men with Peter acknowledged that God had given the Holy Ghost to the Gentiles, for "they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God."

Peter's sermon explained the miraculous happening of Pentecost the disciples experienced and the multitudes witnessed (Acts 2:14-36). By the authority of Jesus, Peter preached the first gospel sermon. His sermon was actually in response to the amazement of the multitude concerning the miracle of men speaking languages they did not know. Jesus had given Peter the keys to the kingdom of Heaven when Peter first confessed the deity of Jesus (Matthew 16:13-19). At Pentecost Peter opened up the people's understanding about the kingdom of God.

The significance of Peter's position is understood in light of a custom among the Jews: when a Jew became a doctor of the Law, he was given the keys to the room in which were kept the scrolls of the Scriptures. Peter was the one chosen to give the first gospel message to unlock the door of understanding into the kingdom of Heaven. He interpreted for the people the work of the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost. He showed them how the outpouring of the Holy Ghost was the completion of Jesus' ministry in the hearts of men.

Peter's sermon can be divided into three parts:

1. Peter first explained the happening of Pentecost as the fulfillment of prophecy (Joel 2:28-29). He defined what had happened as God's work of pouring out His Spirit upon all flesh. He linked

this experience with the salvation God had foreordained for men (Acts 2:21).

2. Peter then proclaimed that Jesus was the Christ. He explained that the disciples' joy and their speaking in other tongues were manifestations of God's Holy Spirit being poured out in fulfillment of prophecy. He then emphasized that the Spirit had come from the resurrected Christ. Peter made clear that the Holy Spirit is given because Jesus has been raised up and shed forth the resurrection power in the hearts of the believers (Acts 2:31-33).
3. Peter actually closed his sermon with verse 36. Verses 37-40 give the application of the message he preached. The people responded to his message with this question: "What shall we do?" Peter answered by telling them how they must apply this truth; in other words, he gave them the key for entering into the spiritual kingdom.

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

Peter preached the gospel message of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, and it brought conviction to the hearts of the listeners (Acts 2:37). This gospel of salvation is the only means by which a person may be saved (I Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 4:12). Jesus is the only sacrifice for sin that God will accept. The full redemptive transaction of the Lord Jesus was essential for man's salvation. Peter stressed this truth. Acts 2:38 plainly defines God's requirements for people to identify themselves with the redemptive transaction of Jesus Christ.

1. Repentance—An individual dies with Christ by repentance, which is a complete turning away from the old life of sin.
2. The individual signifies this death by being buried with Him in water baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 6:3-4). The person must be buried in baptism in the name of the One who died for his sins.
3. The completion of the transaction comes when the person is filled with the Holy Ghost and rises to walk with Him in newness of life

(Romans 6:5). We are reconciled to God by the death of Jesus, and saved by His resurrection life (Romans 5:10). The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of God and of Christ (John 14:17; Romans 8:9; I John 4:13). When people receive the Holy Ghost, they receive the resurrection life and become a partaker of divine rapture. This resurrection life makes the individual a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Summary: Peter used these keys to unlock the door to the kingdom.

1. The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus provided salvation.
2. Repentance, water baptism in Jesus' name, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost are essential for becoming a recipient of salvation. This is the manner by which people identify themselves with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.

D. The Results of Pentecost

Peter emphasized that the promise of the Holy Ghost was for those who listened, for their children, and for all that were afar off. He left no doubt that the complete transaction of salvation was for all humanity, not just for that generation. Peter exhorted the people to save themselves from the "untoward generation" (crooked, perverse generation). This shows that a person must do something to be saved. They will not be saved by a mere passive recognition of Jesus Christ. They must act in obedience to the requirements of the gospel.

Acts 2:41-47 mentions some of the marvelous results of Pentecost:

1. Three thousand souls were baptized that very day.
2. Every day after that, souls were being saved (Acts 2:47).
3. The church continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (teaching), fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers.
4. Many signs and wonders followed the ministry of the apostles.
5. Everyone feared God.
6. They sold their possessions and had all things in common.

IV. THE APOSTOLIC GOSPEL FULFILLED AT PENTECOST

A. Definition of the Apostolic Gospel.

Scripture References:

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14).

“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47).

“The kingdom of God cometh not with observation . . . for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” Paul adds light to this by stating that “the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17).

The gospel is the “good news” of salvation.

The word *apostolic* simply refers to the apostles. The “apostolic gospel” thus means the good news of salvation that the apostles preached.

Jesus spoke of “this gospel of the kingdom” that should be preached in all the world. He also said that “repentance and remission of sins” should be preached in His name among all nations. From the teachings of Jesus we may conclude that the “gospel of the kingdom” is the message of “repentance and remission of sins” that must be preached in the name of Jesus. This is the message Peter and the apostles preached, and therefore it is the apostolic gospel.

B. The Keys to the Kingdom.

Scripture Reference:

“And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in

heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:19).

Some may think that Peter has literal keys and will stand at the gates of Heaven to open them to those who would enter. This is far from the scriptural meaning.

The keys spoken of here are gospel keys. Jesus committed to Peter the trust of preaching the gospel that would unlock the door of salvation to the unsaved.

Peter used the keys on three occasions. He unlocked the door of salvation to three groups of people that were be representative of all peoples.

- To the Jews Acts 2:38
- To the Samaritans Acts 8:14-17
- To the Gentiles Acts 10:44

C. The Door of Salvation Opened to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost.

Scripture Reference:

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38.).

On the Day of Pentecost, the Jews were saved by believing and obeying the message Peter preached.

- Repentance
- Water baptism by immersion in Jesus’ name
- Baptism of the Holy Ghost evidenced by speaking in other tongues

He opened the door to the Jews and three thousand were saved that day.

D. The Door of Salvation Opened to the Samaritans When Peter Went to Pray for Them that They Might Receive the Full Message of the Gospel.

Scripture Reference:

“Who, when they [Peter and John] were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost” (Acts 8:15-17).

A study of Acts 8 shows clearly how the Samaritans were saved:

- Faith (verse 12)
- Baptism (verse 12)
- Receiving the Holy Ghost (verse 17)

E. The Door of Salvation Opened to the Gentiles When Peter Preached to Cornelius and Those Gathered in His House.

Scripture References:

“Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons” (Acts 10:34).

“To him [Jesus] give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10:43).

“While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word” (Acts 10:44).

“Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord” (Acts 10:47-48).

The plan of salvation Peter opened to the Gentiles was the same as that which he had preached to the Jews and the Samaritans:

1. Remission of sins through belief in His name (Acts 10:43). It should be noted that this belief in His name is linked with

baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (see Acts 2:38).

2. Gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 10:44-47).

3. Baptism in the name of the Lord (Acts 10:48).

This congregation of Gentiles in Cornelius's house believed Peter's gospel message as soon as they heard it. The Lord, knowing their hearts, poured out the Holy Ghost on them even before Peter concluded his message.

Nevertheless, this did not in any way eliminate the necessity of their being baptized in Jesus' name. Peter immediately made provisions for them to be baptized and commanded that they be baptized.

The Jews' attitude toward the Gentiles may be why God filled these Gentiles with the Holy Ghost before they were baptized. Obedience to the gospel message involves the identifying of oneself with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. The Holy Ghost is given to those who obey God (Acts 5:32). As a Jew, Peter probably would have hesitated to baptize these Gentiles if God had not first put His approval upon them by filling them with His Spirit. Verse 47 implies this. Peter defended his action before the apostles in Jerusalem by asking, "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" (Acts 11:17).

God's prescribed plan required men to repent and be baptized (death and burial) in order to receive the Holy Ghost (life). However, God who is sovereign has every right to digress from His regular order any time He sees fit to do so. However, such exceptions do not change or make void His plan.

The salvation of the Gentiles provides another valuable lesson. Speaking with other tongues accompanied the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the Jews. This same sign is unquestionably linked with the outpouring of God's Spirit on the Gentiles (Acts 10:46). The apostles recognized tongues as the outward sign of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

F. Entrance to the Kingdom.

The Gospels teach concerning the Kingdom and the Book of Acts opens the door for men to enter that Kingdom.

Scripture References:

“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

“God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36).

Jesus taught about the Kingdom (John 3:5). Peter preached about Jesus and pointed out how He opened up the way for individuals to enter that Kingdom through His death, burial, and resurrection (Acts 2). It is evident that entrance into the kingdom of God is through the new birth, the work of regeneration, the act of being completely changed, transferred from one kingdom to another. Peter clearly gave the requirements for entrance into the Kingdom.

Individuals must remember that during the church dispensation, the kingdom of God is not a material kingdom, but a spiritual one. It is Jesus reigning in the hearts of His saints. As He reigns in a person's heart, He has control over his or her desires, ambitions, and emotions. This reign of the Lord in individuals' hearts is possible only when they have been born again.

The sinful nature of people must be changed by the new birth into righteousness. The gospel emphatically declares how this change must come. It happens when a person obeys the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus died, was buried, and rose again. He instructs individuals through His Word to obey through repentance, baptism, and by receiving the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38).

G. The Church Is That Body of Believers Born into the Kingdom of God.

Scripture References:

“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Ephesians 4:4-5).

“For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free” (I Corinthians 12:13).

Hundreds of church organizations and denominations exist, but there is only one church.

The church is one as far as place, area, or distance is concerned. The church is one as far as race and nationality are concerned. The church is one as far as time is concerned. Members of the church today are members of the same church as the apostles.

The apostolic church was born on the Day of Pentecost, but it is also the apostolic church that waits to be raptured when Jesus comes. People become a part of the apostolic church through obedience to the apostolic gospel that Peter and others preached.

People become a part of the apostolic church today through obedience to the apostolic gospel. God’s plan of salvation has never changed. He commands men and women of all ages to accept His finished work of Redemption. He set the pattern through His death, burial, and resurrection. Humanity’s acceptance of His redemptive work comes only through repentance, baptism, and receiving the Holy Ghost.

V. A Summary of Salvation as Recorded in the Book of Acts.

A. Salvation in the Early Church

The Book of Acts gives the history of the early church; so this is the only place we can expect to find out how the people of that day received salvation. The purpose of this unit of study is to outline the incidents of salvation as written in the Book of Acts. Anyone who seeks to know God’s plan of salvation should carefully and prayerfully study these accounts.

We must remember that the four Gospels give the record of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. They point forward to the day when the plan of salvation was opened to all humanity through Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection.

We must likewise remember that the Epistles were written to individuals or churches that were already saved.

B. The Jews on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2)

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. The Word was preached to them. | Acts 2:14-36 |
| a. They heard the Word. | Acts 2:37 |
| b. They received the Word. | Acts 2:41 |
| 2. They were convicted and saw their need. | Acts 2:37 |
| 3. They cried out for instruction. | Acts 2:37 |
| 4. They were told to repent. | Acts 2:38 |
| 5. They were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. | Acts 2:38; 2:41 |
| 6. They received the Holy Ghost. | Acts 2:4; 2:38 |
| 7. They spoke with other tongues. | Acts 2:4 |
| 8. They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship. | Acts 2:42 |

C. The Samaritans (Acts 8:4-25)

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Christ was preached to them. | Acts 8:5 |
| 2. Philip preached the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. | Acts 8:12 |
| 3. They believed the gospel. | Acts 8:12 |
| 4. They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. | Acts 8:12, 16 |
| 5. They received the Holy Ghost. | Acts 8:17 |

While it is not mentioned that they spoke with tongues, it is implied by Simon the Sorcerer's reaction (Acts 8:18-19). He would not likely have offered money for a gift unless it was a supernatural or miraculous manifestation he could readily observe. Simon heard or saw something supernatural.

D. The Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-39)

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. The Ethiopian was reading the Word. | Acts 8:28 |
| 2. Philip preached Jesus unto him. | Acts 8:35 |
| 3. He believed. | Acts 8:37 |

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| 4. He was baptized. | Acts 8:38 |
| 5. He went on his way rejoicing. | Acts 8:39 |

E. Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:1-19; Acts 22:3-21)

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. Saul began to pray. | Acts 9:11 |
| 2. His eyes were opened. | Acts 9:18; 22:13 |
| 3. He was baptized, calling on the name of the Lord. | Acts 9:18; 22:16 |
| 4. He was filled with the Holy Ghost. | Acts 9:17 |
| 5. He spoke in tongues. | I Corinthians 14:18 |

F. Cornelius and His Household (Acts 10)

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. He prayed to God always. | Acts 10:2 |
| 2. He heard the Word of God. | Acts 10:34-43 |
| 3. He received the gift of the Holy Ghost.
(The Gentiles with him also received the Holy Ghost.) | Acts 10:44-45 |
| 4. They spoke with tongues and magnified God. | Acts 10:46 |
| 5. They were baptized in the name of the Lord. | Acts 10:48 |

G. Lydia (Acts 16:14-15)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| 1. She heard Paul preach the gospel. | Acts 16:14 |
| 2. The Lord opened her heart. | Acts 16:14 |
| 3. She was baptized. | Acts 16:15 |

H. The Philippian Jailer (Acts 16:25-34)

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 1. He realized his hopeless condition. | Acts 16:27 |
| 2. He called for a light. | Acts 16:29 |
| 3. He cried out for instruction.
("What must I do to be saved?") | Acts 16:30 |
| 4. He listened to the gospel preached by Paul. | Acts 16:32 |
| 5. He believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. | Acts 16:31 |
| 6. He showed repentance by making restitution. | Acts 16:33 |
| 7. He was baptized straightway. | Acts 16:33 |
| 8. He rejoiced. | Acts 16:34 |

I. The Ephesians (Acts 19:1-6)

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. They had repented. | Acts 19:4 |
| 2. They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. | Acts 19:5 |
| 3. They received the Holy Ghost. | Acts 19:6 |
| 4. They spoke with tongues and prophesied. | Acts 19:6 |

J. Summary of These Instances of Salvation Being Received

This record gives us eight instances where salvation was received in the early church. Four of the cases involve the salvation of individuals; four of the instances involve groups of people. Note that the record describes salvation as it came to the Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles. A summary helps us to see the truth God intends for man to preach, teach, and experience:

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 1. They heard the Word preached. (Saul was the one exception and the Lord Jesus spoke directly to him.) | seven times |
| 2. They repented (although repentance is not mentioned in some instances, it is evident in most of them). | three times |
| 3. They believed. | three times |
| 4. They were baptized. | eight times |
| 5. They were baptized in the name of Jesus. | five times |
| 6. They received the Holy Ghost. | five times |
| 7. They spoke in tongues (although it does not state that the Samaritans spoke in tongues, yet it is quite evident that they did). | four times |

Conclusion

After studying the total picture, what conclusion should we make? Everyone agrees that faith is necessary to salvation, but it was only mentioned three times. We must then conclude that the other factors, though not mentioned in every case, would also be essential. If we leave out any aspect of God's plan of salvation as revealed in the Book of Acts, we are doing violence to the Word of God.

