



"Recognizing Christ as the Ultimate Saviour of All!"

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Think For Yourself Study Guide

INTRODUCTION TO THIS GUIDE

Most Believers will agree as to what the Bible says (except for some differences in various Bible translations), but the opinions of man differ significantly as to what the Bible means, or how it is to be interpreted.

Many hold to their beliefs based upon their upbringing, their culture, the teachings of their pastor or professor, or the official doctrines of "The Church" (creeds or statements of faith). But even these differ on many specific points, so we know they cannot all be right.

I challenge you to consider the evidence, and to think for yourself as you study the Bible! "Theologies" taught by pastors and teachers are nothing more than **theories** to be challenged and tested to be sure they are correct. Don't simply accept the theology that has been handed to you by your church or your pastor. Test it! Study and think for yourself.

This study guide is not intended to teach you the definitive, correct interpretation of Acts. No author, teacher or professor should be considered infallible, and the final word. The fact that they disagree should show us that some, and perhaps all, are wrong in some areas.

Many, for example, say that Jesus is referring to "hell" when He uses the word "Gehenna." Others, including myself, disagree, and believe Jesus is talking about something totally different ... a geographic place outside of Jerusalem. At the end of the ages no one will remain in the lake of fire; all will be saved and the entire universe reconciled to God (see 1 Corinthians 15).

I am simply asking you to study, and to think for yourself. This study guide presents my own perspectives on Acts. I don't claim to be right in all specifics, and everyone holding other views wrong. I study the evidence and I think, and what follows are my "**theories**" to be considered and tested.

So as we begin I simply make the request that you **THINK!** You have probably been taught from the book of Acts, and this has become the "theory" you now hold to be true. Challenge that theory. Examine the facts and evidences, and consider that your theory might be wrong on some points.

A WORD ABOUT BIBLE VERSIONS

After having tried a number of different Bible versions, I now use primarily the Concordant Literal New Testament and the Concordant Version of the Old Testament, both published by the Concordant Publishing Concern. This is a literal translation, and it was developed using consistent, scientific principles. If God used two different Greek words, the distinction is preserved, instead of combining several different Greek words into a single English word. Likewise if God used the same Greek word in different instances, the same idea (and even the same word whenever possible) is presented in the English. Meanings of words are derived by using a concordance to examine every instance where a word is used in Scripture.

My favorite thing about this translation is the “Keyword Concordance” which is included. This allows the reader to take any English word used, determine what Greek word it came from, and look at every other instance where that same Greek word was used. This allows the reader to examine every individual word in all of its occurrences to see if the English word used in the translation is correct.

The Concordant Version can be ordered from “The Concordant Publishing Concern” at 661/252-2112 or www.concordant.org

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

The four “Gospels” (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) cover the time period when Jesus walked upon the earth. Especially in Matthew’s account we see the emphasis that the Kingdom was near, and the King (Jesus) was making this proclamation. But the Jews would not receive their King. Jesus is crucified; the Kingdom rejected. Is the message that “The Kingdom is near” now set aside?

Jesus talked of the Kingdom to come upon the earth, but now that the Kingdom was rejected does the message from this point on talk only of a “spiritual” Kingdom, as opposed to a Kingdom to come upon the earth? Now that the Jews have rejected the very Son of God, their king, and therefore the kingdom, as Acts begins will the message go now to the Gentiles instead of the Jews? With these questions in mind, let us begin our study of Acts.

POST RESURRECTION APPEARANCES (1:1)

After the resurrection, Jesus appeared upon the earth for a period of 40 days. He is telling them things concerning the “kingdom of God.”

Jesus directs the apostles to remain in Jerusalem “for the promise of the Father.” He tells them that as John baptized in water, they will be “baptized in holy spirit.”

RESTORING THE KINGDOM? (1:6)

The apostles are looking for the kingdom to be restored “**to Israel**,” and ask Jesus if this time has now come. Jesus does not tell them the kingdom will not be restored to Israel; He simply tells them, “Not yours is it to know times or eras which the Father placed in His own jurisdiction.”

We can infer, then, that the kingdom will indeed be restored “to Israel” (and we see this happen when Christ returns in Revelation), but the time for this to happen is not yet revealed.

THEIR ASSIGNMENT: “MY WITNESSES” (1:8)

Jesus tells them when the holy spirit comes on them and empowers them, they shall be His “**witnesses**” both in Jerusalem and in entire Judea and Samaria, and as far as the limits of the earth.”

THE ASCENSION (1:9)

As Jesus ascends from the mount called Olivet (1:12), two men tell them, “This Jesus Who is being taken up from you into heaven shall come thus, in the manner in which you gaze at Him going into heaven.”

THEY WAIT IN JERUSALEM (1:12)

They persevered with one accord in prayer. At this point there were about 120 in the group (1:15).

JUDAS IS REPLACED (1:15)

The requirement: One who was “with us in all the time in which the Lord Jesus came in and out to us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day on which He was taken up from us.”

The purpose: “To become a witness of His resurrection” (1:22)

Matthias is chosen, and numbered with the eleven apostles.

12 APOSTLES

They determined the need to replace Judas, bringing the number of apostles to 12 once again. The mission of these 12 was to go to the tribes of Israel, just as Jesus had done throughout His lifetime. Interesting that there were 12 tribes in Israel, and 12 apostles going out **to Israel**.

When Paul becomes an apostle, he is in addition to the 12. He is not one of the 12, as his mission is different ... to go to the Gentiles. He is an apostle of a different kind, with a different assignment.

PENTECOST (2:1)

They were all “filled with holy spirit, and they begin to speak in different languages, according as the spirit gave them to declaim.”

The multitude of Jews that had come to Jerusalem from “every nation under heaven” were confused, for they each heard them speaking in their own vernacular.

Peter tells them this is what the prophet Joel had declared (Joel 2:28-32)

- I shall be pouring out from My spirit on all flesh.
- Your sons and daughters shall prophesy.

These things were coming to pass ... but Peter also tells the multitude of things that will come to pass at some future time.

- And I will give miracles in heaven above,
- And signs on the earth below.
- Blood and fire and vapor pillars of smoke.
- The sun shall be converted into darkness & the moon into blood
- Ere the coming of the day of the Lord,
- The great and advent day.
- And it shall be that everyone, whosoever should be invoking the name of the Lord shall be saved.

JOEL’S PROPHECY

Note that the first part of Joel’s prophecy is here fulfilled. The remaining portion awaits fulfillment at some future time, and is here again prophesied ... the coming of the day of the Lord.

PETER'S SPEECH (2:22)

- You assassinated Jesus, a Man demonstrated to be from God by powerful deeds and miracles and signs.
- God raised Him; it was not possible for Him to be held by death.
- David spoke of Christ, Who was not forsaken in the unseen and Whose flesh was not acquainted with decay ... David could not have been speaking of himself.
- We are all witnesses ... this Jesus, God raises.
- Exalted to the right hand of God, He obtained the promise of the holy spirit from the Father, and He pours out this which you are observing and hearing.
- Let **ALL THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL** know that God makes Him Lord as well as Christ, this Jesus Whom you crucify.

Hearing this, they asked Peter, “What should we be doing?”

- “Repent and be baptized each of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the pardon of your sins, and you shall be obtaining the gratuity of the holy spirit.”
- To you is the promise, and to your children, and to all those afar, **whosoever the Lord our God should be calling to Him.**

Peter continues: “Be saved from this crooked generation.”

STILL “TO THE JEWS”

Although Jesus, the Christ and King, had been rejected by the Jews and crucified ... to this point the evangel being proclaimed by the apostles (the “witnesses”) is still going **only to “the house of Israel”** (2:36)

LIFE IN THE ECCLESIA (2:41)

Added in that day were about 3000 souls, and the Lord was adding to those being saved **daily**.

They were persevering:

- In the teaching of the apostles,
- In fellowship,
- In the breaking of bread,
- In prayers.

Many miracles and signs occurred thru the apostles in Jerusalem. They were all in the same place, and

- Had all things in common
- Divided possessions as some would have need
- Day by day in the sanctuary (place outside the temple proper, open to the Jewish public)
- Broke bread in homes
- Ate with exultation & simplicity of heart

THE SANCTUARY

The early church (the ecclesia) met daily **in the sanctuary**. Here we see that the church at this point was **strictly Jewish**, since only Jews could enter the sanctuary. See Acts 21:28 where the Jews became enraged when they thought Paul had taken a Gentile into the sanctuary.

Most churches today teach that “the church” was born at Pentecost (Acts 2). But we see that “the church” of Acts 2 was restricted to Jews only!

“THOSE BEING SAVED”

The Lord was adding to the number of those being **saved**. At this point, what were they being saved from?

The prophets had foretold of the coming day of the Lord, when Christ (the Messiah) returns to judge the world. This is the kingdom which is to come upon the earth, once rejected by the Jews when Christ was crucified, but still to come. Before the ascension the apostles asked Jesus if the time had come for the kingdom to be restored to Israel. This was the expectation, but the time had not yet come.

Still, it is the “kingdom evangel” that is being proclaimed, just as Jesus had proclaimed, “Repent ... the kingdom is near.” And when the king returns, and when the kingdom comes upon the earth, this will be a time of judging.

Peter is here proclaiming that the time is now to repent and prepare for the king to come and judge. Repent, and be **saved** from His wrath and judgment.

HEALING THE LAME MAN (3:1)

The “entire people” perceived him walking and praising God. They are filled with awe and amazement.

