

Difficult Passages in Acts, Bible Study Outline

1. Acts 1:4-5, What is the baptism of the Holy Spirit?
  - a. Matthew 3:11-12, three baptisms
  - b. Baptism meaning, immersion and/or identification
  - c. John 14-16, promise of the Holy Spirit given, up to this point the disciples were technically still OT dispensation believers (in some ways)
  - d. Transitional work of God in history, "Pentecost" for Jews (Chapter 2), Samaritans (8), Gentiles (10), John's disciples (19), not repeated in later NT books, transitional work having been completed
  - e. Indwelling Spirit of God (Romans 8:4,9; 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 5:18)
  - f. For church age believers today, Holy Spirit baptism, or identification with the Spirit, accompanies salvation (Ephesians 1:13)
2. Acts 1:6-7, What about date setting?
  - a. Forbidden, also see Matthew 24:36
  - b. We should live in expectation of Christ's return daily, and not attempt to time it
3. Acts 1:9-11, What is the significance of the Ascension of Jesus Christ?
  - a. Stage 5 of 5 of Christ's first advent work: advent, death, burial, resurrection prior
  - b. Prophesied in Psalm 68:18; Proverbs 30:4; John 16:5,10,17,28
  - c. Both Spirit and Body ascended (when His body was buried, Spirit only went to heaven)
  - d. Visible event with witnesses
  - e. On earth glory veiled, after ascension unveiled (Revelation 1:12-16)
  - f. Acts 2:33, seated at the Father's right hand in heaven exercising High Priestly ministry (Hebrews 4:14-16), earthly ministry continued through God the Holy Spirit (John 14:26, 15:26)
  - g. Compare Ephesians 1:20-21 with 2:6, Christ seated, believers are in Christ, therefore believers are positionally seated (Apply Cf. Romans 9:16; Hebrews 10:12)
4. Acts 1:18-19, Is there a contradiction in the Bible regarding Judas' death?
  - a. No. Cf. Matthew 27:5-8, accounts are complementary, in harmony
  - b. Judas hung himself, rope broke (understood), fell down some distance, possibly on the rocks below, hence the messy result
5. Acts 1:26, Who replaced Judas Iscariot as the twelfth Apostle?
  - a. Qualifications given in Acts 1:21-22, cannot be met today, debunks "apostolic succession"
  - b. Revelation 21:14, name memorialized
  - c. Paul a special case, earned the title by his eyewitness, but did not attain to the first twelve, having not met all qualifications, however he was terrifically blessed
  - d. Term apostle used generally as one who is sent (e.g. James and Barnabas)

6. Acts 2:3, Was the gift of tongues the baptism with fire?
  - a. No. The baptism of fire is an identification with judgment of hellfire (Matthew 3:11-12). The Bible describes the appearance of tongues “as of fire”, not literal fire.
7. Acts 2:3-12, What was the gift of tongues?
  - a. The gift of tongues was given as a judicial sign to unbelieving Israel in order to attest to the truth of the gospel message (Hebrews 2:3-4; 1 Corinthians 14:21-22). It was the speaking of a message in one language which was heard in different actual languages known to the hearers, as is clear in the context. The gift of tongues is not a spiritual gift still given today, because the canon of Scripture is perfect and complete (1 Corinthians 13:8-10). For a fuller treatment of this gift, please see the paper, “Spiritual Gifts: Are they all for Today?”
8. Acts 2:16-21, Was Peter mistaken in quoting Joel 2:28-32 here?
  - a. No. This prophecy was partially fulfilled in type by the pouring out of God’s Spirit at Pentecost. However, the entire prophecy will be literally fulfilled just prior to and at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (Cf. Revelation 16).
  - b. The New Testament days inaugurate the “last days” (Hebrews 1:2, 2:4). The last days will be fulfilled at the Second Coming at the end of the Tribulation period.
  - c. The point of similarity in Peter’s mind is that both the events at Pentecost and the events surrounding the Second Coming are the work of God, and not the work of dissipation (Acts 2:13; Ephesians 5:18).
9. Acts 2:25-28, Is the Resurrection of Jesus Christ prophesied in the Old Testament?
  - a. Yes, Peter quotes David in Psalm 16:8-11 regarding this.
10. Acts 2:29, Where was David in that day? Wasn’t he in heaven?
  - a. His physical body was buried in a tomb.
  - b. As a believer, his spirit was and is in the presence of God (Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 5:8).
11. Acts 2:38, Is baptism a requirement prior to salvation?
  - a. No. Baptism is a human work albeit one pleasing to the Lord, and as such it cannot save (John 3:16, 5:24, Romans 4:1-8, and Ephesians 2:8-10).
  - b. Take a look at Acts 2:37- 38. These people were saved in verse 37 but were told to repent--which is a continual process for the believer which begins at the point of salvation, and to be baptized in verse 38. The word translated "for" in verse 38 is conjunctive, and most scholars agree it should be translated "with a view to". In any case, the confusion is cleared up in Acts 10:34-48 and 16:30-33 in which belief clearly precedes baptism.
12. Acts 2:42, What does a healthy New Testament church look like?
  - a. Bible based (doctrinally sound, appealing to Scripture as the authority in all matters of faith and practice), Christian fellowship, Regular observance of the Lord’s Table, Prayer (both private and public)
13. Acts 2:44-45, Does the Bible endorse communism?
  - a. No. This passage is descriptive, not prescriptive (as Acts 6:1-6), in that it records how the Christian community adapted itself in light of persecutions and circumstances.

14. Acts 2:42, Special Study, The Four Ingredients of a Healthy Church

- a. "apostles' doctrine"
  - i. Some object to doctrine and theology, either out of ignorance or desire for the approval of men rather than God
  - ii. Acts 2 sermon doctrinal content, Christ's death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and the coming of God the Holy Spirit
  - iii. Doctrine derived from Scripture, Scripture is divine doctrine and includes the apostles' doctrine, 2 Timothy 3:16
  - iv. John 7:16-18, Jesus proclaimed objectively true doctrine
  - v. Romans 6:17, content of Christian gospel is doctrinal
  - vi. 1 Timothy 1:8-11, sound doctrine affirms both God's righteous law and God's saving grace
  - vii. Ephesians 4:11-14, 2:19-22, connects apostles' doctrine as continuance of Christ's doctrine, now to be continued by Christ's church empowered by God the Holy Spirit
- b. "fellowship"
  - i. Its subject is Christ Jesus, its purpose is encouragement in the faith
  - ii. Luke 24:15; Romans 1:12; Philippians 1:5, 2:17; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 John 1:7
  - iii. Romans 16:17, connects "fellowship" with "apostles' doctrine"
- c. "breaking of bread"
  - i. Most likely a reference to the ordinance, but definitely includes the ordinance
  - ii. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, its content, its meaning
  - iii. Its frequency, in the early church, on a weekly basis, on the Lord's Day, Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2
  - iv. "breaking of bread" teaches "apostles' doctrine" in its observance, and meets the definition of "fellowship", thereby connecting it with both
- d. "prayers"
  - i. Both public and private in view, 1 Thessalonians 5:17
  - ii. Informed by "apostles' doctrine", is by definition "fellowship" with God, accompany "breaking of bread" in the sense of the (corporate yet personal approach to God, confession of sin, and holy meditation)
  - iii. Doctrinal basis for prayer, Ephesians 2:18
  - iv. The forms of prayer, from "Practical Christian Theology, Third Edition" by Floyd H. Barackman, Kregel, 1998: Holy Argument, Exodus 32:11-13, Expression of reliance, 2 Chronicles 14:11, Questions, Psalm 10:1, Confession of sin, Psalm 51:1-4, Submission, Isaiah 6:8, Complaint, Jonah 4:1-3, Fellowship, Luke 6:12, Praise, Acts 2:47, Petition, Romans 1:9-10, Expression of salvational faith, Romans 10:13, Intercession, Ephesians 6:18

15. Acts 3:1, “the hour of prayer, the ninth hour”, 3:00 PM
  - a. Bible precedent, Psalm 55:17, Daniel 6:10, 3x per day
  - b. Practice continued by early Christians, Didache, 3x Lord’s Prayer
  - c. Part of content of Acts 2:42, “prayers”
16. Acts 3:1-10, Healing of the Lame Man
  - a. Divine healing does not necessarily require faith as pre-requisite, modern day “word-faith” healers after the order of Oral Roberts are found false teachers
  - b. Other examples, those risen from the dead in the Gospels
17. 3:16, Purpose of supernatural healing
  - a. To bring those who witness it to saving faith
  - b. Note hypocrisy of those who will blame God but will not praise God (Job 1:21 the biblical attitude)
18. 3:17, “in ignorance”, Does this mean to be ignorant of God’s truth will excuse someone from accountability to God’s judgment?
  - a. Not excused from accountability to God (Romans 1:20-21)
  - b. Rather, without full knowledge and understanding of the gravity of the sin, namely crucifying the Lord of Glory and Prince of Life
19. 3:19, Does repentance precede conversion?
  - a. No, it accompanies conversion.
  - b. The natural man is not predisposed to repentance, it is not in the nature, requires a new nature (1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1,8-10)
  - c. Free will working with the sovereignty of God in time, Romans 8:29-30 gives the actual sequence
20. 3:20, How is Christ sent? Didn’t He already come?
  - a. Colossians 1:27, “Christ in you”, in the personal sense
21. 3:22-23, Identifies the Prophet in Deuteronomy 18:15-19 as Jesus Christ
  - a. Apologetic Significance: Muslims claim that this speaks of Muhammad
    - i. Deuteronomy written by Moses as the farewell address to Israel
    - ii. Context of “brethren” determines meaning, considering use of “brethren” in the Book notably 17:15, the Prophet is an Israelite, not some ethnic cousin
    - iii. In any event, Deuteronomy 34:10-12 clears up any confusion, as these things are true of Jesus but not Muhammad
22. Acts 3:25-26, Covenant (Replacement) Theology Refuted
  - a. Genesis 12:1-3; Galatians 3:26-29
  - b. There is an ethnic seed of Abraham, and also a spiritual seed of Abraham
  - c. Promises such as the land and future sacrificial system in the MK made to ethnic Israel have not yet been fulfilled
  - d. Genesis 15:6; Psalm 32:1, inherit spiritual promise of right standing before God based on faith alone
  - e. Genesis 6:16, “Israel of God” is the spiritual seed of Abraham

23. 4:1-3, The First Persecution of the Early Church, occurring quickly, very early on
  - a. Satan will attack quickly, and then wait for an “opportune time” (Luke 4:13)
  - b. What do the three groups in verse 1 have in common? Not all that much, except they had a vested interest in the power structure, and saw the gospel as a threat to that
    - i. Priests, the religious crowd, devout, seen as religious authorities
    - ii. Captain of the temple, the civil arm of the Jewish establishment
    - iii. Sadducees, did not believe in the resurrection (Matthew 22:23-33), majority of the Sanhedrin (meaning to sit together, basis was Exodus 24:1), theological liberals of their day, annihilationists, humanist outlook
  - c. Resurrection of Jesus and of all men essential point of the gospel
24. 4:4, A Great Soul Harvest
  - a. Is this cumulative for the entire day which began in Acts 3, or just from this most recent sermon? Unknown, disputed, nevertheless many saved, number does not include women and children
25. 4:5-12, How shall we respond when our faith is on trial?
  - a. Be bold, and stay to the truth
  - b. Peter “filled with the Holy Spirit” which was in him, also a view to speaking forth Scripture, which is prophecy (2 Peter 1:19-21)
  - c. Essential content of the gospel, v.10, Christ’s death, v.11 Christ our spiritual foundation (Ephesians 2:20), Jesus is God and Savior, by definition He must be both (Isaiah 43:11, 44:8)
26. 4:12, Are there many ways to heaven (or to God), or is Jesus the only way?
  - a. Text is emphatic, one God, one Way, Jesus is the only way
  - b. John 3:16, 8:24, 14:6; 1 Corinthians 3:11; 1 Timothy 2:5 all teach the same
27. 4:13, What type of education or training is necessary to be an effective Christian minister?
  - a. “they had been with Jesus” is first and foremost
  - b. Worldly or liberal seminary training can in fact be downright unprofitable
28. 4:14, Why does Luke point this out here?
  - a. This man was a living witness to the truth of the message (2 Corinthians 3:2-3)
29. 4:15-22, Under what circumstances is it okay to engage in civil disobedience?
  - a. General rule is Romans 13:1-7
  - b. Exceptions to the rule are found in Exodus 1:15-17; Acts 5:28-29, as here
30. 4:23-30, What can we learn about the content of prayer from this example?
  - a. “with one accord”, unity in corporate prayer
  - b. God exalted and hallowed as Creator
  - c. Praying Scripture is biblical
  - d. Jesus Christ’s purpose, plan, and work exalted
  - e. God’s plans are perfect, and cannot be thwarted, His constancy breeds confidence
  - f. Prayer for boldness to share God’s Word, opposition to this is sure to come
  - g. We should look with anticipation to God’s continual activity, with Jesus’ stamp of authority on it (“in Jesus’ Name” not a formula but an affirmation of His authority)

31. 4:31, What happened when the disciples prayed?
  - a. The place was shaken, God visited
  - b. They were filled with the Holy Spirit, God empowered for ministry (He will do this to the degree that we allow Him to, Cf. Ephesians 5:18)
  - c. They spoke the Word of God with boldness, They fulfilled the Great Commission
32. 4:32-37, What does this teach us about the early church? (Cf. 2:44-45)
  - a. Again, not prescribing communism, Communism is someone else (the government) taking what we have, Christian charity is us freely giving what we have.
  - b. Some necessity due to the persecution existing and impending
  - c. Our earthly treasure is spent according to what we treasure in our hearts (Matthew 6:19-21)
  - d. To the early church, multiplying souls for the kingdom was more important than multiplying "lands or houses"
  - e. Verse 36, meet Barnabas, who was given a new name. Every church needs encouragers. Became among the leaders of the early church, and was a companion of Paul (Acts 13:2)
33. 5:1-11, Ananias and Saphira
  - a. 5:1-2, sold property, donated part and kept part
  - b. 5:3-4, sin was not in so doing but in vowing before God to do something and failing to do it, then lying before God and the church to make themselves look good before men
    - i. Ecclesiastes 5:4-7, oaths to God binding, taken seriously
  - c. 5:3-4, proof of divinity of God the Holy Spirit, lying to the Holy Spirit=lying to God
  - d. Proof of the Personhood of the Holy Spirit, He can be lied to, and grieved (Ephesians 4:30)
  - e. 5:5-6, death of Ananias, Cf. 1 Corinthians 11:28-31, divine judgment of the death of the irreverent and hypocritical worshiper
  - f. 5:7-10, only thing dumber than lying to God (get caught 100% of the time) is to agree with another to do so, accountability within marriage, and the church
  - g. 5:1-11, Life Lessons
    - i. Making vows good, but consider carefully first
    - ii. They were an example to God's people, Scripture is full of examples good/bad
    - iii. Two of the purposes of church discipline: repentance and example (to others)
    - iv. Warning against half hearted discipleship
    - v. Sin of people pleasing (impressing men with "generosity")
34. 5:12-13
  - a. Purpose of miracles to confirm truth of God's message (Acts 2:22; Hebrews 2:3-4)
  - b. Miracles were apostolic and apparently not prevalent as general function by all
  - c. Solomon's porch, east side of temple compound, 1 Kings 7:6, rebuilt in part by Zerubbabel, again by Herod, favorite gathering place of Jesus (John 10:23) and Christians
35. 5:14, kingdom growth included "men and women", Galatians 3:28, equal access to salvation
36. 5:15-16, The Apostles and the Gift of Healing, temporary sign gift
  - a. "they were all healed"
  - b. Regardless of their faith or lack thereof

