

# Acts 13-28

• A UNIFIED, 1200-VOLUME WORK  
• FROM THE SAME AUTHOR: **LUKE**  
• A TRAVELING CO-WORKER WITH PAULUS (CO-AUTHOR: 16:17) (CO-EDITOR: 21)

**LUKE ACTS**

1. I produced my first account about all the things Jesus began to do & teach.

IMPLICATION: ACTS WHAT JESUS CONTINUED TO DO & TEACH

TRADITIONAL NAME: **The Acts of the Apostles**

ACCURATE NAME:

## The ACTS of Jesus & the SPIRIT

### 1 INTRODUCTION

**KINGDOM OF GOD:**

- JESUS RESTORES GOD'S KINGDOM OVER THE WORLD
- CALLED ISRAEL TO FOLLOW HIM
- ENTHRONED AS KING THROUGH HIS DEATH & RESURRECTION

**PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT:**

- FULFILLS PROPHECY MORE (ISAIAH 55, EZEKIEL 36, JOEL 2)
- NEW TEMPLE IN THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM FILLED WITH GOD'S PRESENCE

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JESUS IS EXALTED AS KING OF THE COELUM

FROM DANIEL 4:37

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created by the Bible Project

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# The ACTS of Jesus & the Spirit

**TRADITIONAL NAME:**  
The Acts of the Apostles  
**ACCURATE NAME:**

**IMPLICATION:**  
ACTS  
WHAT JESUS CONTINUED TO DO & TEACH  
THINGS JESUS BEGAN TO DO & TEACH

**11** "It produced my first account about all the things Jesus began to do & teach."  
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## 21-28 PAUL'S WITNESS SPREADS TO ROME

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- HE'S ALWAYS TO INCLUDE TO HIS PEOPLE  
- HE'S ALWAYS TO INCLUDE TO HIS PEOPLE

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**28 UNDER HOUSE ARREST IN ROME**  
- PAUL ANNOUNCED THE KINGDOM OF GOD, BUT TEACHING ABOUT THE LORD JESUS, THE MESSIAH, WHO HAD DIED FOR US (1:3)

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**8-12 JUDEA & SAMARIA**  
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- BECAME THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH  
- FIRST MULTI-ETHNIC CHURCH  
- FIRST USE OF CHRISTIANS (11:26)

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**13-20 THE MISSIONARY JOURNEYS**  
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## 2-7 IN JERUSALEM

**1 INTRODUCTION**  
- KINGDOM OF GOD  
- JESUS RESTORES GOD'S KINGDOM OVER THE WORLD  
- CALLED ISRAEL  
- ENTROUNDED AS KING THROUGH HIS DEATH & RESURRECTION

**2 PENICOST**  
- GOD'S GLORY FILLING THE TEMPLE  
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- IN THE FUTURE: EZEKIEL 43, HAGGAI 2

**3-5 A TALE OF TWO TEMPLES**  
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**6** PETER HEALS & PREACHES IN THE TEMPLE--ARRESTED & TRIED  
- JESUS DISCIPLES GATHER DAILY IN THE TEMPLE COURTS & HOUSE TO HOUSE

**7** JESUS FOLLOWERS DRIVEN FROM THE CITY  
- FIRST PERSECUTION  
- STEPHEN  
- "YOU ALWAYS RESIST GOD'S SPIRIT?"

**LUKE'S POINT:**  
- THE NEW TEMPLE OF JESUS COMMUNITY ENCOUNTERS GODS  
- GENEROSITY & GRACIOUS PRESENCE

**FROM DANIEL 4:7**  
- JESUS IS EXALTED AS KING OF THE WORLD  
- JESUS IS ENTROUNDED AS SON OF MAN

## LUKE-ACTS

**HOW GOD'S KINGDOM CAME ON EARTH AS IN HEAVEN THROUGH JESUS & HIS SPIRIT & HIS CHURCH**  
- EXAMPLES OF FAITHFULNESS TO KING JESUS  
- SHARING THE GOOD NEWS IN WORD & ACTION  
- FORMING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES WHERE PEOPLE ARE EQUALS  
- TRUSTING IN THE POWER & GUIDANCE OF THE SPIRIT

created by the Bible Project

## Introduction to Acts<sup>1</sup>

### Acts

Acts is unique among the NT writings, in that its main purpose is to record a selective history of the early church following the resurrection of Christ. It is the second part of a two-volume work, with the Gospel of Luke being the first volume. Both books are dedicated to a person named Theophilus, and Acts 1:1 explicitly refers back to Luke's Gospel.

### Author

Both the Gospel of Luke and Acts are anonymous, but the earliest discussions attribute them to Luke. The name "Luke" appears only three times in the NT: Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24. All three references are in epistles written by Paul from prison, and all three mention Luke's presence with Paul.

The earliest discussion of the authorship of Luke and Acts is from Irenaeus, the bishop of Lyons in Gaul, writing in the late second century. He attributes the books to Luke, the coworker of Paul, and notes that the occurrence of the first-person narrative ("we") throughout the later chapters of Acts (starting at 16:10) indicates that the author of Acts was a companion of Paul and present with him on these occasions. These "we" passages in Acts are the key to the authorship of both Acts and the Gospel of Luke.

Colossians 4:14 indicates that Luke was a physician, and attempts have been made to bolster Lukan authorship by arguing that Luke and Acts use technical medical language. This does not seem to be the case, as Luke seems to have avoided technical language in order to communicate plainly to his readers, but his detailed description of illnesses perhaps reflects his interests as a physician (cf. Acts 28:8). In addition, all the external evidence refers to Luke as the author.

Other than the three NT references, nothing certain is known of Luke. Early traditions link him with Antioch, but that is probably based on the reference in Acts 13:1 to "Lucius," which is a Latin name. "Luke" is a Greek name, and both books are written in excellent Greek. His thorough acquaintance with the OT may reflect that Luke was a converted God-fearer (a Gentile who attended the Jewish synagogue) or Jewish proselyte (convert), though he could have gained his biblical knowledge after becoming a Christian.

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<sup>1</sup> Used with permission from the ESV Study Bible

## Date

Some scholars date Acts c. A.D. 70. This assumes that Acts was written after the Gospel of Luke (Acts 1:1) and that Luke used the Gospel of Mark as one of his sources (Luke 1:1–2). (Early tradition has Mark’s Gospel written after Peter’s death, which most likely occurred in the mid-60s.) Others date Acts in the 70s or 80s. They hold that the primary purpose of Acts was to give an account of how and where the gospel spread, rather than to be a defense of Paul’s ministry (thus accounting for the omission of the events at the end of his life). Thus the gospel spread to “the end of the earth” (1:8)—that is, to Rome, which represented the end of the earth as the center of world power. But a number of scholars date Acts as early as A.D. 62, basing their view primarily on the abrupt ending of the book. Since Acts ends with Paul in Rome under house arrest, awaiting his trial before Caesar (28:30–31), it would seem strange if Luke knew about Paul’s release (a proof of his innocence), possibly about his defense before Caesar (fulfilling 27:24), and about his preaching the gospel as far as Spain (cf. note on 28:30–31), but then did not mention these events at the end of Acts. It seems most likely, then, that the abrupt ending is an indication that Luke wrote Acts c. A.D. 62, before these events occurred.

## Theme

In Acts, believers are empowered by the Holy Spirit to bear witness to the good news of Jesus Christ among both Jews and Gentiles, and in doing this they establish the church. In addition to this, Acts explains how Christianity, although it is new, is in reality the one true religion, rooted in God’s promises from the beginning of time. In the ancient world it was important that a religion be shown to have stood the test of time. Thus Luke presents the church as the fulfillment and extension of God’s promises.

## Text

The early manuscripts of Acts have a greater variety of readings than any other NT book. This is reflected in the ESV footnotes that provide alternative readings, as well as the absence of whole verses in some instances (8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29). The greatest diversity is shown by a group of manuscripts that scholars refer to as the “Western text,” an early version of Acts that is about ten percent longer than the other texts. Its main difference from the others is in providing additional detail and smoothing out the narrative. No standard English translation follows the Western text. Some of its more interesting readings are provided in the ESV footnotes, such as the note about the hours when Paul preached in the hall of Tyrannus in Ephesus (19:9).

