

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter Thirteen *God's Call To Service*

Focus Verse: **Acts 13:2**

"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

I. Study Introduction

- A. Have you ever wondered how God intended twelve unlearned fishermen to reach this world with the Gospel of Christ?
- B. Have you ever wondered how God calls a person to serve Him, or how they come to know God's plan for their life - which He has for us all!
- C. Chapter 13 is a big transition, from Jerusalem, to Antioch - from the emphasis on Jew, to the Gentile, from ministering to the Christian, to reaching the lost!

II. Chapter Review

- One **The Church Commissioned** - The Ascension of Jesus
 Two **The Church Empowered** - The Day of Pentecost
 Three **Christianity Meets The Need** - The Invalid Man Healed
 Four **How To Stand-Up For Christ** - Handling Persecution
 Five **Staying True!** In Spite of Sin in Christian's Lives
 Six **Delegating the Work** - Choosing Deacons
 Seven **Learning the Lessons of History** - Stephen's Attack on Religion
 Eight **The Church Expanding** - Saul Begins His Persecution
 Nine **The Conversion of Saul** - Saul on the Road to Damascus
 Ten **Cornelius Meets Christ** - Peter Tells Cornelius About Christ
 Eleven **The First Christians** - The Birth of the Church at Antioch
 Twelve **The Church Learns to Pray** - Peter escapes death due to prayer

I. Study Outline - God's Call to Service (Acts 13)

A. The Call (Acts 13:1,2)

1. Who is called?
 - a. Not _____ - he is being bypassed.
 - 1) Only heard from once more in Acts 15:7
 - 2) 800 million people put the emphasis on Peter, yet outside of Jesus, the emphasis in the N.T. is on the Paul!
 - 3) Peter wrote two books - Paul wrote 14!
 - b. Note two important names:
 - 1) _____ (starts off always first), and _____ (always last)
 - 2) Slowly this ordering changes: from Barnabas and Saul, to: Saul and Barnabas, and ultimately, just Paul!
 - 3) Principle: to be used of God, be willing to be last in order to be made first!
2. What does it take to be "called" for use by God? Elected, chosen
 - a. Be part of a N.T. Bible believing local church - be involved
 - 1) In preaching - presenting the Gospel anyway you can!
 - 2) In teaching - discipling, and Sunday School
 - b. Be a minister *unto the* _____ - whole purpose of being saved
 - 1) Minister to God's needs, desires, wants ahead of all!
 - 2) Most churches today are SOCIAL gatherings, catering to the self-esteem of all its members, instead of to God!
 - c. Spend time _____
 - 1) Both an O.T. and N.T. practice (Matt 6:16)
 - 2) Jesus expects us to fast until He returns (Mt 9:15)
 - 3) Demonstrates that you mean business with God - serious
 - 4) Not dealing with "dieting" but sacrificing the normal attention that we give to our bodies, and give it all to the Lord as a time of prayer and searching God's heart.

- d. Spend time _____ to the “still small voice” of the Holy Spirit - Get “in-tune” (spiritual discernment) - be available!
 - 1) Humans are like a TV, just on the wrong channel
 - 2) Practice letting the Lord speak to your heart when you pray - let Him “impress” you in your decisions, instead of peer-pressure
3. Who does the calling?
 - a. Not man-called: self-motivated, or Mammy-directed
 - b. Only the Holy Spirit calls (directs) the Christian
 - c. How does the Holy Spirit work?
 - 1) Makes His will clear to the whole church - unity - God does not usually work with “Lone Rangers”
 - 2) By simply giving an order: Send out Barnabas and Saul to do what I want them to do! Expects us to obey

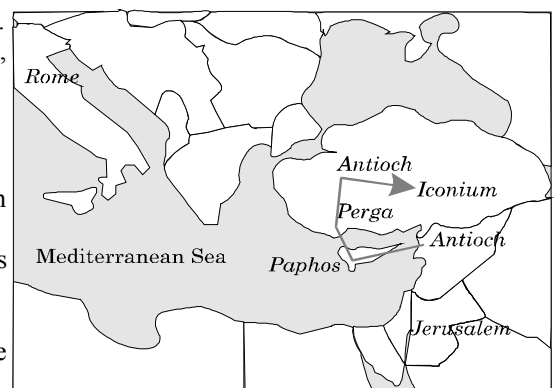
B. The Commissioning (Acts 13:3)