- c. Particular kind of healing is stressed here (spiritual oppression)
37. 5:17
- a. “the high priest”, Caiaphas, or possibly Annas
  - b. “Sadducees” the more vehement opponents to the Apostolic preaching
    - i. More vocal by virtue of their majority on the Sanhedrin
    - ii. Content of the preaching including the Resurrection
38. 5:18, nature of the arrest
- a. Greek: ‘to throw upon’, violent
  - b. “common prison”, with the rougher population
39. 5:19, “an angel”, a literal angel, ordinary reading of the passage and the context supports this
40. 5:20, Apply: Christian witness, God did not save you to be silent! Let us all speak the Word and proclaim the Gospel! God didn’t send an angel so they could go into hiding. What a shame when God’s people are easily silenced.
41. 5:21-25
- a. “early in the morning”, a little after 6 am, definitely before 9 am, crowd gathered there for the daily morning sacrifice (Numbers 28:1-8)
  - b. Prison is shut, guards are outside, Apostles had passed through the midst (Cf. Luke 4:28-30) with the help of an angel, and would now become repeat offenders
42. 5:26, this time “without violence”, in contrast to v.18, due to the more public setting
43. 5:27, a more “formal” trial before the Sanhedrin
44. 5:28, rebuke for disobeying the council (Acts 4:18)
- a. The “doctrine” is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, His doctrine must be learned and preached
  - b. Matthew 27:25, Christ’s blood is upon all those who reject the doctrine (sin of unbelief)
45. 5:29, only justification for civil disobedience (see notes on 4:15-21)
46. 5:30-32, essential gospel content presented simply and clearly
- a. Resurrection
  - b. Bodily Death by Crucifixion
  - c. Exaltation of Christ (Resurrection and Ascension)
  - d. “Prince”, Jesus’ Royal authority, elsewhere called “King”
  - e. “Savior”, Jesus’ Priestly authority and Office, office unique to God (Isaiah 45:21-25)
  - f. Repentance and Forgiveness of Sins, human and divine work which accompany salvation
  - g. God exists in Trinity, Father, Son, Spirit
47. 5:33, conviction but not belief, manifested by rage
48. 5:34, “Gamaliel”, Pharisee, member of the Sanhedrin, leader of a rabbinic school in Israel, well respected, Saul was one of his students (Acts 22:3)
49. 5:35-39, words of caution in dealings with the Apostles, recent examples of revolutionary and/or Messianic movements given
- a. Theudas, about 6 BC
  - b. Judas of Galilee, about 6 AD, a census subsequent to that of which Joseph and Mary were subject, assisted by a few Pharisees and prime point of objection was Rome’s excessive and unjust taxation (Josephus), giving rise to/prominence to the Zealot aka

Canaanite party in Israel (Matthew 10:4, Mark 3:18, one of Jesus' disciples was once one of these)

50. 5:40-42, the beating as a reminder to the Apostles of the cost of their continued preaching of Jesus Christ crucified and risen, but the cost was nothing compared to the Lord's value to them
  - a. We persevere in those activities which we truly believe in, and especially those which involve the most important truths
  - b. More to lose by becoming closet Christians than wounded ones (rewards in heaven)
51. 6:1-7, Seven Men Chosen to Serve
  - a. Verse 1, "multiplying", there were now 20,000 or more Christians, and the number was rapidly growing
  - b. Verse 1, "Hebrews" were Hebrew speaking Jewish Christians, "Hellenists" were Greek speaking Jewish Christians
  - c. Verse 1, "their widows were neglected", factions in the church, when the devil cannot attack from without (Acts 5:18,26), he will attack from within (here the church, apply to the family and our marriages)
  - d. Verses 1-2, "daily distribution...serve tables", disbursement of funds and food, "tables" may be literal tables and money tables
  - e. Verse 2, Was this the entire church, or representatives of the affected parties? Probably the latter in my view. Interpretations of this verse have been used to support the various specific practices of congregational church governance
    - i. Congregational Church Government, Democratic in nature, true democracy in its purest form is one person one vote, usually requires formal church membership or equivalent standard, does generally accept offices of 1 Timothy 3 however, each congregation is autonomous and not subject to any other ecclesiastical body
    - ii. Congregational Church Government, Republic in nature (the USA is a republic, not a Democracy, in the true of the word), governed primarily by representatives of the people, in the church e.g. Elders, Deacons, and other Boards established for specific purposes, does not necessarily require formal church membership or equivalent standard, each congregation is autonomous and not subject to any other ecclesiastical body
    - iii. Both generally (or ought to be) accountable to the Bible first, and Confession (or Statement) of Faith second as guidelines for Scripture interpretation, and bylaws third to address procedural and legal matters, accountability to the congregation is maintained in both of the aforementioned, but the second is better in line with Scripture as a whole (given this passage and 1 Timothy 3, if one rejects formal local church membership roll as biblical mandate)
  - f. Verse 3, "Seek out from among you", congregation selects from their own, specific method by which this was done is not specified
  - g. Verse 3, "seven men", in accord with Jewish tradition, what was required to manage official public business
  - h. Qualifications: good reputation, Spirit filled, godly wisdom

- i. Verse 3, “whom we may appoint over this business”, final approval of who was chosen rested with the Apostles, the leaders of the church
  - j. Verse 4, essential work of church elders, preaching and teaching (of Scripture, and godly doctrine), and prayer, apply: many good things, we must choose the best things
  - k. Verse 5, seven Hellenist Jews selected
  - l. Verse 6, Apostles preside over their appointment, laying of hands and prayer
  - m. Verse 7, Rapid growth of the church, apply: this often occurs when strife is handled in a fair and godly way
  - n. Were these the first Deacons (in terms of office)? No, or at least, one cannot prove this.
    - i. Argument for: language in verses 1-2, all male group
    - ii. Arguments against: Not called Deacons here or elsewhere (Acts 21:8), Work was temporary and Stephen and Philip quickly moved on to other work
    - iii. Passage is descriptive as to how the church dealt with a specific issue (1 Corinthians 14:40), the prescriptive passage is 1 Timothy 3:8-13
    - iv. Case Studies at Firm Foundation: Board of Directors, Deaconate, Women’s Ministry, Men’s Leadership Ministry
52. 6:8-15, Stephen accused of blasphemy
- a. Note similarities to the ministry, arrest, trial, and result to those of the Lord Jesus
  - b. Verse 8, sign gifts, to attest to the truth of his message (given in Chapter 7)
  - c. Verse 9, those who were well learned in the Scriptures, from areas known as centers of religious training
  - d. Verse 10, unbelievers, no matter how worldly wise or intelligent, confounded by the simplicity of the gospel (1 Corinthians 1:18-25)
  - e. Verse 11, they sought false witnesses, as was done regarding Jesus Christ
  - f. Verse 12, stirred up a mob, Stephen arrested
  - g. Verses 13-14, “false witnesses” against God’s truth, Stephen’s testimony was spun to imply great offense, but they were not blasphemy but truth
    - i. In what sense were the words true on these 2 points?
      - 1. Matthew 24:1-2
      - 2. Matthew 5:17-18; Hebrews 7:12; FOBO
  - h. Stephen’s face was “as the face of an angel”, when we are very near to God, our countenance reflects this (Exodus 34:29-35), becoming walking testimonies of the holiness and truth of God
53. 7:1-8, The Beginning of Stephen’s Testimony
- a. Verse 1, Caiaphas, or Annas
  - b. Verse 2, Cf. Genesis 11:27-32; Joshua 24:2-3
  - c. Verse 3, Cf. Genesis 12:1
  - d. Verses 4-5, Abraham’s inheritance was afar off (Hebrews 11:8-10), connections between Acts 7 and Hebrews 11, many of the same historical events, Acts 7 is God’s Redemptive History, while Hebrews 11 is God’s Redemptive History applied to a theme (faith)
  - e. Verse 6, Cf. Exodus 1:8-14
  - f. Verse 6, 400 years (Genesis 15:13), some see a contradiction here in the Bible, analysis:

- i. First, the review of the other text (Galatians 3:17 from Exodus 12:40, covers time frame from Genesis 46:1-4 as promise and Jacob's journey to Egypt to the Exodus in 1445)
        - ii. Response: Stephen does quote God's Words in Genesis 15:13
          - 1. Both may have used round numbers or:
          - 2. Had in mind a different time frame/start point or end point
    - g. 7:7, Compound Quote, Genesis 15:14; Exodus 3:12
    - h. 7:8, Covenant of Circumcision
      - i. Instituted in Genesis 17:1-14
      - ii. Does not equal salvation, as an 8 day old baby is unable to comprehend or express saving faith in God (Romans 2:25-29; Galatians 6:15), hence the argument for infant baptism imparting grace falls flat (in addition to this, baptism of babies is never commanded nor recorded in the NT)
      - iii. Identifies with God's covenant with national Israel, and is an outward act of the inward faith of the parents, but not salvific in the sense of unto salvation
    - i. 7:8, "The twelve patriarchs", sons of Jacob aka Israel, hence the twelve tribes of Israel (Genesis 35:23-26, names recorded, Joseph becomes Ephraim plus Manasseh. Levi does not have land inheritance, because the Lord is his inheritance)
- 54. 7:9-16, Joseph as an example of God's Plan of Redemptive History
  - a. 7:9, Cf. Genesis 37:26-28, "patriarchs" are the sons of Jacob
  - b. 7:10, summary statement of God's workings in the life of Joseph, specifically his exaltation in Genesis 41:39-41
  - c. 7:11-12, Cf. Genesis 41:56-57, 42:1
  - d. 7:13, "the second time:", Chapter 43, when Joseph's brothers return to Egypt with Benjamin
  - e. 7:14, "seventy five", Genesis 46:27 and Exodus 1:5 have "seventy", why the variance?
    - i. The "seventy five", in the Septuagint, counts the "sixty-six" in Genesis 46:26 plus Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim, Manasseh, and the 5 grandchildren of Joseph (Cf. Numbers 26:29,35)
  - f. 7:15-16, that is, as far as God's redemptive history had progressed to that time, God's plan of redemptive history is progressive, culminating in its fulfillment, the Ultimate Redeemer, Jesus Christ
- 55. 7:17-36, the next step in God's Plan of Redemptive History: Deliverance by Moses
  - a. A divinely inspired commentary of the events in Exodus through Stephen
  - b. 7:17, "the promise" in view encapsulates Genesis 12:1 (quoted in Acts 7:3) and Genesis 15:13-14 (quoted in Acts 7:7)
  - c. 7:17-18, Cf. Exodus 1:7-8
    - i. "knew" but did not regard or acknowledge in a positive sense as before
    - ii. Who was this Pharaoh? Possibly Ahmose, the first Egyptian Pharaoh of the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty, reigned in mid-1500's BC (Exodus was in 1445 BC, a date supported by Exodus 12:40, Judges 11:26; 1 Kings 6:1, and Acts 13:19-20, the Pharaoh at that time was possibly Amenhotep 2)

- d. 7:19, Pharaoh guilty of infanticide, Cf. Exodus 1:15-22
  - e. 7:20, beginning of the tree of Moses' life, Cf. Exodus 2:1-2
  - f. 7:21, "set out" on the ark, a box, here and in the case of Noah, a floating, watertight box, Cf. Exodus 2:3-10
  - g. 7:22, "wisdom of the Egyptians", worldly wisdom, astrology/astronomy, mathematics, reading/writing (hieroglyphics)
    - i. Worldly wisdom did not override Moses' faith in God
    - ii. It is possible to be learned and intelligent and come to Christ, though "not many" will (Cf. 1 Corinthians 1:26). God needs all walks of life, ages, abilities, a diverse kingdom
    - iii. Credit to Jochebed (Exodus 2:8-9, 6:20), godly maternal influence
  - h. 7:23, Moses' life broken down into 3 (40 year) periods, training, wilderness, leadership
    - i. Moses chose God and His people over the allures of the world (apply), discuss at what ages this crossroads is reached and how
  - i. 7:24-28, Moses had awareness of God's call on his life, but no one else understood
    - i. Note similarities with Christ on this point, as far as they go
  - j. 7:29, Cf. Exodus 2:15-22
    - i. "Midian", Ishmaelite territory, where Moses dwelt in relative obscurity 40 years
    - ii. Moses' father in law, Jethro aka Reuel, was a pagan priest
    - iii. Two sons were Gershom and Eliezer (Exodus 18:4)
  - k. 7:30-34, Cf. Exodus 3:5-10, the famous burning bush passage, the true God reveals Himself to Moses through theophany
  - l. 7:35-36, remember Stephen's theme, God's plan of redemptive history
    - i. Moses was rejected, yet through him God redeemed Israel from Egyptian bondage (7:2)
    - ii. Stephen is moving toward Christ, rejected by men, national Israel, yet became the Redeemer of Israel
56. 7:37-43, God's Redemptive Plan of History through Prophetic Ministry
- a. 7:37, Cf. Deuteronomy 18:15-18, although the Jews were acknowledging Moses as a prophet, they were not believing his "most important prophecy"
    - i. The Prophet would be like Moses, in that He would be a deliverer of Israel from bondage
    - ii. Of Moses' brethren, a Jew, not an Ishmaelite
    - iii. Speaking on God's authority
  - b. 7:38-41
    - i. Verse 38, "the Angel", Theophany, distinct from "angels" in verse 53
    - ii. Cf. Exodus 19, Moses received the Law
    - iii. Verse 38, "congregation" is "ekklesia", the public assembly, in other places translated "church", but this is the OT (no church until after Pentecost)
    - iv. Verse 39, Israel rejected the Law by words and actions, Cf. Numbers 14:1-4
    - v. Verses 40-41, Cf. Exodus 32:1,23, golden calf incident

- c. 7:42-43, quotes Amos 5:25-27, summary statement of Israel's rejection of prophetic revelation throughout her history
  - i. God had a redemptive plan for Israel.
  - ii. But Israel had a rebellious plan for God.
  - iii. Apply to our own lives (Cf. 2 Peter 3:9)
- 57. 7:44-50, God's Dwelling Place
  - a. Localized Presence in the Tabernacle in the wilderness (Exodus 40:34-38; Joshua 18:1)
  - b. Localized Presence in the Temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 8:14-21)
  - c. Omnipresence of God (7:49-50 quotes Isaiah 66:1-2)
  - d. Localized Presence in Jesus Christ (John 1:14)
  - e. Indwelling of His people by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16)
- 58. 7:51-53, Stephen rebukes the men of Israel
  - a. Verse 51, "uncircumcised in heart," excluded by unbelief, spiritual condition
  - b. Verses 51-52, stubborn rebellion against God and His messengers throughout Israel's history
  - c. Verse 53, angelic involvement in the giving of the Law, or used in the sense of "messengers" (Moses, Aaron, Joshua)
- 59. 7:54-60, Stephen is martyred
  - a. Verse 54, "cut to the heart," very different response than that of Acts 2:37!
    - i. Work of God the Holy Spirit, John 16:7-11
  - b. Verse 58, Saul who would become Apostle Paul
  - c. Verses 59-60, very similar to recorded sayings of Christ (Luke 23:34,46)
- 60. 8:1-4, attacks against the church were first outward, then inward, now outward again, the adversary of our souls is opportunistic (Cf. Luke 4:13; 1 Peter 5:8)
  - a. Persecution tends to the spread of the gospel
- 61. 8:5-8, Philip of Acts 6:5, the Evangelist, preaches Christ, miracles and healing ministry attests to the truth of his message (Hebrews 2:3-4)
- 62. 8:9-13
  - a. Verse 9, Simon uses dark arts to exalt self
  - b. Conflict of light and darkness (Isaiah 8:19-20)
  - c. Much written of Simon the Sorcerer in pseudopigrapha, and early church fathers, amounting to many dubious speculations
  - d. Simon "believed" and was "baptized," Does this mean he was saved?
    - i. Option 1, saved, but did not understand the faith beyond that
    - ii. Option 2, not saved, profession was false, although he believed the miracles, he did not believe upon Jesus by trusting Him in faith for all things
    - iii. Not an option, lost salvation, this is nowhere in the context, and would contradict clear biblical teachings like John 5:24, 10:28, Ephesians 1:13, etc...
- 63. 8:14-17, The Samaritan Pentecost
  - a. The Holy Spirit comes upon them through the Apostolic ministry (Cf. Ephesians 2:20)
- 64. 8:18-25, Simon the Sorcerer's sin
  - a. Verses 18-20, wanted to buy the gift of the Holy Spirit, namely of miracles

- b. Verse 21, seems to imply that Simon was not truly saved
  - c. Verses 22-24, Does this mean he was saved?
    - i. Option 1, saved, and restored by repenting of sin done in ignorance
    - ii. Option 2, not previously saved, gets saved here
    - iii. Option 3, not previously saved, superficial repentance, still not saved
  - d. Verse 25, Cf. 8:14-15, Peter and John in view here
65. 8:26-31, Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch, setting the stage
- a. "an angel", unnamed, distinct from "The Angel", Cf. Hebrews 1:14
  - b. "Jerusalem to Gaza", Philip was in Samaria in 8:5, now in Judea
  - c. "This is desert", not the road well traveled, sometimes God calls us to travel such roads for very specific purposes
  - d. "Ethiopia", in NE Africa
  - e. "eunuch", one who cannot marry (generally meaning emasculated and therefore impotent), common practice for monarchs to employ eunuchs so as to secure their first loyalty (e.g. Isaiah 39:7; Daniel 1:3-6)
    - i. On Celibacy, Matthew 19:10-12; 1 Corinthians 7:32-35; 1 Timothy 4:1-3, 1 Timothy 3:2, 1 Corinthians 7:1-2, singleness a blessing, but is not to ever be required by ecclesiastical statute, as applied by Rome today
  - f. "great authority", as treasurer
  - g. "Candace the queen of the Ethiopians", a dynastic title, like Pharaoh
  - h. "had come to Jerusalem to worship", for an appointed feast
    - i. He was Gentile proselyte, a true worshiper of God
    - ii. Beginning of the fulfillment of Zephaniah 3:10
    - iii. What about Deuteronomy 23:1? Isaiah 56:3-5 is applied as a Gentile salvation passage, which strongly argues against a Jewish ethnicity for this man.
  - i. "returning", also traveling south on the desert road
  - j. "reading Isaiah the prophet", relatively free from distraction, using his time wisely to search the Word of God
  - k. "The Spirit said", divine direction, "bat kol" is not normative following transition phase
  - l. Apply, the need for sound Bible teaching and good Bible Study, one on one and group
    - i. Requires gifted teachers willing to put in the time
    - ii. Requires students willing to learn
    - iii. Analogy to plastering project: have materials, have time, but if I don't know how to do it, I will do it wrong or haphazard, or give up altogether
66. 8:32-40, The Christian Conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch
- a. 8:32-33, quotes Isaiah 53:7-8, note variances due to Septuagint (Greek) vs. Hebrew text
    - i. Apply, in such cases even the inspired writers considered both the Jewish text and the Greek text the Word of God, case in point Isaiah 61:1-2, Luke 4:18-19
  - b. 8:34, a wide open door to share Christ, the man was looking for truth as to identity of Messiah, he only needed to be told, some Isaiah, some David, most Messiah
    - i. Apply: many looking for spiritual truth, will you give the answer/deliver the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:16)?