## Timeline

	A.D.	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80
Death, resurrection of Christ (A.D. 33 [or 30])†		█										
Pentecost (30/33)		█										
Stephen stoned (31/33)		█										
Paul converted (33/34*)		●										
Paul meets with Peter in Jerusalem (36/37*)			●									
Paul ministers in Syria/Cilicia (37–45)			█	█	█							
Peter witnesses to Cornelius (38*)				●								
James, brother of John, martyred (41–44)				█	█							
Peter rescued from prison, leaves Jerusalem (44)					●							
Paul's second Jerusalem visit (famine relief) (44–47*)				█	█							
Paul's first missionary journey (46–47)					●							
Peter and Paul at Jerusalem council (48–49*)						█						
Paul's second missionary journey (48/49–51*)						█	█					
Claudius expels Jews from Rome (49)						●						
Paul's third missionary journey (52–57*)							█	█				
Paul ministers in Ephesus (52–55)							█	█				
Claudius dies; Jews allowed back to Rome (54)							●					
Nero's reign (54–68)								█	█	█		
Paul arrested in Jerusalem (57*)								●				
Paul imprisoned in Caesarea (57–59)								█	█			
James, brother of the Lord, martyred (62)									●			
Paul under house arrest in Rome (62*)									●			
Luke writes Gospel of Luke and Acts (62*)									●			
Paul released, resumes ministry, rearrested (62–64)									█	█		
Paul and Peter martyred in Rome (64–67*)									█	█		

\* denotes approximate date; / signifies either/or; † see *The Date of Jesus' Crucifixion*, pp. 1809–1810

## Distinctive Features

Though Acts has much in common with the Gospels, it has a number of unique features. One of these is its genre: it is the only NT book that tells about the ministry of the apostles, hence its traditional name, “The Acts of the Apostles.” It deals primarily with two of them, Peter and Paul. Often Luke shows how events in their ministries parallel each other and the ministry of Jesus as well. Among the unique features of Acts are the frequent summaries, where Luke provides a broad generalization about the life of the church at a particular time or place, such as the common life after Pentecost (2:42–47), the early Christian sharing of goods (4:32–35), and the apostolic miracles (5:12–16). Sometimes the summaries are much briefer, such as the single verse that sums up Paul’s ministry of more than two years in Ephesus (19:10). Luke’s usual method of presenting the Christians’ ministry is more “episodic,” highlighting individual incidents that illustrate their work, giving it greater liveliness and interest. For instance, at Ephesus this includes the conversion of some disciples of John the Baptist (19:1–7), the “backfiring” exorcism of the sons of Sceva (19:13–16), and the riot occasioned by the silversmith Demetrius (19:23–41).

The most distinctive feature in Acts is the speeches or sermons, constituting nearly a third of the total text of Acts (see chart). Ten of these are major: three by Peter (2:14–36; 3:11–26; 10:34–43), one by Stephen (7:1–53), and six by Paul. Three of Paul’s are defense speeches in Jerusalem and Caesarea (22:1–21; 24:10–21; 26:1–29). The other three consist of one speech on each of Paul’s missionary journeys, each to a different type of assembly: to Jews on his first journey (13:16–47), to Gentiles on his second (17:22–31), and to Christians on his third (20:18–35). Many shorter testimonies run throughout Acts (e.g., 5:29–32; 14:15–17). All are primarily a witness to Christ in one form or another. Much of the theological material of Acts is to be found in these speeches. Another distinctive feature of Acts is its journey narratives. Often these are only lists of stopping places or ports that are passed by (e.g., 16:6–8; 20:14–15; 21:2–3). These give the impression of the Christian missionaries being constantly on the move and are the main reason for giving Paul’s ministry the label of “journeys.” In fact, that label best applies to the first of Paul’s missions (chs. 13–14). The others consisted mainly of more lengthy stays in the major cities (e.g., Corinth, Ephesus).



## Key Themes

The major themes of Acts can be placed under the general category of “witness,” as set forth in the thematic verse (Acts 1:8).

<p>1. The witness is worldwide—Judea, Samaria, the “end of the earth.”</p>	<p>1:8</p>
<p>2. The witness is inclusive of all kinds of people: Jews, Gentiles, Samaritans, the physically handicapped, pagan mountain people, a prominent merchant woman, a jailer and his family, Greek philosophers, governors, and kings.</p>	<p>chs. 2–5; 8:4–40; 10:1–11:18; 14:8–18; 16:11–15, 25–34; 17:22–31; 24:24–27; 26:1–29</p>
<p>3. The witness is guided by the providence of God, who preserves his witnesses for their testimony through all sorts of threats: murderous plots, angry mobs, storms at sea, and constant trials before the authorities, to name only a few.</p>	<p>4:5–22; 18:12–16; 19:23–41; 23:12–22; 24:1–23; 27:21–26</p>
<p>4. On the other hand, faithful witnesses must be prepared to suffer, even to die for their testimony to Christ.</p>	<p>5:41–42; 7:54–60</p>
<p>5. The power behind the witness is the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is granted to all believers, both male and female, whom he empowers for witness. The Spirit guides witnesses in moments of special inspiration and is behind every advance in the Christian mission.</p>	<p>1:8; 2:1–13, 18, 38; 4:8; 7:55; 8:17; 10:44; 13:2–12; 19:6, 21</p>
<p>6. In the early days, the witness was often accompanied by “signs and wonders,” the “wonders” being the miracles worked by the apostles, which served as “signs” pointing to the truth of the gospel. Miracles usually opened a door for witness.</p>	<p>e.g., ch. 3</p>

<p>7. Effective witness demands the unity of the church.</p>	<p>2:42–47; 4:32–37; 5:12–14</p>
<p>8. A key component of the witness is the resurrection of Jesus. For the Jews the resurrection demonstrated that Jesus was the promised Messiah. For the Gentiles it pointed to his role as judge and established their need to repent.</p>	<p>1:22; 2:22–36; 17:30–31</p>
<p>9. Acceptance of the message borne by the witnesses depends both on human response and on the divine sovereignty behind the response.</p>	<p>e.g., 2:47; 11:18; 13:48</p>
<p>10. The OT Scriptures point to the death and resurrection of Christ, and the prophecies that point to Christ and to his followers must be fulfilled (1:16).</p>	<p>(Numerous OT citations in the sermons of Acts illustrate this point.)</p>
<p>11. The witness to the gospel calls for a response. Most speeches in Acts end with some sort of invitation. Representative of this is Paul’s exchange with Agrippa II.</p>	<p>26:27–29</p>
<p>12. The response called for is repentance of one’s sins in the name of Christ, which brings forgiveness of sins.</p>	<p>e.g., 2:38</p>
<p>13. Witnesses must always maintain integrity before the world. In Acts this is illustrated by the many remarks from the authorities about the Christians giving no evidence of any wrongdoing.</p>	<p>18:12–15; 23:29; 25:18; 26:31–32</p>

<p>14. Christian witnesses continue the ministry that Christ “began” (1:1). This is illustrated throughout Acts with the many implicit parallels between the experiences of the apostles and those of Christ: his miracles, the forebodings of his journey to Jerusalem, the cry of the angry Jewish mob for his death, and his trial before the governor and the king.</p>	<p>20:36–21:16 (cf. Luke 9:22; 13:31–34; 18:31–34); 21:36; 22:21 (cf. Luke 23:18); 24:1–26:32 (cf. Luke 23:1–25)</p>
<p>15. Faithful witness brings great results. Acts is all about the victory of the Christian gospel. The witness brings results among both Jews and Gentiles. The book ends on this note, with Paul bearing his faithful witness to “all” who came to him in Rome.</p>	<p>4:4; 11:20–21; 13:48–49; 17:4; 18:6–11; 21:20; 28:30–31</p>

**Purpose, Occasion, and Background**

Luke’s stated purpose for both of his books is provided at the beginning of the first (Luke 1:1–4). He had a historian’s interest in providing an “orderly account” of “the things that have been accomplished among us.” One would assume the latter statement applied both to the ministry of Jesus (the gospel) and to that of the early church (Acts). Dedicating the work to Theophilus, he wanted him to have “certainty” (a firm foundation) for what he had been taught. The exact nature of Luke’s purpose depends on how one identifies Theophilus. He evidently had already been instructed in the Christian way and may have been a new convert or a seeker on the verge of commitment. Since “Theophilus” means “lover of God,” it is also possible that Luke is challenging the devotion of his readers rather than addressing his book to just one of them. Luke probably had a number of purposes for writing Acts. These are best determined through the emphases or themes found throughout the book.