We must believe and teach the whole plan of salvation. God has made the provision; man must respond through obedience. Believing on the Lord

Jesus Christ involves an obedience to the plan of salvation. Salvation is more than a statement of faith: “I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.” Faith must take action by obeying the commands of the gospel to repent, be baptized, and receive the Holy Ghost.

The recipient must also recognize that salvation begins in the Book of Acts but continues in a walk of holiness. The Epistles outline that walk of holiness and give explicit instructions on living a Christian life. The person who merely preaches Acts 2:38 is missing God’s purpose for the church. The church is saved to walk in newness of life. After the new birth, individuals must walk into the pages of the Epistles to grow in Christ (II Peter 3:18).

PART II

THE CHURCH IN THE JEWISH WORLD

The Infant Church and Peter's Ministry
Acts 3-12

PART II

THE CHURCH IN THE JEWISH WORLD

The Infant Church and Peter's Ministry Acts 3-12

I. THE NAME OF JESUS (Acts 3-4)

- A. Signs and Wonders
- B. The Gate Beautiful
- C. The Hour of Prayer
- D. The Healing of the Lame Man
- E. The Name of Jesus
- F. Witnesses of the Resurrection
- G. The Results That Followed the Miracle

II. ALL THINGS IN COMMON (Acts 4:31-37; 5:1-16)

- A. Barnabas
- B. Communal Living
- C. Ananias and Sapphira
- D. The Sin of Lying to the Holy Ghost
- E. Judgment Begins at the House of God
- F. The Results of Judgment

III. DEACONS (Acts 6:1-7)

- A. The Grecians
- B. Church Government

- C. The Deacons
- D. Qualifications of Deacons
- E. The Results of This Event

IV. THE PERSECUTED CHURCH (Acts 4-8, and 12)

- A. Persecution Foretold
- B. Early Persecutions
- C. The Persecution by King Herod (Acts 12)
- D. Peter's Deliverance
- E. The Final Record of Peter's Ministry

V. THE FIRST CHURCH MARTYR (Acts 6:8-15; 7:1-60; 8:1-2)

- A. Stephen, the First Church Martyr
- B. The Synagogues in Jerusalem
- C. The Sanhedrin
- D. The Charge against Stephen
- E. The Sermon of Stephen
- F. The Stoning of Stephen
- G. Stephen's Vision
- H. Similarity between Calvary and the Death of Stephen
- I. Two Final Truths

VI. REVIVAL IN SAMARIA (Acts 8)

- A. Philip
- B. Samaria
- C. Philip's Message
- D. The Results of the Revival in Samaria
- E. Simon the Sorcerer
- F. The Ethiopian Eunuch
- G. Did They Speak in Tongues in Samaria?

VII. THE CONVERSION OF SAUL (Acts 9:1-31; 22:1-21)

- A. Saul of Tarsus
- B. Saul's Conversion
- C. The Revelation of Jesus Christ to Saul
- D. How was Saul Saved?
- E. A Chosen Vessel

- F. Preparation for the Ministry
- G. A Summary of Three Conversions

VIII. THE CONVERSION OF THE GENTILES (Acts 10-11)

- A. The Gospel to the Uttermost Part
- B. Who Was Cornelius?
- C. Peter's Vision
- D. Peter's Audience
- E. Peter's Sermon
- F. How Were the Gentiles Saved?

NOTE: Chapter 12 is covered in Section IV under the Persecuted Church.

PART II

THE CHURCH IN THE JEWISH WORLD

I. THE NAME OF JESUS

Scripture Reference: Acts 3-4.

A. Signs and Wonders

In Acts 2:43, we read that the apostles did many wonders and signs. In Acts 4:30 the church prayed that signs and wonders might be done by the name of the holy child Jesus. This would be according to what Jesus stated as recorded in Mark 16:17, “These signs shall follow them that believe.” It is still true that signs should follow the preaching of the apostolic gospel. We should never follow signs but rather signs should follow us.

One of the first miracles recorded following Pentecost was the healing of the lame man at the Gate Beautiful.

B. The Gate Beautiful

The lame man was laid each day at the gate of the Temple that is called Beautiful. This gate was furnished by Herod and was made of precious Corinthian brass. The gate was eighty feet high and sixty-five feet broad, and it took twenty men to close it.

The gate was a type of another gate that was far more beautiful, a gate that gave entrance not just into the Temple, but into the very presence of God. That gate is Jesus who is the door.

C. The Hour of Prayer

Peter and John went into the Temple at the hour of prayer. The apostles continued steadfastly in prayers (Acts 2:42). One of the reasons miracles followed their ministry was that they continued in prayer.

The Jews set aside three hours of the day for public prayer: The third hour, which was nine AM; twelve o'clock noon; and the ninth hour, which was three PM.

The ninth hour was the very hour Jesus died upon the cross. It was through the value of the death of Christ that the healing came to the poor beggar.

D. The Healing of the Lame Man

The lame beggar had been a cripple from birth. He was now at least forty years old (Acts 4:22).

The miracle was unexpected. The man was begging for money, and when the apostles spoke to him, he expected to receive some coin. However, it was healing he received. The healing was instantaneous and complete, and performed in the name of Jesus.

Peter took him by the right hand. Undoubtedly, the beggar had held out his hand so that Peter might grasp it. Hands are used for receiving as well as giving. God's big hand reaches down to the sinner and all the sinner needs to do is reach up a little hand to receive.

The healed man walked, leaped, entered the Temple, and praised God. Not only was he healed physically, but his soul was able to rejoice in the Lord.

Peter held the lame man by the hand (Acts 3:7) and then the beggar held Peter (Acts 3:11). He no longer needed support but he held on to the apostles in joy and love. Likewise, when a sinner accepts Jesus Christ, he will cling to those who brought him the message of deliverance.

No longer on the outside but now on the inside of the Temple, the beggar rejoiced in the Lord and attracted a large crowd.

E. The Name of Jesus

The name Jesus is found thirty-three times in the Book of Acts.

Peter stated, “His name through faith in His name hath made this man strong” (Acts 3:16). Again, he stated, “There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). These two statements of Peter show that:

1. There is healing in the name of Jesus.
2. There is salvation in the name of Jesus.

Many blessings are associated with the name of Jesus. Water baptism must be administered in the name of Jesus. The gospel must be preached in the name of Jesus. Remission of sins is in the name of Jesus. We are encouraged to ask what we will in the name of Jesus. We have the assurance of His presence when we meet in His name. The name of Jesus is a strong tower in which there is safety.

F. Witnesses of the Resurrection

When the miracle brought together a large crowd, Peter used the opportunity to preach to them the apostolic gospel. The change that had taken place in Peter was a great miracle in itself. A short time before he had denied the Lord and did not have the courage to confess the Lord. Now the rulers of Israel marveled at his boldness, knowing that in the estimation of the world he was an unlearned and ignorant man. They took knowledge that he had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13).

Peter placed great emphasis upon the resurrection of our Lord. In the four Gospels, the Pharisees gave the greatest opposition to Jesus. In Acts it is the Sadducees who oppose the Christians. The Sadducees did not believe in the Resurrection, and became very angry when Peter preached that Jesus had arisen from the dead. They had Peter and John arrested and put in prison overnight. The next morning, they were brought before the most powerful among the priests.

In Jewish eyes, Annas was the real power of the priesthood, even though the Roman government had appointed his son-in-law, Caiaphas, as the high priest. Other rulers and elders were present. Their question was clear: “By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?” Peter did not hesitate to preach the truth before these rulers. He was able to do this because he was “filled with the Holy Ghost.”

G. The Results That Followed the Miracle

Let us mention just a few things that followed the healing of the lame man.

1. The persecution of the church began with Peter and John being arrested and placed in prison overnight.
2. The number of conversions increased until five thousand believers were in Jerusalem (Acts 4:4). This is the last time any such numbering is mentioned.
3. The Christians loved one another and shared their material possessions and ministered to one another. This sharing was voluntary. This was an example of Christian love. The right of possession was not abolished.

II. ALL THINGS IN COMMON

Scripture References: Acts 4:31-37; 5:1-16

A. Barnabas

Barnabas was one of the noblest characters in the Bible. His name means “son of consolation,” and it certainly expresses the true character of this fine Christian brother.

He was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, and apparently quite wealthy. Acts 11:24 describes him as being a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. He was John Mark’s uncle—a brother to Mark’s mother, Mary. Mary also was apparently quite prosperous, and it was in her home that the church met (Acts 12:12).

Barnabas introduced Paul to the apostles (Acts 9:27). It was Barnabas who went to Tarsus to fetch Paul when they needed a teacher at Antioch (Acts 11:25-26). Barnabas accompanied Paul on his first missionary journey. Barnabas was determined that John Mark be given a second chance and so parted company with Paul.

Barnabas was a generous man who was completely dedicated to the work of God. He loved the Lord and saints to such a degree that he sold land and brought the money and laid it at the feet of the apostles.

B. Communal Living

It is a mistake to believe it was God's plan for the early apostolic church to live communally. Rather, God's plan was that the early Christians should go everywhere and evangelize the world. This they could never do if they lived communally. In fact, God permitted persecution to come to break up this style of living.

Why then did they share their possessions and have everything in common? We have to remember that thousands had gathered from all over the Roman Empire and had received the Holy Ghost. It was like a great camp meeting. Their needs had to be met. The newfound love caused the saints in Jerusalem to sell their possessions and bring the money to the apostles that the material needs of everyone would be taken care of. It was an example of Christian love, hospitality, and generosity displayed at its best. Nowhere, however, is it suggested that the right of possession was abolished.

C. Ananias and Sapphira

Ananias and his wife, Sapphira, are examples of many Christians today who desire the blessing without paying the price.

Undoubtedly, the church had applauded Barnabas for his generosity and dedication. Also, it would have been quite evident just how much Barnabas was blessed by God.

Ananias and Sapphira saw this and desired the same blessing from God and the same acclaim from the church. Therefore, they agreed to sell a property, but to give to the church only part of what they received. Peter

told Ananias that Satan had placed the thought in their hearts (Acts 5:3). It was a sin of hypocrisy.

D. The Sin of Lying to the Holy Ghost

Judgment did not overtake Ananias and Sapphira because they kept back part of the price. Judgment overtook them because they said they brought all when they were keeping back part of the price. If they had been honest and confessed that it was only part of the price, they would never have dropped dead. This was definitely an act of hypocrisy, and Peter called it a sin of lying to the Holy Ghost (Acts 5:3).

This sin had to do with their consecration. They said they were bringing all when they were not. The very same sin may be committed today when a person professes to lay all upon the altar when he knows he is holding back. A person should never make a dedication to the Lord unless he is prepared to pay the price and go all the way. Otherwise, it is the same sin as committed by Ananias and Sapphira.

E. Judgment Begins at the House of God

Persecution from the world cannot hurt the church. The church suffers when the devil gets on the inside. Corruption from within is far more dangerous than opposition from without. It is possibly for this reason the Lord dealt so severely with this first evidence of corruption from within.

Judgment must begin at the house of God (I Peter 4:17). God does not judge sinners now, but He does judge His own people. This first act of judgment taught the church a great lesson that it has never forgotten.

The name *Ananias* means “the Lord has shown grace.” This lesson teaches that grace is never any license for sinning. The grace of God teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly, righteously, and godly (Titus 2:12). This Ananias did not do and judgment was the result. Judgment here teaches a few truths of which we should take note:

1. No sin is little; all sin will be judged.
2. God hates hypocrisy. Real love and a true spirit of sacrifice were being replaced by hypocritical pretense.

3. Sin in the church is always far more serious than among the unsaved.
4. A pretended obedience is disobedience. In the life of King Saul, a partial obedience was disobedience (I Samuel 15:22).

F. The Results of Judgment

Three main results followed this purging in the church:

1. The purity of the church was preserved.
2. A wholesome, godly fear came upon everyone (Acts 5:11).
3. The believers experienced new power. Signs and wonders were performed and many believers were added to the Lord, “multitudes both of men and women” (Acts 5:14).

III. DEACONS

Scripture Reference: Acts 6:1-7

A. The Grecians

In Acts 6:1, we read the account of dissatisfaction arising among the Grecians who complained their widows were being neglected.

Who were these Grecians? It is necessary to have a clear understanding of just who they were in order to understand the problem. First, they were not Greeks but Jews, of pure Jewish blood, just as the Hebrews were.

The Grecian Jews were Jews who were living abroad and were visiting Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost, or they were Jews who had lived abroad and had now moved back to Jerusalem. They spoke Greek and were greatly influenced by Greek culture. For this reason, they were called Grecian Jews or Hellenists. They had been influenced by Greek customs and ideas. Undoubtedly they were more prosperous and had been enjoying a higher standard of living. They were more open-minded and less tied to tradition than the Palestinian Jews.

These Hellenists would be conscious of differences in language and culture. They would be very sensitive about any supposed difference that the apostles would be making in their administration of the affairs of the church. Whether or not the Grecian widows were neglected, we are not certain, but when some supposed unfairness seemed to arise, the Grecian Jews were quick to express their complaints. Possibly, this was the first incident of any nationalistic spirit affecting the church.

B. Church Government

Scripture Reference:

“God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets . . . governments, diversities of tongues” (I Corinthians 12:28).

Here we read that God sets governments in the church. The word *governments* refers to the power of ruling, the organized control God has placed in the church for the maintenance of order among the saints.

The Lord placed certain offices and ministries in the church to govern the church (Ephesians 4:11). When the problem arose of the dissatisfaction of the Grecian Christians, the apostles were quick to handle the matter and used great wisdom in this act of governing.

C. The Deacons

The twelve apostles called the multitude unto them and said, “It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables” (Acts 6:2). Their work was to give themselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. Ministers of the gospel need to remember always the wisdom of the apostles here. The first responsibility of the preacher is to give himself to prayer and the ministry of the Word, and not get involved in secular work unless it is absolutely essential.

The apostles commanded the saints to search out from among themselves seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom. This they did, and the apostles laid hands upon them and ordained them as deacons.

The names of these seven deacons were Stephen, Nicanor, Philip, Timon, Prochorus, Parmenas, and Nicolas.

Let us note just how these men were appointed:

1. The apostles gave the qualifications.
2. The church did the choosing or electing.
3. The apostles appointed them or ordained them.

The method by which this was done made everyone happy. The people did the choosing, but the apostles kept the authority and the final decision clearly in their own hands.

Please note that these men all had Greek names. It is quite probable they all were Grecians. What a wonderful, gracious way the apostles used to settle this matter and restore unity! If the Grecians felt they could not trust the Hebrew brethren, they now learned their brethren were ready to trust them.

D. Qualifications of Deacons

In Acts 6:3, we read of the qualifications for these deacons:

1. Men—The Greek word used here specifically means males. Women could not be chosen.
2. Among you—They had to be in the church. No outsiders were to take part in the government of the church.
3. Of honest report—They had to have good reputations.
4. Full of the Holy Ghost
5. Full of wisdom—They had to be men of maturity.

