

ACTS LESSON 1

The Book of Acts was penned by Luke, the physician. Many people call Acts the Acts of the Apostles, but really, if you are wanting to add to the name Acts, perhaps, a better name would be the Acts of the early church. Really, very little is written about the apostles in Acts.

In Colossians 4:14 Luke is called, the beloved Physician. In verse 24, Paul speaks of Luke as a fellow laborer. In Second Timothy 4:11 Paul says, that only Luke is with him. My own personal belief is that Luke and Paul were very good friends and, perhaps, Luke being a physician was of some assistance to Paul with his (thorn in his side) illness. Paul had prayed three times for God to heal him, and the Lord had said no.

The Book of Luke (penned by Luke) and the Book of Act (penned by Luke) were both addressed to Theophilus. The word Theophilus means friend of God. If there was a real Theophilus, he was probably a person high in government. I personally believe that for fear of the letter being intercepted and getting in the wrong hands, Luke wrote this to a friend of God (unnamed). At the time this was written, many Christians were being killed for their belief. Perhaps, Luke was trying to protect whoever this was.

There are many who feel that Acts is one of the most important Books in the Bible, because it shows the struggles of the early Christians, and how many of the practices of the church were established.

In Acts, we see the departure and promise of the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. We, also, see teachings on the power to minister or witness that the Spirit gives to the believers. We will see home missions and foreign missions dealt with, as well. A great deal of Acts deals with Paul's journeys.

We see in the Book of Acts how the gospel of Jesus Christ is spread not only to the Hebrews, but to the entire world through the empowering of the Holy Spirit of God. One thing peculiar to Acts is that, Luke reassures in this letter that Christians are not trying to overthrow the Roman government.

Now we will begin with Acts 1:1 "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,"

We see, here, that Luke is speaking of the Book of Luke which he had written prior to this Book of Acts. We see that Luke is explaining that the first letter was written about what Jesus taught and did. This Book will be written more about how the Christians handle the ministry after Jesus goes to heaven.

Acts 1:2 "Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:"

Jesus walked with the apostles forty days after His resurrection from the dead. He gave exact instructions for what they were to do after His departure. Jesus had promised He would send the Comforter (Holy Ghost) to teach them all truth. This Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit, would be their teacher and guide. As we said before, the purpose of having the Holy Ghost

was to give them power and courage to be effective witnesses to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Acts 1:3 "To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:"

In the Book of John we saw where Jesus even showed the disciples the nail prints in His hands and His side which was pierced after He had risen from the grave. St. John tells of three very dramatic appearances to the apostles of Jesus after His resurrection. Perhaps, the most vivid one is where Jesus is on the side of the Sea of Galilee and prepares a meal for His followers. In this particular incident, Peter and the others had fished all night and caught none. Jesus told them to cast their net on the right side of the boat and they caught one hundred and fifty-three large fish. During this forty days after the resurrection, Jesus prepared His followers for the trial they would face. It is nothing for God who breathed the breath of life in man in the first place to rise again. We will read just a few verses down, a very important appearance when some of the apostles see Jesus go to heaven on a cloud in front of their eyes. Our hope of resurrection is because He rose again.

Acts 1:4 "And, being assembled together with [them], commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, [saith he], ye have heard of me."

This is saying that while Jesus was gathered with the disciples (followers of Jesus), not just the eleven but one hundred and twenty. He not only asked, but commanded them to stay in Jerusalem until the Comforter, the Holy Spirit of God, came to them. In St. John, Jesus had told them of this Comforter, John 14:15 "If ye love me, keep my commandments." John 14:16 "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;" John 14:17 "[Even] the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

Acts 1:5 "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

John the Baptist's baptism was the baptism of repentance as we will see in chapter 19 of Acts verse 4. This baptism of the Holy Ghost, spoken of here, is the baptism of fire. It will set you on fire to work for Jesus. I Mark 1:8 John the Baptist tells us, "I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." In Matthew 3:11 John the Baptist goes into these two baptisms a little further. Matthew 3:11 "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and [with] fire:"

Acts 1:6 "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"

The disciples expected Jesus to set up His Kingdom immediately. They were like so many people today, who want to know the exact day and hour when Jesus will take over as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Acts 1:7 "And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power."

We see here, that even though we are to remain ready at all times, no one, except the Father will know the exact time.

Acts 1:8 "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."

We see, in verse 8 above, why we need to receive power from God. It is not for our own use so that we can brag to someone else, it is to make our witness of Jesus more powerful. We can see here, that the message of the gospel is not just for Israel, but to all nations. We read in Revelation how people of every nationality will be represented in heaven.

Acts 1:9 "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."

If there had ever been any question as to who He was, this should answer it. They were looking at Jesus as He rose up into the cloud before their very eyes.

Acts 1:10 "And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;" Acts 1:11 "Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

So many people who read the Bible try to rationalize how Jesus is going to be in our heart and therefore He has already come back. This is not what this Scripture above says. It says that while we are gazing into heaven, someday we will see the clouds open up and we will see Jesus coming in the clouds. These two men in white apparel were angels. They could possibly even be departed saints. They are wearing white, which is the garment of the redeemed. The robes we Christians shall wear in heaven will be white linen washed in the blood of the Lamb to make them whiter than snow. Steadfastly means that they did not look around, but kept their eyes on Jesus as long as they could see Him. In I Thessalonians 4:13-17 we read of Jesus when He comes I Thessalonians 4:13 "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." I Thessalonians 4:14 "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." I Thessalonians 4:15 "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive [and] remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep." I Thessalonians 4:16 "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:" I Thessalonians 4:17 "Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Acts 1 Questions

1. Who wrote the Book of Acts?
2. What earthly occupation did he have?
3. What extended name do most call Acts?
4. What would be a better extension to the name?
5. What is Luke called in Colossians 4:14?
6. In Philemon, what does Paul call Luke?
7. What other Book of the Bible was written by Luke?
8. What does the Book of Acts show about the Christians?
9. Name several things the Book of Acts show us?
10. Who is the Book of Acts addressed to?
11. Jesus taught the disciples until when?
12. How many days did Jesus walk with the apostles after His resurrection?
13. What was possibly the most vivid time Jesus showed Himself to the disciples?
14. What did Jesus command the disciples to do in verse 4?
15. What do we read in John 14 about the Comforter?
16. What is another name for the Comforter?
17. In verse 5, we read that John baptized with what?
18. Give a more vivid explanation from the Scriptures on the baptism of the Holy Ghost?
19. In Matthew 3:11, we find that John baptized with what?
20. What did the disciples ask Jesus if He would now do ?
21. What was His reply to them and us?
22. What is the Power of the Holy Ghost for?
23. Where were they to witness?
24. When Jesus had spoken these things, what happened?
25. What received Jesus out of their sight?
26. Who appeared to the disciples as they looked up?
27. What did they tell the disciples?
28. Where can we find a very descriptive explanation of Jesus' return?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 1:12 "Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey."

A sabbath day's journey was about 3,000 feet. This mount here was the mount of Olives, and Jesus had told them to go to Jerusalem and wait until they would be empowered of the Holy Spirit. This would actually happen ten days later, fifty days after Jesus rose from the grave.

Acts 1:13 "And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James [the son] of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas [the brother] of James."

When this speaks of them abiding, it means that they went to the upper room where they had the last supper with Jesus. Whether they slept here or not is uncertain, but surely their waking hours were spent here waiting on the Holy Spirit to come upon them. We will see in the next few verses, that they tarried ten days. The fiftieth day after the resurrection of Jesus, the Holy Spirit will come on them. Fifty means Jubilee and sets the captives free. We will see here that on the fiftieth day these disciples (about 120) men and women, will be set free to live and work for the Lord. These disciples, up until this point, had been very weak in their flesh. This will give them power from the Spirit of God to be bold in doing the will of the Lord. At this point, they will no longer deny the Christ, regardless of the consequence. This Spirit will teach them the will of God, and the ways of God, and set them free to minister with power. Notice in the next verse that, this is not just for the eleven, but for all 120 disciples present. This 120 includes the women, as well.

Acts 1:14 "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren."

These brethren which included James, Joses, Simon, and Judas from Matthew 13:55. It seems that Jesus' brothers did not join the original disciples (Psalms 69:8), but after the resurrection of Jesus, were very active followers of Jesus. These were actually half-brothers of Jesus, because they had the same mother, but Jesus' Father was God. Notice, also, here that Jesus' mother, Mary, was praying with all the others. She was not the object of worship, but was worshipping God herself.

Acts 1:15 "And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)"

Names, here, means people. Peter was the leader of the group.

Acts 1:16 "Men [and] brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus."

We know that the Word of God cannot lie. If it is prophesied, it will happen. God foreknew that Judas Iscariot would betray Jesus and then hang himself. This treachery of Judas' is spoken of, again here, by Peter, because, perhaps, some of this 120 had not been told of Judas' betrayal of Jesus.

Acts 1:17 "For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry."

Judas Iscariot had been part of the twelve apostles who worked closest with Jesus. Judas, in fact, had been the one who carried the money for them.

Acts 1:18 "Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." Acts 1:19 "And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood."

The man Peter is speaking of here is Judas Iscariot. When Judas Iscariot realized the terrible thing that he had done, he threw the thirty pieces of silver (the betrayal money) down, and went and hanged himself. This gruesome description that Peter gives, here, is just more detailed about what happened to Judas. The money was used to buy a burial place for the poor. The priests could not use it for anything else, because it was blood money. Aceldama means field of blood. You may read more about this in Matthew 27:3-8. Another name for the field of blood was the potter's field, (a place to bury the poor).

Acts 1:20 "For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take."

You can find this in Psalms 69:25 and Psalms 109:8. Peter is explaining to this group that the select apostles are now just eleven, and in Psalms it tells them to elect another to make up the twelve. He is to be chosen of the 120. The number twelve is a representative number, and we will see it over and over again throughout the Bible, and especially in Revelation. The twelve apostles are mentioned several times. The twelve would include the original eleven and the one chosen to take Judas Iscariot's place.

Acts 1:21 "Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,"

Acts 1:22 "Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection."

We see from this, that the person chosen to take the bishopric of Judas Iscariot must be chosen from one of the disciples who had been in the group since the day John the Baptist baptized Jesus. He must, also, be one who stayed steadfast with the followers of Jesus until the day Jesus was caught up into heaven. In other words, he must be able (when he is witnessing) to give first hand information. He had to be an eye witness.

Acts 1:23 "And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias."

From the above qualifications, Peter and the other ten decided that these two men fit those qualifications.

Acts 1:24 "And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all [men], shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,"

The final decision would be the Lord's. Many times we humans have a tendency to judge a person by their outward appearance, but the Lord always looks on the heart. Peter is aware of this and prays that the Lord will make the final decision.

Acts 1:25 "That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place."

Judas Iscariot was of his father the devil. His place would be in hell with his father. We all have a will of our own, and Judas was no different. Notice, he fell. Judas Iscariot could have been in heaven with all the rest of the apostles, but he fell to his lust for money. His place with the apostles will be filled by a more noble man.

Acts 1:26 "And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles."

Many decisions of this nature in the church were decided by casting lots. Their belief was that God would cause the lot to fall to the more worthy one. Now with Matthias added to the eleven, the twelve apostles were complete again.

Notes

Acts 2 Questions

1. How far is the mount of olives from Jerusalem?
2. How far is a sabbath day's journey?
3. When would the Holy Spirit come upon them?
4. Where did these disciples go to wait?
5. Who went?
6. What does abiding mean?
7. How long did they wait?
8. Why do they need the Holy Spirit?
9. What does verse 14 tell us they did while they waited?
10. Who are explicitly mentioned in verse 11, besides the eleven apostles?
11. Name Jesus' four half-brothers.
12. What must we note about Mary in verse 14?
13. Who was the eleven's leader?
14. How many disciples were actually there?
15. Who had prophesied in the Old Testament about Judas Iscariot?
16. What happened to Judas Iscariot after the betrayal?
17. What was the proper name of the potter's field?
18. What did it mean?
19. How much was the betrayal money?
20. What Book in the Old Testament tells of this?
21. What must the qualifications be of the man to replace Judas Iscariot?
22. Who were the two appointed?
23. When they cast lots, who won the office?
24. Who made the final decision?
25. Who was Judas Iscariot's father?
26. Did Judas have a choice?
27. What caused Judas to fall?

We will begin this lesson in Acts 2:1 "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."

Pentecost means fifty. In Exodus 23:16 we find that this time is one of the three most important feasts or festivals of the Hebrews. The other two are Passover and Tabernacles. This festival (Pentecost) is, also, called the Feast of Weeks. It is called this, because it is celebrated seven weeks after Passover, actually fifty days. It was, also, called the Feast of Harvest and the day of First Fruits. The first loaves of the new grain are offered on the altar on this day. The time this feast is to be celebrated is the fiftieth day after the resurrection of Jesus. Of course, with the Hebrews, it was the fiftieth day after the Sunday of Passover. We will find that God is exact. Notice the harmony of the 120 here (they were in one accord). Pentecost can, also, be thought of as Jubilee. On Jubilee, the fiftieth year, the captives were to be set free. All of these things are symbolized in the day of Pentecost. These disciples would be set free to minister for God. As we said in a previous lesson, their old fears and doubts would all be gone. This would be an assurance of their standing with God.

Acts 2:2 "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting."

The disciples were probably gathered in this home for prayer. This was probably in the upper room, where Jesus had eaten the Last Supper with the disciples. It was probably near the time for the morning prayer. Perhaps, around 9 a.m. in the morning. This mighty wind filled the house (not the temple). This is probably the way the churches got started, with these home meetings. The wind is symbolic of the Spirit.

Acts 2:3 "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them."

These cloven tongues were like a fire. When each of the 120 people in attendance, men and women, were touched by a tongue of fire, the Spirit of God came upon them. Notice here, that it sat on each of them. This is not a collective happening. It happened to each of them individually.

Acts 2:4 "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

There is a lot of confusion today about the Holy Ghost baptism. May I say right here, that you cannot be taught to receive the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost is received by the Spirit of God coming on an individual. This is a gift from God to an individual. The purpose of this is so the individual receiving this gift can be a more effective witness for God. This is the baptism that John the Baptist was speaking of, when he said that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Ghost and fire. Not all tongue speaking is of God. Satan is a counterfeiter, and we must be sure the tongue we receive is of God. The Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost will not enter into an unclean vessel. Notice that these 120 people were praying, and had been praying, and in one accord, for ten days when this happened. I say again, this not something you learn, it is a gift from God to those who God has called to minister.

Another thing that is greatly misunderstood, it is not an unknown tongue, as you will see in the next few verses. It is a language the person receiving has never learned to speak. You will notice that the tongue they were speaking in was a language of another country. Perhaps, unknown to the person receiving it, but easily understood by someone who knew the language. Notice where the utterance came from (the Holy Spirit). Spirit is capitalized, meaning the Holy Spirit. When you repeat a language after someone else, you have learned a language. You must not learn to speak in tongues. You must receive the gift of the Holy Spirit from God alone. The things of the Spirit cannot be learned. They must be received.

Acts 2:5 "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven."

Notice that these devout Jews were from many nations. They had different native languages.

Acts 2:6 "Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language."

This verse 6 seems to be at a later time, because this says when it was noised abroad. Now here, you can easily see that this is not an unknown language at all. This was individuals speaking in a language not their own language. The noise was not from the wind probably, but the noise of the people speaking in tongues. Whoever the baptized person witnessed to, they heard it in their own language.

Acts 2:7 "And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?"

The strange thing to these people was that Galilaeans were speaking in languages not native to their own tongue, but to the tongue of the people who were listening. This amazed them, because they expected to hear the Galilaeans speak in their own tongue. These 120 received their gift of the Holy Ghost in the upper room, but, I believe, those hearing them speak were on the streets. I believe, if God calls you to minister in Mexico, then the foreign language you would get would be Spanish. The purpose, as I have said before, of the Holy Spirit baptism is to equip you to better minister God's word to the people He has called you to minister to.

Acts 2:8 "And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" Acts 2:9 "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia," Acts 2:10 "Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,"

Acts 2:11 "Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God."

This is just an extended explanation of all of the different languages these Galilaeans spoke on that day. This message of the wonderful works of God is not just for one nation, but for all. These who spoke in languages foreign to their own, were not really speaking to these people, but were rather letting God speak to these people through them. Even a minister speaking in English to an English-speaking congregation will have a much

more effective message, if God speaks through him as the Spirit gives him utterance.

Acts 2:12 "And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?"

It is amazing every time that God speaks. Can you believe that they would doubt? They should have known for sure that this was a miracle of God.

Acts 2:13 "Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine."

These who doubted are like many today, who will not believe anything that they have not experienced. They want to believe only things that they have seen with their own eyes. If you have seen something with your natural eye, it takes no faith to believe it. Fact is not faith. Hebrews 11:1, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." New wine would make you so drunk that you would not be able to even speak in your own native tongue, much less speak in a foreign language.

Acts 2:14 "But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all [ye] that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:"

Acts 2:15 "For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is [but] the third hour of the day."

Peter was the authority of this body of believers. Peter stood, and in a grave voice told them, how ridiculous it was to make such a rash statement about this gift of God. The third hour of the day was a time of prayer. It was about 9 a.m. in the morning. Peter was possibly speaking this in the court of the Gentiles where all were allowed to come.

Acts 2:16 "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;"

Acts 2:17 "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:"

Acts 2:18 "And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:"

This leaves no doubt that this is a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy in Joel 2:28-29. We are certainly living in the last days, so we know this is for now, as well as the day of Pentecost. This word prophesy can be translated so many ways, one of which means to preach. In the Spirit there is no difference between a male and female. The flesh is the only difference. God really is not the one who makes a difference between men and women. God is not interested in the flesh. Galatians 3:28 "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." This Holy Spirit of God fell on all of the 120, male and female, and empowered them to be ministers of God. God's purpose is to get as many people as will into the kingdom of God. If the old men won't do it, then He will send a young man. God also sends women, old and young, to bring in the harvest.

Acts 3 Questions

1. What was the state of the 120 on the day of Pentecost?
2. What does Pentecost mean?
3. In Exodus 23:16, we find that there are how many important feast's of the Hebrews?
4. Name them.
5. What are two other names for Pentecost?
6. What day after Jesus' resurrection was Pentecost?
7. What was Jubilee?
8. What would this do for the believers?
9. What did it sound like?
10. Where were the 120 when this happened?
11. What generally happened at 9 a.m.?
12. What did these believers see?
13. How many of them were filled with the Holy Ghost?
14. What outward expression came with the Holy Ghost?
15. How is the Holy Ghost received?
16. What is the purpose of the Holy Ghost?
17. Who had spoken of this baptism of the Holy Ghost earlier?
18. Have all who speak in tongues been baptized of God? Explain.
19. It is not really an unknown tongue, but what?
20. Why were the people confounded about this?
21. What were all who spoke?
22. Name some of the countries these listeners were from.
23. What did they speak in tongues?
24. What did some mockers say?
25. What is faith?
26. What was so ridiculous about them saying they were full of new wine?
27. Who spoke out for the disciples?
28. What time of day was it?
29. What did the disciples usually do at this time?
30. What did Peter tell them this was?
31. In what days was this prophesied to happen?
32. What were the young men prophesied to do?
33. What were the old men prophesied to do?
34. Who will God pour out His Spirit on?
35. Is it wrong for a woman to preach?
36. In Galatians 3:28, we read what about male and female?
37. Who will preach and bring people into the kingdom?

We will begin this lesson in Acts 2:19 "And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:"

This verse 19 here, speaks of the end of the Gentile age. Verse 17 and 18, in the previous lesson, has two fulfillments, one on the day of Pentecost, and the other at the end of the age. You can read more about this time in Matthew chapter 24.

Acts 2:20 "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come:"

Acts 2:21 "And it shall come to pass, [that] whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

This is a tremendous promise. This promise is offered to whosoever will. This is just saying, if we receive Jesus as Saviour and Lord, we will be saved. Terror will grip those who see the moon and sun turn like this. Even at that late date, if they call on Jesus as Saviour and Lord, He will save them.

Acts 2:22 "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:"

Acts 2:23 "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:"

This is a very bold speech that Peter is making to these people. The boldness of Peter speaking out now, is a total contrast from the three times he denied Christ. Peter has now been baptized in the Holy Ghost and knows no fear. Peter is saying that Jesus proved who He was by the signs, and wonders, and miracles that He did. Peter reminds them that these things were not done in secret, but right before their very eyes. They were without excuse, because they knew, and still refused to believe Jesus was the Christ. Peter is giving no slack at all. He is telling them that they had a great part in the crucifixion of Jesus. Even though God foreknew that this would happen, it still does not leave them innocent.

Acts 2:24 "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."

The main enemy that Jesus defeated on the cross was death itself. Those who believe on His name will inherit eternal life, not death. The Spirit of Jesus never died. Only His body died. Jesus was victorious on the cross and defeated sin and death for all who believe on His name. The third day Jesus arose from the grave. Psalms 16:10 explains that Jesus would not remain in hell. Jesus went to hell and took the keys away from Satan. He preached in hell and brought those captives out with Him. Read it in, I Peter 3:19 and Ephesians 4:8-10.

Acts 2:25 "For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:"

Jesus is seated, even now, at the right hand of the Father. Jesus (God the Word) is omnipresent, which means that He can be in more than one place at a time. Jesus not only sits at the right hand of the Father, but is actually the right hand of the Father. Jesus has never lost His position in heaven. Jesus can be in my heart and at the right hand of the Father all at the same time.

Acts 2:26 "Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:"

Jesus' flesh was entombed, but it did not stay in the tomb long enough to begin to decay. The body begins to deteriorate on the fourth day. Jesus rose on the third day. In I Thessalonians chapter 4, we read that we Christians have hope of the resurrection, because Jesus rose again.

Acts 2:27 "Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."

As we said above , Jesus' body rose from the tomb before the fourth day when corruption usually sets in.

Acts 2:28 "Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance."

Jesus' body was transformed in to a spiritual body. This same Jesus re-entered His body and rose from the tomb. We can look to Jesus for our hope. He is the life. We can have joy forevermore knowing that because He lives we will live also. It was buried a natural body and raised a spiritual body. {1 Corinthians chapter 15}

Acts 2:29 "Men [and] brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day."

Peter makes it very clear that this could not have been David speaking, since he was dead and his tomb still held his body.

Acts 2:30 "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;"

God had promised David that through his ancestors in the flesh, the Messiah (Christ) would sit on his throne in Jerusalem. God does not lie. Jesus Christ the Messiah was descended in the flesh from David. David had prophesied this after God had sworn to him.

Acts 2:31 "He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption."

David had prophesied in Psalms 16:10 that Jesus' body would not decay. That He would rise again.

Acts 2:32 "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."

Here, Peter says that this Scripture in Psalms was fulfilled when Jesus rose from the grave. Peter tells these people that He was an eyewitness to

the resurrection of Jesus. He tells them they had witnessed it, also. Jesus was seen of over 500 people after He rose from the grave. I Corinthians 15:6 "After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep."

Acts 2:33 "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."

In our study in John, we learned that Jesus said He would send the Comforter (Holy Ghost), John 14:15-16. Now, Peter is telling them that this which they have seen is the Holy Ghost sent by Jesus to help Jesus' followers.

Acts 2:34 "For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand," Acts 2:35 "Until I make thy foes thy footstool."

This, again, was prophecy of King David. David calls his descendent in the flesh Jesus, Lord. It is difficult to understand that the flesh of Jesus descended from David, but at the same time the Spirit of Jesus was David's Lord. This just means that Jesus is sitting at the right hand of God, until God the Father says the struggle on earth is over. We find that all power in heaven and earth has been given to Jesus by the Father. Jesus defeated Satan in every way at the cross. Jesus is sitting on the right hand of God waiting, because Jesus' work on earth is done. The end of the age is near. This will all finish when the bride of Christ is brought to heaven and the wrath of God falls on those who would not accept Jesus as Lord.

Notes

Acts 4 Questions

1. What are some of the signs mentioned in verse 19?
2. What time is this speaking of?
3. What will happen to the sun at this time?
4. Who will be saved?
5. Who does Peter call Jesus in verse 21?
6. Why should they have known who Jesus was?
7. What is different with Peter's preaching here, from when he denied Christ?
8. Who raised Jesus up?
9. What message is in Psalms 16:10?
10. Where can we read about Jesus preaching in hell and bringing the captives out?
11. Who was David speaking of in verse 25?
12. When does the body begin to deteriorate after death?
13. What does I Thessalonians chapter 4 bring promise of?
14. How was Jesus' body changed from the one that went into the tomb?
15. Who was Jesus' ancestor in the flesh?
16. In what was Jesus David's God?
17. What is David called in verse 30?
18. What chapter in Psalms tells that Jesus' body would not decay?
19. In verse 32, Peter says who were witnesses of Jesus' resurrection?
20. Where is Jesus exalted now?
21. Who sent the comforter (Holy Ghost)?
22. What other Book of the Bible tells that Jesus would send the Comforter?
23. How long will Jesus sit at the right hand of God?
24. Who is all power in heaven and earth given to?
25. What is left for Jesus to do, to be finished with His work?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 2:36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Peter has boldly told these Israelites that they crucified their Messiah (Christ). He says you crucified Messiah, and God has exalted Him to be not only your Saviour, but your Lord.

Acts 2:37 "Now when they heard [this], they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men [and] brethren, what shall we do?"

We must remember that Peter had been entrusted with the keys. He was the leader of the church for both Jew and Gentile. Peter has brought them a message that they know is true. Their hearts are turned, and they seek instruction from Peter about what they must do to be saved. They realize they have made a grave mistake and, now, they want to get into good graces with God.

Acts 2:38 "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."

These men Peter was speaking to here were the house of Israel. They had rejected Jesus as their Messiah. They must repent of this rejection of Jesus as the substitute for their sin. The one they had rejected is the very one they are to be baptized in the name of. These are all Jews here. They must repent of rejecting Jesus. They had the law, the Gentiles did not have the law to go by. Notice the gift of the Holy Ghost would come after they had repented and been baptized. The part of those who want to be saved is to repent of their sin, and then believe on the name of Jesus Christ. Just as Abraham was justified (just as if he had never sinned) by faith they will be justified by faith in Jesus Christ. We read earlier how God will save all who call on His name.

Acts 2:39 "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, [even] as many as the Lord our God shall call."

The promise is made to whosoever will. These who are afar off, are to Gentiles of all generations, since the Jews are thought of as those who are nigh. The Lord Jesus died for all, but our obligation is to accept the gift of salvation. God calls all of us, but few accept that call.

Acts 2:40 "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation."

We see that this group that Peter is speaking to is the very group who turned Jesus down. This says that Peter kept on speaking to them to make them understand their need for Jesus as Saviour.

Acts 2:41 "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added [unto them] about three thousand souls."

I Corinthians 1:21 we read, "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." We see from this, that this is God's plan to save people. They received the sermon Peter preached and were saved and baptized. This was a very effective sermon because 3,000 souls were saved.

Acts 2:42 "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

It seems that the apostles were establishing a doctrine. The Lord really did not set up a doctrine for the church. Jesus' commandments were to love God above everything and everyone else, and love your neighbor as yourself. This breaking of bread could have been the taking of communion in remembrance of Jesus, or it could just mean that they ate together. We do know that it had something to do with worship, because they continued in prayer.

Acts 2:43 "And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles."

This fear has to do with reverence. This fear brings them to the point of making a decision about the Lord. In the 14th chapter of John beginning with the 12th verse, we see that Jesus gave His followers the power to do the same miracles that He had done while He was on the earth if they prayed in Jesus' name. This would be astonishing to these Jews who had not seen this type of miracles going on in the temple.

Acts 2:44 "And all that believed were together, and had all things common;"

It seems as if these believers stayed together, because they needed the strength of the apostles. Soon after this large group joined the disciples, the authorities became very upset and jailed many of them. Some of them were even martyred. This sharing of all that they had kept the poor who came to Jesus from starving.

Acts 2:45 "And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all [men], as every man had need."

At this particular time, these Christians thought that Jesus would be back very soon and set up His kingdom. They had made the mistake of rejecting Jesus once, they did not want to take any chance that Jesus would return and them not know it. They all stayed with the twelve apostles.

Acts 2:46 "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,"

Notice that they worshipped daily. They were so thankful that God would even have them after their rejection of the Lord. Nothing was too much. They were satisfied with what they had. It was very similar to what Paul would say later, that whatever state he found himself in, he was content. They ate together and had all things common. They were of one accord as they were at Pentecost.

Acts 2:47 "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

These followers of Jesus were so thankful to be saved that praises were on their lips continually. This period of time was not the time of opposition. Everyone was still in somewhat a state of shock since the resurrection of Jesus. Almost everyone who heard the good news of the gospel wanted to be saved. We read here, that the Lord added to the number of the believers (church) every day. The apostles preached (planted the seed), and God got the harvest.

Notes

Acts 5 Questions

1. What did Peter say the house of Israel should know assuredly?
2. Who had they crucified?
3. After Peter preached, what effect did it have on the Israelites?
4. What question did they ask Peter and the other apostles?
5. Who had the Lord entrusted with the keys?
6. What did Peter tell them they must do to be saved?
7. What gift would they receive after they were baptized?
8. What was the main thing they were to repent of?
9. Who must they believe on?
10. Who was the promise made to?
11. Who are the ones who are spoken of as being afar off?
12. What did Peter tell them to save themselves from?
13. How many souls were added that day?
14. In I Corinthians, we learn that by the foolishness of _____ God would save those who believe.
15. In verse 42, we find the converts continued stedfastly in what?
16. Did Jesus set up a doctrine for the church?
17. What commandments did Jesus tell us to observe?
18. Fear came on every soul; and many _____ and _____ were done by the apostles.
19. What kind of fear is spoken of in verse 43?
20. What does verse 44 tell us they did?
21. They sold their possessions and did what?
22. What was the main reason that they were not conscious of worldly goods?
23. What did they do daily?
24. How often were people added to the church?
25. Why were they praising continually?
26. The apostles _____ and _____ got the harvest.

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 3:1 "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, [being] the ninth hour."

It seems there were two times during the day when they went to pray. One time was at 9 a.m. in the morning, and the other was at 3 p.m. in the afternoon. Notice here, also, the closeness of Peter and John. When Jesus was with them, many times He would send Peter, James, and John to do something for Him. It appears that after Jesus returned to heaven, Peter and John were still very close.

Acts 3:2 "And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;"

This Beautiful gate many believe is the same as the Eastern Gate. Some believe this gate to be the entrance to the woman's court. This man was born lame. Whether this was a deformity, or not, the Word does not say. The people it would be easier to get an offering from would be the people who loved God. This place would be even more lucrative, since women many times have a softer heart for giving. This was this man's livelihood, since he could not walk. The court of the Gentiles and the women's court was the same.

Acts 3:3 "Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms."

If we look carefully in the spiritual realm at this lame man lying outside the church door, we can see a society that is crippled by all the sin. Our society seems to have gone mad. Our children are the most confused and crippled of all. They are taught in school that the world revolves around them, and yet they know that they cannot make these giant decisions themselves. They realize these decisions are too much and they hide in drugs, alcohol, and rock music. They want somebody, somewhere to make these decisions for them. They search for someone who has answers to life's problems. They are spiritually crippled. Looking for solutions, they many times are led off into cults. As I have said so many times, drugs, alcohol and all these other methods of escape are not the root problem. Mankind is crippled, because we are out of fellowship with God. When I see this lame man above, I see all those struggling people who are crippled by our society. Jesus Christ is what they are all looking for. We ministers must do as Paul and Peter did here. We must focus in on them and get them to look at what we have to offer them. We must show them Jesus in us, so that they can reach out and receive the wonderful healing of not only their body, but spirit as well.

Acts 3:4 "And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us." Acts 3:5 "And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them."

Again, here in this lame man we see the crippled world. This man is looking for help wherever he can get it. This searching describes our society so well. Ever searching for answers, but many times looking in the wrong places. The only true solution to any problem is in Jesus. I hear so

many people on Television and Radio today trying to figure out what can be done to heal our problems. There is only one answer. All of these illnesses will go away when they receive Jesus as Lord and Saviour. The Bible is our handbook for living. All of the instructions for a healthy happy life are explained in its pages. It is the only thing that will work. Jesus is our Life. All of the other things we do to stop drugs and all other sin is like trying to stop a giant river from flowing with a bandaid.

Acts 3:6 "Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk."

Here, we see Peter giving the lame what he really needs, not what he is asking for. This Scripture has really been misunderstood by so many. Peter is not saying that there is anything wrong in silver and gold He is apologizing to the man that he has none to give him. Then he says, I have a much better gift for you. He says, In Jesus Christ of Nazereth's name you are healed. This says to me that our crippled children in our society are crying for someone to help them. Many want to put them in centers to dry them out, but what they really need is the Lord Jesus Christ to heal them. Give them a brand new life, not centered on self, but centered on Jesus. Then they can walk uprightly.

Acts 3:7 "And he took him by the right hand, and lifted [him] up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength."

We see, here, the power of the name of Jesus Christ. When the apostle took this lame man by the hand, he was touching the man as an agent of the Lord Jesus Christ. We see that the apostle reaches out to this lame man. We are an extension of the Lord when we reach out to help those around us who cannot help themselves. This was just the touch this man needed, and strength came, into his feet and ankles, as Peter helped him up by his right hand.

Acts 3:8 "And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God."

We must remember that this is the very first time he had ever walked, because he was born lame. Can you imagine his joy as he discovered he could walk? He directed his praise to the correct one, as well. He praised God, not Peter. Now he could go into the temple himself. This reminds me of the overwhelming joy a person has when they are freed from sin and are made alive to follow Jesus.

Acts 3:9 "And all the people saw him walking and praising God:"

Think of all the friends and family who would be overjoyed with him at his miracle. This should stir up their faith in God, as well. He has been made new in the name of Jesus Christ.

Acts 3:10 "And they knew that it was he which sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him."

Here was a manifestation of Christianity. This miracle was done in the name of the very one, which had been crucified here just a short time before. Perhaps, they had heard of some of the miracles Jesus had done when

He was here before, but to have this kind of power in just the mention of His name overwhelmed them. This miracle would start these people to thinking about the power invested in even the followers of Jesus.

Acts 3:11 "And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering."

This lame man felt that, if somehow, he could hold on to Peter and John his strength would remain. This great number of people ran to marvel at these men. They were confusing this power as if it was in Peter and John, not through the power in the name of Jesus Christ. This is even a thing to consider today. We must not be too overwhelmed by miracles. We must look beyond the miracle to Jesus.

Acts 3:12 "And when Peter saw [it], he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?"

We see, here, that Peter quickly denies that any power within himself is responsible for this miracle. Peter wants the praise directed to the true source of power, the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Peter tells these Israelites that he and John are just men like them. The only real difference is that they have made a decision to follow Jesus. They have made Jesus their Lord, and in so doing they have allowed His power to operate through them.

Notes

Acts 6 Questions

1. When did Peter and John go to the temple in verse 1?
2. Why were they going to the temple?
3. How often did they go to the temple?
4. Which two disciples were really friendly after Jesus went back to heaven?
5. How long had the man in verse 2 been lame?
6. How did he get to town?
7. Where did he stay every day?
8. Why did he stay there?
9. What is another name for the Beautiful gate?
10. What was this the entrance to?
11. The court of the Gentiles was the same as what?
12. What did Peter and John tell him to do when they looked at him?
13. What is the spiritual meaning of all of this?
14. He gave heed unto them, expecting what?
15. What two things did Peter tell him he did not have to give him?
16. What name did Peter use when he told him to rise and walk?
17. How did Peter help him up?
18. What happened to the man to let him know he was healed?
19. Where did he go when he walked?
20. What did he do besides leap and walk?
21. What did the people see?
23. When the man held Peter and John, what did the people do?
24. What did Peter ask the people?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 3:13 "The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let [him] go."

In the lesson just before this one, Peter and John had prayed and healed the lame man in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. The mob ran to them, as if they had done this miraculous healing. Peter quickly told them that it was not his power, but God's power. Now in this verse above, Peter is specifically saying what God this is. He says, you say you worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and yet you rejected His Son (the Messiah), and you even insisted on Pilate crucifying Him, when Pilate wanted to release Him. This healing of the man lame from birth glorifies the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Acts 3:14 "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;"

Peter is giving them the terrible details of their total rejection of the Saviour of the world, and insisting that Pilate let the murderer Barabas go instead.

Acts 3:15 "And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses."

Peter is telling them here, that without Jesus there is no life. Jesus said in John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Jesus is the Life. In Him we live, and breathe, and have our being. Peter, John, and about 500 other people were eyewitnesses that Jesus rose again.

Acts 3:16 "And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."

Again in St. John 14:13 Jesus says, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Peter explains that this great miracle done to the man lame from birth is because Peter and John activated the faith they had in the name of Jesus Christ, and that power healed this man. These onlookers here could not deny the miracle of the man walking who had been lame from birth. This is Christianity in action.

Acts 3:17 "And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did [it], as [did] also your rulers."

Wot means I know. Here, we see some compassion on Peter's part, because he had denied Jesus himself. He says, I know you did not realize who Jesus Christ was the same as the rulers in the church did not realize, or you would not have killed the King of all glory.

Acts 3:18 "But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled."

We see, here, a little remorse even from Peter. He says, the prophets had told us in the Scriptures, we just didn't see it. Even Christ had told them He would suffer, but they did not grasp what He was saying. Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies.

Acts 3:19 "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;"

This is the first good news that they have heard. There is hope for them. They must repent of rejecting Jesus as their Saviour. The most wonderful thing of all is that not only will their sins be covered over, but that they will be completely done away with (blotted out). All they have to do is repent and change from not believing in the name of Jesus to believing. To repent is to change ones mind completely. To be converted is to be saved. Without repentance and believing in the name of Jesus Christ, one can not be saved. This change that takes place that makes a person a new creature in Christ is not a physical change, but a spiritual change. A person who was born of the flesh, after conversion is born of the spirit. This refreshing will come at the presence of the Lord.

Acts 3:20 "And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:" Acts 3:21 "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

Peter, here, is telling them of the second coming of Christ. Jesus Christ will come in great power and glory. Hebrews 7:25 "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." You see, Jesus did not stop working to help His followers when He went to sit at the right hand of the Father. He speaks on our behalf to the Father continuously. Jesus promised His followers in Hebrews 13:5 (the last part), "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." You may read of His coming with power and great glory in Luke 21:27 "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

Acts 3:22 "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you."

We see, here, Peter explaining exactly which of the prophets (Moses) has spoken in their Bible that their Messiah would be of their brethren. You see, even John the Baptist sent word to Jesus and asked if He were that Prophet that Moses had prophesied would come. That Prophet was Jesus Christ their Messiah. This prophecy included the fact that they must hear and believe Messiah.

Acts 3:23 "And it shall come to pass, [that] every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people."

Peter is giving them the bottom line of salvation here. There is only one way to heaven and it is Jesus Christ. Those who reject Jesus as their Saviour are lost. As far as God is concerned, there are only two kinds of people in the world: those who believe in Jesus as their Saviour and those who don't. Those who do not believe in Jesus will spend an eternity in hell.

Acts 3:24 "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days."

Just about every Old Testament Book tells of the coming of the Lord to die on the cross and save His people. The Old Testament is full of not only the coming of Jesus as Saviour, but also of His return to earth as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Acts 3:25 "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed."

All believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are the spiritual seed of Abraham who was found worthy of God, because he believed. Galatians 3:29 says, "And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." These people, Peter was speaking to here, were the physical descendents of Abraham. If they accept Jesus as their Saviour, they will be the spiritual descendents.

Acts 3:26 "Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."

Peter reminds them, here, that Jesus offered salvation to the Jew first and then to the Gentiles. The Lord only turned to the Gentiles, after the Jews refused to believe in Him. In Romans 11:11, "I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy."

This is speaking of the Jews stumbling, so that the Gentiles might receive the Lord, also.

Notes

Acts 7 Questions

1. In verse 13, whose God did Peter tell them was Jesus' Father?
2. Who believed Jesus and did not want to crucify Him?
3. By what two names is Jesus called in verse 14?
4. Who had these Jews preferred over Jesus?
5. In verse 15, Jesus is called whom?
6. What had Peter and John been witness of?
7. In chapter 14 verse 6, what does Jesus call Himself?
8. Approximately, how many people had seen Jesus alive after the resurrection?
9. What does Peter say was the power in the healing of the lame man?
10. What is Christianity in action?
11. What does wot mean?
12. Through their _____, they had doubted.
13. By whom had God told of Jesus' suffering?
14. What is the wonderful promise made that will happen when you repent and are converted?
15. What must these Jews repent of?
16. Without _____ and _____ in the name of Jesus Christ, one can not be saved.
17. Becoming a new creature in Christ is what kind of change?
18. When will Jesus return to the earth?
19. When Jesus returns, it will be in great _____ and _____.
20. What promise did Jesus make to all of His followers in Hebrews 13:5?
21. In Luke 21:27, how will Jesus come?
22. Which Old Testament prophet said there would be a Prophet raised up from the people?
23. Who asked if Jesus was that Prophet?
24. What will happen to those who do not believe this Prophet?
25. Which Old Testament prophet was mentioned in verse 24?
26. Through whose seed would all the kindreds of the earth be blessed?
27. What does Galatians 3:29 tell us of the spiritual descendents of this man?
28. Who was Jesus sent to first?
29. In Romans 11:11, what is said about the Jew and Gentile?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 4:1 "And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them," Acts 4:2 "Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead."

We see here, a quick response to the Sermon Peter had preached. The priests, and the captain which guarded the temple, and the Sadducee (aristocrats) who did not believe in the resurrection came, because Peter and John had been preaching that Jesus rose again. This teaching of Peter and John is in direct opposition with what the Sadducee believe. This preaching of Peter and John angered these men from the temple.

Acts 4:3 "And they laid hands on them, and put [them] in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide."

This is the beginning of the persecution of the followers of Jesus. We see that they held them overnight.

Acts 4:4 "Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand."

This believing the word which Peter and John had preached is an extension of chapter 3 in the last lesson. We read earlier how about 3,000 believed, now the group of believers has grown to 5,000 men. At this time there were many women who believed, so the number of believers is expanding greatly.

Acts 4:5 "And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes," Acts 4:6 "And Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem."

This shows that the higher-ups in the temple were all gathered together to see if they couldn't trap Peter and John.

Acts 4:7 "And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?"

This is an interrogation of Peter and John. The question, itself, lets you know that these in power here did not have respect for the name of Jesus Christ. Instead of being pleased that a man crippled from birth can now walk, they were ready to criticize what they had done.

Acts 4:8 "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel," Acts 4:9 "If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;" Acts 4:10 "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, [even] by him doth this man stand here before you whole."