**History of Salvation Summary**

After his ascension (1:9; cf. Ps. 68:18; Eph. 4:9–10) Jesus sends the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28–32) to empower the apostles as witnesses (Acts 1:8), to spread the message of the gospel (Isa. 52:7), and to draw to himself people from the nations (Matt. 28:19). (For an explanation of the “History of Salvation,” see the Overview of the Bible.)

## **Literary Features**

The book of Acts is a small anthology of individual literary genres. The list includes hero story, adventure story, travel story, conversion story, and miracle story. Drama also figures prominently: there are 32 speeches in Acts.

Following the story line becomes easy when one realizes that the book of Acts is structured on a cyclic principle in which a common pattern keeps getting repeated: (1) Christian leaders arise and preach the gospel; (2) listeners are converted and added to the church; (3) opponents (often Jewish but sometimes Gentile) begin to persecute the Christian leaders; and (4) God intervenes to rescue the leaders or otherwise protect the church. While this pattern is most obvious in the first half of the book, it extends in modified form to the journeys of Paul, whose repeated buffetings are followed by the expansion of the church. The book of Acts is noteworthy for its narrative qualities. It is the report of an adventure, replete with arrests, imprisonments, beatings, riots, narrow escapes, a resurrection from death, a shipwreck, trial scenes, and rescues.

Places play a key role in Acts. The places that matter most are the great cities of the Mediterranean region in the first century. Geography assumes a symbolic as well as literal importance, as Jerusalem, where the story begins, symbolizes the Jewish religion from which Christianity emerged, and Rome, where the story ends, symbolizes the Gentile world to which Christianity gravitates as the early history of the church unfolds.

Out of a large body of available data, storytellers select the details that fit their design and purpose. It is a plausible premise that sometimes Luke chose to give representative examples of categories of experiences: examples of miraculous healings that were no doubt duplicated many times (e.g., 3:1–10; 19:11–12), a specimen of preaching in the temple (3:11–26) and preaching to Greek intellectuals (17:16–34), an example of a martyrdom (ch. 7), and instances of individuals being converted (e.g., a Jew in 9:1–19 and an Ethiopian in 8:26–38) and of groups being converted (e.g., in Jerusalem in 2:37–41 and in Greek Ephesus in 19:17–20).

## **The Setting of Acts (c. A.D. 30–60)**

The book of Acts records the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome, thus fulfilling the risen Christ's words to his apostles in Acts 1:8.



## Outline

- Preparation for Witness (1:1–2:13)
  - Jesus prepares the disciples (1:1–5)
  - Jesus ascends (1:6–11)
  - Matthias replaces Judas (1:12–26)
  - The Spirit descends at Pentecost (2:1–13)
- The Witness in Jerusalem (2:14–5:42)
  - Peter preaches at Pentecost (2:14–41)
  - The Christian community shares a life in common (2:42–47)
  - Peter heals a lame man (3:1–10)
  - Peter preaches in the temple square (3:11–26)
  - Peter and John witness before the Jewish council (4:1–22)
  - The Christian community prays for boldness in witness (4:23–31)
  - The community shares together (4:32–5:16)
  - The apostles appear before the council (5:17–42)
- The Witness beyond Jerusalem (6:1–12:25)
  - Seven chosen to serve the Hellenist widows (6:1–7)

- Stephen bears the ultimate witness (6:8–8:3)
  1. The arrest of Stephen (6:8–15)
  2. Stephen’s address before the Sanhedrin (7:1–53)
  3. The martyrdom of Stephen (7:54–8:3)
- Philip witnesses beyond Jerusalem (8:4–40)
  1. Witness to the Samaritans (8:4–25)
  2. Witness to an Ethiopian eunuch (8:26–40)
- The conversion of Saul (9:1–31)
  1. Saul’s encounter with Christ (9:1–9)
  2. Saul’s encounter with Ananias (9:10–19a)
  3. Saul’s witness in Damascus and Jerusalem (9:19b–31)
- Peter preaches in the coastal towns (9:32–11:18)
  1. Healing of Aeneas and Dorcas (9:32–43)
  2. Conversion of Cornelius (10:1–48)
  3. Peter’s testimony in Jerusalem (11:1–18)
- The Antioch church witnesses to Gentiles (11:19–26)
- The offering for Jerusalem (11:27–30)
- The Jerusalem church is persecuted (12:1–25)
  1. The death of James (12:1–5)
  2. Peter’s deliverance from prison (12:6–19)
  3. The death of Herod Agrippa I (12:20–25)
- The Witness in Cyprus and Southern Galatia (13:1–14:28)
  - The Antioch church commissions Paul and Barnabas (13:1–3)
  - Paul and Barnabas witness on Cyprus (13:4–12)
  - Paul preaches in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch (13:13–41)
  - Paul turns to the Gentiles (13:42–52)
  - Paul and Barnabas are rejected at Iconium (14:1–7)
  - The two missionaries witness in Lystra (14:8–23)
  - Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch (14:24–28)
- The Jerusalem Council (15:1–35)
  - The circumcision party criticizes the Gentile mission (15:1–5)
  - Peter defends Paul (15:6–11)
  - James proposes a solution (15:12–21)
  - A letter is sent to Antioch (15:22–35)
- The Witness in Greece (15:36–18:22)
  - Paul and Barnabas differ over Mark (15:36–41)

- Timothy joins Paul and is circumcised (16:1–5)
- Paul is called to Macedonia (16:6–10)
- Paul witnesses in Philippi (16:11–40)
  1. Conversion of Lydia (16:11–15)
  2. Imprisonment of Paul and Silas (16:16–24)
  3. Conversion of the jailer (16:25–34)
  4. Release of Paul and Silas (16:35–40)
- Paul witnesses in Thessalonica (17:1–9)
- Paul witnesses in Berea (17:10–15)
- Paul witnesses in Athens (17:16–34)
  1. Witness in the marketplace (17:16–21)
  2. Witness before the Areopagus (17:22–34)
- Paul witnesses in Corinth (18:1–22)
- The Witness in Ephesus (18:23–21:16)
  - Priscilla and Aquila instruct Apollos (18:23–28)
  - Paul encounters disciples of John (19:1–10)
  - Paul encounters false religion at Ephesus (19:11–22)
  - Paul experiences violent opposition at Ephesus (19:23–41)
  - Paul completes his ministry in Greece (20:1–6)
  - Paul travels to Miletus (20:7–16)
  - Paul addresses the Ephesian elders at Miletus (20:17–35)
  - Paul journeys to Jerusalem (20:36–21:16)
- The Arrest in Jerusalem (21:17–23:35)
  - Paul participates in a Nazirite ceremony (21:17–26)
  - An angry mob attacks Paul (21:27–39)
  - Paul addresses the Jewish crowd (21:40–22:21)
  - Paul reveals his Roman citizenship (22:22–29)
  - Paul appears before the Sanhedrin (22:30–23:11)
  - Zealous Jews plot against Paul (23:12–22)
  - Paul is delivered to the governor Felix (23:23–35)
- The Witness in Caesarea (24:1–26:32)
  - Paul appears before Felix (24:1–27)
  - Paul appeals to Caesar (25:1–12)
  - Festus presents the case to King Agrippa II (25:13–22)
  - Paul witnesses to Agrippa II (25:23–26:32)
- The Witness in Rome (27:1–28:31)

- Paul journeys to Rome by sea (27:1–44)
- Paul witnesses on Malta (28:1–10)
- Paul arrives in Rome (28:11–16)
- Paul witnesses to the Jews in Rome (28:17–31)



## The Whys and Hows of Marking Bible Text

“Oh, the depths of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” (Romans 11.33-34). If God’s mind is inexhaustibly deep and beautiful, a book created by his mind (Scripture) is the same. It is therefore arrogantly ignorant to assume that casual glances at our Bibles can reveal all of its hidden treasures.