First Timothy 3:8-13 gives further qualifications:

1. Must be grave
2. Must not be double-tongued
3. Not given to much wine
4. Not greedy of filthy lucre
5. Hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience
6. They must first be proved
7. They must be blameless

8. Husbands of one wife
9. They must rule their children and houses well

We can readily understand the importance of this office when we study the above qualifications.

E. The Results of This Event

In Acts 6:7, we read that the word of God increased, the number of disciples multiplied, and even a company of priests believed and were saved.

This revival took place because unity had been restored, everyone in the church now was happy, and the apostles were able to give the needed time to prayer and the ministry of the Word.

We must also note that at least two of the deacons became powerful evangelists: Stephen and Philip. This proves that a man may hold the office of a deacon in the church and at the same time be an effective minister of the Word. Although the office of deacon was primarily that of serving in the material things, yet this would not hinder him from also ministering in the spiritual.

IV. THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

A. Persecution Foretold

Scripture References:

“But he shall receive . . . with persecutions” (Mark 10:30).

“They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you” (Luke 21:12).

“The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you” (John 15:20).

Jesus had warned his disciples they could expect persecution. This persecution began almost at once with the arrest of Peter and John following the healing of the lame man at the Gate Beautiful.

The church at Jerusalem encountered persecution five times in eleven years:

1. By the Sadducees, elders, rulers, and scribes (Acts 4)
2. By the Sadducees because of the preaching of the resurrection (Acts 5)
3. Stephen's trial and martyrdom (Acts 6)
4. Intense persecution under Saul's leadership (Acts 8:1-3)
5. Persecution instigated by Herod (Acts 12:1-25)

The Lord permitted these persecutions, and they undoubtedly accomplished a definite purpose in the growth of the church. The persecutions were some of the means God used in scattering the church so the gospel message might be preached everywhere. The persecutions kept the church strong and developed strong faith as the saints prayed and witnessed the power of God manifested to deliver them.

B. Early Persecutions

The first persecution was directed against Peter and John following the miraculous healing of the lame man. The apostles were thrown into prison overnight. When brought before the council, Peter preached a marvelous sermon. Instead of being the accused, he became the accuser. The council threatened the apostles with violence and dismissed them.

The second persecution was directed against all the apostles (Acts 5:17-42). The religious leaders became indignant and took the apostles and threw them into prison. God's angel delivered them. The next morning when the council was set for trial, they found the apostles were gone. At that very moment, they were in the Temple preaching the Words of life.

In the account of this persecution, the student should note the words of Peter (Acts 5:29, 32): "We ought to obey God rather than men" and "So is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." In this latter statement, it is very clear that obedience is necessary in order to receive the Holy Ghost.

The wisdom of Gamaliel, Paul's teacher, should also be noted. When the council heard Peter, they were convicted deeply and began to plan how to kill the apostles. However, Gamaliel gave them splendid advice: "Let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to

nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God” (Acts 5:38-39).

C. The Persecution by King Herod: (Acts 12:1-25)

King Herod brought the fifth persecution upon the church. This Herod was Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great who was the king when Jesus was born. He had cultivated the good will of the Jews by observing their customs.

In order to win further the favor of the Jews, Herod had James, the brother of John, killed. He had the head of James cut off, a similar death to that of John the Baptist. The student should note that of the apostles, one of these brothers was the first to be killed; the other, John, was the last to die.

When Herod saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter, planning to kill him. However, he did not want to kill him until after the rituals of Passover. The church went to earnest prayer, and God delivered Peter the night before his planned execution.

Although Peter was to be killed the next day, he was not lying awake worrying. He was sleeping. Herod had taken strict precautions. Two chains held Peter and four soldiers (two by his side and two at the door) guarded him. In spite of this, an angel of the Lord delivered Peter.

Peter went to the house of Mary, John Mark’s mother, where the church was praying. Although the church was praying, it was difficult to believe their prayers had been answered. It was so miraculous!

Why did God rescue Peter and allow James to be slain? We do not know, and we must never question the will of God in similar events.

Finally, we should note the horrible death of Herod. The very thing that he desired, the applause and acclaim of the people, brought judgment and death. When the people shouted, “It is the voice of a god and not of a man” (Acts 12:22), Herod accepted this acclaim and died a horrible death. History states that Herod immediately was seized with violent internal pains and lingered in agony for five days before he finally died.

D. Peter's Deliverance

The story of Peter's deliverance is a wonderful illustration of what God does when He delivers a sinner from sin. This passage of Scripture makes a wonderful text for a gospel message.

1. The sinner's condition is described by Peter's condition in prison bound by chains.
2. A light shone first.
3. Peter was smitten on the side next to the heart, which speaks of conviction.
4. He was told to arise . . .
5. Then the chains fell off.
6. Peter was told:
 - a. Gird thyself.
 - b. Bind on thy sandals.
 - c. Put on thy garment.
 - d. Follow me.
7. The gate opened of its own accord.
8. Finally, Peter was able to say, "Now I know."

E. The Final Record of Peter's Ministry

In Acts 12:17, we read, "And he departed, and went into another place." Apart from a brief mention of Peter appearing and speaking at the first church council (Acts 15), the above Scripture completes the record of Peter's ministry. He went into another place, but nobody knows where he went.

He had used the keys and unlocked the door to the kingdom. This is all we need to know regarding the ministry of Peter.

V. THE FIRST CHURCH MARTYR

Scripture References: Acts 6:8-15; 7:1-60; 8:1-2

A. Stephen, the First Church Martyr

Stephen was a Grecian Jew. He was one of the first seven deacons.

The Bible describes Stephen as being full of faith and power (Acts 6:8). God had given him the ministry of preaching the Word, and he preached under such anointing that none could resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke. Great wonders and miracles followed his ministry.

His name means “crown.” His name certainly was appropriate, for he was the first to wear the martyr’s crown.

B. The Synagogues in Jerusalem

The Hellenistic Jews who had returned to Jerusalem to live had established at least five synagogues in Jerusalem. These synagogues were named after the places from which the Jews had returned. The synagogue of the Libertines was an exception. The Jews who assembled in this synagogue were Jews who had been taken prisoners by Roman generals, reduced to slavery, later emancipated, and returned to their homeland.

Since Stephen was a Grecian, it was natural for him to go to the Grecians with the gospel message. Although these Jews had traveled widely and were possibly educated, they were unable to answer Stephen, for Stephen preached with such wisdom and power. This made them very angry, and they determined to get rid of this Holy Ghost preacher. Therefore, they “suborned” men—hired men to give false witness—who accused him of speaking blasphemous words against God and against Moses (Acts 6:11).

C. The Sanhedrin

Stephen was taken before the council or Sanhedrin (Acts 6:12). This was the supreme council of the Jewish people. It had its origin with the seventy elders Moses appointed to help him govern Israel. At this particular time, it was to have seventy-one members—seventy members plus the president.

D. The Charge against Stephen

The charge that the false witnesses made against Stephen was twofold:

1. Stephen was speaking against the Temple.
2. He was changing the law of Moses.

The charge also accused him of blasphemy.

E. The Sermon of Stephen

Stephen's sermon is not an apology; neither did he waste any time in attempting to defend himself. This sermon is the longest one recorded in the Book of Acts.

He began the sermon with a simple salutation, "Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken," and he immediately began to accuse the Jewish leaders themselves. He became their judge, passing sentence upon them.

In his sermon, Stephen dwelt in detail upon the history of Israel. He proved that they ever rejected God's grace while failing to obey God's law. He referred to Abraham to prove that God bestowed blessing upon him entirely on the principle of faith. He gave examples of their persistent hatred of all that is good. He reminded them of the patriarchs' sale of Joseph into Egypt because of envy. The Israelites had refused and rejected Moses.

Stephen built his sermon up to a climax, showing that their history prefigured Christ and their rejection of Him. Stephen charged the Sanhedrin with high treason against God. He rebuked them as being uncircumcised in heart and ears. He accused them of resisting the Holy Ghost and being the murderers of Jesus Christ.

F. The Stoning of Stephen

As the members of the council listened to Stephen, they were convicted deeply. They grew so angry that they gnashed their teeth. They rushed upon him, cast him out of the city, and stoned him. The Sanhedrin had no power to sentence anyone to death, but they ignored this because of their anger and hatred.

Among the council was Saul of Tarsus. Undoubtedly, Saul was one of the leaders who led the mob in killing Stephen. He consented to Stephen's death (Acts 8:1). By this statement we know that he approved of and was pleased with Stephen's death. He also was in charge of the clothes of those who had stripped in order to throw stones.

G. Stephen's Vision

Some try to prove the Trinitarian tradition by referring to the vision Stephen saw just before he died. However, this proves the Oneness.

Stephen called upon God, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Therefore, when Stephen saw God, he knew that He was Jesus Christ. The expression "on the right hand of God" simply means the place of power and glory. Many passages of Scripture bring this out clearly. For example, Mark 14:62 states, "And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power."

In many of the Scriptures where it describes Jesus as being in the place of power and glory, it describes Him as sitting. However, in Acts 7:56, Stephen saw Him standing. Could it be that Jesus arose to welcome the first martyr? Or did He arise because of the keen interest He had in this scene of the death of the first martyr? It certainly is worthy of profound meditation.

H. Similarity between Calvary and the Death of Stephen

Let us consider briefly some similarities between the martyrdom of Stephen and the death of our Lord.

1. In both cases the people were stirred up.
2. Stephen was cast out of the city; Jesus was led out to be crucified.
3. Both prayed for their murderers.
4. Both committed themselves to God.
5. Both cried with a loud voice. In both cases, this was a cry of victory.

I. Two Final Truths

Finally, the student's attention should be drawn to two things:

1. The manner of Stephen's death: "fell asleep" (Acts 7:60) speaks of a quiet, peaceful death. What a blessed thing it is to fall asleep in the arms of Jesus!
2. The effect of Stephen's death upon Saul: Saul of Tarsus was never the same man after this scene. Although he did his best to drown out conviction by leading a persecution against the church, we are confident that he remembered this scene for his entire life. And

many times later, it became a great source of strength and courage to him.

VI. REVIVAL IN SAMARIA

Scripture Reference: Acts 8

A. Philip

Philip was one of the original seven deacons. He was not the same Philip who was an apostle. He was a different Philip, who apparently had his home in Caesarea (Acts 21:8-9). Therefore, he would be a Grecian Jew. Later we read that he had four daughters who prophesied.

Although Philip was ordained a deacon, he became a powerful evangelist of the gospel. A revival followed his ministry in Samaria, and God confirmed his ministry with signs and miracles.

We can see to what extent this man was yielded to the will of God when he left the revival in Samaria and traveled into the desert to preach to one man. What a lesson this should be to all of us!

B. Samaria

Acts 8:1 states that great persecution at Jerusalem scattered the church throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria. However, the apostles remained at Jerusalem.

Judaea and Samaria were included in the commission found in Acts 1:8. It was God's will that both of these provinces would receive the gospel message after Jerusalem.

The Samaritans were a mixed race—part Jewish and part Gentile. It was for this reason that the gospel had to be preached to them before being preached to the Gentiles.

The region of Samaria was located in the central part of Palestine. It lay south of Galilee and north of Judaea. Once when Jesus was going from Judaea to Galilee, He passed through the country of the Samaritans. He paused to rest near Sychar, which is not far from the city of Samaria.

Because of His ministry to the woman at the well, many people accepted Him as the Christ. This may have opened the way in the hearts of the people for the gospel message.

C. Philip's Message

In Acts 8:4, we read that the saints went everywhere preaching the Word. Therefore, Philip preached the Word in Samaria. What did he preach?

1. He preached Christ unto them (Acts 8:5).
2. He preached the things concerning the kingdom of God (Acts 8:12).
3. He preached the things concerning the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 8:12).

This proves that when we preach the Word, we must preach Christ, the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus. It also verifies the close connection between the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus.

D. The Results of the Revival in Samaria

There were definite results that followed the preaching of the Word in Samaria:

1. The people with one accord gave heed (verse 6).
2. There were miracles that they could hear (verse 6).
3. There were miracles that they could see (verse 6).
4. There was great joy in the city (verse 8).
5. Men and women were baptized (verse 12).
6. They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (verse 16).
7. They received the Holy Ghost with the laying on of hands of the apostles (verse 17).

Here are two questions we should answer:

1. How were the Samaritans saved?
 - a. They heard the gospel (Acts 8:6).
 - b. They believed the gospel (Acts 8:12).
 - c. They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 8:16).
 - d. They received the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:17).

2. Why did the apostles come from Jerusalem?

- a. Peter had been given the keys to the Kingdom. Since the Samaritans were part Gentile, it was necessary for Peter to unlock the door of the Kingdom to them.
- b. If the apostles had not come, the Samaritans might have been inclined to think of themselves as being separate from the church in Jerusalem. Receiving the Holy Ghost under the ministry of the apostles showed them that they were part of the same church as the one in Jerusalem.

3. Why was there no tarrying?

The Holy Ghost came on the Day of Pentecost. Now that the Comforter had come, there is no longer any need for tarrying. A person needs only to believe, repent, be baptized, and receive.

E. Simon the Sorcerer

Before Philip came with the gospel, the central figure of interest in Samaria was a sorcerer named Simon. He had bewitched the people and made them believe he was exercising the power of God. He was impressed with the miracles that took place when Philip was preaching, and he presented himself for baptism.

When he saw the people receiving the Holy Ghost, he tried to buy the gift of laying on of hands. Peter severely rebuked him and told him that his heart was not right in the sight of God and that he was in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity.

Whether Simon was saved, we cannot be certain. Certainly, the way in which he received the rebuke and prayed for help (Acts 8:24) would cause us to believe he found forgiveness.

We see the gift of discernment in operation here. This gift of the Spirit is just as important as any of the other eight gifts. We should desire to see this gift in operation as well as the others.

F. The Ethiopian Eunuch

An angel of the Lord suddenly called Philip away from the revival in Samaria to travel south to Gaza, which was a desert area. This was a distance of about eighty miles.

Jerusalem was about thirty miles closer. Why did not the Lord call one of the apostles? The eunuch was returning from Jerusalem. Why did he not hear the gospel in Jerusalem?

We do not have the answers to these questions. However, it does show the importance of never questioning God, but simply obeying in every detail what God commands. This Philip gladly did. He even ran and joined the eunuch in his chariot when the Spirit spoke to him.

One of the marvelous things about this story is the perfect timing. Philip and the eunuch met at a crossroads. Undoubtedly, Philip had traveled by foot while the eunuch was riding in a chariot. Philip had to travel some eighty miles, while the eunuch had to travel about fifty miles. If Philip had been just a few minutes late or early, this appointment would never have been kept.

The eunuch was the treasurer under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. He was a high government official.