1. Notice the church’s response to God’s will:
 - a. They fasted again, and prayed more - _____ the spirits as commanded in 1 John 4:1. Satan can impress Christians to do things (2 Cor 11:13,14). Wanted to fully understand what God wanted them to do - all of this was new to them!
 - b. They laid _____ on Barnabas and Saul
 - 1) Recognition of God’s will - agreement with God - unity
 - 2) Transfer of _____ and responsibility to them - they will operate as representatives of Christ (2 Cor 5:18-20), as well as of that church.
 - 3) Commitment to financially support and back them as they go - not just sending them away on their own - this is a unified effort - they were part of the church at Antioch - the entire church was responsible for helping them do this extension of its work - as a body reaching out. Called Missions (1 Cor 9:1-11) - making the Gospel free costs - how does a church do this?
 - a) By building a **strong church** here that is financially sound - this is not just a fellowship! It is a base of operations to fulfill God’s command of reaching the lost, region by region!
 - b) By **soul-winning** here - in our Jerusalem
 - c) By reaching out throughout Ireland with the Gospel
 - d) By supporting families that are going to other lands
 - e) By sending out God called families of our own to the farthest regions
 - c. Sent them away - Didn’t linger, or hold on to them. Time to get busy for God (Rom 12:11; Eph 5:16)!
2. Notice what’s missing in all this:
 - a. No authorisation from Jerusalem - they were self-sufficient
 - b. No disagreements among the church members
 - c. No sending them off to Bible colleges and Seminaries - because they were being fully trained at Antioch - a local church ought to be geared to training, not to fellowship

C. The Commencement (Acts 13:4-52) - The “First Missionary Journey”

1. *Their direction*- from East to West! From Antioch, to Cyprus.
2. *Their calling* - to _____ (13:5)! Not sing, heal the sick, send humanitarian aid, etc. Secondary.
3. *Their first confrontation* - with two men (13:6-12):

- a. **Bar-jesus** shows up first - the devil is always up early
 - 1) A sorcerer - into drugs, witchcraft - demon possessed
 - 2) A Jew - the Jews will plague Saul for the rest of his life
 - 3) A false prophet - fortune teller, astrologer
 - 4) Had a stage name - known as Elymas - the “wise one”
 - 5) He works hard to hinder people from getting saved



Paul's First Missionary Journey (Acts 13)

- b. **Sergius Paulus**
 - 1) A _____ man - careful, thoughtful, wise
 - 2) An educated man - a man of position in the government
 - 3) A _____ man - followed Bar-jesus (like intelligent people following Scientology, horoscopes, etc)