Precious resources are mined by digging deep shafts into the ground, not (usually) by skimming the surface of the dirt. The Scriptures operate in the same way, yielding its riches to those who dig into it. “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.” (Matt. 7.7). The context of that passage isn’t about Bible study, but the principle applies.

I want you to enjoy reading the Creator’s words and feel comfortable scribbling all around them. I’ve designed this workbook according to those goals. The text of each chapter is presented in one continuous paragraph, instead of two columns of separated verses as you see in many Bibles. Verse numbers are still there, but they’re engulfed into the paragraph to minimize distractions. There’s a two inch margin on the right-hand side of each page. I hope these features help you study! If you don’t see the need to study with a pencil/pen, or if you like the idea but don’t know how, I’ve provided some thoughts to consider below.

### Why Mark Your Booklet?

- 1) You’ll understand it better.** Writing uses a different part of the brain than reading, according to a 2015 study conducted by researchers from Rice, Columbia, and Johns Hopkins Universities. If you take the time to write down your thoughts about Scripture while looking at it, you’ll process the material twice. Surely we desire to comprehend God’s words as completely as we can.
- 2) You’ll see more.** It’s enlightening to hear about someone else’s trip to a foreign country. But if you went to the country yourself, you’d gain so much more understanding of that place through first-hand experience! Our interactions with Scripture work the same way. It’s useful to listen to someone else explain what they’ve discovered in their visit to the Bible. It’s much more illuminating, however, to go see for yourself. Since Scripture’s depth is limitless, we must visit Scripture with our pencils in hand to help us take in the sights and sounds of God’s words.

- 3) **You'll feel more excited.** To use the same traveling analogy again, I felt a thrill when Dennis scrolled through his pictures of Israel. But the pixels on the screen couldn't compare to the excitement of personally discovering the landscape myself. It's one thing to see photos of the Sea of Galilee; it's quite another thing to smell it, splash in it, and boat on it! Personally diving into Scripture with pencil in hand is a similar experience.
- 4) **You'll retain it better.** I've listened to many excellent sermons and participated in great Bible classes led by thoughtful teachers. My general memory of those teachings are poor, however, compared to my own written interaction with the Biblical text.

### How to Mark Your Booklet

- 1) **Read each chapter before doing anything else.** There's no substitute for this step! Before we can zero in on details, we must have a larger sense of the big picture. Interpretation and application cannot happen until initial observation has taken place.
- 2) **Mark divisions in the flow of text.** For example, Acts 1 basically divides into vss. 1-11 (Jesus' ascension) and vss. 12-26 (Judas is replaced). You could draw brackets on the outside of the text and write summaries for each section.
- 3) **Mark repeating key words/phrases.** Note significant repeating words with consistent symbols. For example, Jesus tells his apostles in 1.8 that they will be his "witnesses" in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the ends of the earth. In their sermons and conversations, the apostles will often use that word to identify themselves. Regularly marking the word witnesses (with a "W" or eye symbol, for example) throughout Acts will help you easily see key moments in the book.
- 4) **Mark setting indicators.** Paying attention to the environment in which a story happens is crucial to understanding the story. You could mark cities (Jerusalem, Samaria) or important landmarks (temple, etc.) to help you keep track of the physical backdrop. If Luke tells us about an event's time of day/year, you could mark that with a clock symbol or a use particular colored pencil.
- 5) **Ask questions and record the answers.** Ask the text questions like: "Why was this part of the story recorded this way?" "Why am I told about this detail?" "What is the Holy Spirit showing me through this character?" Record your answers in the margins of each page.

## Chapter 13

**1** Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. **2** While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." **3** Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. **4** So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus. **5** When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John to assist them. **6** When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they came upon a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet named Bar-Jesus. **7** He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. **8** But Elymas the magician (for that is the meaning of his name) opposed them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. **9** But Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him **10** and said, "You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? **11** And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and unable to see the sun for a time." Immediately mist and darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking people to lead him by the hand. **12** Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord. **13** Now Paul and his companions set sail from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia. And John left them and returned to Jerusalem, **14** but they went on from Perga and came to Antioch in Pisidia. And on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down. **15** After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent a message to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it." **16** So Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said: "Men of Israel and you who fear God, listen. **17** The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with uplifted arm he led them out of it. **18** And for about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness. **19** And after destroying seven nations in the land of Canaan, he gave them their land as an inheritance. **20** All this took about 450 years. And after that he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. **21** Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of

Benjamin, for forty years. **22** And when he had removed him, he raised up David to be their king, of whom he testified and said, 'I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.' **23** Of this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised. **24** Before his coming, John had proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. **25** And as John was finishing his course, he said, 'What do you suppose that I am? I am not he. No, but behold, after me one is coming, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.'

**26** "Brothers, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to us has been sent the message of this salvation. **27** For those who live in Jerusalem and their rulers, because they did not recognize him nor understand the utterances of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. **28** And though they found in him no guilt worthy of death, they asked Pilate to have him executed. **29** And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. **30** But God raised him from the dead, **31** and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people. **32** And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, **33** this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you.' **34** And as for the fact that he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, "I will give you the holy and sure blessings of David.' **35** Therefore he says also in another psalm, "You will not let your Holy One see corruption.' **36** For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers and saw corruption, **37** but he whom God raised up did not see corruption. **38** Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, **39** and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. **40** Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the Prophets should come about: **41** "Look, you scoffers, be astounded and perish; for I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you.'" **42** As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath. **43** And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God. **44** The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. **45** But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. **46** And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was

necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. **47** For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.” **48** And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. **49** And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. **50** But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. **51** But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. **52** And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

### Thought Questions

- 1) From looking at the first verse, what can we tell about the church at Antioch?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) This chapter records the beginning of Paul’s first journey. What observations can we make about why the trip happened? What applications can we make?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) From the account of Paul and his companions in Paphos, what do we learn about the gospel, its messengers, and its opponents (vss. 6-13)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4) In Antioch of Pisidia, how did Paul tailor his sermon to his audience? What are his major points?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 5) What OT passages does Paul quote from? What are those contexts?

- 6) As usual, the preaching of the gospel provoked a mixed reaction. What can we learn from the jealousy of the Jews (see also Acts 5.17, John 12.19)?

## Chapter 14

**1** Now at Iconium they entered together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed. **2** But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. **3** So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. **4** But the people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews and some with the apostles. **5** When an attempt was made by both Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, to mistreat them and to stone them, **6** they learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country, **7** and there they continued to preach the gospel. **8** Now at Lystra there was a man sitting who could not use his feet. He was crippled from birth and had never walked. **9** He listened to Paul speaking. And Paul, looking intently at him and seeing that he had faith to be made well, **10** said in a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he sprang up and began walking. **11** And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" **12** Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. **13** And the priest of Zeus, whose temple was at the entrance to the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates and wanted to offer sacrifice with the crowds. **14** But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out, **15** "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. **16** In past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. **17** Yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness." **18** Even with these words they scarcely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them. **19** But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. **20** But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city,

and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe. **21** When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, **22** strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. **23** And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed. **24** Then they passed through Pisidia and came to Pamphylia. **25** And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia, **26** and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled. **27** And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. **28** And they remained no little time with the disciples.

### Thought Questions

- 1) Carefully notice the wording of vs. 3. Who “bore witness to the word”? What can we learn from this and the city’s reaction to the word?
  
- 2) Vs. 9 is not the only time that Paul “looked intently” at someone else. See also Acts 13.9 and 23.1. What do these situations have in common with each other?
  
- 3) What points do Paul and Barnabas make to dissuade the crowd from worshipping them?
  
- 4) Although Paul avoids stoning in vs. 5, he could not escape it in vs. 19. What is surprising about his next actions?