Although he was a Gentile, we do not recognize that it was here where the gospel was taken to the Gentiles, for the eunuch was a proselyte to the Jewish religion. He had been up to Jerusalem to worship, and now he was returning home as empty and needy as he had gone. Undoubtedly, as a high government man, he had been entertained in Jerusalem by some of the rulers and officials. Although he was returning home empty spiritually and still unsaved, there was one thing he had gotten at Jerusalem: a scroll containing the prophecy of Isaiah. He was not returning empty handed, for he was returning with the Word of God.

The eunuch was reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Philip needed no better text than this, and he preached Jesus. The eunuch cried out, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip replied, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." The inference is that if the eunuch did not have faith in Jesus, there would have been something to prevent baptism.

The baptized eunuch traveled on his way rejoicing. History tells us he established a church in Ethiopia. A whole nation received a witness because of the obedience of one man.

G. Did They Speak in Tongues in Samaria?

In every case when the Bible states people received the Holy Ghost, it also states they spoke in tongues, with the exception of one. The one exception is the revival in Samaria.

However, it is evident that Simon the Sorcerer saw or heard something that caused him to want to buy the gift. The Samaritans had already been baptized in water; they had already had a demonstration of joy. Something more took place when they received the Holy Ghost. Only one answer is possible. They spoke in tongues.

VII. THE CONVERSION OF SAUL

Scripture References: Acts 9:1-31; 22:1-21.

A. Saul of Tarsus

Saul was a native of Tarsus in Asia Minor. Tarsus was the chief city of Cilicia. It was located about ten miles from the sea and was a provincial capital during Roman times. The district of Cilicia was famous for its cloth made of goat's hair.

Although Saul was a Grecian Jew, he was a strict Pharisee. Saul's father was a Roman citizen, and therefore, Saul was born a Roman citizen. Undoubtedly, he had attended the Jewish synagogue and the local colleges, for which the city was famous. Saul received an excellent education. When he had received what education he could at Tarsus, he went to Jerusalem to study under the rabbis. Saul studied under Gamaliel, a Pharisee and a celebrated doctor of the Law.

Very likely Saul was named after King Saul, the first king of Israel. As King Saul stood head and shoulders above his fellow men physically, even so Saul of Tarsus stood head and shoulders above his fellow men morally, intellectually, and religiously. He could boast of being blameless as touching the righteousness of the Law, but this did not save him.

In Acts 13:9, we have Saul being called Paul. The name *Paul* means “little.” In Jerusalem he bitterly opposed the church and became one of the leaders in the persecution against the Christians.

B. Saul’s Conversion

Saul went to the high priest and obtained letters from him authorizing him to go to Damascus, far to the north, to arrest the Christians, and to bring them back to Jerusalem to be condemned by the Sanhedrin.

As evident from the Lord’s words, “It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks” (Acts 9:5), Saul was under great conviction in his soul. He was trying to stifle the goading of his conscience by increasing the intensity of his persecution of the Christians.

A light above the brightness of the midday sun shone upon Saul. He fell to the earth. He knew that God had crossed his path. Blinded and helpless, he lay on the ground asking for guidance from the Jesus whom he had so lately persecuted.

The question of our Lord to Saul, “Why persecutest thou me?” teaches us that what we do toward the saints, we do toward Jesus. Persecuting the saints means persecuting Jesus, for the church is the mystical body of Christ.

Saul cried out, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” The Lord instructed him to go into the city and someone would tell him what to do. We should note that Jesus did not tell Saul how to be saved, but rather sent a preacher to him. This teaches us that God always uses men and women to carry the gospel message.

Saul’s conversion was thorough. He became a new creature in Christ Jesus. All things he had formerly counted gain, he counted loss for Jesus’ sake. Saul, the persecutor became Paul, the persecuted. His mouth was filled with blessings instead of blasphemies. His heart was filled with courage instead of curses.

Saul’s conversion shows how a man can be fearfully wrong and yet think he is absolutely right. It also shows how no case is hopeless.

C. The Revelation of Jesus Christ to Saul

We need no greater proof of the deity of Jesus than the conversation that took place between Jesus Christ and Saul at his conversion.

“And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest” (Acts 9:4-5).

Saul recognized Jehovah of the Old Testament, and he knew it was Jehovah who appeared to him. He actually asked, “Who art thou, Jehovah?”

This revelation of Jesus to Saul completely changed this fiery persecutor who a few moments before had been breathing out threatenings. The personal pronouns *thou* and *me* are very significant. The relationship of a man to God is always a personal matter.

D. How Was Saul Saved?

Jesus did not tell Saul how to be saved, but rather told him to go into the city and he would be told what to do.

What a change now took place in this fiery, proud persecutor of the church! For three days he was without sight, without food, and without water. This man who had been plowing crooked furrows now was found in the street called “Straight.” He was in the house of Judas. The name *Judas* means “Praise.” Jesus called a disciple by the name of Ananias to go to Saul. *Ananias* means “the Lord has shown grace.” Referring to Saul, Jesus told Ananias, “Behold, he prayeth.”

What a difference! We now find Saul without sight, humbled, fasting, praying, praising, and about to find the grace of God. Paul became a great preacher of the grace of God. Saul was baptized in the name of Jesus, and he received the Holy Ghost. How do we know? The following Scriptures make it plain:

“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16).

“I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all” (I Corinthians 14:18).

“. . . that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 9:17).

E. A Chosen Vessel

What made this man a great missionary? What did the Lord see in this man that he should be a chosen vessel to bear the name of Jesus before kings? (See Acts 9:15.)

It was his complete dedication to the work of God; it was his utter abandonment to the perfect will of God. He served Jesus Christ with the same fiery zeal as he had previously persecuted Him.

F. Preparation for the Ministry

Although Paul had learned at Gamaliel's feet and had such an outstanding conversion, yet it was some twelve years before Paul became active in full-time ministry.

One might think that according to Acts 9:20 he immediately entered the ministry. However, three years took place between Acts 9:19 and Acts 9:20. After his conversion, he immediately went into Arabia (Galatians 1:17) and spent the time in prayer and meditation. He then returned to Damascus where he began to preach as stated in Acts 9:20.

Escaping from the city in a basket after his life was threatened, he returned to Jerusalem where Barnabas interceded for him and introduced him to the apostles. According to Acts 9:30, the brethren took him to Caesarea and sent him home to Tarsus. He remained in Tarsus for eight or nine years and was still there when Barnabas found him and brought him to Antioch to become a teacher in the church (Acts 11:25-26).

From Antioch Paul and Barnabas returned to Jerusalem to attend the first church council as stated in Acts 15. Paul wrote in Galatians 2:1 that this was fourteen years since the time he left Jerusalem. This makes it about twelve years from the time of his conversion until the time he went to Antioch to enter full-time ministry.

G. A Summary of Three Conversions

A very profitable Bible study may be taken from the conversions of these three men:

- Acts 8 Ethiopian Eunuch
- Acts 9 Saul of Tarsus
- Acts 10 Cornelius

1. All three were moral, upright men but unsaved. All three had a special messenger sent to them.
2. They represented the entire human race: a black man, a Jew, and a Gentile. They were descendants of Ham, Shem, and Japheth.
3. They were of three classes hardest to reach: a politician, a theologian, and a soldier.
4. This Bible study may be developed at considerable length: aroused by reading the Word, aroused by seeing Jesus, and aroused by angelic vision, and so on.

VIII. THE CONVERSION OF THE GENTILES

Scripture Reference: Acts 10-11.

A. The Gospel to the Uttermost Part

In the Great Commission, Jesus had said the apostles would be witnesses to the uttermost part of the earth, which would take in the gospel to the Gentiles.

The Lord had given Peter the keys to the Kingdom (Matthew 16). He had unlocked the door of the Kingdom to the Jews on the Day of Pentecost. It was under his ministry that the Samaritans received the Holy Ghost. In Acts 10 we read the story of Peter being the minister to take the gospel to the Gentiles. Thus he used the keys once again to unlock the door of the Kingdom.

B. Who Was Cornelius?

Cornelius was a Roman centurion, an officer in the Roman army over a company of one hundred men. He was a Gentile and a devout man who feared God and gave much alms. He also was a man of prayer.

Cornelius was stationed at Caesarea, a seaport that had been built by Herod the Great. It became the headquarters of the Roman authority in Palestine.

Although Cornelius was a man of good works, he was not saved. His good works did not save him. His prayers and good works went up to God as a memorial, but they did not save him.

At three o'clock in the afternoon, Cornelius had a vision. He was praying as this was the hour of prayer. In the vision, the Lord sent an angel with explicit instructions where he could find a preacher who would tell him what to do.

This is a clear example that angels do not preach the gospel in this dispensation. Angels have never known the joys of sins forgiven. Angels have never been baptized in Jesus' name or filled with the Holy Ghost. It takes men filled with the Holy Ghost to preach the gospel. In this case, that man was Peter who was at Joppa.

C. Peter's Vision

Peter was staying in the home of Simon the Tanner in the city of Joppa, a seaport some thirty miles south of Caesarea.

The next day after Cornelius had seen his vision, Peter was on the flat rooftop of Simon's house praying. It was noon, and he was hungry. While he was waiting for something to eat, he fell into a trance. He saw a great sheet full of all kinds of ceremonially unclean animals being let down from Heaven. A voice commanded him, "Rise, Peter; kill, and eat."

Peter recognized the order as from the Lord, but he did not acknowledge the Lord's right to command him to do what was forbidden by the law of Moses. Peter said, "Not so, Lord." "Not so" and "Lord" are complete contradictions. If Jesus is Lord, one cannot say, "Not so." And if one says, "Not so," Jesus cannot be Lord.

Peter said, “I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.” The Lord replied, “What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.” This was done three times. Peter had denied the Lord three times. Jesus had challenged Peter’s love three times (John 21) and now this lesson is repeated three times. At first Peter did not understand the meaning of the vision, but later he recognized what God was telling him (Acts 10:28).

D. Peter’s Audience

While Peter was considering the vision, the Holy Spirit told him that three men were seeking him and that he should go with them without questioning.

The next morning, Peter left for Caesarea with these three men accompanied by six brethren (Acts 11:12). This made a party of ten men who made the trip of thirty miles to Caesarea.

The morning of the following day after reaching Caesarea, Peter went to the home of Cornelius. He found the house filled with Gentiles. Cornelius had called in his relatives and friends.

As Peter entered the home of Cornelius, the centurion fell at his feet and worshiped him. To worship a human being is idolatry, and Peter would have none of it. “Stand up;” he said, “I myself also am a man.”

Peter found a crowd gathered that was a God-prepared audience ready to hear the gospel. Cornelius was in earnest, and he had filled the house with guests prepared to hear the Word of God. What a thrill to speak to a group like this!

E. Peter’s Sermon

Peter’s sermon was very simple but yet comprehensive. He gave a brief summary of our Lord’s ministry from His baptism by John up to the Crucifixion and Resurrection. He told them that whosoever believes in Jesus shall, through His name, receive remission of sins.

The sermon was interrupted by the Holy Ghost. Peter never finished his sermon, for right in the middle of it, the Holy Ghost fell on all who heard the Word.

F. How Were the Gentiles Saved?

The seven Jews who were present were astonished that the Gentiles had received the Holy Ghost. They heard them speak in tongues and magnify God (verse 46). Peter then commanded them to be baptized in water in the name of the Lord. We should note the order that took place here:

1. Faith
2. Holy Ghost
3. Water Baptism in the name of the Lord

The faith that brought salvation to the Gentiles was faith unto obedience.

PART III

THE CHURCH IN THE GENTILE WORLD

The Missionary Church and Paul's Ministry
Acts 13-28

PART III

THE CHURCH IN THE GENTILE WORLD

The Missionary Church and Paul's Ministry

Acts 13-28

I. THE BIRTH OF FOREIGN MISSIONS (Acts 13:1-4)

- A. Antioch
- B. Background Leading Up to the Missionary Movement
- C. The Missionary Movement Born in Prayer
- D. Chosen of God
- E. Missionaries Sent Forth by the Church

II. PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY (Acts 13:4-52; 14:1-28)

- A. The First Missionary Journey
- B. Comments on Paul's First Missionary Journey
- C. Map Showing Paul's First Missionary Journey

III. THE FIRST CHURCH COUNCIL (Acts 15:1-35)

- A. Dissension in the church
- B. The Journey to Jerusalem
- C. The First Church Council
- D. The Decision
- E. The Result
- F. God Visiting the Gentiles

IV. PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY (Acts 15:36-41; 16:1-18:22)

- A. The Second Missionary Journey
- B. Map Showing Paul's Second Missionary Journey
- C. Comments on Paul's Second Missionary Journey

V. CONVERSION OF THE JAILER (Acts 16:14-40)

- A. Europe's First Convert
- B. Opposition from Satan
- C. Singing at Midnight
- D. Delivered by an Earthquake
- E. A Wicked Jailer Converted
- F. What Must I Do to Be Saved?

VI. PAUL AT ATHENS (Acts 17:15-34)

- A. Athens
- B. Two Schools of Philosophy
- C. Paul on Mars' Hill
- D. The Result of Paul's Message
- E. The Unknown God
- F. Comments of Paul's Sermon

VII. THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS (Acts 19; 20:17-38)

- A. Ephesus
- B. Apollos
- C. Diana of the Ephesians
- D. The One Example of Rebaptism
- E. Revival at Ephesus
- F. The Ministry of Paul at Ephesus
- G. Paul's Exhortation to the Ephesian Elders

VIII. PAUL ARRESTED AT JERUSALEM (Acts 18:23-38; 19-23)

- A. Paul's Third Missionary Journey
- B. Map Showing Paul's Third Missionary Journey
- C. Paul's Urge to go to Jerusalem
- D. Arrested at Jerusalem
- E. Paul's Five Defenses
- F. Paul Defends Himself

IX. PAUL DEFENDS HIMSELF AT CAESAREA (Chapters 24-26)

- A. Standing before Kings
- B. Paul Defends Himself before Felix
- C. Paul Defends Himself before Festus
- D. Paul Defends Himself before Agrippa

X. THE JOURNEY TO ROME (Chapters 27-28)

- A. Deportation to Rome
- B. Paul's Faith in God Expressed
- C. Map Showing Paul's Journey to Rome
- D. On the Island of Malta
- E. Paul Reaches Rome
- F. With Signs Following

XI. CHARACTER STUDIES IN ACTS

PART III

THE CHURCH IN THE GENTILE WORLD

I. THE BIRTH OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

Scripture Reference: Acts 13:1-4

A. Antioch

Antioch, in Syria, was founded in the year 300 BC. It was situated on a bend of the Orontes River, about fifteen miles from the sea. At the mouth of the river was the seaport of Seleucia.

Many Jews had settled at Antioch and had been allowed to have the same political privileges as the Greeks.

