

# **THE BOOK OF ACTS**

## **THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH**

### **EXPOSITION OF CHAPTER ELEVEN**

Chapter 11 is a continuation of the events of the previous chapter.

#### **1. VERSES 1-18, PETER'S TESTIMONY AT JERUSALEM CONCERNING THE GENTILE VISITATION BY THE SPIRIT.**

As the full revelation and distinction between Law and Grace had not yet been given to the Early Church there was still much contention over the two great Ceremonial Laws, Circumcision and Clean and Unclean Meats. This subject is dealt with particularly in Acts , chapter 15.

When Peter arrives back in Jerusalem they who were of the Circumcision contended with him for going to the Gentiles.

Peter testifies to the fact that it was not him but THE HOLY SPIRIT Himself who had led him to go to the Gentiles, and settled for him the whole matter of the Gentiles coming into the blessing of the Gospel.

It was the Spirit...

- who gave him the vision.
- who sent the Angel to Cornelius.
- who told Peter that He had sent men.
- who told Peter to go with the men, doubting nothing
- Himself, who fell on the Gentiles as they heard Peter preach the Word.
- who manifested Himself in other tongues, as He had done on the Day Of Pentecost in the Upper Room.
- who had overruled Peter's racial ,religious, social pride, prejudice and distinctions. The Spirit made no distinction; therefore why should Peter?

The Gentiles received "words" whereby they could be saved. Romans 10:17  
"So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God."

#### **GOD'S. PATTERN AND STANDARD**

1. "The Spirit fell on them as on us at the beginning." V. 15
2. The Gentiles received "the like gift." v.17 Refer to Acts 2:38-39.
3. God granted to the Gentiles "repentance unto life"

Peter found the truth that "IN CHRIST there was neither Jew nor Gentile. The middle wall of partition had been broken down at Calvary, and God was making of both Jew and Gentile ONE NEW MAN.

Galatians 3:28

Romans 10:12; 15:9

Acts 17:26

1 Corinthians 12:13, 27

Romans 9:24

Ephesians 2:12-20

Racial and National barriers cease to exist in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in those who truly discern the Body of Christ.

Jew and Gentile are washed in:

- the One Blood, of
  - the One Savior, and baptized together by
  - the One Spirit, into
  - the One Body.
- All are ONE in Him!

## **2. VERSES 19-21, PERSECUTION SCATTERS**

The disciples who had been scattered abroad (Acts 8:4) preached the Word everywhere they went. To scatter the saints was to scatter the SEED of the Word.

Matthew 13:38

Luke 8:11

Note the progression in these chapters.

- Acts 9, the Apostle to the Gentiles is apprehended of Christ;
- Acts 10, the Door of Faith is opened to the Gentiles under Peter's ministry; and
- Acts 11:22 brings us to Antioch, from which the great Missionary work to the Gentiles spreads.

The preaching of the Word increases, and many Gentiles are brought to Christ as foretold (pg, 131, New Testament Prophecies concerning the Gentiles).

The Church at Antioch was planted by unnamed disciples scattered in the persecution of Stephen. And as the first chapters in Acts center around the Apostle Peter and the Church in Jerusalem, so the remainder of Acts centers around the Apostle Paul and the Church at Antioch.

## **VERSES 22-26, BARNABAS SENT TO ANTIOCH.**

There is a great moving of the Spirit in Antioch. The Church in Jerusalem hears about it. So they send Barnabas forth to Antioch to minister and raise up a Church there in Antioch. We are going to see that the Church at Antioch becomes the second center of Christian activity. In fact, the center actually shifts from Jerusalem to Antioch.

Under the ministry of Barnabas the Church at Antioch grew rapidly as many were added to the Lord.

Note:

Acts 2:41	Added
Acts 2:42	Added to the Church
Acts 5:14; 11:2	Added to the Lord.

To be added to the Church is to be added to the Lord. To be added to the Lord is to be added to the Church. When one is added to the Lord he is added to the Church. Those who were added to the Lord were baptized by the Holy Spirit into the Body. The Church is the Fullness (completeness) of Him who filleth all things. The Church is the visible manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth since His ascension.

Ephesians 1:22-23

1 Corinthians 12:13

The character of Barnabas is described in verses 23 and 24. What he was and what he did. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and Faith - under his minister believers were added to the Lord.

It is from Antioch that Barnabas goes to Tarsus, Saul's home town. to seek him out and bring him to Antioch. Barnabas, undoubtedly by the Spirit, realizes Paul 's Ministry to the Gentiles was needed here and goes to seek him out.

This shows a wonderful cooperation and recognition of Ministries in the Church, the Body of Christ. It was Barnabas, "Son of Consolation." who introduced Paul (Saul) to the Apostles at Jerusalem, and it is Barnabas who brings Saul to the Church at Antioch. Together they teach the Word, and the hand of the Lord was with them.

## **4. VERSE 26, DISCIPLES CALLED "CHRISTIANS AT ANTIOCH"**

In the New Testament the believers are known by various names.

Disciples (about 250 times)  
People of the Way - Acts 9:2  
The Sect of the Nazarene - Acts 24:5

Here in Acts 11:26 and in Acts 15:17; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16.

Isaiah 65:15

The New Name "Christians".

Although the name may have been given by the Gentiles in mockery, the usage of the word by the Holy Spirit indicates that its real origin was Divine. The Jews could not have given the name, as 'Christos' was to them a scared word.

The Name was given at Antioch, not at Jerusalem.

Hence the Church is called the Body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:12, 27

The very name "Christ" involves the Eternal Godhead in the Anointing upon the Church.

#### **5. VERSES 27-30, THE PROPHET AGABUS AT ANTIOCH**

This is the first mention of Prophets in the Book of Acts. Agabus, one of the Prophets, signified (spoke by a sign from the Spirit) that there would be a famine in the whole earth. There Prophet foretold it can to pass.

The test of a true Prophet:

Deuteronomy 18:21-11

Jeremiah 28:9

The ministry of the Prophet will be dealt with more specifically in Acts 13:1, where the difference between Old Testament and New Testament Prophets is noted.

The practical effect and result of the prophecy was relief for the needs of the Church in Judea.

In verse 30 we have the first mention of the word Elders in Acts. The Ministry of Elders will be dealt with in Acts 14:23. It is, however, note worth that the word and ministry of Elders is always in the plural, never used in the singular in regard to the Church.

# **THE BOOK OF ACTS**

## **THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH**

### **EXPOSITION OF CHAPTER TWELVE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Acts, chapter twelve gives us some details of what is going on in Jerusalem and in the Church there.

The Church at Jerusalem only comes into view twice more in the Book of Acts, and that is in Acts 15:7-14 where the Council is gathered over the matters of Circumcision and the keeping of the Law of Moses in relation to the coming in of the Gentiles; and in Acts 21 where they reject Paul's testimony on his final visit there.

Chapters 1 through 12 have particularly concerned the ministry of Peter, and Jerusalem as being the center from which the Gospel goes forth to Judea.

Acts, chapters 13 through 28 cover the ministry of Paul from Antioch, which becomes the center from which all Gentiles Churches are founded and the Gospel going to the Uttermost parts of the earth.

The Church at Jerusalem degenerates over the years from the early glory into legalistic, pharisaical religionism, becoming more and more sectarian minded and bigoted, until God smashes the whole of that system in A.D. 70.

### **1. VERSES 1-2. POLITICAL OPPOSITION AGAINST THE CHURCH.**

Thus far Satan has used religious opposition against the Church. Now it turns to Political opposition. James, the brother of John, is slain by the sword. James is the First Martyr among the twelve Apostles.

Acts 1:8, "... ye shall be witnesses unto me..." The Greek word for "witness" is "Martyr".

James' death fulfilled Christ's prophetic word to him, given in Matthew 20:20-23. James indeed "drank of the cup that Christ did. and was baptized with the baptism that He was baptized with."

### **2. VERSES 3-19. MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE OF PETER.**

When Herod had James put to death, he gained favor with the Jews, so he took Peter prisoner with the intent of having him also put to death. Peter is kept in prison in the midst of 16 soldiers. Undoubtedly they knew of the incident of the Apostles being delivered from prison by angels (Acts 5:18-19) hence they would take no chance of it happening again.

Verse 4, the word Easter is a mistranslation from the Latin and should be translated "Passover".

In spite of the soldiers and guards, the Angel of the Lord delivers Peter out of prison, causing his chains to fall off, taking him right past the guards outside of the city, where the iron gate opened to them of its own accord.

Peter thought it was a vision but realized the reality of the miraculous deliverance when he was past the city gates.

Praise the Lord There are no chains that cannot fall off ---there are prison gates that will not yield to the Lord, when He wills it to be so.

QUESTIONS arise here.

Why should Stephen be stoned to death - yet Paul is stoned to death and then miraculously raised up?

Why should Philip be supernaturally transported to witness to one person - and yet Paul is left in many weary travels for Christ and the Church?

Why should Peter and the Apostles be delivered by Angels out of prison - yet Paul is left to die in prison writing letters to the churches he founded?

Why should God raise Dorcas from the dead - and not Stephen?

Why should God let James be beheaded - yet the same night Peter is to be beheaded sends an angel to deliver him out of that same prison?

THE ONLY ANSWER is that God rules in heaven and in earth, and it is His SOVEREIGN WILL that is being done, in all and above all and through all, and this in spite of men and satan.

Romans 8:29

Ephesians 1:5,9,11

Colossians 1:9

Colossians 4:12

Daniel 4:17,25

The Early Church surrendered to His Will. We to must learn to recognize that God is above all, and to submit to His Sovereign Will.

Surely Peter must have remembered his own boastful words in Luke 22:33, as he went to prison. Here in prison facing death come morning Peter was asleep, in peace when the angel awoke him and delivered him.

### **3. VERSES 11-19 THE BELIEVER'S PRAYER MEETING.**

Although unceasing and earnest prayer was made for Peter's deliverance, it is evident that faith was not fully manifest. Why? Because faith is dependent upon knowledge of God's Will. They did not know if God willed to deliver Peter or not, or if God would permit him also to die, as He had James.

It is impossible to have faith apart from The Word, or A Word from God.

Romans 10:17

There lack of faith was not unbelief, but rather uncertainty! When Peter came to the door they thought it was his ghost, and kept on praying for him. When they opened the door and saw him, they were amazed.

God's Word is His Will and this creates faith. We must submit wholly and unconditionally to God's Sovereign Will.

The prayer of a Believer when uncertain about God's will is "Our God is able... .but if not... we will not bow..."

Daniel 3:15-18

In verse 17, we are told that "Peter departed to another place". This is the last mention of Peter, except for the Jerusalem Council, Acts 15, and the close of history concerning him, in Acts.

#### **4. VERSES 20-25, DIVINE JUDGMENT UPON HEROD**

Herod, hardened in heart, in spite of the miraculous deliverance of Peter, enthrones himself and receives worship due only to God.

As he sat on his Royal Throne, arrayed in his Royal apparel making a speech. the people acclaim him as a god' and not a man. The angel of the Lord immediately smote him because he did not give God the glory.

The same angel which brought deliverance to Peter smites Herod in wrath. Life to one, death to another, Hebrews 1:14

Herod forgot that there was One King in Royal apparel on the heavenly Throne ruling over all earthly thrones.

Daniel 5:21-23

Satan fell because he desired to be like God.

Isaiah 14:12-15

Man fell because he thought he would be like God.

Genesis 3:5

Verse 23, Herod was "eaten of worms". Symbolically this is the "worm that dieth not."

Isaiah 66:24

Mark 9:44-46

Verse 24, Herod may be eaten of worms, but THE WORD GREW AND MULTIPLIED. The Word of God is Eternal, Incorruptible and liveth and abideth forever.

1 Peter 1:23

Such a glorious contrast to the oration and words of Herod.

Verse 25, refer to verse 30, chapter 11.

John Mark returns with Paul and Barnabus as their minister (deacon, servant) Acts 13:5.

# **THE BOOK OF ACTS**

## **THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH**

### **EXPOSITION OF CHAPTER THIRTEEN, VERSES 1-4**

With this chapter to the close of the Book of Acts, Antioch takes the center place and the Apostle Paul comes into prominence of ministry.

#### **1. VERSE 1. MINISTRIES IN THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH**

"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers..."

It is note worthy at this point to see the development and progression in the Book of Acts, of the revelation of the Ministries which God set in the Church, according to Ephesians 4:11.

Ephesians 4:11, "And he gave some, apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers..."

The Twelve Apostles .....Acts 1  
The Seven Deacons .....Acts 6  
The Evangelists..... Acts 8  
The Prophets .....Acts 11:27; 13:1-2  
The Elders..... Acts 11:30  
Prophets and Teachers..... Acts 13:1  
Apostles..... Acts 14:14

Here we have the Ministries in the Body of Christ. All the fulness of Ministry, Grace and the Spirit; all the Fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in the Son of God, the Head of the Church.

Colossians 1:19; 2:9



All the Fulness is to be manifested in the Body of Christ on earth. These Ministries are simply the expression of Christ flowing down into the members of the Church, which is His body.

## **THE MINISTRY OF A PROPHET**

"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers..."

It is essential to understand the difference between the function of the Old Testament and New Testament Prophets, in order to have a proper revelation and understanding of the Ministry of Christ through the Church.

1. The Office of the Prophet is an Ascension Gift Ministry set by the Lord in the Church.

Ephesians 4:11

2. God has set in the Church, Apostles first, secondly Prophets.

1 Corinthians 12:28-29

3. There is no record that Jesus Christ ever chose a single Prophet before His Crucifixion and Ascension.

4. The Ministry of the Prophet was given for the perfecting of the saints until such a time we come into unity, unto a perfect man".

Ephesians 4:13

5. The Church is built upon the foundation laid by the Apostles and Prophets. These two Ministries work together. The Mystery of the Church was expressly revealed to the Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit.

Ephesians 2:20-22; 3:1-5

6. Christ is **THE PROPHET - THE WORD** made flesh.

Deuteronomy 18:18

All other Prophets are pointers to Christ, and are the expression of Christ in the Body.

7. There are various expressions of this same Ministry even as is evidenced in the Old Testament Prophets, so also in the New Testament Ministries.

### **A. The Old Testament Prophet**

Old Testament Prophets fall into two main categories, which helps in distinguishing the Ministry of New Testament Prophets from that of the Old Testament Prophets.

1. PROPHETS OF GUIDANCE - Moses, Samuel, Elijah and Elisha and other, were Prophets particularly used in the Ministry of guidance. The Word of Wisdom, Word of Knowledge, Forth telling and Foretelling, and Miracles - all confirmed that they were Prophets. These revealed and declared the Mind of God to the people. They were Gods spokesman.

## 2. PROPHETS OF VISION AND SCRIPTURE

a. Prophets of Vision - Daniel and Zechariah especially are Prophets of Vision, or Seers, in which God gave Visions which they recorded under Divine inspiration as infallible prophecy.

They foretold the future and destiny of the Nations of earth. Daniel did not utter these things forth as in the Office of a spokesman, or Prophet.

b. Prophets of Scripture - Isaiah Jeremiah, Ezekiel Hosea, Joel, Amos, and all of the Prophets spoken of as "Major and Minor" Prophets moved especially in the realm of Prophecy - the Prophetic Scriptures. They moved in the fullest sense of Foretelling and Forth telling the destiny of the Nations, both Hebrew and Gentile.

Through these Prophets came infallible Scripture. God overruling the imperfections and infirmities of these men, and brought forth infallible revelation through fallible men, using their personalities under the Spirit's control.

However, most of these were not used in the area of miracles, as were the Prophets of guidance.

These Prophets of Scripture became God's voice for the generation of their time and also for all future generations.

### Conclusions:

The essential function of the Old Testament Prophets were as follows:

1. Old Testament Prophets were used in guidance.
2. Old Testament Prophets were used to utter and write the infallible Scripture.

Guidance for the people or nation was given to the Prophet or Priest by the Spirit by means of Visions, Voice, Visitation, Word or Dream, or by Urim and Thummin because the Holy Spirit was not yet avail-able for '1a11 flesh" under the Old Covenant Dispensation.

Infallible Prophecy is spoken of in 2 Peter 1:20-21.

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

There will be variations of the Prophetic Ministry in the New Testament Church, as there was in the Old Testament, as God willed to use them, but these essential differences will always remain.

## **B. The New Testament Prophet**

It is important to remember these facts.

1. No New Testament Prophet was ever used in guiding or controlling and governing the believer in the will of God, but often used in confirmation of the already known and revealed will of God.
2. No New Testament Prophet was ever used in the utterance or writing of infallible Scripture. All prophetic utterances were judged by the Word of Scripture.