SIGNS & WONDERS

In Jesus’ ministry, signs and wonders closely accompanied the proclaiming of the kingdom evangel. This continues in the time of the apostles ... the “Pentecostal administration.” This is how God was operating as the **kingdom evangel** went out **to the Jews**. Can we legitimately assume that God **must** be operating in the same way today, with the kingdom evangel set aside & with the evangel of grace going to Jew & Gentile alike?

PETER’S SPEECH (3:11)

The “entire people” ran to Peter & John at Solomon’s portico. Peter addresses them.

- Why do you look at us as if we did this by our own power or devoutness?
- The God of our fathers glorifies Jesus ... the Inaugurator of Life, Whom you kill.
- And Whom God rouses from among the dead, of which we are witnesses.
- In the faith of His name, His name gives stability to this man.
- What God announces before thru the prophets, the suffering of His Christ, He thus fulfills.

- Repent, then, and turn about for the erasure of your sins,
- So that seasons of refreshing should be coming from the face of the Lord,
- And He should dispatch the One fixed upon before for you, Christ Jesus,
- Whom heaven must indeed receive until the times of restoration of all.

“REPENT ... THE KINGDOM IS NEAR”

Following the death and resurrection of Jesus, the message has not changed, and it continues to go to the house of Israel as they await the restoration of their kingdom upon the earth, as in the days of King David.

Jesus proclaimed, “Repent ... the kingdom is near.” Peter now proclaims, “Repent ... that Christ will return from heaven and seasons of refreshing should be coming” (in other words, that the kingdom might come.)

It appears at this point that if Israel will repent, Christ will return and the kingdom will be restored to Israel.

- Moses said that God would raise up a prophet from among your brethren ... him you shall hear.
- All the prophets also announce these days.
- God said to Abraham: And in your seed all the kindreds of the earth shall be blessed.
- **To you first**, God, raising His Boy, commissions Him to bless you by turning away each of you from your wickedness.

“ALL KINDREDS” TO BE BLESSED

Here we see a reminder of God’s promise to Abraham, to bless all peoples (Genesis 12:3). But “to you first” (the Jews) the blessing comes through Jesus Christ, Who had come to the tribes of Israel.

And through the entire Old Testament, the days of Jesus’ ministry upon the earth, and now the ministry of the apostles after Jesus’ ascension, the evangel is going strictly **to the Jews**.

PETER & JOHN ARRESTED (4:1)

The leaders of Israel (priests, officer of the sanctuary, Sadducees) are exasperated because of their teaching and announcing the resurrection of Jesus. They take Peter & John into custody.

MANY HEAR THE WORD AND BELIEVE (4:4)

The number of men became about 5000.

THE NUMBER GROWS

As was the case when Jesus’ ministry was at its peak, many were hearing, observing the signs and wonders, and believing. Remember, if the people will repent, Christ will return and the kingdom upon the earth will come.

But despite the growing numbers, the Jewish leaders continue to oppose the evangel, as was the case in Jesus’ day.

PETER’S SPEECH WHEN QUESTIONED (4:5)

- If you are asking how the infirm man was “saved,” let it be known to you and “to the entire **people of Israel**” that in the name of Jesus Christ, the Nazarene, Whom you crucify, Whom God rouses from among the dead, in this name the man stands before you sound.

“SAVED?”

Here the word “saved” is used to indicate “healed” (the man was saved from his infirmity). When we see the word “saved” we must be sure to ask its meaning from the context. Who is being saved? What is he being saved from? What is meant by salvation in the context?

- This is the Stone that is being scorned by you builders, which is becoming the head of the corner.
- There is no salvation in any other one, for neither is there any other name given under heaven among men, in which we must be saved.

They order Peter & John to stop teaching in the name of Jesus. Peter & John reply: “We cannot but be speaking of what we perceive and hear.”

Peter & John are released, since the leaders could find no grounds to be chastening them, because of the people (for they all glorified God for this “sign of healing” that had occurred).

PRAYER FOR BOLDNESS (4:23)

Herod & Pilate, together with the nations and the peoples of Israel, gathered against Jesus “to do whatever Thy hand and Thy counsel designates beforehand to occur.”

THINGS DESIGNATED BEFOREHAND TO OCCUR

While it was the Jews & the nations that gathered to crucify Jesus, we note here that these events were designated by God to occur. Here we see the workings of God’s will, and man’s will.

It is not that man’s will is taken away, or even limited. Man makes use of his will to accomplish the ultimate evil ... the assassination of the Son of God. But the execution of man’s will cannot prevent God’s will from being accomplished. At the crucifixion, man thought he was in full control, and yet thru these events, and unbeknownst to man, God is accomplishing His will.

- Endow Thy slaves with all boldness to be speaking Thy word,
- Stretching out Thy hand for healing & signs & miracles
- Thru the name of Jesus.
- The place where they gathered was shaken.
- They were all filled with the holy spirit.
- They spoke the word of God with boldness.

LIFE IN THE ECCLESIA (4:32)

- All possessions held in common.
- With great power the apostles gave testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Lord.
- Great grace was on them all.
- There were no indigent among them, for they sold their possessions & the apostles distributed to each as they had need.

ANANIAS & SAPPHIRA (5:1)

The crime:

- He sold an acquisition and “embezzled” from the price, bringing a **part** of it to the apostles.
- He “falsified to the holy spirit”, “embezzling” from the price.
- “You do not lie to men, but to God.”

Ananias hears these words, and falls down, giving up the soul. Sapphira later comes and also lies when questioned by Peter.

- “Why is it that you agreed to try the spirit of the Lord?”

She also falls “and gives up the soul.”

Great fear came on the whole ecclesia and on all who hear these things.

THE SAME TODAY?

During the “Pentecostal Administration” we see God immediately meting out judgment to Ananias & Sapphira for lying to Him.

In this current “Administration of Grace” does God work the same way?

MANY SIGNS, WONDERS, HEALINGS (5:12)

Through the hands of the apostles many signs & miracles occurred among the people.

Multitudes were added to those believing, and they carry the infirm into the squares seeking to have Peter’s shadow come upon them. They came also from the cities about Jerusalem, with the infirm and those “molested by unclean spirits,” all of whom were cured.

NO ONE DARED TO JOIN THEM

While many saw the signs & miracles and “believed,” we read that “no one dared to join them.” (5:13)

This seems to be a parallel to the days of Jesus’ ministry, when the multitudes believed His words and flocked to see the signs & wonders, but not many were willing to pay the cost to follow.

APOSTLES JAILED; RELEASED BY A MESSENGER (5:17)

During the night a messenger opens the doors of the jail

- “Go, and, standing in the sanctuary, speak to the people all the declarations of this life.”

When the Sanhedrin & entire senate of the sons of Israel are gathered, they find the prisoners are no longer there. They find the apostles in the sanctuary, teaching, and they lead them before the Sanhedrin.

BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN (5:27)

When challenged about continuing to teach in Jesus’ name, Peter & the apostles reply:

- One must yield to God rather than to men.
- The God of our fathers rouses Jesus.
- This “Inaugurator and Saviour” God exalts to His right hand, **to give repentance to Israel and the pardon of sins.**
- We are witnesses to these declarations, as well as the holy spirit which God gives to those yielding to Him.

REPENTANCE TO ISRAEL

Still at this point we see that the purpose of the evangel being proclaimed by the apostles is to reach Israel ... specifically “to give repentance to Israel and the pardon of sins.”

GAMALIEL’S WISDOM (5:33)

The Jewish leaders intended to assassinate them, but Gamaliel (a Pharisee in the Sanhedrin, and a teacher of the law) advises:

- Withdraw from these men and let them be.
- If this work is of men, it will be demolished.
- But if it is of God, you will not be able to demolish them, lest you may be found fighting against God.

They charge the apostles not to speak in the name of Jesus, and release them. The apostles rejoiced that they were deemed worthy to be dishonored for the sake of the Name.

TEACHING DAILY (5:42)

- Every day, in the sanctuary
- And home by home
- Teaching and bringing the evangel of Jesus Christ

DISSENSION ARISES IN THE ECCLESIA (6:1)

The Hellenists complain against the Hebrews, that their widows are being overlooked at the daily dispensation.

The 12 call the multitude of the disciples and instruct the brethren to choose 7 attested men, full of the spirit and wisdom, to serve, allowing the 12 to focus on the word of God. Stephen is chosen as one of the 7.

MANY DISCIPLES, INCLUDING SOME PRIESTS (6:7)

- The word of God grows
- The number of disciples in Jerusalem multiplied tremendously
- A vast throng of the priests “obeyed the faith”

STEPHEN IS APPREHENDED (6:8)

- Stephen did great miracles and signs among the people.
- None could withstand the wisdom & the spirit with which he spoke.
- They claim he blasphemed Moses and God, stirring up the people, elders and scribes.
- Stephen is led before the Sanhedrin.
- False witnesses are put on the stand, saying that Stephen is making declarations against the holy place and the law, and saying that Jesus will be changing the customs of Moses.

STEPHEN’S SPEECH (7:1)

After recounting a history of Israel, Stephen directs accusations against those gathered.

- Stiff-necked and uncircumcised in your hearts and ears,
- You are ever clashing with the holy spirit.
- As your fathers, you also.
- Which of the prophets do not your fathers persecute?
- They kill those who announce before concerning the coming of the Just One, of Whom now you became the traitors and murderers.

They stone Stephen. **Saul was endorsing his assassination.**

“ECCLESIA”

Note the use of the word “ecclesia” in Stephen’s speech (7:38). He is referring to a “gathering” in the wilderness in Moses’ day.