- c. 8:35, “beginning at this Scripture”, where the man was at
  - d. “preached Jesus to him”, the life saving message, note 1 Corinthians 2:14 and Ephesians 2:1, the futility of preaching anything else to an unconverted person
  - e. For further reference, <http://www.firmfoundationri.com/listentosermons.html>, 3/5/17.
  - f. 8:36, the eunuch had been cut to the heart, Philip had apparently mentioned water baptism in their talk, the order in Acts 2:37-38 is conversion (“cut to the heart”) and then water baptism
  - g. 8:37, belief is required prior to water baptism, refutes the false doctrine of baptismal regeneration
  - h. Romans 10:9 is seen in action here in the narrative
  - i. 8:39, the evangelist there for the season, now the man must walk with Christ without his human agency, Apply: people come and go, but God remains
  - j. “rejoicing”, the joy of salvation, at conversion here, at maturity as in 1 Peter 1:8, Psalm 51:12 speaks of joy needing to be continually restored through confession, repentance, communion, and sanctification
  - k. 8:40, “Azotus”, between Gaza and Jerusalem, and Philip continued his missionary tour in a northward direction in populated areas “till he came to Caesarea.”
67. 9:1-2
- a. “the high priest”, still Caiaphas, same as in Jesus’ day (his attitude, John 11:49-50)
  - b. “synagogues of Damascus”, very large Jewish population in this capital city of Syria in that day, estimated around 40,000 (relying on Josephus’ Antiquities)
  - c. “the Way”, possibly from John 14:6, called such before they were called “Christians” (Acts 11:26)
  - d. “bound to Jerusalem”, to stand trial before the religious authorities
68. 9:3-9, Saul converted on the road to Damascus
- a. God’s light in verse 3, the Shekinah Glory, God’s voice in verse 4, the Bat Kol
  - b. “fell to the ground”, probably prostrate (Cf. Philippians 2:9-11, applied)
  - c. Verse 5, the identity of the Lord is “Jesus”
  - d. “kick against the goads”, a word picture common to everyday life
  - e. Verse 6, conversion, and now devoted service, the way the order of things ought to be for all of us, but is only true of very few, Luke 9:23, Romans 12:1-2, what about you?
  - f. Verse 7, a voice heard, but not directed to them in the same way
  - g. Verse 8-9, Saul struck blind but now he sees! (Cf. John 9:40-41, applied)
  - h. Seeing the Resurrected Jesus qualifies Paul as an Apostle (1 Corinthians 15:1-9)
69. 9:10-19
- a. Ananias, of whom nothing else is known
  - b. Verses 13-14, excuses or legitimate fear? Here, the former.
  - c. Verse 15, Apostle to the Gentiles listed first, but also to the Jews (Book of Galatians)
  - d. Note in verse 15, Paul is “chosen” for particular works
  - e. Verse 18, immediate cure

- f. "after some days", 3 years inclusive, Galatians 1:15-24
- 70. 9:20-22, Saul preaches Christ
  - a. "Immediately", GC is a present imperative command, the folly of waiting for further signs or instructions to fulfill basic Christian duty to become a disciple and evangelist
  - b. "in the synagogues", the public assembly gathered for religious purposes, Jesus also preached in the synagogues
  - c. "Christ" and "Son of God" are the same Person, proven here
  - d. Spiritual growth through use, Hebrews 5:14
- 71. 9:23-25, Saul escapes death
  - a. Cf. 2 Corinthians 11:32-33
  - b. Matthew 23:31-36, especially verse 34, which becomes the experience of Paul
- 72. 9:26-31, Saul at Jerusalem
  - a. Verse 26, suspicion unfounded, did not have bat kol benefit as Ananias did
  - b. Verse 28, fellowship with the other Apostles
  - c. Verse 29, holy boldness before Hellenist Jews, those who were formerly allied with him in the persecution of Stephen, Acts 7:9-12 recalled
  - d. Churches should have "peace" and be "edified", whether in the midst of persecution or plenty and political freedom, church "culture" should intentionally include these as well as a healthy fear of God and Spirit comfort, God can bless such as these.
- 73. 9:32-35, Aeneas healed
  - a. Verse 32, "all parts of the country" include those noted in verse 31
  - b. Paralytic healed, by Jesus Christ, through the Apostolic agency, confirming the message and the identity of the Healer (Cf. Mark 2:5-12; Acts 2:22; Hebrews 2:3-4)
- 74. 9:36-43, Dorcas restored to life, Character study of this devout woman
  - a. Peter empowered by the Spirit to raise this dead woman back to life
  - b. Attesting miracle was the cause of belief and salvation for many
  - c. Interesting parallel, Mark 5:41, "Talitha, cumi", here, "Tabitha, cumi"
  - d. Dorcas is Greek, Tabitha is a form of the Hebrew, her name means "gazelle", which was a symbol of beauty (Cf. Song of Solomon 2:9, 4:5)
  - e. Home was in Joppa, a seaport town
    - i. Gateway of Ancient Palestine, Central Israel on the Great Sea
    - ii. Tribal land of Dan (Cf. Judges 5:17)
    - iii. Port of commerce, 2 Chronicles 2:16
    - iv. Port where Jonah boarded the ship bound for Tarsus, Jonah 1:3
  - f. Woman of great Christian faith
    - i. Verse 36, Christian "disciple"
    - ii. "full of good works" which flowed from her faith, Ephesians 2:8-10
    - iii. "charitable deeds" proved the genuineness of her faith, James 2:14-26
    - iv. Verse 39, "widows" were ministered to by Dorcas (James 1:27; Cf. Matthew 25:34-40 applied)
    - v. Dorcas' motive in her philanthropy, to direct others to saving faith in Jesus Christ, as evidenced by verses 37-38

- vi. Greatly mourned in death, Psalm 116:15
- vii. Raised from the dead, which will one day be reality for all the saints
- viii. Result of her “behind the scenes” ministry was revival
- ix. Profitable to close this section by reading/praying entire Psalm 11

75. 10:1

- a. “Caesarea”, Roman capital of Judea, by the sea, 32 miles north of Joppa, built by Herod the Great, called “Little Rome”
- b. “Cornelius”, common Roman name, a Gentile
- c. “centurion”, Roman officer over 100 soldiers
  - i. Notable centurions, Matthew 8:5-8, 27:54; Acts 27:1
- d. “Italian Regiment”
  - i. Cohort (about 500 men) contained regiments (‘centuries’)
  - ii. “Italian”, meaning native born citizen of Italy (Rome and its environs), these were considered the most loyal soldiers (through “probatio” Latin: testing)
  - iii. Cohort was part of a Legion (3000 to 6000 men), Mark 5:9 notes only 2000, numbers of men in these units was variable

76. 10:2-8

- a. “devout man” both at home and at work, apply this to self
- b. “alms”, works resulting from saving faith, Ephesians 2:8-10, OT saint up to this point, prior to hearing the gospel preached, Acts as transitional (Cf. Acts 19:1-4) period in which Old Testament saints were grafted into the NT covenant upon hearing and believing the gospel
- c. “the people”, the Jews
- d. “prayed to God always”, both privately and at the appointed prayer times
  - i. Morning prayer, afternoon prayer, evening prayer (Cf. Daniel 6:10-11)
- e. Verse 3, “ninth hour”, 3 pm
- f. “an angel”, notice “lord” not in caps, this is a created messenger angel
- g. Content of Cornelius’ prayers, for more light, insight into his Messianic hope, which he shared with the Jewish people, note that spiritually affinity trumps ethnic affinity for him and for the true believer
- h. “send men to Joppa”, 32 miles south, a day’s journey
- i. Verse 7, “a devout soldier”, notice the effect of the godly commander on those in his charge, Matthew 5:13-16 applied to the workplace as well as family and neighborhood
- j. Verse 8, lastly, the faithful obedience, evidence of his love for God, Cf. John 14:23

77. 10:9-16

- a. Peter’s prayer, at noon, “the sixth hour”
- b. Peter’s trance/vision seems to come into conflict with Leviticus 11:44-47
- c. Bat Kol comes in unmistakably to Peter
- d. “Not so, Lord” an interesting response!
- e. “What God has cleansed” through the blood of His Son, Matthew 5:18, Hebrews 7:12 (FOBO, ceremonial law no longer in effect, Cf. Romans 14:1-3 in this context)

- f. Verse 16, “three times”, a familiar motif in the life of Peter!
  - g. Larger truth being emphasized here, Gentiles to be grafted into the Kingdom of God in the NT economy (in the church age)
  - h. Gentiles known as dogs, connotation being they are unclean (Cf. Leviticus 11:27; Matthew 7:6, 15:27; Revelation 22:15)
78. 10:17-23
- a. Cornelius’ men (v.7) arrive late in the day to Joppa, Simon the Tanner’s house
  - b. Verse 18-20, divine direction through the bat kol to Simon Peter (biblical/theological origin of bat kol, Deuteronomy 4:12)
  - c. Verses 21-22, Cornelius had also had a heavenly communication, a highly unusual thing for a Gentile because of Romans 3:2, exceptions are Balaam and Nebuchadnezzar
  - d. Verse 23, the day being far spent, offered hospitality, on the next day Peter and some (Jewish) brethren begin the journey north
79. 10:24-33
- a. Verses 24,27, Peter finds a large reception
  - b. Verses 25-26, Cornelius’s misguided worship (Cf. Revelation 19:10, Contrasted with Matthew 8:2, 9:18, 14:33, 15:25, 28:9; Mark 5:6; John 9:38, 20:28-29)
  - c. Verse 28, lesson learned from the vision in 10:9-16
  - d. Verses 29-33, Cornelius recounts the answer to prayer and angelic direction
    - i. God has brought this mixed assembly together, having broken down potential initial objections by all parties, that it might be attested to that Gentiles will also become partakers in the Spirit regarding God’s salvation
80. 10:34-43, Peter’s Caesarean Sermon (11 essential elements/doctrines re: gospel preaching)
- a. Universal call, Isaiah 45:22, 55:1
  - b. Christ the Word, John 1:1-3
  - c. Peace through Christ to all, Ephesians 2:14-18
  - d. Repentance, Luke 3:3
  - e. Attesting Works and Signs, Acts 2:22
  - f. Christ’s Crucifixion, Luke 23:33; 1 Corinthians 15:3
  - g. Christ’s Resurrection as credible fact, 1 Corinthians 15:4-8
  - h. Great Commission, Mark 16:15
  - i. Christ the Judge, Isaiah 11:4; Matthew 25:32; John 5:22; Acts 17:31; Romans 14:10; 2 Timothy 4:1; 1 Peter 4:5, “Living and the dead” encompasses all, Hebrews 9:27-28
  - j. OT witness of Christ (context), John 5:39; Luke 24:27
  - k. Remission, or forgiveness, of sins, Psalm 32:1, 65:3, 103:3; Isaiah 43:25; Hebrews 9:22 stresses the blood of Christ as the ultimate payment for our sins
81. 10:44-48
- a. Holy Spirit falls upon the Gentiles, third stage of Pentecost, about 7 years after the events of Acts 2
  - b. Tongues as a sign, connecting to Acts 2:4
  - c. “heard the word” and “believed”, Cf. Romans 10:6-13

- d. These believers who had now been grafted into the New Covenant through belief in Jesus as Messiah (verse 45) are water baptized (verse 47)
  - e. 1 Corinthians 12:13, God gets the last word.
82. 11:1
- a. News of the Holy Spirit falling upon the Gentiles spread quickly
  - b. Isaiah 42:1-6 fulfilled
  - c. Receiving the word of God=Receiving Christ (Revelation 19:13)
83. 11:2-3
- a. Peter censured by “those of the circumcision”, Jewish Christians, including other leaders in the early church, showing that he had no ‘papal’ autocratic authority
  - b. Ethnic prejudices went deeper than those against Samaritans (Cf. 8:14-15)
    - i. Note one race, the human race, Acts 17:26
  - c. General difficulty in changing their thinking despite (Cf. 82a, *ibid*), further the words of Christ disputed their thinking (Luke 4:25-27)
84. 11:4-15, the recounting of the events of Acts 10
- a. Divine work emphasized through and through
  - b. Verse 14, Cf. Acts 16:31, in this case there was household salvation, but it is refuted as a universal doctrine throughout Scripture, notably in Ezekiel 18:20
  - c. Verse 15, Compare Acts 2:4 and 10:46 in light of Acts 2:3-4
85. 11:16
- a. Cf. Acts 1:5; Matthew 3:11-12
    - i. Baptism as identification with something (repentance, death and resurrection of Christ) and someone (God the Holy Spirit and therefore God the Son and God the Father, Cf. John 15:26)
86. 11:17
- a. Cf. Acts 5:38-39, applied
  - b. Note the gift is the same, providing the divine stamp of attestation
87. 11:18
- a. Willingness of the Jewish church to admit that their thinking was wrong, apply to self
  - b. This (11:1-18) is the beginning of the fulfillment of Zephaniah 3:9-11
88. 11:19-26
- a. Verse 19, Cf. Acts 7
  - b. “Phoenicia”, “Cyprus”, coastal areas mostly Gentile but with substantial Jewish minority populations
  - c. “Jews only” places this section before Acts 10, chronologically
  - d. “Antioch”, that is, Antioch of Syria, 300 miles north of Jerusalem
    - i. Biblical archaeology, an ancient cup found there which some believe to be the “Holy Grail”, the cup that Jesus and His disciples used at the Last Supper, note the value but also the dangers of trust in biblical artifacts
  - e. Verse 20, “Hellenists” were Greek speaking Jews/proselytes
  - f. “preaching the Lord Jesus”, the main thing! I would that all churches would make this the main thing! (Discuss, why it is often not the main thing in professing Christendom)