1 Corinthians 14:29-30, 32

Most of the New Testament was written by Apostles.

The reason New Testament Prophets were not used for guidance, or for writing of infallible Scripture is evident! God was making a complete break between the the operation of the Old Testament Prophet in this New Testament Dispensation of the Spirit, when the Spirit was available for all.

To go back to seeking guidance through Prophets is to resort back to Old Testament methods. The Bible teaches, Romans 8:14 -

"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons (huios) of God."

Let us now define and distinguish between:

1. Prophecy of Scripture - Inspired infallible Prophecy.

2 Peter 1:20

2. The Spirit of Prophecy - Spoken in the spirit of Infallible Prophecy.

Revelation 19:10

3. The Gift of Prophecy - A word of edification, exhortation or encouragement, and comfort.

1 Corinthians 14:3; 31

4. The Office of a Prophet - All may prophesy, but not all are prophets.

Guidance in the New Testament for the Believer is by:

1. The Infallible Word of God - the complete revelation of His will as in Scripture.
2. The Indwelling Spirit of God - always leading to and never contrary to the Word He inspired.
3. Ministries SET in the Church (mainly Elders) to confirm God's already known and revealed will.

### **C. The Revealed New Testament Ministry of Prophets**

1. Agabus foretold (predicted) by the Spirit the coming famine.

Acts 11:27-28.

He did not give guidance as to what to do, but the disciples responded to send relief.

Acts 11:29-30

2. The Prophets without doubt were the ones through whom "the Holy Ghost said..." (Acts 13:2)

This was confirmation of God's will, already known and revealed to Saul by the Lord Jesus on the Road to Damascus, and confirmed through Ananias, and now re-confirmed through the Prophets here at Antioch. Not guidance, but confirmation.

3. The Prophets ministered the Word of God to the Church, in exhortation and confirmation.

Acts 15:32

A Prophet also means, "A public expounder of God's Word." This is the Ministry of forth telling - telling forth the Word.

4. According to 1 Corinthians 14:29-30,32, the Prophets had a distinct ministry Gift of utterance in prophecy, which was part of the prophetic office.

It means "to flow, to speak. to bubble forth and over like a fountain" It involved

- Exhortation, "to stir up"
- Edification, "to build up"
- Comfort, "to bind up"
- Conviction,
- Confirmation,
- Revelation - These were not counted infallible, but were judged by the Word and the Spirit.

5. Acts 21:8-14 gives a remarkable distinction between the Gift of Prophecy and the Office of a Prophet. Although Philip the Evangelist had four daughters who did prophesy, they were not prophetesses, God sent the Prophet Agabus down to foretell what would happen to Paul at Jerusalem, again confirming what Paul already knew.

6. The New Testament warns us to beware of False Prophets.

Acts 13:6

2 Peter 2:1

1 John 4:1

By their fruits ye shall know them.

Matthew 7:15; 24:11, 24

Revelation 16:13

The final test is the Law and the Testimony.

Isaiah 8:20

Deuteronomy 18:22

Jeremiah 28:9

Note: The comments on the Ministry of Prophets are rather full because of the necessity of understanding and appreciating this Ministry as part of the full five-fold Ministry of Christ.

### **THE MINISTRY OF TEACHERS**

"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers..."

1. God has set Teachers in the Church.

Acts 13:1

1 Corinthians 12:28

Ephesians 4:11

Teachers are one of the Ascension gift Ministries given to the Church, along with other Ministries, to bring the Saints unto maturity.

2. Christ is **THE TEACHER** sent from God.

John 3:2

3. There is great warning and admonition to Teachers in James 3:1-2

James 3:1-2

4. The Teacher needs the Anointing of the Spirit, Who alone is **THE TRUE TEACHER.**

1 John 2:20, 27

5. "Thine eyes shall see thy Teachers" Isaiah 30:20

God is restoring Teachers to the Church in these days as in the early Church. Teachers work through the Word, not speaking as the Scribes and Pharisees, but having That Divine ability to impart knowledge and understanding to the people, teaching the revelation given to the Apostles and Prophets.

Mark 1:22

Matthew 7:28-29

Wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, the anointing of the Spirit in illumination, and the ability of the Spirit - these are the things that enable the Teacher to speak as the very "Oracles of God".

1 Peter 4:10-11

Israel suffered much because there was no "Teaching Priest."

2 Chronicles 15:3-4

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Teacher, and it is His

Ministry manifested and operating in the Church.

The Great Commission included, Matthew 28:19-20

"Go ye therefore and teach all nations...Teaching them to observe all thing whatsoever I have command you..."

## **2. VERSES 2-4, "...THE HOLY SPIRIT SAID..."**

A. They ministered to the Lord. They were ministering Priests.

1 Peter 2:9

1 Samuel 3:1

2 Chronicles 29:11

Ezekiel 44:17-27

B. They Fasted - flesh subdued.

Matthew 9:14-15

C. The Spirit said. Not merely man, not the Church, but the ministry of the Spirit in and through vessels. The Personality and Deity of the Spirit again revealed. "Separate unto Me ... to the work that I called them." The Spirit, as the CEO in the Church, called, chose, elected and equipped the Ministries.

D. They fasted and prayed.

E. They laid hands on them. Identification, confirmation, and edification. The Ministry of Laying on of Hands. First principles

Hebrews 6:1-2

1 Timothy 5:22

Both proven ministries - not novices

F. They sent them forth. The Ministries and Church. The human side. Human responsibility.

G. Being sent forth by the Holy Spirit. The Divine side. Divine Sovereignty. The Spirit must send.

# **THE BOOK OF ACTS**

## **THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH**

### **EXPOSITION OF CHAPTERS, 13 AND 14 - PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY**

#### **1. MINISTRY AT SALAMIS IN CYPRUS - 13:4-5**

- Paul and Barnabas sent forth by the Spirit leave Antioch and sail to the Island of Cyprus.

- Verse 5 set the pattern for Paul's ministry on these missionary journeys - to the jews first. Cf. 13:14

- They went to the Synagogues and preached the Word of God. Although the Word preached here at Salamis was not record we can surmise that it followed the pattern and content of Paul's

first recorded sermon in 13:16-41, which was very similar to both the sermons of Peter (Acts 2) and Stephen (Acts 7).

- John Mark travels with them as their 'minister' (deacon, servant, assistant).

Acts 12:25

Acts 15:37-38

## **2. MINISTRY AT PAPHOS IN CYPRUS - 13:6-13**

- At Paphos (verses 6-13) the Apostles deal with a Sorcerer, even as Philip and Peter and John had to deal with a Sorcerer in Acts, chapter 8. Elymas, the Sorcerer was divinely judged through Paul who being filled with the Holy Spirit as this judgment was pronounced. Note the reason for this judgment:

a. His sin - He was a Jew knowing the Scriptures which demanded judgment on Sorcerers. He became a false prophet which was condemned also in the O.T. Scriptures. Then he became a Sorcerer - a dealer with evil spirits, charms, witchcraft, etc. He willfully resisted the truth of God's Word and the Holy Spirit.

b. His character - He sought to turn others from the Lord. He was a son of the devil, an enemy of all righteousness. and a perverted of the ways of the Lord.

Matthew 13:38

John 8:44

1 John 3:8

He was full of all subtlety and mischief, like the serpent.

Genesis 3:1

c. His judgment - The same power of God which struck Paul blind on the Damascus Road now strikes Elymas blind for a season. His physical blindness was the symbol of his spiritual blindness and his state of darkness.

- Seeing God's judgment upon Elymas "... the deputy believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord".

- Saul (the Destroyer) is first called Paul (little, the Worker) here, verse 13. The new name is significant of the New Nature.

From here on it is Paul and Barnabas and not visa versa. Cf. 12:25, 13:2,7,13,43,46,50, etc.

## **3. MINISTRY AT PERGA IN PAMPHILIA - 13:13**



- Perga in Pamphilla, John Mark departs from them and returns, not to Antioch, but to Jerusalem, where his home and mother were.

Acts 12:12-25

Literally, "Withdrew away".

Acts 15:36-40

Later he went back to Antioch, and Barnabas desired to have him go with them on the second missionary journey, but Paul did not want him. Contention and separation resulted, however, later on, Barnabas was able to help John Mark, and he turned out to be profitable to Paul in the ministry.

Colossians 4:10

2 Timothy 4:11

#### **4. MINISTRY AT ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA - 13:14-52**

- As stated above here at Pisidia we have Paul's first recorded Sermon. It follows a very similar pattern to that of Stephen's preaching in Acts 7, and also to that of Peter's in Acts 2.

- To the Jew first. To the Synagogues. Paul appeals to the very Scriptures they professed to believe and trust in.

- He declares the historical facts concerning Jesus of Nazareth, as being the exact fulfillment of that spoken of in the Law and Prophets.

- Note in verse 27, religious blindness and spiritual deafness is seen in regard to the very things they profess to "hear and see".

Isaiah 6:9-10

Luke 24:27, 44-46

Luke 23:34

- Verses 38-41. "I work a work in your days, a work which ye will in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." (Acts 13:41).

The MAN Christ Jesus, declared by a Man, and by the Ministries in the Church.

Verse 41 is a quote from Habakkuk 1:5; Isaiah 29:14.

Church history has proved the truth of this verse over and over again. People despise and wonder and perish!

God works a work in each generation. He uses a person or movement of the Spirit to declare it, but some will not believe.

"Through THIS MAN is preached forgiveness of sins" Only in Christ Jesus.

- **Verses 42-43, 46-48.** The Gentiles respond to the Word of God. The Jews are filled with envy and jealousy. They contradict and blaspheme - religious, bigoted and blinded Jews.

There is further opposition and persecution manifested against the Apostles, even as against Christ in Jerusalem.

The motive is envy.

Matthew 27:18

It is the same today.

- Note emphasis on THE WORD. 13:5; 15; 26; 42; 44; 48; 49.

The Jews judged themselves unworthy of Eternal Life, by rejecting the Word. They put it away from them. So do men judge themselves today in like manner.

- Devout and honorable women and Chief men were deceived into being stirred up against the Apostles. They should have known better, but they become tools in the hands of a bigoted and unbelieving people.

- The Apostles did as Jesus told them and shook off the dust of their feet.

Luke 9:5

In spite of the rejection and expulsion, they were were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.

Supernatural JOY, which is a fruit of the Spirit and not natural joy which is dependent upon good circumstances and conditions.

### **5. MINISTRY AT ICONIUM - 13:51-52; 14:1-6**

God continues to bless the Gentiles, giving them a LIGHT according to His Word, ordained to Eternal Life.

Isaiah 42:6; 49:6

Luke 2:32

Isaiah 55:6

Romans 1:16; 10:19

Acts 13:46-47

- Verse 1 of chapter 14 sees Paul again going first to the Jews.

Great multitudes believe, both Jews and Gentiles.

- Unbelieving Jews oppose the Apostles again. Their minds were infected with evil. The evil of unbelief always works this way, even as the serpent beguiled Eve through her mind.

2 Corinthians 11:3

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

Hebrews 3:12

1 Timothy 1:13

Romans 11:20 - Israel's epitaph.

Mark 9:24

- The Lord confirmed the Word preached giving testimony to the Word of His Grace through signs and wonders by the Apostles.

Mark 16:15-20

Romans 15:19

- Verse 4 shows the results of preaching the Word. Division came among the the people, some accepted the Word while others rejected it. The Gospel does not allow for neutrality. You are either for or you are against the Christ of God. It is either decision or division.

Luke 11:23; 9:50

## **6. MINISTRY AT LYSTRA - 14:6-20**

- At Lystra they preached the GOOD News. The Law age was not good news.

- Here at Lystra we have the first recorded healing miracle under Paul's ministry. It is similar to miracle of healing under Peter's ministry in Acts 3.

The healing of the lame is typical (a type of) of the spiritual healing of mankind. Mankind because of his inherited sin nature (Romans 5:12-14) is impotent in his walk from birth, a cripple from birth. Only after the Gospel of Christ comes to him can he walk upright.

The lame man heard the Word (verse 9).

Galatians 3:2,5

Romans 10:17

Paul perceiving (discernment by the Spirit) the man had faith to be healed, said to him, "Stand upright on thy feet." The man being obedient to his faith stood up - leaped and walked.

Romans 16:26

Obedience is an essential ingredient of FAITH. Faith is acting on your believing. Faith is never passive but always active.

1 Thessalonians 1:3

James 2:26

Hebrews 11:13

The gift of Miracles and Faith in operation.

1 Corinthians 12:9-10

- Verses 11-13 gives the reaction of the people to this miracle. They sought to make the Apostles "as gods come down in the likeness of man", and prepared to make sacrifice to them.

The nature of the old man (sin nature) is to deify and sacrifice to men.

- Verses 14-17. Paul and Barnabus horrified (rent their clothes - torn their clothes) when they heard about the people preparing to make sacrifice to them, run among the people declaring that they were men of like passions as they were and preached to people the Word of God.

Paul points them to the God of Creation, telling them to turn from their vanities/false worship, and turn to the Living God, Who created the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and all things in the heavens and earth and sea. The God of creation, Who provides the rain, the seasons, the food and a glad heart.

- Verse 18, Paul's words restrained them from sacrificing unto him and Barnabus.

- Verses 19-20 sees Paul being stoned, as Steven. However, unlike with Stephen. God delivers Paul out of death into life by resurrection, so that he (Paul) might fulfill his ministry.

2 Corinthians 11:25

2 Timothy 3:11-12

## **7. MINISTRY AT DERBE AND THEIR RETURN TO ANTIOCH - 14:20-26**

- Paul and Barnabus leave Lystra the next day after Paul was stoned and go to Derbe where they preached the Gospel and teach many the truths of God's Word.

- Leaving Derbe they return to Antioch by way of the cities where they had raised up Churches. In each of these Churches they ministered by Confirming and Exhorting the believers to continue in the faith, that is to say, remain faithful to what they had been taught; to be obedient to the faith (the Way) even in times of persecution and tribulation for "Through much tribulation we enter into the kingdom of God."

**- Verse 23. Paul and Barnabus ORDAINED ELDERS IN EVERY CHURCH.**

### MINISTRY OF ORDAINING ELDERS

1. Elders ordained in every local Church ("Called out company" - "The Ecclesia, the Body of Christ.")

2. Ordained by the Apostles - Paul and Barnabus Elders. also, ordained by one under Apostolic authority.

Titus 1:4-5

3. Ordained with Prayer and Fasting

4. Ordained with the Laying on of Hands. Hebrews 6:1-2

5. Qualification of Elders

1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:4-9

#### **The Elder must be:**

- blameless, having no accusations against him
- the husband of one wife
- vigilant, that is watchful, wide awake, alert
- sober, having a sound disciplined mind
- temperate, having self under control
- of good behavior
- holy, being modest, chaste, not conceited
- given to hospitality, that is generous, not a miser, or selfish, liberal
- apt to teach, that is to tend, rule, guide and lead the Flock of God into the green pastures of the Word.

- not given to wine
- not a striker, not one who hits back, or gets even (vengeful), or strikes the sheep, or whips with the Word.
- not after money, not a hireling
- patient with God and with the sheep; impatience breed disasters in the Church
- not a brawler; does not fight for himself or for his position
- not covetous; having unlawful lusts
- must rule his own house and family well; his home order is a type of the Church order; God's house.
- not a novice; not one newly come to The Faith
- must have a good report of outsiders

## 6. Ministry of Elders

Acts 20:27-35; 1 Peter 5:1-4

- ministry of the Word
- ruling, tending and shepherding the Flock of God

Hebrews 13:7; 17; 1 Timothy 5:17

- Elders together constitute the Presbytery
- the five-fold Ministries constitute Eldership
- prayer and ministry to the sick, James 5:14
- local Churches ruled by the Elders. Elders is always used in the plural in relation to the local New Testament Churches; not a dictatorship, or Lordship, or one man rule, but the Eldership (Presbytery) - however, it is not a co-equal Eldership

Acts 14:23 (elders)

Titus 1:5 (Elders)

Acts 15:13-22 (James makes final judgment)

Elders and deacons together ministry in the local Church, Philippians 1:1

- Elders were not voted in or out by the people; they were ordained by the Laying on of Hands by the Presbytery, or by the Apostles, before the Church

- Verse 26 sees Paul and Barnabus having completed the work to which they had been committed, returning to the Church in Antioch which had sent them out.

- On their return the Church was gathered together where they spoke (rehearsed) of all that God had done with them. God had opened the Door of Faith to the Gentiles. The same door which led the believing Gentiles in, shut the unbelieving Jews out. Christ, the Door, presented to Jew and Gentile alike. All may enter by faith.