“Ecclesia” is translated “church” in most every case, but here is one example where “ecclesia” certainly does not mean “church.” Even the modern translators use another word here (also see Acts 19:32,40,41).

“Ecclesia” simply means a group of people “called-out” from a larger group. (ek = out; klesia = called)

“Ecclesia” does not always mean the same thing, as is clearly displayed in the current example. We cannot, therefore, assume the “ecclesia” (church) Jesus spoke of in the Gospels, or the “ecclesia” (church) referred to early in Acts (which was primarily Jewish), is the same as the “ecclesia” (church) Paul later speaks of.

When we read of the “ecclesia” in God’s Word, we should always ask which “ecclesia” (which group of people) is being referred to. We cannot simply take all cases where “ecclesia” is used and use this as the model for our present-day “church.”

GREAT PERSECUTION (8:1)

In that day there came to be a great persecution of the ecclesia in Jerusalem, and they were dispersed among the districts of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Saul devastated the ecclesia, going into homes to drag out men and women; giving them over to jail. Those who are dispersed evangelize with the word.

PHILIP EVANGELIZES IN SAMARIA (8:5)

Philip was bringing “the evangel concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.” (8:12)

The throngs heeded the things being said by Philip, on hearing them and observing the signs which he did.

- Many spirits cast out ... many cured.

Simon had amazed Samaria with his magic. Now Simon believes and is baptized.

PETER & JOHN SENT TO SAMARIA (8:14)

Hearing that Samaria had received the word of God, the apostles in Jerusalem send Peter & John who come and pray so they might obtain the holy spirit. They had been baptized, but the holy spirit had not yet “fallen on any of them.” Peter & John place their hands on them, and they obtained holy spirit.

SIMON ASKS TO BUY AUTHORITY (8:18)

Simon offers the apostles money, that he might have the authority to lay-on hands to give the holy spirit.

Peter responds: “May your silver be for destruction together with you, seeing that you infer that the gratuity of God is to be acquired by means of money ... Repent from this evil of yours, and beseech the Lord, if consequently the notion of your heart will be forgiven you.”

VILLAGES OF THE SAMARITANS EVANGELIZED (8:25)**PHILIP & THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH (8:26)**

Philip evangelizes to him Jesus, and baptizes him. The Lord snatches away Philip, and he was found in Azotus where he brought the evangel to all the cities until he comes to Caesarea.

SAUL’S CONVERSION (9:1)

36 A.D.

Saul was blinded for three days, and did not eat or drink.

“He is a choice instrument of Mine, to bear my name before both

- The nations and kings,
- Besides the sons of Israel ...”

SAUL'S MINISTRY BEGINS (9:19)

- He came to be with the disciples in Damascus some days.
- Immediately in the synagogues he heralded Jesus, that He is the Son of God.
- He threw the Jews of Damascus into confusion, deducing that this One is the Christ.
- The Jews consult to assassinate him.
- The disciples lower him thru the wall in a hamper. (See 2 Cor 11:32)
- Coming to Jerusalem he spends time with the disciples. (See Galatians 1:18-19)
- He spoke boldly with the Hellenists -- they try to assassinate him.
- The brethren lead him into Caesarea, & they send him to Tarsus

NOT IMMEDIATELY TO JERUSALEM

From Galatians 1:17 we learn that in these early days of Saul, he went to Arabia and then back to Damascus; prior to going to Jerusalem. He makes it clear that the evangel he proclaimed was not received from men, but came thru a revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal 1:12).

Had Saul's (Paul's) message been the same as that being declared by the other apostles, he would clearly have gone first to spend time with the others. But he makes it very clear that this was not the case.

Paul's "my evangel" was not just the same message going to a different group of people (the Gentiles). Paul was entrusted with the evangel of the Uncircumcision, while Peter was entrusted with the evangel of the Circumcision (Gal 2:7).

SAUL "DEDUCED"

Saul spoke with the Jews in Damascus, "deducing" that Jesus is the Christ (9:22). "Deducing" is "sumbibazo" in the Greek ... the same word translated "unite" when speaking of the physical realm.

To "deduce" is to unite the various facts into a single conclusion. Paul was presenting to the Jews the various evidences in support of the conclusion that Jesus is the Christ.

This is a glimpse into a method used by Saul/Paul as he evangelizes.

THE ECCLESIA ENJOYS PEACE (9:31)

The ecclesia in all of Judea, Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified, and going on in the fear of the Lord and the consolation of the holy spirit. The numbers multiplied.

PETER HEALS ENEAS, THE PARALYTIC (9:32)

And aware of him are all those dwelling at Lydda and Saron, who turn back to the Lord.

PETER RAISES TABITHA FROM THE DEAD (9:36)

Tabitha was a disciple full of good acts and alms. This miracle became known in all of Joppa, and many “believe on the Lord.”

CORNELIUS & PETER’S VISIONS (10:1)

A centurion of a squadron called “Italian,” devout and fearing God with his entire house, doing many alms to the people and beseeching God continually.

- “Your prayers & alms ascended for a memorial in front of God”

An “ecstasy” came on Peter, and he is beholding heaven open

- “What God cleanses, do not you count contaminating.”
- “Three men are seeking you. Go with them, nothing doubting, for I have commissioned them.”

Peter goes with the men to Cornelius.

- “You are versed in the fact how illicit it is for a man who is a Jew to join or come to another tribe, and God shows me not to say that any man is contaminating or unclean.”
- “I am grasping that God is not partial, but in every nation **he who is fearing Him and acting righteously** is acceptable to Him.”
- “He dispatches to the sons of Israel, bringing the evangel of peace thru Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all), you are aware...”
- “And we are witnesses of all that He does...”
- “He charges us to herald to the people & certify that this is He Who is specified by God to be Judge of the living & the dead.”
- “To this One are all the prophets testifying: Everyone who is believing in Him is to obtain the pardon of sins thru His name.”

As Peter is speaking, the holy spirit falls on all those hearing the word. Those who accompanied Peter were amazed, seeing that on the nations also the gratuity of the holy spirit has been poured out. Peter bid them to be baptized.

TO THE GENTILES?

Here we see the shock on the part of the believing Jews (the ecclesia) that a Gentile would receive the holy spirit from God. It was hard for Peter to believe that he should even go to the house of a Gentile and proclaim the evangel to him.

From the time of Abraham it was God’s plan to “bless all peoples,” but until now God has worked strictly with the Jews. Jesus Himself would go only to the sheep of Israel, and “the church” (ecclesia) up to now is also exclusively Jewish. Everything we have read thus far in Acts has pertained to the Jewish believers.

Has the plan now changed? Will God now go directly to the Gentiles?

Cornelius was no ordinary Gentile. We read that he was devout, feared God, and beseeched God continually. He sought after the God of Abraham, and God now commissions Peter to go to him.

But as we read on, observe that Peter and the other apostles will continue to go to the Jews. We remember once again Paul’s words; that Paul was entrusted with the evangel of the Uncircumcision, while Peter was entrusted with the evangel of the Circumcision (Gal 2:7).

PETER CRITICIZED FOR GOING TO GENTILES (11:1)

Those of the Circumcision doubted Peter, saying that “You entered to men having uncircumcision, and you ate with them.” Peter tells them of the vision he had received from God.

- “If, then, God gives them the equal gratuity as to us also, when believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I – able to forbid God?”

They glorify God, saying, “Consequently, to the nations also God gives repentance unto life.”

THOSE DISPERSED EVANGELIZE (11:19)

- As far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch,
- Speaking the word to no one except **to Jews only**

A vast number who believe turn back to the Lord.

TURNING BACK

Note that they not only believed, but also “turn back to the Lord.” By inference we see that it is one thing to believe, and another to act (turn back). This is the message being proclaimed as a part of the “kingdom evangel” going to the Jews ... to believe and to repent (turn back).

BARNABAS SENT TO ANTIOCH (11:22)

The ecclesia in Jerusalem delegate Barnabas to Antioch. He entreats them all with purpose of heart to be remaining in the Lord.

SAUL BROUGHT TO ANTIOCH (11:25)

44 A.D.

Barnabas goes to Tarsus to find Saul, and he brings him to Antioch. They remain there for a year, with the ecclesia, teaching a considerable throng.

PROPHETS COME TO ANTIOCH; PREDICT FAMINE (11:27)

Agabus signifies thru the spirit the great famine which is about to be on the whole inhabited earth, which occurred under Claudius. As any of the disciples thrived, each of them designate something to send to the brethren dwelling in Judea, for dispensing.

FAMINE

The famine took place during the reign of Claudius (he reigned from 41-54 A.D.).

MAJOR PERSECUTION (12:1)

Herod the king put forth his hands to illtreat some from the ecclesia.

- He assassinated James, the brother of John.
- Peter is arrested & jailed.

PETER RELEASED BY A MESSENGER (12:5)

- Prayer was earnestly made by the ecclesia concerning him.
- A messenger frees Peter from his chains & opens the gates.
- Peter relates to the others how “the Lord let him out of jail.”
- Peter goes from Judea into Caesarea.

HEROD’S DEATH (12:20)

- The populace say of Herod, “A god’s voice, and not a man’s.”
- A messenger of the Lord smites Herod, because he gives not the glory to God.

WORD OF GOD GROWS (12:24)**BARNABAS & SAUL RETURN TO ANTIOCH (12:25)**

Barnabas & Saul return out of Jerusalem, taking along John Mark.

SAUL & BARNABAS SEVERED (13:1)

- “Sever, by all means, to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.”

Fasting & praying, they place their hands on them & dismiss them.