- g. Verse 22, to ensure that biblical revival is not compromised (Galatians 1:6-7; Jude 3)
  - h. Verses 23-24, Barnabas (Cf. 4:36), encouragers with the ability to see the grace of God and sow to the Spirit wanted
  - i. 11:25-26, to fulfill Ephesians 4:11-16, which is the goal of the Christian minister
  - j. "first called Christians in Antioch"
    - i. Imitators of Christ, Cf. 1 Corinthians 11:1
    - ii. Did they first call themselves this, or were they first called so by others, disputed, but in any event both were true in their case, apply to self
    - iii. Isaiah 62:2 fulfilled
89. 11:27-30
- a. "Agabus", Cf. 21:10-11, the prophet, famine in the days of Claudius
  - b. "Caesar Claudius", Roman Emperor who reigned from 41-54 AD
  - c. Divine preservation reminiscent of that in Joseph's day, Cf. Genesis 41
90. 12:1-4
- a. Herod Agrippa 1, son of Aristobulus and grandson of Herod the Great
  - b. Up until this time there was religious persecution, now civil persecution begins
  - c. 12:2, James the Apostle, brother of John, son of Zebedee, of the inner circle, those who witnessed the Transfiguration
    - i. First Apostle to be martyred
    - ii. He knew the gospel to be true, being a witness to the Lord's Resurrection
    - iii. He was willing to die for his faith, will you live for yours?
  - d. 12:3, Herod's poll numbers went up, so he continues the persecution
  - e. 12:4, "four squads" or "quaterions", 16 soldiers
  - f. "after Passover" the correct rendering, not "after Easter" as some of the older translations have it, nobody was celebrating Easter in those days!
91. 12:5, "constant prayer", Cf. Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; James 5:16
- a. What should the church be doing? Internally, praying, as here, externally, preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as in 11:20. Do you do this? Does the local church do this?
92. 12:6-10, Peter freed from prison by an angel (unnamed) in answer to the prayers of the church
93. 12:11-17
- a. 12:12, "John Mark", human author of the Gospel of Mark
  - b. 12:13,15, the failure to believe that God will answer prayers specifically (and sometimes, but not as often as we would like, swiftly), Mark 10:27
  - c. 12:17, "James" here is probably the half brother of the Lord, Cf. 15:13, James 1:1
94. 12:18-19, the escape of Peter causes excitement
- a. Roman soldiers put to death, according to Roman law, all 16 of them (ibid, 12:4)
  - b. "down from Judea to Caesarea", even though it was north, everything from Jerusalem outward was considered "down" in reference to God's holy hill (Cf. Psalm 24:3, Psalm 120, "song of ascents" in the title of many latter Psalms)
95. 12:20-25

- a. Reason for the anger unknown, Tyre and Sidon in the northern regions
  - b. As political and economic dependents, Herod is unduly flattered
  - c. Proverbs 29:5 is fulfilled according to the Doctrine of Analogy
  - d. 12:23, Cf. Leviticus 10:3 in its context, Herod knew better, The year, AD 44
    - i. Precludes RC claim that Peter served 25 years in Rome as the first pope, Cf. Acts 15:7; 1 Corinthians 9:5; Colossians 4:11; 1 Peter 5:13
  - e. 12:24-25, the gospel continues its effect despite the civil persecution, which will begin to spread and intensify throughout the rest of the Book of Acts
96. 13:1-3
- a. "Antioch", Cf. 11:19-27, *ibid.*, 300 miles north of Jerusalem
  - b. 13:1, note the diversity of these leaders of the early church, Discuss: Does the remnant of Bible-believing churches reflect this? Or do they tend to align by age, color, and race?
  - c. 13:2, "The Holy Spirit said", evidence of His Personhood (He is not merely a "force")
    - i. Speaking as divine call is evidence of His Deity, His Divine Personhood
    - ii. Cf. Acts 5:3-4; Romans 8:16; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13, evidence of His Deity
  - d. Fasting and Prayer before commissioning for the First Missionary Journey (13:4-15:35)
97. 13:4-12
- a. 13:4-15:35 records the events of Paul's First Missionary Journey, the evangelization of Asia Minor
  - b. 13:4, 15 miles west of Antioch to the coast of the Great Sea
  - c. 13:5, "John" is John Mark
  - d. "sorcerer...false prophet", Cf. Deuteronomy 13:1-3, 18:9-22; Isaiah 8:19-20; Revelation 21:8
  - e. Misnomers, "Bar-Jesus" is son of Jesus, "Elymas" is wise man
  - f. 13:7, intelligence and spirituality (Christianity) not mutually exclusive
  - g. 13:9-10, Cf. Ephesians 4:26-27, 5:11, righteous anger, exposing heresy
  - h. 13:12, miracle attested to the truth of Paul's message
98. 13:13-16
- a. Synagogue service, the Law read, expounded upon by men, sample order of service:
    - i. Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4), prescribed prayers, Scripture readings (Law, Prophets), Sermon (By invitation of the elders, often by a visiting rabbi)
  - b. Paul accepts the open door to preach the gospel (Cf. 1 Corinthians 16:9)
99. 13:17-41, Paul's Pisidian Sermon (Cf. Acts 13:14)
- a. 13:17-22, OT Exposition, Sermon Point #1
    - i. Verse 17, Patriarchs chosen (beginning with Genesis 12), the Exodus
    - ii. Verse 18, Forty years wilderness wanderings, Book of Numbers
    - iii. Verse 19, Seven nations as noted in Deuteronomy 7:1
    - iv. Verse 20, Fourteen Judges (Samuel Inclusive), 450 years the subject of much debate as only about 330 years are covered (1380-1050), preferred explanation is that the 450 includes concurrent judgeships of Shamgar, Eli, Samuel, and Abdon

- v. Verse 21, 1 Samuel 8, Saul King of Israel, 1051-1011 BC
- vi. Verse 22, King David, Cf. 1 Samuel 15:23, 16:13; Psalm 89:20; Hosea 13:11
- b. 13:23-29, Jesus the Promised Messiah, Sermon Point #2
  - i. Verse 23, David's "seed"; Cf. 1 Chron 17:11-14; Matthew 1:1,21, Jesus -"Savior"
  - ii. Verse 24, John the Baptist, Luke 3:3
  - iii. Verse 25, John's Testimony, Mark 1:7
  - iv. Verses 26-27, John 1:11, 4:22; Matthew 23:32
  - v. Verse 28, His Death, Matthew 27:22-23
  - vi. Verse 29, His burial, Matthew 27:57-61
- c. 13:30-37, Christ's Resurrection
  - i. Verse 30, His Resurrection, Matthew 28:6, Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4
  - ii. Verse 31, Acts 1:3
  - iii. Verse 32, Beginning with Genesis 3:15, 12:1-3, etc...
  - iv. Verse 33, Son of God, Psalm 2:7; Cf. Proverbs 30:4; Hebrews 1:5 with context
  - v. Verse 34, Resurrection the basis for the New Covenant, Isaiah 55:3
  - vi. Verse 35, Psalm 16:10
  - vii. Verse 36, David though great was mortal, Peter also points out in Acts 2:29, point is that we cannot trust in dead men for salvation but for the Living God!
  - viii. Verse 37, bodily resurrection of Christ clearly taught here
- d. 13:38-41, Conclusion
  - i. Verse 38, Isaiah 43:25; Mark 2:7, forgiveness of sins is divine prerogative, and God is now exercising it through Jesus Christ his Son
  - ii. Verse 39, justification not by law but by faith, Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; belief as the requirement for salvation, an exhortation to do so, call to decision
  - iii. Verses 40-41, an earnest warning for rejecting the gospel, Habakkuk 1:5
- e. Considerations of this sermon
  - i. Gospel of Jesus Christ preached, belief in faith in His Work
  - ii. Essential objective truths set forth, with Scripture support
  - iii. Very theological discourse, sermons should be theological in nature
  - iv. Sermon builds upon itself point by point, as does the Bible, and the Christian life in general, Uses OT and NT both in complementary fashion
  - v. Call to decision on the part of the hearers, nowhere for them to go but to accept or reject, very "black and white", no allowance for "competing truths"
- 100. 13:42-52, Results of the Pisidian Sermon
  - a. 13:42-43, a great commotion caused by the proclamation that Jesus is Messiah
    - i. Synagogue dismissal was charged, some wishing to hear more
    - ii. Note that Jews were rejecting the message, but Gentiles were receiving it, Luke 21:24; Romans 11:11-12
    - iii. "continue in the grace of God", Galatians 5:1
  - b. 13:44-45
    - i. "word of God" is the same as the gospel presented in Acts 13:17-41
    - ii. "filled with envy" of the attention that other preachers got, let us apply

- iii. “contradicting and blaspheming” the truth of the gospel and the work of God the Holy Spirit
  - c. 13:46-48, *ibid.* 100aii
    - i. “appointed” in verse 48 is from the Greek “tasso”, meaning to place in order, arrange, appoint, also used of a place (Matthew 28:16), of appointments to civil authority (Luke 7:8), and as here appointments of God (Romans 13:1)
      - 1. It is the last of these which correlate this verse to the doctrine of election, deniers explain it away at own risk, as they do with Ephesians 1:4 and 2 Thessalonians 2:13
      - 2. Explanation in light of Acts 17:30 (where free will is emphasized) is that the first is the determinative factor of personal salvation based on Romans 3:11
  - d. 13:49-52, Paul and Barnabas driven from Antioch of Pisidia to Iconium (a few miles to the southeast), but not before many people came to accept Jesus Christ and His gospel
101. 14:1-4, Paul and Barnabas in Iconium
- a. 14:1-2, similar responses to those at Antioch in Pisidia
  - b. 14:3, attesting signs and miracles done there
102. 14:5-22, “Preaching the Good News to Lystra”, paper in Articles and Topics
- a. Apologetic significance, 1 Peter 3:15
  - b. 14:5-6, open and closed doors, Matthew 10:11-14; 1 Corinthians 16:9
  - c. 14:7, gospel substance, Acts 4:12, 10:34-43, *ibid.*
  - d. 14:8-10, the man’s heart was prepared ahead of time, “he had faith to be healed” (concept of Hebrews 11:6 applied)
  - e. 14:11-13, fitting the gospel into one’s existing worldview, the danger of doing so is that one may believe “a different gospel”, always room for ‘one more god’ in polytheism
  - f. 14:14-18, God’s revelation through creation, Romans 1:20, the difficulty of confronting old habits and false religious thinking and beliefs (note examples, discuss), patience in evangelism and discipleship enjoined
  - g. 14:19-21, Romans 10:14-15; Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Corinthians 9:16-17
  - h. 14:22a, establishing in the faith as the goal of discipleship, follow up required
  - i. 14:22b, John 16:33, “kingdom of God” a reference to the final stage of salvation, glorification (Cf. Romans 8:33-39)
  - j. Similarities between Lystra and Woonsocket noted, Ecclesiastes 1:9
103. 14:23, “appointed elders in every church”
- a. Descriptive, not strictly prescriptive in the sense of a mandate for Episcopal government, cannot mean apostolic succession, although such oversight was necessary during this transitional period of history (Ephesians 2:20)

- b. Two NT offices, elders and deacons, Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3
  - c. Acts 20:17,28, elders=overseers=bishops, not distinct offices but interchangeably used of the same office
  - d. Qualification of elders, 1 Timothy 3:1-7
  - e. “pastors” denotes a primary function of an elder, hence the title
  - f. Succession of the ruling elders in the synagogues, as precedent, implies public gatherings beyond homes just as the word translated church does
  - g. Plurality of elders within a city, arguably within a congregation (desirable)
  - h. Elders without ranks, 1 Peter 5:1
  - i. Invisible “church” made up of all true believers, visible “church” made up of those who profess faith in Jesus Christ, believers are to be both (Matthew 16:16-18; 2 Corinthians 5:17-18; Hebrews 10:24-25; Matthew 5:14-16)
104. 14:24-28, the return to Antioch
- a. Time of rejoicing, children of God had been born
  - b. 14:28, chronology
    - i. Acts 12, death of Herod, 44 AD
    - ii. First Missionary Journey, 45-48 AD
    - iii. “a long time”, 48-50 AD
105. 15:1-5, Dissension about circumcision, the timing is 50-51 AD
- a. “down from Judea,” everything is “down from there, even though they came to Antioch, which is north (Note titles in Psalm 120, 121, etc...)”
  - b. 15:1, circumcision as ceremonial law, perfect but not binding in the NT economy (civil and ceremonial law not binding, moral law is binding and repeated), but the power of the Law overcome by God’s grace through Christ Jesus
  - c. 15:1, “custom of Moses” also implies observance of the oral law (traditions of the fathers commonly held by Jews of the day to be oral commands of Moses)
  - d. The good state of the church (Acts 14:26-28) is disrupted, as the devil and unwitting prideful men are wont to do, “dissension and dispute” caused by (Romans 16:17), the necessary response of the church when faced with false doctrine (Acts 20:28-32; Jude 3)
  - e. 15:2, “up to Jerusalem,” *ibid* 105a, some “apostles” were in Jerusalem
    - i. Jerusalem the center of the Jewish Christian Church, Peter and James
    - ii. Antioch the center of the Gentile Christian Church, Paul and Barnabas
  - f. 15:3, not missing opportunity to preach the gospel on the way (let us apply)
  - g. 15:4-5, reception warm and joyous, but opposition awaited from those Pharisees who believed in Jesus as Messiah who would add works to faith for salvation—they should have known better (Genesis 15:6; Habbakuk 2:4)
  - h. Apply: preconceptions brought to the table when we convert to Christ
  - i. Apply: let us learn the clear presentation of the Gospel of John 1:12, 3:16, 5:24, as well as Acts 16:30-31 and Ephesians 2:8-10

- j. Apply: beware of adulterations to the Gospel (works, traditions, baptisms, etc...added)
  - k. Cf. Galatians 2:1-10 as a parallel passage to Acts 15 account, told from Paul's unique perspective rather than Luke's unique perspective
106. 15:6-11, The Jerusalem Council Convenes, Peter Addresses the Council
- a. Verse 6, plurality of church government
  - b. Verses 7-9, Cf. Acts 10:44-48
  - c. Verse 10-11, the Law could only condemn but God's grace and the reciprocal side of the same coin (His mercy) saves, Cf. James 2:10-13; Galatians 3:22-29 applied
107. 15:12-18, James (the half-brother of our Lord) Addresses the Council
- a. Testimony of Paul and Barnabas is heard and accepted, having been attested to by "many miracles and wonders" that could not be disputed
  - b. Amos 9:11-12 quoted, probably from the Septuagint, difficulty is that the Amos passage has a view to the Second Advent
    - i. Fulfillment in type, a foretaste of that which is to come (Cf. Acts 2:17-21)
    - ii. "the prophets agree," the consistency of God's salvation program throughout all ages and dispensations
  - c. Verse 18, emphasizes God's foreknowledge and beautiful purpose from of old, as well as His providence in redemptive history, Acts days being a pivotal time of this
108. 15:16, Cf. Amos 9:11, Special Study, Rebuilding the Tabernacle of David
- a. Meaning in Context: The House of David has been restored to its throne, which rightfully belongs to David's dynastic house by genealogy (Genesis 49:10). It is an eternal dynasty (1 Chronicles 17:11-14). "Tabernacle of David" is the 'House of David.' It is a temporary house, in that all things on earth are passing away. It is also an eternal house, for all things are today, and ever shall be, under the sovereign dominion of King Jesus.
  - b. Aren't believers the tabernacle today? No, and this is not at all what this text is saying in context. Believers, however, are said to be temples of God, meaning that they are God's Holy Dwelling Place by virtue of the fact that God the Holy Spirit has claimed the spirit of every Christian as His own (1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 3:17). Because the spirit of the believer is inextricably linked to God the Holy Spirit, and the spirit still dwells within the body, sin committed in the body is an affront to God's holiness (imputed) which dwells within.
  - c. What then is the Tabernacle? It was the place of God's presence on earth (Exodus 25:8). It was to be entered through the door (Exodus 26:36; John 10:9). It was the place where men went to meet God (Exodus 25-31, 35-40). It was an instructive type ("shadow") of the Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 8:5, 9:1-5). Moses' Tabernacle was also a "copy" of the heavenly Tabernacle (Hebrews 8:2, 9:11; Revelation 11:19). In Jesus Christ's first Advent, God came down to meet men and "tabernacled" among us (John 1:14). This was the beginning of the fulfillment of the Messianic Glory spoken of by Amos the prophet in

our text. The final fulfillment is at His Second Advent (Coming), recorded in Revelation 21:3.