- 4) A seeking man - wanted to hear what Barnabas and Saul had to say - evidently heard about these street-preachers
 - c. Elymas withstood them - hindered their ability to deal directly with Sergius by disagreeing, and interrupting.
 - 1) Common practice of the devil's crowd (2 Tim 4:15; 3:8; 1 Thes 2:14-16; Matt 23:13)
 - 2) Same with the cults - can't handle true _____
 - 3) Elymas attempts to change God's grace into works
 - d. Saul (Jewish) here becomes _____ (Latin, meaning 'little one') - something happens to Saul - no longer held back by his past - he is now dealing with Gentiles, and able to just simply preach Christ as a nobody!
 - e. Provides evidence of apostolic authority to speak about God
 - 1) He rebukes Bar-jesus (Cf John 8:44), and **blinds** him. Paul dealt with the "source" of Sergius' blindness - a religious faker that was of the devil! Did not side-step identifying false religions!
 - 2) Is filled with the Spirit to _____ - not speak in tongues, but rebuke, reprove, correct and instruct (2 Tim 4:2)!
 - f. But the confrontation has taken its toll - _____ goes home (Acts 13:13). Spiritual battles can wear people out emotionally, and physically - must wear the whole armour of God (Eph 6:10-18). John Mark will recover soon though. He will go on and be used to God to pen the _____!
4. The starting of churches in _____ (13:13-52)
- a. Started with _____ - start with those that have a background with the Bible - people need clear understanding of the Law and sin to get them to understand Grace and salvation.
 - b. Began to just PREACH - there is no other way to start!
 - 1) A 700 word sermon - of exhortation, an urging.
 - 2) Paul uses _____ method of preaching - Stephen had been Saul's first preacher (Cf Acts 7:58; 8:1)!
 - a) A review of history (13:16-25)
 - (i) Start back with Egypt - we were in bondage to sin
 - (ii) Reminds them that _____ delivered us - salvation
 - (iii) God's patience in the wilderness - growth
 - (iv) The defeat of our enemies - our _____ warfare
 - (v) The Promised Land - Victorious Life over enemies
 - (vi) The Judges - wishy-washy in commitment to God
 - (vii) The Kings - God provided leadership for us
 - (viii) David - God _____ a man only hungering for God
 - (ix) From David (not anyone else) did God promise to bring a Saviour, a Messiah, **Jesus!**
 - (x) John the Baptist proved Jesus was the Messiah
 - b) Directed the Gospel to the Jews first (13:26-38)
 - (i) The Jews in Jerusalem did not know their Bible
 - (ii) Yet they fulfilled the prophecies to the letter
 - (iii) They condemned and murdered the Messiah!
 - (iv) But God raised Christ back to life - as promised
 - (v) We are His witnesses that He is alive, and wants to save sinners - glad tidings - the Gospel
 - (vi) What you need are the sure mercies of David - eternal life - the forgiveness of sins, that can not be obtained by keeping the Law
 - c) Gives an invitation (13:39-41) - invites people to repent, and make a public declaration of their commitment to Christ - not just "give your life to Jesus"
 - (i) **Believe!** Turn to Christ, and cling only to Him!
 - (ii) Or **beware!** The Saviour will be your Judge!
 - c. _____ breaks out (13:42-44) - the whole city comes out!
 - d. Resistance also broke-out (13:45) - resistance is from ENVY
 - 1) Made a killer out of Cain (Gen 4:2-8)
 - 2) Turned Lucifer into Satan (Isa 14:12-14)
 - 3) Caused the Jews to crucify Christ (Mt 27:16-18)
 - e. Paul rebukes the unbelieving Jews, and heads out by faith deeper into the Gentiles - will end up doing this three times.
 - f. Onto the next city - with joy (13:51,52) - there is a whole lot more ground to cover (Mark 16:15)!

II. Conclusion

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter Fourteen *Suffering While Serving*

Focus Verse: **2 Cor 4:17**

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;”

I. Study Introduction

- A. To do God’s will, whatever it may be for a Christian, will always be in direct opposition to the general flow of normal humanity (2 Tim 3:12)
- B. The Christian, who has turned to Christ as both Saviour *and* Lord, has really surrendered their life to follow **Christ**, no matter where that may lead (to the highest mountain top, or deepest valley), and how hard the way. We usually allow extreme devoutness for only a few, and yet ours is to be a total love affair with the One who truly loved us, and gave His all so that we, and all the world could live.
- C. In the life of the Christian, when we serve that great Giver, we rarely experience rewards that the world offers *its* heroes, but rather struggle and suffer through each attempt to honour Him. That is because we are in enemy territory right now, and march to a different drum - that of heaven!

