

# Acts of the Apostles

**Answering the Questions of Christianity**

**Sunset Church of Christ  
March 2016**

**This class is a study of the 28 chapters of the Book of Acts. Our focus is to examine this book with the central theme of the establishing and building of the church of Christ. Once we have finished this book we will have a better understanding of the church that Jesus built, and be well founded in principles of following the patterns of that church.**

*Ephesians 2:19-22 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*

## Acts Chapter 1 – “Is it at this time?”

### I. Prologue (1-2)

- A. Luke advises Theophilus this is a companion to Luke
  - 1. No absolute identity of Theophilus (friend/beloved of God)
- B. It was possibly attached to the Gospel of Luke as one book

### II. Jesus Ascends to heaven (3-11)

- A. Corresponds to Luke 24:50-53
  - 1. Veracity of the physical resurrection (I Cor 15)
  - 2. Jesus commands the Apostles to wait in Jerusalem for the Promise
    - a. Luke 24:49, John 14:16-26, 15:26
  - 3. Jesus has already given them the Holy Spirit in part – John 20:22
    - a. This was for them to understand the meaning of the fulfillment of OT prophecy – Luke 24:44-46
    - b. This (Luke 24:45, John 20:22) was not the promise in Luke 24:49/ John 14,15
      - (1) That coming would bring power (Luke 24:29, Acts 1:8)
      - (2) Spirit would not come unless Jesus returned to the Father (John 16:7)
  - 4. Apostles ask if He is going to restore the Kingdom
    - a. Apostles may be looking for a physical kingdom (Isa 1:26, Dan 7:27)
    - b. Jesus replies that there are some things you are not to know (I Thes 5:1)
    - c. Though asked in the past, never asked again (Luke 17:20)
- B. 40 Days giving proof of His resurrection, teaching about the Kingdom of Heaven
- C. Jesus ascends in the clouds (John 20:17)
  - 1. Two “men” promise He will return in like manner (I Thes 4:17)

### III. Waiting for Pentecost (12-26)

- A. Listing of those who wait
  - 1. New additions include Jesus' brothers (vs 14; John 7)
  - 2. Waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit for 10 days
  - 3. Also, waited in the Temple (Luke 24:52)
- B. Filling of Judas' office (literally *episkopos*)
  - 1. Peter speaks with the understanding given by Jesus (Luke 24:44-46) of scripture
  - 2. Loss of Judas Iscariot
  - 2. Qualifications of the Office of Apostle
    - a. Men
    - b. Accompanied all since the Baptism of Jesus to his ascension
    - c. Witness of the Resurrection (1:8)
    - d. Two men fit, Matthias is selected

## The Apostles

Name	Other Names	Family to:	Personal:	Death
Simon	Peter (Gr) Cephas (Ar)	Father – Jonah Brother - Andrew	Married with children; Possibly the oldest? Spokesman (Acts 2).	<i>Tradition - died in Rome (1 Peter 5:13)</i>
Andrew		Brother - Simon	Disciple of John the Baptist (Jno 1)	<i>Tradition – preached in Black Sea area, Crucified in Petras</i>
James		Father – Zebedee Brother – John Mother – Salome Aunt – Mary Cousin - Jesus		2nd apostle to die; Beheaded by Herod (Acts)
John		Father – Zebedee Brother – John Mother – Salome Aunt – Mary Cousin - Jesus	Married with children	<i>Tradition - last Apostle to die (John 21)</i>
Philip (Gr)				<i>Tradition – Crucified at Colossi</i>
Bartholomew	Nathanael (John 1)			<i>Tradition – Beheaded in Armenia or Yemen</i>
Thomas	Didymus – “Twin” (Gr)			<i>Tradition – Executed in India</i>
Matthew	Levi	Father – Alphaeus		<i>Tradition – Executed in Ethiopia</i>
James	“the Less” (Mk. 15:40)	Father – Alphaeus/Cleopas Mother – Mary Brother – Thaddeus	James is called the son of Alphaeus (Mt. 10:3); Alphaeus is the husband of Mary (Mt. 27:56)	
Thaddaeus (Gr)Lebbaeus	Jude Judas Joses	Father – Alphaeus/Cleopas Mother – Mary Brother – James the Less	Some think he could have been James' son, not brother (Luke 6:16, Ac 1:13)	<i>Tradition – Executed in Persia</i>
Simon	Zealot (mistakenly, canaanite)			<i>Tradition – executed in Persia</i>
Judas Iscariot	Iscariot – Keri-oth?		Treasurer	Suicide (Mt. 27:5)
Matthias				<i>No single tradition exists on his death</i>

## Acts Chapter 2 "What shall we do?"

### I. Day of Pentecost (1-4)

- A. This is the Feast of Weeks, when the first fruit is brought before God – Lev 23:15
  - 1. It is traditionally (historically?) the day Moses brought the Law on Sinai
- B. It was a special Sunday Sabbath (Lev 23:21)
- C. Holy Spirit Comes on the Apostles with Power
  - 1. Power of God - Authority
  - 2. Holy Spirit promised to the apostles
    - a. To teach all things, what to speak – Jno 14:26, Luke 12:12, Mark 13:11
    - b. Bring to remembrance all things – ibid
    - c. Testify of Christ – Jno 15:27
    - d. Convict the world (John 16:8-11) of:
      - a. Sin: because of unbelief
      - b. Righteousness: because Jesus is reigning in heaven with the Father
      - c. Judgment: the ruler of this world is judged
  - 3. This was ONLY promised to the Apostles (John 14-16) and ONLY given to the Apostles (Acts 2:14)
    - a. Only they can pass this power on – Acts 8:14-17, I Thess 1:5
  - 4. Therefore, ONLY the Apostles received the Holy Spirit With Power
  - 5. Reference is made to the Holy Spirit more in Acts than anywhere else
    - a. Witnessing w/ the Apostles (Acts 20:23, 5:32) as Jesus said he would Acts 1:8

### II. Crowds Hear many languages (15 listed) from 12 men –(Speaking in Other Tongues, Zech. 8:22-23)

- A. Peter Explains this is because of Prophecy – Joel 2:28-32
- B. Peter's sermon
  - 1. Scripture proves this day that the “Last Days” had begun
  - 2. Jesus of Nazareth worked the wonders first, He is therefore the First Fruit
  - 3. David prophesied Jesus would not remain dead
  - 4. Jesus was raised, and is now at the Right Hand of God
  - 5. God has WITHOUT A DOUBT made Jesus the Christ (MESSIAH)
- C. Crowd's response – What do we do?
- D. Repent and Be Baptized and Received the Gift of the Holy Spirit
  - 1. Titus 3:5 – Immersion of Being Born again and Renewing of Holy Spirit (Acts 3:19)
  - 2. The answer for all generations to come, both Jew and Gentile – vs 39 – A Pattern!
  - 3. Fulfilled the command in Mark 16:16, Matt 28:19 (note again All Nations)

### III. The Kingdom is Opened

- A. Behavior – Steadfast observance of Apostle's doctrine (the worship of the church)
  - 1. Fellowship
  - 2. Breaking of Bread
  - 3. Prayer
  - 4. The collection (all things in common) (Acts 4:32-37)
- B. The actions of the individual Christians
  - 1. Daily meeting for (common) breaking bread, sharing of homes
  - 2. Public response was positive – daily people obeyed the same manner of salvation

## Acts Chapter 3 – “Why are you amazed at this?”

### I. Peter and John at the Temple

- A. Were they there to worship - at the time of prayer
- B. Man crippled from birth is healed
  - 1. Jesus never healed someone in the Temple
    - a. Suggests a difference for miracles between Christ and Apostles
    - b. Apostles will never send someone away healed quietly
    - c. Like here, miracles by apostles are very prominent
  - 2. Very prominent miracle - the crippled man was identifiable
  - 3. People "ran" "came running" to see what was happening

### II. Peter's sermon

- A. Very much like/the same as the sermon in Acts 2
  - 1. Reminds the people that Jesus was a foretold promise
    - a. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob's God was Yahweh/Jehovah
  - 2. Reminds the people that they killed Jesus, but God raised him back
    - a. Reoccurring statement - 4:10, 5:30, 10:39, 13:28
    - b. Witnesses to this - The people witnessed this too as well as Peter and John
- B. The crippled man was healed by faith in the name of Jesus
  - 1. Before, Jesus healed in the Name of God - John 10:25, 8:54
  - 2. Now it is in Jesus that power is established
  - 3. This Man has been restored to Perfect Health (vs 16)
- C. Return and repent so that sins can be wiped away and times of refreshing come
  - 1. Compare this with Acts 2:38
- D. Christ comes to you (vs 20) and stays until the time of *Apokatahystamei*
  - 1. Perfect Bill of Health
    - a. Medical expression of wholeness, soundness of health
    - b. Compare with Vs 16's Perfect Health to Perfect Bill of Health through Christ
  - 2. Christ will return once all things have been accomplished
- E. Jesus Christ and Moses
  - 1. The Promise that one like Moses would arise from "your brothers"
  - 2. Deut 18:15-23 states that the reason is that Israel asked for a mediator because God was too fierce to bear the presence of and live
    - a. No man can see the face of God and live Ex 33:20
    - b. Clearly figurative based on other passages, but it denotes presence of God
    - c. Peter's point - Our fathers asked for Jesus to come
  - 3. John states only one man has been in the presence of God - Jesus - John 1:17
  - 4. Jesus and Moses have much in Common
    - a. Princes who left their places - Heb 11 and Php 2:7
    - b. Bringer of the Law - Ex 33, Rom 8
  - 5. This is the 1st time this Prophecy is identified, repeated again by Stephen Acts 7:37
- F. Samuel and Others Foretold of Jesus
  - 1. Samuel is considered first of Messianic prophet school
  - 2. Samuel anointed David, an image of the Holy One - Psalm 89:19-20
    - a. David Will Be The Prince of the New Covenant - Ezek 37:25-28
- G. The Jews are Heirs of the Covenant (Moses) and the Prophecy (Samuel)

## Acts Chapter 4 - "In what Name have you done this?"

### I. The First Persecution of the Church

#### A. Arrest of Peter and John by the Temple officials

1. Sadducees are the controlling party of the temple
2. Called themselves "Zadokites" and claimed to have the inherited role of High Priest
3. Consider the last time this happened, Jesus was arrested and murdered (Luke 22:52)
  - a. There is no repeat of events; consider that there are now 5,000 followers (vs4)

#### B. Trial before the Council

1. Israel ruled (outside of Rome) by a council (Sanhedrin) and a Court
2. Peter states that He and John in fact committed their "crime": healing a man
3. He answers their question - "In what name" do you do this
  - a. In the name of Jesus whom you crucified (recall 2:23, 36, 3:13)
4. Peter directly tells the leaders of Judaism salvation is ONLY in Jesus Christ (vs12)

#### C. Council Response (vs 13-23)

1. Recognized the power of words in these men
2. Could not deny it, so they commanded Peter and John to cease and desist
3. Peter and John refuse; in such a way the council cannot accuse them of impropriety
4. Release
  - a. First confrontation ends with decisive victory for the Saints

#### D. Praise God for deliverance (Psalms 2:1-9)

1. Prophecy - the rulers of Gentiles and of Jews conspired against Jesus and lost
2. Physical manifestation of the Spirit concludes this event

#### E. Future Persecutions - three persecutions in the Jerusalem ministry are mentioned in Acts

1. 5:19 - Arrest of the Apostles for speaking in the name of Christ
2. 6:12 - Arrest and murder of Stephen