When persecution broke out in Jerusalem, many of the Christians found a refuge at Antioch. They immediately began to preach the gospel. At first they preached in the synagogues and only to the Jews, but later they began to preach to the Gentiles. It was in Antioch that the first Gentile church was founded, and it was here that believers were first called Christians (Acts 11:26).

Meaning “Christ-like,” the name *Christian* was derived from the Greek word *Christos*, which is the equivalent of the Hebrew *Messiah*, and means “Anointed One.”

The new church at Antioch was a daughter church of the mother church in Jerusalem, but she rapidly grew until she exceeded the church

in Jerusalem in vision and strength, and became a mother church in her own right.

B. Background Leading Up to the Missionary Movement

When news of the radical development at Antioch reached Jerusalem, there was much concern, for the believers left behind at Jerusalem were all strict Jews. They sent Barnabas to investigate the situation. This showed what great confidence the church had in Barnabas.

Undoubtedly Barnabas was one of the greatest characters of the New Testament. He was a good man; full of the Holy Ghost and of faith (Acts 11:24). What he saw in Antioch impressed Barnabas. And instead of returning to Jerusalem with complaints, he remained in Antioch to direct the work.

The church at Antioch was a young church and needed teaching. Barnabas could have attempted to do this himself, but being a dedicated, humble man, he decided to find the best teacher possible. He remembered Saul of Tarsus whom he had befriended several years before. Therefore, he left Antioch, went to Tarsus, and persuaded Saul to return with him to teach the new church at Antioch.

Barnabas and Saul labored together at Antioch for one year and the church developed under their ministry to become one of the most important in the early history of the church.

The church at Antioch had the following qualifications:

1. A benevolent church

The church sent help back to Jerusalem to help the poor saints there (Acts 11:29-30).

2. A spiritual church

The gifts of the Spirit were in operation at Antioch. God was able to speak to them by prophecy (Acts 11:28; Acts 13:2). It was a church that fasted and prayed and because of this God was able to speak to them.

3. A missionary church

It was here at Antioch that the foreign missionary movement was born. This showed that they had a burden for souls and a vision of the harvest field.

When the Holy Spirit spoke through Agabus by prophecy that there was a need in the mother church, they sent Barnabas and Saul to Jerusalem with assistance. They delivered their gift and soon returned to Antioch, bringing with them John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10).

C. The Missionary Movement Born in Prayer

The missionary movement was born in prayer. It is only when the church is on her knees that God is able to speak to her and she has the dedication necessary to obey the voice of God.

At this particular time five prophets and teachers ministered to the church. Although both Barnabas and Saul were later called apostles, at this point they were listed among prophets and teachers. The names of these ministers were Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, and Saul. We should note that Barnabas was listed first and probably was looked upon as the leader among them. Also at this point Saul was listed last. However this changed as soon as the Lord called Saul into His life's work.

These ministers were doing three things: (1) ministering to the Lord; (2) fasting; and (3) praying.

Undoubtedly the missionary movement would never have been born at Antioch if the church had not been doing these three things. They were in the right attitude for God to speak to them. What could happen today if the church could be found in this same attitude before the Lord?

D. Chosen of God

The will of God is the all-important essential in the work of God.

Barnabas and Saul were not called by man but by God. It was the Holy Ghost who said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

God has always called specific men for specific tasks. Saul was a chosen vessel to bear the name of Jesus before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15). It had been a number of years since his conversion and it might have seemed during this long time that the will of God would never be carried out in Saul's life. Just as God has a definite man for a definite work, there is a definite time for the call of God to be fulfilled.

One of the greatest characteristics in Saul's life and ministry was his complete dedication to the will of God. His motto seemed to be: "As much as in me is, I am ready" (Romans 1:15).

E. Missionaries Sent Forth by the Church

God's order in the sending forth of missionaries may be seen here:

1. They were called of God.
2. Their call was recognized by the church.
3. Fasting and prayer must be in evidence.
4. They were sent forth by the Lord in His time and to the places He had chosen.
5. They were sent forth by the church.

This means the missionary ministry becomes the united effort of the whole church.

II. PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Scripture References: Acts 13:4-52; 14:1-28

A. The First Missionary Journey

Antioch was the starting point for Paul's first, second, and third missionary journeys.

After God had spoken to the church, Barnabas and Saul went forth on the first missionary journey. They decided to take with them John Mark who did not stay with them long. (See Acts 13:13.) It should be noted that they started out as Barnabas and Saul, but it was not very long before it

was Paul and Barnabas. In other words, Paul soon became the acknowledged leader.

Saul's name was changed to Paul (Acts 13:9). The name *Paul* means "little." It is the opinion of the writer that Paul himself adopted this name because of his wonderful spirit of humility. He considered himself as being "less than the least of all saints" (Ephesians 3:8).

Let us consider a brief summary of the travels of Paul and Barnabas on this first missionary journey:

1. They left Antioch and went down the Orontes River to the seaport city of Seleucia.
2. Setting sail from Seleucia, they crossed over the arm of the Mediterranean Sea to the island of Cyprus. This island is 140 miles long and fifty miles wide. It lies sixty miles west of Syria and was at that time densely populated. It was the early home of Barnabas.
3. The first stopping place was on the eastern shore at a place called Salamis where they found a Jewish synagogue.
4. Crossing Cyprus from east to west, preaching as they went, they came to Paphos, the capital of the island. The proconsul resided there. This city had a shrine of Venus, which the people worshiped. It was here that a sorcerer, a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-jesus, tried to turn away the deputy of the island from the faith and was struck blind by Paul.
5. Leaving Cyprus, they sailed northwesterly 170 miles and reached the province of Pamphylia. Bypassing the seaport city of Attalia, they landed at Perga, seven and a half miles from the sea. This city was inhabited by Greeks who worshiped Diana. It was here that John Mark turned back.
6. Antioch in Pisidia was the next field of labor. Here Paul preached in the synagogue. A church was established but the brethren were driven out by persecution from the Jews.

7. Sixty miles east of Antioch was a large city, Iconium, where Paul preached in the synagogue. Many believed, but again the apostles had to flee persecution.
8. Eighteen miles southwest of Iconium was the city of Lystra. Paul found a city of superstitious heathens and healed a man who had been a cripple from his mother's womb. Thinking the apostles were Mercury and Jupiter, the people were led by the miracle to try to offer sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas. No sooner had they restrained such acts of the people until Jews from Antioch and Iconium came and stirred up the people against them. They stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city and left him for dead.
9. Paul and Barnabas now went to Derbe, twenty miles away. There they preached the gospel and many accepted the Lord. They were now quite near the pass in Mount Taurus known as the Cilician Gates and could have easily returned home by a short and safe route. They preferred to return the same way they had come in spite of their enemies.
10. They revisited Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the churches and establishing new ones in nearby towns. At Attalia they boarded ship and sailed north of Cyprus to Antioch in Syria. They were gladly received by the church that had sent them forth.

B. Comments on Paul's First Missionary Journey

1. Bar-jesus (Acts 13:6-11)
Bar-jesus, the false prophet and sorcerer, is a type of the Jewish nation, apostate and trying to turn others away from Christ. Bar-jesus was struck blind as has happened to Israel in a spiritual way (Romans 11:25). This blindness was only "for a season" (Acts 13:11). This also speaks of Israel's future restoration for it is only for a season.
2. John Mark (Acts 13:13)
John Mark was the nephew of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10). He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey as far as Perga. Apparently by this time he had had enough of hardships and persecution and turned back. This failure on the part of John Mark became an issue that parted the apostles as

they began the second journey. Barnabas was determined to give John Mark a second chance. This controversy reveals much about the character of both Paul and Barnabas. In this case, Barnabas proved to be correct, for John Mark developed into a fine minister of the gospel, which Paul himself acknowledged when he wrote to Timothy, "Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry" (II Timothy 4:11). The Lord chose Mark worthy to be the writer of the second Gospel in the New Testament. This should teach us patience and understanding with those who fail and to be willing to give them the second chance to prove good.

3. The Stoning of Paul (Acts 14:19)

Undoubtedly Paul actually died on this occasion, and for a brief time he was caught up to Paradise. The writer is convinced that Paul was referring to this experience when he wrote to the Corinthians (II Corinthians 12:1-5). When Paul said he knew a man whom he could not describe as being in the body or out of the body, he was writing about himself.

C. Map Showing Paul's First Missionary Journey



III. THE FIRST CHURCH COUNCIL

Scripture Reference: Acts 15:1-35

A. Dissension in the Church

When Paul and Barnabas returned from their first missionary journey, they gathered the church together. They had a wonderful story to tell. God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles (Acts 14:27). God had graciously confirmed His word and many Gentile churches had been established.

The report of God's remarkable work among the Gentiles was soon known far and near. Certain men in Judea became concerned about the Gentiles considered being in the church when they had never been circumcised after the law of Moses. A group of Jews decided to go to Antioch and contest the message Paul was preaching. Consequently, they came and began teaching that except a person be circumcised he would never be saved. Confusion filled the minds of the people. The question became so disturbing that even Peter, who also visited Antioch, thought it might be wise to withdraw fellowship from Gentiles and keep the old Jewish traditions of separation.

Paul refused to be moved. He knew that grace superseded Law and tradition. Paul used great wisdom in handling the situation. He withstood Peter (Galatians 2:11), but he knew it was not wise for the leaders of the church to be in disagreement. It was decided that they would take the matter to the headquarters church in Jerusalem.

B. The Journey to Jerusalem

Paul and Barnabas, along with certain others of the brethren, journeyed to Jerusalem. As they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, they declared the conversion of the Gentiles. In every place this brought great joy to the brethren. The news of a soul's salvation always thrills a real child of God.

It should be noted that Paul and Barnabas took with them Titus, a Greek, who had not been circumcised (Galatians 2:3). Titus was more or less a test case and it was very important that they did not compel him to be circumcised.

C. The First Church Council

The first church council at Jerusalem was an extremely important one. It was called to settle the question of whether or not a person could be saved without being circumcised. However, although the specific question being settled was whether circumcision was essential to salvation, there was a greater principle being determined. The whole matter of Law and grace was being settled by this issue.

The council was presided over by James, the half-brother of our Lord. Although he was not one of the original twelve apostles, he was the pastor of the church in Jerusalem at this time and was recognized as one of the leaders of the church. Undoubtedly the fact that Mary, mother of Jesus, was also his mother, gave him great influence in the church.

Many spoke and there was much disputing, the main speakers being Paul, Peter, Barnabas, and James. Peter spoke first, giving the account of the conversion of Cornelius. He used it as an effective argument here, and closed his statement with the gracious words, "We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they." He did not say, "They shall be saved, even as we," but brought his own race down to the level of the Gentiles.

Paul followed with an account of the mighty work done among the Gentiles and how God had performed many wonders and miracles.

James summarized the matter. He reviewed Peter's testimony that God first visited the Gentiles through his ministry. He quoted a prophecy from Amos 9:11-12 as confirming the order of events in God's program:

1. God visits the Gentiles.
2. After this Christ will return.
3. The millennial kingdom will be established.

D. The Decision

James pronounced the sentence that he thought just and right. It was put in writing upon the approval of the whole company of the brethren. The decision was as follows:

1. That they trouble not the Gentiles
2. That the Gentiles be instructed to maintain purity by abstaining from meat offered to idols, fornication, meat that has been strangled, and blood.

E. The Result

The decision was written in a letter, and Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas were delegated to carry it to the churches. They reached Antioch where the news was joyously received.

A dangerous schism in the church had been averted and an important doctrinal matter had been clearly settled. Paul's willingness to take the matter to Jerusalem showed his great wisdom in the handling of the problem.

It should be noted that Titus was not compelled to be circumcised.

F. God Visiting the Gentiles

"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name" (Acts 15:14).

This Scripture is a very important one from which many important truths may be developed. Here are a few truths that are stated in this verse:

1. The Deity of Jesus—God was manifested in flesh and in the Incarnation He visited us and came where we are.
2. A Gentile Bride—the church will consist mainly of Gentiles.
3. For His Name—the bride will bear the name of her Lover. This shows us the importance of being baptized in the name of Jesus.
4. Finally, this Scripture shows the importance of being baptized in Jesus' name in order to be ready for the coming of our Lord.

IV. PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Scripture References: Acts 15:36-41; 16:1-18:22

A. The Second Missionary Journey

When the apostles returned to Antioch from attending the first church council in Jerusalem, they were accompanied by Judas and Silas, two prophets. A few days after their arrival, Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord." Because of the controversy over John Mark, they parted company. Barnabas took his nephew and went to Cyprus. Paul chose Silas as his companion and was later joined by Timothy and Luke.

We shall briefly trace the journey taken by Paul and his companions on his second missionary journey:

1. Starting from Antioch, Paul and Silas traveled through Syria, visiting the churches (Acts 15:41). They then journeyed into the province of Cilicia, the land of Paul's birth. Derbe was revisited (Acts 16:1).
2. At Lystra, where Paul had previously been stoned, he founded a church and was joined by his son in the gospel, Timothy (Acts 16:1-4).
3. They visited the churches at Iconium and Antioch and then they went northward to Galatia. On their journey they wanted to turn west and preach in Asia, but the Holy Ghost forbade them (Acts 16:6). They then wanted to go north and preach in Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not (Acts 16:7). There was no choice but to continue in the same northwesterly direction until they came to the end of the road that was Troas, the ancient city of Troy.
4. At Troas, Paul founded a church and was joined by Luke, the author of the Acts of the Apostles. It was at Troas that Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia saying, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us."

5. Immediately Paul and his companions crossed over to Macedonia. This was the first time the gospel was preached in Europe.
6. At Philippi, the first European convert, Lydia, was baptized. Here Paul and Silas were miraculously delivered from jail after having been scourged and imprisoned.
7. Finding no synagogue or Jewish population at Amphipolis, Paul journeyed westward after spending only one day.
8. Forty miles away at Thessalonica was a large Jewish population and a synagogue in which Paul preached three Sabbaths. He later wrote two epistles to the church that he founded here. The Jews instigated a riot and forced the brethren to flee by night.
9. At Berea, Paul found a people hungry for the truth. Many of them believed the gospel message. "The Bereans" have furnished a name for sincere students of the Bible everywhere. The unbelieving Jews of Thessalonica heard about this and came to Berea to stir up the people against the apostles. The brethren sent Paul away to Athens, but Silas and Timothy remained in Berea for a time.
10. Athens was one of the famous cities of the ancient world. It was here Paul preached on Mars' Hill. It does not seem that a church was founded at this time even though some believed.
11. At Corinth, Luke and Timothy joined Paul and Paul preached the Word boldly for a year and a half. While here, he worked at his trade as a tentmaker. He met Aquila and his wife, Priscilla, who also were tentmakers. Because Paul worked at the same craft, he stayed at their home.
12. At Cenchrea, Paul embarked for his return journey. After crossing the Aegean Sea, a voyage of 250 miles, they came to Ephesus. Paul stayed only a short time and then set sail for home. Aquila and Priscilla had accompanied Paul from Corinth, but they remained in Ephesus while the apostles went on home.