## Chapter 15

**1** But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” **2** And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question. **3** So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the brothers. **4** When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them. **5** But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, “It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses.” **6** The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter. **7** And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, “Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. **8** And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, **9** and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith. **10** Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? **11** But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will.” **12** And all the assembly fell silent, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. **13** After they finished speaking, James replied, “Brothers, listen to me. **14** Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name. **15** And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written, **16** “After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, **17** that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord, who makes these things **18** known from of old.’ **19** Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God, **20** but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood. **21** For from ancient generations Moses has had in every city those who proclaim him, for he is read every Sabbath in the synagogues.” **22** Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men from among them and send them to Antioch



with Paul and Barnabas. They sent Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, leading men among the brothers, **23** with the following letter: “The brothers, both the apostles and the elders, to the brothers who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greetings. **24** Since we have heard that some persons have gone out from us and troubled you with words, unsettling your minds, although we gave them no instructions, **25** it has seemed good to us, having come to one accord, to choose men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, **26** men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. **27** We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth. **28** For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements: **29** that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell.” **30** So when they were sent off, they went down to Antioch, and having gathered the congregation together, they delivered the letter. **31** And when they had read it, they rejoiced because of its encouragement. **32** And Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets, encouraged and strengthened the brothers with many words. **33** And after they had spent some time, they were sent off in peace by the brothers to those who had sent them. **35** But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also. **36** And after some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.” **37** Now Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. **38** But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn from them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. **39** And there arose a sharp disagreement, so that they separated from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus, **40** but Paul chose Silas and departed, having been commended by the brothers to the grace of the Lord. **41** And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

### Thought Questions

- 1) What is the issue in this chapter and who is causing the problem?

- 2) What was the purpose of gathering in Jerusalem? Is this a pattern we should imitate?
  
- 3) How much time had gone by the gospel was first preached at Pentecost? How long since the first Gentiles became Christians. See the timeline on page 7. What applications can we make?
  
- 4) How does Peter address this controversy?
  
- 5) How did Paul and Barnabas conduct themselves, both before the meeting and during it?
  
- 6) How does James address this controversy?
  
- 7) What were the major points of the letter and its effect on the Antioch congregation?
  
- 8) Explain the issue between Paul and Barnabas. What can we learn from this?

## Chapter 16

**1** Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. **2** He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. **3** Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. **4** As they went on their

way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. **5** So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily. **6** And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. **7** And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. **8** So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. **9** And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." **10** And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. **11** So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, **12** and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days. **13** And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. **14** One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. **15** And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us. **16** As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. **17** She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." **18** And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour. **19** But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. **20** And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. **21** They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice." **22** The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. **23** And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. **24** Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. **25** About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, **26** and suddenly there was a great

earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. **27** When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. **28** But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." **29** And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. **30** Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" **31** And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." **32** And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. **33** And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. **34** Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God. **35** But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, "Let those men go." **36** And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Therefore come out now and go in peace." **37** But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out." **38** The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens. **39** So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. **40** So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed.

### Thought Questions

- 1) What kind of man was Timothy? See also Philippians 2.19-20, 2 Timothy 1.3-7.
  
- 2) Why did Paul circumcise Timothy (vs. 3), but he refused to circumcise Titus (Gal. 2.3)?
  
- 3) Jesus allowed his workers to wander aimlessly for a while before giving them clear direction (Vss. 6-10). What can we learn from this?

- 4) How did the church at Philippi begin? What are Lydia's characteristics?
- 5) Paul entered prison for the first time in this chapter. How did he respond to this new and violent form of suffering?

## Chapter 17

**1** Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. **2** And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, **3** explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ." **4** And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. **5** But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd. **6** And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, **7** and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus." **8** And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things. **9** And when they had taken money as security from Jason and the rest, they let them go. **10** The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. **11** Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. **12** Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men. **13** But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Berea also, they came there too, agitating and stirring up the crowds. **14** Then the brothers immediately sent Paul off on his way to the sea, but Silas and Timothy remained there. **15** Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens, and after receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they departed.

**16** Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. **17** So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. **18** Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, “What does this babbling wish to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities”—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. **19** And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?” **20** For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean.” **21** Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new. **22** So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. **23** For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. **24** The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, **25** nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. **26** And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, **27** that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, **28** for “‘In him we live and move and have our being’; as even some of your own poets have said, “‘For we are indeed his offspring.’ **29** Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. **30** The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, **31** because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.” **32** Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, “We will hear you again about this.” **33** So Paul went out from their midst. **34** But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

## Thought Questions

- 1) How did the city of Thessalonica receive the good news of Jesus?
  
- 2) What can we learn from the reaction of the Bereans to the preaching about Jesus?
  
- 3) When Paul went to Athens, he discussed the gospel with “Epicurean and Stoic philosophers.” What did these people believe?
  
- 4) How does Paul preach to the Athenians? What are his points?
  
- 5) Why did some of the Greeks scoff at the teaching of the resurrection? See 1 Corinthians 15.

## Chapter 18

**1** After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. **2** And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them, **3** and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade. **4** And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks. **5** When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. **6** And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” **7** And he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. His house was next door to the synagogue. **8** Crispus, the ruler of

the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized. **9** And the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent, **10** for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.” **11** And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. **12** But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal, **13** saying, “This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the law.” **14** But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, I would have reason to accept your complaint. **15** But since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of these things.” **16** And he drove them from the tribunal. **17** And they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of this. **18** After this, Paul stayed many days longer and then took leave of the brothers and set sail for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had cut his hair, for he was under a vow. **19** And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there, but he himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. **20** When they asked him to stay for a longer period, he declined. **21** But on taking leave of them he said, “I will return to you if God wills,” and he set sail from Ephesus. **22** When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch. **23** After spending some time there, he departed and went from one place to the next through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples. **24** Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. **25** He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. **26** He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. **27** And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, **28** for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.



## Thought Questions

- 1) When Paul got to Corinth, he began to practice his trade as a tentmaker. Why? Read 2 Corinthians 11.7-15.
  
- 2) Read 1 Corinthians 2.1-5. What was Paul's condition when he came to the city?
  
- 3) What lessons can we learn about the gospel's reception in Corinth and Paul's work there?
  
- 4) Why did Paul get a haircut? Why do you suppose Luke mentions this fact?
  
- 5) What do we learn by looking at Apollos' conversion?

## Chapter 19

**1** And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. **2** And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." **3** And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." **4** And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." **5** On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. **6** And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying. **7** There were about twelve men in all. **8** And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God. **9** But when some became stubborn

and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus. **10** This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. **11** And God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, **12** so that even handkerchiefs or aprons that had touched his skin were carried away to the sick, and their diseases left them and the evil spirits came out of them. **13** Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims." **14** Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. **15** But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?" **16** And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. **17** And this became known to all the residents of Ephesus, both Jews and Greeks. And fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was extolled. **18** Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. **19** And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. **20** So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily. **21** Now after these events Paul resolved in the Spirit to pass through Macedonia and Achaia and go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." **22** And having sent into Macedonia two of his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, he himself stayed in Asia for a while. **23** About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way. **24** For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen. **25** These he gathered together, with the workmen in similar trades, and said, "Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth. **26** And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods. **27** And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship." **28** When they heard this they were enraged and were crying out, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" **29** So the city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed together into the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul's companions in travel. **30** But when Paul wished to go in among the crowd, the disciples would not

let him. **31** And even some of the Asiarchs, who were friends of his, sent to him and were urging him not to venture into the theater. **32** Now some cried out one thing, some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together. **33** Some of the crowd prompted Alexander, whom the Jews had put forward. And Alexander, motioning with his hand, wanted to make a defense to the crowd. **34** But when they recognized that he was a Jew, for about two hours they all cried out with one voice, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" **35** And when the town clerk had quieted the crowd, he said, "Men of Ephesus, who is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Artemis, and of the sacred stone that fell from the sky? **36** Seeing then that these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. **37** For you have brought these men here who are neither sacrilegious nor blasphemers of our goddess. **38** If therefore Demetrius and the craftsmen with him have a complaint against anyone, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. **39** But if you seek anything further, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. **40** For we really are in danger of being charged with rioting today, since there is no cause that we can give to justify this commotion." **41** And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

### Thought Questions

- 1) What do we learn about baptism and the Holy Spirit by looking at Paul's interaction with John's disciples?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) What do vss. 8-10 teach us about how to teach non-Christians?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) What did the new believers have to sacrifice in order to become Christ-followers?