### II. Having all things in Common (4:32 through 5:11)

#### A. We were already told that they have been providing for one another in 2:45

1. Imagine selling off your possessions or patronage to provide for someone you just met
2. Here they are meeting specific needs
3. Here is another definition of the church - a place where our needs are met
  - a. Physical vs 34 - provision for physical needs
  - b. Spiritual vs 33 - through the doctrine of apostles (Christ) they were being fed
4. Jews typically only came for the feast and returned
  - a. It appears these Jews stay in Jerusalem until Acts 8:1, possibly around 37AD

#### B. Joseph called Barnabbas

1. Sells a piece of property (possibly a tomb per etymology and Lev 25:32-34)
2. He is called the "son of encouragement"
3. Perhaps this is why we see Ananias and Saphira act the way that they do in Chapter 5

## Acts Chapter 5 - "Why...have you put the Spirit of the Lord to the Test?"

### I. Ananias and Sapphira vs 1-11

- A. This event is a follow up to the events of 4:32-37
  - 1. The great giving had a dark side through these two
  - 2. Even within the early church there was the issue of falling out, as seen very early on
  - 3. The issue is their lie, not the withholding of money
    - a. Why lie? Most likely for esteem
  - 4. Great fear - There was no like punishment when the Temple authorities cheated others
    - a. Heb 10:28-30

### II. Of one accord in Solomon's Portico vs 12-16

- A. Being of "one accord" in one place might describe a congregational assembly
  - 1. Solomon's Porch - a colonnade of 27ft columns,
    - a. Possibly the only place big enough to meet to worship in Jerusalem
    - b. Likely there is more than one congregation (1 Thes. 2:14, Gal. 1:13))
  - 2. Any Jew could gather here (3:11) (2:46)
- B. Great Healing
  - 1. People from outside of Jerusalem are now coming

### III. Second Persecution - vs 17-42

- A. This time all of the apostles seem to have been arrested
  - 1. An angel sets them free
  - 2. They return to the temple and begin teaching again
- B. The next morning the High Priest Calls Together the Counsel and the Senate/edlers
  - 1. Major convention of the ruling men of Israel
    - a. There are 24 "Chief Priests", Luke 1:5
    - b. The Captain of the Temple is the man who oversees the Temple operation
  - 2. They find the apostles missing, but they are found back in the Temple
- C. Arrested again, without violence, for fear of being stoned by the people
- D. Second Trial - original charge was to keep silent
  - 1. Peter states the original defense from 4:19
  - 2. Peter essentially repeats his previous message, but much stronger reasoning
    - a. We obey God, not men
    - b. In killing Christ, you did not obey God
    - c. We testify, and the Holy Spirit testifies with us that we tell the truth
      - (1) Implication - if we are lying, so is the Holy Spirit
  - 3. This time, the audience is "cut to the quick" and intend to kill the apostles
- E. Gamaliel's intervention
  - 1. His wisdom - If this work is from men, it will fail; if it is from God, we will fail
    - a. Stand off, or literally stand aloof of these men
  - 2. Gamaliel's advice is taken, but the apostles are still flogged
- F. Result - Apostles were strengthened by their persecution
  - 1. Their teaching continued just as it had been

## Notes on Gamaliel

**Gamaliel the Elder**, or Rabbi Gamaliel I, was the grandson of the great Jewish teacher Hillel the Elder. He was a leading authority in the Sanhedrin in the mid first century. He died nine years before the destruction of Jerusalem (63 AD).

### **Gamaliel as Rabban** (Head Teacher)

In the Talmud, this Gamaliel bears the title "Rabban", a rabbinic title given to the Nasi (head) of the Sanhedrin, of which he is the first of seven appointed leaders of that school of Hillel which earned the title.

In the Mishna he is spoken of as the author of certain legal ordinances affecting the welfare of the community and regulating certain issues concerning conjugal rights. Among his rulings, Rabban Gamaliel decided that for the purposes of remarriage a single witness could provide sufficient evidence of the death of a husband (Yevamot 16:7).

In the tradition was also preserved the text of the epistles regarding the insertion of the intercalary month, which he sent to the inhabitants of Galilee and the Darom (southern Judea) and to the Jews of the Diaspora (Sanhedrin II b and elsewhere). He figures in two anecdotes as the religious adviser of Agrippa I and his wife Cypris (Pesahirri 88 ii). Of his teaching, beyond the saying preserved in Aboth i. 16, which enjoins the duty of study and of scrupulousness in the observance of religious ordinances, only a very remarkable characterization of the different natures of students remains. This compares distinct types of student to varieties of fish. (Aboth di R. Nathan, cb. xl.).

Gamaliel I held a reputation of one of the greatest teachers in the annals of Judaism. Mish. Sorah ix. 15 pays tribute to this quality, "Since Rabban Gamaliel the Elder died there has been no more reverence for the law, and purity and abstinence died out at the same time." While believing the law to be wholly inspired by God, he ruled that the sabbath laws should be less rigorous and more realistic. He also argued that the law should protect women during divorce and urged Jews to be kind towards Gentiles.

### **Gamaliel as a Christian?**

Because of his sympathetic attitude to the early Christians, at an early date Christian ecclesiastical tradition has supposed that Gamaliel I embraced the Christian faith, and remained a member of the Sanhedrin for the purpose of secretly helping his fellow-Christians (compare Recognitions of Clement I.65,66). According to Photius, he was baptized by St. Peter and St. John, together with his son and with Nicodemus.



## Acts Chapter 6:1 through 7:60 - "Are these things so?"

### I. The Growth of the Church causes some growing pains

#### A. All churches face internal disorders

1. Here is the first recorded issue of division in the church
2. Later, Acts 15 records a second church issue between Jew and Gentile
3. What is at the basis of this issue? Consider racism by neglect
  - a. Racial issue - natural born Jews vs Grecian Jews
  - b. If this is an issue in the church now, imagine what will happen when the Gentiles come into the church
  - c. Interesting to note that the two internal issues which confront the Jerusalem Church of Christ are based on racial strife

#### B. Specifically, the non-native widows are being neglected in the distribution of food

1. Per I Tim 5:3-16, one of the works of the church is the benevolence for widows
2. Here that benevolence is shown as being a daily distribution of food
  - a. This is serious; imagine waiting for your lunch and it never coming

#### C. Solution: The appointment of Pseudo Diakonīs

1. Are these the same as deacons of I Tim 3 - not certain
2. Here are their qualifications, per vs 3:
  - a. Good reputation (I Tim 3:7)
  - b. Full of the Spirit (I Tim 3:9)
  - c. Full of Wisdom (I Tim 3:2)
  - d. Able to be in charge of the task (I Tim 3:10)
3. If these are the "deacons" of I Tim 3, are there elders?
  - a. Peter and John are called elders later (John is too young here probably)
  - b. Church histories record James (half brother of Jesus) as an elder too
4. As the apostles are called "overseers" in Acts 1, these as "deacons" in that sense

### II. The growth of the church -- vs 7

A. The conversion of Priests, presumably many of whom were present with the two trials of Peter and the apostles in Chapter 4 and 5, may be placed here to present part of the reason why this upcoming third persecution ended in death

1. The ruling class itself is being converted

B. Later we are told there are Pharisees in the church too (Acts 15:5)

### III. Stephen's arrest

A. The trial and execution of Stephen mark the end of the first part of Acts (1:8)

B. Stephen is performing miracles and comes to the attention of multiple foreign synagogues

1. Libertine=Freedmen, refers to former slaves
2. The other synagogues are by region and imply they are non-native Jews like Stephen

C. Inability to refute Stephen - wisdom (vs 3) by the Holy Spirit (vs 3) overcome their reasoning

D. Stephen is falsely accused by them of blasphemy against Moses and God

1. Stephen's trial and death follow a pattern much like Jesus
2. Fulfilling Jesus prediction that his disciples would suffer as He did (Matt 10:24-36)

#### IV. The Trial of Stephen

##### A. Stephen is accused of:

1. Blasphemy against Moses, which means against the Law (vs 11 and 14)
  - a. Stephen would have taught that the Law was nullified, nailed to the cross
  - b. Moses himself would have known this to be true
2. Teaching about the destruction of the temple (Matt 24, Luke 21)
3. Blasphemy against God
  - a. Stephen never blasphemed God; this was the false witness
  - b. This was the death penalty issue - Lev 24:16

##### B. The Sanhedrin is called to hear the case

1. Stephen's face shown like an angel; recall Moses in Ex.34:30

##### C. Stephen's Defense - vs 2-53

1. Beginning with respectful terms, he recounts Jewish History
  - a. This is a smart defense, recounting Jewish History
  - b. it shows He intimately knows the Law of Moses, not likely he would violate it
2. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all were rewarded by God with Promises, not places
3. Moses was the deliverer, even he promised that someone was coming to Lead
4. "Our Fathers" rejected God AND Moses from the start
5. Solomon built the Temple, but that was not what God desired
6. Summary - Your history is of not listening and rebellion
  - a. Our Fathers ("Your Fathers") persecuted every prophet
  - b. You have the Law, enforce the Law, but do not obey the Law
  - c. You are proud of your fathers, and really are just like them
  - d. This is a repetition of what Jesus said in Matt 23:30-31

##### D. The audience enraged

1. At that moment, Jesus reveals Himself to Stephen (he is not alone)
2. With this statement, the Sanhedrin breaks its own decorum and turns to mob violence

#### V. Death of Stephen

##### A. Stephen is dragged out and stoned to death

##### B. Stephen quotes Christ one last time - forgiving his murderers - and dies

1. Saul is there helping them kill Stephen (8:1)

##### C. This violence does not end, but seems to induce widespread persecution of Christians

## Part II “...all Judea and Samaria...” 1:8

### Acts Chapter 8 - "Do you understand what you are reading?"

#### I. Beginning of the great persecution 1:1-3

- A. The day of the death of Stephen marks the beginning of a great persecution
- B. Introduction of Saul of Tarsus
- C. This persecution leads to the death of more than just Stephen – Acts 22:4
  - 1. Vs. 3 – Ravaging comes from a Gr word related to the destruction by animals
- D. Persecution brings about the growth of the church (James 1:2-3)

#### II. Phillip goes to Samaria

- A. One of the Seven, this gives light to the damage being done to the church there
- B. Samaria had previously been off limits for evangelism- Matt 10:5
  - 1. Samaritans were Gentiles who lived like Jews, but not descended from Israel
- C. Great works lead to conversions
  - 1. Among them a wizard named Simon
    - a. Greek word denotes him as magician (tricks), not sorcery (drug-induced)
    - b. He claimed to be what the apostles were, spokesmen of the “Great Power”
    - c. Though often debated, his conversion seems genuine per Luke
- D. The Apostles came to pass on miraculous gifts
  - 1. Not the Gift of the Holy Spirit (Eternal Life) which comes at Baptism
  - 2. This demonstrates that the apostles alone could pass on these gifts, Matt 19
  - 3. It required two actions from the apostles
    - a. prayer
    - b. laying on of hands
- E. Simon's request – make him equal with the apostles
  - 1. It is not the first time people have asked for power – Matt 20:21
  - 2. Simon proposes offering a personal incentive for this apostolic ability
  - 3. Peter rebukes Simon – commands him to repent
    - a. He is separated from God
    - b. His heart is not right; bitterness (Heb 12:15) and bondage of sin prevail
  - 4. Simon's repentance appears genuine
    - a. Certain churches have traditions it was not, but there is no evidence of this