It is so important to notice the difference in Peter, here, and the Peter who had been afraid and denied Jesus three times. This Peter is filled with

the power of the Holy Ghost. He is looking These accusers in the face and telling them that they killed Jesus. He is, also, telling these powerful (worldly) men who do not believe in the dead rising again, that Jesus whom they killed, rose again. In fact, he is telling them that this power to do miracles, that no one in their group was able to do, came just by mentioning the name of this Jesus they had crucified. Peter has no fear of what these worldly men can do to him. He also reminds them that they are trying to punish him for a good deed, not a bad.

Acts 4:11 "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner."

Peter gets even bolder and tells them that Jesus was the cornerstone upon which all the church fits together with, and these supposedly godly men rejected the most important part of the church. Jesus, the cornerstone, brought physical Israel and spiritual Israel into the family of God.

Acts 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

The Lord Jesus Christ shed His blood on Calvary to save us from sin and death. Christianity is really the only religion which promises eternal life after death, and hell after death, if we reject so great salvation. The religions of the world (other than Christianity) center around man's life on the earth. The difference in most religions and Christianity is that Christians worship the Creator of all the earth. Most other religions worship the created things of the earth and heavens. Jesus is the Judge of all the world, and we will stand or fall by whether we are His or not. He is our great Shepherd and on judgment day, if we are His sheep, we will live eternally in heaven with Him. If we are not His sheep, we will go the way of the goats to eternal damnation. You may read about this in Matthew chapter 25 from verse 32 on.

Acts 4:13 "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."

These men had not been taught in the rabbinical schools as the Levitical tribe was. This boldness, when speaking out for the good news of the gospel, is very important: not only to the apostles then, but also to the preachers today. All who receive this baptism whether preachers or laymen receive power to minister more boldly. One of the beauties of the effective preacher is in his or her boldness to speak in common every day English, so that all can understand what you are saying. The Lord does not choose ordinarily the highly educated to carry the simple message of the gospel. People with a great deal of education, sometimes, want everything proven in black and white. The Bible and its teachings are accepted by faith. Faith and proven facts are the opposite. The Lord generally chooses those with am humble heart who He can teach His ways. These apostles, Jesus had taught one on one. It was easier for them to believe, because they did not have pre-conceived ideas.

Acts 4:14 "And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it."

We can quickly see, that the evidence was stacked in favor of Peter and John. The man who had been lame from birth was standing in front of them. These priests, Sadducees, captains and high ranking people from the temple could not deny the man could now walk. They would have to let them go.

Acts 4:15 "But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,"

This, had these high officials of the temple confused as to what to do. They had no idea how they would be able to discredit the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and still not deny this miracle. Either way, the council would look bad.

Acts 4:16 "Saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them [is] manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny [it]."

These religious men should be repenting for refusing to accept Jesus as Messiah. They have been shown, again, by this tremendous miracle in His name, who He is and was. They really should be asking help of Peter and John, instead they are trying to figure out a way to save face with their temple people.

Notes

Acts 8 Questions

1. As Peter and John spoke to the people, who came up?
2. What were these men grieved about?
3. What did they do to Peter and John?
4. In verse 4, we find that the number of the believing men had grown to what number?
5. Who gathered together at Jerusalem as a council against Peter and John in verse 5 and 6?
6. What question did they ask Peter and John?
7. What caused Peter to speak so boldly?
8. How did Peter answer their question?
9. Who did Peter say crucified Jesus?
10. What is the difference in Peter now, and the Peter who denied Jesus?
11. What is Jesus called in verse 11?
12. Who is salvation in?
13. Which is the only religion that promises eternal life just by believing?
14. Who is the great Shepherd?
15. When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, they perceived that they were _____ and _____ men.
16. These men knew that Peter and John had been with whom?
17. What is one of the most important assets a preacher needs?
18. Who does the Lord choose to work for Him?
19. What and proven facts are opposites?
20. Why could they not say anything against Peter and John healing the man?
21. In verse 15, where did they command Peter and John to go?
22. When the council met, what had them confused?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 4:17 "But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name."

In the previous lesson, we saw the leaders of the temple confining Peter and John for over night. They could not hold them, because they had no charges against them that were believable. They could plainly see that the lame man could now walk, and they could not deny it was a miracle. Somehow they were going to have to get the People's minds off Jesus Christ of Nazareth, or they felt it would jeopardize worship in the temple. The people who regularly came to the temple to worship might begin to believe in Jesus as the Christ, and if they did they would lose the rule over them. At this point, these officials had to know that Jesus was indeed the Messiah (Christ). Rather than lose their position in the church, they would not openly admit to believing in Him.

Acts 4:18 "And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus."

Here, we see a spiritual truth about whether we should obey the government when it conflicts with the teachings in the Bible. The answer is, we should at all times do what we are taught to do in the Bible. We are directed to obey those that rule over us, but not when it opposes God and His teaching.

Acts 4:19 "But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye."

We see, here, a boldness in Christ. These disciples are speaking of the righteousness of Christ. They are not concerned with what the world will do to them. They want to be in the perfect will of God. The same God that saved Daniel in the Lions' den could save them in whatever trials come. These religious people of the day knew the law, but were not acquainted with the Lawgiver. I like the way these apostles tell them that they will have to follow God, rather than earthly leaders. They make the rulers of the temple decide. If these rulers say to do as they say, they would be saying don't listen to God.

Acts 4:20 "For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

Here, we see the apostles explaining that they are compelled to speak the things that have been shown them. Many ministers in our day should be like these apostles. They should speak what they have seen and heard of God regardless of whose toes they step on.

Acts 4:21 "So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people: for all [men] glorified God for that which was done."

The people would have come against these rulers of the church, if they had tried to punish Peter and John here. This leaves it unsaid, but it appears above that these rulers would have punished Peter and John to get

them hushed up (in spite of this great miracle. I see over and over in these rulers a fear of losing their position in the temple and with the people. It was evident there was a miracle, (but they were able to overlook that) just to save face and stay as the leaders of the church.

Acts 4:22 "For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed."

The temple leaders had forty years to help this man, and they did not. Now, that he is walking after so long a time, this not only gives power to the ministry of Peter and John, but discredits these religious leaders in the temple.

Acts 4:23 "And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them."

Now, we see Peter and John returning to the other disciples to draw strength from each other and, also, to report to the others what opposition is out there. This really is the beginning of the followers of Jesus being persecuted. This looks, to me, as if the people who are supposed to be the spiritual leaders in the temple are turning down these new workings of God. They fear it might do away with temple worship, and in turn, cause there to be no need for them. These temple leaders, up until this time, have enjoyed being put up on a pedestal by the temple worshippers. They do not want to lose their position of importance regardless of whether these miracles are of God, or not. These apostles have gone back to their fellow servants to pray to God for strength and guidance.

Acts 4:24 "And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou [art] God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:"

This prayer to God was from an inspired powerful group (filled with the Holy Spirit). These people are still in agreement, only God can cause this one accord. These disciples have not only accepted Jesus as their Saviour, but have, also, made Him their Lord. He gives the orders, they just carry His orders out. Notice, how, at the very beginning of this prayer, they glorify God. You can easily see, also, that the Scriptures have been quickened to them, as well. They are recalling Scriptures that David spoke of the non-believers around them in the next verse.

Acts 4:25 "Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?"

We see that people who are already set in their ways and have already made up their mind that God is a certain way, are not eager to hear the good news of the gospel. They have studied for years the bad news of the law. The law was threatening and this grace was promising. They were not ready for this, and they became very angry. These people, spoken of in this prophecy of David's, were self-centered, full of vanity, and had no intention of listening, even if it was good news.

Acts 4:26 "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ."

This is speaking of people of all degrees of authority who oppose Christianity. Possibly this meant civil and religious leaders. Probably the same crowd which had crucified Him. They have no intention of admitting they made a mistake.

Acts 4:27 "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together," Acts 4:28 "For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."

We see, here, that the heathen mentioned in verse 25 includes, Herod, Pontius Pilate, Gentiles, and people of Israel who rejected Jesus. All of these people had a hand in destroying Jesus. Even now, many of the same people are still rejecting Jesus as the Christ risen from the dead. This prayer is addressed to the Father as all prayers should be and that is why Jesus is spoken of as His Holy Child.

Acts 4:29 "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word,"

This is a cry for help. Of course, the Father is already aware of the threatenings. They have never stopped all through the years. If you are living for Jesus, the world hates you. This prayer is not so much to get God to stop the threats, as it is a request of Jesus' followers to be able to speak the uncompromising word with great boldness in the face of the threats.

Acts 4:30 "By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus."

The gifts of the Spirit of God to the believers are given severally as you will. We read in I Corinthians 12:11 "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." Read all of chapter 12, beginning with the first verse through 11, and it will explain the gifts of the Spirit of God that believers in Christ Jesus can have operating in their lives. Each gift must be received by the person desiring it. Notice, these disciples in verse 30 want these gifts to be operating in the power of the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. The signs and wonders are to cause people to believe.

Acts 4:31 "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."

When the Spirit of God is present, old structures are shaken, lives are changed, people are strengthened anew to speak of the things of God. My own personal belief is that, there is one baptism in the Holy Ghost, but many fillings. Sometimes we get weak in the Spirit and we need God to breathe life into us afresh. When Peter had said earlier in his ministry that Jesus was the Christ the Son of the Living God, Jesus told Peter that the Holy Spirit had revealed this to him. No one can speak powerful messages for God except the Holy Spirit reveals it to them. The boldness comes from God.

Acts 4:32 "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any [of them] that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common."

We see, here, that all of these disciples became as one big family. They shared their worldly goods that God had entrusted them with. In the first part of verse 32, it says one soul, I believe this means that they were all walking in the will of God. They had made Jesus Lord and had given their will over to His will.

Acts 4:33 "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all."

We see, here, that the boldness they prayed for came. The resurrection was a high point of argument with many of the Jews who did not believe in life after death. This grace was not only God toward them, but them toward others, as you see in the next verse.

Acts 4:34 "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold," Acts 4:35 "And laid [them] down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."

This is concern for each other to the utmost. You must remember, they were expecting Jesus back just any minute, and they did not want to be caught up in worldly things when that happened. This way no one suffered, everyone who gave up jobs to work for God, at least had their necessities met.

Acts 4:36 "And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, [and] of the country of Cyprus," Acts 4:37 "Having land, sold [it], and brought the money, and laid [it] at the apostles' feet."

Notice in all of this, that they were not required to do this. These were freewill offerings of what they had. This is not necessarily the pattern our churches should take today. This is just what these people were led to do at that time. It was possibly the only way the church could begin, because those who work for God, have no time to make a living for themselves. This unselfishness on their part gave Christianity a real foothold. Without their unselfish generosity, the church would have taken longer to put together. This was not commanded of them to do by the Lord. This was from their loving hearts. Even today, the good news of the gospel could not go forth, if it were not for people who are willing to give much more than is expected of them to win a lost world. The followers of Jesus Christ have always paid, so that the unbelieving world might be saved. This Barnabas (seldom mentioned) was truly a man of God who gave all to the work. This son of consolation means, to me, that he preached or exhorted the Word of God. He was certainly one of the unsung Heroes of the Bible. This was the same Barnabas who travelled with Paul later.

Notes

Acts 9 Questions

1. Who threatened Peter and John not to preach about Jesus Christ and His resurrection?
2. Should we always obey government rules?
3. Who did Peter and John tell them they would obey?
4. What two things must Peter and John speak?
5. After they had threatened Peter and John again, what did they do to them?
6. Why did they not punish them?
7. How old was the man who was made whole?
8. Where did Peter and John go when they were released?
9. Why do you suppose these temple rulers would not admit this healing was of God and that they had made a mistake about Jesus?
10. What did they do as soon as they were with the other disciples?
11. What is the first thing they do in this prayer?
12. What has the Spirit helped them recall?
13. What had David said?
14. In verse 26, who was gathered against the Lord?
15. Who are the heathen spoken of here?
16. Who should all prayers be addressed to?
17. Whose name should you pray in?
18. In verse 29, they ask God to grant them what?
19. The signs and wonders are to be done in whose name?
20. What are the signs and wonders for?
21. Quote I Corinthians 12:11.
22. When they had prayed, what happened?
23. What are some of the things that happen when the Spirit of God is present?
24. Why would they be filled with the Holy Ghost again?
25. What does being of one soul mean?
26. What happened to their personal belongings?
27. With great power gave the apostles witness of the _____,
28. When they sold their houses and land, what did they do with the money?
29. What did the apostles surname Joses?
30. What does his name mean?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in:

Acts 5:1 "But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,"

Acts 5:2 "And kept back [part] of the price, his wife also being privy [to it], and brought a certain part, and laid [it] at the apostles' feet."

Ananias and Sapphira were not required of God to give their possessions. They decided between themselves to sell the land and lie to the apostles (representing the work of the Holy Ghost on earth) and hold back part of the money.

Acts 5:3 "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back [part] of the price of the land?"

Acts 5:4 "Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."

The sin here is not in Ananias not bringing all the money for the land, but in the fact that he brought part of the money and told the apostles that he had brought all. To lie to man is one thing, but to lie to God is an entirely different thing. The sin here is lying.

Acts 5:5 "And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things."

God is a loving God, but He is also a just God. The judgment came swiftly here, so that all could see that lying to God is a very bad sin. Notice, Sapphira did not die when Ananias lied. You can imagine the fear that gripped the camp. Somehow Sapphira did not hear of this.

Acts 5:6 "And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried [him] out, and buried [him]."

In a case of this nature there would not have been mourning in the camp. The sooner this was taken care of, the better. This dishonest man was quickly removed from the camp.

Acts 5:7 "And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in."

Acts 5:8 "And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much."

There is one really important lesson to be learned here, besides the lesson of not to lie to God. Notice, she was not condemned for the sin of her husband. She will be judged on her own merit. Had she told the truth at this point, she would have lived. She is guilty of her own sin, not the sin of her husband. Wives, you are responsible for your own sins. You need to listen to your husband, until it involves things of the spirit. Then you are an independent agent. Husbands rule over their wives' flesh, not their spirit. There is an order in the home that God has set up and we wives need to heed it. Husbands are the head of the home (in the flesh). Ladies, God will not accept the excuse for you not coming to church, because your

husband won't come. In things of the spirit, you are responsible yourself for your own decisions. As we see in the next verse.

Acts 5:9 "Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband [are] at the door, and shall carry thee out." Acts 5:10 "Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying [her] forth, buried [her] by her husband."

We see that this turning away from the beautiful workings of the early church and lying to the Holy Ghost brought sudden destruction. Ananias and Sapphira conceived this crime together, they both sinned, they met with a common fate and were buried together. This whole message is not saying, to be a Christian you have to sell everything and give it to the church. It is saying that it is a great sin to lie to the Holy Spirit of God. Their sin was lying.

Acts 5:11 "And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things."

This fear here, is fear of God. These people suddenly become very aware that God is indeed not only a discerner of our deeds, but of the intents of our hearts, as well. The power of God manifested here would cause great respect for God and His prophets.

Acts 5:12 "And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch."

These signs and wonders were from God to let the world know that these disciples were agents of Almighty God. They were not acting on their own merits, but were obedient servants of God. These miracles were evidence that could not be denied by the rulers of the temple. Notice also that the followers of Jesus were not bickering among themselves, but were all in one accord. To me, this means their minds and hearts were stayed upon God.

Acts 5:13 "And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them."

We see here that, great astonishment gripped all the people. No more people joined the group possibly for fear of their weaknesses causing them trouble like Ananias and Sapphira. The people magnified them. This included the Jewish rulers. This unity and, also, this happening with the two that lied to the Holy spirit put fear and great respect for these disciples in all of them."

Acts 5:14 "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)"

These believers, here, who were added were not added to these apostles who had all things common. These were ordinary people who started believing that Jesus was their Saviour and Lord. Men and women in great numbers accepted Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

Acts 5:15 "Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid [them] on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them."

We see the power of the Lord Jesus Christ working mightily through Peter here. We saw, when Peter and John prayed for the lame man to walk and he miraculously was healed a small portion of this power in action. We, also, saw how the power of the Spirit refilled the disciples. After this second filling of the power from on high to minister, it seemed that even the shadow of Peter brought such healing power from the Spirit of God that many were healed. This was not Peter's power, but the power of the Spirit in Peter that was doing this healing.

Acts 5:16 "There came also a multitude [out] of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one."

In John 14:12-14 we read, John 14:12 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater [works] than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." John 14:13 "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." John 14:14 "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do [it]." Notice, who does the healing (it is the power of the Risen Christ). Peter is just using the power of the Risen Christ to heal. It is the name of Jesus the Christ that heals. Jesus had said, if His followers believed, they could do greater miracles than He did when He was on earth by just the use of His name.

Notes

Acts 10 Questions

1. What were the names of the husband and wife who sold the property in verse 1?
2. What did they do with the money?
3. What did they lie about?
4. Which disciple had they lied to?
5. Who did that disciple represent?
6. Who had filled their hearts with the desire to lie?
7. Were they required to give all their money?
8. What was the sin?
9. What happened to Ananias as punishment?
10. Who carried him out?
11. How much later was it before the wife came to Peter?
12. Was she punished for her husband's lie, or her own lie?
13. What happened to her?
14. How did this happening affect the church?
15. Who were many signs and wonders shown by?
16. In verse 13, we find what effect to the disciples all of this had, what was it?
17. In verse 14, who were added to the Lord?
18. In verse 15, they brought their sick and demon possessed and put them where what could happen?
19. How many were healed?
20. Who will be glorified in this?
21. When we pray, whose name must we pray in?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 5:17 "Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,"

We see jealousy coming forth here. This high priest and these Sadducees could not deny that the miracles were done. They knew that they did not have the power to heal people, and they felt that people would stop coming to the temple and would follow these apostles instead. This is a little like churches now that get upset when some other church starts having converts. Jealousy has no place in the kingdom of God.

Acts 5:18 "And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison."

These leaders of the temple felt to protect their position in the temple and to keep worship in the temple the only worship services going on, they would lock these men of God up. This common prison just means that they were put in with the thieves and other really dangerous criminals.

Acts 5:19 "But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,"

Acts 5:20 "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life."

This angel of the Lord was a ministering spirit sent by the Lord to release them from prison. They were not released so that they might run and hide, but that they might carry the message of life to all. They were to go back to the temple where they were taken before and preach the good news of the gospel. They were to teach that all should repent of their sins, and be baptized. Those who believe in their heart and confess with their mouth the Lord Jesus shall inherit eternal life.

Acts 5:21 "And when they heard [that], they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought."

It seems as though these people did not know that God had sent an angel to release them. These priests and council had planned to punish them. They were going to bring them before the council to be sentenced. Little did this council know that these apostles were right that minute preaching and teaching.

Acts 5:22 "But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,"

Acts 5:23 "Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within."

These officers have an amazing tale to tell these rulers. The door was still locked, the guards were still on duty, and yet the imprisoned apostles had disappeared.

Acts 5:24 "Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow."

These rulers were really concerned about this spreading to the people and making them more certain that these apostles were of the true God.

Acts 5:25 "Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people."

The very last place these rulers of the temple thought they would find these apostles would be in the temple teaching. They would have expected them to run to safety, not to come into the temple.

Acts 5:26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned."

We see, here, that, the captain and his officers are actually afraid of what these followers of Jesus might do, if they take Peter and the other apostles. Remember, that many of these followers had been healed by the shadow of Peter falling on them. These people had tasted of the power of the true God, they were not about to let this handful of officers destroy Peter and the other apostles.

Acts 5:27 "And when they had brought them, they set [them] before the council: and the high priest asked them," Acts 5:28 "Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

We see, here, the fear that has gripped these rulers in the temple. They know they are guilty of having crucified Jesus. They remind Peter, and the others, that they had been commanded of them not to preach and teach in this name. It appears they are afraid to even utter the name of Jesus. Their guilty conscience has really overwhelmed them, but they still will not admit that they asked for their Messiah's death. They are afraid, not only of the hereafter, but of losing their position in the church now.

Acts 5:29 "Then Peter and the [other] apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."

This was a very bold statement to make to the leaders of the temple. Up until Jesus' arrival, the high priest was thought to be God's agent here on the earth. We discussed in an earlier lesson that, we should obey those in authority over us. The only time it is okay not to obey authority on earth is when it would hinder doing God's will. That is what is being said here. I will obey God and not man.

Acts 5:30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree."

These apostles are filled with the power of God and are bold in their response to the high priest and the rulers of the temple. He reminds them, also, that his ancestry went back to Abraham, as well as theirs and that the

God of all of them was the one who raised Jesus from the tomb. He in essence is saying, you killed your own Messiah (Christ).

Acts 5:31 "Him hath God exalted with his right hand [to be] a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

These apostles are boldly telling these leaders of the temple: You killed the only one who can save you from your sins. You were cautioned to repent, and accept forgiveness of your sins, and accept Jesus Christ as Prince (the Son of God). Jesus was your Saviour, as well as all of ours, and you rejected him.

Acts 5:32 "And we are his witnesses of these things; and [so is] also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."

We are told that Jesus was seen of over 500 people after His resurrection. They were all witnesses that what Peter said here is true. Just the fact of the power of the Holy Ghost which had been manifested in these miracle healings they had done in Jesus' name, was a large enough witness that He was risen, and was, indeed, the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. We will pick up in the next lesson with the attitude of the priest when he heard all of this and his officers' reactions, as well.

Notes

Acts 11 Questions

1. In verse 17, the men with the high priest were of what sect?
2. What did these temple officials do to these apostles?
3. What one word covers the feelings of these temple officials?
4. Compare this to churches of our day.
5. What did they do with the apostles?
6. What is intended by common in verse 18?
7. Who opened the prison doors?
8. What message was given the apostles?
9. Who shall inherit eternal life?
10. When did the apostles preach again and where?
11. Who met with the high priest to determine what to do with these apostles?
12. When the officers came to the jail, what did they find?
13. In verse 24, who was worried about the news of this escape spreading?
14. Someone came and told the rulers what about these apostles?
15. Why were the captain and officers careful not to use violence to bring the apostles?
16. What did the high priest say that he had already commanded them not to do?
17. The high priest said, they had filled all _____ with their doctrine.
18. Who did the apostles tell them they should obey?
19. When is the only time it is okay to not obey the authority directly over you?
20. Who did the apostles say raised up Jesus?
21. Who did the apostles say slew Jesus?
22. In verse 31, God exalted Jesus to be what two things?
23. What does prince in verse 31 indicate?
24. Who was a witness to the resurrection of Jesus?

Notes

We will pick up this lesson in Acts 5:33. In the last lesson we learned that the apostles of Jesus, led by Peter had escaped from jail and were back in the temple preaching. They had been commanded of the high priest not to speak any more in Jesus' name. The apostles told these religious leaders that they in fact caused the death of Jesus. They, also, told them that they had need to repent. The Jewish law said that you needed two witnesses to establish a fact. The disciples reminded them that they were all witnesses of Jesus' resurrection and that the operation of the Holy Ghost in the miracle healings was actually a witness, also. We will now pick up this lesson in verse 33.

Acts 5:33 "When they heard [that], they were cut [to the heart], and took counsel to slay them."

They would have to get Peter and these other apostles quieted down, or they would be thrown out of their high position in the temple. This deeply grieved them that they might lose their high esteem among the people, and they started figuring out a way to kill these apostles to get them quieted down. You would have thought they would have had a guilty conscience and repented, but they did not. Their only fear was of losing their power over the people.

Acts 5:34 "Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;"

Gamaliel means reward of God. This man was a very educated man in the law and seems to have wisdom in the decisions he makes. First of all, he is very careful to put the apostles back out of hearing range, so they cannot hear him plead their case. Had they been in close range, the rulers would not have listened, because they would not want to lose face before these Hebrews. This man is of the same group as Paul (Pharisees). Paul would later remind the Hebrews that he was a Pharisee. This Gamaliel was highly thought of among not only his people, but these rulers as well; Perhaps, because of the wise decisions he made. He was head of the school in Jerusalem.

Acts 5:35 "And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men."

We see, here, a solemn warning to be careful in dealing with these men. Gamaliel is saying, you must be sure of what you are accusing them of and, also, careful not to cause their followers to come in force against you. They could cause a really big problem for the leaders of the temple, if they do not handle it just right. This man is not only an educated man in the law, but uses very good judgment, as well.

Acts 5:36 "For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought."

It is uncertain to me who Theudas was. The only thing we know for sure is that he claimed to be a great prophet and convinced about 400 to follow him. This Theudas did not pass the test of time. Theudas was killed and his followers scattered. The difference being made here is that Jesus Christ had more followers after His death than in His life. One giant difference is that Jesus rose from the grave.

Acts 5:37 "After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, [even] as many as obeyed him, were dispersed."

This Judas of Galilee was not really from Galilee, but Gamala. Galilee was the place he led his rebellion from. He was opposing the census, so tradition says. In the Bible, the only mention of him is here. He was killed just like Theudas and his followers scattered. You see, these both were worldly men and the men who followed them were of the flesh. They were not spiritual men. There really is no comparison at all to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 5:38 "And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:"

This Gamaliel is advising the temple leaders to just let the apostles of Jesus alone and let them run their course. If they are not of God, this that they teach will die out and the followers of this Jesus will be scattered.

Acts 5:39 "But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God."

This is the wisest suggestion he has made yet. He tells them, just in case this is of God, then you are fighting against God and there is no way for you to win. One of the statements Jesus said to the disciples, when they tried to stop someone from ministering in Jesus' name is don't do it. In Mark 9:39 we read, "But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me." Mark 9:40 "For he that is not against us is on our part." It would be well for all followers of Christ to remember this Scripture. We should all be working together, not fighting each other.

Acts 5:40 "And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten [them], they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go."

If they truly agreed that these men might be of God, why did they beat them? They still commanded them not to speak in Jesus' name. It seems to me that, they were still against them, even knowing that they might be of God. Somehow, I feel that their religious leaders knew all along that these apostles were of God. They were just jealous and were not willing to admit they were wrong.

Acts 5:41 "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."

This is such a far cry from what the Christians of today do. Christians, now, want everything to go perfectly for them. They are really not

interested in suffering for Christ at all. These early Christians wanted to be as near like Jesus as they could. They were pleased to suffer for Him, He suffered first that they might be saved. They felt to suffer for Christ was an honor, not shame.

Acts 5:42 "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."

You can easily see that these apostles did not heed the command of the rulers of the temple. They obeyed God and not man. The church seems to always grow the most in times of persecution.

Notes

Acts 12 Questions

1. What did these rulers want to do to the apostles?
2. What did cut to the heart mean?
3. Who stood up in the council to advise them?
4. What was he a doctor of?
5. What did he suggest to do with the apostles?
6. Why did they have respect for Gamaliel?
7. What warning did Gamaliel give in verse 35?
8. What was the name of the false leader mentioned in verse 36?
9. How many followers did he have?
10. What happened to his followers?
11. Who was Judas of Galilee?
12. What happened to his followers?
13. What kind of men were both of these men?
14. If these apostles are not of God, what will happen to their followers?
15. If it is God, what are these rulers actually doing?
16. Why did Jesus say not to stop someone ministering in His name?
17. What lesson should all denominations of Jesus' followers learn from this?
18. After they agreed with Gamaliel what did they do to the apostles?
19. What did they command them not to do?
20. What did the apostles rejoice about?
21. Where did the apostles preach daily?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 6:1 "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations."

We see, here, the church growing to a large number. As long as the church was small and they each were greatly needed, they were all pulling in one direction. They were working for a common cause. Now that the number has gotten so large, there is murmuring. Some of the Greeks think the Hebrew widows are being cared for better than the Greeks. It seems that the early church was very concerned about the needs of widows. Many times widows lived in the church and prayed for the church. In I Timothy 5:9, Paul tells them to not take a widow under 60 years.

Acts 6:2 "Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples [unto them], and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables."

These twelve disciples who seemed to be the leaders of all the rest are explaining that they should not be encumbered by trying to see to the needs of all of these widows. The man or woman of God ministering has enough to do staying in the Word of God and bringing spiritual guidance to the people. Some one else should see to the financial responsibilities of the church. If they have to stop and see to the physical needs of the people, they will not be able to care for their spiritual needs.

Acts 6:3 "Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business."

Seven, as we have said before, means spiritually complete. We see that these seven were to be men who were very close to God. They must be wise men to take care of the finances of the body of Christ. They must be honest and of good report. This is one of the Scriptures used when churches choose seven deacons to raise the finances of the church. Many people want to be a deacon of the church until they learn that the deacons are really responsible for the financial needs of the church.

Acts 6:4 "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."

The twelve apostles were not to be bothered with anything, except the spiritual needs of the people. Perhaps, that is one of the problems in churches today. We have made business men out of our ministers. They learn as much about the way to raise money, to have a bus ministry, and to satisfy the I.R.S. as they do about the Word of God. They really should not be burdened with all of these administration duties. It takes too much of their time away from prayer and study of the Word.

Acts 6:5 "And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:"

Of these seven, of course, Stephen was the most known to us. These men were above reproach. They were men of high character. These men would be fair in all their dealings. Some believe that many of these were Hellenist (Greek Jews), but I believe they were a cross section of men of God, so that each one would be representing their own group. Proselyte means a new comer. In Hebrew, it meant stranger. Philip and Stephen are really the only two out of the list that the Bible tells us anything else about. These are like many deeply sincere people in the church today who really work in the background and do not feel the need to be recognized by others.

Acts 6:6 "Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid [their] hands on them."

This is just a ceremony to anoint these men to the job they are to do. They were installed formerly when the apostles laid hands on them.

Acts 6:7 "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."

We see, here, that, these apostles having their priorities straight caused the Word of God to increase greatly. A church is only as powerful as the prayers that go up for it. These apostles spent much time in prayer and their ministry was powerful because of it. Disciples, here, is the same as followers of Christ. This strong message of God's Word even convinced many of the priests and they believed, also.

Acts 6:8 "And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people."

Notice, that Stephen was full of faith and power. This is saying that the power of the Holy Spirit was so great in Stephen, that the great wonders and miracles were a by-product of the power of God in him.

Acts 6:9 "Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called [the synagogue] of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen."

It seems that there was a large number of synagogues at this time. These different nationalities of people had their own synagogue, and that is why there are so many different names. These Libertines were Jews from Rome. The Cyrenians were from North Africa. Alexandrians were Jewish people from Alexandria and were very large in number. Then there were, also, some from Asia. Whether they did not hear, or whether they did not receive what they heard, is not explained. They just came against Stephen.

Acts 6:10 "And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake."

His (Stephen's) message was with power of the Holy Spirit. Stephen's message was so powerful that they could not overcome it.

Acts 6:11 "Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and [against] God."

Suborn means to throw in stealthily or introduce by collusion. They really had not heard Stephen blaspheme Moses or God, but said that to get Stephen in trouble.

Acts 6:12 "And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon [him], and caught him, and brought [him] to the council,"

They really had lied about Stephen. Their accusations were untrue. He gave no resistance, so they caught Stephen and brought him before the religious rulers.

Acts 6:13 "And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:"

This is much like the accusers of Jesus. They have no reason to accuse Stephen of anything. The whole accusation was a lie.

Acts 6:14 "For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us."

The law of Moses was the basis of worship in the temple and the synagogues. They, themselves, had twisted the law until it was hardly recognizable. They had taken Stephen's message and twisted it into something ugly, instead of the beautiful message of promise that it was.

Acts 6:15 "And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel."

One of the laws of Moses said not to be a false witness. They really were not concerned with Moses' law. They were just jealous. As they all looked at Stephen, they saw an inward light that made his face as the face of an angel. This should have told them who he was, but they ignored this. This light within him was the presence of the risen Christ.

Acts 13 Questions

1. When the number of disciples increased, what problem arose?
2. Who was the murmuring about?
3. What was the complaint?
4. Who did the twelve apostles call to discuss the problem with?
5. These twelve apostles' job was what?
6. How many men were chosen to take care of these needs?
7. What attributes did they have to have?
8. What two things did these 12 give themselves to continually?
9. What is one of the problems in churches today pertaining to the ministers?
10. What was Stephen full of?
11. What was the name of the only other man well known in the Bible?
12. What is a Hellenist?
13. What does proselyte mean?
14. When they set these seven before the apostles, what did the apostles do?
15. In verse 7, we learn that a great many of the _____ were obedient to the faith.
16. A church is only as powerful as what?
17. Disciples in verse 7 meant whom?
18. Stephen full of _____ and _____, did great wonders.
19. What did these different names of synagogues mean?
20. What did they do with Stephen?
21. They were not able to resist what about Stephen?
22. What does suborn mean?
23. What did they say Stephen said about Moses?
24. Who did they stir up with these accusations?
25. What did the false witnesses say?
26. What lie did they tell in verse 14?
27. All that sat in the council saw Stephen's face as what?

Notes

We will pick up this lesson in Acts 7:1 "Then said the high priest, Are these things so?"

We see, here, that this high priest began to question Stephen, and he was not expecting the answer he gave. He preaches to the high priest and rulers.

Acts 7:2 "And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran," Acts 7:3 "And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee."

We see, here, that Stephen goes back to the call of Abraham, which all Israelites believe in. They and the rulers know that every word he (Stephen) is saying about God appearing to Abraham and telling him to leave his homeland is true.

Acts 7:4 "Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell."

We see in 4th verse, that Abraham was obedient to God and left his homeland. He stayed in Haran until his father died and then left there and came to the land that Jerusalem was now part of. Abraham had left a life of luxury and a big home and dwelt in tents. He was looking for a city whose maker was God.

Acts 7:5 "And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not [so much as] to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when [as yet] he had no child."

This message given by Stephen could not, and would not, be questioned to this point, because they knew it was absolute truth. Abraham had faith that all God said was truth and never questioned about his seed, even though at that moment he had none. He knew God would not lie and that it would come about just as God had said.

Acts 7:6 "And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat [them] evil four hundred years."

Of course, they knew Stephen was speaking of the Hebrews being in Egypt 400 years and being slaves to this people.

Acts 7:7 "And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place."

This judgment, spoken of here, was the ten plagues that came on Egypt to make Pharaoh let the people go. They did come to the promised land after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. They built the temple in Jerusalem and did worship God.

Acts 7:8 "And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so [Abraham] begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac [begat] Jacob; and Jacob [begat] the twelve patriarchs."

Acts 7:9 "And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him,"

We see here, also, that Stephen has not said one thing so far that they had not been taught from their youth. They believed every word. They were proud to be of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Acts 7:10 "And delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house."

They know that Joseph was truly made second in command in Egypt.

Acts 7:11 "Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance."

This, of course, was speaking of the seven years of famine called dearth here.

Acts 7:12 "But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first."

Acts 7:13 "And at the second [time] Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh."

Acts 7:14 "Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to [him], and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls."

We see here, the revealing to these leaders of the temple that Stephen knew the history of the Hebrew people from the training he had gotten in his Hebrew home. This story had been told over and over in Hebrew homes, how Joseph had saved his people when the famine came. He is relating how they first went and bought food not knowing that Joseph was their long gone brother. Finally the famine became so bad, that all of Jacob's family had to go to Egypt to survive the famine. Seventy-five souls belonging to Jacob went into Egypt, (including Joseph and his family) and approximately three million came out.

Acts 7:15 "So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers,"

Acts 7:16 "And were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor [the father] of Sychem."

Here are some more important details that only a Hebrew would know. Jacob was not buried in Egypt, but near Jerusalem. To read more about all of this in detail, read the Genesis lessons.

Acts 7:17 "But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,"

God had promised Abraham that his seed would be so many they would be a multitude; in fact, so many that they would be as the sand of the sea.

Acts 7:18 "Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph."

Acts 7:19 "The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live."

This is when the Hebrew boy babies were to be killed at birth and thrown into the Nile river. This evil King took the Hebrews into bondage and used them for slave labor. They became afraid of the Hebrews, because they were multiplying so fast. In this time of upheaval, Moses was born.

Acts 7:20 "In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months:"

Acts 7:21 "And when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son."

Acts 7:22 "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds."

We see that God spared Moses for the purpose of delivering His people out of Egypt. His mother raised him for Pharaoh's daughter until he was weaned, then Moses was trained in the Egyptian schools as an Egyptian prince.

Acts 7:23 "And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel."

Acts 7:24 "And seeing one [of them] suffer wrong, he defended [him], and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:"

Acts 7:25 "For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not."

Acts 7:26 "And the next day he shewed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?"

Acts 7:27 "But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?"

Acts 7:28 "Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?"

We see here that, Moses (trying to help the Hebrews) has really caused problems for himself. Notice, that it wasn't an Egyptian who was telling on Moses, but his fellow Hebrews. Even though Moses is an Egyptian prince, his nationality is Hebrew and the Pharaoh would not be pleased that a Hebrew (regardless of who he was) killed an Egyptian. We will see in the next verse that Moses fled to the desert where he met God. We will pick up with this in the next lesson. Notice, again, the accuracy with which Stephen is relating this to these Hebrew temple leaders.

Acts 14 Questions

1. What surprising answer did Stephen give the priest?
2. Who appeared to Abraham?
3. What did He tell Abraham to do?
4. When did Abraham leave Haran?
5. What had Abraham left to wander with God?
6. How many children did Abraham have when God promised to leave the land to his seed?
7. What did these Hebrew temple leaders know about Stephen's message?
8. How long would the Hebrew children sojourn in a strange land?
9. What was the strange land?
10. What covenant did God make with Abraham?
11. Who was the father of the twelve patriarchs?
12. What position did Joseph hold in Egypt?
13. What does dearth in verse 11 mean?
14. In verse 14, how many of Jacob's people, including Joseph and his family, went into Egypt?
15. Where was Jacob buried?
16. What had God promised Abraham?
17. When the new King of Egypt took over, what did he have the Hebrews to do with their boy babies?
18. Who raised Moses for her own son?
19. How old was Moses when he killed the Egyptian?
20. Who accused Moses of killing the Egyptian?
21. What did Moses do to keep Pharaoh from finding out?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 7:29 "Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons."

In the last lesson, the leaders of the temple were questioning Stephen, and in answer, Stephen started relating the history of the Hebrew family as far back as Abraham. We closed out the last lesson where Moses had killed the Egyptian and had been found out. In this lesson, Stephen relates how Moses went to the desert, and walked across it. He met Zipporah, Jethro's daughter. Soon after, they were married. Moses spent forty years in Midian near Mt. Sinai. During his stay, he and Zipporah had two sons.

Acts 7:30 "And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush."

This occurred when Moses was eighty years old. This is the burning bush that did not burn up.

Acts 7:31 "When Moses saw [it], he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold [it], the voice of the Lord came unto him," Acts 7:32 "[Saying], I [am] the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold."

Stephen is giving to these Jewish leaders an even better detailed happening than, perhaps, even they could have given. He explained to Moses that He was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Stephen, explains, here that Moses was frightened at the sight of God.

Acts 7:33 "Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground."

This, to me, is one of the most important things for us to remember in our churches today. We take God far too casually. If we want the Lord to be with us in our services, we must keep it a holy place. Wherever God is, is holy ground.

Acts 7:34 "I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt."

Here, Stephen is reminding these Hebrews that once before God had heard their cries and sent them a deliverer to take them out of Egypt (type of the world). Jesus was a deliverer, also. Jesus delivers all who will follow Him from a life of sin unto their own promised land (eternal life with Him).

Acts 7:35 "This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send [to be] a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush."

We see that Moses was not only to deliver the Hebrews, but was also to rule over them, as well. Moses' power was not his own. He was a very meek man. His power was that of God in him. God empowered Moses to do the things necessary to deliver the Hebrews.

Acts 7:36 "He brought them out, after that he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years."

We remember from our Exodus teaching that God brought them out with a mighty hand. God brought ten plagues on the Egyptians (demoting their worldly gods). Each plague showed the helplessness of an Egyptian god when facing the true God. Three million (approximately) Hebrews walked through the Red sea on dry ground and all of the Egyptians chasing them were drowned. The miracle of the forty years was that God miraculously provided for them. Their shoes did not wear out in forty years. To learn more about this, read the study on Exodus.

Acts 7:37 "This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear."

Up until now, these leaders in the temple could not find anything wrong with what Stephen had said, because this is what they had been taught from their youth. Everything Stephen had said so far, was leading up to the next few verses. This, they will not accept. This one, spoken of that would come from their brethren that they were to hear, is Jesus Christ the Messiah who they have rejected.

Acts 7:38 "This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and [with] our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us:

You see, Jesus Christ the Lord was actually the doer part of the Godhead. I use the Scripture in St. John so much, but it tells it just like it is. John 1:3, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." In the verse above, we see that it was actually Jesus Christ (Word) who put the ten commandments on the stone. JESUS IS THE WORD. He is the written Word and the spoken Word.

Acts 7:39 "To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust [him] from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt,"

Acts 7:40 "Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for [as for] this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him."

They soon forgot the mighty works of God in bringing them out of Egypt. As we have said so many times, Egypt is a type of the world. Stephen said here that they had turned back to the world (Egypt) in their hearts. Jesus says your heart will be judged. They are guilty of turning from the true God back to a sinful world life style. So many people are like this today. They walk with God, but when He delays His coming, many go back into a worldly life.

Acts 7:41 "And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands." Acts 7:42 "Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices [by the space of] forty years in the wilderness?"

This has to do with the Scriptures in Amos, which say, because of their unfaithfulness to God while Moses was on the mountain, God would not accept their burnt offerings to Him. Read chapter 5 of Amos, particularly verses 25, 26, & 27. This star, in Amos mentioned, is perhaps, Saturn. This speaks of God's great displeasure with the Israelites worshipping false gods. It, also, teaches against astrology. God allowed them to wander forty years in the wilderness, until the old ones died off and a new generation came on.

Acts 7:43 "Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon."

The children of Israel would not get out of one mess until they were worshipping some other god. Moloch was just one of the false gods they worshipped. This Moloch, here, is the same as Molech in the Old Testament. In Leviticus 18:21, we read a direct quote where God told them not to worship Molech, "And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord." You see, God is a jealous God. He will not allow His people to worship other gods. We see in verse 43, that the very reason they were captured and sent to Babylon was because they worshipped other gods. All that we can find about Remphan is that it was an idol. We may not call our false gods by these names, but there are plenty of them around today, as well. God is still jealous and will not allow us to hold anything or anyone (even ourselves) ahead of Him.

Notes

Acts 15 Questions

1. What land did Moses flee to?
2. How many sons were born to him there?
3. What was the name of Moses' wife?
4. Who was her father?
5. What mount was near by?
6. How many years did Moses live here?
7. Who appeared to Moses in the burning bush?
8. Who did the voice in the bush say He was?
9. Who were the three Old Testament Patriarchs named?
10. Why was Moses to take off his shoes?
11. What had God heard that caused Him to send a deliverer to His people?
12. What is Egypt symbolic of?
13. In what way was Moses like Jesus?
14. Where did Moses' strength come from?
15. How did Moses bring them out?
16. What did the ten plagues do, besides free the Israelites?
17. What miraculous thing happened at the Red sea?
18. What miraculous thing occurred with what they were wearing the forty years??
19. Who had prophesied and called Jesus a Prophet?
20. Who received the lively oracles?
21. Who put the ten commandments on the stone?
22. Jesus is the _____ Word and _____ Word.
23. What evil thing did the people talk Aaron into doing?
24. In what Old Testament prophetic Book do we find that God refuses to accept their sacrifices because of their false gods?
25. Which does God teach against; astronomy or astrology?
26. Who was the false god in verse 43?
27. Remphan was what?
28. God is a _____ God.