**THE RESULTS OF PAUL'S AND BARNABUS' FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY WERE A NUMBER OF CHURCHES BEING RAISED UP IN THE CITIES WHERE THEY MINISTERED THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.**

# **THE BOOK OF ACTS**

## **THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH**

### **EXPOSITION OF CHAPTER 15:1-35 - THE CHURCH COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM**

#### **VERSES 1-6. THE QUESTION OF CIRCUMCISION**

The Gentile Churches which Paul and Barnabus established on their first missionary journey face their first great crisis.

In Judea many of the Hebrew converts to Christianity are Pharisees who have no intention of giving up the Mosaic system. They are saying that the Gentiles must also come into the Church through the Mosaic system.

Now certain of these teachers of the Law came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching that you could not be saved, "Expect ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses."

The conflict here is a conflict between Jew and Gentile; Circumcision and Uncircumcision; between the Ritual Law and the Spiritual Law; between Flesh and Spirit. It was a conflict between Salvation with circumcision, or Salvation without or apart from circumcision. The crux of the issue is not simply a question of whether one should be circumcised or not. The question is: Must one do any thing of the Law/keep any part of the Law in order to be saved?

The contention which is set forth in these verses threatened to divide the New Testament Church into two great factions consisting of Jew and Gentile.

Verse 2 sees Paul and Barnabus standing up against this "leaven of legality (Law)" which these Judaizers were planting in the Churches of the Gentiles.

Now since the problem had come from Judea, Paul and Barnabus along with those who were causing the contention agreed to go back to the Jerusalem Church, from whence these legalistic teachers had come and have the matter resolved.

Down through history there have been other church councils that have decided other great issues that were causing division and contention within Christendom, such issues as, the validity and inerrancy of Scripture. Another church council decided upon the deity of Christ and the fact that He is both God and man. And there have been other important councils when differences arose within Christendom.

The Church Council at Jerusalem was convened in order to consider the great issue: What must one do to be saved? For this reason, Acts, Chapter 15 is one of the most important Chapters in the history of Christendom.

We need to realize here that it is really the Gospel which is under question at this council.

The Gospel is used in two senses in the New Testament. First of all, there are the FACTS of the Gospel. These facts are absolutely basic and essential. Paul gives those facts in 1 Corinthians 15:1-5;15-17.

The second sense of the Gospel is the INTERPRETATION of the facts. It is this interpretation of the facts of the Gospel which is the basic truth in the Epistle to the Galatians as expressed in Galatians 3:22, and again in Galatians 2:15-16.

What must one do to be saved? Nothing more nor less than BELIEVE.

The FACTS of the gospel were not under question by the Judaizers.

The contention arose over the INTERPRETATION of the facts of the Gospel. What did Christ do for you? Is the work of Christ adequate to save you? Do you need to go through some ritual or something else in order to be saved? Must you go through the Law? These are the questions they were asking.

### **VERSES 7-18, CIRCUMCISION versus UNCIRCUMCISION**

"And when there had been much disputing..."

This was no small problem!

#### 1. The Case FOR Circumcision.

The points in favor of Circumcision are:

a. Circumcision was given before the Law to Abraham, as the Seal of the Abrahamic Covenant. Genesis 17; Romans 4:11. Anyone refusing this rite was cut off. It was only as they were Circumcised that they were counted as being in Covenant- relationship with God, and counted as the Covenant Seed, entitling them to the Promises and Privileges in the Covenant.

b. It was called "The Covenant of Circumcision." Acts 7:8

c. So serious was this rite in the eyes of Jehovah that He sought to kill Moses who had not brought his own children into Covenant relationship with God, yet was going down to Egypt to bring deliverance to the Nation of Israel on the basis of that Covenant.

Exodus 4:24-26



d. Circumcision was also confirmed under the Law of Moses.

Exodus 12:43-50

Joshua 5:1-10

So important was this rite that none might partake of the Passover Feast without being Circumcised, whether Hebrew or Foreigner.

Thus are the arguments for Circumcision of the Sect of the Pharisees and Judaizers.

They debated that it was the Sign and Seal of the Abrahamic Covenant, and then confirmed under the Mosaic Covenant. The whole of mankind was divided into two classes, the Circumcision and Uncircumcision, or, the under-Covenant-people, or the without-Covenant-people; Jews and Gentiles.

Ephesians 2:11-13

Jeremiah 9:25-26

Therefore they contended that the only way into the Covenant blessings for the Gentiles was by the rite of Circumcision, which involved the Abrahamic Covenant; and again, by keeping the Law of Moses, which involved the Mosaic Covenant.

The "wedge" was Covenant relationship, by virtue of the rite of Circumcision. All of this looked good in the case for Circumcision.

## 2. The Case AGAINST Circumcision

The Case AGAINST Circumcision is given by several of the Apostles.

a. Peter's Testimony. Verses 7-11. Note also Galatians 2:1-9. Peter is the Apostle to the Circumcision.

Peter in verses 7-11 declares the Lord's dealings with him in the sending forth of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles (Acts, chapters 10 and 11). The Gentiles heard the Word of the Gospel and believed (Romans 10:17).

God knows the hearts of all whether they be Jews or Gentiles.

God gave them witness by giving them the same Holy Spirit as unto the Jews.

God made no difference. God makes no distinction (Acts 10:34, Romans 2:11).

God purified their hearts BY FAITH.

The Law, of which the rite of Circumcision was a part, was a "yoke of bondage" that they nor their fathers kept.

Salvation is by means of grace through faith in the death and resurrection of the Christ Jesus our Lord for the Jew and the Gentile. No one has ever been saved by the keeping of the Law (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Peter's Testimony is that the work of God, by the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles, was without the rite of Circumcision and without the Law, and that they were saved by grace, through faith, with God giving them the Sign and Seal of the NEW COVENANT in the Baptism with the Holy Spirit.

The Gentiles are brought into Covenant relationship with God through the grace of Christ by faith, and it is the Spirit who bears witness to their salvation.

**NEITHER JEW NOR GENTILE ARE SAVED BY THE LAW, OR BY CIRCUMCISION.**

b. Barnabus and Paul testify. Verse 12. Note also in Galatians 2:1-9, Paul is the Apostle to the Uncircumcision.

Both Paul and Barnabus testify what God had wrought in miracles and wonders among the Gentiles. This being proof that God was visiting the Gentiles in grace, even though they were Uncircumcised and were without the Law, being Strangers from the Covenant of Promise.

By these miracles and wonders done among the Gentiles by the hand of Paul and Barnabus God was saying/testifying that the Gentiles are His through redeeming grace.

The Apostle Paul's revelation of this truth is given in Romans, Chapters 2,3 and 4.

The revelation given to Paul is that all the world - Jew and Gentile - is guilty before God, and that all are under death, WITH OR WITHOUT LAW, with or without Circumcision.

Thus only by God acting in grace towards mankind could anyone be justified at all.

The Circumcision with the Law, failed to keep that Law, thus becoming as Uncircumcision, or "Gentile-ized", and under death.

The Uncircumcision without the Law, failed to keep and obey the Law of Conscience, and thus they were under death.

God moves in His grace, by His Spirit, through Christ in order to redeem both Jew and Gentile out of death unto life everlasting.

This truth was foreshadowed and typified in Abraham the Father of all who believe, whether they be Jews or Gentiles.

God gave to Abraham the Covenant Promises of Grace in:

- a. Uncircumcision, or when he was a Gentile, and then later on
- b. In Circumcision, or as a Hebrew

Therefore before and after Circumcision Abraham receives the same Covenant Promises of Salvation through grace, which is prophetic of Salvation being available for Jew and Gentile, or Circumcision and Uncircumcision, by means of the righteousness of faith in Christ.

Galatians 3:14.

The Holy Spirit is given to both the Jew and the Gentile through Grace and Faith, and not through Works or rites of the Law.

Note: Although Paul had Timothy circumcised later on Acts 16:3], yet he refused to have Titus circumcised at this Jerusalem Conference [Galatians 2:3].

Paul's reason for circumcising Timothy.

1 Corinthians 9:19-20

c. The Testimony of James through the Scriptures. Verses 13-18.

It is note worthy that the final court of appeal at this Jerusalem Church Conference was to the infallible Word of God.

"What does the Word say?"

Although the Testimony and Experience of Peter may be accepted, and the Ministry of Paul and Barnabus be received to confirm the truth, it was the WORD OF GOD which was the final court of appeal for all and settled the whole issue which was under debate.

James, by a Word of Wisdom quotes this unusual passage of Scripture concerning the Gentiles. The quotation is taken from Amos 9:11- 12. It is interesting to notice that there are slight differences or rather an Apostolic interpretation, by the Holy Spirit, of the Word of the Prophet.

As Peter quoted from the prophecy of Joel on the Day of Pentecost when the Jews came in under the initial outpouring/Baptism of/with the Holy Spirit, now James quotes from Amos applying this Word to the coming in of the Gentiles into the New Covenant.

Amos prophesied that God would build again "THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID."

(Amos, Chapter 9 from whence James quotes in Acts, Chapter 15 gives the last of the five visions of Amos. This vision has to do with the house of God. Here, verses 1-10, is seen Jehovah's recital of the afflictions awaiting Israel in the lands of their wanderings. Then, in verses 11-15, as is customary with the prophets, the seer looks on to their, Israel's, restoration to

glory and blessings in the last days, when their tribulations shall be forever past, and the remnant nation shall be saved and will reign/rule over all the Gentile/heathen nations.

Thus the literal and complete fulfillment of this prophecy quote by James (verses 11-12) will take place during the Millennium.

Typically, David's Tabernacle, as the House of God, is the anti type or foreshadow of the New Testament Church being raised up on the Day of Pentecost. The New Testament Church into which the Gentiles who called upon the Name of the Lord would come.

It was noted especially in Acts 10 about the Gentiles coming into blessing, and here is further confirmation of this fact. Refer to page 130 of Acts notes to review the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Gentiles being blessed through faith in Christ.

This was the crux of the whole dispute at the Church Conference in Jerusalem. The Gentiles were to come into THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID, NOT THE TABERNACLE OF MOSES.

If the Gentiles were to keep the Law of Moses and be Circumcised, they would be coming under the Law, that is to say, anti typically coming into THE TABERNACLE OF MOSES, with its rites and ceremonies, its animal sacrifices, Aaronic Priesthood, Sabbaths, etc. and etc.

But the Gentiles were coming into the NEW Covenant by faith in the Son of David, Jesus the Christ, and into the Spiritual House, and the Priesthood after the Order of Melchisedek, or anti typically into THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID.

A complete study of The Tabernacle of David as set forth in 1 Chronicles, Chapters 15, 16 and 17, 2 Chronicles 1:1-13. shows the following condensed points.

- David, in the will of God, established a complete new order of worship in the Tabernacle which he set up in Mt. Zion.
- There were two Tabernacles in existence at the same time. The Tabernacle of Moses in Mt. Gibeon, and The Tabernacle of David set-up in Mt. Zion.
- The Ark of the Covenant, once it was taken out of the Tabernacle of Moses never ever returned to the Tabernacle of Moses, but was taken and set in the Tabernacle of David. Typically "The Glory" departed from the Tabernacle of Moses.
- In the Tabernacle of David there was a new order of worship in singing and singers. worship and praise, instruments of music, and continual joy and thanksgiving unto the Lord.
- The "Holiest of Holies" was actually transferred to David's Tabernacle, while the Tabernacle of Moses had an empty Most Holy Place, having the Holy Place and Outer Court function only.
- After David offered the dedicatory sacrifices at the Tabernacle of David there is no account of any animal sacrifices ever being offered again in the Tabernacle of David. In fact 2 Chronicles

1:1-13 shows Solomon going up to Mount Gibeon to offer up sacrifice, even though the Ark of the Covenant was in David's Tabernacle.

- Thus after the initial dedicatory sacrifices the only sacrifices in The Tabernacle of David were "sacrifices of praise and joy."

This anti typically speaks of Calvary, where Christ as the dedicatory sacrifice, was offered once and for all. The Veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to bottom (Matthew 27:51) signifying the transference of the "presence of God" to a NEW TEMPLE, a NEW HABITATION, even THE CHURCH which is His body, in which dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily. (Colossians 1:19, 2:9).

In this TABERNACLE OF DAVID, the NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH, there would only be offered "Sacrifices of Praise and Thanksgiving" unto the Lord our God.

In this Tabernacle Jew and Gentile would come by Grace through Faith in Jesus Christ.

Therefore we are not come to Mt. Sinai (The Tabernacle of Moses, and the Law Covenant), but we are come to Mt Zion (The Tabernacle of David and the New Covenant).

Hebrews 12:18-24

This is the whole revelation of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

### **VERSES 19-29 THE FINAL SENTENCE**

James has been summing up. He understands (verse 18) there is a definite program which God is following.

"Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." (Acts 15:18)

Now James is ready to give his sentence/decision. His sentence/decision is that the Gentile Churches did not have to be circumcised or come under the Law of Moses, or be troubled by the teachers of the Law.

However, the Gentiles are going to be asked to abstain from four things.

1. Abstinence from pollution of idols. To eat meat which had been offered to the idols would be offensive to the Jewish brothers. 1 Corinthians 8:1-13.

2. Abstinence from fornication. The reason this is specifically mentioned is that adultery was so common among the Gentiles in that day and time that the conscience had been dulled/seared. In fact, adultery was actually a part of the religious rite. The Gentiles who had become Christians were to "abstain from fornication".

3. and 4.. Abstinence from things strangled and Abstinence from blood. Both of these would be very offensive to their Jewish brothers. This again was a matter of Christian courtesy.

### **VERSES 30-35. DECISION SENT TO ANTIOCH**

The letter sent by the Jerusalem Church Council with their decision concerning the matter of Circumcision is read to the whole Church At Antioch. There was great rejoicing over this decision which lifted the yoke of bondage from off of them.

The two Prophets, Judas and Silas, who returned to Antioch with Paul and Barnabus, exhort and confirm the Saints.

- to exhort is to call near, to console and encourage.
- to confirm is to give support. or strengthen.

It seems that Peter's visit to Antioch, as mentioned in Galatians 2:11-12 took place between verses 35 and 36 of Acts 15. Here Paul had to withstand Peter face to face because of his fear and compromise with the brethren from Judea over eating with the Gentiles.

The remainder of Acts, Chapter 15, begins Paul's Second Missionary Journey.

# **THE BOOK OF ACTS**

## **THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH**

### **EXPOSITION CHAPTERS, 15:36-18:23 - PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY**

#### **1. VERSES 36-41 - DEPARTURE FROM ANTIOCH**

- The Apostle Paul expresses his concern to visit the Churches which he and Barnabus had planted on their first missionary journey. He desired to see how they were doing.

2 Corinthians 11:28. "The care of all the Churches"

Paul had the heart of an Apostle, a real father in the Lord.

- Contention over John Mark with Barnabus was so great and sharp that Barnabus and Paul separated over the matter.

The following Scriptures show that under the hand and ministry of Barnabus, Mark became profitable to Paul in due season.

Colossians 4:10

2 Timothy 4:11

Philemon 24

- Barnabus takes John Mark with him. Paul takes the Prophet Silas with him. God Himself would work on all in the areas that needed His touch.

- They are all recommended by the Church to the Grace of God. John 1:17. His grace would be wrought in all of them.

- Paul and Silas go through Syria and Cilicia confirming (strengthening) the Churches. Strengthening them in the Word of God, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and in the things they have believed. They were establishing them in the faith

Jude 3 - Contend has the meaning of striving in opposition; to assert ones self.

## **2. MINISTRY AT DERBE AND LYSTRA - 16:1-5.**

- At Derbe and Lystra Paul finds a young man by the name of Timothy. a disciples. Possibly Timothy was converted under Paul's ministry on the 1st Missionary journey.

I Timothy 1:1-2

2 Timothy 1:1-2, 2:1

2 Timothy 3:10-11

Possibly, as Paul was the fruit of Stephen's stoning at Jerusalem, so it is possible that Timothy was the fruit of Paul's stoning previously at Lystra.

- Timothy was a Disciple; his mother was a Jew, his father a Greek; and he had a good report of the his brethren at Lystra and Iconium.

Timothy had proven himself in a Local Church before Paul makes him a part of the Apostolic Team. Thus Timothy is a sample believer being proven first in a Church before moving out into ministry.

- Paul takes Timothy and has him circumcised because of the Jews in those areas. NOT because Paul believed there was value in the rite. His reason is found in 1 Corinthians 9:20-21.

If Timothy became as a Jew Gentile, then he could minister to the Jews or Gentiles.

You might refer to notes on pages 167 for the decision of the Jerusalem Church Council concerning circumcision.