- 4) By looking at the speech of Demetrius and the city's reaction to it, what do we notice about how Satan gains/maintains power in the hearts of man?
  
- 5) Paul is probably talking about this chapter when he wrote 2 Corinthians 1.8-10. What was his condition? What can we learn?

## Chapter 20

**1** After the uproar ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and after encouraging them, he said farewell and departed for Macedonia. **2** When he had gone through those regions and had given them much encouragement, he came to Greece. **3** There he spent three months, and when a plot was made against him by the Jews as he was about to set sail for Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. **4** Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and the Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus. **5** These went on ahead and were waiting for us at Troas, **6** but we sailed away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days we came to them at Troas, where we stayed for seven days. **7** On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight. **8** There were many lamps in the upper room where we were gathered. **9** And a young man named Eutychus, sitting at the window, sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer. And being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. **10** But Paul went down and bent over him, and taking him in his arms, said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life is in him." **11** And when Paul had gone up and had broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while, until daybreak, and so departed. **12** And they took the youth away alive, and were not a little comforted. **13** But going ahead to the ship, we set sail for Assos, intending to take Paul aboard there, for so he had arranged, intending himself to go by land. **14** And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and went to Mitylene. **15** And sailing from there we came the following day opposite Chios; the next day we touched at Samos; and the day after that we went to Miletus. **16** For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to

spend time in Asia, for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost. **17** Now from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the elders of the church to come to him. **18** And when they came to him, he said to them: “You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, **19** serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; **20** how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, **21** testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. **22** And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, **23** except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me. **24** But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God. **25** And now, behold, I know that none of you among whom I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom will see my face again. **26** Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, **27** for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. **28** Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. **29** I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; **30** and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. **31** Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears. **32** And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. **33** I coveted no one’s silver or gold or apparel. **34** You yourselves know that these hands ministered to my necessities and to those who were with me. **35** In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” **36** And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. **37** And there was much weeping on the part of all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, **38** being sorrowful most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they would not see his face again. And they accompanied him to the ship.

## Thought Questions

- 1) What was Paul's condition when he came into Macedonia? Read 2 Corinthians 7.5-16.
  
- 2) What kind of "breaking of bread" is happening in vs. 7? Is it different from vs. 11?
  
- 3) What are we supposed to see in the miracle of Eutychus' resurrection? Consider 1 Kings 17.21 and 2 Kings 4.34-35.
  
- 4) According to Paul's last gathering with the Ephesian elders, what does he say about how he did the Lord's work among them?
  
- 5) What does he instruct the elders to do?

## Chapter 21

**1** And when we had parted from them and set sail, we came by a straight course to Cos, and the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. **2** And having found a ship crossing to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. **3** When we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left we sailed to Syria and landed at Tyre, for there the ship was to unload its cargo. **4** And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days. And through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. **5** When our days there were ended, we departed and went on our journey, and they all, with wives and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed **6** and said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home. **7** When we had finished the

voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and we greeted the brothers and stayed with them for one day. **8** On the next day we departed and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. **9** He had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied. **10** While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. **11** And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" **12** When we heard this, we and the people there urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. **13** Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." **14** And since he would not be persuaded, we ceased and said, "Let the will of the Lord be done." **15** After these days we got ready and went up to Jerusalem. **16** And some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us, bringing us to the house of Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge. **17** When we had come to Jerusalem, the brothers received us gladly. **18** On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. **19** After greeting them, he related one by one the things that God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. **20** And when they heard it, they glorified God. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed. They are all zealous for the law, **21** and they have been told about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or walk according to our customs. **22** What then is to be done? They will certainly hear that you have come. **23** Do therefore what we tell you. We have four men who are under a vow; **24** take these men and purify yourself along with them and pay their expenses, so that they may shave their heads. Thus all will know that there is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law. **25** But as for the Gentiles who have believed, we have sent a letter with our judgment that they should abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what has been strangled, and from sexual immorality." **26** Then Paul took the men, and the next day he purified himself along with them and went into the temple, giving notice when the days of purification would be fulfilled and the offering presented for each one of them. **27** When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him, **28** crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place.

Moreover, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.”  
**29** For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. **30** Then all the city was stirred up, and the people ran together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and at once the gates were shut. **31** And as they were seeking to kill him, word came to the tribune of the cohort that all Jerusalem was in confusion. **32** He at once took soldiers and centurions and ran down to them. And when they saw the tribune and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. **33** Then the tribune came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. He inquired who he was and what he had done. **34** Some in the crowd were shouting one thing, some another. And as he could not learn the facts because of the uproar, he ordered him to be brought into the barracks. **35** And when he came to the steps, he was actually carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd, **36** for the mob of the people followed, crying out, “Away with him!” **37** As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he said to the tribune, “May I say something to you?” And he said, “Do you know Greek? **38** Are you not the Egyptian, then, who recently stirred up a revolt and led the four thousand men of the Assassins out into the wilderness?” **39** Paul replied, “I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no obscure city. I beg you, permit me to speak to the people.” **40** And when he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying:

### Thought Questions

- 1) Why did Paul insist on going to Jerusalem when Spirit-filled prophets repeatedly warned him about what awaited?
  
- 2) What do the warnings remind us of in the Old Testament (2 Kings 2.1-5)?
  
- 3) What false rumor has circulated among the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem about Paul (20-22)?



- 4) Although the Law of Moses had ended and Jesus' new covenant had begun, Paul chose to take actions "in observance of the law." Why?
- 5) How is Paul saved from death and what does this situation remind you of (Acts 19.28-34)?

## Chapter 22

**1** "Brothers and fathers, hear the defense that I now make before you." **2** And when they heard that he was addressing them in the Hebrew language, they became even more quiet. And he said: **3** "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. **4** I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women, **5** as the high priest and the whole council of elders can bear me witness. From them I received letters to the brothers, and I journeyed toward Damascus to take those also who were there and bring them in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished. **6** "As I was on my way and drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from heaven suddenly shone around me. **7** And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' **8** And I answered, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.' **9** Now those who were with me saw the light but did not understand the voice of the one who was speaking to me. **10** And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Rise, and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all that is appointed for you to do.' **11** And since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me, and came into Damascus. **12** "And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, **13** came to me, and standing by me said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.' And at that very hour I received my sight and saw him. **14** And he said, 'The God of our fathers appointed you to know his will, to see the Righteous One and to hear a voice from his mouth; **15** for you will be a witness for him to everyone of what you have seen and heard. **16** And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.' **17**

“When I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance **18** and saw him saying to me, ‘Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your testimony about me.’ **19** And I said, ‘Lord, they themselves know that in one synagogue after another I imprisoned and beat those who believed in you. **20** And when the blood of Stephen your witness was being shed, I myself was standing by and approving and watching over the garments of those who killed him.’ **21** And he said to me, ‘Go, for I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’” **22** Up to this word they listened to him. Then they raised their voices and said, “Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he should not be allowed to live.” **23** And as they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, **24** the tribune ordered him to be brought into the barracks, saying that he should be examined by flogging, to find out why they were shouting against him like this. **25** But when they had stretched him out for the whips, Paul said to the centurion who was standing by, “Is it lawful for you to flog a man who is a Roman citizen and uncondemned?” **26** When the centurion heard this, he went to the tribune and said to him, “What are you about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen.” **27** So the tribune came and said to him, “Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?” And he said, “Yes.” **28** The tribune answered, “I bought this citizenship for a large sum.” Paul said, “But I am a citizen by birth.” **29** So those who were about to examine him withdrew from him immediately, and the tribune also was afraid, for he realized that Paul was a Roman citizen and that he had bound him. **30** But on the next day, desiring to know the real reason why he was being accused by the Jews, he unbound him and commanded the chief priests and all the council to meet, and he brought Paul down and set him before them.

### Thought Questions

- 1) In the first part of his speech how does Paul establish his credibility with this wild Jewish crowd?
- 2) How does Paul prepare the people to hear an astonishing message in vs. 21 that he knows they will have a hard time accepting?

3) How do we know Paul wasn't saved from his sins until he obeyed Ananias' instructions in vs. 16?