- d. Is there a relation between the reference in our text to the Tabernacle of David and the Feast of Tabernacles? Not primarily. The main reference is to the Davidic Covenant made in 1 Chronicles 17:11-14. However, the connection is there in that both speak of Jesus Christ. The Feast of Tabernacles was the Fall Feast in Israel that was celebrated from 15 to 21 Tishri (September/October), (Leviticus 23:34-43).
- e. How does the Feast of Tabernacles speak of Christ?
  - i. In its services. Morning (Water Libation Ceremony at the South (Water) Gate), (Isaiah 12:3). Evening of the Seventh Day (Temple Lighting Ceremony), (Psalms 120-134). Hoshana-Rabbah (Great Supplication) Ceremony, Psalm 118:25.
  - ii. NT Applications in John. John 7:2, 7:37-38, 8:12, 9:5, Psalm 118 Messianic
  - iii. OT Prophecy fulfilled in the Second Advent, (note the connection between “tabernacle” and “light” Isaiah 4:2-6, 60:1-3; Ezekiel 37:27-28, 43:1-6, Ultimate fulfillment in Revelation 21:3, 21:22-23
  - iv. Primary Meaning/Fulfillment: God’s Dwelling Place With Men

109. 15:19-21

- a. Verse 19, Gentiles included in the church as full and equal members, Galatians 3:28, without prerequisite of conversion to Judaism
  - i. Salvation is a one-step process, not a two-step process (Apply to current false teachings to this effect in today’s church, often related to “baptisms”)
- b. Verse 20, four restrictions (overarching principle is Romans 14:14-17)
  - i. “things polluted by idols”
    - 1. 1 John 5:21, avoid participation in idolatrous feasts and practices
    - 2. 1 Corinthians 8:5-13, Christian liberty exercised in Christian love
  - ii. “sexual immorality”, Leviticus 18 reiterated in 1 Corinthians 6:9, Revelation 21:8
  - iii. “things strangled”, eating of animals not properly bled
  - iv. “blood”, Genesis 9:4, Leviticus 17:11-14
- c. Verse 20, the reason for these four restrictions is to promote fellowship between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians, not to add conditions for salvation or retain parts of the ceremonial law (Hebrews 7:12, 8:13, 9:11-15, 10:11-12, note context of Hebrews)
- d. Verse 21, James affirms that the Law of Moses is indeed perfect, though it could never save anyone, *ibid.* 106c (James 2:10-13; Galatians 3:22-24), assurance given to the Jewish brethren that the Law was not being relegated to the status of “outdated revelation” (Psalm 19:7-9, and theme of Psalm 119)
  - i. Apply: Do we revere the OT as much as the NT insofar as both are the inerrant Word of God? Note their harmonious and consistent teaching (theology).

110. 15:22-29, the letter from the church at Jerusalem to the church at Antioch

- a. Extended hand of fellowship from the Jewish Christians to the Gentile Christians
- b. “Judas Barsabas”, possibly a brother of “Judas Barsabas” of Acts 1:23, and “Silas”

- c. Official delegates sent to accompany Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch to:
    - i. Confirm the message, and refute any suspicion that the letter was forged
    - ii. Put to bed any idea that the “certain men” in 15:1 were official delegates of the Jerusalem church
    - iii. Be a visible means of the fellowship extended
  - d. Verse 28, “Holy Spirit” guidance in church government, to be sought and obeyed
    - i. In this particular case, the divine guidance is perfectly exercised through the Apostles, descriptive as an example, not necessarily prescriptive to the letter in every circumstance (other things may be necessary to be prescribed in other circumstances and times), NT Epistles as illustrative of this principle
  - e. Verses 28-29, four “necessary things”, *ibid.* 108c, operation of love declares them so (Christian duty of self sacrifice, Romans 14:19-20)
111. 15:30-35, from Jerusalem to “Antioch” in Syria
- a. Paul and Barnabas with the Jerusalem delegates (15:22)
  - b. Verse 32, contrast the effect of their godly ministry with the type mentioned in 15:24, Cf. 1 Timothy 6:3-5, should be endless discipleship and learning, not unprofitable debate
  - c. Verse 34, interjectory note not in either the NU-Text or M-Text
  - d. Verse 35, “teaching and preaching the word of the Lord” is that which accords to spiritual growth and unity, Cf. Acts 2:42
112. 15:36-41, Paul’s Second Missionary Journey Begins
- a. Verse 37, “John Mark”, the author of the Gospel of Mark
    - i. Mark 14:51-52, traditionally identified as Mark
    - ii. Acts 12:12, he had a godly mother
    - iii. Acts 12:25, ministered alongside Paul and Barnabas, 1 Peter 5:13, Peter also
    - iv. Colossians 4:10, cousin of Barnabas
  - b. Even the best of men are but sinners, subject to contention.
  - c. God used even their contention for the purpose of the spread of the Gospel, two teams were able to cover more ground than one.
113. 16:1-5, Return to “Derbe and Lystra” (Cf. Acts 14:6-7)
- a. “Timothy”, to whom Paul later wrote 2 of his Pastoral Letters
    - i. Mother was Eunice, Grandmother was Lois, Jews (2 Timothy 1:5), father Greek
    - ii. Mixed marriage a violation of Deuteronomy 7:3
    - iii. Verse 2, good name and reputation, Cf. Proverbs 22:1, later would be a qualifier to be a Pastor in Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3)
  - b. Verse 3, Was this a violation of the decision of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15:1,28-29? No! According to 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, Paul and timothy had such liberty, they were obliged by love and not by law (Cf. John 15:10)

- c. Verse 4, Cf. Acts 15:28-29, Note that the decrees were Apostolic to confirm the matter of the doctrine of salvation, not to be used as precedent for subsequent church councils (e.g. RC General Councils), the Apostles and Prophets being past (Ephesians 2:20)
  - d. Verse 5, let us endeavor to seek both qualitative and quantitative growth, with the Lord's help, and without ever compromising the gospel message
114. 16:6-10, direction of God the Holy Spirit
- a. Gospel was to go to Europe at this time and not Asia
  - b. Apply 1 Corinthians 16:9, macro and micro levels, personal applications
115. 16:11-15, Ministry at Philippi
- a. Verse 12, "Philippi" in Macedonia, in which a church would become well established, to which Paul wrote one of his Prison Epistles
  - b. Verse 13, Jewish Sabbath meeting place was by the "riverside", either for lack of synagogue quorum, particular local persecution, or practical concerns
  - c. Verses 14-15, "Lydia"
    - i. A female merchant who was also a devout Jew, not allowing her business concerns to override her prioritizing of worship of God
    - ii. Wealthy, "seller of purple" and owning a "house" large enough to accommodate many guests
    - iii. "Thyatira" was 300 miles SE in Asia Minor, her place of origin, the church that was founded there was largely corrupted by sexual immorality and idolatry four decades later (Revelation 2:18-29)
    - iv. Lydia was converted in verse 14, water baptized afterwards in verse 15
    - v. Verse 15, note her gratitude and eagerness to spend time with God's people and be disciple
116. 16:16-20, The Python Slave Girl
- a. 16:16, "as we went to prayer", down by the riverside (16:13), still at Philippi"
  - b. "certain slave girl" owned by "masters" (plural)
  - c. "spirit of divination" or "Python spirit", Greek: "pythonissa"
    - i. "Python" in Greek mythology, a serpent (dragon) which lived in a cave on Mount Parnassus, just north of Delphi
    - ii. Oracle of Delphi, fortune telling priestess known as Pythia, which spoke in ecstatic tongues, interpreted by a priest (difference between this and Bible gift is that genuine biblical tongues were always known languages, intelligibly spoken and interpreted)
    - iii. Like the Pythia, this slave girl was demon possessed
  - d. "much profit", as the dark arts bring today also
  - e. Reason for its "success" is that demons have pre-existed us and have knowledge, which they will use to draw people from God in general and Jesus in particular
  - f. 16:17, probably to disrupt and bring disrepute upon Paul's mission

- g. "Paul and us", Luke included, as narrator and human author of Acts
  - h. Testimony, Cf. Mark 5:7; Luke 4:41, 8:28, Cf. James 2:19
  - i. 16:18, "Paul, greatly annoyed" at the daily disruptions which did not serve to further the gospel in reality, exorcises the demon
    - i. Cf. 19:11-12 and here, as part of the Apostolic fulfillment of Mark 16:17
    - ii. Cf. 19:13-14, a warning against presumptively engaging in exorcism
    - iii. Jude 9 seems a better rule for today's Christian
  - j. 16:19, when the evil spirit went out, "their hope of profit" went out also
    - i. Note their concern for profit but not for people
  - k. Men of the city constituted the arresting authority, common in the ancient world, absent a professional police force in addition to the army
117. 16:20-24, Paul and Silas put on trial and imprisoned
- a. 16:20, Gentile persecution, added to the prior experience which was almost exclusively Jewish persecution
  - b. 16:21, the charge, legitimate under Roman Law, "religio illicita", unlawful (illicit) religion, other than Roman state sponsored religion, being introduced to an area where it is not native
  - c. 16:22-23, Paul's sufferings for Christ, Cf. Acts 9:15-16; 2 Corinthians 11:23-25
  - d. "many stripes", beyond the mercy provided for under Jewish Law, Deuteronomy 25:1-3
  - e. "inner prison", reserved for the worst criminals, Cf. Jeremiah 38:6 (note parallels)
  - f. "feet in the stocks", to maximize discomfort, and prevent escape (Cf. Acts 5:19, 12:6-10)
118. 16:25-34, The Philippian jailer is saved
- a. 16:25, light shines greatest in darkness, "at midnight", applied, Cf. John 1:5
  - b. "praying and singing hymns", rather than complaining and seeking solace for the flesh
  - c. 16:26, "great earthquake", providentially sent and located
  - d. 16:27, since the penalty for allowing escape of a prisoner under Roman Law was death
  - e. 16:30, the question that every man and woman ought to ask, Romans 10:8-17 applied
    - i. Is there any witness in your words and your life that anyone would ask you?
  - f. 16:31, "Believe" the only condition of salvation, compare with John 3:16 and Ephesians 2:8-10, no other work or thing is required, though many things such as repentance "accompany salvation" (Acts 2:38; Hebrews 6:9), James 2:24-works prove genuineness of the professing belief and faith (Cf. 2 Corinthians 13:5)
  - g. "you and your household" is true in this case, known to Paul and Silas
    - i. Household salvation is a heresy when made a doctrine, salvation cannot be conferred, notwithstanding 1 Corinthians 7:14, which does not teach this, Ezekiel Chapter 18 thoroughly refutes the teaching of household salvation
    - ii. Includes only those at condition of accountability, capable of believing and repenting with understanding
  - h. 16:32, "word of the Lord"=the gospel, in context also the elementary teachings of the faith, as defined in Hebrews 6:1-2

- i. 16:33-34, “he” (the jailer) “washed their stripes” and “set food before them”(Paul and Silas, Cf. 16:23), duty to those who preach the gospel to you, Cf. Galatians 6:6, in our text the action is evidence of the genuine conversion
  - j. 16:33, “baptized”, not for salvation but because of the salvation that had just taken place with the acceptance of the singular condition for salvation to “believe”
119. 16:35-40, Paul Departs Philippi
- a. 16:35-36, following the overnight events, the prisoners had returned to the prison
  - b. Reason for the change of heart of the magistrates unclear, speculative, not in the text, the charge of “religio illicita” is dropped
  - c. 16:37, Paul’s Roman citizenship had been violated by refusal of his right to due process
  - d. Why would Paul not leave peacefully and quietly?
    - i. He did not want to allow the perception of wrongdoing to continue, because this would tend to suspicion of the Philippian Christians and their doctrine by all, which would hinder the spread of the gospel.
    - ii. The spread of the gospel did indeed occur in Philippi, the church persevered and stayed the course consistently (Philippians 1:1,5)
120. 17:1-4, Paul preaches at Thessalonica (continuing his 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey)
- a. 17:1, west and south, still in Macedonia (Greece, Europe)
  - b. “synagogue of the Jews...three Sabbaths...reasoned...from the Scriptures”, customary for the synagogue elders to allow esteemed guests to expound the Scriptures
  - c. 17:3, using such passages as Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, and Psalm 16:8-11, Cf. Acts 2:22-32
  - d. 17:4, note that the synagogue membership was both Jew and Gentile, “leading” women were those notable devout women
121. 17:5-9, Assault on Jason’s House
- a. 17:5-6, the “mob” action instigated by unbelieving Jews in response to conversions
  - b. Apostles were sought, but their friends were placed under “citizen’s arrest” instead
  - c. “These who have turned the world upside down”, the Roman world
    - i. A false statement, the Apostles came to turn an upside down world right side up! The allurements of sin in the world system were being opposed.
    - ii. Are we having this effect? Note: the “word of the Lord” (16:32) is the active agent which does this
  - d. 17:7-8, the charge against Jason is accessory to a crime, the crime is essentially the same charge as that of 16:21 in Philippi, falling under the same statute (religio illicita)
  - e. 17:9, Jason and the brethren post bail, and go free on the condition that they do not continue to enable the propagation of the gospel by the missionaries (Paul and Silas)
    - i. It was too late for the enemy of souls, a church had been born there, and it thrived (1 Thessalonians 1:1-10)
122. 17:10-15, The Berean Ministry
- a. 17:10, “sent Paul and Silas away” due to the possibility of more mob violence that evening
  - b. Paul and Silas enter the synagogue in Berea

- c. 17:11, qualities of the Berean hearers
  - i. They were honest seekers, without extreme spiritual prejudices
  - ii. “received the word” as the inerrant Word of God
  - iii. “searched the Scriptures”, diligent in Bible study, they would not be deceived in matters pertaining to their eternal souls
  - iv. “daily”, the priority of spiritual truth, Job 23:12, Matthew 6:33
  - v. “find out whether these things were so”, it is not enough to take the teacher’s word for it, Apply: sermons and Bible studies must be annotated with Scripture, compare man’s words with God’s Words to determine their truth, if unsure ask questions for clarification, if not so then separate from them (Romans 16:17)
- d. 17:12, Cf. Galatians 3:28, equal footing regarding salvation
- e. 17:13, trouble often follows God’s true ministers, because the gospel offends, Cf. John 6:61; Galatians 5:11
- f. 17:14-15, the missionaries move on to Athens, a church had been born in Berea
- 123. 17:16-34, Paul at Athens
  - a. 17:16-17, Athens was full of idols, lifeless works of men’s hands
    - i. Paul’s “spirit was provoked”, righteous anger, as when we see blatant public ‘statements’ which defy the Living God we serve, Cf. 1 Samuel 17:8,26,29
    - ii. Order of Romans 1:16 followed, “reasoned in the synagogue” (ibid 120c, Acts 17:3), “marketplace” the public gathering place
  - b. 17:18, “Epicurean” philosophy, Epicurus, 307 BC
    - i. Freedom from fear
    - ii. Absence of pain
    - iii. Tranquility through moderation of desires (which is subjective)
    - iv. Knowledge as a means of ridding oneself of religious fear
    - v. Denial of the immortality of the soul and divine judgement
  - c. “Stoic” philosophy, Stoicism, Zeno, 300 BC, from “stoa” meaning “porch” meetings
    - i. Staying in the present moment through trained use of logic
    - ii. Goal of life is virtue, happiness found through virtue
    - iii. Physics and Theology intertwined
    - iv. Pantheism, reality and divinity seen as identical, denies the Creator and ordered superintendence over human affairs by (any) God
    - v. Denial of immortality of the soul implicit in the philosophical system
  - d. “foreign gods”, why plural, “Jesus and the resurrection” (Anastasis)
  - e. 17:19-20: Paul brought to the “Areopagus”, “Hill of Ares” or “Mars Hill”, god of war and son of Zeus (mythology)
    - i. Where the city judges gathered, to testify, not at this point charging Paul with “religio illicit”
    - ii. “new doctrine” challenged the two leading schools of philosophy in Athens at that day (ibid 123b, 123c)
  - f. 17:21, leisure activity, and often vocational activity of the people of the Athens was to learn and debate (2 Timothy 3:7; 1 Corinthians 1:21-25); note that even in Christian

circles the popularity of “new” movements, “new” methods, “new” doctrine, and “new” teaching (Jeremiah 6:16 applied here)