FIRST JOURNEY (13:4 – 14:28) 48 A.D.**SELEUCIA****CYPRUS (Island 60 miles west of Syria)**

- **SALAMIS (east coast of Cyprus)**
 - They announced the word of God in the synagogues
- **PAPHOS (140 miles across Cyprus, on west coast)**

SERGIUS PAUL & ELYMAS (13:6)

Elymas the Magician (Bar-Jesus) was a false prophet, a Jew. He was with the proconsul Sergius Paul, an intelligent man. Sergius Paul calls for Barnabas & Saul, seeking to hear the word of God. Elymas withstood them, “seeking to pervert the proconsul from the faith.”

Saul, “who is also Paul”:

- “Will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?”
- “You shall be blind, not observing the sun **until the appointed time**”

The proconsul believes, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

BLINDED UNTIL THE APPOINTED TIME

Elymas, a Jew, seeks to stop the word of God from going to Sergius Paul, a Gentile. It would seem that this single case is representative of the Jews and Gentiles as a whole.

Paul will later say, “Callousness, in part, on Israel has come, until the complement of the nations may be entering.” (Romans 11:25)

Blindness came upon Elymas, that Sergius Paul of the nations may enter. But the blindness is not permanent, but “until the appointed time” (in the case of Elymas), and “until the complement of the nations may be entering” (in the case of the Jews).

SAUL BECOMES PAUL

It is at this point, when blindness comes to a Jew that salvation might come to a Gentile, that we are told Saul “is also Paul” (13:9).

Saul is his given Jewish name. Paul is the Gentile name given to him by God. From this point on the name Saul will no longer be used; but always Paul.

PERGA, OF PAMPHYLIA (170 miles)

- John Mark departs from them & returns to Jerusalem (13:13)

JOHN MARK’S DEPARTURE

Could Mark’s departure have been linked to Paul taking the word directly to a Gentile?

When Paul prepares to leave on his second journey he refuses to take John Mark along (Acts 15:37).

ANTIOCH, PISIDIA (90 miles to the north)

PAUL ADDRESSES THE JEWS (13:14)

Paul is given the chance to speak in the synagogue. He addresses the “Israelites, and those who are fearing God”

- “To us was the word of this salvation dispatched.”
- Being ignorant of Him, and of the voices of the prophets which are read on every sabbath, they judged Him.
- They request Pilate to have Him dispatched.
- Yet God rouses Him from among the dead.
- He was seen by those who are now His witnesses to the people.

“We are bringing to you the evangel”:

- Which comes to be a promise to the fathers,
- That God has fully fulfilled this for our children in raising Jesus,
- As written in the second Psalm.
- David could not have been referring to himself -- his body saw decay.

PARDON & JUSTIFICATION (13:38)

“Through this One is being announced to you,

- The pardon of sins,
- **And** from all from which you could not be justified in the law of Moses, in this One everyone who is believing is being **justified**.”

PARDON/JUSTIFICATION

The message to Israel has always been pardon from sins, if there is repentance. Pardon is relieving one who is found guilty from the deserved sentence.

This is the first time we see “justification” mentioned. To be justified is to be found just, or innocent. There is a big difference between being found innocent, or being found guilty and pardoned. We must pay close attention to the details as we read on.

Matthew 18:23 is a parable concerning pardon. Here we see that pardon can be withdrawn, if the required conditions are not met. When one is found justified, or innocent, there is nothing to be withdrawn.

Note in the present text the word “and” linking:

- The pardon of sins,
- **AND** justification

Paul is here presenting two different things ... pardon AND justification. Pardon has been presented before, but when Paul speaks of justification it is a new thing!

BEWARE OF WHAT THE PROPHETS HAVE SAID (13:40)

“Beware that that which has been declared in the prophets may not be coming on you.”

- “A work am I working in your days – a work which you should by no means be believing if anyone should be detailing it to you.” (Habakkuk 1:5)
- Habakkuk is telling Israel that God will be raising up the Chaldeans, “a bitter and hasty nation,” to judge Israel.

RAISING UP THE GENTILES

As God once used the uncircumcized Chaldeans to judge His people because of their rebellion, so also He will raise up the uncircumcized Gentiles if the Jews continue to reject Him.

PAUL IS INVITED BACK (13:42)

They ask Paul to speak again on the intervening sabbath. Upon leaving the synagogue, many of the Jews & reverent proselytes follow Paul & Barnabas, who “persuaded them to remain in the grace of God.”

JEWS OPPOSE PAUL; TURNING TO THE NATIONS (13:44)

On the coming sabbath almost the entire city was gathered to hear the word of the Lord. The Jews contradicted the things spoken by Paul, blaspheming.

- “To you first was it necessary that the word of God be spoken. Yet, since, in fact, you are thrusting it away, and are judging yourselves not worthy of **eonian life**, lo we are turning to the nations.”
- “For thus the Lord has directed us: I have appointed Thee for a light of the nations; for Thee to be for salvation as far as the limits of the earth.”
- The nations rejoiced and glorified the word of the Lord, and believe, “**whoever were set for life eonian.**”

The word of the Lord was carried thru the whole country, but the Jews spur on the reverent, respectable women, and the foremost ones of the city, and rouse up persecution for Paul & Barnabas. They eject them from their boundaries

ICONIUM (80 miles SE of Antioch)**PAUL IN SYNAGOGUE IN ICONIUM (14:1)**

- A vast multitude of both Jews & Greeks believe.
- Stubborn Jews provoke the souls of the nations against the brethren.
- They tarry a considerable time, speaking boldly in the Lord.
- The Lord testifies to the word of His grace, granting signs & miracles to occur thru their hands.
- The city is divided between the Jews & the apostles.
- They are pelted with stones & fled.

CITIES OF LYCAONIA: LYSTRA, DERBE & area

- They were bringing the evangel

LYSTRA (18 miles SW of Iconium) – Home of Timothy**LAME MAN HEALED BY PAUL (14:8)**

Perceiving he has faith to be “saved”

THEY THINK PAUL & BARNABAS ARE GODS (14:11)

- Zeus (Barnabas) and Hermes (Paul)
- Priest of Zeus brings sacrifices to them

“We also are men, of like emotions as you, bringing the evangel to you **to turn you back from these vain things to the living God**”

- Who makes heaven & the earth & the sea & all that is in them.
- Who in bygone generations leaves all the nations to go their ways, although He leaves Himself not without the testimony of good acts, giving showers from heaven and fruitbearing seasons, filling our hearts with nourishment & gladness.

JEWS FOLLOW & STONE PAUL (14:19)*Summer 43 AD*

Jews from Antioch & Iconium persuade the throngs, stone Paul, drag him outside of the city, inferring he is dead. Surrounded by the disciples, Paul rises & enters into the city.

DERBE (SE of Lystra, on the way toward Tarsus)

[Now within 100 miles of Tarsus; 200 miles of Antioch]

- Evangelizing the city & making a considerable number of disciples

RETURN INTO LYSTRA, ICONIUM, ANTIOCH (they backtracked)

ESTABLISHING THE DISCIPLES (14:22)

- Entreating them to remain in the faith
- “Thru many afflictions must we be entering into the kingdom of God”
- Elders selected for the ecclesia
 - Praying & fasting, they committed them to the Lord

A WORD ABOUT “CHURCH ORGANIZATION”

As we study Acts, note the simplicity within the church. There is no bureaucracy, but only Believers earnestly living their lives in simplicity, meeting the needs of one another, as the evangel is proclaimed and as new Believers come into the fold.

Yes there is a structure. Here we see that “elders” are selected for the ecclesia, to lead the ecclesia. But there are no membership vows, articles of religion, or bureaucracies.

Much of what we find within the church today (any denomination) are traditions of men. Let us pay close attention to “the church” (ecclesia) as we find it in the Word of God!

PISIDIA

PAMPHYLIA

PERGA

ATTALIA

They return to ANTIOCH*2 years: 48-49 AD***GATHERING THE ECCLESIA IN ANTIOCH (14:27)**

They informed them of whatever God does with them, and that He opens to the nations a door of faith. They tarried no brief time with the disciples

JUDAIZERS FOLLOW AFTER PAUL (15:1)

Some came from Judea, teaching the brethren they must be circumcised to be saved. They prescribe that Paul & Barnabas & some others are to go up to the apostles & elders in Jerusalem concerning this question.

DID PAUL SUBMIT TO JERUSALEM?

It would seem at first that Paul was required to appear before the apostles & elders in Jerusalem to defend his position. But as we read Paul's account in Galatians 2:2 we see that he went voluntarily, "in accord with a revelation," and there he "submitted to them the evangel which I am heralding among the nations, yet privately to those of repute, lest somehow I should be racing or ran for naught."

Paul was not subservient to the leaders in Jerusalem. He was an apostle in his own right, chosen by God as His instrument to be a light to the nations.

TO JERUSALEM (15:1-35; Gal 2:10)**PHOENICIA****SAMARIA**

- Detailing the turning about of the nations

JERUSALEM**COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM (15:4)***50 A.D.*

They were received by the ecclesia, apostles & elders. They inform them of whatever God does with them

Some from the sect of the Pharisees who have believed rise up, saying:

- They must be circumcised
- They must keep the law of Moses

Peter addresses the group:

- God testifies to them (Gentiles), giving the holy spirit as to us
- In nothing discriminates between us and them

- Cleanses their hearts by faith
- Why are you trying to place on them a yoke which neither our fathers nor we are strong enough to bear?
- Thru the grace of the Lord Jesus we are believing, to be saved in a manner even as they.