#### III. Phillip called to the Ethiopian Treasurer

- A. Wealthy (proselyte?) Jew from Ethiopia returning from feasts in Jerusalem
  - 1. . Candace – title of Queen mother who carried out Kings work in Nubia
- B. Angel calls Phillip to intercept him on the road from Jerusalem south through Gaza
  - 1. Angels never preached the Gospel, but called others to do so
  - 2. There he sees and hears the Ethiopian reading Isaiah
    - a. Very wealthy Jew; not only is he in charge of the entire treasury, but owns his own copy of Isaiah, and travels with it
    - b. Seems frustrated with the “mystery” of Isa 53 (vs 31)
  - 3. From Isa 53 on Phillip preaches Jesus Christ
  - 4. “What prevents me from being baptized?” –the confession of Jesus Christ
- C. Phillip is left in Ashdod/Azotus, then travels to Caesarea
  - 1. There he and his family reside for the next 20 years,
    - a. Acts 21:8 we see Phillip again with 7 daughters

## Acts Chapter 9:1-30 - "Who are You, Lord?"

### I. Saul of Tarsus, enemy of God

#### A. Background from Scripture

1. Set apart at Birth (Gal 1:15); perhaps referring to his Hebrew and Roman citizenship
2. He is educated at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3)
  - a. He was advancing beyond his peers (Gal 1:14)
3. He exceeded his peers in the Pharisee way; son of a Pharisee (Acts 23:6)
4. His profession is a large cloth maker usually rendered tent-maker in Acts

#### B. Saul the Persecutor

1. Already seen he went from home to home, arresting saints (Acts 8:1-3)
  - a. Form the High Priests he had some type of authority to Arrest and imprison
2. He is a zealot (Gal 1:14, Php 3:6) who does this in ignorance (I Tim 1:13)
3. Compelled Saints to blaspheme, which could mean several things (worthy of death)
3. Persecuted beyond measure (Gal 1), even to death
  - a. Saul breathed murder (vs 1), voted for murder (Acts 26:10), and persecuted the Way to Death (Acts 22:4)

#### C. Mission to Damascus

1. Given a commission by letters to take to synagogues in Damascus to arrest Saints
  - a. Does Acts 22:5 suggests these letters were letters from Saints to Saint?
  - b. Bring them to Jerusalem
2. Outside Damascus he is blinded by a light
  - a. "Why are you persecuting ME?" in Hebrew (26:14)  
(1) Considerably more was said, per Acts 26:9-18
  - b. This begs the question, who is Me?
  - c. Jesus confirms His identity and tells him to go to town and be told what to do
3. The others with him see the light but don't hear/comprehend what is being said (22:9)

#### D. Taken into Damascus

1. Blind for three days, without food or water, praying
2. Waited at the house of Judas on Straight St. for someone to come to him

#### E. Annanias

1. Devote Jew (22:12), and now a devote Christian
2. Jesus comes to him and tells him to go to Saul
  - a. Saul came to arrest Annanias and all other believers; this is a serious request
  - b. Jesus tells Annanias that Saul is His chosen servant to reach the Jews and Gentiles and their kings; he will suffer much

#### F. Saul's conversion

1. He is told what to do, and does it – 18
2. Soon after he appears in the Synagogues (presumably the ones he was delivering letters to, vs 21) proclaiming Jesus as Lord
  - a. Confusion, baffled, astonished
3. Soon the Jews determined Saul needed to be killed
  - a. Saul escaped through a basket in a hole in the wall

#### G. Saul to Jerusalem (3 years after conversion, back to Damascus per Gal 1:13)

1. Was not accepted until Barabbas took him to the apostles
  - a. Stayed with Peter for 15 days (Gal 1:18)
2. Then Saul again begins preaching, until again His life becomes threatened
3. He is sent to Tarsus

## Acts Chapter 9:31-43 – Saints Outside Judaea

### I. Peace of the Church

- A. In three geographic areas the church is growing
  1. this may be prior to the events in the previous part of chapter 9
  2. The church enjoyed peace, and was built up
    - a. not numerically here, but equipped and strengthened
  3. The church increased (numerically)
- B. Fear of the Lord and Comfort of the Holy Spirit are mentioned throughout Acts

### II. Peter travels the country visiting Saints

- A. Peter in Lydda
  1. He meets Aeneas (presumably a saint) and heals him
  2. All of the people in these towns turn to the Lord
- B. Peter in Joppa
  1. Tabitha (Gr Dorcus, Gazelle), another saint
  2. Known for her good deeds
  3. Died from illness
    - a. Body was washed and placed in waiting
    - b. In Jerusalem a body had to be buried that day; outside Jerusalem, up to 3 days
  4. The saints in Joppa sent for Peter, who was 12 miles away in Lydda
  5. Peter is greeted by the widows of the church
    - a. Showing him the clothing Tabitha had made
    - b. Good works are visible and apparent, especially here
  6. Peter prayed, then commanded Tabitha to arise
    - a. opens her eyes and sat up
  7. Presented to the believers; many people believed over this
    - a. Peter was present when Jesus raised Jairus's daughter, Lazarus & the widow's son
    - b. With Jairus's daughter, Jesus also commanded everyone to leave
- C. Simon the Tanner
  1. Interesting to note Peter stayed with the tanner
  2. Tanner handled skins, which (since they were dead animals) were unclean
  3. Tanners also smelled strongly of the mixtures they used
  4. Peter stayed in the home of someone who was ceremoniously unclean

## Acts Chapter 10 - "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized?"

### I. The man Cornelius (1-2)

#### A. Gentile, probably Roman (Cornelius is pretty common Latin name)

1. Centurion – “Hundred Man”, over roughly 100 soldiers (
  - a. Modern equivalent of Army Captain / Sgt Major
  - b. Usually upper class (because it required a patrician), over the age of 30
  - c. A century is roughly a modern Army company)
2. The Italian Cohort (Regiment)
  - a. Most groups were broken out by their country of origin or muster
  - b. This particular group was also called the Augustan or Imperial Regiment
  - c. Same regiment as the centurion who carried Paul to Rome, Acts 27:1
3. Caesarea – Headquarters for Roman forces in Judea
  - a. not numerically here, but equipped and strengthened

#### B. God-fearing Gentile

1. Roman Soldiers (because they were so well traveled) participated in many religions
  - a. Particularly was the Cult of Mithra
2. He and his family worshiped God as a Gentile; 2 particular attributes
  - a. Giving to the Poor
  - b. Efforts in prayer
3. “God-Fearing” refers to someone who was not a proselyte in Jewish language
  - a. Some would consider him as living under of the Covenant of Noah
  - b. well respected by the Jews (vs 22)
4. Consider other God-fearing Gentile soldiers - Naaman

### II. Cornelius's Vision (3-8)

#### A. At 3 in the afternoon; this is the Jewish hour of prayer (incense) Acts 3:1

1. Angel of God speaks to him - “Your prayers have been answered”
  - a. Which causes one to consider, what was he praying for?
2. Send for Simon in Joppa at the tanner's house
  - a. No explanation given, but to “hear what you have to say” vs 22

#### B. Cornelius sends 3 men, a soldier and 2 servants

1. one of them is himself devout (soldier)
2. Cornelius tells them everything
  - a. A sign of trust for an officer to explain to servants why he is sending them
3. Consider how unusual it would be for a soldier to request for a fisherman to come
4. 30 miles north of Joppa – over one day's travel

### III. Peter's Vision (9-23)

#### A. Next day – Peter is praying on the roof

1. Necessity for solitude time for prayer is often seen in scripture; Matt 6, etc
2. Waiting to get something to eat

#### B. Peter falls into a trance

1. What looked like a large sheet full of all kinds of animals
  - a. both clean and unclean
2. “Kill and Eat”
  - a. Peter refuses, citing that the animals are unclean
  - b. The voice tells him that God created nothing impure (Eccl)
  - c. This occurs three times, then the sheet is taken up to heaven
3. Peter does not understand at first what this means

a. Consider though that Peter is living in the house of an “unclean” man, Simon

C. A soldier and two servants arrive at the door afterward

1. Peter's past encounters with soldiers has been difficult
2. The Spirit speaks to Peter – go to the three men
3. The men explain to Peter why they have come, and Peter has them stay a day

IV. Peter Meets Cornelius (24-48)

A. Peter travels to Caesarea and meets Cornelius (with 6 Jewish brothers, vs 45. 11:12)

1. Cornelius has a house full of people to meet them (friends and family)
2. Cornelius (The Centurion) falls at the feet of Peter (the fisherman)
  - a. “I am only a man” - it is unclear who/what Cornelius expected

B. Peter references the Jewish laws pertaining clean/unclean

1. “Against our law to associate or visit with a Gentile”
  - a. Not Mosaic law, but tradition
2. God has shown Peter there is no clean or unclean
3. Cornelius recounts the vision to Peter
  - a. “Now speak what you have been commanded to say”

C. Peter's understanding

1. God spoke to Cornelius, with the vision, indicates that Jesus Christ is for all men
2. Peter speaks as Cornelius has already heard about Jesus Christ, but not accepted
3. Peter's New Sermon
  - a. Recounts How Jesus was God's anointed, He was murdered, then arose
  - b. Explains his part as a witness of these things
  - c. Explains this is a prophetic message – forgiveness through Jesus

D. Coming of the Holy Spirit

1. While speaking, the Holy Spirit descends in power on all who heard
2. Holy Spirit came on Cornelius as it did the Apostles
  - a. Suddenly, without a laying on of hands
3. This did not save these men; they still needed to hear what to do to be saved
  - a. The message (the Gospel) saves (11:14)
  - b. Peter ORDERED them to be baptized

## Acts Chapter 11- "Who was I that I could withstand God?"

### I. Peter Defends His Actions (1-18)

#### A. What Peter has done (preached the Gospel to a Gentile) becomes news to all

1. When the Christians here of it, they are not happy
  - a. They "took issue" "contended" over this; idea is they stood opposed to him
  - b. This makes it clear Peter is not the "Leader" of the church
  - c. Peter must give a defense of his actions
2. Their contention is in 2 parts
  - a. First, that Gentiles did not become circumcised
    - (1) Samaritans were tolerated probably due to their circumcision
    - (2) Derogatory statement more than a statement of fact
  - b. Second, Peter ate with them
    - (1) It seems that most Christians at that time understood Jesus would save the world
    - (2) But they were looking for a "Separate but equal" church situation
4. The issue of racial distinction
  - a. Paul: Neither Jew Nor Greek in Christ
    - (1) Romans
    - (2) Galatians
    - (3) I Corinthians
    - (4) Colossians
  - b. One great issue to overcome is the desire to "fellowship" among our own
    - (1) I John 1:7 – all who are in Christ have fellowship put upon them
  - c. A Jew would need for God Himself to say this was acceptable