II. Study Outline - Suffering While Serving (Acts 14)

A. Completing the First Missionary Journey (Acts 14:1-20)

1. At Iconium (14:1-5)
 - a. They head right into the _____ - why?
 - 1) Commanded to go to the Jew first (Rom 1:16)
 - 2) If they had preached first to the Gentiles, the synagogue would have been closed to them, and they would have no chance of reaching them at all! Had to do this in right order
 - b. A great multitude believed on Christ - believed the _____!
 - c. A great persecution also began
 - 1) Normally Jews and Gentile don’t mix - but when they both have a common enemy (Jesus was becoming more popular and followed more than the Gentile idols, and than the Jewish Rabbis), they end up unified, ecumenical - united together AGAINST the gospel!
 - 2) EX: of Herod and Pilate became friends when they unified against their enemy Jesus, the King (Luke 23:12)!
 - d. The _____ of the miracles (14:3):
 - 1) Done by the hands of the _____ (not by every Christian)
 - 2) Done to testify the truth of the word of God
 - 3) Always in presence of unbelieving _____ (14:2; 1Cor 1:22)
 - e. The city became “_____” - *and it was of God*. Not all walls are bad - don’t tear down all walls!
 - 1) Gospel preaching divides like a sword (Heb 4:12)
 - 2) Jesus Himself divides peoples (Luke 12:51-53)
 - 3) The Christian’s job is not to reconcile people to each other (*demonic*), but reconciling them to _____ (2 Cor 5:20)!
 - 4) You better have some walls in your life, and around family
 - f. How preaching divides:
 - 1) Preaching clearly identifies God’s absolute line of sin and righteousness - it is not up to the individual!
 - 2) Preaching removes distinction between peoples, nations, and races - all have _____ (Rom 3:23)!
 - 3) It rejects all forms of idolatry - no goodness in mankind!
 - g. Biblical preaching can become dangerous work
 - 1) With all the people getting saved, and lives truly getting right with God, there was only envy and hatred, and scheming by the religious crowd to attempt to assassinate Paul and Barnabas - what they called “*the trouble-makers*”
 - 2) Paul and Barnabas fled the city - there does come a time to run (Cf Eccl 3)
 - 3) But they never fled the _____ - went to the next town! Jesus said wipe the dust off the feet and go on (Mt 10:14)! And they went on, and preached the Gospel - couldn’t help it!
2. At Lystra (14:6-20)
 - a. Preaching as usual - that was their main focus always!
 - b. But the devil throws a few new “punches” this time!
 - 1) Paul’s _____ get him into trouble - not just the message

- a) Paul heals to authenticate himself and the words he was speaking - *not trusting the work of the Holy Spirit here*
 - b) Note the discernment of the man's "*faith to be healed*"
 - c) Compare this with the "faith healers" and their failures: usually blame the failures on the sick not having "*enough*" faith
 - d) Compare with Mark 6:5,6. Unbelief hinders God's work
 - e) Here, Paul commands the man to stand-up, instead of believe the Gospel. This is important, because the Gospel message is to *be-lieve*, not *be-healed*!
 - f) The people just get more confused
 - (i) Believe the "_____" have come down from the stars
 - (ii) Believe they must worship "humanoids" - like in *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, etc.
 - g) Paul and Barnabas quickly react by stopping the worship, and attempting to clarify the MESSAGE, not the MIRACLE! *Pope John Paul II would never stop someone from worshipping him!*
 - (i) *God's vessels* - Christians are only human, with similar _____
 - (ii) *God's command* - Everyone must turn away from dead idols, and turn to the only living God who allows people to go this far in their life because of their ignorance, but commands all men everywhere to _____ when they know better
 - (iii) *God's witness* - In every country, every life, God has some sort of witness (the good in life, even the weather) telling people God is there, and that He cares, and that we need to be saved from our sins!
- 2) Paul's enemies don't seem to die (14:19,20)
- a) One minute people worship you, but then the next minute, someone can spread an evil report about you, and they will turn on you (just like they did Christ)
 - b) Paul gets mobbed, and stoned, and left for dead
 - c) Paul gets up and heads back into the town of people that had just stoned him! Why? Only one explanation (2 Cor 12:1-6) - he is now a Spirit-filled, suicidal maniac because he has had a glimpse of heaven!
3. At Derbe (14:19,20)
- a. Paul and Barnabas preach, teach all along the way
 - b. Decide they have had enough excitement, and head back home
4. Heading Home (14:20-25) - Back the way they had come.
- a. Through Lystra, Iconium, Antioch in Pisidia, Perga, and Attalia
 - b. _____ the souls - putting people to the test:
 - 1) Seeing if they have any fruits that demonstrate their faith
 - a) Fruits to show seriousness at salvation (Mt 3:8)
 - b) Fruits showing a changed life (2 Cor 5:17; Mt 7:20)
 - c) Fruits that show you live by faith (Jam 2:17,18)
 - 2) Allow them to prove their love for God - not just talk about loving God - seeing if they are _____, and growing - going to church, in their Bible's, witnessing, serving!
 - c. Exhorting (challenging) the Christians:
 - 1) To continue in "the faith" (Cf Jude 1:6) - it will not always be easy (2Ti 4:1-4). Not just faith, but in the "narrow way"
 - 2) To endure _____ (2 Tim 2:3; 3:12)
 - d. Ordaining elders/pastors - putting people "in charge" - responsible for the spiritual well-being of the Christians (Heb 13:17)
 - 1) Men were encouraged to seek God's will about becoming pastors, and taking God's calling seriously, and beginning to follow God's call by faith! Studying under their pastor.
 - 2) The Christians had nice "fellowships," but they needed to take up the responsibility of having a pastor - someone they submitted to, and ministered to, as he ministered to them.
 - e. They prayed and _____ with these Christians - their burdens became Paul's and Barnabas' - a true Christian community
 - 1) True test of Christianity is whether we stay together (fellowship), pray together, and bond together as a _____
 - 2) We are far too hesitant to lower our shields - be a family
 - f. They _____ (gave-up) them to the guidance and protection of the Lord - they could not lean on Paul and Barnabas forever. Like when parents let go of their children when they leave for college, marriage, and their own life - pass back to God's care