SALVATION BY BELIEVING

Here Peter notes that salvation is not found by observing the law, as the Jews had found it impossible to do since the law was given. Salvation, for Jew & Gentile alike, comes thru believing.

- Belief comes thru the grace of the Lord Jesus
- Salvation follows belief

Barnabas & Paul tell of the signs & miracles God does among the nations thru them.

James addresses the group:

- Simeon (Peter) told how God first visits the nations to obtain out of them a people for His name.
- This agrees with the words of the prophets (Amos 9:11,12)
- Wherefore I decide not to harass those from the nations, but write a letter to them:
 - To be abstaining from ceremonial pollution with idols
 - And prostitution
 - And what is strangled
 - And blood
- For Moses has those heralding him, being read on every sabbath in the synagogues.

The apostles, elders & whole ecclesia agree, choosing men to send along with Paul & Barnabas

- Judas (called Bar-Sabbas) and Silas

A letter was sent with these representatives:

- “Not to be placing one more burden on you save these essentials:
 - To be abstaining from idol sacrifices
 - And blood
 - And what is strangled
 - And prostitution

[They return to ANTIOCH](#)

THE LETTER IS RECEIVED IN ANTIOCH (15:30)

- They rejoiced at the consolation
- Judas & Silas (prophets) entreated & established the brethren
- Paul & Barnabas tarried in Antioch,
 - Teaching, and
 - Bringing the evangel of the word of the Lord

JAMES' DECISION

While Peter addressed the council, it appears that James had authority to make the final decision on behalf of the Jewish ecclesia (15:19).

While Peter advised that no yoke be placed upon the Gentile believers, it seems that James' decision was a bit of a compromise. While he basically agreed with Peter, still he took a few things from the law and insisted upon them, as **essentials**. His reasoning is given in 15:21, so as not to create a stumbling block for those that were hearing the law of Moses proclaimed on every sabbath. Still, James declared certain "essential" portions from the law; to be added to the grace of the Lord.

While we understand James' reasoning, was he correct in imposing these **essentials** upon the Gentile believers? We do not read that this was God's decision; it was decided by James. We cannot assume that James was infallible, or that his decision was correct in this instance.

SECOND JOURNEY (15:36 – 18:23)

51-54 A.D. (3 years)

Visiting the brethren at every city in which we announce the word of the Lord, to see how they are faring.

Paul refuses to take John Mark along, creating a disturbance with Barnabas.

- Barnabas takes John Mark & heads for Cyprus
- Paul chooses Silas to accompany him

PAUL & SILAS

Paul had been travelling with Barnabas (a fellow Jew), but because of the disagreement over John Mark, Barnabas departs from Paul. Paul's new companion, Silas, is a Gentile.

Could this be symbolic, following the Jerusalem council, of Paul's gradual movement from his ministry to the Jews toward his ministry to the Gentiles? Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles, but remember his commission was to both Jew & Gentile (Acts 9:15), and he has typically gone first into the synagogues.

SYRIA

CILICIA

DERBE

LYSTRA

TIMOTHY JOINS PAUL (16:1)

- Son of a believing Jewish woman, & a Greek father
- Paul circumcised Timothy “because of the Jews who are in those places, for they all were aware that his father belonged to the Greeks”

CIRCUMCISION OF TIMOTHY

Paul continues to maintain that circumcision is not necessary, but knowing that he is still going into the synagogues he wishes to remove any possible stumbling block. (See Paul’s message concerning the use of freedoms that could be stumbling blocks to others in 1 Cor 8:9ff.)

DELIVERING THE JERUSALEM DECREES (16:4)

As they went thru the cities, they give over to them the decrees to maintain, which have been decided upon by the apostles and elders who are in Jerusalem. The ecclesias were stable in the faith & superabounded in number day by day.

DID PAUL AGREE WITH THE DECREE?

The decision by James at the Jerusalem council & the resulting epistle being circulated among the ecclesias was, at least to James, a “decree” which delineated certain “essentials” for the brethren. Paul seems to go along with the decree, but it is clear from his writings that he did not consider these things to be “essentials” as it pertains to salvation.

Paul does say that to the Jews he became as a Jew (1 Cor 9:20) to be gaining Jews.

And despite the fact that the Jerusalem decree required abstaining from idol sacrifices, Paul points out in 1 Cor 8:1ff that there is really nothing wrong with eating meat that was tied to idol sacrifices. But he does go on to say, “Beware lest somehow this right of yours may become a stumbling block to the weak.” (1 Cor 8:9) If one exercises his freedom, and this results in injury to others, then he is “sinning against brethren” and “sinning against Christ.” (1 Cor 8:12)

It seems from Paul’s writings that he would not agree that the items in the Jerusalem Decree were “essentials,” except in cases where exercising freedoms would cause a stumbling block to others.

THEIR STEPS DIRECTED BY THE SPIRIT (16:6)

PHRYGIA

THE GALATIAN PROVINCE

- Being forbidden by the holy spirit to speak the word in Asia

ABOUT MYSIA

- Tried to go to Bithynia, and the spirit of Jesus does not let them

TROAS

PAUL'S MACEDONIAN VISION (16:9)

We immediately seek to come out to Macedonia, deducing that God has called us to bring the evangel to them.

SAMOTHRACE

NEAPOLIS

PHILIPPI

- The foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony

LYDIA BELIEVES (16:13)

Paul goes outside the gate beside a river where they believe they will find a group gathered for prayer.

- We spoke to the women who are coming together

Lydia, a woman who sold purple in Thyatira

- Whose heart the Lord opens up to heed what is spoken by Paul
- She & her household are baptized

PAUL CASTS SPIRIT FROM DIVINER (16:16)

The spirit afforded a vast income to the woman's master. She had followed Paul, saying:

- These men are slaves of God most high
- Announcing to you a way of salvation

Exasperated, Paul casts out the spirit. Her masters see that their income is gone, and take Paul & Silas to the magistrates:

- "They are announcing customs which it is not allowed us to assent to, nor to do, being Romans"

PAUL & SILAS IN JAIL (16:22)

At midnight they are praying and singing hymns to God. A great quake occurred. All the prison doors opened; all bonds slacked. The warden asks Paul, "What must I do to be saved?"

- "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household"

They speak to him the word of the Lord, with all in his house. They are baptized

RELEASE FROM JAIL (16:35)

Paul points out that they were uncondemned Romans, yet lashed in public. He demands that they come and "lead us out."

LYDIA

AMPHIPOLIS & APOLLONIA

THESSALONICA (17:1) [75 miles from Philippi]

As was Paul's custom, he enters the synagogue & on three sabbaths:

- He **argues** with them from the scriptures
- That Christ must suffer & rise from the dead
- That Jesus is the Christ

Some are persuaded

- A vast multitude of the reverent Greeks
- Not a few of the foremost women

The Jews gather a mob

- Not finding Paul, they drag Jason & some brethren to the city magistrates
- "Committing things contravening the decrees of Caesar"
- "Saying there is a different king, Jesus"

Jason and the others are released after paying bail.

BEREA (17:10) [45 miles from Thessalonica]

Paul goes into the synagogue of the Jews. They were more noble than those in Thessalonica – they searched the Scriptures. Many believe, including not a few of the respectable Greeks

Jews from Thessalonica came & agitated the throngs. Paul is sent away by the brethren ... Silas & Timothy remain behind

ATHENS (17:15)

Paul's spirit is incited, beholding the city was idol-ridden. He argued:

- In the synagogue, and
- In the market, every day, with those happening along

Epicurean & Stoic philosophers lead Paul to the Areopagus

- "Can we know what this new teaching is?"

PAUL BEFORE THE AREOPAGUS (17:22)

- I behold how religious you are
 - Inscription: “To an Unknowable God”
- “This One am I announcing to you”
 - The God Who makes the world & all that is in it
 - Not dwelling in temples made by hands
 - Not attended by human hands
 - Not requiring anything
- He gives to all life and breath and all
- He makes out of one every nation of mankind
 - Specifying the setting of the seasons
 - And the bounds of their dwelling
- For them to be seeking God
 - Not far from each of us is He inherent
- In Him we are living and moving
- As your poets declare: “For of that race also are we”
- We ought not to be inferring that the Divine is like gold, silver, stone, a sculpture of art and human sentiment

- Condoning the times of ignorance,
 - God is now charging all to repent
 - He assigns a day to be judging the inhabited earth
 - By the Man Whom He specifies
 - Raising Him from the dead

When hearing of the resurrection, they jeer. But some ask to hear Paul again, and some join Paul.

LEARNING FROM PAUL

Paul’s approach before the Areopagus is an excellent model for us today!

When Paul went into the synagogues, he argued with the Jews from the Scriptures. Why? Because the Jews respected the Scriptures, and accepted that they were revelation from God.

But the Gentiles did not have the same view of Scripture. And here, before the Areopagus, Paul does not argue from Scripture. As a matter of fact when Paul does use a direct quote in support of his argument, the quote comes from Gentile poetry and not from Scripture.

Furthermore, Paul does not condemn his audience as pagans, even though his spirit was incited when he first arrived in Athens when he saw the many idols. Instead, Paul builds bridges to his audience. He even compliments them, beholding how “religious” they are.

Paul was Christ’s Ambassador, and he tailored his approach depending on his audience. “To all have I become all, that I should undoubtedly be saving some.” (1 Corinthians 9:22)

CORINTH (18:1)

He remained with Aquila & Priscilla, fellow tentmakers, and worked with them.