- The Apostolic Team goes to the Churches delivering the decrees that were given at the Jerusalem Council by the Apostles and Elders.

- The result - the Churches were established and increased daily.

### **3. MINISTRY FORBIDDEN IN ASIA - 16:6-8.**

- Paul and his team go over the regions of Galatia and then were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to go into Asia to preach the Word. Notice the strong language in verses 6 & 7, "Forbidden of the Spirit to preach the Word in Asia", "they assayed (tried) to go to Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not."

- Important lessons lay here. The Lord knows what Cities are ready to receive the Gospel. There is a time for the Word and Will of God. Paul and his team tried to go to these places, but were forbad by the Holy Spirit to go.

- Paul could have 'forced the issue' and missed the mind and will of God, and brought unnecessary hardships upon himself and those with him, had he not had an "ear to hear what the Spirit was saying".  
Revelation 2:7,11.

### **4. MINISTRY AT MACEDONIA-PHILIPPI, 16:8-40**

- While waiting upon the Lord at Troas, the Lord gives Paul a vision (vs. 8-10). The Spirit forbad them to preach the Word in Asia, and hindered them from going to Bithynia, and the vision Paul receives here is the Lords answer to all.

- God has a time for each City, and here the Lord desires Paul and his team to go over to Macedonia.

- The Apostolic team immediately recognizes that the vision was the Lord's call to them to go in this direction.

- They come to Philippi (vs 11-12). At Philippi, Paul and his team find themselves at a prayer Meeting' down by the river side on the Sabbath. Possibly because there was no Synagogue in this city.

- Note verse 14. "A woman who worshipped God, whose heart the Lord opened." She was a worshipper of God. The Lord opened her heart so that she could give heed to the Word.

- In verse 15 she is baptized, and her household, after which she invites Paul and those with him to stay with her.

- It takes the Holy Spirit to open such a one, for all are closed by nature. The heart maker is the heart opener!



- In verses 16-18 we have a "damsel (slave girl) possessed with a spirit of divination". She had a fortune telling devil (demon) in her. She was being 'commercialized' by her masters. Under the power and ability of this spirit she telling fortunes, foretelling future events, giving guidance to those who consulted her.

- This women was a victim of Satan and in need of deliverance. She was not only a slave to her earthly masters but she was also a slave to Satan.

- Verses 17-18. The evil spirit in this women gave testimony concerning Paul and his team.  
Compare Mark  
3:11-12.

- After a number of days, Paul casts this demon out in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mark 16:17

Luke 10:17-19

- God does not need the testimony of devils to witness for Him.

- Verses 19-40 see Paul and Silas cast into prison for casting out this fortune telling spirit. The masters of this woman saw that the hope of their gains was gone, and thus have Paul and Silas cast into prison.

- Business first! Like the Gadarenes (Mark 5:16-17) who thought more of their pigs (money) than the need of the demon possessed victim.

- The Apostles are beaten with many stripes (2 Corinthians 11:23-24).

### - **WHAT HAPPENS IN PRISON**

1. They are bound fast in stocks (A set of wooden frames with holes through which the legs are fastened. A most uncomfortable position).

2. Their backs hurt and are sore from their beating.

3. Their crime? Preaching the Gospel - casting out demons. Preachers in prison.

4. The midnight hour. The blackest hour of the night but the hour when God would deliver them.

Matthew 25:6

Job 34:20

Judges 16:3

Exodus 11:4-6

5. Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises. The Lord gave them "Songs in the night". Not dependent on feelings or circumstances.

Job 35:10

Psalm 126

6. The prisoners heard them.

Psalm 146:7

Isaiah 49:9

Isaiah 61:1

7. God sends an intelligent earthquake. Nothing was destroyed only the prison doors were opened and the bands of the prisoners loosed.

Matthew 27:51-53

8. All the doors were opened and all bands loosed. What a testimony and witness to the prisoners. The testimony of an 'Open Door'.

Note from the following Scriptures how God faces every generation with "The Door"

Genesis 6:16

Exodus 12:22-23

Acts 14:27

Revelation 3:8

Matthew 25:10

John 10:7-9

The Lord Jesus Christ is **THE DOOR!**

9. Conviction and conversion of the Jailer. The jailer calls for a light and sprang in asking the question of the Ages, "What must I do to be saved?"

Paul answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ".

John 3:16

Ephesians 2:8-9

Romans 6:23

Romans 10:10a

Genesis 15:6

I John 5:1,4-5

10. Household Salvation. God used the prison experience to bring salvation to the jailer and thereby to his household.

Acts 16:15

Proverbs 11:21

Psalms 112:2

I Corinthians 7:14

- Verses 35-39, Paul exercises his legal rights as a Roman citizen. When Paul was beaten and striped by the Jews, he accepted it all in the will of God, but when he could exercise his legal privileges as a Roman Citizen, he did.

Romans 13:1-5

- After being brought out of prison, Paul and Silas return to Lydia's house, bringing comfort to the new Local Church established in her house.

### **5. MINISTRY AT THESSALONICA - ACTS 17:1-9.**

In connection with the Ministry at Thessalonica read 1 Thessalonians 2:1-20 for here Paul tells of his entrance into the City, after leaving Philippi.

- Verses 1-9 of Acts 17. Paul goes to the Synagogue, as was his custom, "To the Jew first." Here he reasons with them out of their own Scriptures for three Sabbaths, "opening and alleging" or literally "opening up and setting before (them)" or "explaining and proving/demonstrating that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ of God.

- Many Jews believed that there were TWO Messiahs to come. One, a Suffering Messiah, and the other a Ruling/reigning Messiah.

- Paul proves to them, opens the Scriptures to them and shows from the Scriptures, along with the historical facts of Jesus of Nazareth that He was indeed the Christ, the fulfillment of all the Scriptures concerning the Messiah.

- He combined and aligned the Scriptural and Historical proofs of Jesus Christ as the One to whom the Law, Psalms and Prophets pointed.

- The Jews were divided. Jesus said: "I came to cause division," and all are either for Him or against Him. There is no ground of neutrality concerning Him.

Luke 12:51

John 7:43

John 9:16

John 10:19

- Some believed and consorted (joined) with Paul and Silas - there was a large number of Greeks and quite a few of the chief (prominent) women.

- There were others who did not believe and were moved with envy. These gathered together some of the bad/evil/lewd persons in the city and formed a mob which caused a great uproar in the city.

- These unbelieving Jews charged that Paul and Silas "have turned the world upside down." In reality Paul and Silas through the preaching of the Gospel were endeavoring to have the world 'right side up.' The coming of Christ into the life of men brings things right side up and turns wrong things upside down.

## **6. MINISTRY AT BEREIA - ACTS 17:10-14**

- The brethren sent Paul and Silas away by night unto Berea. Paul once again, as was his custom, goes "to the Jew first," entering into the Synagogue of the Jews.

Many of the Synagogues actually ended up becoming "The Synagogue of Satan," as Jesus said in Revelation 2:9 and 3:9.

It is beautiful to note that the Bereans were more noble than those of Thessalonica.

The Bereans received THE WORD with all READINESS OF MIND. They were not being hardhearted have a closed mind, or were they prejudiced against them. We, also want to note that they were not gullible. It is good to have the attitude of the Bereans.

They sought the Word. They searched the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. Ministry and the people have the inerrant and infallible Word of God as the test and final authority for teaching and preaching.

- Many believed, Greeks and men and honorable women. God always has some who will respond to His Word.

- The Jews from Thessalonica came to Berea and stirred up trouble and opposition here also. Paul is sent away by the brethren, while Silas and Timothy remain behind with the believers.

### **7. MINISTRY AT ATHENS - ACTS 17:15-34.**

- Paul is escorted by the brethren to Athens. Athens was noted for its 'wisdom'. As Paul waited for Silas and Timothy to catch up with him he was 'stirred in the spirit (moved by the Holy Spirit) seeing that the whole city was given over to idolatry, and the worship of idols.

Paul was not there as a "Tourist Missionary" nor was he there to see and admire the glory of Athens. Paul seems totally unimpressed by the Greek art, culture and wisdom, etc.

Rather Paul was grieved and roused to anger at the DEIFICATION of everything. The Greeks made gods out of any and everything, even as the Canaanites.

- Verse 18. Paul was confronted by various Philosophers.

a. The Epicurians were a sect of philosophers that derived its name from Epicurus (B.C. 342-271) who was a philosopher of Attic decent, whose garden at Athens rivalled/competed with the "Porch" and the "Academy". His aim was to discover a practical guide to happiness; his search was for pleasure, not absolute truth; and he relied on experience as the test, not reason.

They were ATHEISTIC, MATERIALISTIC, and the WORSHIPPED the god of PLEASURE.

The same spirit prevails today.

b. The Stocis were a sect of Greek Philosophers who received their name from 'Stoa,' a Porch of Athens, where Zeno taught. They were severe and lofty Pantheists, and affected indifference in all circumstances.

Zeno was born at Citium, a small town on the island of Cyprus, about B.C. 357; he taught at Athens, B. C. 299; and died B.C. 263.

Pantheists worshipped God in Nature. Romans 1:19-26 speaks of his worship of God in Nature, and all in Nature being part of God.

Likewise this same spirit prevails today.

THESE PHILOSOPHERS who confronted Paul called him a 'Babbler'. The Greek word for 'babbler' seems to be a piece of Athenian slang, applied to one who was outside any literary circle, an ignorant plagiarist. One who picks up scraps of information and retails them secondhand. One who makes a show of knowledge. Literally, the

Greek word means a "seed collector" with reference to birds picking up seeds, thus the translation in the Amplified New Testament, 'A Seedpecker'.

Paul did have THE SEED OF THE WORD, if they cared to listen.

1 Peter 1:23

Luke 8:11

These philosophers charged Paul with setting forth some new and strange gods (deities) because he was preaching (1) Jesus and (2) The Resurrection.

Such is the wisdom of Athens. and the wisdom of this world.

The Athenians were like so many today. All they desired was to hear "something new", some "new doctrine". but they were not hungry for the truth of God that would set them free.

Intellectual curiosity seekers! God was doing 'a new thing' in Christ Jesus.

Isaiah 43:19

The True God was revealing Himself in and through His Son, the expressed image of His Person.

Paul's Sermon on Mar's Hill, verses 22-31.

- Paul goes to Mar's Hill and declares to them the folly of their wisdom and idolatry.

- Let us note Paul's Sermon outline and his approach to the Athenians in contrast to his approach to the Jews.

a. With the Jew, Paul always reasoned out of the Scriptures, the written revelation of God and demonstrated that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah promised by God in the Scriptures.

b. With the Gentile, Paul always reasoned from Creation - the Created revelation of God.

Genesis 1:1

Romans 3:2

Psalms 19:1-5

Romans 1:19-20

Creation reveals there is a Creator God. Creation reveals His power. However, God cannot be known according to His Nature, Character and Being in Creation. This comes only through the

Word of God by inspiration and revelation and finally as revealed in the person of Jesus Christ, the Godman.

- Let us consider the important points in Paul's address to the Gentiles on Mar's Hill.

a. Verse 22. "Ye men of Athens.. are too superstitious". Literally - more religious (than others), quite religious, too religious, or deeply religious; very reverent to demons (Amplified N.T.).

All men are religious by nature. Man was created to worship God and will worship a god of his own mind or making, or else fall to worshipping satan as the god of the world, or demon spirits, or self god.

b. Verse 23. "I ..beheld your devotion. ..altar...TO THE UNKNOWN GOD..." Athens, filled with idols, and gods - yet this idol/altar expresses the ultimate wisdom of the Greeks. This altar to an unknown god is their final confession that God cannot be known. He is unknowable.

This would be true, but for Jesus Christ who revealed the True God and "declared Him".

John 1:14-18

Matthew 11:27

"...Him (the God you don't know) declare I unto you." Now Paul is ready to declare unto them Who this unknown God really is. HE IS...

c. Verse 24. THE GOD OF CREATION. He is greater than creation. and cannot be confined to human altars or temples.

d. Verse 25. THE GOD WHO IS THE SOURCE AND SUSTAINER OF ALL LIFE. God does not need for man to give to Him, for He gave all first to man.  
Psalm 50:7-13

e. Verse 26. THE GOD OF ALL MANKIND. When God created Adam, the father of all mankind, He set the bounds and lands for the various Nations to dwell therein.

Deuteronomy 32:8

Mankind was created in the image of God. "of one blood".

Genesis 1:26-27

Genesis 9:6

f. Verse 27. THE GOD OMNIPRESENT. God is not far from everyone of us. Everywhere present.

Ezekiel 48:35

g. Verse 28. THE GOD OMNIPOTENT. All live and move and have their being in God. He is our very life-source. Man is "His offspring", His creation. He has all power.

h. Verse 29. GOD THE FATHER, GOD THE SON. AND GOD

THE HOLY SPIRIT - THE GODHEAD. Romans 1:20

God, as a Spirit, cannot be represented in material things or likened to gold, silver, stones, etc., or lifeless and inanimate things.

Exodus 20:3-5

The very gods man makes are inferior to the one who makes and worships such as them.

How can intelligent man worship idols which have ears, eyes, nose, mouth, arms and legs. yet have NO LIFE.

Psalm 115:1-8

Romans 1:19-23

2 Corinthians 4:4

Man worships something less than himself, calling it God. Such is the religious nature of man.

i. Verse 30. THE GOD WHO ENLIGHTENS OUR IGNORANCE. "...times of ignorance..." are past. God winked at, or overpassed them previously. Ignorance is spiritual blindness/darkness. The light of Christ has now come to enlightened man's ignorance.

John 8:12; 1:1-3; 1:4-12 Light through the Gospel.

j. Verse 30. THE GOD WHO DEMANDS REPENTANCE. Ignorance enlightened, God now calls all mankind to repentance. "Change of mind" in relationship to Himself (God), and concerning sin and self.

k. Verse 31. THE GOD WHO IS THE JUDGE OF ALL.

Paul's emphasis is upon God first, before he finally brings in THE SON "that man".

There is:

1. The Appointed Judge, ordained of God.
2. The Appointed Day. The Judgment Day. Hebrews 9:26-27
3. The Appointed standard. In righteousness. The Divine standard of righteousness. Revelation



20:12

4. The Appointed proof. That man who has been raised from the dead. THE RESURRECTED CHRIST OF GOD.

The FRUIT in Athens Verses 32-34.

- a. some mocked.
- b. some procrastinated.
- c. some believed

SO TODAY!

- Such was Paul's impression on Athens and Athens' impression on Paul. In I Corinthians, chapters 1 and 2, Paul well expresses that pertaining to His ministry at Athens.

1. "The world with all its wisdom knew not God."
2. "The wisdom of the world is foolishness to God"
3. "The Jews require a sign; the Greeks seek after wisdom; but to those who believe. Christ is the Power of God and the Wisdom of God."

### **8. MINISTRY AT CORINTH - ACTS 18:1-17**

- Paul leaves Athens and goes up to Corinth. It is interesting to see Paul's feelings and his approach when he goes to Corinth, after his apparent failure in Athens.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

"When I came to you, brethren. I came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom. I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified and I was with you in fear, and weakness and in much trembling..."

Undoubtedly his "excellent speech" in Athens did not win the Greeks or Athenians to Christ; hence he comes to Corinth to simply preach "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified", and he is in weakness and fear and much trembling after his experience at Athens.

(Paul in his sermon at Athens never once uses or names the Name of Jesus. His reference is to "that Man" and even here he declares the briefest of facts concerning Him. He does not magnify His name, as he does in his reasoning with the Jews.)

- Here at Corinth, Paul meets Aquilla and Priscilla, who are Tent-makers by trade, and so Paul labors in his trade with them.

Every Jew had to have a trade.

This natural trade was also significant of Paul's spiritual ministry relative to the Church. As he was a tent maker by trade, his ministry is building the house or tabernacle of the Lord. as seen in the revelation of the Church which was given him.

- Once again here at Corinth he ministers the Word "To the Jew first" in the Synagogue every Sabbath, persuading Jews and Greeks.

- Silas and Timothy catch up with Paul at Corinth. Paul is pressed in the spirit. "He was completely engrossed with preaching earnestly and arguing and testifying to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. (Amplified New Testament).

This was the Divine pressure of the Holy Spirit in his spirit.

- Verse 6. The Jews resisted what Paul was preaching and spoke against those things (blaspheming/speaking curses against them).

Paul then shakes his raiment, as did the Prophets of old, and says, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I go to the Gentiles."

Paul quotes from Ezekiel 33:3-7.

As the watchman was clear from the blood of all he warned, and their blood would be on their own head if they did not take the warning, so Paul as a faithful Watchman had gone through the Synagogues. warning and testifying to them that Jesus was the Christ and now. after persistent rejection and opposition from these Jews He turns to the Gentiles.