B. Back Home at Antioch (14:26,27) - A Furlough

1. It had been 2 1/2 years since they had left in Acts 13
2. Time for a reflection and evaluation - see if they have learned anything, and if they can influence more people to go!
3. Held a “Missions Conference” among the Christians at Antioch
 - a. Rehearsed all that God had done through them - glorified God
 - b. Announced that the door to reaching the Gentiles was wide open (remember, people had problems with this for years and years).
 - c. Never talked about their hardships, but just that people were getting saved right and left - that was their only focus - not the pain, and struggles, and defeats!
 - d. Developed the pattern that is our model to follow in winning people to Christ the world over
 - 1) Get sent out by a strong, Bible believing local church with a world vision - they will financially support you
 - 2) Focus the effort on the key cities of each area
 - 3) Preach the word - miracles and the like were only secondary, unless you were among Jews
 - 4) Plant local churches everywhere you go- don't “just” preach
 - 5) Return home, and report to the Christians who have supported you and prayed for you through it all! And get refreshed, and prepared to go out again!

III. Conclusion**IV. Study Questions**

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter Fifteen

Settling New Testament Salvation

Focus Verse: **Romans 3:28**

“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”

I. Study Introduction

- A. When God wants something done, Satan always wants to stop it! The only way to stop the work of soul-winning was to confuse Christians about the message, so they would stop presenting the Gospel - always ends up confusing the Grace of God with the Works of religion.
- B. In Acts 15, some highly educated Bible “teachers” show up at church, attempting to persuade the Christians from preaching the message that JESUS saves, and to start preaching that Jesus PLUS circumcision saves
- C. This “teaching” caused great confusion and concern, and needed to be dealt with, because it is the very foundation for **how** a sinner is saved, and **why** a Christian is saved!

II. Chapter Review

- One **The Church** _____ - The Ascension of Jesus
- Two **The Church** _____ - The Day of Pentecost
- Three **Christianity Meets The** _____ - The Invalid Man Healed
- Four **How To** _____ **For Christ** - Handling Persecution
- Five **Staying** _____ **! In Spite of Sin** in Christian’s Lives
- Six _____ **the Work** - Choosing Deacons
- Seven **Learning the Lessons of** _____ - Stephen’s Attack on Religion
- Eight **The Church** _____ - Saul Begins His Persecution
- Nine **The Conversion of** _____ - Saul on the Road to Damascus
- Ten _____ **Meets Christ** - Peter Tells Cornelius About Christ
- Eleven **The First** _____ - The Birth of the Church at Antioch
- Twelve **The Church Learns to** _____ - Peter escapes death due to prayer
- Thirteen **God’s Call to** _____ - Calls Paul and Barnabas to evangelise
- Fourteen _____ **while Serving** - Doing God’s will is going to be hard