- He argued **in the synagogue** every sabbath
- Persuaded both Jews & Greeks

Silas & Timothy arrive from Macedonia. Paul is “pressed in the word.”

- Certifying **to the Jews** that Jesus is the Christ

THE EDICT OF CLAUDIUS

Acts 18:2 tells us that Aquila & Priscilla departed from Rome due to Claudius prescribing that all the Jews depart. The earliest dating of the edict of Claudius is by Orosius, a 5th century historian, who states that the edict was issued in the ninth year of Claudius (49-50 AD). Orosius claims the date comes from Josephus, but there is no mention in Josephus’ extant works.

1 THESSALONIANS WRITTEN

50 – 52 A.D.

Probably written shortly after Paul’s arrival in Corinth.

TO THE NATIONS (18:6)

The Jews resist and blaspheme

- **“From now on I shall go to the nations”**

Paul enters the house of Titus Justus

- Who is revering God
- Whose house was adjacent to the synagogue

Crispis, chief of the synagogue, believes, with his household. Many Corinthians believe and were baptized

THE LORD PROMISES TO PROTECT PAUL (18:9)

- “Fear not, but be speaking”
- “I am with you, and no one shall illtreat you”
- “Because there are many people of Mine in this city”

Paul remains 1-1/2 years, teaching the word of God.

2 THESSALONIANS WRITTEN

52 – 53 A.D.

GALLIO REFUSES TO JUDGE PAUL (18:12)

Their accusation:

- “Aside from the law is this man inducing men to revere God”

Gallio’s reply:

- “If they are questions concerning a word, and names, and a law of yours, you see to it. A judge of these I am not intending to be.”

They beat Sosthenes, the chief of the synagogue.

THE GALLIO INSCRIPTION

The Gallio inscription is the most certain point of departure in dating Paul’s life. According to the inscription at Delphi, Gallio was procounsel during the 12th year of Claudius’ tribunal power and after his 26th proclamation as Emperor. The 27th proclamation was in August 52.

Procounsels normally took office in mid-Summer. Gallio probably took office in mid-Summer 52, but may have been mid-Summer 53 allowing time for the procounsel to refer some questions to the Emperor as the inscription mentions he did.

Paul probably appeared before Gallio shortly after he assumed office, and probably toward the end of Paul’s 18 months in the city.

SYRIA

EPHESUS

- “Argues with the Jews” in the synagogue

CAESAREA

ANTIOCH

GALATIANS WRITTEN

According to the “Early Theory”

THIRD JOURNEY (18:23 – 21:16)

54-58 A.D. (4 years)

GALATIAN PROVINCE

PHRYGIA

- Establishing all the disciples

APOLLOS CORRECTED BY PRISCILLA/AQUILA (18:24)

Apollos was a scholarly man, able in the scriptures

- Instructed in the way of the Lord
- Fervent in spirit
- Spoke & taught accurately what concerns Jesus
 - Being versed only in the baptism of John

Priscilla & Aquila expounded the way of God to him more accurately

He strenuously & thoroughly confuted the Jews in public

- Exhibiting thru the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ

EPHESUS

DISCIPLES THAT HAD NOT RECEIVED THE SPIRIT (19:1)

There were about 12 men

- “Did you not obtain holy spirit on believing?”
- “Nay, neither hear we if there is holy spirit”

They tell Paul they were baptized “into John’s baptism.” They are then baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

- At the placing of Paul’s hands on them, the holy spirit came on them
- They spoke languages & prophesied

ALL IN PROVINCE OF ASIA HEAR (19:8)

In the synagogue Paul spoke boldly for three months

- Arguing & persuading that which concerns the kingdom of God

Some were hardened & stubborn, saying evil things of “the way”

- Paul withdraws, and “severs the disciples”
- Arguing day by day in the school of Tyrannus
- For two years, so all in the province of Asia hear the word of the Lord
- Powerful deeds God did thru Paul

TO THE GENTILES

Paul continues his custom, going first to the synagogue. When he is rejected, he goes to the Gentiles. Still he has, at this point, not ceased going first to the Jews.

PROBABLE LETTER TO CORINTHIANS

This letter probably lost (see 1 Cor 5:9)

SONS OF SCEVA (19:13)

Some wandering Jews, exorcists, name the name of Jesus over those having wicked spirits.

- “I am adjuring you by the Jesus whom Paul is heralding.”

Seven sons of Sceva were doing this.

- The demon-possessed man leaped on them
- Naked & wounded they escape from the house

MANY BELIEVE & BURN THEIR EVIL SCROLLS (19:17)

Mightily the word of the Lord grows and was strong.

1 CORINTHIANS WRITTEN

Spring, 57 A.D.

PAUL PLANS TO GO TO JERUSALEM (19:21)

MACEDONIA

ACHAIA

- “After my coming to be there (Jerusalem) I must see Rome also”

Paul attended to the province of Asia

- He sends Timothy & Erastus to Macedonia

DEMETRIUS THE SILVERSMITH (19:23)

Demetrius stirs up a group against Paul, pointing out that he is hurting their business in all of Asia, associated with the temples of Artemis.

- “The sanctuary of the great goddess Artemis also is being thereby reckoned nothing.”

The mob becomes full of fury

- “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians”

They apprehend Paul’s associates (Gaius & Aristarchus). The “ecclesia” was in confusion. The majority is not aware why they had come together.

They unite on Alexander, one of the throng, and he speaks to the mob.

- “You must possess composure & no one commit anything rash”
- “These men are not despoilers of the sanctuary, nor blasphemers of our goddess”
- “If any has a charge against them, court sessions are being held, and there are proconsuls”
- “In the legal *ecclesia* will it be explained”

Alexander dismisses the “ecclesia.”

ALEXANDER’S TACT

Despite the fury of the moment, consider the tact used by Alexander to diffuse the mob. Alexander calmly lays out a very logical argument that is successful in diffusing the situation and dismissing the mob.

“ECCLESIA”

As indicated in the note following 7:38, “Ecclesia” is translated “church” in most every case in our modern translations. Here we see “ecclesia” used three times where it certainly cannot mean “church.” (Acts 19:32,40,41) Even the modern translators use another word here.

“Ecclesia” simply means a group of people “called-out” from a larger group. (ek = out; klesia = called) “Ecclesia” does not always mean the same thing, as is clearly displayed in the current example. We cannot, therefore, assume the “ecclesia” (church) Jesus spoke of in the Gospels, or the “ecclesia” (church) referred to early in Acts (which was primarily Jewish), is the same as the “ecclesia” (church) Paul later speaks of.

When we read of the “ecclesia” in God’s Word, we should always ask **which** “ecclesia” (which group of people) is being referred to. We cannot simply take all cases where “ecclesia” is used and use this as the model for our present-day “church.”

MACEDONIA (20:2)**GREECE**

- Spending 3 months
- The Jews plot against Paul; he plans to return thru Macedonia

2 CORINTHIANS WRITTEN

Fall, 57 A.D.

GALATIANS WRITTENAccording to the "Late Theory"
Winter, 57 A.D.**ROMANS WRITTEN**

Spring, 58 A.D.

PHILIPPI

- Left Philippi after the days of unleavened bread

DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

Paul was in Philippi during the days of Unleavened Bread. He left for Troas hoping to arrive in Jerusalem by Pentecost. By calculating from the number of days mentioned in Acts 20:6-7 this would place the slaying of the Passover that year on a Thursday. According to Ramsay, Gerhardt, Michaelis this would be 57, 58 or 56 AD respectively.

TROAS

- Stayed 7 days

EUTYCHUS FALLS FROM WINDOW (20:7)

Paul argued with them, being about to be off on the morrow. He prolonged the word unto midnight. Eutychus (a young man) falls asleep & falls from the 3rd story. Paul tells them: "Make no tumult, for his soul is in him."

TRAVELLING TOWARD JERUSALEM (20:13)**ASSOS**

MITYLENE

ABREAST OF CHIOS

SAMOS

MILETUS

- Sailed by Ephesus, wanting to be in Jerusalem on Pentecost

PAUL CALLS FOR THE ELDERS FROM EPHESUS (20:17)

From Miletus, Paul calls for the “elders of the ecclesia.”

- “Under no circumstances did I shrink from informing you of anything that was expedient”
- “Teaching you in public & at your homes”
- Certifying to both Jews & Greeks:
 - Repentance toward God, and
 - Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ
- Now, bound in spirit, I am going to Jerusalem
 - The holy spirit certifies that bonds & afflictions remain for me
- But I am not making my soul precious to myself, till I should be perfecting my career & the dispensation which I got from the Lord Jesus:
 - **To certify the evangel of the grace of God**
- You shall be seeing my face no longer
- Under no circumstances do I shrink from **informing you of the entire counsel of God**
- The holy spirit appointed you **supervisors** to be **shepherding** the ecclesia of God
- When I am gone
 - Wolves will enter among you, not sparing the flocklet
 - From among yourselves will arise men speaking perverse things, to pull away disciples after themselves
 - Watch
- I am committing you to God & to the word of His grace
 - Which is able to edify
 - And give the enjoyment of an allotment among all who have been hallowed
- I covet no one’s silver or gold or vesture
 - These hands subserve my needs, & of those with me
 - Thus toiling, you must be supporting the infirm
 - Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, “Happy is it to give rather than to get”

“CHURCH ORGANIZATION”

Here we get another glimpse at the organization of the ecclesia. We have seen that “elders” were appointed as leaders within the ecclesia. Now Paul reminds the elders that they are “supervisors” that have been appointed by the holy spirit, and that they are to be “shepherding” the ecclesia of God (20:28).