4) How did Paul respond to the Romans who wanted to "examine" him? What can we learn?

## Chapter 23

**1** And looking intently at the council, Paul said, "Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all good conscience up to this day." **2** And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. **3** Then Paul said to him, "God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting to judge me according to the law, and yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck?" **4** Those who stood by said, "Would you revile God's high priest?" **5** And Paul said, "I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest, for it is written, 'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'" **6** Now when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. It is with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial." **7** And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. **8** For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all. **9** Then a great clamor arose, and some of the scribes of the Pharisees' party stood up and contended sharply, "We find nothing wrong in this man. What if a spirit or an angel spoke to him?" **10** And when the dissension became violent, the tribune, afraid that Paul would be torn to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him away from among them by force and bring him into the barracks. **11** The following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome." **12** When it was day, the Jews made a plot and bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. **13** There were more than forty who made this conspiracy. **14** They went to the chief priests and elders and said, "We have strictly bound ourselves by an oath to taste no food till we have killed Paul. **15** Now therefore you, along with the council, give notice to the tribune to bring him down to you, as though you were going to determine his case more exactly. And we are ready to kill him before he comes near." **16** Now the

son of Paul's sister heard of their ambush, so he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. **17** Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the tribune, for he has something to tell him." **18** So he took him and brought him to the tribune and said, "Paul the prisoner called me and asked me to bring this young man to you, as he has something to say to you." **19** The tribune took him by the hand, and going aside asked him privately, "What is it that you have to tell me?" **20** And he said, "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire somewhat more closely about him. **21** But do not be persuaded by them, for more than forty of their men are lying in ambush for him, who have bound themselves by an oath neither to eat nor drink till they have killed him. And now they are ready, waiting for your consent." **22** So the tribune dismissed the young man, charging him, "Tell no one that you have informed me of these things." **23** Then he called two of the centurions and said, "Get ready two hundred soldiers, with seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go as far as Caesarea at the third hour of the night. **24** Also provide mounts for Paul to ride and bring him safely to Felix the governor." **25** And he wrote a letter to this effect: **26** "Claudius Lysias, to his Excellency the governor Felix, greetings. **27** This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them when I came upon them with the soldiers and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman citizen. **28** And desiring to know the charge for which they were accusing him, I brought him down to their council. **29** I found that he was being accused about questions of their law, but charged with nothing deserving death or imprisonment. **30** And when it was disclosed to me that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you at once, ordering his accusers also to state before you what they have against him." **31** So the soldiers, according to their instructions, took Paul and brought him by night to Antipatris. **32** And on the next day they returned to the barracks, letting the horsemen go on with him. **33** When they had come to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they presented Paul also before him. **34** On reading the letter, he asked what province he was from. And when he learned that he was from Cilicia, **35** he said, "I will give you a hearing when your accusers arrive." And he commanded him to be guarded in Herod's praetorium.

### Thought Questions

- 1) When Paul calls the high priest "a whitewashed wall," what does that remind us of (Matt. 23.27)?

- 2) How does Paul cleverly frame his trial before the Sanhedrin and why?
  
- 3) In this very difficult time of Paul's life, how does the Lord encourage him and give him clarity?
  
- 4) What stands out to you about the tribune's letter to Felix, the Roman governor?

## Chapter 24

**1** And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders and a spokesman, one Tertullus. They laid before the governor their case against Paul. **2** And when he had been summoned, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying: "Since through you we enjoy much peace, and since by your foresight, most excellent Felix, reforms are being made for this nation, **3** in every way and everywhere we accept this with all gratitude. **4** But, to detain you no further, I beg you in your kindness to hear us briefly. **5** For we have found this man a plague, one who stirs up riots among all the Jews throughout the world and is a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. **6** He even tried to profane the temple, but we seized him. **8** By examining him yourself you will be able to find out from him about everything of which we accuse him." **9** The Jews also joined in the charge, affirming that all these things were so. **10** And when the governor had nodded to him to speak, Paul replied: "Knowing that for many years you have been a judge over this nation, I cheerfully make my defense. **11** You can verify that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem, **12** and they did not find me disputing with anyone or stirring up a crowd, either in the temple or in the synagogues or in the city. **13** Neither can they prove to you what they now bring up against me. **14** But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets, **15** having a hope in God, which these men themselves accept, that there will be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust. **16** So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward both God and man. **17** Now after several years I came to bring

alms to my nation and to present offerings. **18** While I was doing this, they found me purified in the temple, without any crowd or tumult. But some Jews from Asia— **19** they ought to be here before you and to make an accusation, should they have anything against me. **20** Or else let these men themselves say what wrongdoing they found when I stood before the council, **21** other than this one thing that I cried out while standing among them: ‘It is with respect to the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you this day.’” **22** But Felix, having a rather accurate knowledge of the Way, put them off, saying, “When Lysias the tribune comes down, I will decide your case.” **23** Then he gave orders to the centurion that he should be kept in custody but have some liberty, and that none of his friends should be prevented from attending to his needs. **24** After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. **25** And as he reasoned about righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, “Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you.” **26** At the same time he hoped that money would be given him by Paul. So he sent for him often and conversed with him. **27** When two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. And desiring to do the Jews a favor, Felix left Paul in prison.

### Thought Questions

- 1) What’s the Jewish case against Paul that Tertullus makes?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2) How does Paul defend himself and his ministry?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3) What do we know historically about Felix?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 4) How would you describe Felix’s relationship with Paul after the trial?

## Chapter 25

**1** Now three days after Festus had arrived in the province, he went up to Jerusalem from Caesarea. **2** And the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews laid out their case against Paul, and they urged him, **3** asking as a favor against Paul that he summon him to Jerusalem—because they were planning an ambush to kill him on the way. **4** Festus replied that Paul was being kept at Caesarea and that he himself intended to go there shortly. **5** “So,” said he, “let the men of authority among you go down with me, and if there is anything wrong about the man, let them bring charges against him.” **6** After he stayed among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day he took his seat on the tribunal and ordered Paul to be brought. **7** When he had arrived, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing many and serious charges against him that they could not prove. **8** Paul argued in his defense, “Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense.” **9** But Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, “Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and there be tried on these charges before me?” **10** But Paul said, “I am standing before Caesar’s tribunal, where I ought to be tried. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you yourself know very well. **11** If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death. But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar.” **12** Then Festus, when he had conferred with his council, answered, “To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you shall go.” **13** Now when some days had passed, Agrippa the king and Bernice arrived at Caesarea and greeted Festus. **14** And as they stayed there many days, Festus laid Paul’s case before the king, saying, “There is a man left prisoner by Felix, **15** and when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews laid out their case against him, asking for a sentence of condemnation against him. **16** I answered them that it was not the custom of the Romans to give up anyone before the accused met the accusers face to face and had opportunity to make his defense concerning the charge laid against him. **17** So when they came together here, I made no delay, but on the next day took my seat on the tribunal and ordered the man to be brought. **18** When the accusers stood up, they brought no charge in his case of such evils as I supposed. **19** Rather they had certain points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who was dead, but whom Paul asserted to be alive. **20** Being at a loss how to investigate these questions, I asked whether he wanted to go to Jerusalem and be tried there regarding

them. **21** But when Paul had appealed to be kept in custody for the decision of the emperor, I ordered him to be held until I could send him to Caesar.” **22** Then Agrippa said to Festus, “I would like to hear the man myself.” “Tomorrow,” said he, “you will hear him.” **23** So on the next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp, and they entered the audience hall with the military tribunes and the prominent men of the city. Then, at the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. **24** And Festus said, “King Agrippa and all who are present with us, you see this man about whom the whole Jewish people petitioned me, both in Jerusalem and here, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. **25** But I found that he had done nothing deserving death. And as he himself appealed to the emperor, I decided to go ahead and send him. **26** But I have nothing definite to write to my lord about him. Therefore I have brought him before you all, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that, after we have examined him, I may have something to write. **27** For it seems to me unreasonable, in sending a prisoner, not to indicate the charges against him.”