- g. 17:22-31, Paul’s Sermon, affirms general and special revelation, refutes philosophies
    - i. “very religious”, conscious of the existence of a higher purpose of life
    - ii. “TO THE UNKNOWN GOD”, the true God that was being sought after in vain, being revealed through creation (Romans 1:20)
    - iii. God the Creator, existing outside and above His creation
    - iv. God is self existent, self sufficient, and the Author and Sustainer of life (Genesis 2:7), and Provider
    - v. “one blood”, one race, the human race, “every nation” is descended from Adam and Noah
    - vi. “times...boundaries” , God’s providential knowledge and action in human history
    - vii. “seek the Lord”, yet none do in Romans 3:11, reconciled in that God reveals Himself and man “should” respond, God is “not far”, a prayer away, dealing personally with men, not as the “gods” of mythology who were capricious
    - viii. “For we are also His offspring” (quoted from Aratus), and applied to mean that God shapes us, not the other way around or shaping of ourselves, we cannot achieve a measure of the Divine Nature by material efforts (In fact, John 4:24, spiritual and not material is the manner of true worship), Paul uses the Greek poet to refute the Greek philosophers.
    - ix. “times of ignorance” regarding the relatively limited revelation of Himself to the Gentiles by God in Old Testament days, “overlooked” is looked beyond with a view to providing special revelation (Jesus and His Work and Promises), Cf. Luke 12:48, we cannot contradict Romans 1:18-20.
    - x. “commands all men everywhere to repent”, to do that which accompanies belief unto salvation, Cf. Acts 16:30-31.
    - xi. The judgment, Cf. Hebrews 9:27-28, the Judge is Jesus Christ in concert with the Father, Cf. John 5:22-30, the assurance is the resurrection, which not only affirms Christ’s power, John 10:17-18, but also affirms a general bodily resurrection, 1 Corinthians 15:42
  - h. 17:32-34, The Response
    - i. Went against their pride, human wisdom, teachings, prejudices, yet some were converted at the Areopagus
    - ii. Sadly, in verse 32, some responded after the manner of Felix (Acts 24:25).
    - iii. What is your response?
124. 18:1-28, Ministry at Corinth
- a. Background and Context
    - i. The timing, Paul’s second missionary journey, about 50 AD
      - 1. Claudius (41-54 AD, 18:2), Gallio (48-52 AD, 18:12)
    - ii. The city, Corinth, in Achaia, Southern Greece, wealthy seaport city

1. Reputation for immorality, Greek verb derived from the city's name, "Corinthian girls" used in ritual prostitution in Aphrodite worship
  2. Special challenges for God's people (e.g. 1 Corinthians 5:1,9-13)
- b. 18:1-2
    - i. "Aquila...Priscilla" were ethnic Jews, previously converted
    - ii. "Claudius" the Roman Emperor had persecuted Jews in Rome
  - c. 18:3-4
    - i. "tentmakers", an honest living, all Jewish boys learned a trade, religious training notwithstanding (Acts 22:3), Jesus of Nazareth learned carpentry
    - ii. The most noble work is not the secular, Romans 1:16
    - iii. Cf. 1 Corinthians 9:16-18 as rule of profession for ministers
  - d. 18:5-6
    - i. Silas and Timothy rejoin Paul, probably the occasion for the writing of the first of Paul's Epistles, 1 Thessalonians
    - ii. Rejection and the blood of men (Cf. Ezekiel 33:8-9; Matthew 27:22-25)
  - e. 18:7
    - i. "Justus" was a Gentile Christian
    - ii. "house" was the Christian meeting place, church next to the synagogue
  - f. 18:8
    - i. "Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue" is converted
    - ii. Religious awakening in Corinth (hearing, believing, baptizing)
  - g. 18:9-10, Word of encouragement from God in season
    - i. "Fear not" (Isaiah 41:10)
    - ii. "speak" (Isaiah 52:7)
    - iii. "I am with you" (Matthew 28:20)
    - iv. "no one will...hurt you" (Isaiah 54:17)
    - v. "I have many people" (Cf. Acts 13:48)
    - vi. God's Word will encourage you too! Seek it, and build a reserve of it!
  - h. 18:11, Paul's ministry in Corinth, 18 months
  - i. 18:12-13, Paul brought to city authorities on a religious charge
  - j. 18:14-16, Gallio, like Pilate, wants no part of religious disputes of the Jews
  - k. 18:17, "Sosthenes", along with Crispus (18:8), a synagogue elder, beaten, probably by lictors, Gallio turns a blind eye
  - l. 18:18
    - i. "remained a good while", until about 52 AD, writing of 2 Thessalonians?
    - ii. "sailed for Syria", to return to the home church in Antioch (15:35-36)
    - iii. "Priscilla and Aquila", why the unusual order? Either order of conversion or primacy of social status. (Cf. Romans 16:3-5)
    - iv. "hair cut off" in the taking of the Nazarite "vow", Numbers 6, voluntary, not an affirmation of legalism but of freedom in Christ
  - m. 18:19-21, Paul visits "Ephesus", seaport city in the Lydian region of Asia Minor
  - n. 18:22, thus concludes Paul's second missionary journey

- o. 18:23, Paul begins his third missionary journey with follow up with recently planted Christian assemblies
  - p. 18:24, “Apollos”, an Alexandrian Jew
    - i. Alexandria a leading center/city/school of rabbinic study
    - ii. Referred to here, 5x in 1 Corinthians, and Titus 3:13
    - iii. Fashionable to believe that he wrote Hebrews, as Luther had speculated, but Paul is in fact the traditional and most likely human author of Hebrews
  - q. 18:25, though Apollos was zealous for the Lord, he was converted under the OT economy, limited understanding of NT special revelation (e.g. God the Holy Spirit)
  - r. 18:26
    - i. Discipleship of new converts is the private work of men, women, and couples
    - ii. “took him aside” for private correction, women are included in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) which includes discipleship
    - iii. Some feminist theologians have gone so far as to suggest that Priscilla was an elder, this is a reading into the text one’s preconceived ideas, we defer to the clearer passages of 1 Timothy 2:11-12 as the rule for public worship, and 1 Timothy 3:1-13 as to the two specifically institutes offices found in the pastoral letters (elders and deacons) in the church being reserved for males, we do not have evidence that Priscilla engaged in public preaching but (rather) private discipleship alongside her husband, and hospitality towards the saints
  - s. 18:27-28, OT Scriptures point to Jesus Christ
    - i. Ibid. 120c (Acts 17:3)
    - ii. Luke 24:25-26; John 5:39
125. 19:1-7, Paul meets John’s disciples at Ephesus
- a. 19:1, “while Apollos was at Corinth”
    - i. Cf. Acts 18:24-28, Apollos was exceptionally well versed in OT Scripture, and a very gifted teacher, his public ministry to the Jews, v.26, needed further private discipleship re: NT revelation
    - ii. Cf. 1 Corinthians 3:6, Apollos watered the gospel seed which Paul had planted
  - b. “Paul...came to Ephesus”
    - i. 200 miles east of Corinth, across the Aegean Sea from Achaia in Greece to Lydia in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey)
    - ii. Center of worship for Diana (Artemis), Acts 19:27
    - iii. Ephesus the first of 7 Revelation churches, Revelation 2:1-7
  - c. “finding some disciples”, of John, OT believers in John’s message
  - d. 19:2, the question
    - i. OT backdrop, Isaiah 32:15, 59:21; Ezekiel 39:29; Joel 2:28; Zechariah 12:10
    - ii. NT promise, Matthew 3:11; John 7:39, 14:16, 16:7; Acts 1:5,8, 2:38
  - e. 19:2, the response
    - i. Incomplete understanding, those who seek more light will receive it, Matthew 7:7; Luke 11:13
    - ii. These disciples not party to any of the 3 “stages” of Pentecost (Acts 2,8,10)

- f. 19:3, “John’s baptism”, a baptism of repentance, Matthew 3:11, in preparation for the revelation of Jesus as Messiah, transitional OT dispensation baptism (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17, salvation by faith means on both sides of the cross)
  - g. 19:4-5, baptisms of the Bible
    - i. These disciples were baptized unto repentance, but did not know that Messiah had already come, and His identity, John’s baptism was OT economy baptism
    - ii. Matthew 3:11, three NT baptisms, water is continued into NT in Romans 6, Holy Spirit is identification with God and His Christ, fire is identification with hell fire as found in the context of Matthew 3:12
  - h. 19:6-7, a 4<sup>th</sup> “installment” of Pentecost
    - i. Acts 2,8,10 involved Peter, this one involves Paul
    - ii. Attesting signs are the same as the other 3 instances, Cf. Acts 2:22; Hebrews 2:3-4, necessary to confirm the message prior to the completed written NT canon of Scripture, or sooner based on available revelation (Cf. Jude 3)
126. 19:8-20, Miracles Glorify Christ and Lead to Revival
- a. 19:8-10, Paul ministers two years in Ephesus
    - i. Three months in the synagogue, weekly basis
    - ii. Twenty-One months in the school of Tyrannus, an ancient school of philosophy attended by both Jews and Gentiles, religion included
    - iii. These verses the context of 1 Corinthians 16:8-9, writing of said epistle 55 AD
  - b. 19:11-12, miracles wrought by God through Paul glorify Christ and attest to his message, note God’s power over physical and spiritual disease, harbinger of 1 Corinthians 15:26.
  - c. 19:13-16, Seven Sons of Sceva
    - i. Itinerant exorcists, not uncommon in that day amongst Jews and heathens
    - ii. Look to duplicate Paul’s miracle by magical use of Jesus’ Name, violation of 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment in Exodus 20:7; may we not do likewise in our prayers!
    - iii. “Jesus I know”, Christ’s power over the demonic realm
    - iv. “Paul I know”, Mark 16:17, delegated Apostolic power
    - v. Warnings re: exorcisms today, delegated power not for us, Jude 1:9 and Ephesians 6:12-18 teach divine provision of means through prayer, note case studies of people dying under the “care” of “Christian exorcists.”
    - vi. Verse 16, don’t underestimate the power of evil, sin has the same results in our lives as we find here, when we coddle it and welcome it in,
    - vii. Don’t invite or allow evil influences into your life or purview, 1 Peter 5:8-10
    - viii. Be pre-occupied with God, but aware of spiritual pitfalls
  - d. 19:17-20, Revival Occurs
    - i. 19:17, fear of God spreads as in Acts 5:1-11
    - ii. 19:18, confession of sin, Romans 10:10
    - iii. 19:19, religious reform and revival
      - 1. Destroying idols in our lives
      - 2. Forsaking those things which lead us away from God

3. Should be outward evidence of inward changes
  4. Resolution not to turn back to sinful works and practices
  5. Care taken that others will not be led astray
  - iv. 50,000 pieces of silver, probably Greek drachmas, or possibly denarii, equates to about four million dollars, these people were willing to literally pay a cost for repentance and discipleship, gaining Christ which is far better, Philippians 3:7-11
  - v. Sorcery as a sin leading unto death, Leviticus 19:26; Revelation 21:8
  - vi. 19:20, growth of God's Kingdom commensurate with the power of God's Word, let's apprehend that power and begin with personal and localized revival!
  - vii. Isaiah 8:19-20 as summary statement on this topic
127. 19:21-41, The Riot at Ephesus
- a. 19:21-22
    - i. "Jerusalem", for an appointed feast (Deuteronomy 16:16; Acts 18:21)
      1. Ceremonial Law optional (Matthew 5:17; Hebrews 7:12)
      2. Moral Law is mandatory (Restated t/o NT)
      3. Case Study, The Sabbath, OT Ceremonial Law, Worship of God, OT&NT Moral Law (John 4:24; Hebrews 10:25), Non-Binding (Romans 14:5-6; Hebrews 7:12), Sense of Matthew 5:17 and the manner in which Jesus Christ fulfilled each of these.
    - ii. "Rome", Romans 1:7
    - iii. Evangelists divide forces between Greece and Asia Minor
  - b. 19:23-24
    - i. "silver shrines of Diana", images of the Ephesian temple with the Diana statue inside, sold as a household idol, Cf. Genesis 31:19
    - ii. "Diana" Roman, "Artemis" Greek
      1. Image different in Ephesus than in Rome; even more sensual, absent bow and crescent moon
      2. Cf. 19:28 "Diana of the Ephesians" was the same dead idol worshiped in Rome but custom made for Ephesus (Cf. 19:35)
      3. Priests were Essenes (King Bees), Priestesses Melissai (Honey Bees), worship was as sensual as the image
      4. Big money in the sale of idols, as there still is today, shrine idols are available for purchase for the homes, even of professing Christians!
  - c. 19:25
    - i. organized trade guilds common in the Roman Empire
  - d. 19:26
    - i. the accusation is true (Acts 17:24-29) but not illegal under Roman Law
    - ii. Religio illicita statute difficult here given presence of Jews in Ephesus
    - iii. True design is to rile up the trade guild
  - e. 19:27-28

- i. “temple” of Diana at Ephesus was 377’x180’x60’ (Pliny), one of the 7 man-made wonders of the ancient world, Herod’s temple including courts was 5x larger, but temple proper 5x smaller
    - ii. Demetrius gives the talking points
      1. Real issue is loss of business (for the tradesmen)
      2. Stated issue is Diana is dishonored (for the masses)
      3. Trade guild responds right on cue
    - iii. Apply: true Christianity hurts the drug trade, the bars, the gambling entities (including casinos, state sponsored lottery, and church sponsored bingo), To put a dent in the drug trade, do more evangelism!
  - f. 19:29-32
    - i. Paul’s companions placed under citizen’s arrest, Paul himself is spared
    - ii. Verse 32, “The Unthinking Mob” (Thompsons), as so many of today’s protests have been exposed to be
  - g. 19:33-34
    - i. Hope was that Alexander the Jew could mediate and calm the mob
    - ii. Sad truth was that the Jews were seen by so many as being no threat to idolatry
  - h. 19:35-41
    - i. City Clerk makes 3 arguments
      1. Everyone knows that Diana is great.
      2. The Christians were not law breakers.
      3. Roman Law is based on rule of law, and mob action is not tolerated by Rome.
    - ii. Verse 39 (Cf. verses 32 and 41), “assembly” is “ekklesia”, translated church elsewhere (Cf. Matthew 16:18), meaning “called out” because the clerk would literally call out the assembly
      1. Universal (invisible) church called out, Romans 8:28,30; 1 Peter 2:9
      2. Church (visible) is to be a public assembly, wherever this is practicable absent hard persecution (as North Korea, Saudi Arabia)
      3. Assembly dismissed, wicked confounded
    - iii. Could what happened in Ephesus happen in Woonsocket?
      1. Yes, if the powers that be (individuals, politicians, corporations, power brokers, churches) stand to lose power and/or profit, directly or indirectly. Christian revival changes everything, and has results for the good, and consequences for the unjust.
- 128. 20:1-6, Paul Journeys to Greece
  - a. 20:1, “uproar” at Ephesus, “departed” Lydia in Asia Minor to “Macedonia” in Northern Greece
  - b. 20:3, “three months”, possibly writing Romans during this time, winter of 57-58 AD, Cf. Romans 15:22-26

- c. 20:4, brethren and disciples met along the way, apply to those you have met in your Christian journey, 'Where are they now?', a few stay in your life, many move on, many depart from practice of the faith or the faith entirely
  - d. 20:6, Days of Unleavened Bread (March/April 57/58), three connected spring feasts are Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits (Leviticus 23:4-14)
  - e. "Troas" in the region of Mysia, Northern Asia Minor
129. 20:7
- a. "first day of the week" which is Sunday
    - i. "Preparation" was Friday, "Sabbath" was Saturday, other five days referred to as ordinal numbers
    - ii. This is not the Sabbath, because that was the seventh day (Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11)
    - iii. Sunday the day of Jesus' Resurrection (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2,9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1,19) became the usual day of corporate worship in the church
  - b. "when the disciples came together", as an "ekklesia", a called out assembly for the purpose of public worship, Hebrews 10:24-25
  - c. "to break bread", Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, may or may not include a fellowship meal but definitely included observance of the Lord's Table
  - d. Cf. 1 Corinthians 16:2, offering received at the called out assembly (church) on Sunday (2 Corinthians 9:7 as the NT rule of giving)
  - e. Note: Sabbath as a civil and ceremonial law not binding in the NT days, neither is Sunday worship (Romans 14:5-6; Colossians 2:16-17), Acts 2:42 and Hebrews 10:24-25 are binding for the church
130. 20:8-12
- a. 20:8, "many lamps", church meetings were corporate, larger gatherings than family only, and done in the light, metaphoric application found in Ephesians 5:8-13
  - b. 20:9, Eutychus had a place to sit on a 3<sup>rd</sup> floor open window (sill/alcove)
  - c. "sinking into a deep sleep", may have worked all day (6-6?) prior to attending the Sunday evening service (implied at end of verse 7), note benefit of a Sunday evening service in an area and culture where Sunday is a work day
  - d. 20:10, Eutychus raised to life, other instances of this in the Bible (1 Kings 17:21; 2 Kings 4:34, 13:21; Matthew 27:52; Mark 5:42; Luke 7:15; John 11:44; Acts 9:40), portends the resurrection (Matthew 28:1-7; John 5:28-29)
  - e. 20:11, Eutychus partakes of communion and the fellowship meal
  - f. 20:12, summary statement of the previous verses, "comforted" in their faith, having been strengthened by fellowship, divine truth, and the attesting miracle (Acts 2:22)
131. 20:13-16, Journey Southward along the eastern side of the Aegean Sea, note on map
- a. 20:13, "we" is Luke and his companions
  - b. Paul went this leg of the journey "on foot", to find quiet time to pray?
  - c. 20:16, "spend time", as it would have been rude not to accept hospitality from his "disciples" and "friends" (Cf. 19:30-31)