#### B. Peter's defense (4-17)

1. Peter came prepared to defend this with 6 witnesses
2. Peter's reply is notably calm in the face of the frustration of the brethren
  - a. Idea here is that he had already decided what to say
3. Peter's point is that it was God who directed all of these events
  - a. God sent Peter the vision
  - b. God sent Cornelius the messenger
  - c. God Sent the messenger to Peter to go to Cornelius
  - c. God sent Cornelius the Holy Spirit in the presence of Peter
4. Statements of interest here
  - a. vs 14 – Peter will speak the words by which you and your household will be saved
    - (1) Cornelius's good works (10:1-2) were insufficient to save him
    - (2) Holy Spirit baptism was insufficient to save him
    - (3) Cornelius's household are his kinsmen and friend (10:24)
  - b. Vs 15 and 17 – Holy Spirit came to Cornelius in the same way He came to apostles in the beginning
    - (1) This establishes that this has only happened 2 times in history in NT
    - (2) This establishes that Pentecost is in fact "The Beginning"
      - (a) It is already established that it was the "Last Days" (2:17)

#### C. Response of the Saints

1. Acceptance – this is a big pill to swallow, but they put aside strong personal bias and agree that Peter acted by the will of God
  - a. God granted Repentance to the Gentiles



## II. At the Same time..... (Vs 19-21)

A. It appears that what happened here is the same time as Peter, but they probably were not aware of Peter's direction

1. This seems to show providence in timing for Peter to speak to the Saints in Jerusalem, and then they hear that this is occurring everywhere
2. Vs 21 – the Hand of the Lord was with them; this was God's will too

B. Time frame – most scholars place this around 40AD, about 10 years after Pentecost

## III. The Church of Christ in Antioch

A. First Jew and Greek congregation

B. Barnabas sent to Antioch (presumably under apostolic direction)

1. Able man, it seems he has twice been identified as being a good man, probably a very encouraging person to be around
2. Possibly – Barnabas is a peacemaker, a mender personality
  - a. Son of Encouragement (4:36)
  - b. Reconciles Saul to the Saints in Jerusalem (9: 27)
  - c. He is the one sent by the apostles to work with the church in Antioch (11:22)
3. After seeing what is happening, Barnabas decides (inspired?) that there is one man he needs to work with him
  - a. Barnabas travels about 100 miles north to Tarsus and seeks Saul
    - (1) Seek means to Hunt out in Gr; seems he had some trouble finding him
  - a. They begin a partnership of preaching
4. They teach in Antioch for a year

C. “First called Christians”

1. Before this, they were called Jews by Gentiles, Nazarenes or Galileans by Jews
2. Needed a name that people could call them all
3. Christian: *Christianos*; an amalgamation of Hebrew meaning, Greek words, and Latin suffixes (remember the “King of the Jews” sign)
  - a. Some believe that because of Pagan culture, it was meant derogatory
  - b. Mentioned two other times – Acts 26:28 and I Pet 4:16
    - (1) One is by Agrippa, one references what you are called
  - c. Clearly the name came from the outside
    - (1) Peter makes the point – be worthy of what you are called
4. Most common name for members of Christ's church
  - a. Saint – 52 times
    - (1) Sanctified – 7 times
  - b. Called – approximately 35 times
  - c. Believer/Believing – approximately 15 times
  - c. Child (of God) – approximately 25 times (mainly by John)

D. Prophecy of Famine

1. Prophet Agabus came from Jerusalem
  - a. Later he would meet Paul in Caesarea in Acts 21:10
2. Forecast a famine that would occur in the reign of Claudius (41-54 AD)
  - a. this famine occurred around 45AD per most historians
3. The saints in Antioch set aside for the saints in Judea
  - a. Interesting to note it was not for the Jews
  - b. Sail and Barnabas sent with this to the elders in Jerusalem
    - (1) Interesting to note that it was sent to the elders, not the apostles

## Acts Chapter 12 - Persecution

### I. Herod arises to destroy the church (vs 1-25), the next great persecution

#### A. Herod Agrippa I

1. Grandson of Herod the Great, his father Aristobulus was executed by his grandfather
2. Raised in Rome in the court of Tiberius, he is more Roman than Judean/Imudean
  - a. Raised with Emperor Gaius
3. He has the Roman title “King of the Jews” as did his grandfather and uncle

#### B. Death of James Bar Zebedee

1. Jesus had told James and John they would suffer His cup (Mark 10:39, Rev 1:9)
2. Execution: “by the sword”
3. Herod wanted to please the Jews
  - a. Some believe he was the most popular of the Herodians

#### C. Arrest of Peter

1. This pleased the Jews, who had not actually persecuted the apostles
2. It appears that the Jews feared the apostle’s popularity (5:26, (4:16))
  - a. So for the King to do it, was a good solution
3. Peter is held awaiting execution at the end of the week
  - a. Remember what Peter was told about his death (John 21:18)
4. Four quaternions (squad of four) assigned to guard him – 16 soldiers
  - a. Presumably 4 for each of the 4 watches
  - b. One on either side of Peter, 2 at the door
  - c. Truly inescapable situation which Peter is in
  - d. Peter is here presumably a week
  - e. Since it was unlikely Jews were going to kill Peter in a holy week, the guards seem to be there to prevent the Saints from breaking Peter out

#### D. The rescue by the Angel (and the Saints)

1. The Saints do their part – they have been in fervent prayer (vs5)
2. An Angel appears
  - a. A light shows into the cell
  - b. He hits Peter in the side and tells him to “get up quickly”
  - c. A chain on each hand is opened
  - d. The angel tells Peter to get dressed, and to follow him
  - e. Peter does not perceive this is actually happening until the Angel leaves him
3. Peter and the Angel pass the guards, the gates are opened, and the Peter is alone
  - a. Peter realizes then that God has delivered him
  - b. He is not subject to Herod's punishment, since the greater King set him free
4. Goes to the house of Mary

#### E. Reunion with the Saints

1. Mary, mother of Mark, aunt to Barnabas; not clear if this is one of the Mary's of the Gospels (probably not)
  - a. Mark was a young man in the time of Christ, Mk 14:51, putting him near 30
2. Wealthy enough family to have servants, as seen with Rhoda
  - a. She hears Peter's voice, fails to open the gate but runs back to everyone
  - b. She is not believed; at first she is presumed to be out of her mind
  - c. Next it is believed she is seeing Peter's Angel  
(1) Matt 18:10; Heb 1:14
3. They open the gate and find Peter, who tells them to be quiet
  - a. He instructs them to notify James & the Brethren

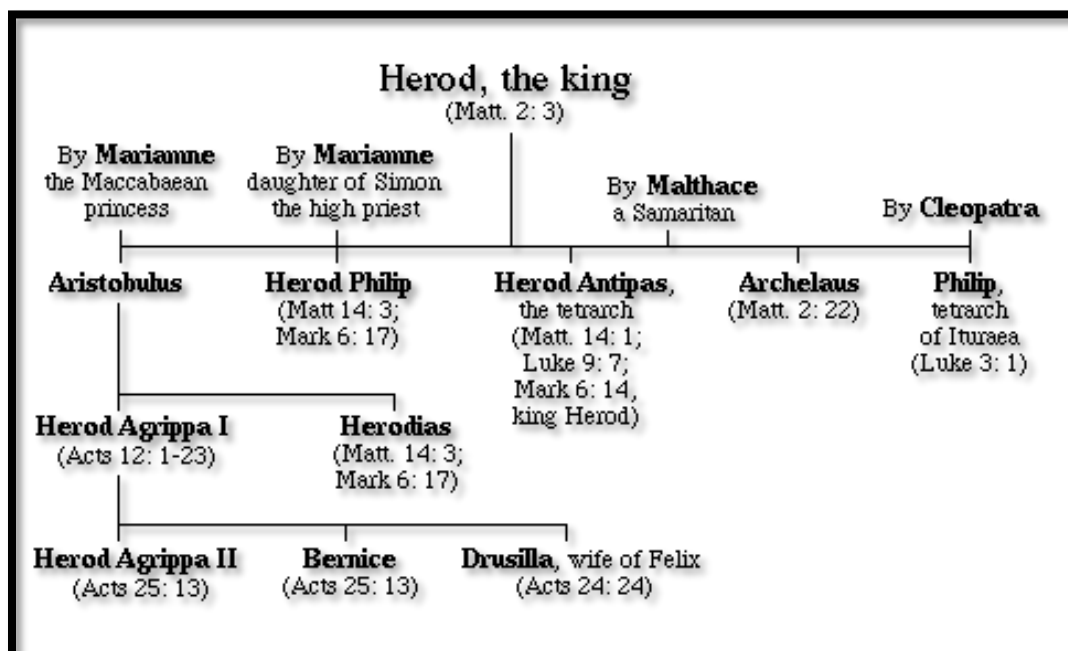
- (1) The elders of 11:30; James is prominent as an elder and Jesus' brother
- b. He himself went to another place; he was dangerous to Mary and her household as he is a fugitive

F. The Next Day

1. No small commotion – a prisoner disappeared from between two guards, walked out
2. Some translations indicate the guards were put to death
  - a. Per Roman law, guards who allowed prisoners to escape were subject to the same penalty the prisoners were
  - b. Agrippa questioned the guards first
    - (1) Some suspect Agrippa must have presumed they let Peter go willingly
3. Soon after, Agrippa leaves for Caesarea (44AD)
  - a. The Phoenicians had offended Herod, there is no historical information
  - b. They are dependent for food; this is the same year as the famine (11:28)
  - c. He arrives and makes peace and when before them he dons royal apparel
    - (1) Josephus records that this was a garment of woven silver, which reflected sunlight and made him look like the sun itself
  - d. The people chant “the voice of a god and not of a man”
  - e. Immediately he was struck for allowing this to occur
    - (1) He was eaten by worms and died, per Josephus 5 days later

II. The Word of God multiplied

- A. Saul and Barnabas returned to Antioch from delivering relief to Jerusalem, w/ Mark
  1. They were likely witness to what occurred with Peter
  2. This seems to be the period mentioned in Galatians 2:1-11
- B. Thus the pattern is complete
  1. Death of a Saint (James)
    - a. Stephen in 7:60
  2. Persecution within the localized area (Herod's kingdom)
    - a. Jews of Jerusalem 8:1
  3. The Kingdom is spread out into the world (13:2)
    - a. Throughout Judea and Samaria in 8:4



## Acts Chapter 13 – Going to All the World

### I. The church in Antioch sends out preachers

#### A. Holy Spirit calls out Saul and Barnabas

1. The church was gathered for worship (here minister is the same as a priest does)
2. Fasting and praying, they laid on hands and prayed more, then sent them on their way

#### B. Along with them is John Mark (12:25, 13:5)

#### C. Apostleship of Paul and Barnabas

1. Apostle means a special representative (ambassador, II Cor 5:20)
  - a. In a generic sense, Titus, Epiphraaditus (Php 2:25) are called apostles
  - b. Comes from the word *apostello*, which means set apart
2. Acts 13:2 is the ordaining of Saul and Barnabas as apostles
  - a. Acts 14:4,14 it is clear they are now apostles
  - b. They are called apostles (Rom 1:1,5; I Cor 9:1-5, II Cor 11:5)
3. Paul makes it clear that though equal to the other apostles, he is different
  - a. Not one of the 12 – I Cor 15:5
  - b. The 12 were to the Jews, He is apostle to the Gentiles - Gal 2:8, I Tim 2:7, II Tim 1:11, I Pet 1:1

### II. Cyprus

#### A. Large Jewish population on Cyprus

1. First to the Jew, this is the pattern

#### B. Before the court of Sergius Paulus

1. A Sorcerer named Bar-Jesus (Jewish) or Elymas (Cyprian) opposed them
2. Paulus wanted to hear the Gospel
3. Paul speaks the message of the Holy Spirit, Elymas is struck by God
  - a. This confirms again He is an apostle