No huge bureaucratic structure. No traditions of men. No fancy buildings. Here is the early church, led by elders who are appointed not by men, but by the holy spirit, and who supervise and shepherd the ecclesia.

CONTINUING TOWARD JERUSALEM (21:1)

COOS

RHODES

PATARA

SYRIA

TYRE

PTOLEMAIS

CAESAREA

- Entering the house of Philip the evangelist
- Agabus prophesies that the Jews in Jerusalem will bind Paul
- Paul: “I hold myself in readiness, not only to be bound, but to die also in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”

JERUSALEM (21:15)

58 A.D.

Paul unfolded each of the things which God does among the nations thru his dispensation. They say to Paul:

- “Tens of thousands there are among the Jews **who have believed**, and all are inherently **zealous for the law**.”
- “They hear that you teach the Jews apostasy from Moses”
- “A multitude must come together, for they will hear you have come”
- “Go with these 4 men having a vow on them; be purified with them; all will know what they have heard of you is nothing”
- “That you are observing the elements and you yourself are maintaining the law.”

Paul does as they instruct him.

PAUL’S ENEMIES IN JERUSALEM

As Paul sets foot in Jerusalem we can understand that the non-believing Jews would be his enemies. They objected to Paul’s preaching in the name of Jesus.

But Paul has other enemies in Jerusalem as well. In 21:20 Paul is told that the “Jews who have believed” and who are “zealous for the law” are also in an uproar over Paul’s teachings.

As Paul enters Jerusalem, then, it appears that nearly ALL are against him.

Furthermore, this should lead us to ask ... at this point in time is there a single ecclesia of God, or are there two? We read in 21:20 that there are the Jewish believers that expect Paul to observe “the elements” and maintain “the law.” But they did not expect this of the Gentile believers. Of the Gentiles they expected only that they guard themselves from idol sacrifice, blood, what is strangled, and prostitution (21:25).

In modern translations the word “ecclesia” is simply translated “church” as if there is only one homogenized group. But here we see that there were actually two distinct groups ... the Jewish ecclesia and the Gentile ecclesia ... and there were different expectations for each. We remember once again Paul’s comment in Galatians 2:7; that he had been entrusted with the “evangel of the Uncircumcision” while Peter was entrusted with the “evangel of the Circumcision.” There were two evangels, for two different groups ... and this accounts for the friction between Paul and the Jewish believers.

This being the case, we must be very careful to observe, when reading the epistles (letters) in the Word of God, **who** they are written to! Peter and the others of the 12 were writing to the Jewish believers, relative to the “evangel of the Circumcision.” Paul was writing to the Gentile believers, and also the Jews that came into the ecclesia (Body of Christ) by faith in response to Paul’s “evangel of the Uncircumcision.” We have no right to mix the two, or as Gentiles to claim the things taught directly to the Jewish believers!

PAUL’S CONCESSION

It appears that Paul is here conceding to the Jewish elders in Jerusalem, but from Paul’s writings we know that he does not consider observance of the law a necessity. Still, to the Jews Paul is willing to become as a Jew, to be gaining Jews (1 Corinthians 9:20).

PAUL IS APPREHENDED (21:27)

Jews from Asia apprehend Paul:

- “This is the man who is teaching all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this holy place.”
- “He led Greeks also into the sanctuary, & has contaminated this holy place.”

As they seek to kill Paul, soldiers & centurions run down to them. They bind Paul and lead him into the citadel. Paul gets permission to speak to the people.

PAUL ADDRESSES THE CROWD (22:1)

Hearing that Paul spoke in Hebrew, they become more quiet.

- I am a Jew, born in Tarsus
- Reared in this city at the feet of Gamaliel
- Trained according to the strictness of the law
- Being inherently zealous for God as you are today
- I persecute this way to death
- Drawing near to Damascus, out of heaven a light flashes
- “I am Jesus, the Nazarene, Whom you are persecuting”
- “The God of our fathers fixes upon you beforehand to know His will, and to be acquainted with the Just One”
- “You shall be His witness to all men of what you see & hear”
- “I shall be delegating you afar to the nations”

They listened until this word, & they lift up their voice against him, saying “It is not befitting for him to live.”

The captain orders Paul to be led into the citadel to be interrogated and scourged. Paul says, “Is it allowed you to scourge a Roman man, uncondemned?”

Learning that Paul is a Roman citizen, the captain was afraid. Paul is loosed, and orders the chief priests & Sanhedrin to come together, to know the certainty of that of which Paul is being accused.

THEIR OBJECTION

As Paul talks with those gathered, it is interesting that they did not object when he proclaims to them that concerning Jesus. Instead they object when Paul says, “I am going to the nations.”

The Jews who had gathered could very well have included those of the Jewish ecclesia that believed in Jesus, but their objection is that Paul is going to the Gentiles. Note once again Acts 21:20 where we see that many Jews “who have believed” were opposed to Paul, because they were zealous for the law.

PAUL ADDRESSES THE SANHEDRIN (23:1)

”You are sitting to judge me according to the law, and illegally are you ordering me to be beaten.”

Knowing that both Sadducees & Pharisees are present, Paul says:

- “A Pharisee, son of Pharisees, am I.”
- “Concerning the expectation & resurrection of the dead am I being judged.”

There arose a commotion between the Pharisees & Sadducees

- Sadducees are saying there is no resurrection, nor messenger, nor spirit
- Pharisees are avowing both

Some of the scribes of the Pharisees say they find no evil in Paul

Fearing for Paul’s life, the captain orders the troops to snatch him out of their midst, to lead him into the citadel.

The Lord tells Paul: “Courage! For as you certify that which concerns Me in Jerusalem, thus you must testify in Rome also.”

THE PLOT TO KILL PAUL (23:12)

More than 40 Jews vow not to eat or drink until they kill Paul. They ask the chief priests & elders to have Paul led into an ambush.

When the captain learns of the plot, he arranges to escort Paul in the night, with heavy guard, to Caesarea ... to the governor Felix. The captain writes to governor Felix.

- Him I found being indicted concerning questions of their law, yet having nothing deserving death or bonds.

CAESAREA

FELIX AGREES TO GIVE PAUL A HEARING (23:34)

- “When your accusers may be coming”
- Paul is guarded in Herod’s pretorium

HEARING BEFORE FELIX (24:1)

Annanias (chief priest), some elders, and an orator (Tertullus) arrive. Tertullus speaks:

- “Finding this man a pestilence and stirrer of insurrections among all the Jews on the inhabited earth”
- “Who tries to profane the sanctuary also”

Paul responds:

- “I went to worship in Jerusalem not more than 12 days ago, and they did not find me arguing with anyone – not in the synagogues nor the city.”
- “Nor can they present evidence to you for that which they are accusing me”
- “According to ‘the way,’ which they are terming a sect, I am offering divine service to God”
 - “Believing all that is written”
 - “According to the law & the prophets”
 - “Having an expectation in God, which these themselves also are anticipating”
 - “That there will be a resurrection which is impending, for both the just and the unjust”
- “I am exerting myself also to have a conscience which is no stumbling block toward God and men, continually”

DECISION POSTPONED (24:22)

Felix makes them postpone to become acquainted more exactly with that which concerns “the way.”

- When captain Lysias comes down I shall investigate your affairs
- Paul is kept, having his ease, & no one was prevented from serving him.

FELIX CONTINUES TO HOLD PAUL (24:24)

Felix comes with his wife (Drusilla, a Jewess) & sends for Paul

- Hears him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus
- Arguing concerning righteousness, self-control, the impending judgment

Felix tells Paul he will call for him again

- Expecting that Paul will give him money
- He sends for Paul frequently, and conversed with him

FESTUS SUCCEEDS FELIX (24:27)

The chief priests & foremost of the Jews inform him against Paul

- Asking Paul to be brought to Jerusalem
- Planning an ambush along the way to kill him

Festus invites Paul's accusers to come to Caesarea

FESTUS' ARRIVAL

Eusebius dates Festus' arrival in Nero's second year (between Sept 56 and Sept 57). Many scholars have preferred a later date for the commencement of Festus' procuratorship (59-60 AD).

HEARING BEFORE FESTUS (25:6)

The Jews make many & heavy charges against Paul which they were not strong enough to demonstrate. Paul responds:

- "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the sanctuary, nor against Caesar did I any sin"

Festus, wanting to curry favor with the Jews, asks Paul if he is willing to go to Jerusalem to be judged there. Paul responds:

- "At the dais of Caesar I must be judged"
- "If I have committed anything deserving of death, I am not refusing to die"
- "To Caesar am I appealing"

Festus tells Paul: "To Caesar shall you go"

KING AGRIPPA COMES TO CAESAREA (25:13)

Festus submitted Paul's affairs to the king

- "They brought not one charge of the wicked things I suspected"
- "They had questions concerning their own religion against him"
- "And concerning a certain Jesus, who has died, whom Paul alleged to be alive"
- "Paul appealed to be kept for the Imperial investigation"

Agrippa tells Festus that he intended to hear Paul.

HEARING BEFORE KING AGRIPPA (25:23)

Paul makes his defense

- “I am happy to make a defense before you, as you are versed in both the customs & questions of the Jews”
- “In expectation of the promise which came by God to our fathers, I stand being judged, to which our twelve-tribed people, earnestly offering divine service, is expecting to attain.”
- “Why is it unbelievable to you, if God is rousing the dead?”