Jewry cried: "His Blood be upon us and our children" Matthew 5:28; Acts 5:8.

Paul now cries out: "Your blood be upon your own heads". Thus what the Jews in Jerusalem accused Peter of doing, Paul now speaks forth. They brought the judgment and curse of Christ's innocent Blood on themselves and the unborn generations, and now their own blood is also charged upon themselves for their continual rejection of the Grace of God in the Gospel of Christ.

- Paul and his band move from the Synagogue to a house next to the Synagogue. Here Crispus and his whole household were saved and along with many other who heard and believed were baptized.

- Verses 9-10. The Lord gives Paul a vision to reassure him that no danger would come to his life there, so he could speak forth in boldness with no fear for his life. His ministry extended over 18 months in Corinth, teaching the Word of God.

- The Jews stir up strife and Paul is brought before "The Judgment Seat" and charged before Gallio concerning "words, names and laws" of the Jews. Gallio cared for none of these things - these religious differences between the Jews.

Human nature is to argue over "words, and names and laws" and miss the truth of God.

After this Paul tarried yet in Corinth for a good while then takes his leave.

## **9, BRIEF MINISTRY AT EPHEBUS AND RETURN TO ANTIOCH ACTS:18-18-22.**

- Aquilla and Pricilla travel with Paul to Ephesus where they stay when Paul goes on to Antioch.

Aquilla had shaved his head in fulfillment of a vow.

- Once more he goes "To the Jew first" to the Synagogue and reasoned with the Jews out of the Old Testament Scriptures.

He promises to return to them in due time, as they press him to stay. Paul's desire is to be at the coming Feast at Jerusalem. Which after he greets the Church at Caesarea he went down to Antioch.

Thus Paul returns to his 'home church' at Antioch, spending time with them reporting all that God had done on this missionary journey.

New Testament Churches established on this Missionary Journey were Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea and Corinth. To these Churches we have several of Paul's Epistles, giving to us the riches of the glories of the truths of Christ.

# **THE BOOK OF ACTS**

## **THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH**

### **EXPOSITION OF CHAPTERS, 18:23 - 21:14 - PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY**

The Apostle Paul's third missionary journey is summarized very briefly in Acts 18:23. Here we are told that he departed from Antioch and went over all the country of Galatia and Phryia STRENGTHENING all of the DISCIPLES.

1 Thessalonians 3:2, 13

The Churches were in need of being 'established' on the solid Rock of God's Word.

Cf. Colossians 1:21-29

#### **APOLLOS ENTERS THE SCENE - 18:24-28**

(Note: This is introductory to that which happens in Ephesus under Paul's ministry relative to those disciples who had only experienced John's Baptism.)

- Apollos, a Jew. was born in Alexandria in North Africa.

(Alexandria, founded by Alexander the Great, was one of the great centers of Greek culture. There was a great university there and it had one of the finest libraries in the world. It was here that a Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, was made. The center of the early Christian movement moved from Jerusalem and Antioch to Alexandria, and it remained important for several centuries of early church history. Athanasius, Tertullian, and Augustine, three great men of the early Christian movement, came from there.)

- Note the character of Apollos for he would be used by the Lord in the ministry of the church.

- a. He was an eloquent man. Cultured, a man skilled in literature and the arts. He had stores of learning and could use it convincingly.
- b. He was mighty in the Scriptures. Well versed in the Old Testament Scriptures.
- c. He had been instructed in "The Way of the Lord." The word "instructed" here means orally instructed by word of mouth. He was not as the Apostle Paul, taught or instructed by revelation (Galatians 1:12).
- d. He was fervent in spirit. Burning with spiritual zeal; hot for the things of God - not luke warm.
- e. He taught diligently the things of the Lord Jesus as they had been handed on to him, concerning the Messianic prophecies pointing to Him.
- f. However, he only had understanding concerning Baptism of John.
- g.. He spoke boldly in the Synagogues of the Jews.
- h. He was teachable. Aquilla and Priscilla, who were still at Ephesus, took Apollos aside and expounded unto him "the WAY of God more perfectly."

This reveals this eloquent man was humble enough to allow another brother and his wife to teach him the things of "The Way" more clearly and accurately.

Thus he was teachable. One must be teachable, if he is to teach others; if a person is unteachable then he cannot teach others.

Apollos is an example to all believers today. It is good to appreciate and receive light and truth from the Lord, but it is an absolute necessity to keep open to the Lord when God has His ministries there to expound "The Way of God more fully" to us.

i. He goes to Corinth with a letter of recommendation from the brethren at Ephesus. At Corinth God blessed his ministry as he was able to refute and convince many of the Jews by showing and proving that Jesus was the Christ, the promised Messiah of the Old Testament Scriptures

In fact so great was his ministry at Corinth that 'party factions' came into being over the persons of Paul, Peter and Apollos.

This 'carnality' and person following/worship was then rebuked by Paul in 1 Corinthians 3:1-7, 21-23. Paul exhorts that we must not glory in men. We are to appreciate the various ministries, but we must not deify/worship them. that is to say. place one above another for one sows, another waters, but God gives the increase.

1 Corinthians 3:7, "So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither is he that watereth; but God giveth the increase."

## **1. PAUL'S MINISTRY AT EPHESUS - 19:1-41**

- Paul had passed through Ephesus previously and had promised to return in the Lord's will and time. Acts 18:18-21. in the meantime, God had Aquilla and Priscilla there, and then Apollos had come, now Paul returns.

- Paul finds certain disciples there, and ask them: "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since (or when) ye believed?"

Their answer: "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."

- Paul asks them concerning their water Baptism. "Unto what (or, unto whom) then were ye baptized?"

They respond: "Unto John's Baptism".

These Ephesian believers had not heard that the Holy Spirit had been poured out. Thus their experience was very similar to the experience of Apollos, "knowing only the Baptism of John."

- Paul then baptized these disciples in into the "Name of the Lord Jesus."

- God then sealed this act of Paul by imparting the Holy Spirit Baptism to these disciples as Paul laid hands on them.

The evidence? "They spake with tongues, and prophesied."

- Verse 8, Paul ministers the Word to the Jews in the Synagogue for a period of three months.

- However when certain persons HARDENED THEMSELVES IN UNBELIEF speaking evil against THAT WAY before the people, Paul; separated himself and the disciples from them.

- For 2 years Paul ministers the Word at Ephesus. Ephesus became a great Church, from which the Gospel went out into all Asia. Previously the Spirit had forbidden him to preach in Asia. Acts 16:6-7.

Now it was God's will and timing. It is evident that a number of Churches were established in Asia Minor, and it seems that Ephesus was the center from which many Churches were established.

Thus here at Ephesus "A great Door and effectual" was opened to Paul. 1 Corinthians 16:8-9.

- "God wrought special miracles (not the ordinary!?)

Diseases and demon spirits leave the bodies of the afflicted as these handkerchiefs/aprons of Paul were laid on them.

What were these handkerchiefs/aprons which are mentioned? They were from Paul's body - Paul used them in one way or the other - possibly as sweat cloths to wipe his brow while he was working. They had his body perspiration on them.

Under the Presence and Anointing of the Holy Spirit they become means of Grace, that is to say, channels of impartation of blessings.

- The seven sons of Sceva, vagabond and apostate Jews, having no legal right to use the name of Jesus, attempt to exorcise evil spirits. The evil spirits in the man leaped upon them, stripping them naked, and they fled out of the house wounded.

The evil spirits knew who had spiritual authority over them, and whose command they would obey. They knew who had the legal right to us 'THE NAME.'

The evil spirits spoke through human lips: "Jesus I know (lit. acknowledge (ginosko) and Paul I know (lit. am acquainted with (epistamai),but who are ye?"

Results among the people:

- a. Fear came upon all the people.
- b. The Name of Jesus was magnified.
- c. Believers who had practiced curious arts, and had black magic books with brought them and burned them. A value of 50,000 pieces of silver.
- d. Confession and cleansing took place.
- e. The Word of the Lord grew and prevailed.

- Opposition at Ephesus. A great stir came about "The Way at this time." Demetrius, the silversmith, who made much money through the silver shrines of the goddess Diana, arouses the business men of the city against Paul.

The goddess Diana was one of the 7 wonders of the ancient World. She was one of the principal goddesses of the Greeks and Romans. Idolatry abounded in these cities, with all immorality and vile orgies.

- Verses 28-29. Confusion breaks out in the city under the spirit of mob rule.

- The brethren restrained Paul from endangering his life in the midst of such a mob spirit, (verses 30-32) by going to the Theater.

- Alexander becomes a real enemy of Paul. Cf. 1 Timothy 1:20 and 2 Timothy 4:14.

- Eventually the Town clerk appeased the howling mob and brought order back into the city, telling Demetrius and the business men that there are proper channels through the Court if they have any real charge against Paul and his party.

(Note - "Robbers of Churches" verse 37. is lit. "Robbers of Temples")

## **2. MINISTRY IN MACEDONIA - 19:21-22;20:1-2**

- Paul purposes in the Spirit to go into Macedonia and Achaia, and then on to Jerusalem.

- He sends two of his assistants (deacons, servants) Timothy and Erastus ahead of him.

- He, himself, stays in Asia for awhile. Waiting on the Lord. Seeking His will and mind for that which lay ahead of him.

- Paul then goes into Macedonia and ministers in all those areas, giving them much exhortation. To exhort means "to stir up". Paul was keeping the believers stirred up "on fire" for the Lord and the things of the Lord.

## **3 MINISTRY IN GREECE AND CORINTH - ACTS 20:2-4**

- Paul came into Greece and ministers for about 3 months.

- His life is threatened by the Jews.

- Note the Apostolic company in verse 4. All the fruit of Paul's labors. These all precede Paul to Troas.

## **4. MINISTRY AT TROAS - ACTS 20:5-12**

- Paul sails from Philippi to Troas stays there 7 days. It is the time of the Feast of Passover, or Unleavened Bread.

- Paul ministers the Word of God as the Disciples **"CAME TOGETHER TO BREAK BREAD ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK."**

The change from the Jewish (Hebrew) Sabbath Day to observing the FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK was in fulfillment of prophetic types and Scriptures of the O.T.

### **A. Prophetic Types**

1. The Sheaf of the First Fruits was to be waved before the Lord on "the morrow after the Sabbath", and was a type of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was raised from the dead -not on the Sabbath - but "on the morrow after the Sabbath bath, the FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK.

Leviticus 23:9-14

1 Corinthians 15:20-23

Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1-2; Luke 24:1; John 20:1

The Jews had a "Christless Sabbath" on the 7th Day.

2. The Feast of Pentecost and the Presentation of the Two Wave Loaves took place 50 days after the waving of the Sheaf of the First Fruits.

This was 7 Sabbaths (or  $7 \times 7 = 49$ ) and then the 50th Day was the "morrow after the 7th Sabbath."

Leviticus 23:15:-17

This found its fulfillment in Acts 2:1-4. The Feast of Pentecost was the 50th day after the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus the out pouring of the Holy Spirit came on the First Day of the Week. Not on a Sabbath Day, but "the morrow after the Sabbath."

The Jews kept a "Sabbath without the Spirit." The Letter and form of the Law, but not having the Spirit, or the Life.

Thus the two most important foundation events in the Early Church took place, not on the Hebrew 7th or Sabbath Day, but on the "morrow after the Sabbath." In other words, on the FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK."

1. The Resurrection of the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, and...
2. The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the formation of the Church.

If the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit by-passed the 7th Day, or the Sabbath, IT SHOWED THAT THE SHADOW WAS AT AN END; and this was being fulfilled in the TRUE Sabbath, REST IN THE GODHEAD.

When two Persons of the Eternal Godhead set their seal that the Sabbath Day was ended, and established the foundations of the Church on the First Day of the week, then all believers ought to follow suit, and accept the Divine Testimony.

## B. Scriptures

1. Hosea 2:11. Hosea prophesied, "I will cause her New Moons, Feasts and her Sabbaths to cease..."



2. Colossians 2:16-17. Paul states that we are not to let anyone judge us in respect of New Moons, Holy or Feast Days, or meats, or of keeping of Sabbath Days, WHICH WERE A SHADOW OF THINGS TO COME.

3. Romans 14:5-6. He says that one man esteems one Day better than another, and others esteem every Day alike. Everyone must be fully persuaded in his own mind.

4. Hebrews 4:9; Matthew 11:28-30; Isaiah 28:10-12. The TRUE Sabbath Rest is found "in Christ" and "in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit."

The Early Church moved from the keeping of the 7th Day Sabbath into the privilege of the First Day of the Week - Christ arose on that Day, and Holy Spirit was poured out on that Day.

- They broke bread on the First Day of the Week. Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23 (partook of the Lord's Supper).

- Laid aside the collections on the 1st Day of Week. 1 Corinthians 16:2.

This is sufficient Scriptural ground for the Church today.

- Verse 7-11. Paul preached through until midnight. A young man fell asleep and fell out the window and died. Paul raised him from the dead.

Matthew 10:8

Matthew 11:5

Acts 9:36-41

## **5. JOURNEY TO AND MINISTRY AT MILETUS - 20:13-38**

- Verses 13-16 - Journey to Miletus. Paul was anxious to be in Jerusalem for the celebration of the Day of Pentecost.

- Verse 17. From Miletus Paul sends to Ephesus and calls for the Elders of the Church to come to him.

Note: "Elders" in the plural. Always plurality of the Ministry in the Early Church. The Eldership constituted the Oversight of the Flock (local Church).

- Paul's final message and address to the Elders at Ephesus.

Refer, also to page 158-159 of notes concerning Ministry and Qualifications of Elders.

a. Paul reminds them of his message and ministry, of his sufferings and temptations. Humility of mind, though having great revelation from the Lord, yet there was a humility inwrought by the Spirit of God.

b. His ministry publicly and from house to house.

c. Ministered the First Principles of the Doctrine of Christ to both Jew and Gentile. Cf. Hebrews 6:1-2

d. How he is willing to lay down his life for the Gospel of the Grace of God.

e. Paul preached the Kingdom of God. Preached and demonstrated the Gospel of the Kingdom. in the Grace of God.

f. He declares his purity from shunned responsibility. Pure from the blood of all men (Ezek. 3:21; Acts 18:6, 23:1).

g. Paul's warning and exhortation to the ELDERS. Verses 28-31.

1. Take heed to YOURSELF. Self - the biggest enemy.
2. Take heed to the FLOCK of God. Give the Flock your attention.
3. Overseers - Bishops, Elders, Overseers same person.
4. Called to feed (lit. to shepherd. pastor, tend as a shepherd does his sheep) the Flock of God.
5. Watch for grievous wolves - the enemy without. Wolves in sheep's clothing.
6. Watch among yourselves - the enemy within. Drawing to oneself, party spirit. personality spirit, schism, division.
7. Watch and remember the warnings.

h. Paul commends these Elders to God and His Word. The Word of His Grace. It is able to build up (edify) and to give the saints of light their inheritance. The sanctified or set apart ones.

i. Paul did not seek wages of silver, gold or clothing. Paul was a worker, and giver. Not covetous. 1 Corinthians 9:1-14; 2 Corinthians 12:17

j. Paul's farewell prayer. verses 36-38. This must have been a very touching scene as Paul and the Elders prayed together, weeping and kissing him as they realized they would see his face no more and then accompanying him to the ship.

This charge to the Elders (verses 18-35) in one of the richest 'Charges' in the New Testament, and a challenge to all Elders today.

## **6. MINISTRY AT TYRE - 21:1-6**

- The Apostolic team journey to Tyre where the ship was to unload.

- Here they find disciples and tarried with them for 7 days.

- Paul is warned once again by the Holy Spirit that trouble waited him at Jerusalem (verse 4).

Compare Acts 20:22-24.

- a. Paul was bound (lit. having been bound by the Spirit) by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem.
- b. Paul knew by the Spirit that bonds and afflictions awaited him in every city.
- c. He would not be moved from the will of God.

- The believers accompany Paul and his company to the ship and after they pray together, they embark.

- They sail to Ptolemais where they stay with the brethren for one day (verse 7).

### **7. ARRIVAL AT CAESAREA - 21:8-14.**

- These verses bring to end Paul's third great Missionary Journey. At Caesarea they enter into the home of Philip the Evangelist. Philip was last seen in Acts chapter 8 and his Ministry of Evangelism.

- Philip had four daughters which did prophesy. They were not Prophetesses. They had the gift of prophecy  
(1 Corinthians 12:10).

- God sends the Prophet Agabus down from Judea to Caesarea.

Agabus, by the Spirit signified what would happen to Paul when he got to Jerusalem. Taking Paul's girdle he bound his own hands and feet saying that this is what would happen to Paul by the Jews there.