#### C. Saul becomes Paul

1. Significant in that this is a *Gentile-ization* of the name Saul
2. Much symbolism in the change of a name; this one is to be all things to all men

### III. Pisidian Antioch (via Perga)

#### A. John left them at Perga, and went back home to Jerusalem

1. He deserted them, word emphasizes it was not everyone's desire in Acts 15:38

#### B. On Saturday, they came to the synagogue and were invited to speak; Paul's sermon

1. Origin of Israel
2. Selection of David through whom the savior would come
3. Importance of John the Baptist's message (vs 24,
  - a. Remember, John had disciples all over the world (Apollos, Acts 18:25, 19:4)
4. Death of Jesus Christ at the hands of the rulers of Israel
5. Resurrection by God
6. The Forgiveness of Sins
  - a. Cannot be obtained through the law of Moses
7. Warning – it is prophesied some (many) will reject it

#### C. Meeting breaks up, and the Jews begged to have them return next week, some urged him to continue immediately

#### E. Next Saturday: the whole town was there

1. Jealousy caused some Jews to rebuttal Paul's speech
2. Paul then turns to the Gentiles with the message, who received it with joy
3. Riot is instigated, and so the Apostles move on

## Acts Chapter 14 – “Men, why are you doing these things?”

### I. Iconium

- A. The set practice is now clear – Speak at the synagogue until removed
- B. A large number of both Jews and Gentiles believed; God granted signs through them
  - 1. But a few Jews did not; they stirred up the gentiles against them
  - 2. A division in town: the apostles vs. the anti-Gospel Jews and Gentiles
  - 3. After some time a conspiracy to murder occurs, and the apostles leave

### II. Lystra (possibly the home town of Timothy)

- A. Paul healed a lame man (much like Peter did in Acts 3)
- B. When the residents saw this, they proclaim the apostles as Zeus and Mercury
  - 1. There was an ancient legend that Zeus and Hermes had come before, but no one proclaimed them, so they left (presumably upset)
  - 2. The Priest of the Temple of Zeus comes to offer sacrifices
  - 3. Paul and Barnabas proclaim dramatically that they are not gods, but men
    - a.” Men of the same nature as you”
    - b. Some debate that we have a sinful nature until we are saved, then we change our inner nature....
- C. Paul's Sermon
  - 1. There is One Living God who is the creator of all things
  - 2. In the past God was not directly revealed to the pagans
    - a. God did leave indirect evidence of His presence
  - 3. This lesson parallels the one in Acts 17:24-31, and Romans 1:18-20
- D. Jews following them from the last two towns persuade the people to kill Paul
  - 1. This shows that the desire to terminate Paul & his message are not just reactionary, but represent a planned effort throughout the region
  - 1. Paul arises from being stoned; miraculous preservation or resurrection.....
  - 2. Next day he left town

### III. Return trip

- A. Apostles return the way they traveled
- B. Ultimately they returned to Antioch, the church which sent them outstretched
  - 1. Report is made on all that they had done
  - 2. Here they spent “a long time”
- C. While here it seems likely that Peter (who seems to have left Jerusalem after his arrest) came down, possibly staying during Paul's absence

## Acts Chapter 15 - The Great Debate

### I. The problem arrives at Antioch

- A. Judaizing teachers from Judea (likely from Jerusalem and James, Gal 2:12)
- B. At first they are very successful, convicting even Peter and Barnabas
  - 1. However, as previously studied, Paul is able to persuade Peter, then presumably Barnabas, of this error
  - 2. The error is refuted, but it is determined that they need to go (with others, possibly Peter?) to Jerusalem
    - a. Heart of the error
    - b. Gathering of the apostles
- C. They passed through the surrounding regions, presumably doing the same thing they would do in Jerusalem
  - 1. Teaching them about the Law of Christ

### II. At Jerusalem

- A. They are received by the church, the elders and the apostles there
  - 1. Indicating that the teachers did not represent all there
- B. The Pharisee Christians
  - 1. Think of this as being like a political party
  - 2. They stood up and stated that it was necessary to circumcise Gentiles
- C. The Debate
  - 1. Note that it is not thrown out, but considered by all present
    - a. This was not about who was right and wrong, this was about searching out Truth in the scriptures
  - 2. The statement is that the apostles and elders came together to discuss this
    - a. In vs 2, 4, 6 the role of the apostles and elders is highlighted
    - b. However, vs 12, 22 indicate that this is a meeting of the entire church
    - c. This may be construed as a debate (vs 7) much like modern debates
  - 3. For circumcision:
    - a. Some still teach in observing the Law of Moses
    - b. There are several possible reasons why they taught this:
      - (1) They believed it was necessary for the covenant to be in effect
      - (2) They feared the rest of the Jews and sought reconciliation (Gal 6:12)
      - (3) They feared paganism (vs 29) and went to the opposite extreme
      - (4) They wanted a more “unified” church
  - 4. Against Circumcision: Peter, Paul and Barnabas
    - a. Peter's Point: Look what God has done
      - (1) It has been some time since God brought Gentiles to him
        - (a) 40AD; it is now about 51AD
      - (2) God was the one who testified to their part in the Gospel
        - (a) Vs 9 is much like Paul's “neither Jew nor Greek”
      - (3) Converting them to Judaism is being opposed to God
      - (4) Law of Moses was not born successfully by anyone before them
        - (a) We can't have Grace if they can't
    - b. Barnabas and Paul's Testimony: Look what God has done
      - (1) Paul and Barnabas relate the events from Acts 13 – 14

#### D. The Conclusion

1. James related that God's selection of the Gentiles was pre-determined
  - a. The Prophets testified as to the “wealth of the nations”

*Zec 14:14a Judah also will fight at Jerusalem. And the wealth of all the surrounding nations Shall be gathered together.....*

*Isa 60:5b .....Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you.*

*Isa 60:16a You shall drink the milk of the Gentiles*

*Isa 61:6 But you shall be named the priests of the LORD, They shall call you the servants of our God. You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, And in their glory you shall boast. 7 Instead of your shame you shall have double honor; And instead of confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore in their land they shall possess double; Everlasting joy shall be theirs.*

2. James has the apparent role of an elder in the church
  - a. This may be the first time James has made this his position (Gal 2:12)
  - b. This reveals that for the congregation in Jerusalem, the elders are the voice
3. The directions of the church – 4 parts
  - a. What the churches needed to remember:
    - (1) Do not eat food sacrificed to idols (I Cor 8:4-8)
    - (2) Abstain from fornication (I Cor 6:15-20)
    - (3) Do not eat or consume blood
    - (4) Do not eat something that has been strangled
  - b. Purpose:
    - (1) Verse 21 – to avoid offending the Jews
    - (2) Avoiding the immorality of Paganism
    - (3) This may concede a point to the Pharisee Christians

#### E. Letter to the churches of Cilicia, Syria and Antioch

1. One church to another – there is no oversight of one church or another
2. Purpose: to refute what some who had left there were teaching
  - a. Teaching without authority of the church or of the Holy Spirit
3. They are all of one mind
  - a. In agreement with Paul and Barnabas
4. Addition of two men of character from the Church in Jerusalem to verify this
  - a. Silas (aka Silvanus) a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37)
  - b. Judas
5. Commended by Holy Spirit to observe four things

#### F. Received with joy in Antioch

1. There would be no division among apostles and churches

#### G. Great point: The Holy Spirit commended them to this (vs 28) but never directly acted

1. They resolved this with the Holy Spirit the exact same way we do today:
  - a. Examined God's commands, examples, and made a necessary inference

### III. Second Commissionary journey begins

#### A. Decision by Paul and Barnabas to revisit the cities they visited in Acts 13-14

#### B. Argument between friends – TO take Mark or not

1. Barnabas is for it, Paul is against it
2. Their argument resulted in separation (perhaps amiable) and Barnabas went on another journey instead
3. Paul took Silas instead

## Acts Chapter 16 - "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

### I. Paul and Silas Begin their Journey (circa AD 52)

#### A. Syria and Cilicia (15)

#### B. Derbe and Lystra (14:6)

1. Previous journey, they healed the lame man in Lystra, and were worshiped there
  - a. This led to Paul being stoned in Lystra by Jews of the region

#### 2. Meeting with Timothy

##### a. Well known, spoken of by the brethren

- (1) Age unclear, but he was a youth (I Tim 4:12) when Paul wrote him about 10 years later

##### b. Mother: Eunice; Grandmother: Lois; father: un-named Greek

##### c. He is circumcised (why not as a child is unknown) for the sake of the Jews

- (1) Paul and Silas are teaching the need to get along, the letter from Jerusalem (vs. 4)

##### d. He has a knowledge of scripture taught from birth 2 Tim 3:15

#### C. Denied access by Holy Spirit to Bithynia, Asia (central Turkey), so they went to Troad/Troas

1. They are stopped from heading north or east
2. Troas is the region named for the mythical city of Troy/Trojans
3. It is likely this is where Luke is picked up, based on personal pronouns in the text

### II. The Macedonian Call

#### A. Paul's dream – A Macedonian man calling for them

1. Conclude this (with the geographic restrictions the Holy Spirit has given) is God calling them to Europe

#### B. Samothrace to Neapolis to Phillipi

#### 1. There on the Sabbath they go to the location where women gather for prayers

##### a. Obviously not far since it is a Sabbath day's journey

#### 2. Lydia, the dyer of purple from Thyatira (back east of Troas)

##### a. She and her whole household are baptized, saved

##### b. Her home becomes the place Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke headquarter at

##### c. She is almost certainly well off, probably a substantial home

#### 3. The possessed slave girl

##### a. She tells "fortunes" for her masters

- (1) Divination = Puthon in GR, the Greek God Python/Apollo, Oracle of Delphi

##### (2) Luke identifies her with the false god Apollo

##### b. the demon is following them, proclaiming the Gospel

- (1) Demons have "proclaimed" the gospel before, Mk1

##### (2) Demons believe Jesus is Lord too – James 2

##### c. The demon becomes annoying (lit. worrisome) to Paul, and is cast out

- (1) No longer can it read fortunes, and the profit is lost to her masters

#### 4. The arrest of Paul and Silas

##### a. The masters press charges that Paul and Silas are teaching Jewish customs unlawful to observe for Romans

##### (1) Phillipi is a Roman colony

##### (2) Roman custom (possibly law) is that no new religion can be introduced by a foreigner

- (a) Cicero (de Legibus ii. 8) says, "*No person shall have any*



*separate gods, or new ones; nor shall he privately worship any strange gods, unless they be publicly allowed."*

(b) Later Tertullian adds it has to be approved by the Senate

b. It is clear that "law" is the last thing these men care about, creating a mob

c. Magistrates (military) ordered them to be beaten and thrown into prison

#### 5. Philippian Jailer

a. Ordered to keep them secured in prison, he secures them in the inner jail

b. At midnight, while singing, with other prisoners listening, an earthquake opens the prison cells and unlooses everyone

(1) None of the prisoners flee, evidently interested in Paul's message

c. The jailer is going to kill himself over the penalty for escaped prisoners

(1) A jailer or guard is accountable for the punishment the prisoners receive

(2) Suicide is a very common Greco-Roman way of dealing with shame

d. The Jailer asks "what must I do to be saved?" similar to Acts 2:37

(1) *"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, you and all your household"*

(2) Obviously this is a generic statement, not all things he must obey;