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 7:44 "Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen."

We see in this an explanation that Moses did not build the tabernacle to suit himself, but actually got exact instructions from God while he was on the mount just how to build it. God really gave Moses a look (vision) of the tabernacle in heaven, which this was to be patterned by.

Acts 7:45 "Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David;"

Acts 7:46 "Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob."

We see that God was with the Hebrews. When the Ark of the covenant was with them, the enemy fled before it. God was fighting their battles for them. This moveable ark was brought into the promised land and King David desired to build a permanent temple for the Ark and a Place to worship. David was a warrior and God would not let him build it. His son Solomon (a man of peace) built the permanent structure of the place to worship and meet God.

Acts 7:47 "But Solomon built him an house."

Acts 7:48 "Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet,"

Acts 7:49 "Heaven [is] my throne, and earth [is] my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what [is] the place of my rest?"

This is speaking of the omnipresence of God. He can be everywhere all at the same time. In fact, the entire earth could not hold Him. No mere building can hold all of God. We learn in the Revelation teaching that the Spirit of God is in all churches who bear His name.

Acts 7:50 "Hath not my hand made all these things?"

We see, again here, that God created everything. In Genesis, we know that God spoke the whole universe into existence. We learn in John chapter 1, that the Word (Creator God) was the very same one that came to earth and dwelt among us. Notice in verse 50 above, "my hand" Jesus (the Word) (Creator God) is the Right hand of God. He not only sits at the right hand of the Father, He is in fact the Right Hand.

Acts 7:51 "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers [did], so [do] ye."

You see, Stephen was speaking to men who were circumcised in the flesh. These were men who had been circumcised in the flesh on the eighth day in keeping with the Abrahamic covenant. The problem was that they knew God in formality and had never received Him into their heart. They had ears, but could not hear, and they had eyes, but they could not see. Stephen tells them that they were like their fathers. They were very technical about the law, but they closed themselves off and did not know the Lawgiver. They had

a religion of the flesh and not the spirit. We see the extreme boldness of Stephen in the next verse.

Acts 7:52 "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:"

Acts 7:53 "Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept [it]."

To these religious rulers, this was about the worst accusation that Stephen could make. They prided themselves in keeping the law. We know that many of the prophets had been killed for the truth in the Bible. Isaiah, we are told by historians, was sawed in half, Daniel faced the lions in the den, Elijah fought the prophets of Baal. These great prophets got very little help from the rulers in the temple. Many times the prophets even spoke out against the religious rulers and were persecuted by the rulers of the temple. Stephen tells them, you never did truly understand the law and You have certainly not kept it.

Acts 7:54 "When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with [their] teeth."

This just simply means that they bit him. They were so angry with him, that instead of flogging him, they bit him. Down deep in their heart, they knew that what Stephen had said was true.

Acts 7:55 "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,"

We see here, that Stephen not only felt the Presence of the Holy Ghost, but was empowered from on high and completely filled with the Holy Ghost. Stephen was so filled that all scales were removed from his eyes, and he looked into heaven, and saw the throne of God, and the glory of God on that throne. There is much controversy about Stephen seeing Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Jesus ordinarily is seated at the right hand of God, because His work is finished, but I believe He was standing to greet Stephen and welcome him to heaven. Stephen had no fear of what they could do to him here on the earth. He knew his home was in heaven.

Acts 7:56 "And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."

This proclamation of Stephen would have been impossible to hold back. To see inside heaven and all the glory there would be almost beyond comprehension. The thrill would be so great, that any kind of death would be welcomed to be able to go there.

Acts 7:57 "Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,"

To them, this was blasphemy, and they ran toward him to capture and kill him. I really believe, however, that they stopped their ears, because they were not ready to hear that they had killed the Lord. You see, if Stephen is telling them the truth, they know they are doomed to hell. They have to know

that it is the truth, because Stephen's countenance was so bright as we read earlier.

Acts 7:58 "And cast [him] out of the city, and stoned [him]: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul."

This Saul is the Pharisee who was ordering the persecution of the Christians. This is also the Saul who Jews would rename Paul. You see Saul really was one of these religious leaders who ordered the stoning to death of Stephen. Notice they took him out of the city wall before they killed him. It was not lawful (their laws) to kill a man within the city wall.

Acts 7:59 "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon [God], and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

This is further proof that a Christian's spirit leaves his body and goes to heaven when he dies. Stephen's spirit went to heaven immediately.

Acts 7:60 "And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."

We see here, an humble servant of God. Stephen had become Christlike, because he asked forgiveness for these men who did this horrible thing to him. Jesus said, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do", Luke 23:34 Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. Stephen said, "Lay not this sin to their charge." There was no question that Stephen was a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. Immediately Stephen died to this world.

As we said, this Saul will soon be called Paul and would, also, become a servant of God, a follower of Jesus Christ. Saul thought he was doing God a favour, when, in fact, he was killing one of God's anointed.

Acts 16 Questions

1. What directions had Moses been given to build the tabernacle?
2. Who led the Israelites into the land of the Gentiles?
3. Who was the king who wanted to build a permanent house of worship?
4. Why did God not allow him to build the temple?
5. Who built the temple?
6. What name is God called by in verse 48?
7. Where is His throne?
8. What is His footstool?
9. What does omnipresence mean?
10. What did we learn in Revelation about the Spirit of God?
11. In verse 50, who made all things?
12. Who is the Right Hand of God?
13. What two terrible names did Stephen call these religious men?
14. What had they resisted?
15. What was wrong with their worship?
16. What name is Jesus called in verse 52?
17. Even though they had been given the law, they had _____.
18. In verse 54, they were cut to the heart and did what to Stephen?
19. What two things did Stephen see in verse 55?
20. What was Jesus doing? Why?
21. Why did they stop their ears?
22. Where did they take Stephen? Why?
23. How did they kill Him?
24. Where did they put Stephen's clothes?
25. What was Stephen doing and saying as he died?
26. What statement did he make that was similar to Jesus' statement?
27. What does verse 61 tell us?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 8:1 "And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles."

This persecution seemed to be vented against the followers of Jesus at Jerusalem. The thousands who had joined the church were a threat to the rulers of the temple. So many, even devout Hebrews, had joined this great Christian movement. These leaders of the temple thought they must stamp out this Christian movement, before it overthrew the worship in the temple. One thing they feared so much, was the great miracles that were done by the apostles in the name of Jesus. This persecution served its purpose in scattering the people for fear they would lose their lives.

Acts 8:2 "And devout men carried Stephen [to his burial], and made great lamentation over him."

When a cruel, selfish man dies hardly anyone notices. Stephen was the opposite, he was a faithful, just, hard working man. He loved others more than himself. He even asked God to forgive the men who killed him. He was a true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ with signs and wonders following. Stephen would be sorely missed. This is the reason for the lamentation.

Acts 8:3 "As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed [them] to prison."

Saul was a Pharisee. He felt that he was doing God a favor by rounding up all these Christians and punishing them. He had no regard for their lives at all, whether they were men or women. He even went into their homes, and drug them out, and imprisoned them.

Acts 8:4 "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."

No one understands why, but the greatest move of Christianity is always during the greatest persecution. The fact that Saul was hunting them down and arresting them, just made them more determined to spread the good news of the gospel.

Acts 8:5 "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them."

We see that Philip took the message of Christ to what had been thought of by the Jews as a heathen nation. If he couldn't preach Christ one place, then he would just go to another place and preach. Perhaps, had it not been for the great persecution, the gospel would not have been spread so widely.

Acts 8:6 "And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did."

Just as many followed Jesus because of the miracles He did, we see here, that many believed because of the miracles which God did through Philip. We read in John 14:11 what Jesus said about this very thing, "Believe me that I

am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake." You see, it takes a miracle for some to believe.

Acts 8:7 "For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed [with them]: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed."

The spirit of Satan or demon spirits cannot stay where the Spirit of God is, because the Light (Spirit of God) does away with darkness. The way to get rid of darkness is just apply the Light. These miraculous healings were for a sign to these unbelievers.

Acts 8:8 "And there was great joy in that city."

You can certainly understand the joy. The lame could walk, the sick of palsy were healed, and people were set free to worship the Lord Jesus Christ. The whole city was touched by this revival.

Acts 8:9 "But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:"

Simon was a magician who practiced controlling other people's minds. He had a great number of these people believing he was Messiah, because he hypnotized them and told them this. Once he had them under his spell, he could tell them anything and they would believe it.

Acts 8:10 "To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God."

Acts 8:11 "And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries."

Their great regard for him was because he had control of their mind and will. Many young people today all over the world have been tricked by Satan's crowd and are blindly following, because they have turned over their mind and will to these evil people. They brainwash them and they believe they are doing the right thing. When they are found, they must be deprogrammed to be able to use their own will and function as a normal human being.

Acts 8:12 "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."

As we said earlier, the way to do away with darkness is to apply the Light of Jesus. When Philip presented Jesus Christ (the Light of the World), they were freed from this darkness in their life and received the Light freely. Men and women were baptized. There was no difference then and there is no difference now in God's sight. Women, as well as men, must repent of their sins and receive Jesus as their personal Saviour and Lord. Each individual must do this for himself.

Acts 8:13 "Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done."

This Simon, the sorcerer, could not deny the miracles. He was wise enough to know that there was nothing fake about these miracles. The Light always does away with darkness, and it was no different with Simon. Simon could not resist and he was baptized, as well.

Acts 8:14 "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:"

It seemed as though Peter and John were constant companions now. Peter seemed to be the last word in the church. He had been given the keys by Jesus, you remember.

Acts 8:15 "Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:"

Acts 8:16 "(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)"

It seems as though Philip had stopped with water baptism. None of these people had been baptized with the baptism of fire, the Holy Ghost.

Acts 8:17 "Then laid they [their] hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

You see, the baptism of the Holy Ghost is received most of the time by laying on of hands.

Acts 8:18 "And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,"

Acts 8:19 "Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost."

We see, here, a real fallacy in many people in the church. So much emphasis is put on money now in the church that it really concerns me. The things of God, cannot be bought or sold. This power of the Holy Ghost is a free gift from God. No one can teach you how to receive it or can get it for you. You must receive it from God. Any Christian can lay hands on you and ask God to fill you, but it is God who fills you, not the person praying for you. This is a terrible mistake that Simon has made.

Acts 8:20 "But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money."

Peter sees right through Simon the sorcerer. He knows that Simon is not truly a Christian, but one in name only.

Acts 8:21 "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God."

You see, what we are is in our heart. Our heart is either right with God or desperately wicked. Simon's heart is wicked. Simon went through the formality of baptism, but was not truly saved, because his heart was not cleansed and pure. Salvation occurs first in the heart.

Acts 8:22 "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."

Peter cut no corners for Simon (who had been the sorcerer). Peter told him that he must start all over again and truly repent in his heart. Sins are born in the heart. Peter is saying to Simon, let God cleanse your heart and, perhaps, God will forgive you.

Acts 8:23 "For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and [in] the bond of iniquity."

Peter tells him that he is a slave to sin. Simon's jealousy of Peter's abilities to bestow the Holy Ghost has made him bitter. All of this is sin. We must never be jealous of the gifts God has given someone else. Rejoice with them to the glory of God.

Acts 8:24 "Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me."

There is no explanation of what happened to Simon. It does appear from verse 24 that he repented. He even asks Peter to pray for him. It appears to me that it is really a little more fear of what might happen to him, than true repentance. We are not his judge, however, God is. Leave his fate to God.

Notes

Acts 17 Questions

1. When great persecution came to the church at Jerusalem, what happened?
2. Who was the exception?
3. Who buried Stephen?
4. Why was their great lamentation over Stephen?
5. Who was the one man responsible for much of the persecution?
6. Were just the men persecuted?
7. Those that were scattered abroad went everywhere doing what?
8. Who went down to the city of Samaria and preached?
9. What two things caused the people to believe?
10. In verse 7 it gives specific miracles, what were they?
11. What effect did it have on the city?
12. Who was the man who had before bewitched the city?
13. What kind of control had he used on the people?
14. Who did the people think Simon the sorcerer was?
15. What happened when they believed Philip's preaching?
16. How do you do away with darkness?
17. When Simon believed and was baptized, what did he do?
18. When the apostles at Jerusalem heard about the happenings at Samaria, which two came?
19. What did they do that Philip had not done?
20. What did Simon the sorcerer try to buy?
21. How did they receive the Holy Ghost?
22. Why did Peter say thy money perish with thee?
23. What was not right about Simon?
24. What did Peter tell Simon to do?
25. What is Simon slave to?
26. In verse 24, what moves Simon to ask Peter for help?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 8:25 "And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans."

In the last lesson, we had seen Peter and John come to Samaria to help Philip. They had laid hands on the believers and they had received the Holy Ghost. Now that the church is established here in the city of Samaria, Peter and John go back to Jerusalem. It appears from the Scripture above, that on the way back they preached in many of the Samaritan cities.

Acts 8:26 "And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert."

It is so strange today, if you tell someone the Lord has spoken to you, they look at you as if there is something wrong with you. All through the Bible the Lord spoke to people. He spoke to Noah to build an ark, He spoke to Jonah to go to Nineveh, He spoke to Moses to deliver His people, He spoke to Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldees, and many more too numerous to mention. The problem today is, the Lord still speaks, but few are listening. We see, here, that Philip is told to go toward the south. He was not told why, just to go.

Acts 8:27 "And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship," Acts 8:28 "Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet."

This man was interested in knowing the truth about God. While no one was looking out in the desert, he was studying God's Word in Isaiah.

Acts 8:29 "Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot."

Notice in this that God is interested in individuals. God has sent Philip a long way to just this one man. My own opinion is that God is doing this type of work today. The people who are truly interested in studying God's Word and knowing God's will are just a few. Our theme song at Church In The Wildwood is "LITTLE IS MUCH WHEN GOD IS IN IT". God is interested in individuals who truly love Him and want to follow Him. That is the case in the verse above. God has sent Philip to save this one man. Notice that in this verse, the Holy Spirit told Philip to go to this chariot.

Acts 8:30 "And Philip ran thither to [him], and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?"

Notice, the eunuch was trying to understand. He was still reading, hoping the meaning would be opened to him. This man is not only one seeking God, but a truthful man, as well. He is not puffed up with pride, but admits he does not understand.

Acts 8:31 "And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him."

Help is here! This help was sent from God to one who earnestly desired to know the truth.

Acts 8:32 "The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:" Acts 8:33 "In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth."

We know that the leaders in the temple in Jerusalem did not even know themselves what this meant, so how could they teach someone else? You see, this was a prophetic Scripture about how Jesus (the Lamb of God) would be brought before the council, and how He would stand in silence as they accused Him. It tells of His humiliation of the cross, and then being taken up from the earth.

Acts 8:34 "And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?"

This eunuch had no one to turn to for the truth. God has sent him help in Philip. Notice one more time, that this valuable disciple of God was sent to the desert to minister to one man.

Acts 8:35 "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus."

There are several important things to notice in this. One thing is, that Philip took up the man's Bible and taught from Isaiah. This is a New Testament man preaching from the Old Testament. Another very important thing to note, is that Philip showed him Jesus in the Old Testament. Jesus is from Genesis to Revelation. The whole Bible revolves around Jesus. Notice the most important thing: Philip, without hesitation, preached to this total stranger. Be instant in and out of season, where the Word of God is concerned.

Acts 8:36 "And as they went on [their] way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, [here is] water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?"

This eunuch knew the Scriptures (written Word) and readily accepted the spoken Word. We see here, that it is not necessary to be baptized in any particular place, or even on any day. Notice in the next verse, how Philip answers him. It is great to be baptized, but we must have something happen in our heart first.

Acts 8:37 "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

You see, new birth really occurs first in our heart. We must truly love God more than we love the world around us. We must destroy the desires of the flesh and live to the Spirit. In Romans 10:9-10, we read the qualifications for being saved, Romans 10:9 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Romans 10:10 "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is

made unto salvation." We see the eunuch has done just this, and now he is ready to be baptized.

Acts 8:38 "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him."

We see here, that they went into the water. This baptism was to the death of self and burial (water) and being raised to new life in Christ. Now this eunuch is a brand new spirit man in the Lord Jesus Christ. He will no longer live for the flesh, but will walk in the spirit.

Acts 8:39 "And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."

Mission accomplished. Philip was no longer needed here, so the Spirit carried him away. He did not have to walk back.

Acts 8:40 "But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Caesarea."

This was a miraculous transportation of Philip. God's power is unlimited. How Philip got to Azotus, I will allow you to guess. We see, here, that Philip knew no fear, he preached everywhere he went. I believe the transportation Philip used to get from the desert to Azotus was similar to the trip Elijah took in the whirlwind, and the trip the Lord Jesus took to heaven on a cloud. All I can say is, it was a miracle ride.

Notes

Acts 18 Questions

1. In verse 25, we find that they preached in many _____ of the _____.
2. After what was completed in the city of Samaria, Peter and John went to Jerusalem?
3. Where did the angel of the Lord tell Philip to go?
4. Name several specific people God spoke to in the Bible.
5. Do you believe God speaks to people now?
6. What is wrong with our not receiving more from God?
7. When God spoke to Philip, what did Philip do (in one word)?
8. The eunuch, Philip was sent to, was from what country?
9. What does eunuch mean?
10. Who did he work for?
11. What book of the Old Testament was he reading?
12. In verse 29, who told Philip what to do?
13. What question did Philip ask the eunuch?
14. In verse 31, what good character trait do we see in the eunuch?
15. What was he reading about in Isaiah?
16. Why had not the temple rulers told him what this Scripture meant?
17. What question did the eunuch ask Philip in verse 34?
18. What did Philip preach to him?
19. Which books in the Bible are about Jesus?
20. What did the eunuch ask Philip in verse 36?
21. What must we do before we are baptized?
22. Quote Romans 10:9.
23. What type of baptism did Philip do to the eunuch?
24. What happened to Philip immediately after the baptism?
25. Where did Philip preach after he was found at Azotus?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 9:1 "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest," Acts 9:2 "And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem."

You see, Saul (Paul) at this time felt that he was doing God a favor by persecuting the Christians. He was a Pharisee, and he believed Jesus to be an imposter. Saul was not only going out and rounding up men and women followers of Jesus and putting them in jail, but he was doing it joyfully. In fact, he would even go and get papers on his own to arrest these Christians. He was eager to arrest them and punish them. This breathing out above just meant that Sauls' spirit was in doing this punishment.

Acts 9:3 "And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:"

This Light from heaven is the Light of the world (the Lord Jesus). He was so eager in his persecutions that only the Lord Jesus could stop him.

Acts 9:4 "And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

Remember that Saul was a Pharisee and he was a proud man. To fall before the Lord would be humiliating, but to fall on his face before this Light is a very humbling experience. This voice leaves no doubt who it is when a person hears it. This voice coming from deity is actually saying that Saul is persecuting Him. Remember Saul is a religious man who thinks he is doing right, so this will come as a great shock to him.

Acts 9:5 "And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: [it is] hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

We see here, that Saul has been just like so many sinners before they come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. They, and he, were going headlong to destruction. We see Saul was even putting himself in great hardship to do this deed, thinking it was right in his own sight. He really hadn't stopped to consult with God and make sure he was on the right course. Self indulgence gets many on the wrong path. Jesus, at some point in time, comes in nearness to each of us with His glorious Light. It stops us dead in our tracks and creates a point at which we can follow Jesus to eternal life, or follow the way of the world to destruction and hell. Notice that Saul calls Jesus Lord. He recognizes that this is the Lord of the universe. Saul is wise in that he asks his name, so that he, too, might worship Him. We see that this encounter of Saul with the Light of the world will change him forever. Saul has been wanting to please God all along, he just didn't know the will of God. You cannot do the will of God, until you know the will of God. This dramatic encounter happens to very few people. I believe the Lord did this, because of His foreknowledge of what Saul would do. The Lord pricks our heart and some times we do not accept it. The Lord tells Saul, he has been pulling against Him.

Acts 9:6 "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord [said] unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

So many times, the people who have been the most outspoken against the workings of the Lord are the very ones who do the greatest work for the Lord, once they receive Him as their Saviour and Lord. This encounter has left Saul trembling before God. Saul had been a powerful man and was a proud man, as well. This was quite a come-down for him. The cry of every one who has decided to follow Jesus is "Lord, what would you have me to do?" Very few get a direct answer like Saul did here. Now Saul's part in this is to obey the Lord.

Acts 9:7 "And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man."

This does not say whether they heard what the Lord had said to Saul or not. They did hear a voice though, and knew that something very unusual had happened. I personally do not believe that they saw the Light that Saul saw, or else they would have been blinded. We do know that the companions of Saul are aware that something extremely unusual has happened and that the Lord did it.

Acts 9:8 "And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought [him] into Damascus."

This great Light had blinded Saul to everything of this world. The they, here, are Saul's companions. Saul had to be led as a blind man. It appears Damascus was very close and they continued there.

Acts 9:9 "And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink."

This could have been a three day fast of Saul's. It was time to do some serious praying. Saul probably thought he might never see again. He was probably still in wonderment about what had happened to him, as well. He had to be confused about just exactly what this was all about. It was certainly time for serious prayer. We all should pray, "Lord open mine eyes that I might see."

Acts 9:10 "And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I [am here], Lord."

Here, again, is another way that the Lord speaks to His people. To Ananias, it was in a vision. (This is not the Ananias who was the husband of Saphira). This was a common name and this is an entirely different person. Notice Ananias answers as each of us should: "Here am I Lord".

Acts 9:11 "And the Lord [said] unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for [one] called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,"

Acts 9:12 "And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting [his] hand on him, that he might receive his sight."

Sometimes the places the Lord sends us, look hopeless in the flesh. In fact, sometimes we feel that it is dangerous to go where the Lord sends us. It is really none of our business though. The Lord can send us wherever He wishes. Our only part in all of it is to do exactly as we are instructed of God to do. Whether we are successful, or not, is not our concern. We just do what God tells us to do, and God does the rest. Success or failure is up to Him. This would be a frightening thing for Ananias to do, but he must do it anyway, because that is what God wants. When he lays his hand on Saul, God will restore Saul's sight. God has gone ahead and prepared Saul to receive Ananias. God tells Ananias exactly where to find him.

Acts 9:13 "Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:" Acts 9:14 "And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name."

Ananias acts like the Lord does not already know all of this. His fear of this Saul, who has been capturing the Christians and throwing them in jail, is showing. Saul was most assuredly a dangerous man. What Ananias does not realize is that Saul has had an encounter with God.

Acts 9:15 "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:"

Acts 9:16 "For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."

You see, God, realizes that Saul wishes to please God. That really was why he was capturing the Christians (he did not realize he was working against God). God knows Saul's heart. Saul has a great calling on his life. He is to bring his message to the Gentile world. He, as many others, tried to carry it to his Hebrew brothers first though. The greatest call a Christian can have is to suffer for Christ. Only the truly strong, such as Job, can suffer for Christ and still remain true. Saul's calling is great. I think it is important to note, here, that the first king of the Hebrews in the Old Testament was named Saul, and now we see Saul called to service here to actually lead the people that he had been persecuting.

Acts 9:17 "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, [even] Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost."

Now, we see an obedient servant in Ananias. Ananias (even though he was afraid of Saul) went right on over and told Saul exactly what God had told him to say and do. This had to be an humbling experience for Saul, as well. The very people he had wanted to destroy was where his help came from. Not only will Saul's physical sight be restored, but his spiritual sight, as well. Notice, also, that God, the Holy Ghost, will empower Saul to witness the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Acts 9:18 "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized." Acts 9:19 " And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus."

As I said in the verses above, the scales fell from his spiritual eyes, as well as his physical eyes. His sight was two fold: physical and spiritual. Now having eyes, he could see. The Light of Jesus had entered into his inner most being and drove out all of the darkness. He was baptized to show that he had been born again not of the flesh, but of the spirit. He would rise from that watery grave (baptism) to a new life in Jesus Christ.

Acts 19 Questions

1. Who did Saul go to, to get orders to capture and imprison the Christians?
2. What town did Saul go toward?
3. Was there any difference shown between men and women, if he caught them?
4. Of what religious group was Saul?
5. Did he realize he was offending God?
6. What happened to Saul as he neared Damascus?
7. What did this voice say to Saul?
8. How did Saul answer?
9. What had this Light done to Saul physically?
10. What does Saul call Jesus the first time in verse 5?
11. In verse 5, who did Jesus tell Saul He was?
12. What does everyone have in common with Saul before we are saved?
13. What effect does this encounter with the Lord have on Saul?
14. What effect did the encounter have on the men with Saul?
15. Why did they have to lead Saul into Damascus?
16. This period of time Saul was not eating and drinking could have been a ____.
17. How long was Saul without sight?
18. What should be everyone's prayer?
19. What was the name of the disciple at Damascus that had a vision of the Lord about Saul?
20. How does Ananias answer the Lord?
21. Where did the Lord tell Ananias to go?
22. What was he to do when he got there?
23. Why did Ananias not want to go?
24. What did Ananias remind the Lord of?
25. What did the Lord call Saul in verse 15?
26. Who would Saul be sent to actually?
27. In verse 16, what will the Lord show Saul?
28. What did Ananias do?
29. Besides his sight what would Saul receive?
30. What fell from Saul's eyes?
31. What did Saul do immediately after he received his sight?

Notes

In the last lesson, we saw Saul (the persecutor of the Christians) receive both his physical and spiritual sight, and we saw him baptized in the Holy Ghost, so that he could be an effective witness. We will pick up in Acts 9:20.

Acts 9:20 "And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God."

You can easily see that this transformation in Saul was immediate. Now he is just as strong for the Lord Jesus Christ, as he had been against Him. The difference is, now that his understanding has changed. Now he knows who Jesus is. Saul will be bold in his preaching Jesus, because of this dramatic thing that has happened to him. Straightway means that just as soon as he received his sight, he went directly to the temple and preached. He had ready access to the temple. He was a Pharisee .

Acts 9:21 "But all that heard [him] were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?"

The amazing thing to those who heard Saul was that just a few days before, he had been capturing and punishing the followers of this Jesus that he now proclaimed so openly. People who had never believed before would believe now, because of where this came from.

Acts 9:22 "But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ."

Who would be better to confound the Jews than one of their very own? Even more than that, He had been so strongly against Jesus as the Christ (Messiah). Now that this strong Pharisee of the Pharisees believes Jesus was the Christ (Messiah) perhaps, they had better take another look, too. Saul knew the law, he had been trained in their schools. Saul could prove to them from their own Scriptures who Jesus was because He fulfilled every prophecy about Messiah from Genesis all the way through Malachi.

Acts 9:23 "And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him:"

They could not disprove what he was saying through the Scriptures, and suddenly the rulers in the temple become afraid that he will convert everyone, so they decide the only way to stop him is to kill him.

Acts 9:24 "But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him."

They felt at sometime he would leave this town, and they would capture him as he left through one of the city gates. Saul knew of their plot to kill him.

Acts 9:25 "Then the disciples took him by night, and let [him] down by the wall in a basket."

The hunter had become the hunted, now that he was boldly proclaiming Jesus Christ is Messiah. The very people, that he had hunted and persecuted before, are the ones who let him down the side of the wall in a basket to safety. He was numbered among the disciples himself now.

Acts 9:26 "And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple."

Assayed means he attempted to join the other disciples. He had been such a cruel pursuer of the disciples before, that his name had been passed among the disciples as someone to avoid at all cost. His conversion to Jesus was so recent, that word had not reached Jerusalem yet, and the disciples did not believe him when he told them he was a disciple, too.

Acts 9:27 "But Barnabas took him, and brought [him] to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus."

Many believe that the happenings spoken of in Galatians 1:17-19, indicate that Saul had been a Christian hidden in the Arabian desert three years before this visit to Jerusalem occurs. We do know that Paul, in Galatians, says that he did not go to Jerusalem until after the three years. For our study here, it doesn't matter when it happened, only that it did happen before the disciples believed Saul to be one of them. Barnabas believed Saul and took him to the apostles.

Acts 9:28 "And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem."
Acts 9:29 "And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him."

The apostles, after hearing his testimony, believed him. In fact, he stayed with them and went in and out of the city of Jerusalem with them. Saul was an aggressive man and he spoke boldly. These Grecians were Jews and were caught up in the law. They had not accepted Jesus as the Christ. The boldness of Saul frightened them, and they tried to kill him to get him quieted down.

Acts 9:30 "[Which] when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus."

Saul was known as Saul of Tarsus, so this had to be his home town. Caesarea was on the sea coast, and perhaps they sent him by ship. Tarsus was in Cilicia. Cilicia was in the south east province of Asia Minor. He would be safe in Tarsus.

Acts 9:31 "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."

When Saul left for his home in Tarsus, it seems the Jewish rulers let up for a while on persecuting the Christians. It seemed they were just let alone, and they became strong in numbers and in the Holy Ghost. The beginning of wisdom, is to fear the Lord. They became almost a country within a country. They went about their worship as usual, but without as

much fanfare as before, and the temple rulers almost forgot about their existence. It was a time of peace and rest for the church.

Acts 9:32 "And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all [quarters], he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda."

It seems as though Peter was travelling through the countryside proclaiming Jesus Christ the Messiah to all who would listen. The reason for the peace was possibly because most of this ministering at this time was outside Jerusalem. Lydda was a town about 11 miles out of Joppa. Two other names Lydda was called by was Lod or Lud. These saints were those converted to Christianity. Lydda was an area of working people. This had been a pagan city before.

Acts 9:33 "And there he found a certain man named AENEAS, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy."

Acts 9:34 "And Peter said unto him, AENEAS, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately."

Peter was so full of the power of God, that he just spoke the name of Jesus Christ to this man who had been sick of the palsy eight years, and the man was immediately healed. Palsy is a disease of the central nervous system that gets worse as time passes. We see the power in the name of Jesus Christ. He was immediately healed.

Acts 9:35 "And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron saw him, and turned to the Lord."

We see here the results of such a miracle. It caused all who knew to believe. Jesus said, if you didn't believe for any other reason, then believe because of the miracles.

Acts 9:36 "Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did."

Remember, Joppa is eleven miles from Lydda. Notice here, that a disciple can be a woman, as well as a man. This Dorcas was not just a Christian in word only, but was a doer of the Word, as well. Verse 36 says she was full of good works. Her belief was her life. Her Jewish name was Tabitha and her Greek name was Dorcas. The Dorcas means gazelle.

Acts 9:37 "And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick, and died: whom when they had washed, they laid [her] in an upper chamber." Acts 9:38 And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring [him] that he would not delay to come to them."

Notice that she was not embalmed. She was Jewish and they do not embalm their dead. She was washed. These disciples, here, did not have enough confidence in their own prayers. They knew that Peter was close by, and that Peter could call on God to raise Dorcas from the dead in the name of Jesus Christ. They sent two men to get Peter.

Acts 9:39 "Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them."

She would be greatly missed, because she had made beautiful clothing for all of them. She was a very unselfish woman. She had ministered to all of them.

Acts 9:40 "But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning [him] to the body said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes: and when she saw Peter, she sat up."

Notice the humbleness of Peter, he kneeled. His prayer was to the Father in the name of Jesus. He spoke to her in Jewish since she was Jewish and he was Jewish, also. Peter did not do this for show. He sent the women out. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, James 5:16. Tabitha arose and sat up.

Acts 9:41 "And he gave her [his] hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive."

What a time of rejoicing. This wonderful unselfish child of God is now alive. The revival was overwhelming.

Acts 9:42 "And it was known throughout all Joppa; and many believed in the Lord."

If anything would cause someone to believe, this should be it. Revival broke forth in Joppa.

Acts 9:43 "And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner."

Simon, the tanner, opened his home to Peter, and Peter stayed with him while he ministered in Joppa.

Acts 20 Questions

1. What message did Saul preach in the Synagogue?
2. What were the people in the temple amazed about?
3. In verse 22, we find that Saul increased in _____.
4. What did he prove to the Jews at Damascus?
5. After many days, the Jews took counsel to _____ him.
6. Where had they planned to capture Saul?
7. How did the disciples help Saul to escape?
8. What does the word assayed mean?
9. Why did they not want to join Saul?
10. Who was the one who believed Saul and took him to the apostles?
11. What did he tell the apostles about Saul?
12. What does Galatians 1:17-19 indicate?
13. Saul spoke boldly in what name?
14. Who did he dispute against?
15. What did the local authorities want to do with Saul?
16. Where did the brethren take Saul to help him escape?
17. What was the name of Saul's hometown?
18. Where was Cilicia located?
19. Verse 31 tells us the church had rest where?
20. They walked in the _____ of the Lord and the _____ of the Holy Ghost.
21. Peter came to what city?
22. How long had AENEAS been sick?
23. What disease did AENEAS have?
24. Who did Peter tell AENEAS made him whole?
25. What effect did this miracle have on the people of Lydda and Sharon?
26. What was the Jewish name of the lady disciple in verse 36?
27. What was her Greek name?
28. What had happened to her?
29. Why was everyone so grieved over her?
30. How do we know she was not embalmed?
31. What did Peter do besides pray for Dorcas?
32. When she was raised from the dead, what effect did it have on the people?
33. Who did Peter stay with in Joppa?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 10:1 "There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian [band],"

Acts 10:2 "[A] devout [man], and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway."

Cornelius is a Roman. He is a Gentile who loves God and prays. This Roman Gentile, not only loved God and prayed, but was like Dorcas in the last lesson. He was full of good deeds. He feared and loved God. God does not let that kind of loyalty to Him go unnoticed. Cornelius is to be the first convert of a Gentile to Christianity. You see, Saul was a Jew as well as being a Roman citizen.

Acts 10:3 "He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius."

People who God speaks to in visions are those who keep their mind and spirit stayed upon God. Cornelius was such a man. Cornelius was a military man which many believe would keep him from knowing God. God does not look at the outside of man, but at the heart. Cornelius had a pure heart. This visit was from God. God sent this angel (ministering spirit) to Cornelius. This angel knew Cornelius' name, because God had given it to him.

Acts 10:4 "And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God."

God has been aware of the good deeds and prayers of Cornelius. Fear gripped Cornelius. You remember he feared God, and he associated this Angel messenger with God.

Acts 10:5 "And now send men to Joppa, and call for [one] Simon, whose surname is Peter:"

Acts 10:6 He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do."

We see specific instructions for Cornelius to do. Just as Cornelius had said above, "What is it, Lord?", that is every person's question: What must I do to be saved, Lord? We see, here, that the Lord leaves no question where they are to go and who to see. Many times we have a tendency to get ahead of God, but we must wait for our instructions from God.

Acts 10:7 "And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;" Acts 10:8 "And when he had declared all [these] things unto them, he sent them to Joppa."

Notice, Cornelius did not delay. He chose his most trusted servants to do the job. He sent them exactly where the Lord had told him to.

Acts 10:9 "On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:"

Cornelius had sent his men to Joppa to find Peter. About noon, Peter went up on the house top to pray.

Acts 10:10 "And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,"

Acts 10:11 "And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:"

This was a supernatural hunger. It was the time of day to eat, but this hunger was brought on by the Spirit of God, not by the flesh. This trance just meant that the things of the real world around him were not in his mind. He saw a vision of a vessel descending from heaven. The sheet knit at the four corners means the four corners of the earth and indicates that this is a universal message. Four means universe, spiritually, or all of the people. This message was from God to the people of the earth. Heaven (its origin) and earth (its destination) show it is a message from God.

Acts 10:12 "Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air."

These represented all life, except human life on the earth. There were clean and unclean life.

Acts 10:13 "And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat."

This message came to Peter, because at this time he was the last word on Christian matters here on the earth. Jesus had placed him as the ruling authority of His church on earth.

Acts 10:14 "But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean."

What Peter is saying, is that he had kept the Levitical law about clean and unclean food to eat. Certain animals, certain fish, and certain fowl were forbidden for the Jew to eat. Peter had kept this ordinance. Here, though, he is disobeying God.

Acts 10:15 "And the voice [spake] unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, [that] call not thou common."

Acts 10:16 "This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven."

This voice spoke with authority and repeated it three times. Then the vessel was taken up into heaven. There is no question that this message is from God to mankind. God made everything and everyone in the beginning, and He said it was good. This message is twofold. Not only is it speaking to Peter about not calling any man common, but it is also speaking of eating food. Food is made pure by prayer. In I Timothy 4:4-5 it says, I Timothy 4:4 "For every creature of God [is] good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:" I Timothy 4:5 "For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." We see from this that, God is saying that praying

over food before we eat it and thanking God for it cleanses it for us. We cannot call anyone common because except for the grace of God, we would be unclean ourselves.

Acts 10:17 "Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,"

Acts 10:18 "And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there."

These men had been sent by Cornelius to Peter, to bring him to their master Cornelius. God's timing is perfect.

Acts 10:19 "While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee."

This Spirit is the Holy Spirit of God because it is capitalized. The Spirit reveals to Peter that the men are there.

Acts 10:20 "Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them."

This still is the Spirit giving Peter instructions. Peter is not to doubt, but go with them. These three have actually been sent by the Spirit of God. Cornelius gave the orders, but his orders came from the angel of the Lord.

Acts 10:21 "Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what [is] the cause wherefore ye are come?"

Peter already knows why they are here, but goes through the formality anyhow.

Acts 10:22 "And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee."

We see here, that Cornelius is well thought of not only by God, but by his own men and even all of the Jews who live around him. These men of Cornelius tell Peter that Cornelius was told of God to send for Peter to come. Peter is to bring a message from God to Cornelius.

Acts 10:23 "Then called he them in, and lodged [them]. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him."

A true Jew would never have invited these non-Jewish people to spend the night. They were thought of as unclean people. Christians were not that particular, but had been taught to be a friend to man. Jesus had even done miracles for those who were not Hebrews. These brethren of Peter's were not physical brothers, but they were brothers in Christ. They were disciples of Jews. It was not unusual for an apostle to be accompanied by other disciples. Peter was not going, because of the request of Cornelius' men, but because the Holy Spirit told him to go.

Acts 10:24 "And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends."

We see that Cornelius was waiting for Peter. This unselfish man had invited others so that they might receive, as well.

Acts 10:25 "And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped [him]."

Remember, Cornelius was an humble man. He did not know who Peter was, only that God told him to send for Peter. He, perhaps, thought Peter to be deity so he fell down and worshipped Peter.

Acts 10:26 "But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man."

Peter was quick to tell Cornelius that he, too, was a servant of God. We will pick up here in the next lesson.

Notes

Acts 21 Questions

1. Who was Cornelius?
2. Where did he live?
3. Describe Cornelius' character?
4. How was he like Dorcas?
5. Who did Cornelius see in a vision?
6. How did Cornelius feel when he saw him?
7. Who did Cornelius call him?
8. What had come up as a memorial before God?
9. Where was Cornelius to send his men?
10. Who were they to go for?
11. Where was he staying?
12. Who did Cornelius send to Joppa?
13. Where did Peter go to pray at the sixth hour?
14. Why did he not eat?
15. What did Peter see in a vision?
16. What is the number four symbolic of?
17. How did we know this message was from God to man?
18. What was in the sheet?
19. What did the voice tell Peter to do?
20. What reply did Peter give?
21. The voice told Peter what about common things?
22. How many times did Peter see this?
23. What causes food to be clean?
24. What Scripture tells us that?
25. How did Peter feel about the vision?
26. What inquiry did Cornelians' men make?
27. Who told Peter to go with them?
28. Who really sent them?
29. What question did Peter ask the men?
30. Verse 22 tells us who, besides God, had great respect for Cornelius?
31. In verse 23, what did Peter do that a true Jew would not have done?
32. Who had Cornelius invited to meet Peter?
33. When Cornelius saw Peter, what did he do?
34. How did Peter correct him?

Notes

We will resume this lesson in Acts 10:27.

Peter has just arrived at Cornelius' home and Peter told Cornelius not to worship him, that he was a man. Now we will begin in verse 27.

Acts 10:27 "And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together."

This many here, were the people Corenlius had invited. These were all Gentiles.

Acts 10:28 "And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean."

This encounter, with the sheet let down from heaven, has shown Peter that he was wrong in calling any man common. We are all made in the image of God, not just one nationality. The Jews thought themselves to be better than anyone else. They thought all other people to be less than they were. Jesus disproved this when He ate with the publicans and sinners. Prejudice is not right. God does not make different classes of people. People make classes.

Acts 10:29 "Therefore came I [unto you] without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?"

Peter is saying, I learned my lesson well that God was showing me about calling things common. I came without hesitation, even though I knew you were not Jewish because I felt that was what God would have me to do. Now, what did you send for me for? Gainsaying means promptly. He was not prompted, he just came.

Acts 10:30 "And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing,"

Acts 10:31 "And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God."

Acts 10:32 "Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of [one] Simon a tanner by the sea side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee."

This is a repetition of the very thing that had happened to Cornelius. The man in bright clothing was the angel of the Lord. We mentioned before that regardless of who it is, God respects a person who fasts and prays from their heart. This Cornelius truly loved God and wanted to please Him. God answered Cornelius' prayer by telling him where to get help. God even prepared Peter to accept Cornelius, before the servants got there, and asked him to come.

Acts 10:33 "Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God."

Cornelius obeyed God immediately. Now he tells Peter that he is pleased that he came, and that he knows God will speak to him through Peter. He is expecting instructions from God.

Acts 10:34 "Then Peter opened [his] mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:"

This actually is the Holy Spirit speaking through Peter. All Peter had to do was open his mouth. The rest came from God. Perceive, here, means to comprehend or understand. God had made Peter understand that God is no respecter of persons. God loves all of His creation.

Acts 10:35 "But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

This means that if you love God and keep His commandments, it doesn't matter if you are Caucasian, Asiatic, or Negroid: you are God's children and he accepts you. All believers in Christ whether white, black, yellow, or brown are all spiritual Israel and heirs according to the promise. God wants us to fear Him enough to obey Him. He is our heavenly Father.

Acts 10:36 "The word which [God] sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (He is Lord of all:)"

God sent the Scriptures to the physical house of Israel by Moses and the prophets. These Scriptures from Genesis to Malachi told of Jesus Christ (the Lord of all). Jesus Christ is the King of Peace.

Acts 10:37 "That word, [I say], ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;"

The Word is Jesus. Jesus is Saviour of the world. This is the good news preached. Jesus was from Galilee. John the Baptist preached to repent and be baptized that the Saviour of the world, the Messiah was coming. Here, we see Peter telling these Gentiles that Jesus Christ is their Saviour too.

Acts 10:38 "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him."