"Thus saith the Holy Ghost..."

The Jews would then hand him over to the Gentiles.

**Note:** Though Philip had four daughters which had the gift of prophecy, yet God sent Agabus the Prophet to speak to Paul.

The ministry through the Gift of Prophecy is seen in 1 Corinthians 14:1-4.

- a. edification (building up)
- b. exhortation (stirring up)
- c. comfort (binding up)

The ministry of a Prophet is to:

- a. foretell - Acts 11:27-28; 21:11
- b. forthtelling - telling forth the Word, expounding the Word, laying foundations on the Word -

Ephesians 2:20; 3:1-5.

c. exhortation and confirmation - Acts 15:32; 21:11

- The brethren attempted to persuade Paul against going to Jerusalem, when they could not they said, "The will of the Lord be done." (verse 14).

- verses 15-17. Paul and his company leave with other believers, for Jerusalem.

**Note:** It has been suggested that Paul was out of the will of God going to Jerusalem. and that had he heed these warning of the Spirit through various ones in the Local Churches, then he would not have been put in prison.

However, a study of the following Scriptures reveals that Paul was in the will of God.

1. Acts 9:15-16. Ananias had foretold to Paul that he was called bear the Name of Jesus before the Gentiles, kings and the children of Israel and to suffer for the Name of Jesus.

2. Acts 19:21, Paul purposed (resolved, knew) in/by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem.

3. Acts 20:22-24, Paul himself knew in the Spirit, by the Spirit, that bonds and imprisonment awaited him in every city.

4. Acts 21:4. The brethren at Tyre said he should not go up to Jerusalem, through the Spirit.

5. Acts 21:13, Agabus the Prophet confirms to Paul what would happen to him when he goes to Jerusalem.

# **THE BOOK OF ACTS**

## **THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH**

### **EXPOSITION OF CHAPTERS, 21:15 - 23:35 - PAUL'S WITNESS AT JERUSALEM**

As noted previously, it was the will of the Lord for Paul to go to Jerusalem and be a witness and testimony there, even though the Lord knew the Jews would not accept his Testimony.

These chapters before us cover this witness of Paul in the "Holy City," which in a few years' time would be laid desolate, and the Temple would be destroyed totally, and the Jews would be scattered to the four corners of the earth, "Until the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-24

#### **1. PAUL AT JERUSALEM - 21:15-40**

- Paul and his company arrive in Jerusalem from Caesurae, and they are received of James and the Elders of the Church.

- Paul declares what God had wrought amongst the Gentiles by his ministry. The Jerusalem brethren received the news with joy.

- The Law-Grace Believers - Verses 20b-24.

The brethren at Jerusalem encourage Paul to take the Nazarite Vow to protect himself and the Church at Jerusalem for receiving him.

Their reasoning is that there were thousands of Jews which were believers in Christ, and yet were still zealous for the Law of Moses.

"All of them were enthusiastic upholders of the Mosaic Law." Amp. N.T.

These were Law-Grace believers. Romans 10:1-2

Moses in one hand, and Christ in the other hand. Typical of that seen in the Galatian Church. The compromise which produced mixture, Law mingled with Grace. Moses mixed with Jesus!

They tell Paul that the Jewish believers have been informed that Paul does not follow circumcision any longer, or the customs of the Jews, or the Law of Moses. For this reason they exhort Paul to go through the Mosaic Rituals as 'proof' that these reports were not true.

So Paul according to his principle follows their judgement.

I Corinthians 9:19-23.

(1) He takes a vow with four men, possibly according to the Nazarite Vow.

Numbers 6:1-7

Shaves his head.

(2) Pays the price of the purification Of these four men.

(3) Goes into the Temple with them for the days of purification.

(4) Waits for an offering to be offered For them. Paul pays for all the expenses.

This vow was for seven days.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE that this was not a COMPROMISE on Paul's part. It has been said that if Paul had not stooped to fulfil these Laws of the Mosaic Ritual, then he would not have been arrested in the temple, while performing these things he did not believe in.

God was in and above all, using these things for His ultimate purposes for the ministry of Paul.

Though Paul obligated himself in these rituals, he did not believe they counted with God.

He knew as the Epistle to the Hebrews very clearly shows that the Mosaic Rituals, with the Aaronic Priesthood, animal sacrifices, and oblations, rituals, purification, etc. Were all fulfilled and abolished in the perfect once-for-all Sacrifice of Jesus.

Paul found all in Christ. Hebrews, chapter 10

He also knew that God had finished. with the Temple, demonstrated in the Rent Veil, and although the Jews were carrying on the abominable system, God was soon to have the whole thing smashed to the ground under Roman Prince Titus, in A.D. 70

Paul knew that this was the transition era from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant, but he was well aware of the truth and the truth had set him free.

Here we see Paul following the principle of "becoming as a Jew to the Jews that he might win the Jew."

He knew that circumcision availed nothing, nor did any of the other rites of the Law of Moses. Paul also knew that the Church at Jerusalem was a mixture of "Moses Jesus-Believers," and it was from Jerusalem and Judea he had suffered the most, from the brethren that persistently dogged his footsteps, bringing trouble and discord into all the Churches of the Gentiles which he established.

**BUT Paul became all things to all men THAT HE MIGHT WIN SOME!**

- The Elders tell Paul; that they have maintained the DECREE established at the Conference concerning Gentile believers.

Acts 15 :19-27

So they have Gentile believers, who serve Christ, and Jewish believers, who serve Moses AND Christ.

- Paul arrested - verses 27-32

The days of the Vow and Purification are almost at an end when some of the Jews from Asia, there for the Feast of Pentecost, recognize Paul.

They suppose that he has with him in the Temple an Ephesian called Trophimus, a Gentile, and that their Temple is being defiled by a Gentile.

They still called it "this Holy Place."

It is evident that they did not accept that God was finished with the Temple economy, and that the prophecies of Christ concerning the destruction of the Temple and every stone being upturned upon another were either forgotten or cast aside.

The whole city was moved and shut the Doors of the Temple and took Paul to kill him.

The Chief Captain came on the scene as the City was in an uproar, taking with him his Soldiers and Centurions, who just came in time to save him from being beaten to death.

2 Corinthians 11:23-27

- Paul given permission to speak -vs 33-40

Paul is bound with chains. The people are in tumult and violent against him. Note their cry "away with him." The same cry given against the Lord Jesus. (Luke 23:18).

The servant shall be as his Master.

Paul asks for permission to speak to the people and receives it. He speaks in Hebrew.

In these chapters we see how the prophetic word of the Lord to Paul through Ananias, is particularly fulfilled

1. Before the Gentiles Acts 13-20
2. Before Kings - Acts 24-26
3. Before the Children of Israel Acts 22-23

This is Paul's final visit to Jerusalem. Paul had never been fully accepted here. They were rather pleased that his Ministry was to the Gentile Cities, as he was too strong in the revelation of the Grace of God, without the Law of Moses.

What a contrast to the first scenes in the Church at Jerusalem. This Church which experienced the initial Pentecostal outpouring, the Ministry of the Words in signs and wonders, and the thousands of Jews which had turned to Christ - -now it has degenerated into a Legalistic Church, a Law- Grace- Church.

## **2. PAUL'S TESTIMONY AT JERUSALEM TO ISRAEL - 22:1-29.**

Paul's Defense. His Witness and Testimony before the Jews here is clearly defined and set in order. It is clear cut.

a. He appeals to his countrymen, for which he had continual sorrow and great heaviness in his heart.

Romans 9:1-2. He was willing to be accursed for his brethren after the flesh, so great was his love for them.

b. The order of his Testimony and witness.

- Verse 3, Paul declares the fact that he is a Jew, born in Tarsus.

He was brought up in Jerusalem, and set under the teachings of Gamaliel, who taught him according to the perfect manner of the fathers.

He was zealous towards God.

- Verse 4, He persecuted **THE WAY** by delivering believers to prison and death.

- Verse 5, He had letters of authority from the High Priest and the Elders to bring believers from Damascus to Jerusalem to be punished.

- Verses 6-11, Paul relates to them his miraculous visitation by Jesus Christ and his conversion on the road to Damascus.

He calls upon the Lord, and is instructed by the Lord to go to Damascus, which he does, being led by those with him.

The Jewish hears should have been able to recognize all these things were Old Testament manifestations of Jehovah. to His ministers Paul's account of his conversion is very similar to the experience of Moses at the Burning Bush, Exodus 3.

Refer to notes on Acts, chapter 9, concerning Paul's conversion.

- Verses 12-16, In Damascus, Ananias, who was well-known and of good report among the Jews, by revelation came to him confirming that which the Lord had spoken on the Damascus Road.

Through Ananias he is healed of blindness, water baptized and receives the Holy Spirit in the Laying on of Hands.

Word of Prophecy by Ananias:

- a. The God of our Fathers has chosen you.
- b. To know His will.
- c. To see the Just One.
- d. To hear the Voice of His mouth.
- e. To be His witness of all he has seen and heard.

- Verses 17-18, The Lord tells Paul when he was in Jerusalem previously, (Possibly on his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion.) as he was in a trance in the Temple, that he was to get out of Jerusalem quickly for the Jews would not be willing to accept his testimony concerning Christ.



- Verses 19-20, Paul reminds the Lord how he imprisoned and beat people in the Synagogues; how he shed Stephen's blood upon his shoulders, as he stood by consenting to his death and holding his garment.

It is clear in all his witness that the blood of Stephen and the saints continually weighed upon his mind and heart and he was willing to lay down his life as a living sacrifice for his brethren he had slain.

Paul tells Timothy that he was a blasphemer a persecutor and injurious but he obtained mercy because he did it ignorantly in unbelief, 1 Timothy 1:12-13.

- Verse 21, The Lord tells him that He will send him to the Gentiles.

**NOTE:** *GENTILES* was Paul's last word to the Jews at Jerusalem. Legalistic bigotry prevailed. They were Jews, under the Mosaic Law, with Christ in the other hand. They cared not about the salvation of the Gentiles. They rejoiced not that the Lord was visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His Name.

They cared not that the Prophets foretold the Gentiles would come into blessings through Messiah.

Such was their Nationalistic attitude and spiritual blindness and bigotry.

"... they gave him audience unto this word", (*Gentiles*) verse 22.

C. The rage of the Jews - Verses 22-23 Note their cry, verse 22.

"Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live."

1 Thessalonians 2:16

Luke 22:18

So said they of Paul's Master.

The Jews allowed mob-spirit to prevail. Crying out, casting dust into the air, and waving their clothes about.

d. Paul to be Scourged - Acts 22:24-29

- The Chief Captain takes Paul to have him scourged. HOWEVER, Paul exercises his legal rights and privileges as a Roman citizen to save himself from another scourging.

**NOTE:** 2 Corinthians 11:23-28. Paul had received scourgings, floggings and beatings from the Jews, his own countrymen, and accepted it as part of the sufferings foretold to him.

However, when it came to Roman scourging and punishment, Paul exercises his rights as a Roman Citizen. He did this in Acts 16:37, after he had the flogging; here he does it before the flogging.

Scourging was a terrible form of punishment and chastisement. According to the Law of Moses, they were to receive 40 stripes save one, or 39 stripes in flogging. Many a person would die under such a flogging. Paul suffered this of the Jews 5 times. He had stripes above measure.

Deuteronomy 25:3

2 Corinthians 11:24

Paul bore in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

Galatians 6:17

Enough is enough.

Believers are privileged to avail themselves of these rights of citizenship so long as they do not conflict against the Word and will of God.

Such a conflict is seen:

1 Corinthians 6:1-7

### **3. PAUL'S TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN - 22:30 - 13:35.**

- The Chief Priests and the Sanhedrin are commanded to appear, to bring their charges against Paul.

A number of years before, the Lord Jesus Himself, stood before the Sanhedrin and was falsely accused and condemned.

Then years later, Stephen stands before the Sanhedrin and gives his marvellous defense and testimony to the Council. He, also, is rejected and then stoned to death outside the City.

And now Paul stands before the Sanhedrin to give witness to the Risen Christ. His witness will also be rejected. As noted earlier, within a few years, God will smash the whole Mosaic economy. The Temple will be destroyed; and the City will be razed to the ground.

God in His grace and long-suffering allows Paul to give a special final witness to the Sanhedrin.

The Chief Priests and the Sanhedrin are commanded to appear to bring their charges against Paul.

- Verses 1-10, Paul's Testimony to the Sanhedrin (Council).

He appeals to the Sanhedrin on the ground of a good conscience. For this he is slapped across the mouth at the command of the High Priest, Ananias.

Paul then challenges him on the ground of violating their own Law while they profess to be judging him by the Law.

Ananias was a corrupted High Priest, even as Annas and Caiaphas before him had been.

White wall (hypocrite) Paul calls him.

Compare John 18:19-23. Jesus was also smitten contrary to the Law when he stood before the Council.

Jesus called the Pharisees and Scribes, Whited sepulchres, Matthew 23:27.

These sepulchres were white-washed about the time of the Feast of Passover so that none would be ceremonially defiled and hindered from keeping the Feasts.

Within they were full of dead men's bones and rottenness.

They were white-washed, but not washed white Outwardly appearing beautiful and white, but inwardly full of inner corruptions and filth.

Matthew 23:27-39

Paul is then charged with reviling God's High Priest. He recognizes that he was wrong to speak in such a manner.

Exodus 22:23

Rulers were not to be spoken of in an evil manner.

Even though King Saul was evil and corrupt, yet David would not touch the Lord's anointed, even though the Spirit of the Lord had departed from him.

The same principle is here also. The Spirit had departed from the Aaronic Priesthood. God had introduced the new Priesthood after the Order of Meichisedek.

There must always be respect for the powers that be.

Paul had been away from Jerusalem a number of years, and it seems evident that the High Priest was not in his official High Priestly Garments or else Paul would have recognized this and know his office.

- Verses 6-10. Paul perceived in the Spirit the situation here as the Council consisted of Pharisees and Sadducees.

The Pharisees were the Fundamentalists of the day, believing in the Inspiration of the Scriptures, and Miracles (resurrection from the dead), etc.

The Sadducees were the Modernists of the Day, denying the existence of angels, spirits, and miracles (especially the resurrection of the dead)

Paul hurls the challenge of his faith in hope of the resurrection out before the Council. Immediately it brought the Council into collision and dissension and the whole court was divided.

The Pharisees were forced to stand for the doctrine of the resurrection, and side with Paul against the Sadducees who denied this truth.

God's method of battle and victory was to send confusion into the enemy ranks until they destroyed themselves.

The Pharisees admit they do not want to fight against God. However they were more intent on defending their doctrine than the Apostle Paul. They had actually been fighting against God when they opposed Christ and His Church.

Paul is taken to the Castle for his protection.

- Verse 11. The Lord Himself appears to Paul and re-assures him that he will also go to Rome and testify of the Lord, even as he had testified of Him at Jerusalem.

-Verses 12-22. In these verses we find more than 40 men who imposed on themselves a fast and a curse until they killed Paul.

In the providence and mercy and will of God Paul's nephew overheard the plot against Paul's life and was able to tell him. Paul encouraged him to tell the Captain how the Jews had planned to have Paul brought down to trial before the Sanhedrin again and en- route they would kill him.

There is no miraculous deliverance from Prison for Paul, as there had been for Peter and the other Apostles in Acts. God had His plan and will for Paul to go to Rome and all things were working together for good in the situation at hand.

The Sovereignty of God is seen in so many little things.

- For Daniel, it was a sleepless night for a king.
- For Joseph, it was a couple of dreams from God given to Pharaoh which needed interpretation.
- For Moses, it was a few baby tears which preserved the life of the one called to bring about the downfall of Egypt and deliverance of a Nation from bondage.

- For Esther, it was the touch of the golden sceptre and the change of heart of a king to reward Mordecaik after reading a book in a sleepless night.

For Paul, it was his sisters son which overheard the plot of the Jews to murder Paul.

"God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform, He plants His footsteps in the sea, And rides upon the storm."

- Verses 23-25. The Lord uses Roman justice, Roman horses, and Roman soldiers to escort Paul safely from Jerusalem to Caesarea to a Roman Court for judgement.

Note the escort Paul was given. This was the Lord's protection for him from the Jews

- Two Centurions,
- Two hundred soldiers under them,
- Seventy horsemen,
- Two hundred spear men.

Totalling 472 persons, at least, to accompany Paul safely to Caesarea.

This was not too bad an escort for God's man!

Paul even had a beast to ride on! So different to all his travels by foot, etc.

- The letter of the Chief Captain Claudius Lysias sent to Felix the Governor. Here he states why he has sent Paul to Felix.