(a) All of his family was not saved because he believed

(b) He was baptized in vs 33 for his salvation, as his family too

e. The prisoner becomes the guest

(1) He washed their wounds, they washed his sins

#### 6. Their release

a. When release comes, Paul refuses to go quietly

(1) He has been beaten without trial; he and Silas are both Roman citizens

b. Paul and Silas are now in a position of prosecution against the men who charged them and the magistrates

(1) Some magistrates were put to death for this action

c. Paul and Silas are merciful

(1) They encourage the brethren and leave the city

(2) Consider that this may protect the brethren in the city in the future, as they can always appeal to the magistrates for protection because of what has happened

## Acts Chapter 17- "May we know what this new doctrine is of which you speak?"

### I. Departing from Philippi and coming to Thessalonica

#### A. Arrival and persuasion

1. Paul and Silas spend three Saturdays persuading the synagogue of the validity of the claim to the throne that Jesus Christ has
2. This seems to be a very profitable period, with a number being converted
  - a. Both Greek and Jew

#### B. Backlash

1. Those Jews who did not see the Christ reacted by inciting a riot
  - a. This has become a pattern: incite the Gentiles to riot
  - b. This apparently recently caused the expulsion of the Jews in Rome
  - c. Consider: 13:50, 14:4, 14:19, 18:29
2. Riots are easy to start, and the solution is usually not to arrest the rioter (too many), but to remove the source of the riot
3. Bring an Accusation: Treason
  - a. They arrested Jason, whose home they stayed in
  - b. The authorities forced Jason to pledge (not to house them?)
  - c. The apostles then left town

### II. Berea

#### A. The Noble-minded Bereans who searched the scriptures daily

1. Literally "high-being" or "high-born"
2. A number believed here too

#### B. Jews in Thessalonica heard about this and followed them to Berea

1. Again, attempted to incite a riot
2. Again, Paul and Silas move on
3. This time Timothy and Silas go to the coast, and Paul is sent to Athens (alone?)
  - a. Luke probably remained in Philippi, due to the change in narrative voice

### III. Athens

#### A. While Paul is waiting for Silas and Timothy, he is provoked to speak out

1. Athens is the academic heart of the empire
2. A "college town"; the major schools of philosophy and debate are here
  - a. Many Roman noblemen were trained to debate at these schools
  - b. Imagine today going into Harvard or MIT and debating evolution
3. Full of idols
  - a. Romans had a saying "It is easier to find a god in Athens than a man"
4. Paul begins in the synagogue, and daily in the market

#### B. This draws attention to the philosophers, so Paul is invited to address them at Areopagus

1. Two of the schools of philosophy
  - a. Epicureans: hedonism, no afterlife
    - (1) All of Self
  - b. Stoics: pantheism; no immortal soul; good is its own reward; one with nature
    - (1) None of self
2. Idle babbling – literally seed-picker; the idea was that Paul had heard a little bit and thought he knew something because of it, very condescending
  - a. The real reason is revealed that they wanted to hear something new
  - b. One Greek king stated that it was the question on everyone's lips in Athens, "have you heard something new"

### C. The Unknown God

1. This inscription has not existed to today
2. It was common for alters to be made to the “unknown gods”, one survived in Turkey
3. The one of such an alter is by a Greek historian in 200AD
  - a. He states that around 600BC there was a plague, and the philosopher Epimenides solved it by releasing sheep in town, and at the alter nearest where each one laid down, they would sacrifice. At least one sheep laid where there were no alters nearby, so one was made to the Unknown God
  - b. Athenians would swear "*in the name of the Unknown God*" (Νῆ τὸν Ἄγνωστον Ne ton Agnoston).[ Pseudo-Lucian, Philopatris]. Apollodorus Philostratus and Pausanias wrote about the Unknown God as well.
  - c. *The Unknown God* was not so much a specific deity, but a placeholder, for whatever god or gods actually existed but whose name and nature were not revealed to the Athenians or the Hellenized world at large.
4. Paul states that they are very superstitious/religious
  - a. Literally the word references the idea of fear of divine power
  - b. Paul will proclaim what they are ignorant of

### D. The Gentile Lesson

1. As we studied back in Acts 14, Paul uses a different lesson for the Gentiles
  - a. God is the Creator of the World (14:15)
    - (1) As creator, God's nature cannot be made from the creation
    - (2) There is evidence of this God throughout His creation
  - b. Men are made in a divine image (14:15)
    - (1) Paul quotes two Greek philosophers, showing His understanding
      - (a) “*In Him we live and move and have our being*” Epimenides
      - (b) “*We are His offspring*” Artus
  - c. In the past God did not call the Gentiles (“overlooked ignorance” here) (14:16)
  - d. Now the time has come to know Him
2. In addition to this, Paul adds to this the idea of a final and eternal judgment
  - a. He has successfully disabled the Stoic and Epicurean philosophies
  - b. One of these “professors”, Dionysius, was converted
3. Paul is met with skepticism
  - a. Resurrection is not part of either philosophy
  - b. Paul would leave them soon after this
  - c. Paul will travel to Corinth, where he is reunited with Silas and Timothy

## Acts Chapter 18 - "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent"

### I. Departing from Athens and coming to Corinth (51AD)

#### A. City of Corinth

1. Approximately 250,000 free persons, 400,000 slaves
2. City well known for immorality
  - a. A Greek expression "to Corinthianize" meant "to practice sexual immorality"

#### B. Meeting of Aquila and Priscilla

1. Roman Jews expelled by Claudius probably around AD49
  - a. Per Suetonius, instigated by "Chrestus" (Christ)
2. Paul takes up a profession in town, only preaching "part-time"
  - a. This is clarified in that when Timothy and Silas come, he resumes "full-time"
  - b. Even part time he is in the Synagogue every week teaching
3. When he begins speaking "full-time", he is forced to end his work with Jews only as previously occurred (Acts 13:46)

#### C. Paul's message to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 2:1-5)

1. Taught the Gospel story of Christ
2. Used miraculous gifts to reinforce this teaching
3. Remained there for 18 months (vs 11) "some time" (vs 18)

#### D. Conversions

1. Titius Justus (not the same Titus as II Cor 2:13)
  - a. Gentile, probably not a proselyte
2. Crispus
  - b. Ruler of the Synagogue – responsible for order in services

#### E. Troubles in Corinth

1. Paul received a message NOT to leave when trouble came
  - a. Previously he left town when the uproar came
  - b. This time he is told to remain, because the Lord "has many people" in Corinth
2. Jews have Paul arrested (same charge as in Acts 16:21)
3. Gallio refuses to hear what he considers a matter of religious opinion
  - a. He is pro-consul, brother of the famous philosopher Seneca
    - (1) We know he was pro-consul in 51-52AD by inscription
  - b. Wisely saw there was no issue for Roman law
    - (1) Later Paul would defend Christianity as being the "Way of the Fathers" and therefore not a new religion to Felix in Acts 24:14
  - c. "Names and words" – an interesting interpretation of what Paul taught
  - d. Ejected from the court, the Jews beat Sosthenes, another synagogue leader
    - (1) Possibly the same as in I Cor 1:1

### II. From Corinth to back to Syria

#### A. Ephesus

1. Prior to this he cut his hair for a vow; we will talk more on this in Acts 21:26
2. He takes Aquila and Priscilla with him; they remain in Ephesus
  - a. There they meet and convert Apollos of Alexandria
  - b. After being taught he travels on to Corinth
3. Paul only spent a short time in Ephesus, then went back to Caesarea

#### B. Back to home

1. He spends some time at Antioch, then sets off again on his third journey through Asia
2. He will then come back to Ephesus to set things right

## Acts Chapter 19- "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"

### I. Paul's Return to Ephesus

A. In his previous visit (18:19) he stayed only briefly and left Aquila and Priscilla there

1. Now he returns and finds disciples who are incorrectly taught

a. They do not know about the Holy Spirit being poured out

b. They were not baptized for remission of sins

2. In order to correct this they are baptized and then Paul lays hands on them

3. This raises several questions:

a. How were they disciples if they were not baptized correctly

(1) Disciples could refer to disciples of John

(2) More likely they are disciples of Christ, but not of the Gospel

b. How could this error be present if Paul had taught there previously and left Priscilla and Aquila there

(1) This was fairly soon after Paul's previous visit, and it appears that

Aquila and Priscilla were working on correcting this error, as seen with

Apollos

4. Paul begins with 12 converted men and works with the synagogue

B. Speaking in the synagogue 3 months, then 2 years total in Ephesus

1. Most receptive Jews and Gentiles for Paul thus far

C. Events in Ephesus

1. With this long of time, Paul became well known in the area for the miracles God was performing

2. Jews attempted to copy this; the 7 sons of Sceva tried and failed

a. Became well known to all in the area

b. "Jesus I recognize (*ginosko*) Paul I am familiar with (*epistamai*)" James 2:19

3. Destruction of sorcery books totaling 50,000 silver pieces (drachmas, a day's wage)

a. Appears in this context to be books of sorcery, not *pharmikea*

b. Another possible context (like busybodies of I Tim 5:13) – lewd fiction

c. This really impacted people's perceptions

D. Riot of the Silversmiths

1. The greatest monument in Ephesus was the temple of Diana

a. It was one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world;

b. 500 years old at the time of Paul (although rebuilt after Alexander the Great)

b. It was enormous, a big money draw

2. Dmitrius spoke (possibly from the theater, which held up to 25,000 people) and stirred them against Paul for destroying the importance of Diana

a. The city riots

a. They seized Gaius and Aristarchus

c. Paul's friends (*ariarchs*, in charge of religious ceremony for the city and not likely Christians) told Paul not to go into the crowd, which was disorganized

d. Alexander is unknown; a Jew, apparently to defend the Jews or condemn Paul for the Jews

(1) He is caught up by the crowd too

3. The City Clerk saves the day

a. The scribe points out that no Christian has actually harmed Diana

b. Reminds them that they are risking punishment for riot, not the Christians

c. Disbanding of the group occurs without violence

## Acts Chapter 20 – “I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.”

### I. Paul's travel through Greece and Macedonia

#### A. Paul leaves Ephesus

1. North into Macedonia, then down to Greece

#### B. Paul's stay in Greece

1. It seems likely he stayed in Corinth (he may have written Romans in this time period)
2. This corresponds to his desire to come to Corinth
  - a. Paul mentions this being his 3rd visit, indicating that either he has visited once not recorded in Acts, or the three visits are his three letters to them  
(1) II Cor 2:1, 12:14, 13:1
3. There is a plot to kill him; this is a common occurrence
4. Paul determines to return the way he came

#### C. Return through Macedonia

1. Here we resume the narrative with Luke, who was left in Philippi in Acts 16
  - a. We can presume that Luke has remained here for the last 5 years
2. Travelling companions who went on to Troas while Luke and Paul remained in Philippi:
  - a. Sopater
  - b. Arsitarchus (Acts 19:29, 27:1)
  - c. Secundus
  - d. Gaius (Acts 19:29)
  - e. Timothy
  - f. Tychichus (Eph 6:21-22, Col 4:7-9; 2 Tim 4:12, Tit 3:12)
  - g. Trophimus (Acts 21:29)

### II. Troas

#### A. Meeting on the first day of the week

1. Here is a clear indication that the day observed 25 years previously as the day of worship is still the day of worship
2. Purpose: Communion and collection (I Cor 16:1), singing, hearing the Word, prayer

#### B. Paul preaches into the night, and Eutychus falls asleep

1. He is found dead, but he is restored when Paul embraces him
2. Paul partakes of communion, then continues on speaking until daybreak