When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Ghost in the likeness of a dove came and sat upon Him. Jesus was not only filled with power, but was, in fact, power itself. His power was not limited as ours is. He was the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He healed all, not some as we do, in His name. He healed in His own name, we must use His name. Jesus has all power in heaven and earth.

Acts 10:39 "And we are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree:"

Peter, here, relates that even though Jesus did only good, the rulers of the temple had him crucified on a wooden cross. Peter tells them that he saw it with his own eyes.

Acts 10:40 "Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;"
Acts 10:41 "Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, [even] to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead."

Peter is explaining here that, as no mere man could do, Jesus rose from the grave on the third day after His crucifixion. He was seen of over five hundred, but He was with His apostles the most time during the forty days that He walked on the earth, after He arose from the grave, and before He was carried into heaven. He lets them know that it wasn't just a vision of Jesus that they saw, because he ate and drank with them. It was really Him and they were eyewitnesses.

Acts 10:42 "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God [to be] the Judge of quick and dead."

Jesus is the Judge of all the earth. When we die, we stand before Jesus to be judged. He is the one who decides whether we go to heaven or to hell. He is the great Shepherd. If we are His sheep we will go to heaven, if we are not His followers we will go to hell. All who preach are to preach the good news of Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world. It pleased God that by the foolishness of preaching man can be saved.

Acts 10:43 "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."

All of the prophets, prophesied of Jesus. The gift of salvation is so simple that many cannot believe. Romans 10:9-10 explains it the best. God wants all of us. That is why we must believe in our heart. He does not want us to be ashamed of Him, and that is why we must confess Him with our mouth. He gave His body on the cross that we can have our sins washed away in His precious blood. If we believe in the name of Jesus Christ, we are truly Christians who are saved.

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

These people loved God and freely accepted the message Peter brought. This hearing the word here has to do with their inner man hearing and believing. They received the Holy Ghost as the 120 had at Pentecost.

Acts 10:45 "And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost."

The word that gives the whole thing away is gift. You cannot earn the Holy Ghost. It is a gift of God. This is God's way of showing these pious Jews that He loves the Gentiles, too. These Jews with Peter had thought you had to be a natural Jew to receive God. God taught them a lesson here. All who love God can receive God.

Acts 10:46 "For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,"

Acts 10:47 "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?"

God had not only baptized them in the Holy Ghost, but gave the evidence, as well (they spoke with tongues). Peter, in a word, is saying, If God found them worthy of baptism, who are we to deny them? You see, if they refused them water baptism after God had baptized them in the Holy Ghost, they would be siding against God. They would, in fact, be questioning God's wisdom. Peter says, if they are alright with God, they better be alright with us.

Acts 10:48 "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."

Peter did not ask any more. He told them to baptize them in water in the name of the Lord. They asked Peter to stay a few days. I would guess that this was so they could be taught more about Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world.

Notes

Acts 22 Questions

1. Why did Peter tell Cornelius not to worship him?
2. When Peter came inside, was Cornelius alone?
3. Peter told Cornelius that what was against Jewish law?
4. Why did Peter come then?
5. Peter had come without _____.
6. What did Peter ask Cornelius?
7. How many days before had Cornelius been fasting?
8. When Cornelius prayed, what had he seen?
9. What message had God sent Cornelius?
10. In verse 32, Peter was called by what other name?
11. Where was Peter staying?
12. What did Cornelius mean by, "...thou hast well done that thou art come...?"
13. What had they all come to hear of Peter?
14. In verse 34, "...Peter opened his mouth..." means what?
15. What had Peter perceived of God?
16. Who is accepted of God?
17. What had God sent to the children of Israel?
18. Who is Lord of all?
19. Who preached baptism?
20. Who is the Word?
21. What is the good news that is preached?
22. What did Jesus do on earth?
23. Who slew Jesus?
24. What day did Jesus rise?
25. Who witnessed Jesus after His resurrection?
26. Who is the Judge of the "...quick and dead..?"
27. What gives you remission of your sins?
28. What happened while Peter spoke?
29. Who were astonished at this happening?
30. What did they hear them do?
31. What did Peter say they could not forbid?
32. What did Peter command them to do?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 11:1 "And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God."

Up until this time, they had not even tried to bring the gospel message to the Gentile nations. The Israelites felt that they were a set aside nation to whom God had given this message. They felt that it was for them alone.

Acts 11:2 "And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,"

We see in this Gentile conversion, the beginning of the Gentile church. The Jews were so self-centered that they believed they were the only ones God offered salvation to. They had not had the vision that Peter had from God showing them that all people were acceptable to God. The fact that Peter had baptized these Gentiles was causing problems. They had already forgotten that Jesus ministered to publicans and sinners.

Acts 11:3 "Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them."

We must realize that the beginning of the early church was made up of Jewish men and women.

Acts 11:4 "But Peter rehearsed [the matter] from the beginning, and expounded [it] by order unto them, saying,"

Acts 11:5 "I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me:"

Acts 11:6 "Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air."

You see, Peter now is relating to them the vision God had given him in Joppa, which convinced him that he was not to call any man common or unclean anymore.

Acts 11:7 "And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat."

Acts 11:8 "But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth."

Acts 11:9 "But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, [that] call not thou common."

Acts 11:10 "And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven."

If this does not convince these Jews, then they are not convinceable. Peter was, perhaps, the most set in Jewish tradition of any of them, until he had this vision. God has a way of doing away with our preconceived ideas.

Acts 11:11 "And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Caesarea unto me."

Acts 11:12 "And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:"

Acts 11:13 "And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter;"

Acts 11:14 "Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved."

You see, Peter, at the time this happened, was the one that all the others looked to for instruction and doctrine. Jesus had turned the keys over to Peter. Peter was the foundation rock. If Peter okays the Gentiles, then they know it is correct. He is explaining in detail what influenced him to believe in allowing Gentiles to join their ranks.

Acts 11:15 "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning."

This they cannot criticize, because they know that the Holy Ghost is a gift from God. They would be questioning God, if they said anything about the Holy Ghost falling on them.

Acts 11:16 "Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost."

Peter reminds them, here, that it may be alright to criticize him in this matter, but be sure and remember that it is Jesus Christ their Lord who baptizes in the Holy Ghost.

Acts 11:17 "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?"

Peter tells them, here, that he has no intention of going against God on this matter. Peter knows that he, too, is a servant of God carrying out the will of God, and not his own will. The Holy Ghost is not only a gift from God, but is also an empowerment to minister the Word of God to the lost. This gift has a purpose. This makes our witness filled with power from on high. There is so much hidden in the name Lord Jesus Christ. Many believe in Christ the anointed one. Many believe in Jesus the Saviour. It is a totally different thing to believe that the Christ (the anointed one) and Jesus (your Saviour) is also your Lord. When we make Jesus Christ our Lord we are saying, not my will but thine be done in my life.

Acts 11:18 "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

How can they fight against God? This just shows them, again, the greatness of God. This leaves no doubt. God is interested in the Gentiles, as well. Salvation is to whosoever will. One thing they have overlooked in all of this, is those Jesus ministered to. One of the most vivid to me, is where the mother comes to Jesus for help for her demoniac daughter. This is

found in Matthew 15:21-28, Matthew 15:21 "Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon." Matthew 15:22 "And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, [thou] son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." Matthew 15:23 "But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us." Matthew 15:24 "But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matthew 15:25 "Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me." Matthew 15:26 "But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast [it] to dogs." Matthew 15:27 "And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Matthew 15:28 "Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great [is] thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."

You see, God respects faith wherever it is. Jesus set the example here and in many other places. Peter has done the correct thing. He has been obedient to God and not man.

Acts 23 Questions

1. What did the apostles in Judaea hear that disturbed them?
2. Who contended with Peter?
3. What was this the beginning of?
4. In verse 3, what complaint did they make to Peter?
5. What did Peter rehearse to them?
6. What city was Peter in when he had the vision?
7. What had the Lord told Peter to do that Peter said, not so to?
8. How many times did the Lord give Peter the vision?
9. Where were the three men sent from to get Peter?
10. How many of Peter's brethren went with him?
11. Who had appeared to Cornelius?
12. In verse 14, what had Cornelius been told Peter would tell him?
13. In verse 15, Peter tells them something that they cannot argue with, what is it?
14. What did John baptize with?
15. Who baptized with the Holy Ghost?
16. In verse 17, Peter said he would be trying to withstand whom, if he had not accepted them?
17. What, besides a gift from God, is the Holy Spirit?
18. In verse 18, what did these apostles do after hearing Peter's statement?
19. Who is offered salvation?
20. In Matthew chapter 15, who does Jesus minister to?
21. Who did Jesus tell her he was sent to?
22. Why did Jesus answer her prayer?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 11:19 "Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only."

It appears that this area they were scattered to, were mostly Gentile people, but these apostles preached to the Jews in this area only. When Stephen was stoned to death, the apostles and other disciples scattered and went to these various areas.

Acts 11:20 "And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus."

This Phenice (Phoenix) was a haven of Crete. It is easy access by water. Cyprus is a large island in the Mediterranean off the coast of Syria. You can see that fear had driven these disciples to a far away place. This Cyprus was the native home of Barnabas. This area was Paul's first missionary field. Antioch was the place Jesus' followers were first called Christians. This area, I guess you could say, was the cradle of the first Christian missionary ministry.

Acts 11:21 "And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord."

All of the eloquent preaching in the world will not bring one sinner to salvation, if God is not the author of the sermon. What makes a sermon cause people to be saved is the power of the Holy Spirit in the message. The Holy Spirit woos the person and prepares his heart to receive before the message even begins. In I Corinthians 1:21 we read, "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." You see, what is foolish to man is wise to God.

Acts 11:22 "Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch."

The good news of how people were readily accepting the Lord spread fast and was soon all the way back to Jerusalem. Barnabas, as we had said before, was from this area and he would know the people. He was sent, because he knew all the ins and outs of this area and the people.

Acts 11:23 "Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord."

Barnabas was glad that the people of his home area had received the Lord. It appears that he preached (exhorted). He warns them to walk in their salvation and not fall back into the ways of the world. This leaves no doubt that Barnabas has been added to the preachers of the Word. Since he is familiar with these people, he will be able to minister in the area of their needs better, because he knows their needs.

Acts 11:24 "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord."

This means that Barnabas was a man seeking to do God's will. He was in right standing with God. There was the power of the Holy Ghost in his ministry. People who knew him would listen to him, because they had great respect for him. These people were added unto the Lord, because Barnabas preached to them and they listened and received the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

Acts 11:25 "Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:"

We will find that Saul (Paul) and Barnabas will minister together in many cities. Barnabas has already led many to Christ at home, now he goes out as a missionary. Tarsus is the capital of Cilicia and the birthplace of Saul.

Acts 11:26 "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."

It seems that the power of the Holy Ghost operating through Saul and Barnabas caused the church to grow mightily for a whole year in Antioch. A Christian is a follower of and a believer in Jesus Christ, so it would be correct to call them Christians (Christ like). It seemed Christianity could grow freely here and the disciples came here after Stephen was martyred. The most resistance to Christianity seemed to be in Jerusalem.

Acts 11:27 "And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch."

Prophet here means someone who foretells the future under the anointing of the Spirit of God.

Acts 11:28 "And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar."

This Agabus was believed to be one of the 90 disciples of Christ. His prediction came true in just one year from his prophecy. The world meant here was probably the land of Judaea. Dearth means scarcity of food, famine, hunger. Claudius Caesar was the Roman emperor in Power when this famine came. Famines are many times, a way of getting people on their knees seeking God.

Acts 11:29 "Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:"

We see here, Christians in Antioch sending help to their Christian brethren in Judaea. This is the first time recorded that this type of charitable acts were done by Christians. We see by this that, they had begun to believe that all Christians are sisters and brothers in Christ. We are a family and this is the first time these Christians seemed to be aware of this.

Acts 11:30 "Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."

This practice of sending ministers to carry out our missions of good will was started here when Saul and Barnabas were entrusted with the funds to help those in need in Judaea. Saul and Barnabas were the first example of co-pastoring a church, also. Jesus had sent them out 2 by 2 to minister, but Saul and Barnabas actually pastored together.

Acts 24 Questions

1. Where did the disciples go after Stephen was stoned to death?
2. Who did they preach to?
3. Who were most of the population here?
4. What did they preach?
5. What was another name for Phenice?
6. Where is Cyprus located?
7. Who was Cyprus home to?
8. In verse 21, "And the _____ was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord."
9. Who must be the author of a sermon to win people to Christ?
10. Quote I Corinthians 1:21.
11. Who sent Barnabas to Antioch?
12. What does exhorted mean?
13. What did Barnabas warn them not to do?
14. How was Barnabas described?
15. What two things was he full of?
16. Where did Barnabas go when he left?
17. Who did he go to meet?
18. What is the capital of Cilicia?
19. When Barnabas found him, where did they go?
20. How long did they stay here and preach?
21. Where were the disciples first called Christians?
22. What is a Christian?
23. Where was the most resistance to Christianity?
24. Where did the prophets come from to Antioch?
25. What does prophet mean in verse 27?
26. What was the name of the prophet who predicted famine in Judaea?
27. What does dearth mean?
28. Who was the Roman emperor in power when the dearth came?
29. Verse 29 is the first example of what?
30. Who took the offering to Judea?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 12:1 "Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth [his] hands to vex certain of the church." Acts 12:2 "And he killed James the brother of John with the sword."

We see, here, that the opposition to the church has gone violent. About that time means about the time Saul and Barnabas were preaching together, and about the time the followers of Jesus became to be called Christians. This Herod is Herod Agrippa, probably. He ruled over Judaea and Samaria at the time this happened. This James, brother of John, was a son of Zebedee and was known along with his brother as sons of thunder. He is not to be confused with the James (half brother of Jesus) who wrote the Book of James. Jesus had predicted that James would die a violent death for the gospel. History (not Bible) says that James and his accuser were beheaded together.

Acts 12:3 "And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)"

This Herod really liked the Jews. He wanted very much to please them. Their greatest ambition at this time was to stamp out Christianity any way they could. Peter, James, and John had been very close to the Lord and were doing a lot to further Christianity. The Jews felt, if they could get rid of them, they could possibly stamp out this movement. This happened very close to Passover, because Passover and Unleavened Bread are just about the same time. In fact they overlap. Unleavened Bread Feast lasted from the 14th of Nisan, or Abib, through the 21st. Passover was on the 14th. Abib or Nisan is approximately our April. It fluctuates on our calendar (which is different to the Jewish calendar), because they count a month on the change of the moon.

Acts 12:4 "And when he had apprehended him, he put [him] in prison, and delivered [him] to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people."

Apprehended means seize or officially arrest. A quaternion is four soldiers, or a squad. This just means that they had 16 soldiers constantly watching Peter to keep him from escaping. Herod did not want another happening like Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection to happen, so he purposely does nothing about Peter until after Easter. The Strong's Concordance gives Easter as meaning Passover.

Acts 12:5 "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him."

This means that twenty-four hours a day someone in the group of disciples was praying for the release of Peter unharmed. Herod did not want to bring this to a head during Passover, so he just kept Peter in jail under heavy guard until this time passed.

Acts 12:6 "And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison."

They were treating Peter as if he were a hardened criminal. They not only had his hands in chains, but had two soldiers, one on each side to even sleep next to him to keep him from escaping. These two soldiers were probably chained to Peter, but the Scripture does not say. This was not even enough restraints, so they positioned soldiers at the door to watch, as well. It is just like the Lord to wait until just before Peter was to be brought before Herod for sentencing to save him.

Acts 12:7 "And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon [him], and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from [his] hands."

This angel of the Lord had been close to the Lord Jesus, because of the light that shined around him and in the prison. Jesus is the Light. This was a light, so this was probably an angel whom Jesus had given this power to, to help Peter. The chains fell from Peter's hands, but did not awaken the soldiers, because they probably still had chains attached to their hands. This smote Peter on the side just means that he quietly awakened Peter and gave him these instructions. Peter would know that this angel was sent of God and not Herod, because of the light and the miracle of the chains falling off.

Acts 12:8 "And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me."

This angel is telling Peter that he has time to put on his sandals and outer coat and get ready to leave this prison. The guards are as if they are in a deep sleep. The angel will lead the way and open any and all closed doors. Any opposition to Peter leaving the prison would be taken care of by this angel.

Acts 12:9 "And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision."

Peter really believed that he was dreaming, or had a vision, and had no idea that this angel was really releasing him from this prison. God cares for his own. When there seems no way out of a problem, God makes a way for us.

Acts 12:10 "When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him."

This ward here is the prison guard. It is as if everyone in this prison is in a state of deep sleep. These guards do not even notice as they pass by. This angel has the power of God operating in him so strongly that the door opens automatically and lets them pass. We see in this, that where God sends us, God opens the way for us. After Peter is safely out of prison and away from the prison, the angel leaves him to make his own way. Always, when we work for Jesus, He walks with us and leads us until we are established to walk on our own. We ourselves must not start on a road that the Lord has not opened to us. The Lord heads us out in the direction we should go. Our job is to continue on that path to our destination.

Acts 12:11 "And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and [from] all the expectation of the people of the Jews."

Herod had done this terrible thing just to please these Jews. You see, Peter had not committed a crime. We see here the ruling power not judging justly, but to please some of his people. A ruler should always be above this sort of thing. He should judge justly. Peter realizes suddenly, that this is not a dream at all, but that the Lord has sent His angel and freed him from prison. We see in this, that those whom the Lord send's cannot be stopped by government officials, nor can they be stopped just because they are imprisoned. God's truth will go forth. No force on earth can stop it.

We must remember in this, that the other apostles and followers of Jesus have been praying for the release of Peter. The prayers of the Saints do not go unnoticed. The Lord knew when Peter was imprisoned and, also, knew how his release would build up the faith of all the followers of Jesus.

Notes

Acts 25 Questions

1. What king stretched forth his hand to vex the Christians?
2. What did he do to James the brother of John?
3. Which Herod is this?
4. Where did he rule?
5. What does history teach about James' death?
6. Why did Herod seize Peter?
7. What Jewish feast was going on at this time?
8. What was the Jews' greatest ambition at this time?
9. What month did Feast of Passover occur?
10. What month did Feast of Unleavened Bread occur?
11. How do the Jews note a passing month?
12. How many soldiers were to guard Peter?
13. What is a quarternion?
14. When did Herod plan to bring Peter before the people?
15. Who prayed for Peter?
16. How fervent was the prayer?
17. In verse 6, how did they secure Peter so he would not escape?
18. How were the soldiers treating Peter?
19. What two things happened to Peter in the prison that were definitely of God?
20. When the angel smote Peter, what happened?
21. Why would Peter know this angel was from God?
22. In verse 8, what did the angel tell Peter to do?
23. What did Peter think was happening?
24. What happened to the gate?
25. What did the angel do as soon as Peter was safe?
26. When Peter came to himself, what did he realize?
27. What did the Lord know from the beginning that the release of Peter would do?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 12:12 "And when he had considered [the thing], he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying."

In the last lesson, we saw Peter imprisoned for no reason at all, except Herod wanting to please the Jews. We saw, also, that the Lord intervened on Peter's behalf and sent an angel to release him. Peter, at first thought he was dreaming, but quickly discovered that the Lord had, indeed, released him. Now we pick up when Peter goes to the home where the Christians had been praying for him. This prayer meeting was at John Mark's mother Mary's house.

Acts 12:13 "And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, named Rhoda."

We see that Rhoda had been assigned to watch and listen at the door. This was a very dangerous time for the Christians, and they were very cautious. This was in the middle of the night, and she was afraid.

Acts 12:14 "And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate."

She was so excited that she ran to tell the others, even before she opened the gate. She was really excited, and we do unusual things many times when we get that excited. Peter was well known by this family, and Rhoda was probably a member of it. He had stayed with them many times before. It would be a natural thing for her to recognize Peter's voice.

Acts 12:15 "And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they, It is his angel."

We see that even though they had been praying for his safe release, they did not believe it. This was probably because they knew Herod to be an evil ruler. They, also, remembered that he had James killed with the sword. Even though she kept telling them that Peter was at the door, they believed the worst. They thought Herod had him killed and this was his angel at the door. This is just like today. We pray for a miracle and when it comes, we just can't believe it. Possibly the prayers of these people have doubt and unbelief in them.

Acts 12:16 "But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened [the door], and saw him, they were astonished."

Peter had been standing at the door knocking all this time. They were amazed when they saw him, because they were expecting him to die. Even though they were praying for a miracle, they did not expect it to happen.

Acts 12:17 "But he, beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place."

Peter was trying to keep quiet, so that the authorities would not find out where he had gone to hide. He relates the story to them, how the Lord had released his chains and opened the gate to let him out. This James, here that Peter is speaking to, is the half brother of Jesus. This James and Peter were leaders of the church at this time. The reason it was so important to tell the brethren of this miracle was to encourage them that God would be with them if the authorities arrested them. They were, perhaps, frightened by James the son of Zebedee's being killed for the Word of God.

Acts 12:18 "Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter."

You remember, that these soldiers who had been chained to Peter were not even awakened when Peter's chains fell off. They were in a deep sleep and did not wake until the next morning. They could not explain what happened, because they slept through the whole thing.

Acts 12:19 "And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that [they] should be put to death. And he went down from Judaea to Caesarea, and [there] abode."

We see, here, the intolerance of Herod. He did not accept the excuses of the soldiers. He just had them killed. Herod's fear is showing in that he moved. He felt these Christians had more power than he had realized, so he moved to Caesarea by the sea.

Acts 12:20 "And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's [country]."

There was commerce going on between Tyre, Sidon, and Herod's country in those days. Herod's country sent food stuff to them in exchange for other goods needed. It seems that there was a limited peace with them, similar to the cold war we have known in our generation. This Blastus was a personal servant to Herod. He was inside Herod's home, even taking care of Herod's clothing etc. This friendship Blastus had with these people, at the least, strained the relationship he had with Herod.

Acts 12:21 "And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them."

Herod was dressed in the finest he had. He was speaking to the people. His dress was so superior to the people around him, that they thought of Herod as someone very special.

Acts 12:22 "And the people gave a shout, [saying, It is] the voice of a god, and not of a man."

Many rulers, then and now, have been treated as if they were a god, because of the control they have over the people and the extravagant way they live. The people have elevated Herod far above what he should be.

Acts 12:23 "And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."

Many ministers today need to take heed of this Scripture. We must all remember that the power that works in us is not our own, but His. Kings are kings because God made them kings. Great orators are good speakers, because God gave them ability. We see, here, the danger of thinking that the great and wonderful things in our life are by our own ability. God will not tolerate this type of arrogance, whether it be from one of His ministers or whether from a king. Notice the process of Herod's death. He was eaten of worms and then he died. All praise and honor goes to God. We are only the container for His power and glory. It is not our power or glory, it is His.

Acts 12:24 "But the word of God grew and multiplied."

We find that in the very worst of times, the gospel seems to grow the most. Persecution seems to drive us on to bigger and better things.

Acts 12:25 "And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled [their] ministry, and took with them John, whose surname was Mark."

We see, here, that Saul and Barnabas had returned, and were probably here when they were praying for Peter to be released. This John Mark is not the same, probably, as John the beloved. He was son of this Mary whose home was used when they prayed for Peter's release. I believe what happened to Herod, is just reward for him killing James, the brother of John of Zebedee. This John was probably a young disciple and could learn from these seasoned ministers, so they took him with them.

Notes

Acts 26 Questions

1. When Peter escaped from prison, where did he go?
2. Who heard him knocking?
3. What was her reaction?
4. Why was it necessary to assign someone to watch the door?
5. What time of day was this?
6. Why does verse 14 say, "...she opened not the gate...?"
7. What did she do instead?
8. In verse 15, the disciples said what to her when she told them Peter was at the door?
9. What explanation did they give that this was not actually Peter?
10. Did Peter go away? Explain.
11. When they did open the door, what did Peter caution them to do?
12. Who did Peter say had brought him out of prison?
13. Who did Peter tell them to go and tell?
14. Who were the two leaders of the church at this time?
15. When did the soldiers realize Peter was gone?
16. What did Herod do to the soldiers who guarded Peter?
17. Where did Herod move to?
18. What two was Herod highly displeased with?
19. What was the name of the king's chamberlain?
20. What was his duty toward Herod?
21. What did Herod do on a set day?
22. Who did the people say Herod was?
23. What did the angel of the Lord do to Herod?
24. Why did the angel of the Lord do this?
25. Was he eaten of worms before he died or after?
26. In spite of all this, what happened to the Word of God?
27. When Saul and Barnabas went out to minister, who did they take with them?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 13:1 "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul."

It seems at this time that, there was a very active church in Antioch. Prophets and teachers differ, in that the prophets foretell of future events, and teachers are speaking of things that need to be learned that have already happened. This church at Antioch seems to be operating in the fullness of the five fold ministry. The name Barnabas means son of prophecy. Barnabas was a Levite. He was also a native of Cyprus. He was an early convert to Christianity. He seems to be closely associated with Saul. About all we know of Simeon, that was called Niger, is right here. His name indicates that he was a Jew. The other two here, we know nothing about, except that they grew up with Herod and Saul.

Acts 13:2 "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

Here, we see a special call on Saul and Barnabas to go out as missionaries. I have found, in my own ministry, that the Lord speaks to us the most when we have set ourselves aside from all the earthly things for a few days and just pray. God will not interrupt your favorite television program to speak to you. I have found that the Lord is still speaking to his people. We are just not listening. God has not changed, we have. Too many people give God too little of their time. Those whom God calls to work for Him, must make time for God to speak to them.

Acts 13:3 "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid [their] hands on them, they sent [them] away."

We see from this that even Saul and Barnabas needed extra power from God to undertake this missionary journey. Those who were earnestly praying and fasting were acting as agents of God when they laid hands on Saul and Barnabas. Their strength came from God and not man.

Acts 13:4 "So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus."

Seleucia was actually the seaport of Antioch. It was like a suburb. This is truly a missionary journey, because they are sent forth by the Holy Ghost. Cyprus was an island. It was off the coast of Syria in the Mediterranean Sea. It, also, was the native home of Barnabas, as we studied before.

Acts 13:5 "And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to [their] minister."

Salamis seemed to be a Jewish city, since the synagogues were mentioned. Saul would have been allowed to speak, since he was a Pharisee. It seems that the early Christians here were Jewish believers.

Acts 13:6 "And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name [was] Bar-jesus:"

This sorcerer had great power, the only problem was that this great power came from an evil source. Sorcerers of this day used astrology, and magic, and dark arts to convince the people. This has never changed. People are still consulting their horoscope, going to palm readers and practicing all sorts of sorcery. Sorcery is not of God, but is of Satan. Satan has some limited power on this earth, but is not like Jesus Christ who is the source of all power. It seems this sorcerer had many deceived. Many thought him to be a prophet, because of the miracles he did. Bar-jesus was a Hebrew by birth, but a son of Satan in the spirit. He was a false prophet.

Acts 13:7 "Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God."

Sergius Paulus (a Roman) was seeking the truth. Notice that God will accept the wealthy and famous the same as He will the poor. The requirement is the same. They must repent and earnestly seek the Truth. Those who seek the Truth, find it, and Sergius Paulus is no different.

Acts 13:8 "But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith."

Bar-jesus and Elymas are the same person. This sorcerer had probably been living off of Sergius Paulus, and he didn't want anyone coming in and tearing his little con game up. To work against God is a very dangerous thing to do, as this sorcerer will find out.

Acts 13:9 "Then Saul, (who also [is called] Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him," Acts 13:10 "And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, [thou] child of the devil, [thou] enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?"

This filled with the Holy Ghost is more than what he ordinarily had. This was an extra portion of the Spirit. This gave Saul great boldness in the Lord. The words which came from Saul were really not his own, but words the Holy Ghost spoke through him. This is the Holy Ghost coming against this Elymas. He called him who he is, the son of the devil. Elymas' power was devil power. Saul is saying to him, you have now come against Almighty God. Elymas was not opposing Saul, but God.

Acts 13:11 "And now, behold, the hand of the Lord [is] upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand."

The judgment of God is swift when it does come. Those who oppose the Lord in our day can expect a like fate. Notice that this blindness is not a permanent situation, but is for a season. The blindness was so drastic that

he could not even see to walk. This man had already been blind to the Spirit and now he is physically blind, as well.

Acts 13:12 "Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord."

This deputy, really, was already believing what Saul and Barnabas had been saying. The sorcerer had tried to cause him not to believe. When the great power of God was manifest (made real) against this sorcerer, this deputy knew beyond a shadow of a doubt who was God. The doctrine of the Lord was so different from all that he had ever been taught, but this miracle with the sorcerer erased any doubt he might have had. In Romans 10:9-10, we see that the most necessary thing to salvation is to believe. We are not told whether he was baptized or not, but true believers want to be baptized as a show to the world that they have truly believed.

Notes

Acts 27 Questions

1. What ministries were going on in the church at Antioch?
2. How does a prophet and teacher differ?
3. Name four people involved in ministry at Antioch.
4. In verse 2, what do we read they were doing when the Holy Ghost spoke to them?
5. What did He tell them to do?
6. When will God speak to us the most?
7. The Lord is still speaking, we are just not _____.
8. What did the group do before they sent them out?
9. In verse 4, it tells us just who really sent Saul and Barnabas forth, who was it?
10. Where did they go?
11. Where was Cyprus?
12. In verse 5, we find that they preached in what building?
13. What were most of the people of Salamis?
14. What was the sorcerer's name?
15. What was he?
16. Who was the deputy of the country?
17. What are some of the things sorcerers do?
18. Who was the deputy?
19. What did this deputy desire to hear?
20. What are the requirements for a rich man to come to God?
21. What was another name for Bar-jesus?
22. What did he try to do to the deputy?
23. How could Saul have such boldness?
24. Under heavy anointing of God, what did Saul say to Bar-jesus?
25. Whose ways were the sorcerer trying to pervert?
26. What punishment came instantly to Bar-jesus?
27. What effect did this have on the deputy?
28. What was the deputy astonished at?

Notes

We will pick up this lesson in Acts 13:13 "Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem."

We find that Saul (Paul) left and went for the first time to Asia Minor. Perga was the capitol of Pamphylia. This area was inhabited by the Jewish people. The worship of the false goddess Diana had been prevalent here. There was even a temple built right out of town in Perga to this false goddess. John went back to Jerusalem, instead of coming with them to Perga.

Acts 13:14 "But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down."

This is not the Antioch in Syria where the followers of Jesus were first called Christians. This was an area where desperate criminals roamed and robbed everyone that came through. II Corinthians 11:26 is probably speaking of this trip when Saul was in danger of robbers. They were not completely bad, because there was a synagogue there.

Acts 13:15 "And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, [Ye] men [and] brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on."

Whether they had heard rumors from other countries about Saul or not, it does not say. It, perhaps, was a little unusual for strangers to come here, and even more strange for them to come to the synagogue. Perhaps, these in authority in the synagogue thought they were probably prophets whom God had sent to them. For whatever the reason, they opened the way for Saul and the others to speak freely.

Acts 13:16 "Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with [his] hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience."

This should cover everyone who was there worshipping in the temple. A person would not be in the temple unless they feared God. His beckoning with his hand was so that they would come close enough to hear what he said. To put it simply he was saying, gather around, I have something to tell you.

Acts 13:17 "The God of this people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought he them out of it."

Saul starts with something that all Jews were familiar with. This was something they remembered each year at Passover. If you were a descendent of Israel, you were very familiar with this.

Acts 13:18 "And about the time of forty years suffered he their manners in the wilderness."

Also, the forty years in the wilderness was well known to these people. Their unbelief had turned a journey of a few days into forty years. Not only was this familiar to them, but to Saul, too, since he was a Pharisee.

Acts 13:19 "And when he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, he divided their land to them by lot."

All of these statements, Saul is making, is to reassure these Israelites that he was very familiar with what they believed.

Acts 13:20 "And after that he gave [unto them] judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet."

I do not know exactly how this 450 years fit in here. I tried to begin the stay in Egypt 400 years instead of 430, and add forty years for the wilderness wanderings, which would leave just ten years in Canaan before the beginning of the judges. Whatever I came up with was just pure speculation, so I would rather say, I do not know than to try to squeeze it around to fit. I do not know is my answer.

Acts 13:21 "And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years."

We remember that God did not want them to have an earthly king. He was their King. They insisted, and God gave them Saul to rule over them as an earthly king. Saul reigned for forty years.

Acts 13:22 "And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the [son] of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will."

David also reigned forty years as king of Israel. David was the beloved of God. Jesus in the flesh was a descendent of David. In Psalms 110:1 we see David speaking of his descendent Jesus.

Acts 13:23 "Of this man's seed hath God according to [his] promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:"

Now Saul is making the connection here between David and his descendent Jesus Christ (the Saviour of the world). God had promised a Saviour to the Israelites. They called him Messiah, but they did not accept Jesus as this promised one.

Acts 13:24 "When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel."

This is speaking of John the Baptist who went through the country crying, repent for the Lord is coming. This message was preached to the house of Israel.

Acts 13:25 "And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not [he]. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of [his] feet I am not worthy to loose."

John the Baptist, who all of the Israelites had great respect for, told them that he was not the Messiah, but was proclaiming the coming of the Messiah. It is strange to me, that they thought so much of John the Baptist

(flocking to him to be baptized) and did not believe what he had told them about Jesus being the Christ (the Messiah).

Acts 13:26 "Men [and] brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent."

This includes everyone who believes in God. God sent His Son to be the Saviour of them all. Paul reminds them, here, that the message of salvation through Jesus Christ was sent to the physical house of Israel first. Stock of Abraham means physical house of Israel.

Acts 13:27 "For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled [them] in condemning [him]."

Paul is reminding them, here, of the prophets who prophesied that Jesus would be rejected by his own. This was so true, because His own received Him not. The prophets read the Scriptures every Saturday which told of this very thing.

Acts 13:28 "And though they found no cause of death [in him], yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain."

We went into this in great detail in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Just to touch on it here, Pilate was against crucifying Jesus. He washed his hands of the whole matter. The temple rulers and most of the other Israelites wanted Him crucified. They even told Pilate that they and their children would bear the blame. Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies, but they had scales over their eyes and would not accept the Truth.

Acts 13:29 "And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took [him] down from the tree, and laid [him] in a sepulchre." Acts 13:30 "But God raised him from the dead:"

Paul tells them, here, that even though they thought they were rid of Jesus (by killing Him and putting Him in a tomb), He rose from the grave.

Acts 13:31 "And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people."

Paul says, here, that it was not just the eleven disciples that saw Jesus after He arose. In another Scripture, we are told that Jesus was seen of over 500 people after his resurrection. Paul is telling them that there were many eyewitnesses that they can check with. These eyewitnesses are telling this everywhere. It will not be difficult to find someone who saw Him.

Acts 13:32 "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,"

Acts 13:33 "God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."

This particular thing Paul mentioned here is in Psalms 2:7 but all the chapter is really about Jesus. I love the 12th verse the most, it says, Psalms 2:12, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way,

when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." You see, if we put our trust in Jesus, we are blessed. Paul reminds them, again above, that it was prophesied that Jesus would rise from the grave.

Acts 13:34 "And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, [now] no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David."

Acts 13:35 "Wherefore he saith also in another [psalm], Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."

Psalms 16:10 is the Scripture Paul is speaking of here. Jesus Christ (the Messiah) (the Word) is an eternal being. Death could not contain Him for He is Life. St. John chapter 1 tells of the eternity of His being. The body begins to decay on the fourth day. Jesus rose from the grave on the third day, so even His body did not experience corruption.

Notes

Acts 28 Questions

1. At what time did John leave Paul?
2. This was the first time Paul had come to _____.
3. The worship of what false goddess was prevalent here?
4. When they left Perga, where did they go?
5. Was this the same place the followers of Jesus were first called Christians?
6. After the reading of the law and prophets, what did the rulers say to them?
7. Who did Paul tell to give audience?
8. Paul reminded them that God brought their people out of Egypt, how?
9. How long were they in the wilderness?
10. How many nations in Canaan did God run out to make room for Israel?
11. How many years after, did Paul say God gave the judges until Samuel?
12. Who was the first king of Israel?
13. What tribe was he from?
14. How long did he reign?
15. Who took the place of Saul to rule?
16. Who was the father of David?
17. Of whose seed did God promise Jesus the Saviour to be?
18. Who preached the baptism of repentance?
19. How had John compared himself to Jesus?
20. What does stock of Abraham mean?
21. Who all is included in verse 26 to hear the gospel?
22. What was read every sabbath?
23. Who did the Israelites choose to carry out their evil wishes toward Jesus?
24. How was Jesus killed?
25. After they killed Him, what did they do?
26. What happened on the third day?
27. Who are Jesus' witnesses to the people?
28. What is written in second Psalms?
29. "...Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see _____."
30. In Psalms 2:12 who are blessed?

Notes

We will continue this in Acts 13:36 "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:"

We discussed in the last lesson, how Jesus saw no corruption, because his body rose from the tomb on the third day. The decaying process begins on the fourth day. The prophecy in Psalms 16 had meant that Jesus' body would not decay; it did not mean David's body. David's body had lain in the grave many years, when Paul spoke these words. His body had decayed.

Acts 13:37 "But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption."

Jesus Christ's body did not decay. It was raised on the third day.

Acts 13:38 "Be it known unto you therefore, men [and] brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:"

Paul speaks of Jesus as man here, because this is what the people saw. They could not comprehend at this time that Jesus was, in fact, (God the Word) in the flesh of a man. Paul gets to the most important part here. Through Jesus is the only way to get forgiveness for your sins.

Acts 13:39 "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."

Justified means just as if I had never sinned. Every person who believes is just as if they had never sinned. What a promise! The law of Moses was our schoolmaster (Gal. 3) to make us see our need for a Saviour. All of the washings and the animal sacrifices could only cover sin, not do away with sin. The blood of Jesus does away with our sin, if we are a Christian.

Acts 13:40 "Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;"

Here, again, we see a warning to hold fast to what you have. The authorities will not like it, and will come against God's people just as the prophets have predicted.

Acts 13:41 "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you."

Paul is warning them, that if they sit around and just wonder without receiving this message that he has brought them of salvation through Jesus Christ, they will perish. These Jews, Paul knows, will not believe. Even though Paul was one of them (Pharisee), he has changed and is trying to get them to change. They won't change and accept Jesus as Messiah.

Acts 13:42 "And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath."

These Jews are like so many Christians today in different denominations. They are head strong (they can't be bothered with the facts). They have already made up their minds. They do not intend to change. Most of this type of dogmatic belief is based on some denomination's doctrine, rather than on the Word of God. Gentiles, in this case above, have no preconceived ideas and are willing to listen to the Word of God. They not only want to listen, they ask Paul to preach to them.

Acts 13:43 "Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God."

We see that Paul and Barnabas' teachings were not in vain. Many of the Jews believed and accepted the gift of grace through Jesus Christ. We see that the Jews and proselytes (newcomers) wanted to hear more and followed Paul and Barnabas to the place they were staying and heard even more. At any rate, they believed and accepted Jesus as Saviour.

Acts 13:44 "And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God."

The word has spread by the people who heard before, and now they have come in great numbers to hear the Word of God.

Acts 13:45 "But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming."

This is nothing more than religious jealousy. These leaders of the Jews suddenly realize they are losing their following. They come out against Paul and Barnabas and what they are teaching. These Jews had worshipped a certain way all of their lives, and they were not about to go to this new way.

Acts 13:46 "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

You see, every person on earth is a free agent. We either choose the Lord Jesus Christ and everlasting life, or we refuse the Lord and death reigns. We judge ourselves, as the Scripture above says. There really is no need wasting God's time on those who will not listen and accept the good news of the gospel. Paul has done the only thing he could do, and that is to turn to someone interested in receiving eternal life. The Gentiles are not only wanting Jesus as Saviour, but they are eager to receive Life in Him.

Acts 13:47 "For so hath the Lord commanded us, [saying], I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."

Paul is now no longer limited to carry the message to just the few Jewish villages, but is told of the Lord to spread it everywhere to whosoever will. Paul's journeys really begin now. Paul and Barnabas will be set free to minister wherever they go, regardless of the nationality of

the people. Paul's missionary endeavors are to the Gentile nations everywhere. Paul was a Pharisee and this was hard for him, but he will do what God sends him to do.

Acts 13:48 "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

God had foreknowledge of all who would believe. The Gentiles received Jesus as Saviour gladly. They had been thought of as heathen before, not even being offered the God of the universe.

Acts 13:49 "And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region."

Have you ever seen a new Christian talking about their Lord? There is no way you can hush them up. Verse 49 is, perhaps, the most understated Scripture. I am sure it went like wildfire and soon everyone knew of Jesus.

Acts 13:50 "But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts."

We see, here, that jealousy of this great move of God has caused a stir among the religious people of the day. These Jews wanted to be rid of Paul and Barnabas and ran them out of town.

Acts 13:51 "But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium."

To shake the dust of the feet off is like speaking a terrible punishment on them from God. In other words Paul and Barnabas are saying, I won't have any more to do with these Jewish people here, they are evil, let God take care of them. This Iconium was Asia. Many believe Paul visited here three or more times.

Acts 13:52 "And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost."

It seems whenever the disciples had a bad time somewhere, God poured out the Holy Ghost on them all over again and they were filled with joy.

Acts 29 Questions

1. What is meant by David seeing corruption?
2. On what day does the body begin to decay after burial?
3. Verse 37 says, who raised Jesus?
4. Who was Paul speaking to in verse 38?
5. Through whom was salvation preached?
6. Who are justified in Jesus?
7. Could the law of Moses justify you?
8. What does justified mean?
9. What was the law to us, really?
10. What was the difference in what the shed blood of Jesus Christ could do for us and the shed blood of the sacrificial animals?
11. Verse 41 says, that those who wonder and yet do not believe,_____.
12. What religious connection did Saul (Paul) have before becoming a Christian?
13. What did the Gentiles ask Paul after the Jews left?
14. When the congregation broke up, many _____ and _____ followed Paul and Barnabas.
15. What did Paul persuade them to do?
16. Verse 44 says next sabbath nearly the whole city came together. Why did they come?
17. When the Jews saw the multitude, they were filled with what?
18. When Paul and Barnabas were filled with boldness, what did they say?
19. Who had judged these Jews?
20. Who had the Lord sent Paul to?
21. Where was he to preach?
22. When the Gentiles heard this, what did they do?
23. How does the author think the Word got published throughout the area?
24. Who did the Jews stir up to persecute Paul and Barnabas?
25. What did they do that showed they were through with these Jews?
26. Where did Paul go?
27. What happened to the disciples?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 14:1 "And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed."

We see here the synagogue being opened to the Greeks, as well as the Jews. It seemed that Paul was under great anointing of God at this time and many were brought into the numbers of the Christians. Paul is preaching the Word. Many who are receiving this Word are saved. Remember, these disciples had been filled again with the Spirit and with joy about the time they came to Iconium. In Romans 10:14 we read, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" It is necessary to have a preacher. By the foolishness of preaching, men are won to God.