13. Paul reached Caesarea after he had sailed some 600 miles. Paul then went on to Jerusalem, and then to Antioch.

B. Map Showing Paul's Second Missionary Journey



C. Comments on Paul's Second Missionary Journey

1. The Macedonian Call (Acts 16:6-11)

Paul received the Macedonian Call at Troas when he saw a vision of a man from Macedonia saying, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." Troas was a seaport and was at the end of the road. Paul could travel no farther by land.

The remarkable thing about the dealings of the Lord with Paul was that earlier Paul had tried to turn west and then to the north but each time he was checked by the Holy Ghost. There was no choice but to continue in the same northwesterly direction until he came to the end of the road (Acts 16:6-7). The will of God was not made clear until he needed to know it.

This is a great lesson for us all. We should be able to be checked by the Holy Spirit and willing to trust God to reveal His will when we need to know it. We should not try to peer into the future but be willing to be led day by day.

2. The Bereans (Acts 17:10-13)

The story of Paul and Silas at Berea teaches us the great importance of being Bible students—Bible searchers. The Bereans were called noble and honorable.

It is certainly a noble quality to search the Bible and prove everything by the Scriptures.

3. Corinth (Acts 18:1-17)

Corinth stood at the junction of important land routes north and south and sea routes east and west. It had been destroyed by Roman conquest, but Julius Caesar had restored it in 46 BC. It became the capital of the province of Achaia in 27 BC. It was notorious because of widespread immorality.

Paul arrived in Corinth a discouraged man. His ministry in Europe had not been well received. Here he was forced to work at his trade of tent making. He met Aquila and Priscilla, Jews who had been evicted from Rome under the edict of Claudius in AD 49. However, he was encouraged by being rejoined by his friends, Silas and Timothy, who brought him good news from Thessalonica and material help. Also the Lord appeared to him in a night vision and assured him that he should stay in Corinth and continue his ministry. Paul continued preaching at Corinth for one year and six months.

Paul won Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, and Justus, a Gentile who lived next door to the synagogue. The attitude of Gallio, the Roman deputy, is worthy of note. He refused to judge in religious matters.

V. CONVERSION OF THE JAILER

Scripture Reference: Acts 16:14-40

A. Europe's First Convert

The first European convert was Lydia who lived at Philippi, a city of Macedonia, situated about nine miles from the sea. This was the first city in Europe in which Paul preached. And a fine church was raised up here. Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians to this church.

At Philippi, the colony of Jews was very small. As there were not the necessary ten men to build a synagogue, the Jews worshiped each Sabbath in the open air on the banks of the river. Among them was Lydia, a Jewish proselyte lady from Thyatira. Thyatira was famous for its dyeing-works and Lydia sold dye and dyed goods. Apparently Lydia was a lady of considerable wealth.

On the Sabbath day, Paul joined the group of women at the riverside and preached the gospel to them. Lydia was a righteous woman, but she still needed salvation. She listened to the Word of God and the Lord opened her heart. Generally, we think of a person opening the doors of their own heart and letting the Savior in. In this case the Lord Himself opened Lydia's heart. She was then baptized along with her household.

We should note the steps in Lydia's conversion:

1. She heard the Word of God.
2. Her heart was opened.
3. She was baptized.

As soon as she was saved, she invited Paul and the missionary party to stay at her home. This they did (Acts 16:15, 40).

B. Opposition from Satan

When the Lord works, the devil generally gets busy too. For many days a demon-possessed woman followed the servants of God, commending them as true ministers of the way of salvation. Satan's commendation, however, is less to be desired than his condemnation. Although the woman spoke the truth, the gospel was damaged by her cries, for it put the gospel message on the same level as her soothsaying.

Finally, Paul grew weary of her cries and commanded the demon to come out of her. This immediately cut off the source of livelihood for her masters who charged the missionaries with speaking treasonous words.

C. Singing at Midnight

Paul and Silas were arrested, cruelly beaten, and thrust into an underground dungeon. The magistrates had made no investigation of the charges against them, but had them beaten and imprisoned.

The inner prison was a dark, damp, windowless underground hole. With their backs raw and bleeding, the apostles were thrust into this inner prison and placed in the stocks. The pain and distress they suffered must have been beyond description.

Instead of groaning and complaining, or merely suffering in silence, pitying themselves, these preachers prayed and sang praises to God. The darkest hour is supposed to be the midnight hour and it was at this darkest hour that they were still praising and singing when deliverance came.

D. Delivered by an Earthquake

God rocked the foundations of the prison with a great earthquake that opened all the doors and loosed every prisoner's chains off his hands and legs. The earthquake awakened the jailer from his sleep. Seeing the prison doors open, he concluded that all the prisoners had escaped.

The jailer drew his sword and was about to commit suicide when he was arrested by a loud voice from the lips of Paul, "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here." These words brought the jailer trembling to the feet of those whom he had treated so brutally the night before. He cried, "Sirs,

what must I do to be saved?" The earthquake did not make the jailer tremble, but the voice of Paul did.

E. A Wicked Jailer Converted

There was more than one miracle that took place here. The earthquake that opened the prison doors certainly was a great miracle. But the fact that Paul knew the jailer was about to commit suicide was also a miracle. There was no light and they were in the dungeon. This was a manifestation of the Word of Knowledge, one of the gifts of the Spirit. Also it was a miracle that none of the other prisoners escaped.

The greatest miracle, however, was the conversion of the Philippian jailer. He was a cruel, hard-hearted, wicked jailer, but in almost a moment of time he was completely changed.

Let us study just what took place:

1. The jailer was desperate and in his extremity was about to commit suicide.
2. The word of hope was brought to him.
3. He recognized his need of salvation and cried out for directions.
4. He called for a light. The first need in his life was light.
5. He was told to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.
6. He listened to the gospel preached by the apostles (Acts 16:32).
7. He washed the stripes of the apostles. This is evidence of true repentance and the doing of restitution.
8. He was baptized straightway.
9. He rejoiced, believing in God (Acts 16:34).

F. What Must I Do to Be Saved?

Many people use this story to try to prove that all a person has to do to be saved is to believe. Nevertheless, this story reveals that there is more to it than just believing.

The faith that saves is not a passive faith, but an active faith that reaches out, appropriates the grace of God, and causes it actually to do something in a person's life. Note the Philippian jailer was baptized, he and all his, straightway. They did not wait even until morning.

In giving the commission, Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned” (Mark 16:16).

What are we told about how this man was saved?

1. He recognized his need.
2. He cried out for instructions.
3. He was told to believe.
4. He washed the stripes of the apostles revealing repentance.
5. He was baptized straightway.
6. He rejoiced believing in God.

VI. PAUL AT ATHENS

Scripture Reference: Acts 17:15-34

A. Athens

Athens is one of the famous cities of the ancient world. It was the acknowledged center of intellect, culture, and religion. It was the seat of the prevailing schools of philosophy. It was “wholly given to idolatry” (verse 16). It was said that there were more gods than men in Athens.

It is no different in the world today. Almost the whole human race is bowing down before idols that men have invented and human hands have made. Some worship idols of wood and stone, pictures and images; others worship the gods of gold and silver, culture and refinement, arts and sciences.

The apostle Paul began his message on Mars’ Hill stating, “I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious” (Acts 17:22). This may be translated, “You are too religious.” They did not lack for religion, but in all of this, they did not know the one true God

B. Two Schools of Philosophy

1. Epicureans

The Epicureans were materialists and atheists. They believed the chief aim of existence is pleasure—that pleasure is the only good and pain the only evil. To them there was no God and no future

existence in eternity. Their motto was: “Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die.”

Millions of Epicureans today have never heard of the name. Men are still lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

2. Stoics

The Stoics believed that God was everything and in everything, which is called Pantheism. They were fatalists and considered apathy the highest moral attainment. To them God was the “soul” of the universe, so that the distinction between the human and the divine ceased to exist. Man became his own god. This is the basic teaching of all spiritistic cults with certain variations as in Christian Science, Unitarianism, Spiritualism, and so on. These philosophers considered the simple Christian truth that Paul preached as being absurd. They said Paul was a babbler talking baby talk.

C. Paul on Mars’ Hill

The philosophers took Paul to Mars’ Hill in order to hear him further. Mars’ Hill was an Athenian court that met in early times on the Hill of Ares west of the Acropolis. It had jurisdiction over moral questions and religious matters. Another name for Mars’ Hill was Areopagus.

Paul was very observant. He quickly used something that was familiar to his hearers to introduce his message. In doing so, he was following the example of our Lord. Paul had seen the religious devotions of the Athenians and had found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. This unknown God to whom they had erected an altar was the one Paul was going to declare.

Paul declared Him to be the Creator and the world’s moral Governor; truths that strike at the very heart of materialism, pantheism, atheism, and so forth. Paul spoke to them of sin as a personal offense against a personal God and Judge, who therefore commands all men everywhere to repent. He showed the folly of idolatry when we ourselves are the offspring of God.

D. The Result of Paul's Message

The result of Paul's sermon to these intellectuals was threefold:

1. Many rejected it.
2. Some procrastinated.
3. A few believed.

Wherever the gospel is preached today, it is followed with this same threefold result. Thank God for those who believe.

E. The Unknown God

Throughout the world today, God is still the "Unknown God." Like the Athenians, men everywhere are very religious but are idolatrous. They are given to much learning and knowledge, but they do not know the true and living God.

Many say God is just an idea, that He may be found in nature, that He may be discovered within man himself. However, God is the personal, living Sovereign of the universe. He is the Creator in whose hands is our very breath—our life and being comes from Him.

In order to know Him, one must be born into His family and be a recipient of His Spirit. The only way we may know Him is to have a personal relationship with Him, to be baptized in His name, and filled with His Spirit.

F. Comments of Paul's Sermon

Paul's message to the Athenians on Mars' Hill should be studied carefully. There are many profound truths stated here. Let us comment briefly on two of them:

1. Of One Blood All Nations (Acts 17:26)

God is the Creator of every race and nation. Every man and woman has descended from Adam and Eve. The human race is one regardless of color, class, and culture. The bigotry and prejudice that separate mankind today and that erect walls of misunderstanding and suspicion should never be found in the church.

“By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body” (I Corinthians 12:13).

2. All Men Everywhere to Repent (verse 30)

This statement tells us that salvation is for all men of all races, nationalities, and cultures. Paul’s statement refutes once and for all the false belief that salvation is only for the elect. This is sufficient proof that Calvinism is not correct. Salvation is for everyone who will repent, for “whosoever will.”

VII. THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS

Scripture References: Acts chapter 19; 20:17-38

A. Ephesus

Ephesus was a city of power. It was the capital of proconsular Asia and the citizens were constantly reminded of the power of Rome.

Ephesus, situated near the mouth of the Cayster River on the main trade route between Rome and the East, was the greatest commercial center in Asia at that time. It was also a free city with its own Senate and Assembly.

At Ephesus stood one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, the temple of Diana. It was a magnificent structure with its 127 columns sixty feet high, standing on an area 425 feet in length and 220 feet in width. It was the center of all heathen worship in that area.

One whole chapter is devoted to the account of the founding of the church at Ephesus. The importance of this church may be noted by the fact that one of Paul’s epistles was written to this church. Also, the first of the letters written to the churches of Asia (Revelation 2) was addressed to this church.

Paul ministered in Ephesus longer than at any other place. He spent three years at Ephesus (Acts 20:31). Another fact that reveals the importance of this church is that a record is given in the Bible of Paul’s exhortation to the elders of Ephesus (Acts 20:17-38).

B. Apollos

Apollos was a Jew who was born at Alexandria. He is described as being “an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures” (Acts 18:24). The statement that he was mighty in the Scriptures meant he was learned in the Old Testament. About all he knew of the New Testament message was the message of repentance preached by John the Baptist. Apollos came to Ephesus and spoke eloquently in the synagogue regarding the elementary truth of repentance.

We see something of the character of Apollos when he was willing to have two poor tentmakers instruct him in the things of God “more perfectly.” This revealed a great quality of humility in Apollos. When he left Ephesus to go to Corinth, the saints commended him, sending a letter that he might be received elsewhere as a minister of the gospel. This example teaches us that ministers should not be permitted on our church platforms unless they are known and proven, or they carry with them letters of commendation from responsible brethren. Much church trouble would be avoided if all ministers had to be known or carry letters of commendation.

C. Diana of the Ephesians

The Ephesian goddess Diana is to be identified with Astarte and other female divinities of the East. This idol was regarded as an object of special sanctity, and was believed to have fallen down from Heaven (Acts 19:35).

Diana was recognized as being “great,” but greater was the power of the gospel. Idolatry has no message, but it can shout for two hours trying to make itself believe something that is false. Diana of the Ephesians vanished long ago, but the church still stands. Great may be any philosophy, religion, or idolatry, but greater is He whose name is Jesus.

D. The One Example of Rebaptism

When Paul came to Ephesus, he discovered twelve disciples of John the Baptist, who, like Apollos, knew only the baptism of John the Baptist. He inquired if they had received the Holy Spirit when they believed and they replied, “We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.” Paul explained the gospel, pointing them to Jesus. When they understood the truth, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus and received the Spirit. This is the only recorded instance of rebaptism in the New

Testament. However, it clearly teaches that one must be baptized correctly according to the Bible or he is not yet baptized. There is only one baptism (Ephesians 4:5) and that one baptism must be correct according to the Scriptures. Otherwise it is not considered as being baptism. To be correctly baptized, it must be by immersion in water administered in the name of Jesus.

E. Revival at Ephesus

God worked mightily at Ephesus. The following results followed the preaching of the gospel in this Asian capital:

1. They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 19:5).
2. They received the Holy Ghost and they spoke in tongues.
3. They bore bold testimony to the Jews (Acts 19:8).
4. Multitudes received the gospel (Acts 19:20).
5. The power of the gospel transformed lives (Acts 19:17-19).
6. Miracles accompanied the gospel (Acts 19:11-12).

F. The Ministry of Paul at Ephesus

Paul had desired to preach in Asia on his second missionary journey, but the Holy Ghost forbade him to do so (Acts 16:6). God has a right time for everything. If Paul had gone to Ephesus at that time, he never would have had the revival that he now had when he went in the will of God.

Paul went to the synagogue and witnessed to the Jews for three months. When some of the Jews became hardened and obstinate, Paul separated the Christians and taught them in the lecture hall of Tyrannus for two years. During this time Paul worked at tent making and supported himself (Acts 20:34). One ancient manuscript states that Paul taught from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM. If this is true, then Paul undoubtedly worked with his hands in the early morning while Tyrannus was teaching, and then began to teach when Tyrannus finished his lectures.