- Paul is conducted by night as far as Antipartris, from whence his guard mainly returns, and the horsemen accompany him to Caesarea.

- Verses 34-35. Felix reads the Letter, saying he will wait until Paul's accusers come and then he will hear the case. Paul is commanded to be kept in Herod's Judgement Hall.

**NOTE:** This is the last Paul sees of Jerusalem. He has borne witness to the Lord Jesus Christ before the Gentiles, and before the Children of Israel, and the Religious Rulers of the Sanhedrin.

Now he is going to bear witness before Kings and then finally is to go to Rome.

# **THE BOOK OF ACTS**

## **THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH**

### **EXPOSITION OF CHAPTERS 24, 25, 26 - PAUL'S WITNESS AT CAESAREA**

As noted previously, the order of witness for Paul included:

1. Before Gentiles,
2. Before the Children of Israel
3. Before Kings, or Rulers

On these chapters before us we have Paul's witness before Kings.

1. Before Felix. Acts 24
2. Before Festus. Acts 25
3. Before Agrippa. Acts 26

### **1. PAUL'S TESTIMONY BEFORE FELIX. ACTS 24**

- The High Priest, Ananias, with Elders and an Orator named Tertullus, came to Caesarea to bring charges against Paul before Felix.

- Verses 2-9 The Charges against Paul.

1. A pestilent fellow (a perfect pest, a real plague - Amplified New Testament)
2. A mover of sedation among all the Jews throughout the world (stirring, inciting, agitating the Jews where ever he went)
- 3.. A ring-leader of the Sect/Cult of the Nazarenes.
4. Profaned the Temple (defiled, desecrated The Temple at Jerusalem.
5. Would have been Judged by Jewish Law had not the Chief Captain taken him from them by great violence/force and placed him under Roman jurisdiction.
6. The Jews present with Tertullus assent to these charges against Paul.

- Verses 10-21 Paul's defence against these accusations.

Paul knew the Law of Moses, and these men were violating the very Law they professed to uphold.

Exodus 20:16, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Paul denies the charge that he was causing dispute in the Temple, or in the Synagogue or in the City. He states that they cannot prove these charges against him.

He does, however, state that, as they say, he worships God after the "**WAY**" which they call heresy. He believed in the Law and prophets in that they (the law and prophets) pointed to Christ Jesus.

He believed in the hope of the resurrection which they also believed. Even the resurrection of the just and the unjust.

He speaks of his good conscience both toward God and men.

He testifies that he had gone to Jerusalem taking alms for his own people, and offerings.

He testifies of being in the Temple fulfilling a vow of purification, when Jews from Asia saw him and caused an uproar among the people, which led to his being arrested, falsely.

He states that these Jews who accused should have appeared before this hearing to testify.

The High Priest and Elders present could not give any true witness against him, except it be that he caused dissension in the Sanhedrim when he brought in the faith of the Hope of Resurrection.

- Verses 22-23, Felix having a good knowledge of the 'Way', defers Paul's case until the Chief Captain came down from Jerusalem to give further evidence in the case against Paul.

Paul is kept in custody. His friends are allowed to visit him.

- Verses 24-26, Paul is brought before Felix and his wife, Drusilla, who was a Jew. Paul once again testifies of "The Faith" in Christ.

Jude 3

He reasoned before them concerning:

1. Righteousness

Romans 10:3-13

Romans 3:21-26

2. Temperance (self under control)

Romans 3:21-26

3. Judgement to come

Hebrews 9:7

Revelation 20:11-15

Acts 17:31

Felix procrastinates. "Procrastination is the thief of Time. He puts it off until a more convenient season."

Trembling with conviction he became alarmed and terrified. Amp. N.T.

Convicted, but unconverted. He knew not that "TODAY is the day of Salvation, NOW is the accepted time."

II Corinthians 6:2

TIME more convenient for him may not be given. TIME is in God's Hand. He gives to man 'now' only - not tomorrow!

In verse 26 we are told that he hoped that money would be given him to release Paul.

"The love of money is the root of all evil." I Timothy 6:10

Judas sinned for money, Ananias and Sapphira sinned for money, Simon the Sorcerer tried to buy the power of God for money, and here Felix puts his salvation off to a more convenient time and hopes for money!

Paul was "not for sale." None could bribe him.

Felix is a typical character study of the unregenerate man who:

1. Has knowledge of The Way.
2. Hears the Faith in Christ. The Word.
3. Is convicted of sin, of righteousness and judgement.
4. Trembles with guilt.
5. Yet procrastinates, looking for another more convenient call for the Word of God.
6. Has a hardened, covetous heart after the god of Mammon, which is money.
7. Yesterday is gone forever. Tomorrow for you may never come. God only gives you "Today".

TODAY -- if you will hear His voice.

Hebrews 3:7

Proverbs 1:24-32

Felix communed with Paul often. His motive? He hoped for money!



Eternity reveals that Felix will stand before another Throne of Judgement and will be judged, instead of having Paul before his Throne and judging him!

-Verse 27 After 2 years Festus takes Felix' place and Felix wanting to maintain favour with the Jews left Paul bound.

Two years of grace shows Felix unrepentant! Leaving Paul bound in chains to please His Jews was outward evidence of his inner spiritual condition.

Mark 15:15

He Left "the Word of God" (typified in Paul) bound to please the unbelieving and rebellious (typified in the Jewish Council.) For Paul it was not 'lost time,' but in God's plan.

## **2. PAUL'S TESTIMONY BEFORE FESTUS -ACTS 25**

- Verses 1-3 Festus goes to Jerusalem from Caesarea where the High Priest and the chief of the Jews informed him of Paul's case.

They hoped that he would bring Paul to Jerusalem to have his case dealt with there, intending to have him killed on the way there. A corrupted Sanhedrin. Luke 23:14-15.

- Verses 4-5 Festus stated that Paul would be kept at Caesarea and have his case judged under Roman Judgement. Roman justice.

- Verses 6-8 He asks for them to bring witnesses to accuse Paul.

At Caesarea the Jews before Festus lay many grievous complaints against Paul which they could not prove. Unproven accusations.

Acts 24:5-13

Matthew 5:11-12

I Peter 4:12-16

Their repeated charges were:

1. charges against Paul, concerning the Law of Moses.
2. Charges against Paul in the Temple.
3. Added to this were charges against Paul concerning Caesar.

Romans 13:1-3

- Verse 9 Festus willing to give the Jews a pleasure asks Paul whether he would go to Jerusalem and be judged by Jewish Law as well as Roman Law before him.

- Verses 10-12 Paul appeals to Caesar. The Lord had already told Paul that he was to bear witness of Him at Rome.

Now Paul sees the will of the Lord unfolding before him step by step.

Acts 26:32

Acts 27:24

Once more Paul exercises his Roman Citizenship and his legal rights to proper justice.

After conferring with the Council, Festus agrees to send Paul to Rome and to Caesar.

- Verses 13-27 King Agrippa and Bernice come to Caesarea.

Nothing happens by accident or coincidence in the purposes of God for His own. King

Agrippa and his wife Bernice came to Caesarea to salute Festus, and after many days Festus tells the King concerning Paul whom he has in bonds.

He speaks of Roman justice which could not condemn a man to death before the accusers faced the accused, and the accused is given license to answer for himself concerning the crime charged against him.

He tells Agrippa of the case in which none the of the things charged against Paul were found to be true; but simply involved certain questions about their own" superstition or, literally, "demon-worship;" and about one called Jesus whom Paul supposed to be raised from the dead.

Such is the concept in the mind of Festus about the Jewish Religion! Just the worship of another God; and further superstitions, even as the Greeks and Romans had numerous gods and religious superstitions.

Festus admits his ignorance of such matters and tells how he asked Paul whether he would go to Jerusalem and be judged there. Paul had appealed to Caesar Augustus.

Agrippa desired to hear Paul for himself.

The next day came, and King Agrippa and Bernice enter into the place of hearing in great pomp and show, with chief Captains and prominent citizens of the City.

The Lord had a good 'congregation' ready for Paul's witness concerning his experience in Christ!

When all the host was assembled together, Festus stated before the King and all gathered that which concerned Paul. He admitted that he did not want to send a prisoner to Rome for appeal before Caesar without having definite 'crimes' signified.

Festus declares Paul's innocence but could not revoke Paul's appealing to Rome.

Unbeknown to him, "God was putting it in their hearts to fulfil His will."

Revelation 17:17

"The King's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the Rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will." Proverbs 21:1

It was God's will for Paul to go to Rome! At Rome's expense!

Over all, through all and above all, Paul was being used as a Testimony to the Name of the Lord, before Rulers and Kings.

### **3. PAUL'S TESTIMONY BEFORE KING AGRIPPA ACTS 26**

Here we have the third main record of Paul's conversion to Christ.

1. Acts 9. His arrest by the Lord Jesus.
2. Acts 22. His witness to the Sanhedrin and Jewish people.
3. Acts 26, His witness before King Agrippa.

Verses 1-23 Paul gives his testimony once again. The prominent points are as follows:

1. He knows Agrippa is more familiar with the Jewish Religion and an expert in Jewish matters
2. He declares his manner of life, as a Jew, and of the straightest Sect of Jewish Religion as a Pharisee, "a Separationist."

He was well-known as such in his own Nation.

3. He is being judged for the Hope of the promise made to the Fathers, which the 12 Tribes of Israel held to. This was the Hope of the Resurrection.

In Paul's heart and mind, he knew this "Hope" was fulfilled in Christ Jesus the Lord.

4. Paul challenges Agrippa that it is not an incredible thing that GOD should raise the dead.
5. He tells once more of his persecution of the saints, and his utter hatred of "The Way."

He elaborates on his part of giving voice in the death of many believers, his delegated authority to punish the Christians, how he compelled them to blaspheme, how exceedingly mad he was against them, going to extreme measures in foreign Cities to kill them.

What Paul had done to the believers was being done to him!

6. He tells of his conversion to Jesus on the Damascus Road.

a. The Light at midday above the brightness of the noonday sun.

Revelation 1:16

Matthew 17:1-5

The Shekinah Glory in the Face of Christ.

b. The prostration of all to the earth.

C. The Heavenly voice of Jesus - the LORD.

d. The Divine Commission and purpose of this appearing.

e. His kicking like a stubborn ox against the pricks, or ox-goad.

f. His ministry under Christ.

1. To be a Minister.

2. To be a Witness of all he sees and hears.

3. The Lord will appear to him.

4. To be delivered from the Jews,

5. To be sent to the Gentiles and delivered from them.

6. To open the eyes of the blind.

7. To turn people from darkness to light.

8. To turn people from the power of Satan to the power of God.

9. To receive the forgiveness of sins.

10. To receive an inheritance among the sanctified ones, by faith in Christ.

This was such a Commission

Isaiah 61: 1-4

Romans 16:20

Romans 3:23

Ezekiel 2:1-2

Isaiah 42:7-16

The whole purpose of the Gospel of Jesus is to do all that which is listed above. Paul was not disobedient to the Heavenly Vision. His whole life was the response and outworking of that Vision.

"Where there is no Vision, the people perish." Proverbs 29: 18

"Where there is no Progressive vision, the people dwell carelessly."

h. Paul obeyed the Lord, witnessing in Damascus, then Jerusalem and then to the Gentiles.

He taught:

1. Repentance and turning to God.
2. Works meet for repentance.

Romans 2:4

Hebrews 6:1-2

Matthew 3:1-2; 4:17

Acts 17:30; 20:21

1. Because of all this, the Jews had taken Paul in the Temple and tried to kill him.

j.. Paul praises the grace and mercy of God in preserving him through everything to that day.

He concludes his testimony with the basic facts of the Gospel.

1. The Law and the Prophets pointed to Christ.
2. Christ suffered on the Cross. His Death.
3. Christ rose from the dead. His Resurrection
4. Christ is the Light of the world, to the Jews and also to the Gentiles.

Verse 24, Festus declares Paul is mad. Recognizing Paul's learning, Festus says that Paul has gone intellectually insane. "Thy great learning is turning thee into raving madness."

They charged Jesus with this sane charge.

Mark 3:21

Verses 25-29 Paul's final challenge to Agrippa.

Paul knew he was not mad, but speaking truth and soberness.

He challenges King Agrippa who knew the historical facts of these things, for it was not done in a secret corner.

King Agrippa believed in the Prophets and the Scriptures. But he did nothing about it.

He says in front of all that assembly there, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." With a little more persuasion Agrippa may have become a believer. Only Eternity will reveal whether he ever did believe. The last record is that King Agrippa was "almost persuaded."

"Almost persuaded, but lost'

Paul could say: "I am persuaded," Rom 8:38

As King Agrippa and Bernice, and all the important people were in that Assembly, all heard the Gospel of Christ, leaving them without an excuse.

Paul was bound by chains, but was free!

They were free, but spiritually bound by the chains of sin!

Verses 30-32 The Case is closed at Caesarea. Verses 30-32.

Agrippa and Festus state that Paul has done nothing worthy of death or of prison and could have been set at liberty had he not appealed to Caesar.

The Lord desired Paul in Rome, and to Rome he must go!

Acts 23:11; 25:11

One day the scene is to be changed and reversed. Instead of Paul being the condemned and the accused, and Agrippa and Festus on the Throne of judgement, it will be Jesus Christ on the Throne, and Agrippa and Festus on trial.

Jesus Christ will do with them what they did with Him.

# **THE BOOK OF ACTS**

## **THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH**

### **EXPOSITION OF CHAPTERS 27 - PAUL'S JOURNEY TO ROME**

- **Verses 1-2**, Paul is placed on a ship with other prisoners under Julius, a Centurion of Augustus' band. With Paul is Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, and Luke. The Beloved Physician.

Acts 19:29; 20:4;  
Colossians 4:10;  
Philemon 24.

What a comfort to Paul to have these brethren with him.

- **Verse 3**, At Sidon Paul is refreshed by friends.

Even the Apostle Paul needed to be refreshed by the brethren. Refreshing in the Spirit.

Isaiah 28:10-12.

- **Verses 4-5**, During the first part of the Voyage there were 'contrary winds.

Significant of the natural and the spiritual 'winds' which come the way of all who follow Christ.

The Lord Jesus had been in a Ship with His Disciples also when the winds and storm' came.

He would be with Paul in this ship too

Matthew 8:23-27  
Mark 4:35-41  
Matthew 14:24  
Mark 6:48  
John 6:16-21

Jesus always comes in the storm unto His own.

- **Verse 6**, Change of ships for Paul and the prisoners.

- **Verses 7-11**, Paul foretells the coming storm and shipwreck

After slow sailing for many days, through lack of the proper winds, and the time of the year was dangerous sailing, Paul steps forth telling the Ship-owner that the Voyage was to be greatly endangered.

Note verse 9. "'The Fast" was The Great Day of Atonement, which took place on the 10th Day of the 7th Month in the Feast of Tabernacles.

Leviticus 23:27.

The Centurion believed the Master and Owner of the ship more than Paul.

The Centurion knew the Master and Owner of the Ship! Paul knew the Master and Owner of the seas!

The Centurion believed man! Paul believed God!

The Ship owner trusted the ability of his sailors and the make of the ship.

- **Verse 12**, As usual, the majority rules. One man only had the mind of God.

Amos 3:7.

Perhaps it was suggested that a Tent-maker would not know too much about a ship in the sea?

- **Verse 13**, The south winds blew softly.

They supposed they had gained their purpose, and off they sailed. Distant havens look like "Fair Havens" and peaceful to those who are full of self-confidence.

The sailors were deceived by the 'south ' winds blowing softly but God saw the coming storm.

The spiritual lesson is evident! It is easy to be deceived by soft south winds, or contrary winds God knows the future and just when and where the storms will strike, testing the ability of the best sailor.

There are natural and spiritual lessons here.

- **Verse 14**, The tempestuous wind called Euroclydon arose, "not long after." A typhoon.

Note the winds here:

- Contrary winds Verse 4
- Little winds. Verse 7- Winds not suffer us
- South soft winds. Verse 13
- Tempestuous winds- Verse 14. Psalms 147-18; 148:8.

Revelation 7:1-3

Daniel 7:1-2

Ephesians 4:16-18.

Unexpected, but foretold by Paul.

-**Verses 15-20**, The ability of men frustrated.

- 1 .The ship caught in the wind driven helplessly.
2. Ungirding the ship for fear of the quicksands.
3. Driven about in the storm and typhoon.



4. Tossed with the tempest. Ability of man frustrated. Helplessness, The power of the wind and the sea.
5. Ship's goods thrown overboard. Freight.
6. The ship's tackling apparatus also tossed into the sea,
7. No light of sun, moon or stars seen for many day source of guidance. No light.
8. All hope of being saved was taken away. God was permitting them to come to a place where they and submit to His Word.