Acts 14:2 "But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren."

These Jews were jealous, because the body of believers in Christ was growing far more rapidly than the synagogue. These Jews put a question into the minds of the Gentiles who were not familiar with the Scriptures. This is still going on today. Satan never changes. He planted a question in Eve's mind, and that has been his plan from the beginning. Faith and doubt are opposites. If you have doubt, you do not have faith. You can see how it would be easy to sway the thinking of a new convert, and that is just what this is saying above.

Acts 14:3 "Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands."

Paul did not quickly leave this area, but stayed and kept proclaiming the pure word of God. God allowed them to do wonderful miracles. The signs and wonders should have convinced the people who was right. Many times people are blinded so by unbelief that they ignore the miracles.

Acts 14:4 "But the multitude of the city was divided: and part held with the Jews, and part with the apostles."

Not everyone will receive the Truth of God, and Iconium is no different. Some believed, and some did not believe. It seemed that those who did not believe, used every pressure available to them to try to keep the others from believing. Many times even homes are divided into two armed camps, because some of the members believe in Jesus Christ as Saviour, and some do not. This is what happened here. Their differences in belief separated the people.

Acts 14:5 "And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use [them] despitefully, and to stone them," Acts 14:6 "They were ware of [it], and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about:"

It appears here that Paul, Barnabas, and the other disciples had to run for their lives to keep from being killed. There is a time to stand as they had done (long time they abode here and preached), but there is also a time to use good judgment and leave, and they did that as well. When they realized they could do no more good at this time, they left. Not many ministers will stand against great opposition and bring the gospel, but sometimes that is what God requires. Lycaonia was a small Roman province of Asia Minor.

Acts 14:7 "And there they preached the gospel."

The whole reason they are making this trip is to preach the gospel unto all the world. Matthew 28:19 gives Jesus' great commission to all who would be His ministers, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Paul, Barnabas, and the other disciples were carrying out this great commission. It is not our job to win them to Christ. We preach the Word, God gives the increase.

Acts 14:8 "And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:"

We see a man in a very destitute condition. He came into the world a cripple and has been one ever since. This is just the type of thing God can show His power through.

Acts 14:9 "The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,"

Acts 14:10 "Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked."

In Romans 10:17 "So then faith [cometh] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." This man heard Paul preach and that preaching built up his faith enough that he might receive his healing. This man's faith paid off. He leaped and walked. Over and over, Jesus said to those he was healing, (your faith has made you whole).

Acts 14:11 "And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men."

These Lycaonians worshipped false gods, and they associated these miracles as being done by these false gods. They knew the miracle was real, and they knew that a miracle such as this was beyond what a natural man could do. They assumed that this miracle originated with Paul. They did not realize that he was just carrying out a miracle from God.

Acts 14:12 "And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker."

This false god Mercurius had to do with eloquent speaking. This is why they assumed Paul was Mercurius. Jupiter and Mercury in Greek is the same as Zeus and Hermes.

Acts 14:13 "Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people."

This priest was bringing these sacrifices to Paul and Barnabas. They believed that Paul and Barnabas were these false gods they worshipped, and they always sacrificed to these false gods, so they wanted to sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas.

Acts 14:14 "[Which] when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard [of], they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,"

Acts 14:15 "And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:"

Acts 14:16 "Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways."

This frightened Paul and Barnabas, who knew the dangers of allowing anyone to deify them. God alone is to be worshipped. This is a lesson many today need to look at carefully. The men and women of God, who God uses to heal someone, are not to be thought of too highly (exalted and lifted up). The power to heal is not their own. The power is God's. We are just His message carriers. The created should never be worshipped, whether it is people or sun, moon, or stars, or whether it is things like cars, homes, etc. We should worship only the Creator. God has made mankind a free-will agent. He will allow us to choose to worship anything we desire. The only catch is, if we worship anyone or anything other than the one True God, we will not inherit eternal life. Paul and Barnabas are not like Lucifer who wanted to be God. They quickly straighten these people out and tell them they are not gods. They also add that the Creator of this whole universe is the one to worship. Until Jesus came, most everyone walked in his own ways. Jesus brought a better way.

Acts 30 Questions

1. In Iconium, where and to whom did Paul and Barnabas speak?
2. What could we say about Paul caused so many to be saved?
3. Who did the unbelieving Jews stir up?
4. What was the problem with these Jews?
5. If you have doubt, you do not have _____.
6. What gave testimony of His grace?
7. What happened that helped the unbelievers to believe?
8. How was the city divided?
9. In verse 5, what did the townspeople do to Paul?
10. Where did Paul and Barnabas go?
11. What did Paul and Barnabas do when they got to a new city?
12. Where can we find the great commission Jesus gave His followers?
13. What was the commission?
14. It is not the job of the minister to save the people, what is our job?
15. How long had the man at Lystra been crippled?
16. What had Paul perceived in this man?
17. What did Paul say to the man?
18. What happened?
19. How does faith come?
20. What did Jesus say many times when He healed someone?
21. What did the people of Lycaonia say, when they saw that Paul and Barnabas healed the lame man?
22. Who did they think Paul and Barnabas were?
23. What did Mercury have to do with?
24. What names are the same as Jupiter and Mercury in another language?
25. What did the priest of Jupiter do?
26. When Paul and Barnabas heard what the priest did, what did they do?
27. Who did Paul and Barnabas tell the people they were?
28. How did Paul and Barnabas describe the true God?
29. In verse 16, what tells us that God gave us a free will?

Notes

In the last lesson, Paul and Barnabas had healed a man who had been lame from birth. The people of the town thought Paul and Barnabas to be their false gods, Mercury and Jupiter. They thought these false gods had taken on the form of man and done the miracles. The priest of these false gods wanted to sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas. Paul and Barnabas were terribly frightened by this and stopped them. Now, we will pick up this lesson in Acts 14:17.

Acts 14:17 "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

We see that Paul and Barnabas, here, are telling these people about the only true God. The Creator of the world. Paul tells them that even nature itself testifies of this one true God. This lengthy description here and in the previous lesson is explaining to them the magnitude of the true God. Paul is explaining how foolish it is to worship Mercury and Jupiter, that the one to worship is the Creator of all things. This God that Paul is telling them about is concerned about His creation and provides for their needs. Paul explains the true God through nature.

Acts 14:18 "And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them."

They were able to stop the people from sacrificing to them, but it was not easy. These people were not easily convinced of this God they had never heard of before.

Acts 14:19 "And there came thither [certain] Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew [him] out of the city, supposing he had been dead."

This, again, is not the same Antioch where the believers were first called Christians. This is the same group who gave Paul trouble at Iconium. It appears here that they stoned Paul so badly, that they took him for dead and drug him out of the city. This, to me, is almost unbelievable, when just a few hours earlier they had thought him to be a god. This shows how quickly people forget the miracles, and the same people can easily believe something bad about Paul.

Acts 14:20 "Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe."

We see the loyalty of the disciples even in the face of death. Even though Paul has been left for dead, they gather around him. The strength of this many believers has to be what caused him to rise up. We did not read how Barnabas escaped, but it appears he was not stoned with Paul. It appears, just as Paul had fled to Lystra and Derbe before from Iconium, he flees to Derbe here.

Acts 14:21 "And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and [to] Iconium, and Antioch,"

The preaching of the gospel in Derbe brought them renewed courage, and Paul and Barnabas went right back to where they had all the trouble. They were undaunted by the stonings. They were determined to bring the good news of the gospel to this entire area, even if it endangered their lives.

Acts 14:22 "Confirming the souls of the disciples, [and] exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

We see, here, their reason for returning to this hostile region is to check on those who received the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. These new disciples (followers of Christ) will be persecuted just as Paul was, and Paul has come to tell them that the way will not be easy. Even though the tribulation is great (like Paul's stoning), they must stand firm in the Lord to inherit the kingdom of God. This message is not only for them, but is for us as well. We can't give in to the enemy when trials come. In this life we will have tribulation (trials), but be of good cheer, Jesus has overcome the world and we can, too, through Him.

Acts 14:23 "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed."

The first trip Paul had made into this area, he was like an evangelist. He preached and many were saved, but this trip he is back to establish a church for them. This body of believers would have to hang together to be able to survive. The need for a church unit (one reason) is that the members can draw strength from each other. This ordaining of elders was so the local church could function with a leader. The prayer and fasting was so God could choose, through them, the right leader, and that leader could be duly recommended to God.

Acts 14:24 "And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia."

This Pisidia was a mountainous district in Asia Minor, north of Pamphylia. It was a really rough area filled with robbers. These men were at odds with Rome. Pamphylia means of every race. This was the first country in this area for Paul to visit.

Acts 14:25 "And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia:"

Perga is the capital of Pamphylia. The main worship in this area, before Paul's visit, was the worship of Diana. This was a hard town to minister in, because of the deep seated worship of this false god.

Acts 14:26 "And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled."

We see, in all of this missionary journey, a presence of God's will at all times. It is as if they (Paul and Barnabas) are led by the will of God to minister in certain places. They fulfilled their part. They went where God sent them, regardless of the consequences. They equipped themselves by fasting and prayer. They were acting as agents of God. Notice the word

(fulfilled). We see by this that they completed the job that God gave them to do. They had pleased God.

Acts 14:27 "And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles."

They were all excited telling all of their Jewish helpers how God was the God of the Gentiles, as well as the Jews. God had opened the door to His church to all people. God, the Holy Spirit, had gone on ahead of Paul and Barnabas and prepared the hearts of those who were to believe and receive the Lord as Saviour. God had shown this Pharisee (Paul) that Christianity was for the Gentile, as well as the Jew.

Acts 14:28 "And there they abode long time with the disciples."

This was like a time of rest. They were with the disciples who believed as they did. There were no unbelieving Jews to harass them here. This was a much needed time of rest.

Notes

Acts 31 Questions

1. In verse 17, what does Paul say should be a witness to them of God?
2. Who had these people sacrificed to?
3. Where did the Jews come from that stirred up trouble?
4. What did the people do to Paul?
5. Why did they take him to the edge of the city?
6. When the disciples stood around Paul, what happened?
7. Where did they go (Paul and Barnabas)?
8. Verse 21 tells us what they did in this area before they left, what was it?
9. What three places did Paul go to, when he left Derbe?
10. What did confirming the souls of the disciples mean?
11. How must we enter into the kingdom of God?
12. Why should we rejoice in tribulation?
13. What was Paul doing when he ordained elders in every church?
14. What did Paul and Barnabas do before they commended someone as leader of a particular church?
15. Where was Pisidia located?
16. What does Pamphyla mean?
17. Where did they go after preaching the word in Perga?
18. What is Perga?
19. Who was the object of worship here before Paul came?
20. Where did they sail to, when they left Attalia?
21. Name several special things we see in this missionary journey that should be part of our missionary journey, as well.
22. Paul told all of the Christians gathered here how God had opened the door of faith to whom?
23. Verse 28 tells of a time of what?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 15:1 "And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, [and said], Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved."

Now we see a dissension in the church. You remember, that the apostles and most of the disciples at the beginning were of the physical house of Abraham, and had practiced circumcision of all males at eight days old. These teachers had themselves been involved with the Old Testament teaching of Moses' law. They did not understand grace. They were trying to put all the new Gentile converts under the Mosaic law. No where, in Jesus' teaching while He was on the earth, did He teach circumcision of the flesh. Jesus taught circumcision of the heart. These people in verse 1, are like many of the people of our day, who add obligations to be done, to be saved. Salvation is simple. Romans 10:9-10 explains it perfectly. St. John 3:15-17 tells it so well in Jesus' own words. Read both and you will get the exact picture of what it takes to be saved.

Acts 15:2 "When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question."

We can see from this, that Paul and Barnabas, as well as these ministers here are not the last word in these matters. Peter and James, the half brother of Jesus, are the leaders of the church. We must not confuse this James with James the brother of John who had already been martyred. The church was in the early stages here, and all of the doctrines had not been settled to everyone's knowledge. Many of the Christian converts had come from Judaism and they tried to bring their practices with them. They were caught up in the law and did not understand grace. This was very smart of Paul and Barnabas to call in someone not directly involved to straighten this out.

Acts 15:3 "And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren."

It seemed they went by all the home churches that had been established on their way through Phoenicia and Samaria. The good news was, that God had offered salvation to the Gentiles, as well. Just as all Christians should feel today, when anyone is added to the kingdom of God, they felt great joy. Brethren here means all who are of like persuasion (Christians).

Acts 15:4 "And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and [of] the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them."

The church at Jerusalem seemed to be like a hub that the other churches were branches of. You might even say, that the original apostles ministered out from this church. This really was a natural setting for the church to be, since Jerusalem was where the temple of the Jews was.

Acts 15:5 "But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command [them] to keep the law of Moses."

You see, the Pharisees had been caught up in the law from the very beginning. Now they are trying to combine the law and grace, and it won't work. There are, even today, groups who claim to be following Christ who burden their people down with the law. If the law had been sufficient, there would have been no need for the Saviour or the gift of grace. Moses' law was for a specific time and for specific people, but it was obvious no one could live up to this law, and God sent us a Saviour. In Galatians 3:24-26, we read about the law and grace. Galatians 3:24 "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster [to bring us] unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." Galatians 3:25 "But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." Galatians 3:26 "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." You see, to require anything except faith in Jesus Christ and baptism would be against Jesus' teachings. Jesus did not do away with the law, but He fulfilled the law for us .

Acts 15:6 "And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter."

It seems as though, all the apostles and elders in this area came together to have a meeting similar to a board meeting in our churches today, to determine what the doctrine of the followers of Christ should be.

Acts 15:7 "And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men [and] brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe."

We see that Peter listened to the discussion by both sides of this question. In fact, it appears that he allowed it to go on for a good little while, until every one had stated their case. Then Peter takes charge. He arises and gives them the final word on the matter. Not boastfully, but with authority Peter reminds them that God chose him out to minister to the Gentiles. This is under his jurisdiction.

Acts 15:8 "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as [he did] unto us;"

You see, Peter reminds them here, that God approved these Gentiles, because of the condition of their hearts, and not because they had been circumcised. He poured out the Holy Ghost on these Gentiles before they had even participated in water baptism, let alone been circumcised. If God puts His seal of approval on them, who are these Pharisees to object? That would be going against God.

Acts 15:9 "And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith."

The heart is really what determines whether we are saved or not. God, who looks on the heart sees either a heart desperately wicked or a heart stayed upon God. Romans 2:29 says, "But he [is] a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision [is that] of the heart, in the spirit, [and] not in the letter; whose praise [is] not of men, but of God." This purifying

their heart is the washing of the heart with the shed blood of Jesus Christ taking all the fleshly part away.

Acts 15:10 "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"

Peter is saying here, If God accepted them the way they were, why can't you? Peter reminds them that keeping of the letter of the law, including circumcision was too hard for even the Jews to do. Now they are trying to burden down people that God had already accepted with these impossible rules.

Acts 15:11 "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."

Peter reminds them that Salvation is the same for Jew and Gentile. Ephesians 2:8 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God:" Ephesians 2:9 "Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Notes

Acts 32 Questions

1. What were men who came down from Judaea teaching the brethren?
2. Why were they teaching circumcision?
3. Where in Romans, do we read the requirements for salvation?
4. Who had a dispute with these men from Judaea?
5. Where would Paul go to get the matter settled?
6. Who were the leaders of the church at this time?
7. Where had many of these Christian converts come from?
8. By what places did they go on their way to Jerusalem?
9. What was the wonderful news they brought to these churches?
10. Who received them at the church in Jerusalem?
11. In verse 5, we find that what group insisted on all the Gentile males being circumcised?
12. What other requirement were they demanding?
13. Why was there a need for grace?
14. What one word was the law called in Galatians 3:24?
15. In verse 26 of Galatians 3, we are children of God by what?
16. Who came together to consider the matter?
17. When did Peter speak up?
18. By whose mouth were the Gentiles to receive the gospel?
19. Peter takes charge and settles the matter, not boastfully, but with much _____.
20. In verse 8, who knows the heart of man?
21. How did God bear witness that He had accepted these Gentiles?
22. If _____ approved them, who were these _____ object?
23. How did they purify their hearts?
24. Peter says, why put a yoke on these Gentiles that who had not been able to bear?
25. In verse 11, Peter says that we believe what?
26. In Ephesians 2:8, what saves us?
27. Not of works, lest any man should _____.

Notes

In the previous lesson, there had come up a dispute about whether the Gentile believers should be required to keep the law of Moses and be circumcised or not. Peter listened to their arguments, and then stood up and settled the whole thing by stating, that if God accepted these Gentiles as they were, who were they to question God's judgment? He ended the speech by saying this, Acts 15:11 "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."

We will continue on in Acts 15:12 "Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them."

We see here, that the voice of authority has spoken and all of the arguing stopped. This opened the way for Paul and Barnabas to tell of their missionary journey to Derbe, Pamphyla, and other places, and how those who had never before heard the gospel message received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. The most exciting part was that Gentiles, who had been worshipping the false goddess Dianna, had believed Paul and Barnabas' report of Jesus and had come to the one true God. Paul told of the miracle of healing the lame man, but also told of the persecution, as well.

Acts 15:13 "And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men [and] brethren, hearken unto me:"

This is not John, the apostle's brother, James. He had already been killed for the gospel. This is the half brother of Jesus by Mary. James seemed to be highly thought of in the church, even though he did not accept Jesus as his Saviour and Lord until after Jesus rose from the grave. He commands their attention in the above verse.

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

We see here, James calling Peter, Simeon. In Scripture after Scripture, we are told that a thing is established by two witnesses: and this is your second witness here regarding salvation for the Gentiles, also.

Acts 15:15 "And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,"

James reminds them, here, that this was even prophesied by the Old Testament prophets.

Acts 15:16 "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:"

Acts 15:17 "That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things."

James tells them, here, of the promise the Lord had made. This I will return, is speaking of Jesus' return. Residue means those remaining. In this instance, here, it is speaking of the non Jew. The salvation of Jesus

Christ is offered to whosoever will. Not to just a chosen few, but to all. The statement "...upon whom my name is called..." means the Christians, followers of Christ who have taken on His name.

Acts 15:18 "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world."

God's foreknowledge of everything from the beginning of the world unto the end of the world is spoken of here. This reception of the Lord by the Gentiles is no shock to God. He knew it would happen from the beginning.

Acts 15:19 "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:"

We see, here, James saying, my decision is that we not trouble these Gentiles who have come to God. God foretold it, they received the Holy Ghost just as we did, now let us not mess with God's decision.

Acts 15:20 "But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and [from] fornication, and [from] things strangled, and [from] blood."

James gives a code for church membership behavior here. Don't mess around with idols of any kind, if you are a Christian. Fornication is sin of the body of every kind. This special warning against all body sin should be heeded by all Christians. Under this sin is homosexuals, or lesbians, or adulterers, etc. Christians are not to drink or eat blood. These are so simple and so few restrictions, yet many people seem to not be able to keep even these few.

Acts 15:21 "For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day."

James is saying here, if they want to become a Jew and live by Moses' law, they can find that in the synagogue. To me, James is saying here, that there is a separation of Moses' law and God's grace. You cannot have both. Choose one or the other. To live by the law would make you a Jew. To live by grace makes you a Christian.

Acts 15:22 "Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; [namely], Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:"

It seemed to be by unanimous decision, that the apostles and elders decided to accept Peter and James' decision on the matter of the Gentiles. We see here, a committee chosen of the elect men in the group to go and carry this good news of the church 's decision to the church at Antioch. Perhaps, Judas surnamed Barsabas and Silas went to assure the people of Antioch that this was not just Paul and Barnabas' decision, but was also Peter and James' decision, as well. This is the Antioch where the followers of Jesus were first called Christians, and there were many Gentile converts here. Remember, the church is still being formed here.

Acts 15:23 "And they wrote [letters] by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren [send] greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:"

These letters were written to these churches as a sort of doctrine of the church. These letters were to settle the discussion of keeping the law of Moses and of circumcision. Notice this letter is addressed to the Gentile believers.

Acts 15:24 "Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, [Ye must] be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no [such] commandment:"

We see again, here, that this letter is to straighten out a misunderstanding. This letter is saying, that whoever required you to do these things, was not speaking for the apostles and church leaders. Don't be troubled by this, because it is not the Christian's doctrine.

Acts 15:25 "It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,"

This is showing that this doctrine is not just Paul and Barnabas', but the whole church's. These representatives of the main body support the fact that keeping the Mosaic law and circumcising the men is not the doctrine of Christianity.

Acts 15:26 "Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

This is speaking of men like Paul who have gone and preached the gospel, even in the face of death. Just as Paul had been stoned, and left for dead, and then went right back to the same area to preach again. They felt it an honor to be crucified with Jesus.

Acts 33 Questions

1. What was the dispute that Paul and Barnabas had with the other leaders?
2. What did Peter explain that he believed in verse 11.
3. In verse 12, what had God done among the Gentiles?
4. When did all the arguing stop?
5. In verse 13, what did James say?
6. Which James is this?
7. Who is Simeon?
8. Who had agreed in the Old Testament that the Gentiles should be accepted?
9. Residue means what?
10. What is the tabernacle called in verse 16?
11. Who does "...upon whom my name is called..." mean?
12. Known unto _____ are all his works from the beginning of the world.
13. In verse 19, James says not to trouble whom?
14. What were they to write to them (three things)?
15. What was read in the synagogue every sabbath?
16. Who did the apostles and elders send with Paul and Barnabas?
17. Where, in verse 23, are three specific places the Gentiles are mentioned?
18. What did they try to put on the Gentiles that Peter and the others had not commanded?
19. This doctrine of grace had been approved of whom?
20. Verse 26, tells of the devotion of these men that were sent, what showed their devotion?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 15:27 "We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell [you] the same things by mouth."

We see from this, that the message Peter and James had sent in a letter to these churches about the requirements for the Gentiles was not all they had done. They had, also, sent Judas and Silas to tell them their wishes in person.

Acts 15:28 "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;"

Acts 15:29 "That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well."

We see, here, that the apostles were guided in their setting of doctrine by the Holy Ghost. These few rules of doctrine, if you carefully examine them, are really a furtherance of what Jesus said when He was asked what commandments were important. Matthew 22:37- 40, Matthew 22:37 "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." Matthew 22:38 "This is the first and great commandment." Matthew 22:39 "And the second [is] like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Matthew 22:40 "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." You see, the first says we are to have no idols. If we love God with all our heart, we will not have idols. If we love our neighbor as ourselves, we will not commit sin. You see, the doctrine of Jesus Christ and the doctrine Peter, James, and all the other church leaders gave through the influence of the Holy Ghost is the same.

Acts 15:30 "So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:"

An epistle is a written letter. This message was given to the entire church (followers of Jesus) so that there would be no question about the doctrine of the church.

Acts 15:31 "[Which] when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation."

Consolation means comfort. They were all very pleased to have this settled, so that they would no longer be questioning whether they were doing the right thing or not.

Acts 15:32 "And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed [them]."

This just simply means that they preached to these people. Being prophets is included to show by what authority they preached. The many words means, to me, that they preached more than once.

Acts 15:33 "And after they had tarried [there] a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles."

This seems like a revival of the believers. It just went on and on, because they were all being refreshed in the Lord. Finally they let them go back to their evangelistic work.

Acts 15:34 "Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still."

The other church leaders went back to Jerusalem, or to their mission fields, but Silas decided to stay here and minister in Antioch.

Acts 15:35 "Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also."

It seemed like Antioch was a place for the apostles and believers to go, and preach, and get built up, before going out in the field. There is strength in groups of believers. It is like getting fueled up before they go out to minister. One of the problems with ministers, and especially pastors, is that they are constantly giving out to others, and never going back and getting refreshed themselves. This meeting at Antioch, here, seemed to be for the building up of the ministers.

Acts 15:36 "And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, [and see] how they do."

Paul and Barnabas had started churches all over Asia Minor. They were in the middle of all kinds of false religions. Paul wanted to go back to each one of them individually, to make sure that they were still worshipping the way he and Barnabas had started them out. He not only wanted to check up on them, but to encourage them in the Lord, as well. They were probably under heavy persecution from the idolatrous people around them and from the strict Jewish people, as well.

Acts 15:37 "And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark."

This is not John, who wrote the Book of John and was James' brother, but was, in fact, Mark the writer of the Gospel of Mark. Mark and Barnabas were related through Mark's mother. Colossians 4:10 tells of this relationship.

Acts 15:38 "But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work."

The Scripture does not say why Paul was so set on Mark not going with them, but Paul was so set in not taking Mark, that Barnabas and Paul separate over it. As you will see in the next verse.

Acts 15:39 "And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;"

We see here, that blood is a little stronger than friendship in this case. The argument seemed to be over Mark. Cyprus was the home of Barnabas and was, also, the place Barnabas and Paul had started an early church. Barnabas, perhaps, took Mark and went home. Some writers believe the reason Paul did not want Mark to go was, because he was still caught up in the law, but there is no Scriptural evidence of that. Some believe that Paul's

domineering spirit caused the separation, but there is no real evidence of that, either. It seems to me, that two friends were separated over a third party, and nothing more is told.

Acts 15:40 "And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God."

It appears that Silas had been a successful disciple himself, and the leaders of their group recommended Silas to Paul as someone who would do a good job as helper to Paul. At any rate, Paul took Silas as his new partner. It is interesting, to me, that they went out two at a time, as the Lord has sent them when He was on earth. Perhaps, this has to do with the Scripture, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven," Matthew 18:19.

Acts 15:41 "And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches."

We see, here, that Paul went back to the same churches, he and Barnabas had started and checked on how they were doing. Possibly he preached and, also, taught that they were not under the Mosaic law, but under the grace of Jesus Christ. The above statement would have been a little more accurate to say (they) went, because Silas went with Paul.

Notes

Acts 34 Questions

1. Who were two that were sent with Paul and Barnabas to tell the decision of Peter and James?
2. In verse 28, to whom did it seem good to do this?
3. What were the only restrictions these Gentiles were to observe?
4. These rules of doctrine actually parallel what teaching of Jesus?
5. When they dismissed, where did they come to?
6. When did they deliver the epistle?
7. What is an epistle?
8. Verse 31, says they rejoiced for _____.
9. Which two prophets exhorted (preached) the word?
10. Verse 33, seems like what was going on here?
11. Who remained behind when the others went back to Jerusalem?
12. What did Paul and Barnabas do in Antioch?
13. Where did Paul want him and Barnabas to go?
14. Who did Barnabas want to take with them?
15. Barnabas went where without Paul?
16. What are two thoughts on why Paul and Barnabas parted that are not really backed up by Scripture?
17. Why did Barnabas choose to go with him?
18. Through whom was Barnabas related to Mark?
19. Who did Paul choose to go with him?
20. Where did Paul and his helper go?
21. Why had Paul chosen Silas?
22. What was, perhaps, one of the messages Paul taught?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 16:1 "Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father [was] a Greek:"

It appears that Timothy and his mother, Eunice, had been early converts of Paul. Eunice was a Jewess, but she had received Christ. II Timothy 1:5 tells us that Timothy's mother and grandmother were believers in Christ, even before Timothy was. II Timothy 1:5 "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also." You see, Paul was acquainted with all three, Lois, Eunice, and Timothy. He even calls Timothy his son. Timothy is not his physical son, but his son in that Paul led Timothy to Christ, II Timothy 1:2 "To Timothy, [my] dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, [and] peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord." We, also, see an inner faith marriage between Timothy's mother and father. She was a Jew and he was a Greek.

Acts 16:2 "Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium."

It seems that since Paul's last visit, Timothy has been ministering. It, also, appears that Timothy had been visiting other churches than his home churches, because he was highly spoken of by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium. Timothy had been taught the Jewish law by his mother and had been told of the Messiah, as well. As we said above, he had received Paul's message that Jesus Christ was the Messiah on Paul's earlier visit. Timothy means venerating God.

Acts 16:3 "Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek."

We see, here, in this circumcision of Timothy that Paul does this, because Timothy's father was a Greek, and the Jews will not accept him unless he has been circumcised. This seems to be a terrible contradiction to Paul's fight against the Gentiles being circumcised. Paul had even gone to Jerusalem and gotten Peter's support on non-circumcision. The only way that I can explain this is that, Paul himself said he must be all things to all people, that by all means he might save some. You can find this in I Corinthians 9:11. He did this to appease the Jews they would minister to. These Jews would not have accepted Timothy had this not been done.

Acts 16:4 "And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem."

Here, Paul and Timothy are teaching the doctrine set down in Jerusalem that circumcising the men and keeping the Mosaic law was not the doctrine of Christians. The doctrine of Christians was to abstain from meats offered to idols and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication. The doctrine of Christians, in a nut shell, is Love God and worship Him alone and love your neighbor as yourself.

Acts 16:5 "And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily."

The faith they were established in was faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and faith that Jesus Christ rose from the grave. Romans 10:9-10 explains perfectly about this faith that we must have. Notice how the churches were established (on faith). They were undoubtedly having daily preaching, because they were saved every day. The Bible says by the foolishness of preaching men believe and are saved, I Corinthians 1:21 "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

Acts 16:6 "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,"

The Galatians were possibly newly converted churches that Paul started on this trip, rather than the first trip, but that is not explained. The Holy Ghost was leading Paul and telling him where to go and where not to go.

Acts 16:7 "After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not."

We see, here, the Holy Spirit of God checking them from going into Bithynia. So many times we ministers run ahead of God and go places God would not have us go. We should be like Paul and let the Holy Spirit lead us to a fertile place to minister.

Acts 16:8 "And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas."

Acts 16:9 "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us."

Troas is in Asia, and Paul had his vision here. Macedonia is a country lying north of Greece. It seems that Paul heeds this vision and goes to Macedonia.

Acts 16:10 "And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them."

One really admirable trait that Paul had, was when God called him to do something, he did not hesitate, but immediately answered the call. Paul immediately goes to Macedonia and begins to preach the good news of the gospel to them.

Acts 16:11 "Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next [day] to Neapolis;"

Acts 16:12 "And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, [and] a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days."

We see that, Paul went to the main city of Macedonia. We did not get any of the details of the vision he had in Troas, but we can assume the Holy Spirit told him to come to Philippi. He passed other cities and made it to Philippi, so this appears that it was this specific city he was told to come to.

Acts 16:13 "And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted [thither]."

There are several things we must notice here. These people were Jewish, because they observed sabbath. We know that Luke was with Paul here, because he says "we", and Luke is the penman. It is rather interesting that Paul is not speaking in the synagogue, but on a river bank. It is, also, interesting that his first ministry here in Philippi is to the women. This has to be the working of the Holy Spirit. We will find later in Philippians 4:3, that the church in Philippi has two women ministering in the church and Paul tells the church to be supportive of them. Philippians 4:3 "And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and [with] other my fellowlabourers, whose names [are] in the book of life."

Acts 16:14 "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard [us]: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."

It appears that the Holy Spirit sent Paul and the others to minister to Lydia and to start a church here in her home. It appears that Lydia worshipped God before Paul came, but after hearing the gospel message, received it with gladness in her heart .

Acts 16:15 "And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought [us], saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide [there]. And she constrained us."

We are not told who Lydia's household was. She may have been a widow. At any rate, she was a seller of purple for a living. She did as Paul had preached, and was baptized and her household was baptized, also. She insisted on Paul and his helpers coming and staying in her house, if they deemed her worthy.

Acts 35 Questions

1. When Paul came to Lystra, what disciple did he find there that would go with him?
2. Who was his mother?
3. What were his mother and father?
4. In II Timothy 1:5, who had faith first and passed it on to Timothy?
5. Was Timothy related to Paul?
6. Why did Paul call him his son in II Timothy 1:2?
7. Who spoke highly of Timothy recommending him to Paul?
8. What does Timothy mean?
9. Why did Paul circumcise Timothy?
10. How is the only way the author can put this together with Paul's fight against circumcision?
11. In verse 4, what doctrine did Paul teach?
12. How were the churches established?
13. How often did they have new members?
14. In I Corinthians 1:21, we learn that by what some are saved?
15. Where did the Holy Ghost tell Paul not to go?
16. Where was Paul when he had the vision?
17. Where did the vision tell him to go?
18. Why did Paul believe the Holy Spirit had sent him here?
19. What were some of the towns Paul came through getting to Philippi?
20. On what day did he begin to minister?
21. Where did Paul go to minister?
22. Who was he ministering to?
23. What message does Paul give the church in Philippi on another visit, that can be found in Philippians 4:3?
24. What woman is specifically mentioned as receiving Paul's message?
25. What did she do for a living?
26. Who was baptized with her?
27. What did she insist Paul and his party do?
28. What can we probably safely assume about her husband?

Notes

We will continue on with Paul's ministry here in Macedonia in this lesson Acts 16:16 "And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:"

Soothsayers pretend to be able to tell the future. Their power that they do have is from Satan and not God. This girl could be compared to palm readers in our day. Certain people (away from God) make a living doing this. They prey on the people who are uncertain about their lives and their relationship with God. The whole thing is demonic.

Acts 16:17 "The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation."

Paul does not need a demon possessed woman following around after him, proclaiming him to know the way to salvation. Her message is true, but coming from an unclean vessel. Paul does not want to indicate that she is with his group.

Acts 16:18 "And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour."

Her continued crying out finally began to disturb Paul, and he commanded the evil spirit to come out of her in the name of Jesus Christ, and it did.

Acts 16:19 "And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew [them] into the marketplace unto the rulers,"

These rulers were probably city judges, since they were holding court in the market place. Those who took Paul and Silas to be tried were the men making a living from this girl.

Acts 16:20 "And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,"

These magistrates were not Jewish, because the people who brought Paul and Silas accused them of being Jews (as if there were something wrong with that). The one they were troubling was them, keeping them from making a living from this girl.

Acts 16:21 "And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans."

Rome ruled here in Philippi at this time and everything was based on the Roman law, not on a moral code of Christianity or Judaism. The Romans, at this time, were not Christian or Jews, but heathen.

Acts 16:22 "And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat [them]."

They incited a mob against Paul and Silas. Actually this was without cause. Paul and Silas had not attacked Rome. These magistrates forcibly tore off Paul and Silas' clothes and commanded them to be beaten.

Acts 16:23 "And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast [them] into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:"

This punishment was a public whipping and then they were thrown into jail. As much as for the pain inflicted, the public whipping was to embarrass the one receiving the whipping. The jailer was specifically instructed to keep them from getting away.

Acts 16:24 "Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks."

It was not enough to have them in the inner prison. The jailer put them in stocks, as well. There should be no possible way for them to get out, but they had not taken into consideration their God.

Acts 16:25 "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them."

We read in I Thessalonians 5:18, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." It is always the correct time to praise God. Of course, the other prisoners could hear their prayers and praise. They are right there with them.

Acts 16:26 "And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed."

We know that all who will live Godly lives will suffer persecution. Tribulation comes to all. Our attitude about the problem is what can free us from bonds. We must know that victory is only in Jesus Christ. We see the divine power of God in action here. Earthquakes are God dealing with man. In this case, all the doors flew open. The bands breaking off was even more unusual.

Acts 16:27 "And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled."

This keeper of the prison was going to kill himself to keep from being tortured for letting the prisoners go.

Acts 16:28 "But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here."

This was, perhaps, the greatest surprise this keeper of the prison had ever had. He could not believe they were all still here. They could have gotten away so easily.

Acts 16:29 "Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,"

He literally jumped in when he got a light. He was afraid of the ruler from Rome before and now he is afraid of God. He has forgotten about Rome's ruler here. He, too, was aware that Paul and Silas had prayed and praised and caused this to happen. He ran to them and fell down before them for help.

Acts 16:30 "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

This miracle of the earthquake and the bands falling off has convinced this jailer that Paul and Silas have the truth. Now, he asks what must I do to be saved? This should be the question of all people.

Acts 16:31 "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

This is a wonderful promise that all believers can stand on. Not only will we be saved, but our family as well.

Acts 16:32 "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house." Acts 16:33 "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed [their] stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway."

It seems that Paul and Silas went to the jailer's home and preached to him and his family. The jailer and his family doctored Paul and Silas, and Paul and Silas baptized the jailer and his family.

Acts 16:34 "And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."

This jailer was truly excited and happy over his salvation and the salvation of his family. He prepared a meal and invited Paul and Silas to eat with them.

Acts 16:35 "And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go." Acts 16:36 "And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace."

Those above the jailer had been sent to tell Paul and Silas they could go. It seems the magistrate did not know about the happening of the earthquake.

Acts 16:37 "But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast [us] into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out."

Paul is not going to let them ease out of this. He reminds them that he is a Roman citizen. It is illegal to punish a citizen of Rome without a free trial. Paul lets them know they will have to come themselves in the way of an apology before they will leave.

Acts 16:38 "And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans."

Acts 16:39 "And they came and besought them, and brought [them] out, and desired [them] to depart out of the city."

This could have gotten them in a whole lot of trouble. Romans were not to be punished or imprisoned without a trial. If their carelessness were known in Rome, they might lose their positions. They wanted Paul and Silas to leave town before word got back of what they had done.

Acts 16:40 "And they went out of the prison, and entered into [the house of] Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed."

The believers were gathered at Lydia's house. Paul and Silas went by to report what had happened to the brethren. This was undoubtedly a home church. Paul comforted the others, and then they left.

Acts 36 Questions

1. What type of spirit possessed this woman following Paul?
2. How had she brought her masters much gain?
3. What is a soothsayer compared to in our day?
4. What was she saying about Paul and Silas?
5. After many days, Paul said what to the spirit in the woman who followed him?
6. What happened when Paul said this?
7. What did her masters do when they realized the hope of gain from her was gone?
8. Who did they take Paul and Silas to?
9. Who did they accuse them of being?
10. In verse 21, the masters claim to be whom?
11. Who tore off their clothes?
12. What did they command be done to Paul and Silas?
13. Who was in charge of them?
14. What did he do with them?
15. What time was it when Paul and Silas prayed in prison?
16. What did they do besides pray?
17. What Scripture tells us "In every thing give thanks..."?
18. What happened when they prayed?
19. When the jailer saw the doors open, what did he start to do?
20. Why did he not go ahead and do it?
21. When he got a light, what did the jailer do?
22. What question did the jailer ask Paul and Silas?
23. What did they answer him?
24. Who did Paul tell him would be saved besides him?
25. What did the jailer and his family do for Paul?
26. What did Paul do for the jailer and his family?
27. After Paul baptized them, what did the jailer do for Paul and Silas?
28. When it was day, who sent to the jailer to release them?
29. What did Paul answer the magistrate?
30. Who did Paul tell them he was?
31. Did they come and let Paul out?
32. Where did Paul go when he got out of jail?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 17:1 "Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:"

Acts 17:2 "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,"

This Thessalonica was part of Macedonia. The they above, for sure, means Paul and Silas. We could only speculate to whom else is with them. This is not a completely pagan area, because there is a synagogue (place of worship). Paul preached three different Sabbaths (Saturdays) here. Paul, being a Pharisee, would have access to the synagogue.

Acts 17:3 "Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ."

Christ and Messiah are the same. The Jews had been looking for generations for Messiah. Paul is not accusing them, but explaining to them, of Jesus' death and entombment. He explains that Jesus had to die, so that He could be resurrected. It was prophesied in the Old Testament and fulfilled in Jesus.

Acts 17:4 "And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few."

These Greeks had been attending the synagogue. They were interested in the one true God. Thessalonica was a city actually of many synagogues. At various times, up to 36 of them were in the city. Luke, in his writings, gives credit to the women receiving Christ as Saviour.

Acts 17:5 "But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people."

Jason, some believe was a relative of Paul. The name Jason is a Romanized form of the name Jesus or Joshua. These lewd fellows of the baser sort would be called thugs in our society. Notice, why these Jews came against them, it was envy or jealousy. These Jews had gathered a mob to get rid of Paul and Silas.

Acts 17:6 "And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;"

Acts 17:7 "Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, [one] Jesus."

They do not really have any grievance against Paul and Silas, and surely not this Jason that would stand up before the court, so he tries to say they are trying to take Caesar's throne.

Acts 17:8 "And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things." Acts 17:9 "And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go."

Jason had to put up bond for himself and the others so the authorities would let them go.

Acts 17:10 "And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming [thither] went into the synagogue of the Jews."

Berea is still a city of Macedonia near Mount Bermices. We will see that this group of Jews is well read in the Scriptures. Paul and Silas left in cover of darkness to keep them from imprisoning them. The word has not travelled to Berea yet, so they can find safe haven here.

Acts 17:11 "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

Acts 17:12 "Therefore many of them believed; also of honorable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few."

This is exactly what I believe. If a person truly studies the Scriptures with an open mind and heart to receive the Truth, God will reveal that Truth to you. The Old Testament Scriptures point to Jesus. If these people truly understood the Old Testament, they would readily accept Jesus as their Messiah. Their attitude was better (they were not envious) just eager to know the Truth. Jesus is the Truth. These Greek women were attending the synagogue. They were all worshippers of God the Father already. Now they receive Jesus as Saviour and Lord, their Messiah.

Acts 17:13 "But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people."

These Jews from Thessalonica aren't satisfied to run them out of their town, they cause trouble here in Berea, as well. I do not understand how they could stir up those who believed. I believe it must have been those who rejected Paul's message. The beginning of the Christian movement and the founding of their Churches were under much opposition. Even today, starting a new work is very difficult to do.

Acts 17:14 "And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still."

We see, here, that Paul was rushed out of town by night to keep him from being jailed. Why Silas and Timothy stayed behind is not given. Perhaps, they were not at the house when Paul was carried away. The authorities were really after Paul who was the main preacher. The others would have not been in as much danger.

Acts 17:15 "And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed."

It really appears that Paul was whisked away so quickly, that he did not have time to wait for Timothy and Silas. Paul sends word to Timothy and

Silas to come immediately and join him. He, perhaps, feared for their lives, if they stayed there in Berea. Those who brought Paul safely to Athens were to take instructions back to Timothy and Silas.

Acts 17:16 "Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry."

Paul, later on sends Timothy back to Thessolonica and Silas to Berea, because he can not go back there himself. We will get into a great deal of that when we get into Thessalonians. Athens truly was a city of idols. This was not a godly city by any stretch of the imagination.