### Thought Questions

- 1) From outside this text, what do we know about Festus? What does he do with Paul when he becomes governor?
- 2) Why did Paul appeal to Caesar? Which Caesar did Paul appeal to?
- 3) Who were Agrippa and Bernice?
- 4) How does the end of this chapter fulfill Jesus’ words in Mark 13.9?



## Chapter 26

**1** So Agrippa said to Paul, “You have permission to speak for yourself.” Then Paul stretched out his hand and made his defense: **2** “I consider myself fortunate that it is before you, King Agrippa, I am going to make my defense today against all the accusations of the Jews, **3** especially because you are familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews. Therefore I beg you to listen to me patiently. **4** “My manner of life from my youth, spent from the beginning among my own nation and in Jerusalem, is known by all the Jews. **5** They have known for a long time, if they are willing to testify, that according to the strictest party of our religion I have lived as a Pharisee. **6** And now I stand here on trial because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers, **7** to which our twelve tribes hope to attain, as they earnestly worship night and day. And for this hope I am accused by Jews, O king! **8** Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead? **9** “I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth. **10** And I did so in Jerusalem. I not only locked up many of the saints in prison after receiving authority from the chief priests, but when they were put to death I cast my vote against them. **11** And I punished them often in all the synagogues and tried to make them blaspheme, and in raging fury against them I persecuted them even to foreign cities. **12** “In this connection I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. **13** At midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, that shone around me and those who journeyed with me. **14** And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ **15** And I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. **16** But rise and stand upon your feet, for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you, **17** delivering you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you **18** to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’ **19** “Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, **20** but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance. **21** For this reason the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill me. **22** To this day I have had the help that

comes from God, and so I stand here testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses said would come to pass: **23** that the Christ must suffer and that, by being the first to rise from the dead, he would proclaim light both to our people and to the Gentiles.” **24** And as he was saying these things in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, “Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind.” **25** But Paul said, “I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words. **26** For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner. **27** King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.” **28** And Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?” **29** And Paul said, “Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains.” **30** Then the king rose, and the governor and Bernice and those who were sitting with them. **31** And when they had withdrawn, they said to one another, “This man is doing nothing to deserve death or imprisonment.” **32** And Agrippa said to Festus, “This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar.”

### Thought Questions

- 1) What does Paul tell Agrippa that he is on trial for?
- 2) How does Paul summarize his life before he began following Jesus?
- 3) This chapter contains the third recounting of Paul’s meeting with Jesus on the Damascus road. What does this retelling emphasize about Jesus’ words to Paul?
- 4) What does Paul say about the teaching of the Scriptures?

## Chapter 27

**1** And when it was decided that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan Cohort named Julius. **2** And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail to the ports along the coast of Asia, we put to sea, accompanied by Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica. **3** The next day we put in at Sidon. And Julius treated Paul kindly and gave him leave to go to his friends and be cared for. **4** And putting out to sea from there we sailed under the lee of Cyprus, because the winds were against us. **5** And when we had sailed across the open sea along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra in Lycia. **6** There the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy and put us on board. **7** We sailed slowly for a number of days and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, and as the wind did not allow us to go farther, we sailed under the lee of Crete off Salmone. **8** Coasting along it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near which was the city of Lasea. **9** Since much time had passed, and the voyage was now dangerous because even the Fast was already over, Paul advised them, **10** saying, “Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives.” **11** But the centurion paid more attention to the pilot and to the owner of the ship than to what Paul said. **12** And because the harbor was not suitable to spend the winter in, the majority decided to put out to sea from there, on the chance that somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, facing both southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there. **13** Now when the south wind blew gently, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, close to the shore. **14** But soon a tempestuous wind, called the northeaster, struck down from the land. **15** And when the ship was caught and could not face the wind, we gave way to it and were driven along. **16** Running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we managed with difficulty to secure the ship’s boat. **17** After hoisting it up, they used supports to undergird the ship. Then, fearing that they would run aground on the Syrtis, they lowered the gear, and thus they were driven along. **18** Since we were violently storm-tossed, they began the next day to jettison the cargo. **19** And on the third day they threw the ship’s tackle overboard with their own hands. **20** When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned. **21** Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul stood up among them and said, “Men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete and incurred this injury and loss. **22** Yet now I

urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. **23** For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, **24** and he said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.' **25** So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. **26** But we must run aground on some island." **27** When the fourteenth night had come, as we were being driven across the Adriatic Sea, about midnight the sailors suspected that they were nearing land. **28** So they took a sounding and found twenty fathoms. A little farther on they took a sounding again and found fifteen fathoms. **29** And fearing that we might run on the rocks, they let down four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come. **30** And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, and had lowered the ship's boat into the sea under pretense of laying out anchors from the bow, **31** Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." **32** Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the ship's boat and let it go. **33** As day was about to dawn, Paul urged them all to take some food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day that you have continued in suspense and without food, having taken nothing. **34** Therefore I urge you to take some food. For it will give you strength, for not a hair is to perish from the head of any of you." **35** And when he had said these things, he took bread, and giving thanks to God in the presence of all he broke it and began to eat. **36** Then they all were encouraged and ate some food themselves. **37** (We were in all 276 persons in the ship.) **38** And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea. **39** Now when it was day, they did not recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach, on which they planned if possible to run the ship ashore. **40** So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea, at the same time loosening the ropes that tied the rudders. Then hoisting the foresail to the wind they made for the beach. **41** But striking a reef, they ran the vessel aground. The bow stuck and remained immovable, and the stern was being broken up by the surf. **42** The soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any should swim away and escape. **43** But the centurion, wishing to save Paul, kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could swim to jump overboard first and make for the land, **44** and the rest on planks or on pieces of the ship. And so it was that all were brought safely to land.

## Thought Questions

- 1) What difficulties were faced by Paul and his companions on their voyage to Rome?
  
- 2) What are the ways Paul served the people he traveled with?
  
- 3) According to prophecy, everyone would be saved. How was that accomplished?

## Chapter 28

**1** After we were brought safely through, we then learned that the island was called Malta. **2** The native people showed us unusual kindness, for they kindled a fire and welcomed us all, because it had begun to rain and was cold. **3** When Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and put them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand. **4** When the native people saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, “No doubt this man is a murderer. Though he has escaped from the sea, Justice has not allowed him to live.” **5** He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. **6** They were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw no misfortune come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god. **7** Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius, who received us and entertained us hospitably for three days. **8** It happened that the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. And Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him, healed him. **9** And when this had taken place, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured. **10** They also honored us greatly, and when we were about to sail, they put on board whatever we needed. **11** After three months we set sail in a ship that had wintered in the island, a ship of Alexandria, with the twin gods as a figurehead. **12** Putting in at Syracuse, we stayed there for three days. **13** And from there we made a circuit and arrived at Rhegium. And after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the

second day we came to Puteoli. **14** There we found brothers and were invited to stay with them for seven days. And so we came to Rome. **15** And the brothers there, when they heard about us, came as far as the Forum of Appius and Three Taverns to meet us. On seeing them, Paul thanked God and took courage. **16** And when we came into Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who guarded him. **17** After three days he called together the local leaders of the Jews, and when they had gathered, he said to them, “Brothers, though I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. **18** When they had examined me, they wished to set me at liberty, because there was no reason for the death penalty in my case. **19** But because the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar—though I had no charge to bring against my nation. **20** For this reason, therefore, I have asked to see you and speak with you, since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am wearing this chain.” **21** And they said to him, “We have received no letters from Judea about you, and none of the brothers coming here has reported or spoken any evil about you. **22** But we desire to hear from you what your views are, for with regard to this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against.” **23** When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in greater numbers. From morning till evening he expounded to them, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. **24** And some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved. **25** And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: “The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet: **26** “Go to this people, and say, “You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive.” **27** For this people’s heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.’ **28** Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.” **30** He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, **31** proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance.

## Thought Questions

- 1) How were the native people of Malta affected by Paul?
  
- 2) What caused Paul to “take courage” (vs. 15)? What can we learn from this?
  
- 3) What did Paul say to the Jews in Rome about why he was there? Why did some of them stop talking to him?
  
- 4) Why does the book of Acts end so suddenly? It’s a cliff-hanger!