Paul tells of his Damascus road experience:

- “A deputy & a witness both of what you have perceived and that in which I will be seen by you”
- “Commissioning you to open their eyes, to turn them about from darkness to light & from the authority of Satan to God”
- “For them to get a pardon of sins & an allotment among those who have been hallowed by faith that is in Me”

Paul reports how he responded to this experience

- “First in Damascus, and in Jerusalem, and the entire province of Judea, and to the nations, I reported that they are to be repenting & turning back to God, engaging in acts worthy of repentance.”
- “I say nothing outside of what both the prophets & Moses speak of impending occurrences”

Festus interjects, “You are mad, Paul. Paul replies, “Not mad but declaiming declarations of truth & sanity”

- “The King is adept concerning these things”
- “King Agrippa, are you believing the prophets? I am aware that you are believing”

Agrippa asks Paul, “Briefly are you persuading me, to make me a Christian?” Paul replies:

- “May I ever wish to God, that, briefly as well as greatly, not only you, but also all who are hearing me today, become such a kind as I am also, outside of these bonds.”

They agree that Paul has done nothing deserving of death or bonds, & that he could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar.

THE TRIP TO ROME (27:1)**SIDON**

- Paul is permitted to go to friends for casual care

MYRA, OF LYCIA**IDEAL HARBORS, NEAR LASEA**

A considerable time elapsed, & sailing was already hazardous. Paul predicts that sailing will be with damage & much forfeit, not only of the lading and the ship, but of “our souls also.”

The ship is caught in a hurricane. Paul tells them not one soul will be cast away, as reported to him by a messenger. There were 276 in the ship

SHIPWRECKED AT MELITA (28:1) 60 A.D.

The barbarians kindled a fire & took them in. A viper bites Paul, but he does not die. They said he is a god.

FATHER OF PUBLIUS HEALED (28:7)

The others on the island having infirmities came & were cured.

TO ROME (28:11)

SYRACUSE

RHEGIUM

PUTEOLI

ROME

- Paul meets with the brethren who had come
- Paul was permitted to remain by himself, together with the soldier who guarded him.

PAUL CALLS FOR THE JEWS (28:17)

He calls together those who are foremost of the Jews.

- “Because of the expectation of Israel this chain is about me.”

The Jews say they have received no report concerning Paul, or anything wicked concerning him. They ask to hear what Paul has to say. On a set day, more came to him in the lodging & Paul expounded from morning till dusk:

- Concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses & the prophets

Some were persuaded, yet others disbelieved. There being disagreements, they were dismissed. Paul tells them: “The holy spirit speaks thru Isaiah to your fathers”:

- “You will be hearing but not understanding”
- “You will be observing but not perceiving”
- “For stoutened is the heart of this people”

“Let it be known to you, then, that to the nations was dispatched this salvation of God, and they will hear.”

TO THE GENTILES

This is the same passage from Isaiah that Jesus quoted in Matthew 13:14, as the kingdom evangel was being rejected and He began to speak to the masses only using parables.

After the King Himself was rejected (crucified) we read throughout Acts that the kingdom evangel is again proclaimed, and again rejected. Several times Paul has said he would go to the Gentiles, and he then did so. Paul never stopped, however, going still to the Jews as well.

Now, however, the Acts of the Apostles have come to a close. At the close of Acts we read once again that because of the “stoutened heart” of the Jewish people, salvation is going to the Gentiles. Paul continues to herald the kingdom of God to the end (28:31), but we read his assessment of Israel in Romans 11:25 – “Callousness, in part, on Israel has come, until the complement of the nations may be entering. And thus all Israel shall be saved.”

In other words ... the coming of the Kingdom upon the earth, to Israel, is postponed, while God’s salvation now goes to the nations.

PAUL REMAINS IN ROME FOR 2 YEARS (28:30)

He welcomed all those going in to him

- Heralding the kingdom of God, and
- Teaching that which concerns the Lord Jesus Christ
- With all boldness, unforbidden

PAUL’S FIRST CAPTIVITY IN ROME

COLOSSIANS WRITTEN

61 or 62 A.D.

EPHESIANS WRITTEN

61 or 62 A.D.

PHILEMON WRITTEN

62 or 63 A.D.

PHILIPPIANS WRITTEN

63 A.D.

BETWEEN PAUL'S CAPTIVITIES

Paul tells of his expectation to be released (Philippians 1:23-27; 2:24 and Philemon 22).

Paul's possible travels according to Romans, Philemon, Colossians and Philippians:

- Philippi (Philippians 1:26; 2:24)
- Colossae
 - Desire to visit Colossae (Philemon 22)
 - Personnel in ecclesia at Colossae, Epaphras, Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, Onesimus (Colossians 4:12,17,9; Philemon 1,2,10-11)
- Laodicea & Hierapolis
 - Paul's concern for these ecclesias; Work of Epaphras (Colossians 2:1; 4:12-13)
 - Personnel of ecclesia at Laodicea: Nymphas & Archippus (Colossians 4:15)
 - Connection of letter to Colossians with the Laodiceans. Paul's letter to Laodicean ecclesia (Colossians 4:16)
- Spain (Romans 15:24,28)

NERO

64 A.D. – Great fire in Rome. Nero accuses Christians.
Terrible persecution begins.

Paul's recorded travels (according to 1 Timothy, Titus, 2 Timothy)

- Paul & Timothy in Ephesus. Paul departs to Macedonia where he writes 1 Timothy.
 - 1 Timothy 1:3
 - 1 Timothy 3:14-15

1 TIMOTHY WRITTEN

67 A.D.

TITUS WRITTEN

67 A.D.

PAUL'S SECOND CAPTIVITY**2 TIMOTHY WRITTEN**

Spring, 68 A.D.

PAUL EXECUTED*Summer, 68 A.D.*

Tradition is that both Peter and Paul were martyred under Nero. Some suppose that this took place early in the period of persecution (64 A.D.) but other scholars follow Eusebius in placing the martyrdom of Paul toward the end of Nero's reign (68 A.D.).

FACTS ABOUT PAUL

- A Jew, born in Tarsus, 5-10 A.D. (Acts 21:39; 22:3; Phil 3:5)
- Circumcised on the eighth day (Phil 3:5)
- Tribe of Benjamin (Acts 13:21; Rom 2:1; Phil 3:5)
- Raised in Jerusalem (Acts 22:3)
- Educated in Judaism, studied under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3)
- A Hebrew of Hebrews (Phil 3:5)
- A Pharisee, son of a Pharisee (Acts 23:6; 26:4; Phil 3:5)
- Kept the law (Acts 26:5)
- A Roman citizen (Acts 22:25-38)

FAMILY

- His sister lived in Jerusalem (Acts 23:16)
- His nephew helped him (Acts 23:16)

HIS TRADE

- A tentmaker (Acts 18:3)

OVERALL

- 34 years of ministry
- 12,000 miles

PAUL’S LETTERS – Chronological Order

- 1 Thessalonians (50-52 A.D.)
- 2 Thessalonians (52-53)
- 1 Corinthians (57)
- 2 Corinthians (57)
- Galatians (57)
- Romans (58)
- Colossians (61-62)
- Ephesians (61-62)
- Philemon (62-63)
- Philippians (63)
- 1 Timothy (67)
- Titus (67)
- 2 Timothy (68)

ABOUT TARSUS

- Capital & chief city of Cilicia in southeastern Asia Minor
- Queen city of the fertile Cilician plains, cultivated by slave labor
- On major road from Mesopotamia to Syria; access to Mediterranean and a gap in Taurus Mountains
- A commercial center; used by camel caravans
- Location of a university
- A temple of Baal located there
- Famous conquerors marched this road
 - Cyrus of Persia
 - Alexander the Great
 - Julius Caesar
- Predominantly Hellenistic culture, but within the city was a Jewish community
- THE BIRTHPLACE OF PAUL

A SUMMARY OF ACTS

- Post-resurrection appearances by Jesus, and His ascension (1)
- Pentecost: The Kingdom is “unlocked” with the “keys of the kingdom” promised by Jesus in Matthew 16:19 (2)
- Kingdom evangel proclaimed **to the Jews** by the apostles (3)
 - “Repent, that Christ shall come & all is restored” (3:19)
 - The kingdom to be restored to Israel (see Acts 1:6)
- Kingdom message rejected by the Jewish leaders, as was the case throughout Jesus’ lifetime (Acts 4:18; 5:28; 7:54; 8:1; 12:1)
- Saul’s conversion (9)
 - “A choice instrument of Mine, to bear My name before both the nations & kings, besides the sons of Israel” (9:15)
 - Paul typically goes first to the synagogues (the Jews)
- Acts 1-12
 - Central figure is Peter
 - “Kingdom evangel” goes to the Jews & is continually rejected
- Acts 13-28
 - Central figure is Paul
 - To the Jews first, but then to the Gentiles when rejected by the Jews (Acts 13:6-12; 13:46; 14:1-10)
- Paul asked to report to apostles in Jerusalem as “Judaizers” tell the Gentile believers they must be circumcised (15)
 - Paul continually misunderstood by Jewish believers (21:20)
- Paul continues to go to Jews & Gentiles alike
 - When rejected: “I shall go to the nations” (18:6; 21:27-28:14)
 - Paul is eventually able to take the evangel to such Gentile leaders as Felix, Festus and King Agrippa
- Jewish leaders gathered one last time (28:17)
 - To those rejecting: “To the nations” (28:28)
 - Paul uses the same Isaiah passage the Jesus used when the kingdom evangel was rejected, and He began to conceal His proclamation in parables (Matthew 13:14)
- Kingdom evangel now set aside until “the complement of the nations may be entering” (Romans 11:25)