We should note three events in Paul's ministry:

1. Signs and miracles occurred and many sick were healed. The power of the name of Jesus was manifested. Seven exorcists from one family, sons of Sceva who attempted to cast out a demon by using the name of Jesus, were attacked by the demon. The demon

wounded them and caused them to flee from the house naked. This misuse of the name of Jesus brought fear and conviction. This lesson teaches us that the name of Jesus must be used only in the power of the Holy Spirit.

2. Great conviction came upon the church. They gathered all their books of magic and destroyed them in a bonfire. The cost of the books amounted to fifty thousand pieces of silver.
3. While the Christians were surrendering their wealth by cleansing their homes from idolatry, others were angry because the revival was costing them money. Those who made small, silver shrines to be offered to Diana lost a significant portion of their Asian sales market. Demetrius and the other silversmiths stirred up the entire city. The people ran to the amphitheater and for two hours cried, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." They captured Gaius and Aristarchus. Eventually the town clerk, an Ephesian who was responsible for the good conduct of such a meeting, was able to quiet the crowd.

G. Paul's Exhortation to the Ephesian Elders

Every Bible student should study carefully Paul's exhortation to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:13-38). On his return journey, he arrived at Miletus, about thirty miles from Ephesus, and sent for the Ephesian elders. He gave them a charge that showed the love and concern he had for them. The ministry of the true pastor is shown here.

VIII. PAUL ARRESTED AT JERUSALEM

Scripture References: Acts 18:23-28; 19-23

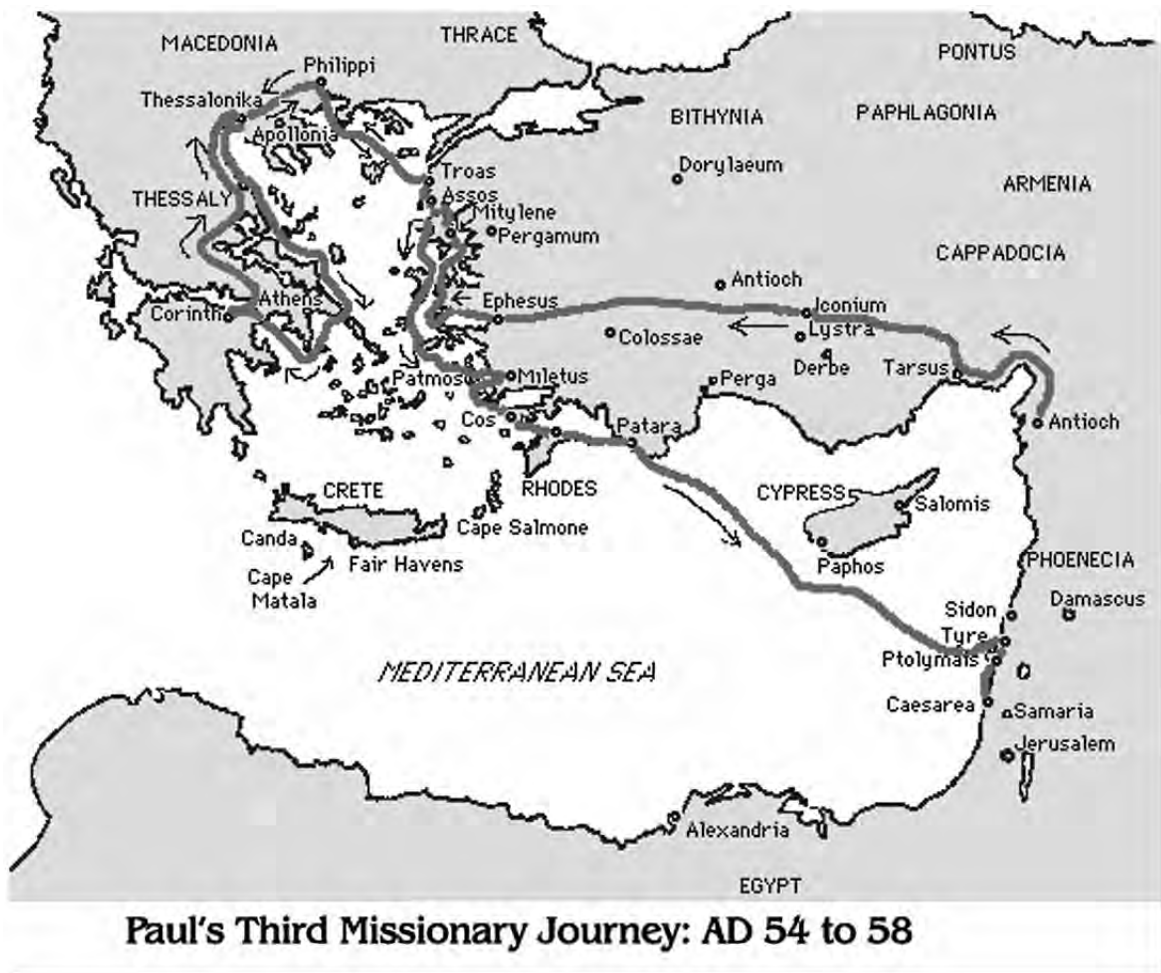
A. Paul's Third Missionary Journey

Paul's third journey occupied about four years, much of which was spent at Ephesus. We shall briefly trace the journey:

1. Paul left Antioch and passed through Galatia and Phrygia en route to Ephesus.

2. Preparation for Paul's labors at Ephesus had been made by Apollos who had been instructed by Aquila and Priscilla. Paul remained there for three years. Through his labors, the seven churches of Asia were established.
3. Paul went to Troas to await Titus with news from the church at Corinth. As the news did not come, Paul took ship and sailed to Europe.
4. Paul again visited Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea.
5. He visited Corinth to take care of troubles that had arisen there.
6. Paul returned by way of Philippi, Troas, Assos, and Mitylene. He briefly visited Chios, Samos, and Trogyllium.
7. He arrived at Miletus and sent for the Ephesian elders. He gave them a farewell address and charge.
8. At Patara, Paul took another ship for Phoenicia.
9. Reaching the coast of Phoenicia, the ship remained a week at Tyre to unload its cargo. Here Paul found a church.
10. He sailed along the coast to Ptolemais where Paul spent a day with the church.
11. Arriving at Caesarea, Paul met Philip who had lived there for twenty years.
12. For the last time Paul entered the city of Jerusalem where he soon became the "prisoner of the Lord."

B. Map of Paul's Third Missionary Journey



C. Paul's Urge to go to Jerusalem

Except for the three years spent at Ephesus, Paul seemed to be in a hurry on his third journey. He had a strong urge to hasten to Jerusalem. He apparently had a burden to preach to Hebrew Christians at Jerusalem. It has been suggested that it was his burden that caused him to write the epistle to the Hebrews while a prisoner in Rome.

Both at Tyre and Caesarea, Paul was warned about what was going to happen at Jerusalem. Agabus prophesied that he would be bound in Jerusalem. In spite of this, Paul was determined to do God's will.

D. Arrested at Jerusalem

Some of the Jewish believers in Jerusalem accused Paul of forbidding the Gentile believers to be circumcised. The leaders in the church felt that something had to be done to appease these Jewish Christians and to assure them that Paul was not against the Mosaic law.

They felt they had the answer: Paul should go to the Temple with four men who had taken a vow. They had to be purified and to offer a number of offerings. It was suggested that Paul should purify himself and pay for these offerings. Paul, in his desire to be all things to all men, agreed.

His conduct was misunderstood. Certain orthodox Jews recognized Paul and leaped to the conclusion that he was trying to desecrate the holy shrine by bringing Gentiles into the Inner Court. A mob fell upon him and would have beaten him to death had not the Roman authorities sent soldiers and centurions to interfere. Rescued out of the hands of the mob by the Roman captain, Paul begged leave to speak to the Hebrew nation and was granted permission. After a great silence descended on the multitude, Paul spoke to them in Hebrew.

E. Paul's Five Defenses

As a result of his imprisonment, Paul was given opportunity five times to preach Christ to audiences of ever-increasing importance.

1. He spoke to Israel as a nation (chapter 22).
2. He spoke to the Sanhedrin, the religious leaders of the Jewish people (chapter 23).
3. He spoke before Felix, the Roman governor (chapter 24).
4. He spoke before Governor Festus (chapter 25).
5. He spoke before King Agrippa (chapter 26).

From the common people to the king, he was able to witness to the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

F. Paul Defends Himself

Paul elaborated on his condition as a true Jew. He referred to the facts of his birth, his education, his zeal for the traditions of the Law, and his persecution of the Christians. He then told about his conversion and his

experience on the road to Damascus. He spoke of being commissioned to preach to the Gentiles.

When he spoke about preaching to the Gentiles, a storm of protest arose from the mob. The captain did not understand so he prepared to have Paul scourged to make him confess. Paul appealed to his Roman citizenship that exempted him from such treatment.

The next day the captain had Paul taken before the Sanhedrin. Paul divided the group by stating he was being called in question concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead. The meeting was thrown into such uproar that the captain had to rescue Paul by force or he would have been killed.

The following day, forty Jews banded together under an oath not to eat anything until they had killed Paul. They made their plan known to some of the Sanhedrin and Paul's nephew heard about it and told Paul, who sent his nephew to tell the chief captain. As a result, Paul was sent that very night under heavy escort to Felix, the governor in Caesarea. The captain also sent a letter stating his belief in Paul's innocence and exalting his own part in the entire matter.

IX. PAUL DEFENDS HIMSELF AT CAESAREA

Scripture Reference: Acts 24-26

A. Standing before Kings

The Lord had told Ananias that Paul was a chosen vessel to bear the name of Jesus before the Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. In this lesson we will study about Paul bearing the name of Jesus before two governors and one king. Later he stood before the emperor at Rome.

1. Felix

Felix was liberated from slavery by Claudius by whom he was appointed procurator of Judea. He ruled the province in a cruel and profligate manner. His period of office was full of troubles and seditions. The wife of Felix was Drusilla, daughter of Herod Agrippa I. It must be remembered that the Jews hated Felix like poison.

2. Festus

He was the successor of Felix as governor of Judea. He was appointed by Nero probably in the autumn of AD 60. He probably died in the summer of AD 62, having ruled the province less than two years.

3. King Agrippa

Herod Agrippa II was the son of Herod Agrippa I. He was in Rome at the time of the death of his father in AD 44. His relationship to his sister, Bernice, was the cause of much suspicion. The pomp with which the king came into the audience chamber and the cold irony with which he met the impassioned words of the apostle are both characteristic traits of this man.

B. Paul Defends Himself before Felix

1. Paul Sent to Felix

At Jerusalem it was discovered that forty men had conspired to kill Paul. The captain, Claudius Kysias, wrote a letter to Governor Felix at Caesarea and sent Paul to him guarded by two centurions, two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen. Paul was allowed to ride all the way. Felix sent to Jerusalem for the accusers of Paul. After five days, they arrived at Caesarea.

2. The Accusation against Paul

Ananias, the high priest, took the elders and a certain orator named Tertullus with him to Caesarea. Tertullus was to be the spokesman. The name *Tertullus* meant “triple-hardened” and certainly could typify the condition of Israel. After paying false courtesy and flattery about the nobility of the ignoble Felix, Tertullus presented false accusations against Paul. The charges were:

- a. Paul was a pestilent fellow.
- b. He was a mover of sedition among the Jews throughout the world.

- c. He was a ringleader of the Nazarenes.
- d. He profaned the Temple.

All Paul's accusers affirmed the things Tertullus said about Paul.

3. Paul's Personal Defense

Paul stated that his accusers could not prove the things they had said, although he did confess that he worshiped God after the way they thought was heresy. He stated:

- a. He believed all things that are written in the Law and the prophets.
- b. He had hope in God concerning the resurrection of the just and the unjust.
- c. He kept a clear conscience toward God and man.
- d. He brought alms to his nation.
- e. He entered the Temple only to worship.
- f. He caused no tumult.
- g. He was confident that no evil could be found in him by any or all of his accusers.

4. Paul Left Bound

Felix dismissed the case, promising to hear the matter again after Lysias should come down. He put off judgment until later, just as he did about his soul's salvation. He hoped that he might receive money as a bribe to set Paul free.

Paul was placed in the keeping of a centurion and was given liberty. His acquaintances were allowed to visit and minister to him. He was left a prisoner for two full years.

During this period of time, Felix often heard Paul. On one occasion he sent for Paul when his wife Drusilla, a Jewess, was present. Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. Felix was known for his unrighteous rule and his utter lack of temperance in his personal life. The governor was violently shaken, but he only procrastinated.

The term of Felix expired with him still making no decision concerning his soul's salvation or Paul.

C. Paul Defends Himself before Festus

When the new governor, Festus, went to Jerusalem, the Jews assailed him with requests to bring Paul back to Jerusalem. They intended to kill him as he was being transferred. Festus refused, but told them they could come down to Caesarea and lay charges against Paul. They did so, and although they laid many complaints against Paul, they could prove none of them.

Festus asked Paul, "Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?" Paul knew the regulations of the law, and he knew that he had fulfilled his ministry at Jerusalem. Therefore he answered boldly, "I appeal to Caesar." Festus conferred with his council and then announced that Paul would be sent to Caesar as he requested.

D. Paul Defends Himself before Agrippa

When King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea, Festus told Agrippa about Paul. Festus confessed surprise at the type of accusation brought against Paul.

King Agrippa desired to hear Paul himself. Consequently, the court was set. Festus introduced all present with the purpose of the gathering. He set Paul forth in their midst and told them he had found no guilt in him and that he did not think it reasonable to send a prisoner to Rome who was evidently an innocent man. He asked them to listen to Paul and assist him in framing a charge to send to Caesar Augustus.

Paul was happy to speak to the rulers and the king because he had a message for them. He addressed his remarks to the king whom he acknowledged as being expert in all customs and questions among the Jews. He proceeded to tell the king why he was held a prisoner. Paul told the real reason the Jews had become so embittered against him because of his stand regarding the Resurrection. Paul did not hesitate to testify before these skeptical persons regarding his personal conversion and the miraculous element that is involved in Holy Ghost salvation.

Festus interrupted with an outburst that revealed the power of Paul's preaching, which could move both demons and men. Festus cried, "Paul, you are mad." Agrippa confessed that he was profoundly moved. Through the centuries his words, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," have been quoted by soulwinners.

Those who listened were convinced of Paul's innocence and they tried to ease their consciences by shifting the responsibility. Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed to Caesar."

X. THE JOURNEY TO ROME

Scripture Reference: Acts 27-28

A. Deportation to Rome

A sea voyage was not something to look forward to in Paul's day. Paul left Palestine in August or September and did not arrive in Rome until March, having lost his ship and his belongings in the meantime.

Paul was delivered over to Julius, a centurion, for the trip to Rome. Luke again joined him (note "we" in Acts 27:1). At Sidon Paul was allowed to visit his friends. They sailed to the east and north of Cyprus to Myra on the southern coast of Asia Minor where Paul and the others were transferred to a vessel from Egypt.