Note especially Psalm 107:23-30 in connection with this storm.

The Lord brought them to their "wit's end."

It is typical of the condition of the World. The World is in the winds and the storms, in a place of darkness, and things are being thrown overboard, but God has His man there at the right time.

- **Verses 21-26**, Paul stands forth in faith..

After long abstinence, Paul stands forth reminding them of the Word of the Lord he had given before which they refused to heed. They are more willing to listen to him now in the storm than when they were in the calm. Verses 9, 10.

How true of the flesh.

Like the Disciples in the storm, it was the Lord's will for them to go to the other side, hence they could not go under for going over.

Luke 8:22-25.

No storm could defeat them. It was the Lord's will for Paul to go to Rome in spite of storm or shipwreck. Their hopelessness was met by a declaration of faith in God.

After reminding them of their unbelief and disobedience, Paul said, "I BELIEVE GOD

In Verse 11, the Centurion believed the Owner of the Ship In verse 25, Paul said that he believed God.

Romans 1: 16

What they did not believe in time of peace they now believe in the storm [there are no atheists in the foxhole).

The Angel (messenger) of God was a ministering spirit sent to minister to Paul in the storm.

Hebrews 1:4,14.

He assures Paul that he indeed will appear before Caesar and that all in the ship are given to Paul. God will preserve all aboard the ship for Paul's sake.

The people in the world are blessed, whether they realize it or not, because of the people of the Lord.

- Egypt was blessed because of Joseph. Genesis 39:5.
- Laban was blessed because of Jacob. Genesis 30:30.
- The ship's passengers and prisoners were blessed because of Paul.
- The world is blessed because of the presence of the Church.

Paul tells them they would be cast on an Island

- **Verses 27-29**, The Midnight Hour.

After 14 days, about the Midnight hour the shipmen deemed they were near some land.

The Midnight Hour --always significant of the End of the Age.

Matthew 25:1-13. Virgins heard the Midnight cry  
Job 34:20. The people shall be troubled at Midnight.  
Psalms 119:62. At Midnight will I rise to give thanks.  
Acts 16:25. At Midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang.  
Mark 13:35. His coming may be at the Midnight Hour.

The Fourteenth Day -- always significant of Passover.

Exodus 12:1-6; 11:4-

The Feast of Passover took place on the 14th day, and at the Midnight Hour.

Here is the same spiritual significance in the storm at sea.

Deliverance would come to all on board the ship after the 14th Day, and the Midnight Hour

- **Verses 30-38**. Paul assumes responsibility of the ship.

As the Ship is tossed near the land and the rocks, the ship men make as though they were lowering the anchors as they endeavor to escape in a boat. Paul demands full obedience by all on board if all were to be saved. Compare verses 22 with 21.

The soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat and their last natural hope is gone. They have to trust God's Word through Paul now for salvation.

He took bread and gave thanks in the presence of them all. and encouraged them also to eat, saying not a hair of their heads would fall.

Matthew 10:30 and Luke 21-.18.

There were 276 persons in all upon the ship. - Verses 38-41, The Ship totally wrecked.  
In the morning they discovered a certain creek, and taking up anchors, hoisting up the main sail to the wind, they let the ship run aground.

The forefront of the ship stuck fast and the hinder part was smashed to pieces with the violence' of the waves.

- **Verses 42-44** All souls saved from the wreck.

The soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners lest any should escape but the Centurion desired to have Paul spared and suggested that all who could swim to shore do so, and others get there on broken pieces of the ship.

All escaped safely to the shore, according to the Word of the Lord - and Paul!

Psalms 107:28-30

2 Corinthians 11:23-26.

This was another of Paul's shipwrecks in which the Lord delivered him.  
" Thrice I suffered shipwreck . . "I

## **SUMMARY**

The Holy Spirit has given much detail to the journey to Rome and the details of this shipwreck-

The natural first, then the spiritual.

The whole story in this Chapter can be likened to the World.

The World-system is like this old ship and is in the greatest storm of history as the End of the Age comes upon the earth. There is no hope of saving the ship (the World-system;) but God has His Witnesses in the winds and the storms who believe God and the only hope of escape and salvation from the wreck of the World-System is to believe God and the witness of His Servants.

The crash comes at the Midnight Hour, but those who trust God and the Word will be safe.

# **THE BOOK OF ACTS**

## **THE HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH**

### **EXPOSITION OF CHAPTERS 28 - PAUL IN ROME**

- **Verses 1 -1 0**, Paul on the Island of Melita.

Paul and company find themselves on the Island of Melita which is the modern island of Malta, located in the center of the Mediterranean Sea, 60 miles south of Sicily and in an area about 95 square miles. Melita is not to be confused with the Island Meleda or Melitene which are located off the Dalmatian Coast. Melita had been occupied in the 10th century B.C. by Phoenicians. The name of the Island means "Refuge" in the Phoenician language (verse 1.) The sight of Paul's shipwreck is thought to have been "St. Paul's Bay, " 8 miles northwest of modern Valletta. Verse 1. The barbarous (or Native) people were kind to them.

We find the great Apostle helping on the Island by gathering a bundle of sticks and laying them on the fire because of the rain and cold; ministering to the present, practical need. Verses 2-3

During his helping, Paul is attacked by a venomous viper or serpent from the midst of the fire but is miraculously preserved from its bite. Mark 16-17. This is the only record in the New Testament of such a phenomenon. Notice that Paul did not take up the viper knowingly or willingly, to show that he was a "snake charmer or a snake handier," which he was not. Spiritually we take note of Satan, the Serpent or Viper, coming out of the fire or the heat at a time when the Ministry is laboring even at menial tasks, to try to destroy the work and workers of the Lord, But the Lord preserves His faithful remnant and continues to victoriously build His Kingdom. Satan is a DEFEATED foe and his only weapon is deception. Verses 3-6.

Spiritually when God pours out the Latter Rain of His Spirit, and the fire of the Lord is there, often the Serpent manifests himself to destroy the Ministry.

Note the reaction of the Natives when Paul escaped the deadly serpent.

- When the snake came out they called him a Murderer. Verse 4. They thought he was under the vengeance of God,
- When he was unharmed by the serpent, they said he was a god.

The flesh wants to decry you or deify you!

Paul's ministry of healing is shown by the laying on of hands. Verses 6-9

Mark 16-17

Signs continue to follow the Apostle's work and all of his necessities are provided for, We note that the laborer is worthy of his hire and that God provides for the needs of His Ministry, Church, and people.

Matthew 16:18-1 6:28-34

God brought blessing and healing in the Gospel of the Kingdom to this Island through the shipwreck. "All things (even shipwreck) work together for good to them that love the Lord."

Romans 8:28

**- Verses 11 -15, Paul's journey from Melita to Rome**

Paul does not irresponsibly leave the work that the Lord may have begun on the Island of Melita, but rather stays for 3 months, watering and planting. We find that Paul did not request a special ship to carry him on to Rome as the great Apostle, but rather using, with the others, a ship "which had wintered in the isle." Verse 1 1 b

In Puteoli, Italy, Paul finds some Christian brethren who desired him to fellowship with them for seven days. The number 7 is significant of completeness, perfection, and wholeness. The Christian life is not complete or whole without the fellowship of the brethren. Notice that Paul desired to be with them- Here again we see the Apostle as one member of a "many membered body." Paul did not associate exclusively with only the upper-class of Apostles, etc.- but enjoyed and appreciated all of the family of God -Jesus Christ being the Name and Center of all of their fellowship.

Paul thanked God when he saw the brethren coming to him. Paul knew that there was strength in fellowship, and thus 'took courage" at the sight.

Disunity, fear, and discouragement are the weapons of Satan. Verse 15. 1 Samuel 30:6. "David encouraged himself in the Lord." Not in his circumstances.

**- Verse 16, Paul's arrival in Rome.**

Paul and the prisoners come to Rome and we note the outworking of God' s will in relationship to Rome from the following Scriptures-

- Acts 19:21, Paul said, "I must see Rome "(Not as a tourist.)
- Romans 1:10-15, Paul wrote to the Romans, "I long to see you."
- Acts 23:1 1, Jesus said, "Thou must bear witness to Me also in Rome.
- Acts 25:11,16, Paul said, "I appeal unto Caesar."
- Acts 27:23-24, In the storm the Angel said, "Thou (Paul) must be brought before Caesar."
- Acts 28:14,16, After the shipwreck, Paul said, "..we went toward Rome."
- Finally, "We came to Rome."

**Verses 17-20**, After 3 days, Paul calls the chief of the Jews and testifies to them that it is because of "the Hope of Israel" in his Nation, that he is bound with the chain.

He testifies that he has done nothing against the people or the Customs of the fathers, but had been falsely accused. Hence he had appealed to Rome. Here he was in Rome now and once more desires to tell his brethren after the flesh concerning the Gospel of Christ.

Paul refers to the "Hope of Israel" in verses 20.

Acts 26:6-7

Colossians 1:27

Titus 1:2-12-13

Hebrews 6:18

The Messiah and the Resurrection was the Hope of Israel.

The Church looks forward to that "Blessed Hope" of Christ's appearing.

He is bound by a chain. Verse 20. when he writes his Epistle, he says that he is "A prisoner of Jesus Christ, -- not a prisoner of Rome."

Ephesians 3:1 -16:20

2 Timothy 1: 10-12

He was not ashamed of this chain because he bore it for the Lord Jesus.

**- Verses 21-24**, The enquiring Jews at Rome.

The Jews at Rome desire to hear about "This Sect which is everywhere spoken against."

Church History tells us that Christians were sometimes referred to as "Atheists" because they worshipped an Unseen God, whereas Pagans worshipped Nature-, and the Emperor who could satisfy their temporal needs from his financial position in the Empire.

The Jews at Rome tell Paul they have no letters concerning him, nor have any Brethren come from Judea to witness against him.

Paul ministers and testifies to them out of the Law and the Prophets, which all pointed to the Lord Jesus as their Hope and Messiah. Verse 23.

Luke 24:27,44-46.

The results in Rome?

1. Some believed the things spoken. Believers.
2. Some believed not. Unbelievers.

There is no neutral ground. Only two classes.

There will always be those that accept and those that reject the Gospel.

Satan would seek to discourage the Church by sighting that all the world is not accepting Jesus Christ and His Gospel.

God gives the increase. Evil doers will wax worse and worse, but the whole earth will be filled with the Glory of the Lord.

**Verses 25-29**, Paul turns to the Gentiles.

The Jews agreed not among themselves, Popular opinion is not the doorway to salvation.

Acts 13:46 18:6

Salvation only comes to the house through Christ.

In verses 25-27, we have Paul's final warning to Jewry, quoted from the Prophet Isaiah.

This verse is quoted several times in the New Testament, by the Lord Jesus and by the Apostles.

Isaiah 6:9

Matthew 13:14

Luke 8:10

John 12:40

Romans 11:8

Spiritual blindness and spiritual deafness had finally settled upon Jewry, the House of Judah, as a whole.

It is worthy to remember Paul's pattern of Ministry as set forth in Acts.

"To the Jew first, and then to the Gentiles."

1. The Jew first.
2. The Gentile next.

Paul consistently followed this principle, and this Scripture was certainly fulfilled.

**Note these Scriptures which show this.**

1. He went to the Synagogues first in each City where there was one.

Acts 13-5, 15; 14:1; 17:1,17; 18:5; 19:8

There were thousands of Jews saved in the Early Church. Acts 2:4,41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 9:1, 22-23; 11:19-21; 21:20-21

At Pentecost there were 3000 souls, then later on another 5000, then multitudes.

"This was the "Remnant according to the election of Grace-"

Romans 11:4-5

They were to be witnesses to Jerusalem, Judea, and then Samaria, and the Uttermost part of the earth.

Acts 1:8

- They were to begin at Jerusalem. Luke 24:47-48, 49,
- Paul said: "It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you, but seeing you put it from you and judged yourselves unworthy of Eternal Life, we turn to the Gentiles." Acts 13:46.
- The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile. Romans 1:13-16; Romans 2:9-10; 10:12.
- Paul's main opposition however came from the Jews Acts 17:5, 10, 13-17; 18:12-14; 23:12, 20-23, 30; 24:5,9; 1 Thessalonians 2:14-17.

2. After years of persistent opposition and rejection by the Jews as a whole, Paul turned to the Gentiles.

Even though he was sent to the Gentiles, he always went to the Jews first, and after rejection turned to the Gentiles. Note this in these Scriptures:

Acts 9:15; 13:42-46, 47-48; 15:15-18; 14:2, 5, 27; 18:6; 21:11, 19-25; Romans 15:9-18, 27; 16:4

God opened the Door of Faith to the Gentiles and they came into blessing in the Tabernacle of David in the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. God is visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His Name, and Jerusalem will be trodden down until the Fulness of the Gentiles and the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Romans 11:25

Luke 21:21-24

The Jew and the Gentile can only be grafted into the Good Olive Tree by in Christ Jesus.

Hence Paul says: "Be it known unto you that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles and that they will hear it., Acts 28:28

**- Verses 30-31, Paul in Rome**

Paul dwelt in his own hired house in Rome and received all who came to him.

Preached the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and all that concerns the Lord Jesus Christ, unhindered.

"A Prisoner of Jesus Christ" - indeed!

## **SUMMARY:**

Thus the Book of Acts opens with the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Jewish Nation and closes with the rejection of the Gospel by that Nation, and Paul turning to the Gentiles.

Jewry as a Nation had rejected the Ministries of:



- John the Baptist,
- The Lord Jesus Christ,
- The Apostle Paul,
- The Early Church believers consisting of both Jews and Gentiles.

The Gospel had spread from JERUSALEM TO ROME! From the Religious center of the then known world to the Political center of the world.

Both Rome and Jerusalem come into prominence in the Last Days before the Second Coming of the crucified-resurrected, ascended-glorified Son of the living God, Jesus Christ.

The Book of Acts can be described in these ways:

- The Church in its beginning.
- The Acts of the Holy Spirit.
- The Seed-book of the Church.
- The Divine Pattern for the New Testament Local Church

Acts covers a period of about 30 years, from A. D. 34 to AD. 64, approximately.

In A. D 70, God permitted Rome to destroy the Temple at Jerusalem, making the Temple, Jerusalem, Jewry and the Land desolate, scattering Jewry to the four corners of the earth.

The Father God had rent the Veil in the Temple from top to bottom in connection with the death of His Son at Calvary, opening for all the Dispensation of Grace to Jew and Gentile.

The Natural Branches of Judah were cut off the Olive Tree because of unbelief. The Unnatural Branches of Gentiles were grafted in by faith.

- Acts The LORD JESUS CHRIST....the HEAD of the Church - His Body!
- Acts 2.The CHURCH - THE BODY of Christ formed by the Holy Spirit!
- Acts 3-28 .THE BODY OF CHRIST - in operation, in manifestation.

The Book of Acts reveals the Lord Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church which is His Body, in whom all Fruit, Gifts, Grace, Ministries and all the Fulness of the Godhead dwells as the Son of God.

Colossians 1:19-1 2:9

"A BODY hast Thou prepared--- Lo I come to do thy will, O God." Hebrews 10:5-7.

He was prepared as A BODY in which God was able to fulfill His will in the earth.

And now the Church became THE BODY OF CHRIST, to continue doing that same will. The Fulness of the Son of God is to be manifested in this many membered Body of Christ in the earth by the Spirit of God.

He said He would build HIS CHURCH, and the Gates of Hell (Hades) would not prevail against it. Matthew 16:16-18. The Book of Acts is the revelation of Him building His Church! A Victorious Church - A conquering Church - continuing the same Ministry of the ascended Head!

When He returns the second time from heaven, He will come for a GLORIOUS CHURCH without spot, or wrinkle, or blemish, or any such thing. It will be a holy, and spotless Church - like unto Himself! Ephesians 5.-23-32. This Church will be brought about by the Ministry of the Holy Spirit. It will be a Perfect Church!

The Ministry of Jesus Christ is God's Pattern to which this Church will be made, and fashioned. And every member in that Church will be according to the pattern in the heavenly Mount, which is Jesus Christ!

The Early Glory of the Early Church was manifested under the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Feast of Pentecost.

The Early rain.

James 5:7.

The Latter Glory of the Latter Church will be manifested under the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the Feast of Tabernacles-

The Latter Rain.

Haggai 2:9

May our prayer be "Lord, grant that Thy servants may with all boldness preach the Word, and that signs and wonders may be done in the Name of Thy Holy Child, Jesus," as we partake of that which God is doing in the Church in these Last Days-

"Better is THE END of a thing than THE BEGINNING." Ecclesiastes 7:8.

**THE END**