Notes

Acts 37 Questions

1. What two towns did they go through on the way to Thessalonica?
2. How many Sabbaths did Paul preach there?
3. What did he use to reason with them?
4. What country was Thessalonica part of?
5. What day is Sabbath?
6. "Opening and alleging..." what, was what Paul preached?
7. What is another name for Christ?
8. Why did Jesus have to die?
9. Who were the two with Paul?
10. What is a synagogue?
11. Who were two specific groups mentioned who believed?
12. Was this the only synagogue? Explain.
13. The Jews that didn't believe were moved with what?
14. Who did they take to attack Paul and the others?
15. At whose home was Paul staying?
16. What other name is the same as Jason in Roman?
17. Who was this Jason?
18. What ridiculous accusation did they make of Paul?
19. The rulers required Jason to do what before he released them?
20. What did the brethren immediately do for Paul and Silas?
21. Where did they go?
22. What mount is this city near?
23. How were the Jews here compared to those in Thessalonica?
24. Why were they convinced of Jesus more readily?
25. How can anyone really learn the Truth?
26. What nationality were the women believers?
27. Who came and stirred up the Jews in Berea?
28. Where did the brethren take Paul for safety?
29. Who remained in Berea?
30. What message did Paul send them?
31. While Paul waited for them, what did he observe about the people of Athens?

Notes

In the last lesson we saw Paul whisked off to Athens to keep the people of Berea from capturing him. He left Timothy and Silas behind. He sent word for them to join him in Athens. While he is waiting for them in Athens, he discovers that Athens is completely idolatrous. We will pick up here in Athens in Acts 17:17.

Acts 17:17 "Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him."

Dispute means he argued with them. Devout means religious. The synagogue was Jewish and these people Paul was disputing were the leaders of the Jews. They were students of the Old Testament, but did not believe Jesus was the promised Messiah. It seems this dispute was not occasional, but daily.

Acts 17:18 "Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection."

These philosophers of the Epicureans taught that through philosophy a person could find happiness. True pleasure, and not absolute truth, is what they taught. In Athens, this philosophy of materialism was strongly supported at this time. The Stoicks taught pride, individual independence, and believed in fate, not faith. You see, neither of these were even vaguely associated with God. In fact, they both remind me of secular humanism which is centered on self, and not God. You see, they did not know God nor His Son Jesus, and they did not believe in life after death.

Acts 17:19 "And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, [is]?"

This Areopagus seems to be a court named after their false god of war. These people, who were so possessed with having every bit of knowledge they could get, would be wanting this new knowledge, as well. They were fascinated with the mind, not the spirit.

Acts 17:20 "For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean."

Acts 17:21 "(For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)"

These people analyzed everything they heard. They checked out all new things, just as people today are always looking for something new. You cannot analyze God. He must be accepted on faith, not fact. These people worshipped their own mind. If they could not prove it, they did not believe it. They had faith in no one and nothing. They dealt only with their so-called facts.

Acts 17:22 "Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, [Ye] men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious."

Areopagus and Mars' hill is the same place. Superstitious, here, means more religious than others. He does not say they are involved with God, just that they are religious. A person can be religious about any thing. Any habit you have, you are religious about it.

Acts 17:23 "For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."

You see, these intelligent people knew that there had to be something, or someone, who started all of this. In science you can go so far back, but science does not really know where it all began. Paul says here, you really are worshipping God, but you are ignorantly worshipping you know not what. For them to be told they are ignorantly doing anything, is quite a shock to them. They think themselves to be very intelligent. Paul says to them, listen and I will tell you who this God is.

Acts 17:24 "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;"

Paul, here, is starting out with very fundamental teaching. He touches first on something that they will agree with. They know that they have no idea who made heaven or earth, so they will go along with this much of Paul's message. They know that they have never seen Him, so they would, also, believe that he dwelleth not in temples. We see, here, that boldness of Paul, because on this very Mars' hill they have temples to false gods. The Parthenon is one of the well known temples here.

Acts 17:25 "Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;"

Since God made the world, and everything, and everyone in it, He really doesn't need us, or the things we might do for Him. We need Him. In Him we live, and breathe, and have our being.

Acts 17:26 "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;"

These proud people do not want to hear that all these people of the world, that they look down on, were made from the same blood line as they were. God decided what color our skin would be and where we would live. Paul is showing that all people everywhere are sisters and brothers, and that we should all worship the one true God who gave us all life.

Acts 17:27 "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:"

God is with us all the time. He never moves away from us. We sometimes wander away from Him. If we seek Him, we will find Him. The heathens are stumbling through life looking for something (they know not what). They are really looking for God and do not realize it. His handiwork is around every one of us. The flowers, trees, skies, and for that matter, everything shows His handiwork. Paul is saying to these people, reach out, He is right here with you.

Acts 17:28 "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."

Paul says, here, that God causes us to live. We Christians know that the very breath of life breathed into us at creation is our life He (God) put within us. These words Paul quoted had been written by one of their Greek poets.

Acts 17:29 "Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device."

Paul is explaining here to them why it is wrong to worship a statue of gold, or silver, or any other engraved thing. These are creations of man. We must only worship Creator God. Paul is saying, if you are God's offspring, then you know these images are not God.

Acts 17:30 "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:"

Paul says that God overlooked their sin in the past, because it was done in ignorance. God now has revealed Himself to mankind, and man must repent of all those sins he has committed and come to the one true God. Since the knowledge of God has come, God will not look the other way any longer at sin. Man must repent, and start over again worshipping God.

Acts 17:31 "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by [that] man whom he hath ordained; [whereof] he hath given assurance unto all [men], in that he hath raised him from the dead."

We see here, that Paul has led them to the place and time of decision. Do they go on worshipping their idols, or do they repent and start life anew with this God that Paul is telling them of? Paul tells of a day of judgment, when even these people of Athens will stand before this Judge of all the world. Paul tells them that the one who will judge the world is the very same Jesus that rose from the grave. His rising from the grave is evidence of who He is. His judgment will be righteous.

Acts 17:32 "And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this [matter]."

Paul had turned some of them completely off when he mentioned the resurrection, because they did not believe in life after death. Some, however, were interested and were eager to hear more about this life after death. All men fear death, until they have the blessed hope of the resurrection.

Acts 17:33 "So Paul departed from among them."

Paul had done and said all that he could.

Acts 17:34 "Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which [was] Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them."

In another book, other than the Bible, we read that a Dionysius was the pastor of a diocese in Corinth and this one here was named for him. This woman Damaris was not a relative of his. Perhaps, these specific mentions here just show how few received the gospel message into their hearts.

Acts 38 Questions

1. Why was Paul whisked off to Athens?
2. Who did he leave behind?
3. What did Paul find out about Athens?
4. Who did Paul dispute with in the synagogue?
5. How often did Paul do this?
6. What philosophers encountered him?
7. They said he seemed to be a setter forth of what?
8. What did Paul preach to them?
9. How did they believe a person could find happiness?
10. What did the Stoics teach?
11. What, in our modern society, are they like?
12. Where did they take Paul when they took him?
13. What false god was it named for?
14. Why did they want to hear the new doctrine?
15. What did they spend their time doing?
16. What was another name for Mars' hill?
17. What did Paul say he perceived about them?
18. Paul had found an inscription on an altar to whom?
19. Who did Paul tell them this was?
20. Where did Paul tell them God did not dwell?
21. Where did Paul tell them He was Lord of?
22. In verse 25, Paul says that God gives all people what two things?
23. How does verse 26 teach against prejudice?
24. Who should seek the Lord?
25. "For in Him we _____ and
"_____"
26. Whose words had Paul quoted to them?
27. What should we know about the Godhead since we are his offspring?
28. What were all men now commanded to do?
29. Who will judge the world?
30. How will He judge?
31. When they heard what, some mocked?
32. Who specifically were mentioned who believed?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 18:1 "After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;" Acts 18:2 "And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them."

This Claudius is Caesar. When he ordered the Jews to leave Rome, it appears Aquila and Priscilla came to Corinth. We don't know how long Paul waited in Athens for Timothy and Silas. We do know it would have taken about a month for the servant to take back the news that Paul wanted them to come, and then for them to make the trip, because it was a long way. Corinth was about 40 miles from Athens, so it would have taken two or three days to get there. Most of the Jews run out of Rome, came to Corinth.

Acts 18:3 "And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers."

Paul was going to work some as a tentmaker and he stayed with these tentmakers in Corinth. Tentmaking was an honorable profession. Paul was a Pharisee, so he understood Jewish customs, as well. He would fit in well with Aquila and Priscilla.

Acts 18:4 "And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks."

Notice the different wording here. He reasoned. In the other places he disputed. We see, also, that he persuaded them, the Greeks and Jews.

Acts 18:5 "And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews [that] Jesus [was] Christ."

Pressed in the spirit here means compelled of the Spirit. Paul had been working part time as a tentmaker, now the Holy Spirit has set him on fire to preach the gospel message. Whether Silas and Timothy being there had strengthened him, or not, we cannot say. He boldly proclaims Jesus as the Christ (these Jew's Messiah).

Acts 18:6 "And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook [his] raiment, and said unto them, Your blood [be] upon your own heads; I [am] clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles."

Paul could take no more opposition to the name of Jesus Christ. His people, the Jews, had rejected Jesus. The shaking of his garments was an act of saying, I am through trying to convince you. He was obligated to try to tell them, but they didn't listen. His obligation is over. He was called to the Gentiles, as well as the Jews. In Acts 9:15, God tells Ananias of this call.

Acts 18:7 "And he departed thence, and entered into a certain [man's] house, named Justus, [one] that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue."

This man named Justus lived just next door to the synagogue. This probably does not mean that Paul lived with Justus, but that he reached at Justus' house. The voice of Paul would have carried, so that those attending synagogue would have heard the message, also. Justus was a believer.

Acts 18:8 "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."

Crispus was one of the few people that Paul himself baptized. He was chief ruler of the synagogue, and it would have been proper for Paul to baptize him. In I Corinthians 1:14 we read, "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius." These Corinthians were probably many of them Jews; because this house where Paul preached was next to the synagogue and they could hear Paul preaching.

Acts 18:9 "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:" Acts 18:10 "For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city."

Paul has run into trouble nearly everywhere he has ministered. In every instance, he had not been able to settle down and really preach for any length of time, because the Jews would come in and force him to leave. We see, here, that God is telling Paul to settle down and preach boldly, that God Himself will protect him from any harm. What a promise! The Lord tells Paul that there are many people here who will receive Jesus into their hearts. This will really be the forming and early years of the Corinthian church.

Acts 18:11 "And he continued [there] a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them."

This is a time of peaceful ministry for Paul. This 18 months was time to form a sound base for this church. Paul will later write I and II Corinthians to this very church he started here.

Acts 18:12 "And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat,"

After 18 months of peace for Paul, suddenly the Jews came against him and brought him before the judgment seat.

Acts 18:13 "Saying, This [fellow] persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law."

Notice, they are not accusing Paul of worshipping a false god. They say he persuades men to worship God. They are complaining about the way he worships, not who he worships.

Acts 18:14 "And when Paul was now about to open [his] mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O [ye] Jews, reason would that I should bear with you:"

Paul does not have to defend himself. Gallio does it for him. It appears that Gallio is a little annoyed that they would bring any accusation against Paul. He says, in a sense, he has done no wrong, why do you accuse him? He, also says, he would listen to their grievance, but they really don't have one.

Acts 18:15 "But if it be a question of words and names, and [of] your law, look ye [to it]; for I will be no judge of such [matters]."

He says again here, this is not for a court to judge. It would be like asking a court today to decide between two denominations of churches. This is not a civil matter.

Acts 18:16 "And he drave them from the judgment seat."

They had wasted his time, and he was very annoyed with them.

Acts 18:17 "Then all the Greeks took Sosthenes, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and beat [him] before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things."

These people who caught the ruler of the synagogue up and beat him, must have been sympathetic to Paul. Gallio would not stop them, because this too was a matter of church concern, and not a civil matter. These Greeks were probably a mixture of people who disliked the Jews.

Notes

Acts 39 Questions

1. When Paul left Athens, where did he go?
2. What husband and wife did Paul meet?
3. Why was this couple in Corinth?
4. Why did Paul choose to live with them?
5. Where did Paul reason every sabbath?
6. Who was Paul teaching?
7. Who came from Macedonia to help Paul?
8. What was Paul pressed in the spirit to do?
9. When the Jews blasphemed, what did Paul do?
10. Where would Paul go not to minister?
11. Whose house did Paul go to?
12. Where did Justus live?
13. Who was chief ruler of the Synagogue?
14. Who with him received the Lord?
15. Who were two men mentioned in I Corinthians that Paul baptized?
16. In verse 9, God spoke to Paul how?
17. What did He tell Paul to do?
18. Why was Paul not to fear?
19. How long did Paul preach here?
20. Who was deputy of Achaia when the Jews made insurrection against Paul?
21. What did they accuse Paul of?
22. What did Gallio say to them?
23. Why would he not judge in this?
24. What did Gallio do to the Jews?
25. What did the Greeks do to Sosthenes?
26. What did Gallio do about this?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 18:18 "And Paul [after this] tarried [there] yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn [his] head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow."

In the last lesson, we learned that Paul stayed in Corinth for one and a half years and started the church there. The Jews finally came against him and tried to cause him trouble, but Gallio would not do their dirty work for them. Now we read that Paul stayed there for a while after this incident, then he leaves and goes to Syria. Priscilla and Aquila had become very close to Paul. He had lived with them while he was in Corinth. This is undoubtedly Paul that has shaved his head for a vow. It seems this shaving his hair off was so that he could take it to the temple when he goes to sacrifice. Paul, to me, is still fulfilling some of the Jewish customs, even though he is a converted Christian. Why he is doing this is a big question. I have no idea, but I am sure he is doing what he feels is best at the time.

Acts 18:19 "And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews."

He left Aquila and Priscilla here at Ephesus, and Paul continues on after stopping and preaching at the synagogue. It appears that Paul has not completely given up on winning the Jews to Jesus, because here he is, again, in their synagogue trying to make them understand. Two years before this, Paul had been forbidden to go to Asia, but now it seems that it is pleasing to God for Paul to go there.

Acts 18:20 "When they desired [him] to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;"

We see, that Paul was set for Jerusalem. He just stopped momentarily here. They could not persuade him to stay longer (tarry), because he had something he wanted to do in Jerusalem.

Acts 18:21 "But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus."

We see that Paul was determined to go to Jerusalem. He possibly was going to carry this hair he had cut off there. The feast, he thought it was so important to get to, had to be one of the three important feasts. It could have been Passover, Pentecost or Harvest. This "I must by all means" indicates, that even if the weather is bad, he will go anyhow.

Acts 18:22 "And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch."

This does not specifically mention Jerusalem, but I believe he went there at this time. He went to Caesarea, which is not far from Jerusalem. Then it says and gone up, Jerusalem is up from Caesarea. It also says and saluted the church, I believe that is speaking of the church at Jerusalem. Antioch would be down from Jerusalem, so all of these things make me think he went to Jerusalem here. He leaves Jerusalem and goes to Antioch.

Acts 18:23 "And after he had spent some time [there], he departed, and went over [all] the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples."

This is Paul going back and checking on the churches, after he had spent a few months here. Paul had a great deal to do with the formation of these churches. He was going back to make sure that they were still worshipping in the way he established them.

Acts 18:24 "And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, [and] mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus."

We see, here, a man who is highly educated, and particularly in the Scriptures. We know that he is a Jew by birth, but a Christian by choice. He has not received the fullness of the Holy Ghost, since he has been baptized in the baptism of repentance only (John's baptism). Ephesus was one of the cities on Paul's second journey where he stayed and preached for a short time.

Acts 18:25 "This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John."

Apollos was from Alexandria, as we read several other times other than in Acts. Paul speaks very highly of Apollos. You may read I Corinthians 3:4-7, and I Corinthians 16:12, and Titus 3:13. Many expositors believe that he became one of the early bishops. At any rate, we know that he knew the Scriptures well, and that he believed Jesus to be the Messiah. He not only knew that Jesus was the Christ the very Son of God who came to be Saviour of the world, but he proclaimed that good news to every one he saw.

Acts 18:26 "And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto [them], and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly."

Perhaps, the only truth about Jesus that Apollos knew was what he had picked up from hearing other believers tell as they had come into contact with him. He knew the Scriptures so well, that he immediately related what they told him about Jesus and he knew He was the Messiah. The Word convinced him. We see here, where Aquila and Priscilla tell him more fully. The Scripture here does not say so, but we can safely assume they baptized him in the Christian baptism.

Acts 18:27 "And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:"

It appears to me, from this verse above, that these believers in Achaia knew very little of the Scriptures. They had received the grace of God, but had not yet been taught in the Bible. The brothers of Ephesus knew what a great Bible scholar he was and wrote a letter recommending him as a speaker at Achaia. He appears, to me, to be a teacher of the Word.

Acts 18:28 "For he mightily convinced the Jews, [and that] publicly, shewing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ."

There are thirty-eight or more specific Old Testament Scriptures which prophecy the coming Messiah. When you join these prophecies with the circumstances of Jesus' birth, life, crucifixion, entombment and resurrection, there is no doubt left who He is.

Acts 40 Questions

1. Who went with Paul to Syria?
2. What had Paul done in Cenchrea?
3. Why had Paul done this?
4. How long had Paul stayed in Corinth?
5. Where did Paul leave Priscilla and Aquila?
6. Who did Paul reason with here?
7. Where had Paul been forbidden to go two years previous to this?
8. Why was Paul in such a hurry to get to Jerusalem?
9. When Paul sailed from Ephesus, he promised he would return under what condition?
10. Where did Paul land before he went by land to Jerusalem?
11. What does saluted the church indicate?
12. After he had his business in Jerusalem taken care of, where did he go?
13. What two areas did Paul go to when he left Antioch?
14. Why did Paul go back to these places?
15. What was the name of the Jew from Alexandria?
16. In verse 24, we read two attributes of the man, what are they?
17. Where did he come to minister?
18. How and of whom did Apollos speak to the people?
19. What was the only baptism he knew?
20. Name some other places you can read about Apollos?
21. What two people expounded to Apollos more perfectly of God?
22. Where did Apollos go to minister next?
23. How would the Christians there know to receive him?
24. How had the believers in Achaia believed?
25. What did Apollos minister to them?
26. How did Apollos convince them?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in:

Acts 19:1 "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,"

Acts 19:2 "He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."

We know that we studied in the last lesson that Apollos taught the Scriptures. He was not acquainted with the baptism of the Holy Ghost himself, so he did not bring the teaching of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. He was a teacher of the Word of God, not the Spirit of God. These people were strong believers in Jesus Christ, but they had not been taught about the power of the Holy Ghost. When Paul asks them, had they received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, they were confused, because they did not know about it. The only answer they could give was that they did not even know if there was a Holy Ghost.

Acts 19:3 "And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism."

We see here that these people in all sincerity have been baptized in John's baptism. They did all they knew to do.

Acts 19:4 "Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."

John the Baptist had gone through the land crying, repent and be baptized. The Lord (Messiah) is coming. These people here at Ephesus had done all of this in obedience to Apollos' teaching. They had just stopped short of being baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Acts 19:5 "When they heard [this], they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

We see, here, that they now have been buried in the watery grave (water baptism) and will rise to new life in Jesus Christ.

Acts 19:6 "And when Paul had laid [his] hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

We see, here, that the fire of the Holy Ghost (the baptism of the Holy Ghost) came upon them as Paul touched them. This is the baptism that John the Baptist spoke of when he said, there was one among them that would baptize them with the Holy Ghost and fire. The speaking in tongues was evidence that they had been baptized in the Holy Ghost.

Acts 19:7 "And all the men were about twelve."

It appears there were twelve men who received this baptism of the Holy Ghost here at Ephesus.

Acts 19:8 "And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God."

It seems there were some things that were not pleasing to Paul in this church, because we see the word (disputing). For three months, Paul taught doctrine to these people. This, you remember, was in the day when they were establishing the church.

Acts 19:9 "But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus."

We see, here, that many people did not accept this message of Paul. Many of the people were already settled in the way they believed, and they were not anxious to change. The word Tyrannus means tyrant. It seems this Tyrannus had a school here and Paul lectured at the school. Somehow this difference of opinion separated these disciples. It seemed this argument went on every day. When Paul could not win them over, he just left this area. It seems as if Paul stopped these disciples from going to Synagogue with their unconverted friends.

Acts 19:10 "And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks."

It was not uncommon for the rulers of the Jews to get together and debate a Scripture that was giving them problems. I am not sure whether Paul stayed here in the city for the two years or went out into other parts of Asia. He did talk to both Jew and Greek alike and it does say all who dwelt in Asia. That would make you believe he ventured out to other cities (unnamed), but made his headquarters here in Ephesus.

Acts 19:11 "And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:"

Acts 19:12 "So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them."

Paul prayed over these items of clothing, and God healed and delivered the people these articles were sent. God is not limited. This is just a show of God's power, just as Jesus spoke the word and healed the demoniac girl at home when her mother came to Jesus for help in Matthew 15:21-28. God's power is not limited to a certain location. This power of God in Paul was very great, and Paul was not afraid to use it.

Acts 19:13 "Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth."

These vagabond Jews were similar to Gypsies who traveled around in covered wagons with no certain dwelling place. They cast spells and supposedly delivered people from evil spirits. They did not know Jesus, or believe in Him. They had heard that Paul preached of Jesus, but they really did not know any details about this either. They knew that Paul used Jesus' name to heal and deliver people, but they had no idea where the power came from. They were really practicing magic.

Acts 19:14 "And there were seven sons of [one] Sceva, a Jew, [and] chief of the priests, which did so."

These were not even devout Jews, much less believers in Christ. They had a chief priest, because they were of Jewish birth, for no other reason. They were not even living for either Judaism or Christianity. They were trying to make money with this.

Acts 19:15 "And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?"

This is true. These demons knew Jesus in heaven before they became demons, while they were angels. They knew Paul because he delivered demons from many people. They actually were afraid of Jesus' name and of Paul, because of the power of Jesus in him. They didn't know, and certainly were not afraid of, this priest of Sceva or his seven sons. Many times the demons called out Jesus' name when they came in contact with Jesus, such as in Mark chapter 5, especially verse 7.

Acts 19:16 "And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded."

Now remember, this is one man against seven men. The problem is that this one man with the demons has super-natural strength. He could have several thousand demon spirits inside him, as the insane man did that Jesus cast 2,000 demons out of. Even one demon has tremendous power, but someone with a number of them could cause a whole city a problem. It would be no problem for him to destroy seven men.

Acts 19:17 "And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified."

This would certainly get your attention. You can easily see how this would cause a great move of the church. It leaves absolutely no doubt who has the power. You see the only name that can cause deliverance and healing is the name of Jesus Christ. You can see why everyone magnified the name of Jesus Christ.

Acts 19:18 "And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds."

We see, here, that these who heard believed and they repented of their sins.

Acts 19:19 "Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all [men]: and they counted the price of them, and found [it] fifty thousand [pieces] of silver."

We see that these people are willing to give up all of their witchcraft books to be burned. They are serious about believing in Jesus Christ. We could take a lesson from them. They didn't worry about the cost, they just didn't want to have anything displeasing to God. So many people who claim to be Christians today, are reading their horoscope in the paper, they are contacting familiar spirits. Many have Ouija boards, tarot cards, totem

poles, Buddhas, and all other sorts of witchcraft paraphernalia. If we are a Christian, we ought to have a good old fashioned, spiritual house cleaning. Silver means redemption. Whether that has any significance here, or not, I do not know.

Acts 19:20 "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."

This is not because of the fear that the word grew, but because of the teaching. The fear just caused the people to be more receptive to hear. The Word grew, because it was the Truth.

Acts 41 Questions

1. While Apollos was at Corinth Paul passed through and went where?
2. What question did Paul ask the disciples here?
3. How did the disciples answer Paul?
4. Why did these disciples not know about the Holy Ghost?
5. What kind of teacher was Apollos?
6. Paul asked, to what then were ye baptized, and they answered what?
7. What was the baptism of John's?
8. Who had Apollos taught them to believe on?
9. In verse 5, they were baptized in whose name?
10. What came on them when Paul touched them?
11. What was their evidence that they had been baptized in the Holy Ghost?
12. How many men were baptized?
13. How long did Paul speak boldly in the synagogue?
14. What did Paul teach for this time?
15. What one word lets us know that Paul was not pleased with what was going on?
16. Why did Paul separate from them?
17. What school did he dispute in daily?
18. What does Tyrannus mean?
19. How many years did Paul teach in Asia?
20. Who heard the word of the Lord?
21. "And God wrought _____ by the hands of Paul:"
22. What was carried from his body, which healed the sick and caused evil spirits to go out?
23. What kind of Jews were the Exorcists?
24. What were these Jews doing?
25. Whose name were they using?
26. How many sons did the Jew, Sceva, have?
27. What was Sceva?
28. How did the evil spirits answer them, when they tried to cast them out?
29. What did the man filled with evil spirits do to the seven sons of Sceva?
30. What effect did this have on the Jews and Greeks at Ephesus?
31. Verse 18 says they did what, because of what had happened?
32. These books of curious art that were burned cost how much money?
33. What are some of the things that we should get out of our houses, if we are Christians?
34. Verse 20 tells the results of all of these witchcraft items being destroyed, what was the result?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 19:21 "After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome."

We see that Paul's journey, checking on all of the churches he had started, was quickly done. He purposed to go to Jerusalem, and then mentions that he must go to Rome. Paul, among other things, was a Roman citizen. He was concerned about the Romans You remember God had sent him to the Gentiles.

Acts 19:22 "So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season."

Timothy had been an understudy of Paul's, and anything Timothy might say would be as if Paul himself were speaking. This is the first mention of Erastus. Erastus seems to have been a Corinthian. This may be found in Romans 16:23. He was a city treasurer or steward. At any rate, he was a chamberlain of the city. He was probably at Ephesus with Paul and Timothy. In II Timothy 4:20, Erastus was at Corinth which indicates, again, that was his regular home. Paul sent them to Macedonia to check on the churches for him.

Acts 19:23 "And the same time there arose no small stir about that way."

This is undoubtedly speaking of here at Ephesus where Paul stayed. This stir is over the false goddess Diana.

Acts 19:24 "For a certain [man] named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;"

The people here carried around small silver images of Diana that they thought would bring them good luck. These were like charms on a charm bracelet or necklaces with this charm on them. Of course, Demetrius had made some bigger images to set around in their houses, as well. Demetrius was making a lot of money doing this.

Acts 19:25 "Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth."

The great concern that these craftsmen have, is that there will no longer be a market for their images they have graven. If all the people became Christians, they would be out of business. They have called an emergency meeting to try to stop Paul and this Christianity he preaches.

Acts 19:26 "Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:"

We see from this that Paul has brought a direct attack upon the images that they worship as gods.

Acts 19:27 "So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth."

Acts 19:28 "And when they heard [these sayings], they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great [is] Diana of the Ephesians."

These men were really not concerned with this false goddess. They were afraid they would not have any way of making a living. This Diana had supposedly fallen from heaven and there was widespread worship of this false goddess. I think it is wonderful that Paul has gone into an encampment of people worshipping the false goddess, and has set them on the path to true righteousness in Jesus Christ. Paul is truly a brave man for Christ.

Acts 19:29 "And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre."

We see some who have received Christ as Saviour and others who are still worshipping this false goddess Diana. They grabbed two of the men travelling with Paul and brought them to the place of trial in the theatre. It appears that Paul was not with them at the time, so they just grab his helpers.

Acts 19:30 "And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not."

Here we see the bravery of Paul. He wanted to turn himself in so that they would release Gaius and Aristarchus, but the other disciples held him back. They knew how valuable Paul's ministry was and they wanted no harm coming to him.

Acts 19:31 "And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring [him] that he would not adventure himself into the theatre."

These people feared the worst, if Paul showed up in the theatre. These were people who knew how bad it could become, and they kept Paul back.

Acts 19:32 "Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together."

We see here a mob gathered, not even knowing what the charges were. They were gathered for the excitement.

Acts 19:33 "And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people."

This Alexander is a mystery. Most believe that he was a Jew, and he came out of the multitude to make the statement that he was not with the Christians, and did not want to be blamed along with them. Some view him as a converted Jew, who is at this time a Christian, and therefore comes to defend Paul and his companions. I believe personally, he is still a Jew here and does not want to be counted with the Christians.

Acts 19:34 "But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great [is] Diana of the Ephesians."

We can see from this just how strongly embedded this worship of this false goddess Diana was. They had shrines to her everywhere.

Acts 19:35 "And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, [Ye] men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the [image] which fell down from Jupiter?"

This town clerk is trying to calm these people down. He reminds them that it is a well known fact that they worship this false goddess. It was not unusual for people to worship the sun, moon, or stars. In fact, many people still do. The fault in that type of worship is that they are worshipping the created and not the Creator.

Acts 19:36 "Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly."

Acts 19:37 "For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess."

This town clerk who seems to be presiding over this incident, calmly tells them that these men have not broken any laws, so they have no reason to try them. He even goes so far as to say that they have not cursed the goddess Diana, either.

Acts 19:38 "Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another."

Acts 19:39 "But if ye inquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly."

The word implead means bring to account. He says here, if you can come up with a legal complaint about any of this, take it to a legal court.

Acts 19:40 "For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse."

He is really saying that this riot was illegal. The high courts might arrest them all for disturbance.

Acts 19:41 "And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly."

He told them to all go home.

Notes

Acts 42 Questions

1. Paul purposed in his heart to go to what two places when he left Macedonia?
2. Which two people did Paul send to Macedonia in his place?
3. Where did Paul stay for a season?
4. Where had Erastus come from?
5. Why had Paul sent them to Macedonia?
6. What is the stir in verse 23 over?
7. Who is the silversmith mentioned in verse 24?
8. What was he making for his living?
9. Who did Demetrius call together?
10. Verse 26 tells how Paul had turned whom away from the worship of Diana?
11. Demetrius said not only had Paul destroyed their way of making a living, but had done what else?
12. Who did they call Diana in verse 28?
13. What two companions of Paul did the people grab up?
14. Where did they take them?
15. What brave thing did Paul try to do that the disciples stopped him from doing?
16. Who were spoken of as Paul's friend?
17. In verse 32, we read that the assembly was _____.
18. This assembly could be called a _____.
19. Who was Alexander?
20. What did this mob cry out for two hours?
21. Who came to settle all of this?
22. Why did they worship Diana?
23. What two things did the clerk say in defense of Paul's men?
24. Who did he reprimand in verse 38?
25. What does the word implead mean?
26. What did the clerk warn them that they were in danger of?
27. What did the clerk do after he spoke?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 20:1 "And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto [him] the disciples, and embraced [them], and departed for to go into Macedonia."

In the last lesson, we had seen Demetrius, and the other silversmiths, who made a living engraving figures of the false goddess Diana, grabbing two of Paul's companions and bringing them to open trial. They were released after they decided there were no charges. Now we see Paul warmly greeting the accused. Paul lost no time in getting out of this evil city of Ephesus. He and his companions go back to Macedonia. Probably, Priscilla and Aquila left at this time, also.

Acts 20:2 "And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,"

We see, here, that Paul and his companions ministered along the way. They were checking still on churches they had already started. Perhaps, they were setting standard doctrine for the Christians at this time. He probably thought them to be doing okay, and proceeded on to Greece.

Acts 20:3 "And [there] abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia."

Whether this visit was Athens, or not, we do know that Paul was very interested in these people, and he stayed three months preaching there. These Jews are probably the angry ones from Corinth, and they really are plotting to kill Paul. Somehow Paul finds out their evil plan, and changes his plan to sail to Syria. It will be safer to go by Macedonia, so Paul changes his plan.

Acts 20:4 "And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus."

The name Sopater means saviour of his father. This is the first mention of Sopater. We do find out that he was a product of Paul's ministry in Berea. Secundus is first mentioned here, as well. His name means second. Tychicus means fortuitous, fortuitous means happening by chance. Tychicus is mentioned again in Colossians 4:7-8 and in Ephesians 6:21-22. Paul speaks very highly of him, calling him a faithful minister and a beloved brother. It seems when Paul could not go to a particular church, he would many times send Tychicus to tell of his affairs to them. Again in Titus 3:12, Paul sends him on a mission for him, and in II Timothy 4:12, we see Paul sending Tychicus to Ephesus. It appears that Trophimus was a brother to Tychicus. Trophimus is a Greek name which means nourishing. In II Timothy 4:20, Paul writes that he left Trophimus in ill health at Miletum.

Acts 20:5 "These going before tarried for us at Troas."

It appears that all these others went ahead of Paul.

Acts 20:6 "And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days."

This tells us that this happens in the early spring. Unleavened Bread and Passover are about the time Easter occurs. This trip of five days should not have taken but two, so it must have been a troublesome trip. This seven day stay was probably occasioned because it was the seventh day that would have been the Lord's day (the first day of the week).

Acts 20:7 "And upon the first [day] of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."

We see, here, that Paul's message was a long one. It lengthened into the night, even unto midnight. They just did not want to let go of Paul. In these early days of the church, there was much time spent in teaching the newcomers the doctrine of Christianity. They all needed to share that they might gain strength from each other. Even Paul needed to know that he was not the only Christian in the world.

Acts 20:8 "And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together."

Acts 20:9 "And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead."

This fall would have been 24 feet or more. This young man falling asleep, while Paul was preaching, might encourage ministers today, who have people fall asleep while they are preaching. It is not so bad, if they did this to Paul. Probably, he was sitting in the window to get a breath of fresh air. Eutychus means good fortune. We will find that he is fortunate.

Acts 20:10 "And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing [him] said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him."

We see, here, that his fall was to glorify God. Paul falls on him (to pray with great power) and then announces that he is alive. God restored the man completely.

Acts 20:11 "When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed."

This is speaking of Paul going right back to ministering. Perhaps, we modern ministers should take note of this powerful man of God who taught the Word until the break of day. This type of preaching and teaching is very pleasing to God. When the ministry lasts that long, God knows you mean business.

Acts 20:12 "And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted."

This would be a time to shout praises to God! The young man is alive. God has performed a miracle.

Acts 20:13 "And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot."

It appears that Luke (we) and some of the others took a ship to Assos, and waited there for Paul who walked there.

Acts 20:14 "And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene."

Here, Paul entered the ship with them and went on to Mitylene. This was the chief city of the island of Lesbos in the Aegaeen Sea. This area was famous for riches and literary character.

Acts 20:15 "And we sailed thence, and came the next [day] over against Chios; and the next [day] we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next [day] we came to Miletus."

This is just a detailed description of their journey. It does not appear that Paul ministered at these ports along the way. The destination was Miletus, which was thirty-six miles south of Ephesus. This was a very evil place. They had a temple of Apollo here. Paul will minister here.

Acts 20:16 "For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost."

We see again, Paul rushing to get back to Jerusalem to keep a feast. This time the feast of Pentecost. Pentecost occurs fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus so this occurs on our calendar in early June. If he had stopped at Ephesus, they would have insisted on him staying a while, so Paul deliberately sails by Ephesus. It is a mystery why Paul seemed so compelled to keep the Jewish feasts. Possibly, he was doing this so he might be able to minister more easily to the Jews. It seems that many of the early Christians still clung to the feasts and sacrifices, until the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed, cutting the ties.

Notes

Acts 43 Questions

1. As soon as the uproar was over, where did Paul go?
2. Who had caused the problem?
3. What false goddess was the problem over?
4. Who probably left this evil city Ephesus when Paul left, two people?
5. In verse 2, we learned that Paul went where?
6. How long did they stay there?
7. Who laid wait for Paul to capture him?
8. Where had he planned to sail to?
9. Where did he go instead?
10. Who went with Paul?
11. What does Sopater mean?
12. What does Secundus mean?
13. What does Tychicus mean?
14. What two nice things does Paul call Tychicus?
15. Who was Trophimus?
16. What feast was just over as they sailed from Philippi?
17. How many days did they stay at Troas?
18. What day did the disciples come together to break bread?
19. How long did Paul preach here?
20. What happened that caused a pause in Paul's message?
21. What did Paul do to revive him?
22. When did Paul depart?
23. What happened to the young man that fell out of the window?
24. How did Paul go to Assos?
25. Who is the "we" in verse 13?
26. When they took Paul in the ship, where did they go?
27. Why had Paul sailed by Ephesus and not stopped?
28. When does Pentecost occur?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 20:17 "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church."

It seems that Paul's stopping at Miletus was to avoid the opposing Jews in Ephesus. These elders of the church needed last minute instructions from Paul, and that is why he sent for them. This would be Paul's last time to see them.

Acts 20:18 "And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons," Acts 20:19 "Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:"

Paul tells them, here, that he had not elevated himself above them, but had actually lived with them and been one with them while he was here in Ephesus. He tells them that he shed many tears over them and suffered all sorts of hardships that the Jews brought just to bring them the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Acts 20:20 "[And] how I kept back nothing that was profitable [unto you], but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house,"

Paul tells them, here, that he has revealed to them all that God had revealed to him. He had held back nothing. He says, I didn't hide to preach this gospel, for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He, also, reminds them that before there was a church, he went from house to house preaching. When they started the church, he spoke boldly in the church, never fearing for his own life.

Acts 20:21 "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

Paul says, I have not adjusted the message of Jesus. It is the same message to the Jew and to the Greek. The message is the same (repent and be baptized) for all have sinned and need to repent. The repentance toward God, because they have broken His law, and faith in Jesus being their Saviour.

Acts 20:22 "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:"

We see, here, that the Holy Spirit has revealed to Paul that he will have troubles when he returns to Jerusalem, but he is compelled to go there anyway. He has no idea what the problems will be, just that there will be problems.

Acts 20:23 "Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me."

It seems that Paul had been told by the Holy Spirit in each city that he went to, that when he got back to Jerusalem, he was facing imprisonment. He, also, knows this is the will of God and has set his face to Jerusalem.

Acts 20:24 "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

Paul says, whether life or death to this life await him, he will not be upset. He has been dead in Christ ever since his first encounter with Jesus. He does not fear death to the body, because he knows he will be in heaven with God when he departs his body. He says, I will joyfully preach the gospel to the end. I have no fear of death. I will rejoice that the grace of God saved me to the end.

Acts 20:25 "And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more."

Paul is bidding them farewell, because he knows that this will be his last time to see them. It is kind of like leaving your family forever. These are, in a way, his children in the Lord, because he led them to Jesus. This is a sad parting.

Acts 20:26 "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I [am] pure from the blood of all [men]."

We read in chapter 33 of Ezekiel, that a person who knows the truth and does not tell the ones around them of their errors and their need to repent, will be held responsible for that person when we stand before Jesus to be judged. Paul is saying here, I told everyone and I am not responsible for their sin.

Acts 20:27 "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."

Paul reminds them that he has not neglected to bring them the truth. It is their responsibility to do what he preached.

Acts 20:28 "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

Paul is reminding these leaders of the church that they are not only responsible for themselves, but for their membership, as well. The food that they are to feed the flock is the uncompromised Word of God. Paul also reminds them that the precious shed blood of Jesus Christ has bought our salvation for us.

Acts 20:29 "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."

This is a warning from Paul, that the enemy will send liars and deceivers among them to destroy the flock. The good shepherd will protect their sheep from false doctrines and lies. Keep your people in the Truth of God, is what Paul is saying to them.

Acts 20:30 "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

This is speaking of people in the church who cause a rift and carry some of the members away with them. This was not a problem for just them, but is a present day problem, as well. There is always someone who gets unhappy and leaves the church taking part of the members with them.

Acts 20:31 "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

Paul had taught them in all sincerity, and now he tells them to be careful to remember what he taught. He was so concerned about their salvation that his prayers for them were accompanied with tears. Paul, like many ministers, feels responsible for those people he has ministered the truth to and cried over them regularly.

Acts 20:32 "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

Sanctified means purified or made holy. The study of the Word of God is what builds you up. Paul is telling them, here, to stay in that Word and become strong. Through the grace of God, (free gift) we receive the inheritance of eternal life.

Acts 20:33 "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel." Acts 20:34 "Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me."

Paul was proud of the fact that he had never taken substance from the people he ministered to. He was a tentmaker and had worked at that trade whenever it was needful. Paul, not only had supported himself, but he had given to those around him, as well.

Acts 20:35 "I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

We see, Paul teaching to help those who cannot help themselves. This weak means physical and spiritual. The strong always has to help the weak. He reminds them of the Lord's statement: It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Acts 20:36 "And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all."

This is a prayer asking God to watch over his flock. Paul must now place these elders which he had trained in God's hands. This was probably like an anointing service where Paul prayed for each of these elders and the church.

Acts 20:37 "And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,"

You can certainly understand the love that Paul has for them, as if they were his dear children. The love that they have for Paul who led them to God is tremendous. Without him and his teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, they would be lost.

Acts 20:38 "Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship."

This is like a death. They are assured that Paul has spoken truth. They will see him no more. As if trying to hang on as long as they could, they go to the ship with him.

Notes

Acts 44 Questions

1. Where did Paul stop for rest?
2. Who did Paul send for to come here?
3. In verse 18, Paul says that he had been with them in _____ seasons.
4. "Serving the Lord with all _____ of _____"
5. Who had lain in wait for him to harm him?
6. How had Paul taught them all that he knew?
7. What two peoples had he testified to?
8. What two things had he testified?
9. Paul said he was going where, bound in the spirit?
10. Where had the Holy Ghost told Paul that he would be imprisoned?
11. Paul said none of these things moved him, why?
12. What bad news did Paul bring them?
13. Paul told them he was pure from _____.
14. Verse 27 says he had not shunned to declare what to them?
15. What did Paul tell these leaders to take heed and do for the church of God?
16. Who had made them overseers?
17. What had Jesus purchased them with?
18. Who did Paul warn would come in among them and would not spare the flock?
19. In verse 30, even who will arise with perverse things and draw away disciples?
20. How many years had Paul been coming to minister to them?
21. What did Paul tell them would build them up?
22. Who did Paul tell them they would have an inheritance with, if they remained faithful?
23. What is the grace of God?
24. What does sanctified mean?
25. Paul said he had not coveted men's _____, or _____, or _____.
26. How had Paul supported himself?
27. What words of the Lord did Paul tell them to remember in verse 35?
28. What did Paul do after talking to them?
29. Verse 37, tells how they expressed their love for Paul, what did they do?
30. What did they sorrow the most for?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 21:1 "And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the [day] following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara:"

We see, here, Luke using we again. It appears that Luke was on this journey with Paul. They left Miletus and the elders from Asia. Coos was a small island in the Aegean sea. Rhodes is an island in the Mediterranean sea. Patara was a seaport on the coast of Lycia. These were not places where Paul stopped and ministered. They were on his way to Jerusalem.

Acts 21:2 "And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth."

This is an area on the Northeast side of the Mediterranean. It is near Lebanon and near Galilee.

Acts 21:3 "Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden."

Paul was working his way toward Jerusalem. Now he is on the coast. He is just a short journey from Jerusalem. He had ministered in all of these areas here earlier and was well known.

Acts 21:4 "And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem."

These disciples, like Paul, had been told by the Holy Spirit that Paul will be imprisoned, if he goes to Jerusalem. Even though they are strong believers and they know it is the will of God for this to happen, they still (in the flesh) do not want this to happen. They visited together seven days.

Acts 21:5 "And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till [we were] out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed."