- d. "Jerusalem...on the Day of Pentecost", when there were a great many pilgrims there for the feast (Acts 2:5), Feast of Pentecost or Weeks (Leviticus 23:15-16)
- 132. 20:17-38. The Ephesian Elders addressed by the Apostle Paul
  - a. 20:17, chronologically within Chapter 20, this would likely be the Lord's Day, a week after Acts 20:7
  - b. "elders of the church", plural elders in a unified church (whether this met as one or several "ekklesia's" is not conclusive, probably the latter, given the population)
  - c. "elders" (20:17), "overseers" (20:28) are the same office, "shepherd" the function
    - i. All three terms also listed in 1 Peter 5:1-3, "pastors" a fourth term introduced in Ephesians 4:11, "bishop" a fifth term (in our English Bibles) in 1 Timothy 3:1 is literally an "overseer"
    - ii. 1 Timothy 3, there are two New Testament offices, "Overseer" and "Deacon", both offices are clearly restricted to (Greek) "one woman men" (3:2,12).
  - d. Qualities of a good Christian minister, which we all are, not just the pastor, \*Discuss\*
    - i. 20:18, a transparent life
    - ii. 20:19, an attitude of humble service
    - iii. 20:20, gospel message, sharing of all the Word of God, withholding nothing
    - iv. 20:21, not a respecter of persons
    - v. 20:22, repentance and faith indispensable to the gospel message
    - vi. 20:24, perseverance and willingness to endure personal hardship and sacrifice for the furtherance of the gospel
    - vii. 20:26, doing the work of an evangelist, warning the wicked (Ezekiel 3:18-21)
  - e. 20:28, "The Reformed Pastor", by Richard Baxter (1656), the best book any aspiring or existing Pastor can read on the subject, entire book expositis this one verse
    - i. The oversight of ourselves, the oversight of the flock, motives of the duty, leading others to humble submission before God by exhortation, instruction, and correction in love, remembering that we are mere stewards
    - ii. "Holy Spirit" has assigned gifts and opened doors for the work
    - iii. "church of God", Jesus Christ Himself being God (Cf. Matthew 16:16-18)
    - iv. "purchased with His own blood", Hebrews 9:16-22; 1 Peter 1:17-21
  - f. 20:29, apostates characterized by false teaching and motivated by pride and greed (Cf. 1 Timothy 6:3-5), best protection is found in 20:31-32 (sound theological instruction; making of mature disciples of Jesus Christ—2 Timothy 3:16-17; Jude 3)
  - g. 20:34-35, industry, willingness to preach the gospel without pay (Acts 18:1-3; 1 Corinthians 9:14-18), refutes those who assume the church is a covetous institution
  - h. 20:35, these words of Christ not recorded elsewhere, but found here (givers and takers in this world, the church should be characterized by the first, Matthew 20:28; John 3:16)
- 133. 21:1-14, the close of Paul's third missionary journey
  - a. 21:1, note on map, down SE coast of the Aegean Sea, to NE coast of the Great Sea
  - b. 21:2, to make a beeline by ship across the Great Sea to "Phoenicia" (modern day Lebanon) the fastest way, as the crow flies

- c. 21:3, "Tyre" in Phoenicia", a great merchant seaport in Bible times, famous for bronze and silver wares, and purple dye
  - d. 21:4, "finding disciples", a church had been planted in the region in Acts 11:19, and Paul had visited it in Acts 15:3, fellowship vital (Acts 2:42)
  - e. "told Paul through the Spirit", direct prophetic revelation warning of impending arrest if and when Paul goes to Jerusalem, Paul would proceed with eyes wide open
  - f. 21:7, moving south, Tyre an island  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile off the coast, hence the "voyage"
  - g. 21:8, Philip the Evangelist, as opposed to the Apostle (Cf. Acts 6:5, 8:5,26)
  - h. 21:9, daughters were prophetesses (7 mentions of these in the Bible, Miriam in Exodus 15:20; Deborah in Judges 4:4; Huldah in 2 Kings 22:14; Noadiah in Nehemiah 6:14; Isaiah's wife (disputed) in Isaiah 8:3, Anna in Luke 2:36, and here), ministry was exercised in early NT days but restricted to outside the corporate assembly of the church (Compare 1 Corinthians 11:5 with 14:34)
  - i. 21:10-11, Agabus the prophet (Cf. Acts 11:27-28), this prophecy would also come true
  - j. 21:12-14, despite the foreknowledge, Paul elects to go anyways, that God's will be done, and commits himself to the divine will, note parallels with Jesus in Matthew 16:21
134. 21:15-26, Paul makes peace between Jewish and Gentile Christians
- a. 21:15, having tarried in Caesarea, Paul and the disciples head south to Jerusalem for Pentecost as intended in Acts 20:16
  - b. "up to Jerusalem", one always goes up to Jerusalem and never down to Jerusalem, because God's holy hill, the temple, is there (Cf. Psalm 24:3)
  - c. 21:16-17, Mnason (M-nas-on) of Cyprus, likely a convert in Acts 13:4-5, and owner of a large home in Jerusalem metro area
  - d. "received us gladly", hospitality included a greeting (Matthew 28:9; John 20:21), a holy kiss (usually an embrace and a kiss on each cheek) (Romans 16:16), provision of water for the feet and oil for the head (Luke 7:44-46)
  - e. 21:18, James the half-brother of our Lord, and the Jerusalem elders
  - f. 21:19, testimony of widespread Gentile acceptance of the gospel
  - g. 21:20-21, Jewish love of the Law (of Moses) constrained them in their Christian liberty
  - h. 21:22-24, the solution, a public display of reverence for the Law of Moses by the taking of a Nazirite vow (Numbers 6:1-12), Cf. 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 applied, and discuss
  - i. 21:25, Acts 15:28-29 reiterated, the Gentiles were to avoid four things as the law of love necessitated it, the first three ceremonial and the fourth moral
  - j. 21:26, Cf. Numbers 6:13-21
135. 21:27-40, Paul is Arrested in Jerusalem
- a. 21:27, "seven days...almost ended" references the completion of the sacrifices associated with the Nazirite vow (Numbers 6)
  - b. "Jews from Asia", many of these unbelieving Jews from Ephesus (Acts 20:19)
  - c. "laid hands on him", citizen's arrest, with murderous intent
  - d. 21:28, the charge, 'polluting, or defiling, the temple'
    - i. A capital crime, allowing Gentiles into the court of Israel

- ii. Warnings posted near the entrances to the court
  - iii. Scripture appeal/basis, Malachi 2:10-12; Cf. Deuteronomy 18:9-13
  - iv. For a visual reconstruction, see “Holman’s Book of Biblical Charts, Maps, and Reconstructions”, pp. 153-155
- e. 21:29, “Trophimus the Ephesian”, Cf. Acts 20:4
- f. 21:30, Paul dragged violently out of the temple court of Israel as a Gentile would have been, and the “doors were shut” by the gatekeepers to prevent ‘further defilement’
- g. 21:31-32, Paul beaten near to death by the mob, saved by Roman soldiers
- h. 21:33-34, inquiry made of the multitudes and accusers
  - i. As in Acts 19:32, no agreement on a specific charge nor among witnesses, as it was with Jesus Christ (Mark 14:55-56)
- i. 21:35-36, Paul is literally surrounded and carried by the soldiers
  - i. “Away with him!” is the same cry made against Christ (John 19:15)
- j. 21:37-38, assumption made by “Claudius Lysias” the commander (Acts 23:26)
  - i. Back story, Zealot party had arisen from the Pharisee party, and revolutionary activity with messianic overtones had increased (Cf. Acts 5:36-37)
  - ii. According to Josephus (Wars and Antiquities), about 55 AD, an Egyptian claiming to be a Jewish prophet had assembled a following
    - 1. Gathering at Mount of Olives, falsely predicted a Jericho style victory over Rome, followers dispersed
    - 2. Date at this point, about 58 AD.
- k. 21:39-40, Paul commands the attention of both Roman and Jew
  - i. “citizen of no mean city”, Rome
  - ii. “Hebrews”, the language of the Jewish people, although many also knew Aramaic (cousin of Hebrew language), Greek, and even Latin
- 136. 22:1-5, Paul’s Credentials
  - a. Devout Jew, clearly innocent of the charge of temple pollution
  - b. Born in Tarsus, considered a reputable city amongst the Hebrews
  - c. Brought up in Jerusalem
  - d. Student of Gamaliel, a foremost rabbi
  - e. Student of the Law, reverently so
  - f. Zealous towards God, religious (though misguided, Matthew 23:15 applied)
  - g. Persecuted “this Way”, Christians, zealously, later becoming just as zealous for Christ
  - h. See “The Apostle Paul and His Ministry”, by this author, [www.firmfoundationri.com](http://www.firmfoundationri.com) Articles and Topics Page, for more detailed reference of this chapter
- 137. 22:6-11, Paul’s Conversion
  - a. Road to “Damascus” in Syria
  - b. Timing, “about noon”
  - c. Shekinah Glory and Bat Kol come to Paul, voice heard by Paul only
  - d. Light of God a most intense light, apply how this is so in your life regarding truth, conscience, conviction of sin, Cf. John 8:12
- 138. 22:12-16, Paul’s sight restored

- a. Attesting miracle accomplished
  - b. "Just One", a title of Jesus which declares His innocence
  - c. Baptism follows Paul's conversion
139. 22:17-21, Paul's Call
- a. Paul went to the "temple", the first place the converted desire to go is God's house
  - b. Call as Apostle to the Gentiles
140. 22:22-29, Paul's Citizenship
- a. 22:22, Cf. John 19:15, Paul receives the similar treatment to his Lord
  - b. 22:23, in a murderous rage, to free themselves up to violently assault Paul
  - c. 22:24, "scourging" as Christ was (Matthew 27:26), with a flagellum, leather whip with metal pieces to scrape the skin, often fatal, done by Rome without mercy
  - d. 22:25,28, Paul a "Roman" citizen by birth, meaning his father was
  - e. 22:29, due to the severe punishments meted out by Rome for scourging a Roman citizen without due process, an illegal act
141. 22:30-23:10, Paul's Defense Before the Sanhedrin
- a. 22:30, Claudius Lysias, unsure of the charge, calls for a meeting of the Sanhedrin
  - b. 23:1, "looking earnestly at the council", many of the faces have changed since the days of Acts 8:1, 9:1-2, when Paul was on the other side of things
  - c. "good conscience", always acting in ways that Paul truly believed were in God's interest
  - d. 23:2, "high priest Ananias", who presided over the Sanhedrin from 48-59 AD, called by Josephus "the great procurer of money" (Ant. 20.205), because of his corruptive use of his position to gain personal wealth and power
  - e. 23:3, "whitewashed wall", Cf. Matthew 23:27 illuminates Paul's meaning here
  - f. "the law", primarily a reference to the law of civil proceedings in the Sanhedrin
  - g. 23:4-5, Cf. Exodus 22:28, "I did not know", certainly Paul knew, being familiar with the proceedings and seating arrangements of the Sanhedrin, the idea being "I would never have known judging on the basis of Ananias' conduct."
  - h. 23:6-9, Paul brings up the doctrine of the resurrection
    - i. Predictable result, a mistrial, due to the division between Pharisees and Sadducees on the resurrection (Special Study: First Century Jewish Sects)
    - ii. Because the doctrine is the centerpiece doctrine of the Christian faith, Paul desires to bring it up to the forefront
  - i. 23:10, if a Roman citizen (as Paul was) under Roman custody were to be murdered, Rome would not look kindly upon the custodians
142. 23:11-22, The Plot Against Paul
- a. 23:11, "The Lord stood by him" as He does for all of us always (Psalm 46:1)
  - b. Christ's words to Paul, 9:4-6, 18:9-10, and here, Paul boasted neither of these nor his vision, 2 Corinthians 12:1-6
  - c. 23:12-15, an evil vow taken, and the 40+ evil men seek the aid of the Sanhedrin in their murderous intended deed
  - d. 23:16, Paul's nephew discovers the plot, and reveals it to him

- e. 23:17-22, Paul is respected as a Roman citizen, his nephew is allowed an audience to reveal the plot to Lysias, and it fails, presumably causing the 40+ evil men to die of starvation and dehydration (as if the Lord respected their vow to kill God's man)
143. 23:23-24, The Commander Provides for Paul's Safety
- a. Guard of 470 soldiers assigned to protect Paul from the assassins
  - b. Departure at 9 pm, under cover at night, to get to the fortress of Antipatris en route "to Felix the Governor", who resided in Caesarea, 60 miles NW of Jerusalem
  - c. Felix's governorship, 52-60 AD, the date in the narrative is now about 58 AD
144. 23:25-30, the Commander's Letter to Felix
- a. Its format that of Bible times
    - i. Name of the Writer
    - ii. Name of Recipient
    - iii. Greeting
    - iv. Body of the Letter
    - v. Farewell/Benediction
145. 23:31-35, The journey to Caesarea
- a. 23:31, "Antipatris", Roman fortress halfway between Jerusalem and Caesarea, about 30 miles, a night's journey into the morning
  - b. 23:32-33, the second leg of the journey, with rested troops, the Commander having taken no chances
  - c. 23:34, Felix confirms that he has jurisdiction, he did over Tarsus, Cilicia
  - d. 23:35, ensuring a full, fair, and legal trial, in contrast to the Sanhedrin (23:3)
    - i. Apply: When the world conducts itself more honorably than the church, it is a disgrace, dishonorable to God (Cf. 1 Corinthians 6:1-6)
  - e. "Herod's Praetorium", where the Roman garrison would be quartered, Paul is kept under special guard and not in the common prison, for his safety, as he awaits trial
146. 24:1-9, Paul Before Felix, The Prosecution
- a. 24:1, "after five days" of Paul being held in Herod's Praetorium
  - b. "Ananias", "elders", "Tertullus" (their hired prosecuting attorney) came to state their case against Paul, ostensibly on behalf of the state
  - c. "gave evidence", the arraignment before Felix
  - d. 24:2-4, The Exordium, opening remarks, often flattering toward the judge
    - i. "we enjoy great peace", due to Felix' crackdown on brigands and raiders, especially in the countryside, remark made with a view to the charge which would be subsequently given, that Paul was a disturber of the peace
    - ii. "not to be tedious to you", since Felix the Governor is so busy
  - e. 24:5, "sect of the Nazarenes", another title ascribed to "The Way" and "Christians", with a despising overtone, Cf. John 1:45-46
  - f. 24:5-6, Threefold accusation against Paul
    - i. Disturbing the peace
    - ii. Violation of Religio Illicita (Roman statute)

- iii. Profaning the temple (Jewish statute respected by Rome)
  - g. 24:7, Cf. Acts 21:33, but failing to mention 21:32 events
  - h. 24:8, Cf. Acts 23:30
  - i. 24:9, Ananias and the elders bear false witness for the prosecution, thus violating their own Law, the 9<sup>th</sup> Commandment, testimony was hearsay and therefore insufficient
  