At Myra the party found a ship coming from Alexandria and bound for Rome. They embarked and sailed with difficulty to Fair Havens, a small bay on the southern coast of Crete. Paul warned Julius about the danger of sailing farther. Julius, however, preferred to believe the captain of the ship and they set sail, hoping to spend the winter in Phenice, a good harbor on the south coast of Crete. But as they sailed along the coast, a wind caught them and they had to let the ship run with it. They undergirded the ship with cables to strengthen it and lowered the mainsail. They lightened the ship and eventually even the cargo was thrown overboard.

On the fourteenth night of the storm, they were cast up on the island of Malta. They ran aground in a narrow channel and the ship began to break up. The sailors wanted to kill the prisoners, but Julius would not permit it. Those who could swim were ordered to jump overboard while the

others followed using planks from the ship to help them stay afloat. In this way all were saved even though the ship was lost.

B. Paul's Faith in God Expressed

"Sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God" (Acts 27:25). Here Paul expressed his unshaken faith in God. Everyone on board had given up hope. There had been no sun or stars for many days; the storm still roared around them. In spite of the hopeless situation, Paul still believed God.

This teaches us that faith is not dependent upon outward conditions and circumstances. It is not affected by the storms of life. Old age did not change Caleb's faith. True faith is centered in Jesus Christ who never changes.

C. Map Showing Paul's Journey to Rome



D. On the Island of Malta

Paul spent about three months on the island of Melita (Malta) during the months of November, December, and January. Two miracles took place during this time:

As Paul was helping the people to build a fire, a snake bit him. The Maltese people expected Paul to become ill or even die, saying he must have been a murderer. When he suffered no harm because of the serpent, they said he must be a god.

The second miracle was the healing of Publius's father. Publius was the chief man in the island. His father was very ill. After prayer and the laying on of Paul's hands, he was healed.

After three months the group boarded another ship sailing from Alexandria for Rome.

E. Paul Reaches Rome

From Malta they sailed to Syracuse in Sicily, then to Rhegium on the toe of Italy, and finally to Puteoli on the Bay of Naples. This was a principal port in southern Italy and a chief port for unloading grain from Egypt. Here Paul found some Christians with whom he stayed a week.

The brethren in Rome heard of his arrival and traveled forty-three miles from Rome to Appii Forum to meet him. This was a great encouragement to the apostle.

When Paul arrived in Rome, he was given relative freedom. He was permitted to live in his own hired house for two years with one soldier to guard him. He called the elders of the Jews and told them why he was a Roman prisoner and gave them the gospel. Some of them believed, but many of them rejected his message.

It is acknowledged that Paul's death took place in Rome about AD 64.

F. With Signs Following

Signs followed Paul's ministry. When the serpent's bite did not harm him, and when he laid hands on the father of Publius, we see evident the signs of Mark 16 (Mark 16:17-18). When he warned Julius of the danger of leaving Fair Havens, we see the gift of the word of knowledge (I Corinthians 12:8).

The reason Paul's ministry was as fruitful as it was, unquestionably was the fact that he was filled with the Holy Ghost and always ministered in the power of the Holy Ghost.

XI. CHARACTER STUDIES IN ACTS

Although Peter and Paul are the two main characters in the history of the early church as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, many people took a prominent part. The student of this book should be well acquainted with the main characters, the part they took in this history, and where to find the references. He should be so familiar with this book that he can turn immediately to the story involving them.

Some of the main characters are listed in this lesson:

Agabus—Acts 11:28; 21:10-11

Agabus was a prophet of Jerusalem. A famine predicted by him occurred in the reign of Claudius. He warned Paul about what would happen to him in Jerusalem.

Agrippa—Acts 25:13-27; 26:1-32

Agrippa was Herod Agrippa II, the last of the Herods. Paul preached to King Agrippa and almost persuaded him to become a Christian.

Ananias—Acts 5:1-11

Ananias and his wife Sapphira were Christian Jews of Jerusalem. They lied to the Holy Ghost and were smitten with death. This showed that Ananias was hypocritical.

Ananias—Acts 9:10-18

Ananias was a Jewish Christian who lived at Damascus. God used him in laying hands upon Saul of Tarsus. He undoubtedly was the one who baptized Saul. He was a devout man with a good reputation (Acts 22:12). He showed some caution in approaching the persecutor, but he obeyed God, showing dedication to the will of God, obedience, and courage.

Apollos—Acts 18:24-28

Apollos was a learned and eloquent Jew of Alexandria. He was a disciple of John the Baptist. He showed humility in being taught by Aquila. Afterward his ministry had great success in Corinth and throughout Achaia.

Aquila—Acts 18:1-3, 18-19, 26

Aquila was a Christian Jew and tentmaker who, with his wife, Priscilla, entertained Paul at Corinth. He accompanied Paul to Ephesus where he instructed Apollos in the true gospel.

Barnabas—Acts 4:36-37; 9:27; 11:19-26; 15:1-2, 12

Barnabas was a Levite from Cyprus. He revealed a beautiful Christian character by selling his property and donating the proceeds to the church, by helping Paul by bringing him to Antioch, by being the first missionary sent out by the church, and by giving John Mark a second chance. He dedicated his whole life and ministry to the preaching of the gospel and the encouragement of others.

Bernice—Acts 25:23; 26:30

Bernice was the sister of Agrippa II. She had a notorious reputation and was with Agrippa when Paul preached to him.

Claudius Lysias Acts 23:26; 24:7, 22

Claudius Lysias was the Roman officer at Jerusalem who protected Paul from the Jewish mob and sent him to Caesarea under guard.

Cornelius—Acts 10:1-48

Cornelius was a devout Roman centurion at Caesarea. He and his household were the first Gentile converts to Christ.

Crispus—Acts 18:8

Crispus was the ruler of the synagogue at Corinth who was saved through the preaching of Paul.

Demetrius—Acts 19:24-41

Demetrius was a silversmith at Ephesus who stirred up a riot because his business was being hurt by Paul's preaching.

Elymas—Acts 13:6-12

Elymas was a Jew, Bar-jesus, who tried to prevent the conversion of the Roman deputy at Paphos. He was smitten with blindness for a time.

Felix—Acts 24:24-27

Felix was the governor of Judea who had married a Jewish wife, Drusilla. He trembled under the preaching of Paul. He showed his

weakness of character by wanting to please the Jews and to receive a bribe. He left Paul in prison.

Festus—Acts 25-26

Festus was the successor of Felix. He listened to Paul's defense and was satisfied that Paul was innocent.

Gallio—Acts 18:12-17

Gallio was the proconsul of Achaia. He refused to listen to the accusations of the Jews against Paul.

Gamaliel—Acts 5:34-39

Gamaliel was a doctor of the Law, a Pharisee, and a member of the Sanhedrin. He was Paul's teacher. He showed his wisdom by opposing the persecution of the apostles.

James—Acts 12:2

James was one of the twelve apostles, and a brother of the apostle John. He was the first apostle to be martyred under the persecution of Herod.

James—Acts 15:13

James was the son of Joseph and Mary, a half-brother of Jesus. He became the bishop of Jerusalem and presided over the first church council. He wrote the Epistle of James.

Jason—Acts 17:5-9

Jason was a Christian at Thessalonica who entertained Paul and because of this was persecuted.

Julius—Acts 27:1, 42-43

Julius was the centurion who took Paul as a prisoner to Rome.

Justus—Acts 1:23

Justus was also called Barsabas. He was one of the men considered to fill the place of Judas Iscariot.

Luke—Acts 16:10

Luke was the author of the Acts of the Apostles. He was the beloved physician and companion of Paul. He joined Paul's company at Troas.

Lydia—Acts 16:14-15

Lydia was a woman of Thyatira who lived in Philippi. She sold the dyed garments of Thyatira. She was the first European convert and entertained Paul in her home.

Mark—Acts 13:5, 13; 15:37-39

John Mark was the son of Mary, the sister of Barnabas. He accompanied the apostles on their first missionary journey but turned back at Perga. Later Barnabas parted company with Paul in order to give John Mark a second chance. Mark became a profitable minister and wrote the second Gospel.

Mary—Acts 12:12

Mary was Mark's mother. The Christians met for prayer at her home during the imprisonment of Peter. It is believed that her home was one of the meeting places for the early Christians. She apparently was a prosperous woman.

Matthias—Acts 1:21-26

Matthias was chosen to take the place of Judas as one of the twelve apostles.

Paul—Acts 7:58; 8:1; 9:1-28:31

Paul was the great apostle to the Gentiles. His Hebrew name was Saul, and he was a native of Tarsus. He was highly educated. His greatest characteristic was complete dedication to the will of God. "As much as in me is, I am ready" (Romans 1:15) expressed this dedication. He showed this in his ministry on many occasions.

Peter—Acts 1-12

Peter was the apostle that Jesus chose to be the first preacher of the gospel, thus unlocking the door of the Kingdom. He was a man of great earnestness, impulsive, and had qualities of leadership.

Philip—Acts 6:5; 8:4-8, 26-39; 21:8-9

Philip was one of the first deacons and became a powerful evangelist. He was the first to preach the gospel in Samaria, he baptized the eunuch, and went on to Caesarea. He had four daughters who had the gift of prophecy.

Rhoda—Acts 12:13-16

Rhoda was a servant of Mark's mother and identified Peter when he knocked at the gate.

Sceva—Acts 19:14-16

Sceva was a Jewish chief priest whose seven sons tried to use the name of Jesus in casting out a demon.

Sergius Paulus—Acts 13:7-12

Sergius Paulus was the Roman proconsul of Cyprus.

Silas—Acts 15:22, 27, 32, 40; 16:19, 25; 18:5

Silas was a member of the church at Jerusalem and was commissioned to report the decision of the church council to Antioch. He became Paul's companion on the second journey. In the epistles he is called Silvanus.

Simon—Acts 8:9-24

Simon was a magician of Samaria who Peter severely rebuked when he tried to buy the power of the Holy Spirit.

Sosthenes—Acts 18:17

Sosthenes was the ruler of the synagogue at Corinth. He was seized and beaten by the Greeks.

Stephen—Acts 6-7

Stephen was one of the first deacons and became the first Christian martyr. He was a man of great faith and was a very powerful preacher.

Tertullus—Acts 24:1-8

Tertullus was an orator employed by the Jews to make the accusation against Paul.

Timothy—Acts 16:1, 3

Timothy was a native of Lystra. His mother was Jewish and his father was Greek. To avoid criticism from the Jews, Paul caused him to be circumcised. He was a companion of Paul and became a very successful minister of the gospel.

Titus—Acts 15:2; Galatians 2:1-3

Titus accompanied Paul to Jerusalem to attend the first church council that considered whether circumcision was necessary for Gentiles. Titus was a Greek but was not required to be circumcised. He became a minister of the gospel and companion of Paul.

Tyrannus—Acts 19:9

Tyrannus had a school in Ephesus that he permitted Paul to use after Paul no longer had the use of the synagogue.

Missionary Spotlight: Rev. and Mrs. John E. Klemin

By Marla Klemin Van Beek

On March 4, 1919, Ruby Bosworth Keyes was born to William John and Eliza Kate Bosworth Keyes, the second oldest of six children, three boys and three girls. Her father supported his large family by working as a bellhop in a hotel in Sacramento, California.

The saddest day of Ruby's life occurred the year she turned eleven. On May 28, 1930, her mother died giving birth to twins.

Victor and John were buried in the same coffin with their mother, leaving a heartbroken family behind. Thirty years older than his wife, William Keyes found it difficult to be a single parent, leaving much of the parenting role to eleven-year-old Ruby. The youngest child was two years old at this time.

Ruby received the baptism of the Holy Spirit at age twelve or thirteen, and remembers settling a lot of things with the Lord and determining to go all the way with Him when she was fourteen.

The family began traveling in evangelistic work when Ruby was seventeen. She was the speaker and the other children would sing. In 1940, Ruby began traveling on her own and received her General License with the Pentecostal Church, Inc. She made a number of good friends who believed in the Oneness of God, among them were the Ellis Scism and Ernest Moyer families. They shared Scriptures with her and she was baptized in Jesus' name.



Ruby has been a part of the United Pentecostal Church since the merger in 1945 and was ordained around 1948, at the insistence of Howard Goss, the general superintendent. She was elected the general youth secretary around 1947 and served for seven years. Prior to her appointment, she served as youth president of the Northwest District for seven years.

John E. Klemin was born June 20, 1926, in El Paso, Texas. As a single man, he pastored in Livingston, Vallejo, and Oakland, California. He was also the vice-president and an instructor at Western Apostolic Bible College, in Stockton, California. A handsome young man and youth president of the Western District, John sent a letter to Ruby in 1954, requesting that they begin a Christian correspondence. It went very well and they married on May 28, 1955, turning the saddest date in Ruby's life, into one of the happiest!

John was pastoring in Oakland, California, at the time of their marriage. He planned to preach on Sunday mornings and have his new bride preach in the evening. This lasted one week. Ruby overheard parishioners comparing notes on who was the better speaker. She refused to give them further opportunities to make comparisons!

Through the years, John and Ruby served jointly in ministry. They moved to Portland, Oregon, in 1960 to pastor First United Pentecostal Church. Later they pastored in Vancouver, Washington. As the president and instructors at Conquerors Bible College in Portland, Oregon, John and Ruby Klemin made lasting impressions on the lives of many young people in North America through their teaching and godly example.

They were appointed as missionaries to Argentina in 1966. They spent twenty years in Argentina and the United Kingdom. Of their missionary work, Harry Scism, the director of Foreign Missions, stated, "Brother and Sister Klemin . . . served, in addition to their extensive ministry in North America, on the mission fields of Argentina, South America, as well as England. As a missionary, Brother Klemin was especially effective in his teaching, preaching, and correspondence course ministry. Both in South America and in England, Brother Klemin, along with his precious wife, poured himself in the teaching and training of men and women."ⁱ

Retiring back to Portland, Oregon, in 1992, John and Ruby Klemin reopened a home missionary church in Sandy, Oregon, where they pastored until John's death on January 27, 1995.

Although she mourned the loss of her beloved husband, Ruby continued faithfully to serve the Lord in whatever capacity He desired to use her, whether it was public speaking, counseling individuals, or praying.

At age ninety-three, she makes her home in Portland, Oregon, with her older daughter, Marla, and son-in-law, David Van Beek. She is a vital part of their ministry and until a few years ago, played the piano for each church service. She is always a blessing when she visits her youngest daughter, Marilyn, and son-in-law, Steve Johnson, who pastors True Gospel United Pentecostal Church in Bend, Oregon. All six of her grandchildren are serving the Lord, and her two little great granddaughters adore their "Nana."

Ruby still spends hours each day praying for needs around the world. Her commitment to serving Jesus is as strong as ever, and she eagerly looks forward to seeing Him face to face!

Editor's Note: Ruby Bosworth Keyes Klemin went to be with the Lord May 31, 2012.

ⁱ *Global Witness*, April-June, 1995, 7.