Here again, this is a sad parting. They went as far as they could with Paul. He was loved by all: men, women, and children. Here again, kneeling on the shore before he leaves Paul is probably praying for his people. He must leave and he places them in God's hands.

Acts 21:6 "And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again."

This just explains that these disciples, that had come out to see Paul off, went back to Tyre. Notice again, that Luke is still with Paul here, because he again says we took ship.

Acts 21:7 "And when we had finished [our] course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day."

We see, that their sailing trip was over and they were near their destination. Ptolemais is the ancient name for Accho.

Acts 21:8 "And the next [day] we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was [one] of the seven; and abode with him."

They seemed to be now travelling by land. Ptolemais is not far from Caesarea (probably two days on foot). Philip had been ministering in this place, and now it appears he has settled down to live here. He had previously been a deacon in Jerusalem, but because of all the problems there, Philip had begun to go out as an evangelist. How large the party with Paul that abode with Philip is, we do not know. This, perhaps, is saying there were just seven evangelist at this time.

Acts 21:9 "And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy."

We see, here, that Philip had four daughters who were preachers. Notice, that Paul does not say anything to them, or to Philip about their preaching. Paul's statement, in I Corinthians 14:34-35 and in Timothy, has been badly misunderstood. Paul being the bold man in the Lord that he was, would have said something to Philip and his daughters here, if he were really opposed to their preaching. Paul, himself, wrote in Galatians 3:28 that there was no male nor female with God. We, also, read in Philipians 4:3, that Paul had women ministers travelling with him. This is what is spoken of in Joel 2:28-29, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:" V-29, "And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour our my spirit." We can read the very same thing in Acts 2:17-18. We see here two witnesses to the fact that women will prophecy. One by Joel and one by Luke. The statement in I Corinthians and in Timothy were both spoken by Paul and therefore were not to be taken as established doctrine, but preference. Paul, himself wrote in II Corinthians 13:1, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." Paul is only one person. I really do not believe that Paul intended to imply that this was for general practice, because all through his writings, he speaks of the women who ministered with him. Remember, in one instance, God sent Paul to Philippi to minister just to the women. It was such a correct thing to do that God gave Paul a night vision instructing him to go there. Paul and Lydia started a church in her home as a result of this visit. There was no other place to have this church meet. We Christians have just misunderstood what Paul intended. Again I say, if Paul had been opposed, he would have spoken out against Philip's four daughters who prophesied (preached). God has called women of our day to help bring souls into the kingdom. We can no longer hide behind the Scripture in I Corinthians and the one Scripture in Timothy. God will not accept that excuse any more.

Acts 21:10 "And as we tarried [there] many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus." Acts 21:11 "And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver [him] into the hands of the Gentiles."

This is just a confirmation of what the Holy Ghost had told Paul every time he stopped at one of the churches. Even though Paul knows he will be imprisoned when he gets to Jerusalem, he is headed for Jerusalem in spite of that. Agabus was probably one of the early seventy followers of Jesus. Agabus, being a prophet, was told by the Holy ghost what would happen ahead of time. We see the great dedication of Paul in this. He is going to Jerusalem, even if it means death for him.

Acts 21:12 "And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem."

The natural thing for all of those to do who loved Paul was to beg him not to go, and that is just what they did.

Acts 21:13 "Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

Paul wants to do the will of the Lord, even to the losing of his life, but it is crushing Paul's heart to see them grieve over him. He asks them to accept his fate as being the will of God. The purposes of God are not always understood by man.

Acts 21:14 "And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done."

We see, here, that Luke and the others see the futility of trying to talk Paul out of going to Jerusalem and they finally give in and say, thy will be done, O Lord.

Acts 21:15 "And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem." Acts 21:16 "There went with us also [certain] of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge."

It seems as though a large group went with Paul to Jerusalem. At least they would be encouragement in his troubles. The certain disciple from Caesarea probably included Philip. This Mnason must have been a disciple before Stephen was stoned, or perhaps, he was of the first seventy. This is the only mention of him, which does not leave much information. He was, perhaps, well to do, to have a place large enough to furnish housing for all of them. The oldness could have been his age, also, and not how long he had been a disciple.

Acts 45 Questions

1. In verse 1 we read of several towns along their route, what were they?
2. What town did they leave?
3. Where is Coos?
4. Where is Rhodes?
5. In verse 2, they found a ship sailing where?
6. What place was the ship to unload?
7. How long did Paul stay here?
8. What message did the disciples in Tyre give Paul?
9. Who went to the edge of the city to see Paul off?
10. What did they do on the seashore just before he sailed?
11. What is another name for Ptolemais?
12. Where was Philip's home?
13. What was special about Philip's four daughters?
14. What was the prophet's name that came down to see Paul?
15. What did he do and say to Paul?
16. When the believers heard what Agabus said, what did they try to do?
17. What did Paul say to the believers?
18. What did Paul say he was ready to do for the Lord?
19. When the believers saw that Paul would not be persuaded, what did they say?
20. How did they go to Jerusalem?
21. Who went with them?
22. Who would they stay with?
23. What kind of disciple was he called?
24. What do you think caused them to call Mnason an old disciple?

Notes

We will continue in Acts 21:17 "And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly." Acts 21:18 "And the [day] following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present."

This verse 17 above, shows the love that all of the early church had for each other. We, also, see the great position that James (the half brother of Jesus) had in the church at Jerusalem. If there ever was a doubt that James is the head of that church, this Scripture settles it. Paul shows great respect to James here.

Acts 21:19 "And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry."

Saluted means greeted them with respect. This was as if he were reporting to James and the elders, the accomplishments the Lord had made through him in all the churches he had established.

Acts 21:20 "And when they heard [it], they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:"

We see, here, a group of people claiming to believe that Jesus is Messiah, but they undoubtedly did not accept his crucifixion as being total payment for all sins for everyone. If they are still keeping the law of Moses and still sacrificing, then they did not understand Jesus was the perfect Lamb sacrifice of God. They are hanging on to Judaism with one hand and claiming to be Christians on the other hand. They cannot have both. Those zealous of the law are under the law and not grace, because that is where they have placed their trust. This problem could be due to not enough extensive teaching of the Truth.

Acts 21:21 "And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise [their] children, neither to walk after the customs."

We see that they are accusing Paul of teaching not to circumcise the men and not to keep the law of Moses. This truly is what he has been teaching and what he should have been teaching. The circumcision of a believer is in his heart. The Mosaic laws and customs are not for believers, either. For the believer, God has written His law on their heart. These two schools of thought prevailed then and now, as well. There was the group who believed in grace and there was the group looking to the law. They are like oil and water, they don't mix. These Jewish converts to Christianity are not willing to give up their old customs. They are angry with Paul for telling the truth. In Matthew 5:17, we see that the law was not done away with, but fulfilled by Jesus.

Acts 21:22 "What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come."

Acts 21:23 "Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them;"

Paul's message from the beginning had been salvation through the free gift of Jesus Christ, not of works. Now all these (Christians?) have decided you must circumcise and live up to the law. Had Paul taken a stand right here, and said we are not under the law, he possibly could have made a case in favor of grace, but as you see in the next few verses, he conforms somewhat to the law himself. We can read about the Nazarite vow in Numbers chapter 6. Christians fast, Jews take a Nazarite vow.

Acts 21:24 "Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave [their] heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but [that] thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law."

Since they are forming the conduct of the church for centuries to come, it is very important what kind of stand they take here. I truly believe the question is {is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ sufficient to take care of the obligations of the church}, or should we all go back to the practice of sacrifices? I believe this would have been the moment for Paul to make a declaration on what is correct to do. We were not there, so we could not say this for sure (only speculate).

Acts 21:25 "As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written [and] concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from [things] offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication."

The obligations to be a Christian should be the same for all mankind. If Gentile believers are required to refrain from things offered to idols, from blood, from strangled, and from fornication, then that should be the requirements for the Jewish believers, as well. The church in Jerusalem and Peter had sent a letter to all the new Gentile churches that these few things were the only requirement. It appears to me, that they still have the wall of partition up between Jew and Gentile, even though the curtain in the temple was torn from the top to the bottom when Jesus was crucified. God had torn down the wall, and now these Jews are putting it back up: all the while proclaiming to be followers of Christ who tore it down.

Acts 21:26 "Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them."

Paul knows that he has been made pure by the blood of Jesus Christ. This has to be just a show for these Jews to be accepted of them. We Christians, when we receive Christ, put on his righteousness and we are pure.

Acts 21:27 "And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,"

The temple in Jerusalem was a symbol of the law. Religion is whatever you do habitually. These Jews had never truly understood the meaning of the law. They were just repetitiously carrying out these rituals. This is not a religion of the heart or spirit, but a religion of flesh and custom. They looked on the outward man, while God was interested in the inner man. These

Jews of Asia had been a problem all along. They really wanted to kill Paul, but God had kept them from it. Now they have followed Paul to Jerusalem and stirred up the people.

Acts 21:28 "Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all [men] every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place."

Acts 21:29 "(For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)"

You can easily see, from these verses above, why it would be an impossibility to mix Christianity and Judaism. Christianity teaches that God is the Father of all who will accept Him, Judaism teaches God is Father of just a very small select group. Jesus taught that we are not to be a respecter of persons, Judaism taught that the Jew alone was worthy to come into the temple. Judaism taught keeping of the law, Christianity teaches love and grace. Jesus had rightly called them stiff-necked and whited walls. Everything these Jews were associated with in the temple had to do with cleaning up the outside of man. Jesus Christ taught the cleaning up of the heart of man by washing in the blood of the Lamb. There was no way these two could be meshed together into a compatible religion.

Notes

Acts 46 Questions

1. How were Paul and his companions received by the leaders in Jerusalem?
2. Which leader did Paul go to see in Jerusalem?
3. What is meant by Paul saluting them?
4. What good news did Paul bring them?
5. How many Jews did they say believed?
6. What was peculiar about their belief?
7. In verse 21, what did they reprimand Paul for teaching the Jews?
8. How many men were involved in a Nazarite vow?
9. In verse 24, these Jews told Paul to do what?
10. Why had they taken the vow?
11. Why is it so important for Paul to take a stand for Christianity right here?
12. What does the author believe is the true question here?
13. What had they (the church in Jerusalem) written to the Gentiles?
14. Is there a difference between the obligation of a Jew and Gentile?
15. Who had torn the wall of partition down between Jew and Gentile?
16. Who built the wall back up, even though it was torn down by God when Jesus was crucified?
17. What did Paul do in verse 26, that signified he was pure?
18. How is a Christian purified?
19. Why did Paul do this in verse 26?
20. What Jews came and stirred up the people against Paul?
21. What was the temple in Jerusalem a symbol of?
22. What is religion?
23. What three things did these Jews from Asia say Paul taught against?
24. In verse 27, what did they do to Paul after the seven days?
25. How did they say Paul had polluted the temple?
26. Give several reasons why it is impossible to mix Christianity and Judaism?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 21:30 "And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut."

These Jews from Asia had stirred up the city against Paul. It appears that the people captured Paul and took him out of the temple. It is strange how one minute he is a hero, and a few moments later, they want to kill him. No violence could take place in the temple.

Acts 21:31 "And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar."

You could say, mob rule had taken over and they were about to kill Paul without a trial and without the public authorities.

Acts 21:32 "Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul."

There are a number of similarities to the affliction of Paul by the people and the affliction of the Lord by the people. These were Paul's own people. They were beating him without a reason. They desired to kill him, as they did the Lord, but they drug him out of the holy place to kill him. Both the crucifixion of Jesus and this beating of Paul should be a warning to all religious people to make sure of who they come against. You can see the terrible error these religious people made when they crucified Jesus (thinking they were pleasing God), and now, making another terrible mistake trying to kill Paul. Religious conviction must be grounded in truth, or else we will make mistakes, too, thinking we are doing right. The only way to know the truth is to study God's Word daily. We see here, that they stopped beating Paul when the civil authorities showed up.

Acts 21:33 "Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded [him] to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done."

At least, the chief captain saved Paul's life. The chief captain thought he might be a desperate criminal, so he had him bound hand and foot. He says to Paul, tell me who you are and what you have done?

Acts 21:34 "And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle."

The accusers could not agree on what the charges were, so the captain had the soldiers take Paul, bound, into the castle. This multitude was just a mob who wanted to kill someone. Once you get a crowd stirred up like this, they forget why they are doing this, they just want to kill someone.

Acts 21:35 "And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people."

This just means that the soldiers carried Paul to keep the people from continuing to beat him.

Acts 21:36 "For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him."

As I said, this mob (stirred up by the Jews from Asia) really had no idea why they wanted him killed. Now, Paul will speak in defense of himself.

Acts 21:37 "And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?"

Paul was a learned man and he could speak Greek, as well as Hebrew. When he spoke in Greek to the captain, it surprised the captain. He even asked, who spoke.

Acts 21:38 "Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?"

This captain feels that Paul must be some desperate person, such as the Egyptian he mentions here. He would never be able to understand that these people were trying to kill him, because of something he preached. We see, here, a preacher of the Word of God. Paul may be chained as far as the world sees, but his message is not chained up. Paul will preach from these steps which lead to prison for him. How many preachers of today would still be confident in our Lord, if they were chained and possibly speaking for the last time? Paul's speech lets us know that he has peace within. The Holy Spirit had warned him of this very encounter, and he had come to Jerusalem anyway.

Acts 21:39 "But Paul said, I am a man [which am] a Jew of Tarsus, [a city] in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people."

Paul is in the hands of this captain. Paul has not been evasive and has answered the captain's questions. He not only tells who he is, but tells him in detail. Paul has already surprised him in that he can speak Greek, and now he tells this captain that he would like permission to speak to these Jews who accuse him. He probably will give Paul permission out of pure curiosity himself. Who is this man that is so hated of all these people?

Acts 21:40 "And when he had given him licence, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto [them] in the Hebrew tongue, saying,"

We see, that this captain has granted this wish of Paul's. Most of these people had not even been informed why they were persecuting Paul. They really had just joined a mob. To give Paul license, just means that he allowed Paul to speak. It does seem strange, also, that Paul would encourage this mob, who tried to kill him, to come closer. Paul wants them to hear every word. When he began to speak in Hebrew, a great silence fell on this crowd. They were probably surprised that he was an educated man. We, in the next lesson, will hear a sermon that will save his life.

Possibly one of the most important sermons he has ever given, and one that will change many lives.

Acts 47 Questions

1. In verse 30, the people ran together and did what?
2. Who had stirred up the city against Paul?
3. Why did they drag Paul out of the temple?
4. Verse 31, tells us what they want to do to Paul, what is it?
5. What message was brought to the captain?
6. They were about to kill Paul without what?
7. Who did the captain take and stop the mob?
8. When did the people stop beating Paul?
9. Name at least three similarities between what they were doing to Paul and what the people did to Jesus?
10. Religious conviction must be grounded in what?
11. How can you acquire that?
12. When the chief captain took Paul, what did he command to be done to Paul?
13. What question did the captain ask?
14. What were the people crying out?
15. Why did the captain decide to carry Paul into the castle?
16. What could you call this multitude in one word?
17. Why were the soldiers carrying Paul?
18. What was the multitude crying out?
19. What did Paul ask?
20. Why did it surprise the captain?
21. What question did he ask Paul?
22. Who did the captain think Paul was?
23. How many men had this murderer led out to the wilderness?
24. Paul's speech lets us know that he has _____ within.
25. Who did Paul say he was?
26. Where was Paul from?
27. Why do you suppose he grants Paul's request?
28. What did Paul do before he began to speak?
29. What language did he speak in?
30. What effect did this have on the people?

We will begin this lesson in Acts 22:1 "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence [which I make] now unto you."

Paul, speaking Hebrew, which surprises them, now addresses these men who had beaten him. He calls some of them brethren, which is true, because they are his Jewish brothers. Remember, several thousand of these Jews had even professed Christianity.

Acts 22:2 "(And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,)"

Acts 22:3 "I am verily a man [which am] a Jew, born in Tarsus, [a city] in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, [and] taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day."

We see, again, here, that they will listen to Paul, because he speaks their language. Instead of a frightened begging man, Paul seems to have every confidence as he brings his defense. He starts out by telling them that he is one of them. He is a Jew, and had even been trained from early youth right here in Jerusalem under their greatly respected teacher Gamaliel. He says here, that he perfectly understands their religious zeal in trying to stop him by destroying him. He tells them that he had done the very same thing. He knew their law, probably even better than they did, because of his lifetime of study in the law.

Acts 22:4 "And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women."

We see that Paul's argument was one they could surely relate to. He says I was like you. I persecuted the Christians, because I, too, thought I must protect the law. He says that he not only persecuted men, but women as well. He had even stood and seen Stephen stoned to death.

Acts 22:5 "As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished."

He is saying here, ask your high priest, I went and persecuted Christians. Paul, you remember, had been a Pharisee of the Pharisees. He had been greatly opposed to Christians and Christianity. Paul had gotten his papers from the leaders of the church to go, and capture the Christians, and bring them back to be punished. I am sure by this time, some eyes were beginning to open and see what they are doing.

Acts 22:6 "And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me."

Paul has come to the important part, the encounter with Jesus Christ (the Light of the world). I am sure they were all ears by now. This great Light that shone more than the noon day sun would get anyone's attention.

Acts 22:7 "And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

Paul is giving a true account of what happened to him, but people, who have never had an experience like the one Paul is describing, will not believe.

Acts 22:8 "And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest."

These Jews have already made up their minds (many of them) against Jesus of Nazareth. In fact, they were part of the group who crucified Him. If they side with Paul now, they will have to admit they made a mistake about Jesus. They are not about to admit that they made a mistake.

Acts 22:9 "And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me."

It is strange that they all saw the light, but only Paul was blinded by it. Notice, the Lord was speaking only to Paul, so he was the only one who heard. The message was not for the world, but for Paul.

Acts 22:10 "And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do."

We discussed it a few verses back, but people will not believe a statement like this unless it happens to them. Paul is relating in detail what happened, but it will not be accepted.

Acts 22:11 "And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus."

Acts 22:12 "And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt [there],"

Acts 22:13 "Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him."

This message from Paul, about the Light shinning so bright that it blinded him, should be a warning to all these people listening. Paul is trying to tell them that he was blind physically and spiritually, until God opened his eyes. He really is saying to these people, open your eyes and see. Paul tells them that Ananias was a Jew, but he does not tell them that he had been converted to Christianity. These men, Paul was speaking to here, would not have appreciated the fact that he had become a Christian.

Acts 22:14 "And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth."

This Scripture above (if you believe it to be true) separates Paul into a class of a very few men in all of history, such as Moses. For God to totally reveal Himself to a man or woman, means that He has set them aside to do a great job for the kingdom. These people, Paul is speaking to, who accept this as truth would be sold out as his followers. The big catch is, they will not believe that this is truth, because it hasn't happened to them.

Acts 22:15 "For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard."

Just the fact that Paul has used the statement all men, will turn these people off. They do not believe that God is interested in all men. They believe that God is the God of just the Jews.

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

Paul again here, mentions the baptism of repentance, because the Jews understand that type of baptism. They will not fuss at the name of the Lord, because all through Moses' writings God is spoken of as Lord.

Acts 22:17 "And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;"

Acts 22:18 "And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me."

We see, that when Paul was a new Christian, God had warned him that these Jews would not accept him or his new found relationship with God. Had Paul not had this vision in the Temple, he would have stayed and with the boldness of a new Christian, they would have killed him. God warned him to leave Jerusalem. These Jews in the temple in Jerusalem (on the whole part) were too convinced that their way was the only way. They would not, at this time, accept Christianity. These Jews, Paul is telling this to now, are not going to like hearing this.

Acts 22:19 "And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:"

Paul is desperately trying to tell these people that he was just like them before his eyes were opened to the truth. He had been cruel to Christians everywhere before he was saved, and that is what he is saying here. He says, I learned better.

Acts 22:20 "And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him."

They all probably knew about Stephen. Probably, some of them were involved in the stoning. He is saying here, that he actually okayed the killing of Stephen.

Acts 22:21 "And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles."

Now Paul has said an unforgivable thing to these Jews. He has classed the Gentiles with the Jews in importance to God, and they will not ever believe that is from God.

Acts 48 Questions

1. Who did Paul address in his speech?
2. What did the word brethren reveal?
3. What is so unusual about these Jews?
4. Why does it say they kept silent and heard Paul?
5. What did Paul say he was?
6. Where was he born?
7. Where was he raised?
8. Who was his teacher?
9. How and what was Paul taught in his youth?
10. What one word did he use to describe his standing toward God?
11. In verse 4, we find that Paul had persecuted whom?
12. How severely had Paul persecuted them?
13. Who did he say could bear witness of Paul getting letters to go and bring in the Christians?
14. Where was Paul headed to capture Christians and bring them to Jerusalem, when he saw the Light?
15. What sect of the Jews was Paul?
16. What time of day was it when this bright Light shone from heaven?
17. What did the voice from heaven say?
18. Who did the voice say He was?
19. How did those with Paul know something happened?
20. What did Paul call this voice?
21. What happened to Paul physically from the Light?
22. Who was to pray for Paul, so that he might see?
23. Why will what Paul said in verse 14 anger this mob?
24. Who was Paul to be a witness to?
25. Why did Paul speak of the baptism of repentance?
26. What did Paul mean about a trance?
27. Why did God tell Paul to leave Jerusalem?
28. What did Paul tell the Lord that all in Jerusalem knew about him?
29. What specific martyr had Paul consented to his death?
30. The Lord told Paul to depart and he would send him far to whom?
31. Why would this make the Jews even more angry?

In the last lesson, we saw Paul standing on the stairs, bound, speaking in his own defense. He expounded on how he had been a zealous Jew. He had even persecuted the Christians himself, until the Lord had encountered him on the road to Damascus and turned his life completely around. These people listened, but didn't like his message that God had sent him to the Gentiles. We will pick up here in Acts 22:22 "And they gave him audience unto this word, and [then] lifted up their voices, and said, Away with such a [fellow] from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live."

The fact that the Gentiles would be allowed to be part of the family of God, was something they would never accept. Their pride in being God's chosen family would not allow them to believe God would have anyone else. They wanted to do away with Paul for even suggesting such a thing.

Acts 22:23 "And as they cried out, and cast off [their] clothes, and threw dust into the air,"

Acts 22:24 "The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him."

This casting off their clothes showed their wild fury against Paul. The throwing dust in the air was their way of saying that their great anger was of God. The captain saw that there was no chance of a fair trial with this mob, so he brings Paul on into the castle.

Acts 22:25 "And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?"

They possibly had already bound him to beat him, when Paul told them he was a Roman citizen. Many times this type of scourging caused people to die. Paul, of course, would try any thing to keep from being beaten so severely. He did not lie, he was a Roman citizen. It was against the law to scourge a Roman citizen without a trial and conviction. Paul was wise to inform them that he was a Roman.

Acts 22:26 "When the centurion heard [that], he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman."

This was the proper thing for this centurion to do. The captain certainly would not want to cause a problem with his superiors for scourging a Roman citizen without a trial. He probably enjoys being captain and does not want to endanger his job.

Acts 22:27 "Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea."

Yes, he is a Roman. Yes, he is a Jew. Yes, he is a Pharisee. Yes, he is a Christian. Paul, in his own words says, that he was all things to all people that by all means he might save some. To this captain who had great respect for Roman citizens, he was a Roman citizen.

Acts 22:28 "And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was [free] born."

You see, this captain wanted Roman citizenship so much that he raised a large sum of money to purchase his citizenship with. You can imagine his amazement when Paul tells him that he was a Roman by birth. The marvelous thing is that until God is through with Paul on this earth, no one can destroy him. If he needed to be a Roman, God had made him to be one from birth. It was through Paul's father, he was a Roman.

Acts 22:29 "Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him."

A Roman citizen was greatly feared, as well as being respected in Jerusalem in these days, because Rome was very powerful at the time. To anger Rome, could cost this captain his station in life of chief captain and perhaps, his head as well. This so called prisoner, Paul, really had the chief captain afraid that he had already over-stepped the limits. The eloquence of Paul as a speaker when he brought his own defense verified to this captain that he was no ordinary man. A man of that day that could speak two languages and had been taught in the school by Gamaliel certainly was no ordinary citizen. Paul, also, had been an officer when he led his men in capturing the Christians. We see that not the prisoner here is afraid, but his captor. It seems this chief captain had no idea what to do with him, so they (the examiners) left and there was nothing more to do, but to take these chains off his hands and legs.

Acts 22:30 "On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from [his] bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them."

The mob has been disbanded, the beating of Paul stopped, even the chains have been removed. This chief captain sends for the rulers of the temple to come and tell him exactly what charges they have against Paul. This chief captain wants to quickly get this out of his hands. The scene is set. Paul is before them to be questioned.

Let us go back now and review what these charges are, before we get into chapter 23. The only charges they have brought against him is that they say he has taught both Jew and Gentile that they are not to keep the law of Moses anymore, and that circumcision of the men is no longer to be done. Paul has been teaching that Christianity does not require these outward shows of faith. Perhaps, one confusing thing to them, and to us, is if Paul teaches this, why is he observing feasts, circumcising Peter, taking a Nazarite vow, and sacrificing in the temple? The only explanation is that he is doing these outward things to satisfy the Jews, so they will allow him to teach in the temple and in the synagogues.

Acts 49 Questions

1. Who spoke in defense of Paul?
2. What did he expound on?
3. When had Paul stopped persecuting the Christians?
4. Why did these Jews not like Paul's message?
5. What did they cry out after his speech?
6. What one word describes these Jews' problem?
7. In verse 23, what things did they do to show their displeasure?
8. Where did the chief captain command Paul to be brought?
9. What did he tell the men to do with Paul?
10. How did they bind Paul?
11. What did Paul say to the centurion?
12. When the centurion heard this, what did he do?
13. What did the captain ask Paul?
14. What was the difference in Paul's citizenship?
15. How was Paul a Roman?
16. What did the examiners do, when they found out that Paul was a Roman?
17. Why was the chief captain afraid?
18. What were some of the things that should have told the captain that Paul was no ordinary citizen?
19. Why did the captain call the high priest and counsel to come and talk to Paul?
20. What had the captain done to show more respect for Paul than at the beginning?
21. Really, what were the charges against Paul?
22. What was probably confusing to them, as well as to us, about Paul?
23. Why do you suppose Paul still sacrificed?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 23:1 "And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men [and] brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day."

The word earnestly here indicates, to me, that Paul wants them to believe. He really does love them, and he wants them to know the truth. This men and brethren, here, indicates, to me, that Paul is saying, I am one of you. Paul says, I have nothing to apologize for. I have lived the life that God has called me to even until this day.

Acts 23:2 "And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth."

This was not the Ananias that Paul had spoken of earlier who had become a Christian. History (not the Bible) tells us this was a cruel man, a glutton. Even though he was an evil man, he was high priest in the temple about ten years. We see his cruelty and lack of respect for Paul when he has one of the men with him slap Paul in the mouth.

Acts 23:3 "Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, [thou] whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?"

Paul called him whited wall, because on the outside he had on the garment of the high priest, but underneath he was everything rotten. I believe Paul recognized the high priest garment, but Paul knew that it was not God who had chosen him to be high priest. The priest had no right to slap someone on the face. Paul's righteous indignation flared up here. This wicked high priest was killed brutally a few years later. Thrust through by a dagger.

Acts 23:4 "And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?"

Acts 23:5 "Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people."

This, again, shows that Paul knows in his heart that this is not a high priest of God's choice, but one self-appointed.

Acts 23:6 "But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men [and] brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question."

Here we see again, that the Holy Spirit of God has told Paul exactly what to say to get these two groups off of him, and fighting each other, over whether there is life after death or not. Again, he has not lied. He is a Pharisee.

Acts 23:7 "And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided."

Divide and conquer. This is what Paul has done with just a few words here. These Pharisees and Sadducees had been arguing for hundreds of years about life after death.

Acts 23:8 "For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both."

These people, who were supposed to be the learned people in the law, really knew very little about God. The Sadducees did not even believe in the Spirit. The Pharisees and the Sadducees had missed the whole meaning of the Bible. The entire Bible, Old and New Testament, is focussed on Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and yet they did not believe Jesus of Nazareth to be the Christ (Messiah). You see, they had not even understood the portion of the Bible that they had studied. The point of verse 8 is that Paul got them stirred up and arguing among themselves to get their attention off him.

Acts 23:9 "And there arose a great cry: and the scribes [that were] of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God."

These scribes have realized that Paul is not doing all of this himself, but in fact, has the power of God on his side. They bring up a very interesting question. What if Paul is telling the truth? If he is and they come against Paul, they would be fighting against God himself. It is nice to know that there was someone who believed Paul.

Acts 23:10 "And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring [him] into the castle."

It seemed there was such a battle going on between the Sadducees, Pharisees, and scribes about Paul, that they were pulling him first one way and then the other. The captain was remembering the fact that Paul was a Roman citizen and he wanted no harm to come to Paul. He sends soldiers into this group and takes Paul by force out of their midst. They carried Paul back into the castle to protect him.

Acts 23:11 "And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."

We see, here, that the Lord does not send an angel, but appears Himself to Paul. The Lord will never leave us or forsake us. He is our very present help in trouble. Paul really needed encouragement here. It really looked like they were going to kill Paul. We see from the statement the Lord makes about Rome, that no harm will come to Paul here. He will live to testify another day. The Lord will not allow anything to happen to Paul. The Lord has a mission for him in Rome.

Acts 23:12 "And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul."

What a terrible thing to do. Paul would not die, until the Lord was ready to take him home. This curse would surely come to pass, because they will not be able to kill Paul. This just means they will surely starve to death. If this vow was made to God, this was a serious vow.

Acts 23:13 "And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy."

Acts 23:14 "And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul."

Taking vows of any kind was taught against by Jesus in Matthew in His Sermon on the Mount. To take a vow to kill someone would be doubly wrong. Thirdly, to tell the chief priests and elders was to include them in the sin.

Acts 23:15 "Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to morrow, as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him."

We see, here, now, they are trying to include the priests in lying to the chief captain. These forty and the priests would all be guilty of murder. The whole idea is to lie to the captain, and trick him into bringing Paul close enough, so one of these forty men under the oath can kill him.

Acts 23:16 "And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul."

This nephew of Paul's overheard their plot, and somehow got into the castle, and warns Paul of their plan.

Acts 23:17 "Then Paul called one of the centurions unto [him], and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him."

Acts 23:18 "So he took him, and brought [him] to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto [him], and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee."

Paul had the centurion and the chief captain afraid for anything to happen to him. They were eager to figure a way out of this problem with Paul. The centurion was afraid not to carry the message.

Acts 23:19 "Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went [with him] aside privately, and asked [him], What is that thou hast to tell me?"

This is very unusual for a captain to be talking to a prisoner at all. It is even more unusual, for him to receive this young man sent by the prisoner to him. This just shows that he is really afraid of Paul, because he is a Roman citizen. The captain does not want to show weakness around his men, so he calls this young man aside to speak to him.

Acts 23:20 "And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to morrow into the council, as though they would inquire somewhat of him more perfectly."

Acts 23:21 "But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee."

You can see that even though these forty evil men have made this death oath, they are in the wrong. God has intervened and caused this young man to be just at the right place at the right time to save Paul. This captain is eager to help Paul, but he has to live here with these other people, so he will have to be very clever in how he handles this. He cannot let them know that he knows about their scheme.

Acts 50 Questions

1. Paul has lived how, up until this day in verse 1?
2. What was the name of the high priest present?
3. What did he tell those near Paul to do to him?
4. History tells us two things about this high priest, what were they?
5. What did Paul call this priest?
6. Paul said he judged him after the law, and hit him contrary to ____.
7. What did it mean, when he called the priest a whited wall?
8. How does history tell us this priest died?
9. In verse 4, those standing around spoke out against Paul for what?
10. In verse 5, what does Paul say is written pertaining to this?
11. What kind of a high priest does this show that Paul believes he is?
12. When Paul saw they were divided into Sadducees and Pharisees, what did he tell them he was?
13. What did Paul tell them he was called in question about?
14. What did this cause among the multitude?
15. Which says there is no resurrection, Pharisees or Sadducees?
16. What other two things do they not believe in?
17. Who said they found no evil in this man?
18. They also said, if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against ____.
19. Why did the chief captain have soldiers to go down and get Paul away from the mob?
20. Where was Paul taken?
21. Who stood by Paul, and said be of good cheer?
22. Where would Paul live to testify?
23. Who banded together in a curse not to eat until they had killed Paul?
24. How many of them had taken the vow?
25. Who did they come and tell of their vow?
26. What kind of conspiracy had they schemed up to get Paul close enough to them that they might kill him?
27. Who overheard their evil plot?
28. Who does he warn of the plan?
29. What did Paul tell him to do?
30. What did the chief captain do, when the young man came to him?
31. Who has intervened and helped Paul?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 23:21 "But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee."

In the last lesson, we saw Paul brought before the council. The council really did not find anything they could convict him of. Forty men banded together and took an oath not to eat until they killed Paul. Paul's nephew overheard and came and told Paul. Paul sends this nephew to the captain, so the captain can protect Paul from these forty men. These men were going to try to get the captain to bring Paul out to be questioned. While he is out, they plan to kill him. Remember, the captain is afraid for any harm to come to Paul, because he is a Roman citizen.

Acts 23:22 "So the chief captain [then] let the young man depart, and charged [him, See thou] tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me."

This chief captain has to live in this area, so he can not let these people know that he knew about this plot. He is getting Paul out of this, but he cannot let the people know why he is taking Paul out. It would look like he had taken sides with Paul against them.

Acts 23:23 "And he called unto [him] two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;"

This is a very large group to guard this one man. This is about the same number that would go to guard a king. This captain was going to make sure no one would kill Paul on the way. Seventy horsemen went with them. They left at 9 p.m.

Acts 23:24 "And provide [them] beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring [him] safe unto Felix the governor."

Felix means happy. Felix was a Roman procurator. Felix had been a slave, but was freed by Claudius Caesar and was elevated to governor in Judaea.

Acts 23:25 "And he wrote a letter after this manner:"

Acts 23:26 "Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix [sendeth] greeting."

Up until this point, we have just heard him spoken of as captain. Now we are told that the captain's name was Claudius Lysias.

Acts 23:27 "This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.

This captain is just sure that it will put him in good favor that he saved a Roman citizen from being killed by a mob of Jews.

Acts 23:28 "And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council:"

Acts 23:29 "Whom I perceived to be accused of questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds."

We really see the divine providence of God in all of this. God caused this captain, really, to get Paul out of danger. The captain said they wanted to kill him, because of a technicality in their Jewish law. He, also says, that Paul has not done anything to warrant punishment.

Acts 23:30 "And when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what [they had] against him. Farewell."

Part of this was not true, when the captain sent Paul away by night unknown to the Jews. The captain waited until after Paul was safe, before he tells them that they will have to bring their complaints to Felix. This letter was explaining why he sent Paul to Felix.

Acts 23:31 "Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought [him] by night to Antipatris."

Antipatris was thirty-eight miles away from Jerusalem. Paul was sent by night to keep from arousing these forty men who were sworn to kill him.

Acts 23:32 "On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle:"

This just means that somewhere between six and nine hours later, they came to Antipatris. The horsemen left the soldiers, and they took Paul the last part of the journey. They would leave Paul with Felix and go back to the castle in Jerusalem.

Acts 23:33 "Who, when they came to Caesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him."

These soldiers had orders to turn Paul over to no one except Felix. Along with Paul, they gave the letter from their captain to Felix.

Acts 23:34 "And when the governor had read [the letter], he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that [he was] of Cilicia;" Acts 23:35 "I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are also come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall."

What appeared to Paul to be a safe haven is now far from that. Instead of Felix protecting Paul from these forty Jews, Felix just orders Paul held until they can catch up and accuse Paul before Felix. This is just a delay, not a reprieve. Really, all of this is actually taking Paul closer to Rome. We must remember that the Lord had appeared to Paul and told him be of good cheer, because he would bear witness of Him in Rome as he had in Jerusalem. Felix, perhaps, did not take his word for Paul's innocence. He wanted to be thought of as being just, so he was going to wait and hear both sides of this argument, before he makes up his mind. His inquiry about where Paul was from was to make sure that he fell within his jurisdiction.

Acts 51 Questions

1. How many men lay in wait for Paul?
2. What had they done to show how serious they were about killing Paul?
3. What were they not going to do, until they killed Paul?
4. What had the council found Paul guilty of?
5. Who had overheard their plot to kill Paul?
6. Why was the captain afraid for Paul to be killed?
7. What did the captain warn the young man of?
8. Why did he not want the people to know what he had told the nephew of Paul?
9. Who did the captain call to him to give orders to about what to do with Paul?
10. How many soldiers would go and guard Paul?
11. How many horsemen went?
12. What time did they leave Jerusalem?
13. How did Paul travel?
14. What does Felix mean?
15. Who was Felix?
16. Who had freed Felix?
17. What was the captain's name?
18. Who had Paul been taken of?
19. Why had the captain sent soldiers in to protect Paul?
20. What did the captain perceive Paul to be accused of?
21. What was the captain's verdict of what Paul had done?
22. What small untruth did the captain tell in verse 30?
23. Where did the soldiers take Paul?
24. How far was this from Jerusalem?
25. Where did they deliver Paul to Felix?
26. What did Felix ask Paul, to see if Paul was in his jurisdiction?
27. What unpleasant decision did Felix make?
28. Where was Paul held until court day?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 24:1 "And after five days Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and [with] a certain orator [named] Tertullus, who informed the governor against Paul."

This is the same Ananias who had told one of his men to slap Paul in the mouth. Paul had called him a whited wall. We had already mentioned that he had probably proclaimed himself high priest. Probably this Tertullus was a Roman and probably was hired, because he could speak the language of the governor, as well as the language of the high priest. He made his living as an orator. He told the governor the accusations against Paul.

Acts 24:2 "And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse [him], saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence,"

This orator begins by flattering the governor to get him on the side of the high priest. He speaks of providence as being the reason worthy deeds had been done of their nation.

Acts 24:3 "We accept [it] always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness."

Acts 24:4 "Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words."

This is just a very flattering way of asking Felix to hear their side of the story.

Acts 24:5 "For we have found this man [a] pestilent [fellow], and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes:"

Pestilent means nuisance here. There had been many riots instigated by rebellious Jews, and Felix was familiar with the problems they had caused. Now this paid orator has brought this up to try to get up a case against Paul. The Jews used the name Nazarenes for followers of Jesus. They had previously made the statement, "can any good thing come out of Nazareth?". This was intended to be a slur against Paul. Their true complaint was that he was a follower of Jesus Christ from Nazareth.

Acts 24:6 "Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom we took, and would have judged according to our law."

Truly Paul had not profaned the temple. In fact, many Christians might have questioned why Paul had gone to the temple to sacrifice. I believe that down deep in Paul's heart, he had never truly given up trying to win his Jewish brothers to Christianity, and he was trying to make himself acceptable unto them by going through the Jewish rituals.

Acts 24:7 "But the chief captain Lysias came [upon us], and with great violence took [him] away out of our hands,"

Nowhere do these accusers tell Felix that they had every intention to kill Paul. They do not mention that he is a Roman, either. They, also,

find it very convenient to hide the fact that Paul is really one of them, a Pharisee. They want to blame anyone, but themselves.

Acts 24:8 "Commanding his accusers to come unto thee: by examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him."

They are showing their anger here in having to come to a higher court. They are reminding Felix here of his duty.

Acts 24:9 "And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so."

Up until now, the orator had spoken for them, but in verse 9, Jews which hired this orator have spoken out and said that what he had said was true.

Acts 24:10 "Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself:"

Paul is a wonderful orator himself. He, also, begins with a little flattery of the governor. Paul says, I know you are fair. I am happy to bring my case before you.

Acts 24:11 "Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship."

Paul tells this governor that twelve days ago, he went to Jerusalem for one purpose (to worship). He had no evil intent at all.

Acts 24:12 "And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:"

Paul is not making inflammatory remarks about his accusers. He is just quietly denying any wrong doing. Paul really did not try to minister on this particular trip to the temple. These Jews were accusing him of things he had taught in other cities, before he came back to Jerusalem. The Jews of Asia were really the ones who had stirred this whole thing up.

Acts 24:13 "Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me."

These are all false accusations.

Acts 24:14 "But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:"

Sect is used in the sense of one's philosophical belief. This covers sect of the Sadducees, ect. Here it just means that Paul is a follower of the Nazarene Jesus Christ. This he admits. He does not call him Jesus Christ here, it would just tend to inflame the Jews more. He does say that he believes the law and the prophets. I believe he included the prophets, because they prophesied of Jesus.

Acts 24:15 "And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."

Of course, not all of the Jews believed in the resurrection of the dead. The Sadducees do not believe in the resurrection of the dead, but the Pharisees do, as we read in chapter 23 verse 8 of Acts. The Sadducees tolerate this belief of the Pharisees somewhat however. They are both Jews.

Acts 24:16 "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and [toward] men."

Paul says, I have a clear conscience before God.

Acts 24:17 "Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings."

This was like a tax that was to be paid.

Acts 24:18 "Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult."

Paul had gone to the temple and been purified with the four men who had shaved their heads, stating that Paul walked orderly and kept the law. Acts 21:24. There were no large numbers with Paul. He was not causing trouble either.

Acts 24:19 "Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me."

Paul says here, why did these men not come and testify against me to you, if they had a complaint.

Acts 24:20 "Or else let these same [here] say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council,"

You see, they had not proved any evil doing of Paul at all to the council. They were just mad, because Paul followed Jesus.

Acts 24:21 "Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day."

Acts 24:22 "And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of [that] way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter."

Felix could not make his mind up who was right, so he just put off deciding until Lysias, the captain from Jerusalem comes to give him some more information.

Acts 24:23 "And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let [him] have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him."

We see that Luke and the others were allowed to come and visit Paul while he was imprisoned. He was not chained or restrained at all. He was just kept in the prison, until the next trial. It appears that Paul was treated more as a guest than a prisoner. His friends could come and see him and bring things to him. He just couldn't leave.

Acts 24:24 "And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ."

It seems that Felix's wife was interested in hearing about Jesus. Felix and Drusilla formed the entire congregation as Paul preached to them the gospel message of Jesus Christ. This was a private sermon for just these two in Felix's office.

Acts 24:25 "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."

This is very similar to people today. Felix was almost persuaded to become a Christian. He did not receive Jesus though. He said, perhaps next time. He was convicted in his heart, because he trembled. How sad that he waited.

Acts 24:26 "He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him."

Felix wanted to hear what Paul had to say, because he called Paul often to hear him. Felix was not honest, however. He was wanting Paul to pay him a bribe to get out of jail. We do not see where Felix was converted to Christianity. Perhaps, his greed for money kept him from receiving Jesus.

Acts 24:27 "But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound."

This Porcius was the successor of Felix. Felix was afraid of the Jews reporting him to the emperor, so he bound Paul for the benefit of these Jews right before he left office.