- 147. 24:10-21, Paul Before Felix, the Defense
  - a. 24:10, note Paul's defense is pro se, but Luke 12:11-12 can be applied here
  - b. Felix was "many years a judge", Governor since 52 AD, now 58 AD in the narrative, Felix had been a civil magistrate prior to that
  - c. 24:11-12, "to worship" was Paul's purpose, not to disturb peace
  - d. 24:13, accusations cannot be proven, it is impossible to prove a lie
  - e. 24:14, "the Way" not a sect, but the fulfillment of the hope of the Judaistic religion, and therefore Paul was not in violation of Religio Illicita
  - f. 24:15, bodily resurrection of the dead asserted here, a doctrine believed by the majority of the Jews, though not the Sadducees (Acts 23:8)
  - g. Consistent with Daniel 12:2, NT exposition in John 5:24-29
  - h. Justification based on belief in faith in Jesus Christ, John 3:36
  - i. 24:17, "alms" were a gift from the churches (Cf. 2 Corinthians 8:16-9:5, written in 56 AD) to the poor saints in Jerusalem, Genesis 12:1-3 applied here
  - j. "offerings" as prescribed by law, namely that of the Nazarite Vow (Cf. Acts 21:21-27)
  - k. 24:18, not guilty of profaning the temple, but in fact honoring it and its laws
  - l. 24:19-20, prosecutor's witnesses testified to hearsay, no eyewitnesses present
  - m. 24:21, Paul testifies before all, proclaiming the gospel, implicit challenge to investigate its claims, above all that Jesus is the Risen Messiah (Cf. 1 Corinthians 15:6)
  
- 148. 24:22-27, Felix Procrastinates
  - a. 24:22, case continued, stated reason to summon Lysias as a witness, but real reason because Felix understood the nature of the conflict and the likelihood that a serious disturbance of the peace may result from an innocent verdict
  - b. 24:24, "his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish", which explains Felix' good understanding of the ramifications of Paul's case
  - c. Paul gains a hearing of the gospel from Felix the Governor
  - d. 24:25, conviction brought to bear, Cf. John 16:8-11
  - e. "convenient time" is stated in 2 Corinthians 6:1-2, the danger of procrastination
  - f. 24:26, having hardened his heart to the gospel, Felix now seeks a bribe, none came
  - g. 24:27, 60 AD, Festus succeeds Felix as Governor, Paul kept bound, again to keep the peace
  - h. Apply: danger of doing the wrong thing for reasons of self interest, expediency, and fear of men, in our own daily lives, let us not live Felix' pattern of this

149. 25:1-12, Paul before Festus
- a. 25:1, Porcius “Festus” succeeded Felix as Governor in 60 AD, governing over Judea from Caesarea, 60 miles NW of Jerusalem
  - b. 25:2, “high priest” now Ishmael, “chief men of the Jews” are the same as the “elders”
  - c. 25:3, request that Paul be sent to Jerusalem to stand trial before the Sanhedrin, with the intent to hire assassins (sicarii) to ambush the convoy and kill Paul
  - d. 25:4-5, Festus responds that the Jews should “come down” from Jerusalem with him following his visit there
  - e. 25:6, “ten days” spent meeting the power brokers, and getting a sense for the political, economic, and religious culture in Israel
  - f. “Paul to be brought” from the prison quarters of the Praetorium (23:35)
  - g. 25:7-8, repeat of the trial before Felix with false accusations (24:5-6), and Paul continues his pro-se defense
  - h. 25:9-12
    - i. Festus proposes a second Roman trial in Jerusalem, unfavorable for Paul, as despite Paul’s clear innocence, an unfair trial is likely
    - ii. As a Roman citizen, Paul exercises his right to appeal to a trial in Rome, and appear before the “Augustus” or “Emperor”—in that day Nero reigned, but this was before his great persecution of Christians
150. 25:13-21, Festus informs King Herod
- a. 25:13, King Agrippa 2, reigned 48-66 AD, from Caesarea Philippi, just NE of Galilee, over 100 miles N/NE of Jerusalem
  - b. Though Festus was technically responsible to Rome and not Agrippa, as Governor his rank was lower than regional King, so he reported on a ‘dotted line’ of respect
  - c. Purpose/Job Description of Romans officials
    - i. Keep the Pax Romana (the peace of the Roman Empire)
    - ii. Collect Taxes
    - iii. Promote the interests of Rome
  - d. Festus’ account truthful and accurate, largely self-explanatory
151. 25:22:27, Festus Acknowledges his Dilemma
- a. 25:22-23, Agrippa’s dramatic entrance into the gathered assembly
  - b. Matthew 10:18 finds a fulfillment here, Paul brought before governor and king
  - c. 25:25, Festus declares Paul’s innocence (Cf. Luke 23:13-14, as Pilate did re: Jesus)
  - d. 25:26-27, Festus’ dilemma is that he is sending a man accused of capital crimes to Caesar, yet is unsure what the charges even are! So he hopes King Agrippa can shed light on this, so as not for Festus to invite Rome’s displeasure towards himself
152. 26:1-11, Paul’s early life, 26:12-18. Paul’s conversion, 26:19-23, Paul’s post-conversion life, See notes on sections 68-70, 136-138 for exposition of Acts 26:1-23.
- a. 26:23, Cf. Isaiah 59:20, 60:1-3.

153. 26:24-32, Paul's Appeal to Festus and Agrippa
- a. 26:24, Festus charges Paul with insanity, 'brainwashed' by his study of the Scriptures
  - b. 26:25-26, Paul affirms that he is simply explaining what any reasonable person would conclude based upon the evidence of Jesus' Messiahship, specifically those things pertaining to His resurrection (OT fulfillment, and eyewitnesses)
  - c. "not done in a corner", the work of Christ was public and well-attested to
    - i. Note: God's widespread Word, OT and much of the NT completed, and open to challenge, which it will always withstand
    - ii. Note: Issues of Jesus Seminar unbelief, which denies anything supernatural
    - iii. Note: not a secret, or an 'invisible coming' as JW cult has taught
  - d. 26:27, an appeal based on belief, evangelistic strategy
    - i. Strategy: work from a point of agreement to a logical conclusion
    - ii. Cannot believe in OT but not NT or visa-versa given the overwhelming evidence that Jesus is the Christ; the two are intertwined (John 5:39; Luke 24:25-26)
      1. Minimization of the role of the OT, though well intentioned, borders on heresy, despite attempts to thread the needle with regard to the inerrancy of the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16)
    - iii. Answering a common objection: If one professes belief in Jesus, one must also believe biblical accounts of Jonah and Noah (Matthew 12:40, 24:37)
  - e. 26:28, "almost persuade", sad that so many hear the truth, conviction is brought to bear, yet they do not seal the deal (Romans 10:9-10; Ephesians 1:13-14)
    - i. Analogize: One who is almost persuaded to leave a burning building
  - f. 26:29, Paul's zeal for souls, does not desire personal comfort and blessing in a temporal manner, but a spiritual one (Proverbs 11:30; Daniel 12:3)
  - g. 26:30-32, now that it is relatively safe to publicly do so, they declare Paul's innocence, because they will not have to set Paul free, since he had appealed to Caesar already
    - i. Apply: are we only professing Christ when it is 'safe' to do so? Are you, or are you not, a 'fair-weather' Christian?
154. 27:1-44, Paul sails for Rome
- a. 27:1, "we should sail to Italy", includes Luke who wrote Acts among the 276 persons in total (27:37), sail as opposed to taking a land journey, to Rome where Paul would be tried before Emperor Nero to whom he had appealed
  - b. "Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment", one hundred soldiers were under Julius' command, but it is uncertain if they are all here present, the "Augustan Regiment", probably a special royal dispatch from Rome, the most loyal soldiers to the Augustus
  - c. 27:2, and following, using a map of this journey would be most helpful in following the narrative
  - d. "Aristarchus", Cf. Acts 20:4; Colossians 4:10
  - e. 27:3, "Sidon" in Phoenicia (Lebanon), where a Christian church had been established

- f. Note the trust Paul had earned, and the respect for his Roman citizenship, in which Paul was free even though his circumstances seemed otherwise (apply to our Christian freedom and heavenly citizenship (Cf. Romans 6))
- g. “receive care”, spiritual, personal practical, medical may all be in view here
- h. 27:6, an Alexandrian grain ship (Cf. 27:38), which Julius by virtue of his station was able to utilize as Rome had need of it (Cf. Matthew 5:41 is in this context as well)
- i. 27:9, “dangerous” to put to sea Sept-Nov, and near impossible over the winter months, “the Fast” is a reference to the Day of Atonement (10 Tishri, late September, early October)
- j. 27:10-11, Paul’s advice, which in hindsight was best, is rejected by the centurion, and the counsel of the ship’s owner and helmsmen (more experienced sailors) followed
- k. 27:12, “the harbor” at Fair Havens on Crete neither safe for the ship to winter nor equipped to winter the 276 men on board the ship
- l. 27:13-15, seeming to have a favorable wind, the party sails for Phoenix harbor (safer for ships to winter as well as equipped for the large # of men) on the west side of Crete
- m. “Euroclydon”, a northeast typhonic wind (analogous to a strong nor’easter)
- n. 27:16-17, “skiff” secured so as not to lose it, storm had been so sudden that the ancillary boat had not been secured to the stern
- o. 27:19, “ship’s tackle”, unnecessary items that weighted down the ship
- p. 27:20, note the condition, and apply the feeling of hopelessness and fear experienced by the men on board the ship
- q. 27:21, “long abstinence from food”, to preserve the food supply for as long as possible
- r. 27:22-25, in hopelessness, God sends “an angel” (not the Angel) to reassure Paul
  - i. Hopeless situations do not inhibit God from working (Matthew 19:23-26 applied here with point of similarity), discuss other Bible examples, our own examples
  - ii. #9 Hymn, “Baptism”, “I didn’t see no angel”, Cf. John 20:29, difficulty of the men in believing Paul’s words, but what hope did they have? Testimony of fulfilled prophecy surely gave them cause to consider God (Mark 16:20; Acts 2:22).
- s. 27:27, “Adriatic Sea” approaching Malta, refer to map
- t. 27:28, “twenty fathoms”, 120 feet, and approaching shallow water
- u. 27:29, hence the building of lighthouses, “Lighthouse of Alexandria” the first lighthouse, built in 290 BC, though very uncommon in those days
- v. “prayed for day to come”, for God’s help with timing, and the effective working of His providence for our good, a good type of prayer to He who made and sustains nature
- w. 27:30, self preservation, under pretense, at the expense of all others on the ship, as we saw with the Titanic centuries later
- x. 27:31-32, Paul alerts the authorities of the plot, and it is foiled, Cf. Psalm 71:13-16, the wicked are confounded in their plans, and Paul may have prayed a prayer like this
- y. 27:33, since man can only survive three weeks without food
- z. 27:35, the giving of thanks before eating, and the breaking of bread, for Paul, every mealtime was a time of fellowship with Christ, Is it so with you?
- aa. 27:37, 276 persons on the ship in all

- bb. 27:38, “lightened the ship” of its grain cargo, the merchant who owned the ship carrying grain from Alexandria in Egypt to Puteoli in Italy may well have expected reimbursement from Rome on account of his service to the Augustan Regiment (27:1)
  - cc. 27:41, “two seas met”, that is, the bays converged near the land with shallow water, over an ‘underwater isthmus’
  - dd. 27:42-44, the prisoners are saved, on account of Paul the Roman citizen, though an ‘accident’ could have been plausibly explained, and all 276 persons “escaped safely to land” to the island of Malta, south of Sicily in Italy
    - i. The ship is wrecked, NT allusions to shipwrecks in Paul’s writings
      - 1. Literal shipwreck, 2 Corinthians 11:25 (three times prior to the writing of this letter in 56 AD, hence Paul’s experiential advice, Cf. Acts 27:9-10)
      - 2. Spiritual shipwreck, 1 Timothy 1:19, written in 62 AD, referring to apostasy and false and blasphemous doctrine
155. 28:1-10, Paul’s Maltese Ministry
- a. 28:1, “Malta”, part of the Roman province of Sicily, 60 miles south of Sicily at the ‘toe’ of Italy, island is 20 miles (E-W) by 12 miles (N-S)
  - b. 28:2, “unusual kindness”, they went out of their way to be hospitable to the shipwrecked, wet, cold, and hungry people (all 276 of them, Cf. Acts 27:37)
  - c. 28:3, poisonous “viper”, native to the island, but extinct there today, since the 1800’s
  - d. 28:4, Iustitia (Lady Justice), the Roman goddess of Justice, with scales of justice and blindfold, first introduced in the days of Augustus
    - i. Lex talionis, Cf. Exodus 21:24, in Hebrew law code, but also found in many other law codes, assumption made is that Paul had murdered with that hand, and Justice was being meted out accordingly after the same manner
    - ii. Note: Romans 2:14-15 can be applied to the Maltese people
  - e. 28:5-6, Paul miraculously unaffected by the venomous viper, and the Maltese conclude that he is “a god”, as the men of Lystra had (Acts 14:11-12).
  - f. 28:7, “Publius” was the Legate (“leading citizen”) over Malta, under the authority of the Procurator, or Governor, of Sicily, to whose Roman district Malta belonged.
  - g. 28:8, “fever and dysentery”, intestinal infection, especially of the colon, caused by bacteria, virus, and/or parasites
  - h. 28:8-10, Publius’ father is healed by prayer and Paul’s apostolic gift of healing (Cf. Acts 20:10), and many more were healed also both through Paul’s gift and Luke’s natural gifts which made him a good physician (Colossians 4:14), needs of the party were met, and honor received, opportunity to preach the gospel being the greatest honor
  - i. Note: Mark 16:18 was fulfilled in this passage in detail (excepting the drinking of deadly poison, which is not recorded at all in the Bible). Having been fulfilled in the apostolic era, these things are not characteristic of the church today in the same sense.

156. 28:11-16, The Last Leg of Paul's Journey to Rome
- a. 28:11, "After three months", after the winter, and release of the sailing ban, now early March, probably 61 AD
  - b. "Alexandrian ship", another large grain ship moving from Egypt to Italy (27:6,38)
  - c. "Twin Brothers" figurehead, ship's name would have been "Dioscuri", from the mythological sons of Zeus, Castor and Pollux, protectors of the seas, not revered so much in the sense of gods, more in the sense of 'patron saints.' Neptune/Poseidon was considered the 'god of the seas.'
  - d. 28:14, "brethren...seven days", through a Sabbath and Lord's Day, celebration of communion important for pilgrims of all kinds (even you)
  - e. Note: that there were brethren at Puteoli shows the fast spread of the Christian faith, and geographical breadth of the true religion of God, Christianity
  - f. 28:15, a welcoming committee for the respected saints (Paul, Luke, Aristarchus, and perhaps others), traveled 45 miles south to the 'traveler's rest stop' at Appii Forum, and 33 miles south to the town of Three Inns, the 'rest stop' was turned from a reputed place of vice to a mighty place of prayer and praise! Apply to 'anyplace' you go.
  - g. 28:16, Paul, as an un-condemned Roman citizen, who had proven himself not to be a flight risk, is allowed to dwell under house arrest, with much comparative liberty
157. 28:17-31, Paul's Ministry at Rome
- a. 28:17-20, "Jews" had returned to Rome, decree of 18:2 by Claudius was allowed to lapse under Nero's early years policy of détente, Paul follows his general policy of first preaching the gospel and ministering to the Jews in every area before seeking out Gentiles (Romans 1:16)
  - b. 28:21-22, These Jews had not heard of the tumult in Jerusalem (recorded in Acts 21-23), and were willing to hear about the "sect" of "Christians" (Acts 11:26).
  - c. "what you think", Paul's perspective, being a Christian himself, the Jews more fair minded than those in Jerusalem
  - d. 28:23, Cf. John 5:39; the reference is to the entire body of OT Scripture, which is indispensable to a full understanding of the Christian faith, 2 Timothy 3:16-17
  - e. 28:24-27, quotes Isaiah 6:9-10, as the Jews rejected Isaiah's message in his day, and Jesus' in His (Matthew 13:14-15), so too did these Jews reject the Apostles
  - f. 28:28, Cf. Isaiah 65:1-5 can be applied here
  - g. 28:30-31, for "two whole years" Paul preached and taught the gospel freely
  - h. Note: Prison Epistles written during this time (61-62 AD), Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, Titus, 1 Timothy
  - i. Epilogue, Paul was eventually freed to the point that he embarked on yet more missionary work throughout the Roman world, visiting churches he helped establish, and possibly reaching as far west as Spain. Paul was brought before Caesar Nero (Acts 27:24) and martyred (by decapitation), as early as 64 AD (though some hold to a date as late as 68 AD), last letter was 2 Timothy, Paul's valedictory is in 2 Timothy 4:6-8.