### III. Asia

#### A. Paul's companions leave by ship, and head for Assos (Paul went by foot)

#### B. Ephesus: Paul determined not to stop, but sent message for the Ephesian elders to meet him

1. They come to the sea and he gives them this message:
  - a. I preached to you despite great adversity
  - b. Now I am compelled to go to Jerusalem, where the Holy Spirit has told me I will be imprisoned/hardships of unknown nature
  - c. I am ready to go on if possible
  - d. You will never see me again
    - (1) I have preached to everyone, so I am not guilty of any being lost
    - (2) Now it is your job to watch over the flock
      - (a) Overseers, shepherds
      - (b) Problems: Wolves coming in, internal disorder
  - e. I commit to you the Word of God
    - (1) Not for personal gain, but because of sincere love
2. With tears they are separated, knowing they would not see each other again

## Acts Chapter 21 - "The will of the Lord be done."

### I. Paul's Journey to Jerusalem (c. 56 AD)

#### A. Travel to Tyre

1. Met with the saints there
2. They attempted to persuade Paul not to go to Jerusalem
  - a. Through the Spirit references the revelation of Paul's troubles in Jerusalem, not that the Spirit was instructing him to avoid it
  - b. They were simply stating that if the Spirit says bad things await him in Jerusalem, he should not go by their estimation

#### B. Travel to Caesarea

1. Phillip the evangelist has been here since converting the Ethiopian Eunuch
  - a. Now he is married with 4 daughters
2. They remain in Caesarea some time
3. Agabus (the prophet who spoke of the famine in Acts 11) comes from Judea
  - a. He dramatically reveals that Paul will be bound by the Jews, delivered to the Gentiles
  - b. This description sounds similar to the murder of Jesus Christ, James
4. All of the Christians in Caesarea, as well as Paul's traveling companions sought to dissuade him from going
  - a. Paul has in the past avoided trouble
  - b. Here Paul is clear he cannot be dissuaded from going to Jerusalem
    - (1) He is going "by the Spirit", 20:22

#### C. Travel to Jerusalem

1. Saints from Caesarea traveled with Paul; quite a group of people now traveling

### II. Paul in Jerusalem

#### A. The meeting with Christ's church in Jerusalem

1. Pleasant reception; compare with the fear in Acts 9, problems in Acts 15
2. The elders: James is still there, but there is no mention that there are apostles present

#### B. Concern: Some people believe Paul is teaching contrary to the teaching of Moses

1. Paul is teaching the fulfillment of the Law of Moses;
  - a. He teaches there is no spiritual VALUE to circumcision, holy days (1 Cor 7:19)
2. The concern seems to be over weaker brethren – who are working with and concerned about living right
  - a. This seems to be where Romans 14 will be practiced (written months before)

#### C. Solution: Put on a demonstration that you do not despise the weaker brethren

1. Go to the temple, take 4 men under oath and assist them in keeping their vow
  - a. Similar to the vow Paul took in Acts 18:18
  - b. Shaving the head was symbolism and required of cleansing
    - (1) Foreign wives, lepers, Nazarites
    - (2) Here, it is likely they are fulfilling a Nazarite vow
2. In doing this he should cause the Jews in the city not to despise teachings (1 Cor 9:22)
3. However, this is NOT to be considered something the Gentiles need to consider

#### D. Why did Paul do this

1. It appears Paul is compromising with Judaism
  - a. He is submitting to the Temple, priests, and the law of Moses
2. There are multiple reasons suggested why Paul seems to compromise with Judaism
  - a. The Gospel had not been fully revealed to him yet

- b. What he had written while inspired he did not understand
- c. Paul violated the Law of Christ, compromise for the purpose of unity
- d. Paul did not obey what was asked of him
- e. The Law of Moses had not been fully done away with yet (II Cor 3:11)
- f. Paul is practicing something as a Jew by birth that he does not do as a Jew by faith
- g. Paul's actions are more bureaucratic than religious

3. Most likely, this is a combination of the last few points.

#### D. Tumult in the City

- 1. At the end of the 7 days Paul's enemies see him in the temple
  - a. They presume that Trophimus, a gentile, is with him
- 2. They drag Paul out of the Temple
  - a. The Temple is closed
  - b. The city begins to riot
  - c. They intend to kill Paul
- 3. The Roman garrison is notified
  - a. Roman garrisons were also the police force, fire department of a city

#### E. Intervention by the Chiliarch (Commander of 1000), equivalent of colonel

- 1. The Chiliarch arrests Paul
  - a. Not to protect him as much as to restore order
- 2. Paul requests to the commander in Greek to speak to the people
  - a. The Chiliarch had presumed Paul was a wanted criminal
    - (1) Per Josephus, this Egyptian was one of the messiah impostors
    - (2) Assassins – Sicarious, short sword, related to Iscariot
  - b. Paul's presentation in Greek reveals He is no common criminal
- 3. Paul is permitted then to address the crowd



## Acts Chapter 22 – “What shall I do, Lord?”

### I. Paul's Defense

#### A. Jewish backgrounds

1. In Hebrew, a language of learning more than common speak
2. Paul was born in Tarsus, but is a Hebrew of Hebrews
  - a. Trained in the law with the best
  - b. Zealous for the law and a persecutor of the Way to death
    - (1) The priests and high council can testify for him on this

#### B. Meeting on the Road to Damascus

1. At noon, a bright light blinded him and Jesus appeared to him
  - a. His companions cannot testify to what he heard, but that something happened
2. Paul is told then to go to Damascus and ALL that he will do will be told to him

#### C. Damascus – meeting with Ananias

1. Himself a devout Jew and a devout Christian
2. He called Saul to receive his sight
  - a. More to the statements Ananias made here than in Acts 9
  - b. Here he tells Saul God has planned for him:
    - (1) To know His will
    - (2) To see Jesus Christ
    - (3) To hear from the mouth of Jesus Christ
  - c. He commands Saul to Call on the Name of the Lord by being baptized
    - (1) Acts 2:21, Rom 10:13

#### E. First return to Jerusalem

1. Back in Jerusalem, he is praying in the temple and receives a vision
  - a. The Jews intend to kill him (Acts 9:29), they will not accept this testimony
  - b. Paul responds to the vision that they should understand He is one of them
    - (1) He may be stating that he, if anyone, can make them see the truth
    - (2) He also could be saying that he is guilty of blood, and this is a right penalty
  - c. Paul is told to go to the Gentiles by God

### II. The Jews respond by Riot

#### A. With the accusation that the Gentiles would listen to what the Jews would not, the Jews of Jerusalem revolt

1. Paul is remanded into the custody of the Chiliarch Lysias
  - a. He will be scourged until a good answer comes from him
  - b. It appears this commander turns Paul over to a Centurion
2. Paul subtly remarks that as a citizen of the Roman Republic, he cannot be beaten without a trial
  - a. This is a serious point; a Roman who assaults another Roman citizen in capacity of the government can be punished themselves
  - b. Paul has already mentioned once he was a citizen (21:39)

#### B. The Roman commander needs to resolve the situation

1. He orders Paul released
2. He orders the Jews to appear with Paul the next day to determine why this riot had occurred
  - a. He needs Paul accused of some crime in order to arrest or chain him

## Acts Chapter 23 - "Do you revile God's high priest?"

### I. Paul with the Sanhedrin

#### A. Paul begins His oration

1. He is struck by order of the High Priest Ananias
  - a. Possibly for blasphemy, although possibly for spite (Jesus, John 18:22)
  - b. Paul responds by condemning the man who for the sake of the law denies the law's obligation of being fair
    - (1) Deut. 25:1
  - c. When it is pointed out that this was the High Priest, Paul stated he must submit
    - (1) Even Jesus answered when adjured by the Priests Mt 26:63 (Mt 23:3)
    - (2) Paul recently wrote the Christians of Rome to submit to authority, Romans 13
2. Paul turns the crowd against itself
  - a. By stating the truth, that he was a Pharisee and that he stood for the resurrection of the dead – I Cor 15:20
  - b. Now it becomes a sectarian debate of Pharisees vs. Sadducees
  - c. Pharisees want Paul released
3. Paul is removed for fear of being injured/killed

#### B. The Lord's message: His witness in Jerusalem would be repeated in Rome

1. Paul's witness had been his testimony of how Christ changed him, and how Christ was the Messiah
2. Up till now, Paul has only heard he would be persecuted in Jerusalem (and he believed death, Acts 21:13)

### II. Paul moved to Caesarea

#### A. 40 men make a vow to kill Paul

1. Confirmed by the Chief Priests and elders
  - a. "Under a great oath" to neither eat nor drink until Paul was dead
2. Plan – have Paul brought out of the barracks for trial and we will kill him

#### B. Paul is preserved

1. Paul's nephew hears the plot, warns Paul and then Commander Lysias
2. This plot would probably involve injury to the Romans too
3. Lysias orders 270 soldiers together to escort Paul to Caesarea
  - a. This is the military capital of the province
4. Letter to Gov. Felix
  - a. Lysias reveals that Paul's preservation is mainly because he is a Roman
  - b. Paul's only crimes appear to be violation of religious laws
    - (1) Nothing worthy of death or chains

#### C. Paul with Felix

1. Felix verifies birthplace (either for jurisdiction or citizenship)
2. Paul is held in custody with the soldiers until the Chief Priests come to present charges
  - a. It may have been presumed that they would drop this rather than press charges

## Acts Chapter 24 - "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you."

### I. Paul's trial before Felix (c. 57 AD)

#### A. Antonius Felix was appointed governor of Judea in 52AD by Emperor Claudius.

1. His brother was minister to Claudius.
2. Felix ruled 8 years; this dates Acts 24 to 57-58 AD.
3. Felix was born a slave;
  - a. He was considered a poor ruler by Roman standards
  - b. *"He held the power of a tyrant with the disposition of a slave"* Tacitus
4. He was ultimately recalled for incompetence regarding riots in Judea

#### B. Paul is accused by Tertullus, lawyer (literally "orator") of the high priest

1. Crimes he is accused of:
  - a. Stirring up dissension (riots)
  - b. Leads a religious sect/heresy, the Nazarenes
    - (1) Religious sects had to be approved by Rome
    - (2) The Jews need to prove this is not a sect of Judaism, but something else
  - c. Attempted to desecrate the Temple (as opposed to the accusation of 21:28)

#### C. Paul's plain defense

1. Lacks the flattery (since it is relatively untrue) of Tertullus
2. Per the Crime of dissension
  - a. Paul's time in Judea is insufficient to be stirring up people;
    - (1) Half of that time has been in Caesarea, where it has not occurred
  - b. It can be verified that:
    - (1) Paul was only there a short time
    - (2) In the Temple, he caused no problem
    - (3) There is no evidence or false witnesses to prove their statement
3. Per the crime of leading a (new) sect (consider the modern use of the word "cult")
  - a. Paul is a follower of "the Way", not a leader of a sect
  - b. This "Way" is based on the Law and the Prophets (Mt 5:17, Rom 3:31)
    - (1) It is the God of the Jews that "the Way" worships
    - (2) It is the same hope of the Jews that "the Way" looks for
  - c. As a follower of the way, Paul works NOT to cause trouble
  - d. Paul's purpose in Jerusalem and the Temple
    - (1) To give to the needy saints (2 Cor. 8:1-4)
      - (a) Not mentioned previously, but inferred in II Cor. 8:23, this was part of the reason the men in Acts 20:4 accompanied Paul
    - (2) Present offerings – the activity in Acts 21:24
      - (a) The only witnesses, the troublemakers themselves, are not here
4. Ultimately, Paul point that this is not his first trial; why is he being tried again?