Acts 52 Questions

1. How long after Paul arrived in Caesarea, did the high priest come?
2. What was the high priest's name?
3. Who came with him?
4. Who would do the speaking for him?
5. How does the orator begin?
6. What adjectives does he use of Felix in verse 3?
7. What kind of a fellow did he call Paul?
8. What does the word mean?
9. He called Paul a ringleader of the sect of the _____.
10. What did he say Paul profaned?
11. What was the chief captain's name?
12. Who agreed with this orator?
13. In verse 10, what approach did Paul take to speak to the governor?
14. How many days had it been since Paul went to Jerusalem?
15. In verse 12, Paul states three things he did not do, what were they?
16. In verse 13, Paul says all the accusations were _____.
17. In verse 14, Paul proclaims belief in what?
18. In what sense is sect used in verse 14?
19. What hope toward God did Paul say that they had?
20. What is Paul saying in verse 16?
21. What had Paul come to do after many years?
22. Where were the Jews who started the trouble from?
23. In verse 19, Paul said these Jews should have done what, if they had anything against him?
24. Why did Paul say he was called in question?
25. What decision did Felix make in verse 22?
26. Who did Felix order to keep Paul?
27. What was he allowed that most prisoners were not?
28. What was Felix' wife's name?
29. Who did Paul preach to while he was in prison?
30. What one word lets us know Felix was almost persuaded?
31. Verse 26, tells us Felix wanted what from Paul to release him?
32. How long was Paul in prison until Porcius Festus took over?
33. What did Felix do to Paul to please the Jews right before he left office?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 25:1 "Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Caesarea to Jerusalem."

We saw in the last lesson that Paul had been imprisoned two years in Caesarea by Felix. Now Festus has come to power. In verse 1 above, we see Festus going up to Jerusalem. Festus had something to prove, being newly in office.

Acts 25:2 "Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him,"

We see that the Jew's hatred for Paul had not diminished at all these two years. The Jews (God's chosen people) who actually had been given the law and knowledge of God, seemed to know less about the Lord than the unlearned. They lost no time in going to Festus and asking for Paul.

Acts 25:3 "And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him."

These Jews were trying to trick Festus into sending for Paul. They would lay wait for him and murder him.

Acts 25:4 "But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly [thither]."

Festus was probably wise enough to see through their plot to kill Paul. Perhaps, Felix had filled him in on some of the details. We are not told one way or the other. We were not told what happened to the forty Jews who made the vow not to eat or drink, until they killed Paul either. There was a way to get out of such a vow, but there were severe consequences. The Lord had said not to make vows. We are sure they were not fasting after two years.

Acts 25:5 "Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with [me], and accuse this man, if there be any wickedness in him."

We see, here, that Festus invites them all who have any accusation to place against Paul to come to Caesarea and file their complaint. Festus says, if there be any wickedness in him. Thanks to the fact, that Festus has not already made his mind up as to Paul's guilt or innocence.

Acts 25:6 "And when he had tarried among them more than ten days, he went down unto Caesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought."

It seems, even here, that Festus would not be rushed into anything by these Jews. When he (Festus) did get back to Caesarea after ten days in Jerusalem, he had Paul brought to him.

Acts 25:7 "And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove."

Here, again, we see that these Jews really did not have anything against Paul that they could prove. Even the accusations had nothing to do with civil law.

Acts 25:8 "While he answered for himself, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended any thing at all."

Paul gives an all encompassing defense of himself here. He truly had not gone against the law of the Jews. He had kept their feasts and their customs when he was at the temple. He had not really broken any religious law, or any civil laws. He had not even spoken out against Caesar.

Acts 25:9 "But Festus, willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?"

Festus was playing politics here. He knew that it was wrong to turn Paul over to these Jews. His wanting to be in good standing with the people of his area, is the only reason he made such a suggestion.

Acts 25:10 "Then said Paul, I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest."

As a Roman citizen, Paul has every right to be judged by a Roman court. Paul reminds Festus of that in the verse above. I believe he, also, is saying to Festus, you know how difficult these Jews can be, and you, also, know that I am innocent of all they have charged me with. I believe the expression as thou very well knowest shows us that.

Acts 25:11 "For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar."

Paul gets really bold here in telling Festus that no man (including Festus) has a right to turn him over to these Jews. As a Roman, he has the right to appeal to Caesar, and that is just what he does. Paul has no fear of death. He says, if a fair court judges him guilty, he is willing to die for what he has done, but he is not willing to be turned over to the Jews.

Acts 25:12 "Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Caesar? unto Caesar shalt thou go."

Paul's request to be tried by a higher court cannot be denied. Festus will get this whole mess out of his hands and let Caesar decide this impossible case.

Acts 25:13 "And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Caesarea to salute Festus."

Festus was a governor and Agrippa a king. Agrippa was, perhaps, seeing how well Festus was doing with his new job. This Agrippa was Herod Agrippa II, actually, and he was king over about a third of Palestine. Agrippa was a descendent of the Edomites and was a Jew. It seems he was not a really

faithful Jew, but was nevertheless a Jew. This Bernice was probably his sister. She was known as a princess.

Acts 25:14 "And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix:"

Acts 25:15 "About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed [me], desiring [to have] judgment against him."

We see, that Festus is telling Agrippa (an expert on Jewish law) about the problem with Paul and the Jews at Jerusalem. Festus is quick to tell Agrippa that this is a problem he inherited from Felix. It was a custom of the king to come and show respect for the new governor, but Agrippa had stayed longer than the normal visit of state, perhaps to help with any pending problems.

Notes

Acts 53 Questions

1. After Festus was in Caesarea (as ruler) three days, where did he go?
2. Who looked him up and brought charges to him against Paul?
3. What did they ask Festus to do to Paul?
4. What would they have done to Paul, if Festus had granted their wish?
5. What answer did Festus give them?
6. What did Festus invite Paul's accusers to do?
7. How long did Festus stay in Jerusalem?
8. Soon after he returned to Caesarea, what did he do about Paul?
9. Who laid many grievous complaints against Paul?
10. What three things did Paul deny offending?
11. Why did Festus ask Paul to go to Jerusalem to be judged before him?
12. Where did Paul say he stood?
13. What right did Paul have as a Roman citizen?
14. Who did Paul say was the one who had a right to make him be judged in Jerusalem?
15. Who did Paul appeal to?
16. After Festus conferred with his council, what did he decide to do?
17. What king and queen came to see Festus?
18. Why had the king come?
19. What was Bernice to Agrippa?
20. Who was Agrippa descended from?
21. Who was an expert on Jewish law?
22. Whose problem does Festus say Paul was?
23. Why had Agrippa stayed so long.?

Notes

Let me lay a little ground work from the previous lesson. We know that Felix had imprisoned Paul for over two years, and Paul had preached the gospel to him. When Felix was succeeded by Festus, he tried to settle the Paul problem by trying to talk Paul into going to Jerusalem to be tried. Paul refused and appealed to Caesar, which was his right, as a Roman citizen. Soon after Festus took office, he was visited by King Agrippa and his sister Bernice. After Agrippa has stayed a few days, Festus tells him about Paul. He is still explaining the problem to Agrippa, as we pick up the lesson here in Acts 25:15.

Acts 25:15 "About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed [me], desiring [to have] judgment against him."

The chief priests and elders of the Jews had so much hate built up of Paul, that after two years they were still wanting to kill him.

Acts 25:16 "To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have licence to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him."

Festus wants Agrippa to know that he has not gone beyond the Roman law in this matter. He is trying to make a good impression on Agrippa the king. He recites to Agrippa the law of the Romans pertaining to this situation. He is saying, I know the Roman law and I stick to it.

Acts 25:17 "Therefore, when they were come hither, without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth."

Here, we see that Festus is explaining to Agrippa that he had not avoided this problem, but had fully done his job.

Acts 25:18 "Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed:"

Acts 25:19 "But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive."

It appears that Festus knows very little about Christianity or Judaism. He even calls their religious belief "superstition". He was telling Agrippa, I thought they would accuse him of breaking some civil law, but the law they were accusing him of breaking was their religious law.

Acts 25:20 "And because I doubted of such manner of questions, I asked [him] whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters."

Festus wants Agrippa to know that he did not overlook the wishes of the Jews either.

Acts 25:21 "But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I might send him to Caesar."

Here we hear an apology by Festus to Agrippa for holding Paul over. He is just explaining why he kept Paul over.

Acts 25:22 "Then Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him."

All of this has stirred an interest in Agrippa. Agrippa, being a Jew, and a king, feels that he might be able to settle this matter himself. He is the superior here and tells Festus that he wants to question Paul the next day. Festus tells him that he will see to it.

Acts 25:23 "And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth."

We see, here, that all the men of the city, who had any position of rule, came to sit in on this meeting of Agrippa and Bernice with Paul. There was much show of world power. This show was put on for Bernice and Agrippa. This was probably a large room where trials were generally held. This outward show of world importance is done in honor of visiting dignitaries. Festus, being in direct charge of Paul, commanded him to be brought forth to be examined by Agrippa.

Acts 25:24 "And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at Jerusalem, and [also] here, crying that he ought not to live any longer."

Festus had just been in power a few days, and had made his first trip as ruler to Jerusalem, when the Jews came to him and asked him to turn Paul over to them. They wanted to kill Paul, but they were not able to convince Festus that he had done anything worthy of death. Now Festus has explained to all of those present who this Paul is who will stand before them. The Jerusalem Jews were not present at this meeting.

Acts 25:25 "But when I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death, and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him."

Remember, Festus has to defend his own decisions at this time, because he has just been in power a very short time. He says here, that his decision to send Paul to Augustus Caesar was because Paul had requested that, as a Roman citizen.

Acts 25:26 "Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write."

Here, we see Festus, in front of all these witnesses, shifting the responsibility of deciding about Paul over to Agrippa. The name lord (not capitalized) was many times used in speaking of someone who had rule over you.

Acts 25:27 "For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes [laid] against him."

This is almost a plea by Festus. He says, how can I send a man to Rome to be tried, when I really have not heard any charges placed against him that would be of interest to a Roman court?

Acts 54 Questions

1. Who had imprisoned Paul for over two years?
2. Who was Felix replaced with, as ruler?
3. Who had Paul appealed his case to?
4. Who was Festus visited by, soon after taking office?
5. Who had tried to get judgment against Paul?
6. What was the right of a Roman to do, before he was delivered to die?
7. Why is Festus going into such detail to explain to Agrippa, what he had done?
8. In verse 19, he called their religious beliefs what?
9. When Paul appealed to Caesar, what did Festus do?
10. In verse 22, what does Agrippa tell Festus?
11. Why did he want to do this?
12. How did Agrippa and Bernice come to the hall?
13. Who else was present?
14. Who commanded Paul to be brought forth?
15. What did Festus say the Jews at Jerusalem had wanted to do to Paul?
16. Who did Festus address in his speech?
17. In verse 25, Festus says that he found Paul not worthy of _____.
18. Who is Festus calling lord in verse 26?
19. Why did Festus say he brought Paul before these men and Agrippa?
20. In verse 27, Festus said it seemeth unreasonable to do what?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 26:1 "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself:"

Festus was really the head of this court, but he had undoubtedly stepped down so that his superior might deal with this seemingly impossible situation. He (Agrippa) at once turned the floor over to Paul. It appears Agrippa is eager to hear from Paul. Paul is eager to speak on his own behalf.

Acts 26:2 "I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:"

Acts 26:3 "Especially [because I know] thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently."

Paul is a wonderful orator and he knows that he is not really trying to convince the others, but king Agrippa, so he addresses him. We see Paul eager to address him and clear his name. Paul immediately gets Agrippa on his side, when he tells him he is an expert in Jewish law. In the last sentence above Paul says, if you will hear me out, I will prove my innocence to you.

Acts 26:4 "My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews;"

We see, here, that Paul tells Agrippa that the very Jews that are trying to kill him, knew him really well when he grew up in Jerusalem. Paul had gone to school under Gamaliel in Jerusalem we learned in another lesson, and he was probably class-mates with many of his accusers. He says, I am no stranger to them.

Acts 26:5 "Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee."

He tells Agrippa that these same men knew that he was a Pharisee and a very strict keeper of Moses' law. None of them would testify in Paul's behalf, but if they did and told the truth, they would have to admit that he was a very strict Pharisee.

Acts 26:6 "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:"

The hope of the promise that God had made was that Messiah would come. All Jews knew of the promise of Messiah. He says, it is because I believe in the promise God said that he would send Messiah. This promise had been made to Abraham.

Acts 26:7 "Unto which [promise] our twelve tribes, instantly serving [God] day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews."

The promise of Messiah, and the promise of the resurrection, and eternal life for the Christian is all the same. Paul says here, because I believe that Jesus Christ was Messiah and believe in the resurrection, I am accused of the Jews.

Acts 26:8 "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?"

Remember, Agrippa is a Jew. He believes that God was Creator of the world, why would it be hard for him to believe that God could raise the dead?

Acts 26:9 "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth."

Paul draws back now a little and says, I once did not believe myself. I could not believe that someone from Nazareth could be the Messiah, and I, too, was opposed to Jesus of Nazareth.

Acts 26:10 "Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against [them]."

Paul freely admits his fault in not only consenting to the death of the Christians, but actually as a member of the Sanhedrin had given his consent to have them killed. Much of Luke's writings use words that doctors used, and this just verifies that Luke was the author. I believe Luke listened in on this trial. He knows too many details.

Acts 26:11 "And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled [them] to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted [them] even unto strange cities."

Paul did not just jail them, but stoned them, and persecuted them as well, trying to make them renounce their belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul really worked out of the temple in Jerusalem.

Acts 26:12 "Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests," Acts 26:13 "At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me."

Paul was on his way to capture Christian men and women and bring them back to be imprisoned in Jerusalem. You see, at that time Paul was working hand in hand with the high priests. They all thought they were in the will of God stopping these Christians. All of a sudden, Paul encountered the Light of the world. This Light (Jesus Christ) is the source of all light. Even the sun is just a container that we see a portion of the Light in. The Light that Paul encountered is not to be even compared to the sun. The sun is not the Light. It is a light. We see here that Paul didn't immediately understand what this Light was, he just knew it was much greater than the light of the sun. He tells Agrippa that the men with him saw this Light, as well.

Acts 26:14 "And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? [it is] hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

This Light was so bright that Paul fell blinded to the earth. The other men did not hear the voice, only Paul heard the voice. This kicking against the pricks is just saying to Paul, why fight, just submit to God. The Light was telling Paul that it was useless to fight against God. Of course, Paul did not realize he was fighting God. Paul must submit to God's will now. This voice must have been in Paul's ear. God can speak to an individual in a large group and no one else know, just as he did for Paul here. Paul mentioned that this voice was speaking in Hebrew, so they would know this was the Hebrew's God.

Acts 26:15 "And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

Paul's question was a legitimate question. He had really never come in direct contact with Jesus before. Can you imagine how he felt when the voice said, Jesus whom thou persecutest? Of course, Paul had not persecuted Jesus personally, but had persecuted Jesus' followers.

Notes

Acts 55 Questions

1. What did Agrippa say to Paul in verse 1?
2. Who did Paul address in his speech?
3. What did Paul say Agrippa was expert in?
4. How did Paul ask Agrippa to hear him?
5. In verse 4, what did Paul say all the Jews knew?
6. In verse 5, how had Paul lived?
7. In verse 6, Paul says he stood judged for what?
8. Who had this promise been made to?
9. Paul asked Agrippa, why should you think it incredible that God could do what?
10. Paul thought it right to do things contrary to whom?
11. Who had Paul put in prison?
12. Who had given Paul this authority?
13. What city did this happen in?
14. What had Paul given his voice against the Christians to do?
15. Verse 11, tells us that Paul tried to force the Christians to do what?
16. Where was Paul headed, when he saw the Light?
17. What time of day did he see the Light brighter than the sun?
18. Who else saw the Light?
19. What happened to Paul, when he saw the Light?
20. What language did God speak to Paul in?
21. What question did He ask Paul?
22. What question did Paul ask Him?
23. What name did He give?
24. Who had Paul persecuted, really?

Notes

In the last lesson, Paul had begun to tell Agrippa about his encounter with the Light (Jesus Christ) on his way to Damascus to persecute the Christians. The Light knocked Paul to the ground and blinded him. The men with Paul saw the Light, but did not hear the voice. I will repeat verse 14 and 15, so that we can get all of Jesus' words.

Acts 26:14 "And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? [it is] hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

Acts 26:15 "And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

Acts 26:16 "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;"

This was a dramatic call of Saul (Paul) to the ministry of God. Many people would say, why would God do this, knowing that Paul had been so aggressively against the Christians? Paul thought he was doing God a favor. He was trying to follow God, he just didn't understand. God is patient and long-suffering, especially when He feels that we are doing the best we know how to do. God speaks to us in many ways. Sometimes it is an audible voice in our ear. Sometimes it is in a dream or a vision. Sometimes it is through his Word (Bible). Sometimes He speaks to us through one of His prophets. Paul did not separate these ways out here, telling all of this to Agrippa. It doesn't matter anyhow. It is the voice of God, the Word.

Acts 26:17 "Delivering thee from the people, and [from] the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,"

Acts 26:18 "To open their eyes, [and] to turn [them] from darkness to light, and [from] the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

Abraham was acceptable to God, because of his great faith. Sanctified, here, means made holy. The thing that makes them holy is because of their faith in Jesus Christ. God had never really been offered to the Gentiles. They were living in darkness, because they had never been offered the Light. Paul is to present this Light to them, which does away with all darkness. The faith is in Jesus. Sanctified (set aside for Jesus) is the condition of the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul was to bring this message to the Gentiles. Verse 17 promised that God would protect Paul from the Jews and Gentiles who opposed him.

Acts 26:19 "Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:"

Paul says this in such a way that he is saying to Agrippa, how could I not follow through on this visitation from God the Son? I could not have experienced this heavenly visit without being changed by it.

Acts 26:20 "But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and [then] to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."

Paul is giving a short description here of where he had witnessed this experience. Paul loved the Jewish people and he did not give up on them entirely ever, even though God had really called him to the Gentiles. It was the Jews who stoned him and tried to kill him over and over again. He would say he was giving up on them, but he really never did.

Acts 26:21 "For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill [me]."

Paul does not go into detail here about why the Jews were after him.

Acts 26:22 "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:"

Paul was never afraid to go anywhere, if he felt God had sent him. He knew that God was with him and would protect him. The Lord had spoken to him several times and had even told him not to fear, that he would still go to Rome and witness for Him there. Paul knew that death was not immediate, because he has not yet visited Rome. The Old Testament prophets had prophesied the very same thing that Paul preached.

Acts 26:23 "That Christ should suffer, [and] that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles."

The suffering of Christ was to us-ward that he might save us from our sin. Had Christ not suffered and His body died, then we could not have everlasting life. We will rise to life eternal, because our leader rose first. He is our Saviour. We read in I Corinthians 15:15-23, I Corinthians 15:15 "Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not." I Corinthians 15:16 "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:" I Corinthians 15:17 "And if Christ be not raised, your faith [is] vain; ye are yet in your sins." I Corinthians 15:18 "Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." I Corinthians 15:19 "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." I Corinthians 15:20 "But now is Christ risen from the dead, [and] become the firstfruits of them that slept." I Corinthians 15:21 "For since by man [came] death, by man [came] also the resurrection of the dead." I Corinthians 15:22 "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." I Corinthians 15:23 "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." The light that shines is the hope of eternal life. This is to the Gentile, as well as the Jew.

Acts 26:24 "And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad."

This is just what happens always when the good news of the gospel is preached. By the foolishness of preaching, some men are saved. The world

who does not accept Jesus as Saviour thinks the minister who has brought the message is mad. Festus doesn't believe and says Paul is mad.

Acts 26:25 "But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness."

Paul here has to defend his sanity. Miracles of God, such as these Paul experienced are not believed by people who have never experienced miracles. They believe if it were real, it would have happened to them.

Acts 26:26 "For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner."

Agrippa was a Herod and his ancestry had given Jesus problems at his birth, trying to kill Him, and, also, Herod killed John the Baptist, who was proclaiming Jesus. This Agrippa was a Roman, as well as a Jew, and knew well about the Nazarene name of Jesus.

Acts 26:27 "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest."

Paul has seen that something he said has touched Agrippa, and he believes.

Acts 26:28 "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

We see here, that Agrippa is convicted in his heart. He has believed what Paul has said. The Spirit of God is drawing Agrippa, and he is holding back. The word almost tells us that he does not humble himself and receive God. He is tempted, but does not quite bring himself to do this.

Acts 26:29 "And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."

Paul is a true minister of God here. He wants everyone to be saved. He wants all to have the closeness of God that he has experienced. Of course, he does not want himself or anyone else to be in chains.

Acts 26:30 "And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them:"

Acts 26:31 "And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds."

This is the same opinion the chief captain in Jerusalem had, the same opinion Felix had, the same opinion Festus had before Agrippa came, and now the opinion of Agrippa and Bernice. Why do they not just let him go? In the next verse we see why.

Acts 26:32 "Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar."

Caesar would not like someone else deciding a case that had been turned over to him. The real reason, of course, is that God wants Paul to witness in Rome of Him.

Acts 56 Questions

1. Who was Paul telling Agrippa about?
2. For what purpose had Jesus appeared to Paul?
3. Who did God promise to deliver Paul from?
4. Verse 18, says to open their eyes and turn them from _____ .
unto _____ .
5. How are believers sanctified?
6. In verse 19, Paul tells Agrippa that he was faithful to what?
7. Where are some of the places Paul ministered first?
8. What did Paul tell them to do?
9. Who caught Paul and tried to kill him?
10. Who protected Paul?
11. Who had previously said all that Paul was saying?
12. Why did Paul know for sure they would not kill him at this time?
13. Verse 23 said, Christ should _____ and _____ from the grave.
14. I Corinthians 15:17 says, if Christ be not raised, your _____
is in vain.
15. What is Christ called in I Corinthians 15:20?
16. As in Adam all ____, in Christ shall all be made _____ .
17. What did Festus say much learning had done to Paul?
18. In verse 25, Paul said he was not mad but spoke what?
19. Why did Paul say he knew Agrippa knew these things?
20. What question did Paul ask Agrippa in verse 27?
21. What did Agrippa say Paul almost did?
22. Who did Paul say he wished could be like him except for his
chains?
23. Who went aside to talk about Paul?
24. What verdict did they come up with about Paul?
25. Why did they not release Paul?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 27:1 "And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto [one] named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band."

In the last lesson, we saw Paul actually being found not guilty by all who examined him, but he had appealed to a higher court, and now he must be tried in Rome. We pick up here in chapter 27, where he is finally being sent to Rome by ship after being imprisoned for more than two years. The "we" above lets us know that Luke is with Paul.

Acts 27:2 "And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; [one] Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us."

This Adramyttium was a ship-building city in Asia Minor. This Aristarchus is the same one mentioned in chapter 19 verse 29, and is part of Paul's party. He was saved on Paul's first missionary journey to Thessalonica. Aristarchus never lost contact with Paul while he was imprisoned and neither did Luke.

Acts 27:3 "And the next [day] we touched at Sidon. And Julius courteously entreated Paul, and gave [him] liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself."

It does not tell us here, but I am sure that Festus and Agrippa had told Paul's jailor and this centurion, that Paul was really an innocent man caught in circumstances beyond his control. He actually lets Paul go ashore and visit with friends here at Sidon. Refresh, here, is used in medical terms, and, perhaps, Paul needed some type of care that Luke could not give him aboard ship. Of course, he came back to the ship and did not betray the centurion's confidence.

Acts 27:4 "And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary."

The ship had intended to sail to the west, but because of the strong winds wound up sailing north instead.

Acts 27:5 "And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, [a city] of Lycia." Acts 27:6 "And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein."

This was a port they had not intended to enter, but other ships which ran from Rome to this area came, and brought needed goods, and took back things needed in Rome. These cargo ships could carry a few passengers, also, and this is the type of ship Paul and the others found passage on.

Acts 27:7 "And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under Crete, over against Salmone;" Acts 27:8 "And, hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called The fair havens; nigh whereunto was the city [of] Lasea."

The winds were blowing the wrong direction for them, and they were not able to go the way they wanted to. This was a sailing ship and the wind was their only power to move. It appears right along here, that the wind did not cooperate at all. Since the wind would carry them no further along the route they intended to go, they landed at Fairhavens.

Acts 27:9 "Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished [them],"

Acts 27:10 "And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives."

Notice, Paul had been fasting. God has shown Paul, perhaps, a vision or, perhaps, just put these words in his mouth, but he has shown Paul that this ship is in trouble. This ship going down could cost many lives. Paul has told this to the centurion. This centurion knows that Paul is a man of God and should listen.

Acts 27:11 "Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul."

This was a natural thing to do, because the captain of the ship knew these waters better than Paul did. Paul was not speaking in the natural, however, he was speaking in the spirit. He had brought the warning that God had given him, that is all he can do.

Acts 27:12 "And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, [and there] to winter; [which is] an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south west and north west."

Commodius means inconvenient or not favorable. Against Paul's advice, they take up anchor and try to sail to a more favorable port to winter in.

Acts 27:13 "And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained [their] purpose, loosing [thence], they sailed close by Crete."
Acts 27:14 "But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon."

This Euroclydon was a terrible storm from the east. This bad weather had to do with the oncoming winter. It seemed they hung to the coastline for safety.

Acts 27:15 "And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let [her] drive."

This is just saying there was no way of going the direction the captain wanted to go without capsizing the ship, so he just let the wind carry them where it would. They were moving, if not in the right direction.

Acts 27:16 "And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat:"

Acts 27:17 "Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven."

Going wherever the wind would take them, they soon found out was no good at all either. It took them near this island Clauda where there was dangerous quicksand. The captain must get out of here, so he puts the sails up and sails out fast. All of this time, the captain has lost his plan for this trip. Now all he is trying to do is to save the ship, its cargo, and its passengers.

Acts 27:18 "And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next [day] they lightened the ship;"

Here, we see the captain having the cargo thrown overboard to try to save the lives of his passengers and himself.

Acts 27:19 "And the third [day] we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship."

This is a desperation move of the captain, when even the tackling must go overboard.

Acts 27:20 "And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on [us], all hope that we should be saved was then taken away."

It appears that things have gotten so bad, that the captain, and all the passengers, and crew have decided there is no use. The ship is going to sink and they will lose their lives.

Acts 27:21 "But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss."

We see here, that Paul told them before they left Crete, that this trip would be extremely dangerous. They ignored him and went on anyway.

Acts 27:22 "And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of [any man's] life among you, but of the ship."

This was a relief in itself, but how did they know that they could believe what Paul said? We see in the next verse why.

Acts 27:23 "For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve," Acts 27:24 "Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."

Many of these people on this ship are not even believers in God, but Paul has brought a glimmer of hope. To those who know God, this is like a pardon from the death chamber. They all thought certain death lay ahead. Paul's God has sent a message of hope. I am sure that some on board wondered, what kind of a man was going on this boat, that the very Angel of God would come and talk with him? If he didn't have a reputation for being a man of God before this trip, he now does.

Acts 27:25 "Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me."

Paul expresses his complete faith in what God has told him, here. Paul's faith will encourage others aboard, especially Luke, and Aristarchus.

Acts 57 Questions

1. Whose hands was Paul delivered into for the trip to Rome?
2. How do we know Luke went along?
3. Where was the ship from that they went on?
4. Besides Luke, who was another disciple who went with Paul?
5. At Sidon what courtesy did Julius show Paul?
6. Why did they sail into Cyprus?
7. After they had sailed over the sea of Cilicia, what did the centurion do at Lycia?
8. Where was the ship from?
9. Where did the ship land near Crete?
10. In verse 9, we find Paul had been doing what?
11. What had God shown Paul, that he warned them of?
12. Why should this centurion have listened to Paul?
13. Who did the centurion believe instead?
14. What very foolish thing did they do?
15. What port were they trying to make to winter in (V-12)?
16. What does commodius mean?
17. What was the name of this terrible east wind?
18. When they could not steer the ship, what did they do?
19. What did they fear near the island called Clauda?
20. What was the first thing they did, thinking they were about to lose the ship?
21. On the third day of the storm, what did they throw overboard?
22. In verse 20, what despaired them so that they thought there was no hope?
23. In verse 21, what does Paul tell them?
24. Why did Paul tell them to be of good cheer?
25. Who had stood by Paul in the night and told him he must be brought before Caesar?
26. What else had he told Paul that was good news to all aboard?
27. What act of faith did Paul show in verse 25?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 27:26 "Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island."

In the last lesson, we saw a ship out of control throwing overboard cargo, and even tackle, trying to save the passengers' lives. After three days of total darkness in a terrible storm, Paul announces that an angel of God told him not to worry, that they would lose the ship, but no lives would be lost. Now we pick up the lesson in verse 26 above. Paul tells them that they will be washed up on an island.

Acts 27:27 "But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country;"

Acts 27:28 "And sounded, and found [it] twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found [it] fifteen fathoms."

This storm had continued fourteen days, and they were blown with the waves this way and then that. Not knowing exactly where they were, the only way to tell if they were near land was to tell how deep the water was. The shipmen determined how deep the water was by casting a weight over on a rope and measuring the depth. They know they are nearland, because the water is getting more shallow with each throw.

Acts 27:29 "Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day."

To make this more frightening for these sailors, this happened at midnight.

Acts 27:30 "And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under colour as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship,"

Acts 27:31 "Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved."

Paul knew their safety was with him. God is going to bring Paul through this to go to Rome. Fear causes people to do strange things. These shipmen were going to abandon the ship and their passengers. They were not under orders to do this of their captain. They were pretending to put out more anchors. They were just acting in fear. When Paul tells them they must stay with the ship, they remember the angel appearing to Paul.

Acts 27:32 "Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off."

This was the life boat. Now, they do not even have it to try to get to land.

Acts 27:33 "And while the day was coming on, Paul besought [them] all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing."

It seems when this storm got so bad that they thought they would die, they started a fast and have continued fourteen days. This makes your body very weak, and Paul knows if they shipwreck, they will need strength to swim. He tells them to eat meat to strengthen them.

Acts 27:34 "Wherefore I pray you to take [some] meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you."

This is encouragement that they all need to hear.

Acts 27:35 "And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken [it], he began to eat."

Acts 27:36 "Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took [some] meat."

We see here a great respect has grown for Paul. They feel that whatever Paul does is okay with God. When Paul eats, they eat also.

Acts 27:37 "And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls."

Now for the first time, we know that 276 people are on board ship.

Acts 27:38 "And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea."

They had kept back food to eat when they had cast out the other things before. As a show of confidence that they were about to be saved, they threw the wheat overboard.

Acts 27:39 "And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship."

This was not a port, but was a possibility to get a little closer to land before the ship broke up. They would try to get the ship to sail into this creek.

Acts 27:40 "And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed [themselves] unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoised up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore."

This wind is still very heavy. They brought the mainsail up, but could do very little in the way of direction, because of the contrary wind.

Acts 27:41 "And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmoveable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves."

This ship violently broke apart, as these heavy winds brought huge waves against the ship.

Acts 27:42 "And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape."

This would have included Paul. Some of these prisoners were, perhaps, hardened criminals who might have been a problem to society, but Paul surely does not fall into this category. God had compassion on these soldiers, but they were not showing compassion for the prisoners.

Acts 27:43 "But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from [their] purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast [themselves] first [into the sea], and get to land:"

This centurion knew that Paul was a man of God. He would not allow anyone to be killed, because he was saving Paul's life. The faster the swimmers could get to land, the faster help would come.

Acts 27:44 "And the rest, some on boards, and some on [broken pieces] of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land."

Just as Paul had been told by the angel of God, who stood beside him. They all were spared their lives. It appears anyone who could not swim used anything at all that would float to take them to land.

Notes

Acts 58 Questions

1. Where would Paul and the others be cast?
2. What had the angel of God told Paul?
3. After how many days of terrible storm, did they realize they were near some land?
4. What time was it?
5. How deep was it the first sounding?
6. How deep was it the second sounding?
7. Why did they cast anchors and stop here?
8. After dropping anchor, what did they wish for?
9. Who was about to flee the ship?
10. Why did they not flee?
11. What happened to the lifeboat?
12. What did Paul tell them to do just before daylight?
13. What had they been doing fourteen days?
14. What were they to do this for?
15. What harm did Paul say would come to them?
16. Why did Paul eat first?
17. Verse 36 says, "Then they were all of good _____."
18. How many people were on this ship?
19. After they had eaten enough, what did they do?
20. When daylight came, what did they see?
21. What happened when they fell into a place where two seas met?
22. What did the soldiers want to do to the prisoners?
23. Why would the centurion not do this?
24. Who jumped ship first?
25. How did the others make shore?
26. Was anyone lost?

Notes

We will begin this lesson in Acts 28:1 "And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita."

Acts 28:2 "And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold."

Most anyone, regardless of their culture, would help someone who was shipwrecked. It was very cold and still pouring down rain. This was in the fall when the rain is very cold. These people building a fire on the bank was a great help to these soaking wet people.

Acts 28:3 "And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid [them] on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand."

Paul always worked wherever he was and whatever he was doing. This is no exception. Paul gathered dry wood for the fire. This viper (snake) which fastened on Paul's hand was a physical snake. The old devil (serpent) had been trying to destroy Paul this entire trip, but God has other plans.

Acts 28:4 "And when the barbarians saw the [venomous] beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live."

Barbarians were not believers in God. They were superstitious people. They decided because the snake bit Paul, he was a murderer. This is the attitude of some church people today. Because Satan attacks a person (from the outside), they say real quickly that he or she is not of God. That just isn't true. The closer you walk with God (like Paul), the more the enemy attacks you. Satan only fights those who have taken a firm stand for God. I would be more worried if Satan were leaving me alone. It might mean that I was not fulfilling God's will.

Acts 28:5 "And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm."

Paul was protected by God. This snake could do no harm to Paul. Just as we are protected from Satan by the blood of Jesus, if we are true believers. He can attack us, but he cannot win. God can use this bad thing and turn it into a blessing.

Acts 28:6 "Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god."

They suddenly realize that Paul is not evil after all. These barbarians, as we said before, are superstitious and now they have decided Paul is a god. They know that they would be dead if the snake had bitten them, so they know Paul is different and they pronounce him a god. They will do anything for Paul at this point.

Acts 28:7 "In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously."

Paul would be treated with great respect. He would be housed and fed the best on the island, as we see in the verse above. He is in Publius' quarters, the chief man of the island.

Acts 28:8 "And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him."

God is with Paul. If Paul was in good favor with these people before, now he is in great favor with them. God, through him, has healed the father of the leader of the land. Now Paul and those with him will have need for nothing. These people will take care of their needs.

Acts 28:9 "So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:"

God is using this to provide for Paul and his companions while they are on this island. Healing their sick was one of the things the Lord had told His disciples to do. Preach the word, heal the sick, and cast out demons was what the Lord would have those do who represent him. Paul is doing what the Lord would have him do.

Acts 28:10 "Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded [us] with such things as were necessary."

We see, here, that Paul and his companions were well cared for while they were on the island, and were sent away with enough to take care of their needs, until they made it to Rome. They were highly respected and honored, because of Paul.

Acts 28:11 "And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux."

These superstitious people had the signs of the twin sons of Jupiter on their ship. They would be setting sail about February or March.

Acts 28:12 "And landing at Syracuse, we tarried [there] three days."

Acts 28:13 "And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:"

Acts 28:14 "Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome."

This Puteoli was a place where the ships carrying wheat landed. It was so wonderful for Paul and his companions to find believers like themselves here at Puteoli. Christianity had already made its way to Italy. What a wonderful surprise. Followers of Jesus here were called brethren still. They, perhaps, wanted Paul to preach (like a revival), at any rate, they wanted him there these seven days. He stayed and then headed for Rome.

Acts 28:15 "And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage."

Paul was highly thought of among the brethren. Many of them had just heard of him and wanted to hear from his own lips the gospel. It seems word spread fast that he was on his way to Rome, and at every stop there were

brethren who had gathered to meet him. Paul was greatly encouraged by this and praised God for it.

Acts 59 Questions

1. What was the name of the island where they were shipwrecked?
2. What kind of people lived here?
3. How did they show kindness to the shipwrecked?
4. When Paul was gathering branches for the fire, what happened to him?
5. What did these natives believe about Paul, when this happened?
6. They did not believe in God, but said what suffereth him not to live?
7. What did Paul do in verse 5?
8. These barbarians expected what to happen to Paul?
9. When it didn't, who did they think Paul to be?
10. Who was the chief man of the island?
11. What relative of his was sick?
12. When Paul entered, what did Paul do as an agent of God?
13. So when this was done, who else came to Paul for help?
14. They honored Paul and his company, and when they left they gave them what?
15. Where was the ship from that Paul left in?
16. What sign was on the ship?
17. How long did they stay at Syracuse?
18. What did they purchase at Rhegium?
19. Who did they find at Puteoli?
20. How long did Paul stay with them?
21. Where did Paul and his group leave for then?
22. The word spread that Paul was on his way to Rome. At every stop who met them?
23. What effect did this have on Paul?
24. Who did Paul thank?

Notes

We will begin this last lesson in Acts 28:16 "And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him."

This centurion, Julius, has put in a good word for Paul, and Paul is not put into the common prison. He is allowed a room by himself, at possibly a soldier's home or in a soldier's quarters here at the prison. It does appear, in a later Scripture, that Paul rented a house and the soldier stayed there with him. I am sure Julius has brought a letter from Festus and Agrippa, if it was not ruined in the shipwreck. If it was, Julius can certainly tell of Paul on this most eventful journey. Paul had actually gotten special privileges for Julius back with the barbarians.

Acts 28:17 "And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men [and] brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans."

Someone might ask, how in the world could Paul, a prisoner, call these Jewish leaders together? The truth is, that Luke is still with Paul and many others who are not imprisoned, but can see Paul any time they wish. They are free to come and go, and some of them have set up this meeting. Paul wants the Jews to believe and receive Jesus. He defends his feelings toward the Jews in the verse above.

Acts 28:18 "Who, when they had examined me, would have let [me] go, because there was no cause of death in me."

Paul is telling them the truth. The captain at Jerusalem found no fault in him. Felix found no fault, when he examined him. Festus and Agrippa found no fault in him.

Acts 28:19 "But when the Jews spake against [it], I was constrained to appeal unto Caesar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of."

Paul says here, that he was not trying to get the Jews in trouble. He had to appeal to Caesar to save his life.

Acts 28:20 "For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see [you], and to speak with [you]: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain."

Paul's persistence in trying to win the Jews to Christ is what got him in trouble. The Gentiles received the Lord Jesus Christ freely, but the Jews did not. When Paul tried to teach in the synagogues and in the temple in Jerusalem, they stoned him and wanted to kill him.

Acts 28:21 "And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judaea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee."

It appears that these Jews of Asia and the Jews from Jerusalem did not know that Paul made it to Rome. They had not sent any messages ahead.

Acts 28:22 "But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against."

They are saying here to Paul, that they have not heard anything bad about Paul as an individual, but they have heard of Jesus of Nazareth and his followers and all they have heard is that Jews are opposed to His teachings.

Acts 28:23 "And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into [his] lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and [out of] the prophets, from morning till evening."

We see from this, that these Jews had not already made their mind up, but came and listened. It appears that Paul taught of Jesus' grace, love, hope, and resurrection at least eight hours. He showed them the prophecies from Moses' writings and from the prophetic books, the promise of a Saviour, born of a virgin, who would die for the sin of the world, be entombed and rise again on the third day. He shows them how Jesus fulfilled these prophecies and many more. He told them of the miracles, how He raised people from the dead, and he surely told them of his own personal experience with Jesus Christ.

Acts 28:24 "And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not."

This is always the case. You will never be able to convince everyone.

Acts 28:25 "And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,"

Isaiah was prophesying that these Jews would not receive Jesus. The Scriptures say that the whole Bible is from holy men of God being moved upon by the Holy Spirit. II Timothy 3:16 is a good Scripture to read.

Acts 28:26 "Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:" Acts 28:27 "For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with [their] eyes, and hear with [their] ears, and understand with [their] heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

For a person to be healed, he must first understand that he is sick. You must humble yourself to receive Jesus. They are satisfied with the law and don't want grace. Their hearts are hardened and this is their real problem. They are full of the law and will not believe that God has a better plan. The hearing that is needed is not with the ear, but with the inner man. Their religion is of the flesh and leaves no room for the Spirit. Jesus called them stiffnecked, too proud to learn anything.

Acts 28:28 "Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and [that] they will hear it."

The difference in the Jews and Gentiles is that the Jews are self-satisfied, and the Gentiles know they need a Saviour. One more time, Paul has tried to bring the salvation message to the Jews, and they have rejected it.

Acts 28:29 "And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves."

Half believed and half did not. They had been given the truth. Perhaps, some of it will be received. At least they did not try to kill Paul for what he believed.

Acts 28:30 "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,"

It seems that Paul was allowed the freedom of preaching, even though he was not allowed to leave his house. As we said before, having his own home was certainly different from the housing of the other prisoners. For two years, he preached in his own home in Rome.

Acts 28:31 "Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

God always tells the truth. The angel that stood before him and told him he would bring his message in Rome was correct. This is what Paul has done the last two years here in Rome. It was better, now that there was no open opposition to the message Paul was teaching.

If I have learned one thing from Paul in Acts, it is that even though the Jews were so violently opposed to Paul, he still loved them and would suffer almost anything to bring them the good news of the gospel. Even though many times he almost gave up on them, he would still go back and try to help them again.

Acts 60 Questions

1. Paul dwelled by himself, with whom guarding him in Rome?
2. What was the centurion's name?
3. Julius, the centurion, had probably brought a letter from _____.
4. What had Paul done for this centurion on this trip?
5. Who did Paul call together after three days?
6. What does Paul say, in verse 17 about himself?
7. Whose hands had Paul been delivered into?
8. What fault did the captain in Jerusalem find in Paul?
9. Who had Paul appealed to?
10. For the _____ of Israel Paul was bound with a chain.
11. In verse 21, what did these men think of Paul?
12. In verse 22, what did these men ask Paul to tell them about?
13. Where was the meeting between Paul and these Jews held?
14. Name four things Paul taught about Jesus.
15. What results did this bring in these Roman Jews?
16. Who did Paul say had prophesied this?
17. In verse 26, what did Paul say was wrong with their seeing and hearing?
18. What was wrong with their heart?
19. For a person to be healed, what must he first realize?
20. What is the real problem with these people?
21. What did Jesus call this type person?
22. In verse 28, who does Paul say will accept salvation?
23. When did the Jews leave?
24. How many years did Paul live in his own house in Rome and minister?
25. The author realized in these lessons that Paul never gave up on whom?
26. What is the Book of Acts, really?

*Thank you for taking the time to study these lessons.
I pray that something in this study has blessed you.*

Your friend in Jesus,

Louise

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