### II. Felix ends the trial

#### A. Felix adjourned until Lysias arrived (whether that happened or not is unclear)

1. Felix was acquainted with Christianity already
  - a. It appears he did not see it as a new religion
2. He allows Paul to preach to him
  - a. Drusilla – Felix's 3rd wife, daughter of Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12)
  - b. Until the teaching scared Felix, then he dismissed Paul

#### B. Paul is held under loose arrest (with a centurion over him) for 2 years

1. Felix is looking for a bribe, which he does not get
2. When he is relieved, he intentionally leaves Paul imprisoned
  - a. Felix was put to trial in Rome, and would face the Jews as witnesses

## Acts Chapter 25 - "You have appealed to Caesar?"

### I. Paul's trial before Festus (c. 59 AD)

#### A. The Romans

1. Porcius Festus - Roman Governor of Judea 58-62AD
  - a. Apparently unfamiliar with Judaism or Christianity
2. Herod Agrippa II (age 32 years here)
  - a. Son of Herod Agrippa (Acts 12), raised in Claudius' court;
  - b. Drusilla was his sister
  - c. Vested as the "guardian of the temple" (later has a conflict with the priests),
  - d. King of the Tetrarchy of Phillip
3. Berenice (around 31 years here)
  - a. Ruled like a co-regent with Agrippa
  - b. Later taken to Rome with Titus

#### B. Paul in Caesarea

1. Jews try to get Festus to bring Paul to Jerusalem, Festus declines
2. Festus travels to Caesarea
  - a. He orders the Jews to bring charges against Paul
3. Festus hears Paul in Caesarea
  - a. The Jews again bring charges
  - b. Paul refutes, stating he has not broken Jewish law, Temple Law or Roman law
  - c. Festus recommends Paul go to Jerusalem, Paul pleads to go to Rome/ Caesar
    - (1) If accused of treason, a Roman had the right to be tried in Rome
    - (2) It appears Festus genuinely wants justice
  - d. Paul is not sent straightaway to Rome
    - (1) Evidence Festus knows he is innocent
4. Festus lays Paul's case aside "for some days"

### II. Paul's Introduction to King Agrippa and Queen Berenice

#### A. Apparently a formal greeting of the governor

1. Festus lays the situation of Paul out to Agrippa
  - a. Festus accurately summarizes the case
  - b. Festus seems confused why Paul would desire to go before Caesar
    - (1) Festus will say that he does not know how to write this case up
2. Agrippa wants to hear Paul;
  - a. Since Agrippa is a "Jew" (more Roman than Jew, but knowledgeable of Judaism), his opinion in the case will help

#### B. Paul appears before Agrippa

1. In a formal setting, Paul can plead his case

## Acts Chapter 26- "You almost persuade me to become a Christian."

### I. Paul's discourse before Agrippa

#### A. Paul's discourse – introduction

1. This does not appear to be a trial, but a petition
  - a. In many places it was common that when a king appeared, petitioners were granted an audience
  - b. There is no one here accusing Paul, and Paul speaks before the full “pomp and circumstance” of the king
2. Paul waives for silence to begin

#### B. Paul states that he knows Agrippa to be well taught in Judaism

1. A “Jew” himself, though more Roman than Jewish
2. Agrippa seems to have reputation as knowledgeable in Judaism

### II. Paul's Oration in two parts

#### A. Paul's life before Christ

1. I am famous – everyone knows about my childhood and service to the priests
  - a. A Pharisee (Gal 1:14)
2. Paul's statement about why he is being tried is an opening remark in his logical debate on who he is
  - a. He will prove He and His Hope is the natural heir of the way of the Fathers
    - (1) The law of Moses
  - b. Rom 10:1 Rom. 11:26
  - c. Paul is the ultimate friend to his people to preach this message
3. Paul switches at vs. 8 to speak to all of the people (consider Mt 22:32)
4. He returns to his former conduct, all done being furiously enraged
  - a. Murder
  - b. Imprisonment
  - c. Forced blaspheme (coercion)

#### B. Paul's life after Christ

1. When Paul met Christ, he had not been experiencing a weakness or doubt, he was still zealous for his religion
  - a. On the road to Damascus, Paul message from Christ caused him to doubt
    - (1) Jesus spoke with the authority of God
    - (2) He did not destroy Saul, but had a job for him to do
2. Paul obeyed the heavenly vision
  - a. Damascus, Jerusalem, Asia, Europe all taught to repent and turn to God, performing the deeds of repentance
    - (1) This is parallel to vs18, sanctified by faith
  - b. This is why the Jews seized Paul

#### C. Christ is the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets

1. By testimony: Jesus would suffer and die a particular way, then in resurrection He would be the first to proclaim light (I Cor 15:5-9)

### III. The response of two men

#### A. Festus: You are insane (Gr – mania, raving)

1. Festus recognized an educated speaker
  - a. Paul responds to Festus to ask Agrippa privately, he will substantiate all this
2. It is to this day that many cannot comprehend the truth of the resurrection of Christ

B. Agrippa: You almost persuade me to become a Christian

1. Agrippa sees reason and logic in Paul's teaching
  - a. Paul points out that this is natural; Agrippa knows the Law and Prophets
2. Not quite responding
  - a. The Greek word sometimes translated “almost” or “in a time”(closest) is unclear; but is that not appropriate, that so many just have some indiscernible something keeping them from stating that “you persuade me to become a Christian”

IV. Conclusion of Paul's time in Caesarea

A. Paul has failed to convert either party

1. Although it is not impossible that Agrippa later became a closet Christian

B. The King, Governor and Queen talk about this among themselves

1. Clearly this discourse left a heavy impact
2. It was determined that ultimately, the decision was made before Agrippa arrived
  - a. Festus seems to see more clearly now
  - b. Paul has no charge to take to Rome

C. From here on is Paul's journey to Rome

## Acts Chapter 27 - "Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster"

### I. Paul sets off to sea (fall AD 60)

#### A. Traveling companions

1. Luke
2. Aristarchus (traveled with Paul from Achaia, seized in Ephesus riot)
3. Julius – centurion assigned to deliver Paul to Rome
4. Other unnamed prisoners

#### B. Journey

1. Sidon – Paul is permitted to be released
2. Myra – Changed ships
3. Crete – here the debate became to press on or not

#### C. Sea faring travel –

1. After the fast (Day of Atonement, October) Jewish sailing season ended
2. Romans considered it bad after Sep. 15, impossible after Nov 11
3. Paul warns them in Crete: this voyage will end in disaster and death
4. Centurion and others decide to make for the other end of Crete for harbor

### II. Storm and Shipwreck

#### A. After leaving port, they are struck by a *Euroclydon*, a northeaster (for 14 days)

1. The storm pushes the ship out to sea
2. Ropes are tied beneath the ship to keep it together is used to control the ship
3. After the third day, the ships tackle and other items were thrown overboard
4. Soon after hope was thrown overboard too (Gr *periaireo*, cast off)
5. Paul's encouragement
  - a. Paul states an angel told him that all with him would be saved

#### B. The Shipwreck

1. As land approached after 14 days, the sailors knew the ship was going to be destroyed
  - a. The sailor try to escape on the life-boat after weighing anchors
  - b. Paul directs the centurion to cut away the boat
  - c. everyone must stay together
2. Morning of – Paul instructs everyone to eat, that (if they do as he says) they will all live
  - a. Paul offered thanks and ate
  - b. 276 people on board
3. Land is sighted
  - a. the anchors cut, the rudders steer to land
  - b. However, a sandbar is struck and the ship is broken by the waved
  - c. The ship is now being broken up by the waves
4. Romans presume to kill the prisoners
  - a. Julius prevents this
5. Abandon ship!
  - a. Those who could swim went overboard (land must have been close by), the rest secured themselves to debris
  - b. Everyone reached land safely

#### C. This was not Paul's first shipwreck; it is in fact his fourth (2 Cor. 11:25)

## Acts Chapter 28 – “concerning this sect, we know that it is spoken against everywhere”

### I. Shipwrecked in Malta (c. 60 AD)

#### A. The Maltese treat the apostles with kindness

1. Building a fire for warmth
2. At this time Paul is bitten by a poisonous snake
  - a. Maltese determine that this is divine justice
  - b. Common doctrine of men – that all natural disasters/events are divine justice
    - (1) The Jews believed it – John 9:2
3. Paul is not injured (Lk 10:19)
  - a. Conclusion: he must be a god

#### B. Paul on Malta

1. Paul and others are hosted by Roman official (literally, “first man”), Publius
  - a. Paul must not be considered much of a prisoner for this treatment
2. Paul heals Publius' father, an unbeliever
  - a. Indicating faith is not required of being healed.....
3. All the Maltese begin to bring their sick to Paul
4. Ultimately, the Maltese resupply them for their journey to Rome
  - a. No mention if any were converted
  - b. Probably in late February

### II. Journey to Rome

#### A. On Ship under Castor and Pollox

1. Syracuse (Sicily)
2. Regium (Italy)
3. Puteoli – there brethren took them in

#### B. Walking to Rome

1. Brethren walk from Rome to Forum of Appius and Three Taverns
2. Paul arrives in Rome and is put under house arrest with one guard

#### C. Paul calls together the leaders of the Jews

1. He has already written a letter to the Christians that was meant to unite Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians

#### D. Paul's Last Sermon

1. Arrest in Jerusalem, and handed over to the Romans
2. “It is because of the hope of Israel I am in chains” (Rom. 10:1)
3. The Response of the Jews
  - a. Nothing has been said or sent by the Jews in Jerusalem
  - b. This “sect” is spoken against everywhere
4. Agree to hear: A large group come to Paul's house to hear him
  - a. Paul speaks all day about Christ – through the Law of Moses and Prophets
  - b. Some believed. Others did not
5. Conclusion with Isaiah's prophecy: the obstinacy of the Jews
  - a. Paul quotes what Jesus quoted – that because the Jews would not hear, they will turn to the Gentiles for a people

#### E. Two years and suddenly the record ends



### III. The End of the Acts of the Apostles: 63 AD

#### A. The abrupt end indicates several things

1. The two years (as well as the statements of the Jews in vs 21) suggest that Paul's accusers never showed up to bring charges (Php. 1:12-14)
2. Luke ended this work without a real end (as in the Gospel of Luke)
  - (1) Possibly because Luke was sent away at that point by Paul for work elsewhere, but when he wrote Philemon, Luke and Aristarchus were still with him

#### B. Paul wrote several letters while in prison

1. Philippians (anticipating release soon, Php. 2:24)
2. Philemon 22 (anticipating release soon, Phm 1:22)
3. Colossians (4:18).
  - a. Again, Luke is mentioned as still being present
4. Letter to the Laodiceans (Col 4:16)
5. Ephesians: Eph 6:20

#### C. After Paul's (presumed) release:

1. He would write I & II Timothy and Titus
2. He would travel to:
  - a. Macedonia (Php. 2:24, I Tim. 1:3)
  - b. Crete (Tit 1:5)
  - c. Spain (?) Rom 15:24,28

a. Since this was a plan that was changed, it is possible it did not occur

#### D. Luke remains with Paul until the end of his life as recorded by II Tim 4:6,11