III. Study Outline - Settling New Testament Salvation (Acts 15)

A. The Dissension (15:1-3)

1. False _____ arrived in Antioch teaching that a man had to be circumcised to be saved - this is “another _____” (Gal 1:6-9)
 - a. Roman Catholic: you must “keep the sacraments” to be saved
 - b. Mormon: you must follow the teachings of Joseph Smith
 - c. Seventh Day Adventist: you must keep the Sabbath to be saved
 - d. Pentecostal: you must have the initial evidence of the Spirit - be able to speak in tongues
 - e. Jehovah’s Witness: you must “endure to the end” to be saved
 - f. There is always someone trying to add to your salvation, by commanding you to DO something more than just trust Christ!
2. Proves that there are only ___ “religions” in the world:

WORKS	GRACE
All Religions teach that a man has to "DO" something in order to be saved. They never “know” whether they are saved or not.	Bible teaches that it is only what CHRIST did on the cross (grace) that completely saves - “DONE” - all we do is receive its effect by <i>faith</i> .
<p style="text-align: center;">Jewish Way of Thinking</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">God's Way of Salvation</p>

3. Why do false teachers show up?
 - a. _____ will - Satan is always looking for “new converts” so to confuse them, and to make them incapable of winning souls!
 - b. The key is to have strong _____ - clear, simple preaching of the gospel from the Bible only (2 Cor 11:3), and personal study for yourself (2 Tim 2:15).

B. Doctrinal Convictions Are Established

1. What are Convictions? Something that you know for sure is right, and is worth defending. Examples:
 - a. Life is of the highest value - abortion is wrong, as is euthanasia
 - b. Hell is just as real as heaven
 - c. The family unit must be maintained and protected at all costs
 - d. The Bible is the very word of God - does not just “contain” them
2. Controversy is not always wrong. Paul and Barnabas attack the false teachings - unity was not more important than doctrinal _____!
3. An answer, based upon Final _____, is called for! This issue cannot be overlooked - it is the very reason for the coming of Christ, for the existence of Christianity on this planet, etc! Must settle it!

C. The Discussion (15:4-19)

1. The Contention - the two teachings (_____, and _____) cannot be merged, or adapted - one has to be right, and the other wrong!
2. The Convention - NOT "*Council*" as in Trent, and Vatican.
 - a. Peter speaks first
 - b. Paul and Barnabas speak
 - c. James settles the question with the final authority - the Scriptures (15:13-19)

D. The Decision (15:20-41)

1. Gentile Christians should refrain (NOT do the following things):
 - a. From eating meats (foods) offered to _____ (Lev 17:7) - stay clear of idolatry, and anything associated with it!
 - b. From _____ (Lev 18) - live clean in your heart, and life - this is THE greatest testimony to the lost (Jew or Gentile) - that of a transformed life (Rom 12:1,2). A Jew knows the holiness of God, and expects it of anyone worshipping the same God.
 - c. From eating _____ - not dealing with transfusion (Lev 17:10) - just leave the blood of an animal alone - no fooling with it
 - d. From eating things killed by other animals, i.e. _____ (Lev 17:15) - don't disregard healthy eating
 - e. All for the _____ sake (15:21) - Gentile Christians are claiming that the very same God of the Jews has brought them the salvation and eternal life that had been offered to the Jews - they then need to not “offend” the Jews, making them think they are superior - don't get trapped into thinking like the Jews.

NOTE: To “offend” means to hinder, block someone from getting saved (1Cor 8:7-13). The Christian is not free to live as they please!

- f. Notice what's missing: No mention of keeping the _____, and no mention of this enabling a person to BE saved, or to STAY saved - just to do well, and so that OTHERS get saved!
2. They return to Antioch with letters (*epistles*) explaining these instructions (15:22-35), telling them to:
 - a. Beware of false teachers - not teaching New Testament doctrine!
 - b. Listen to chosen men - not self-styled mavericks
 - c. The Holy Spirit will confirm what this epistle says. Always does
 - d. Everyone listens, and rejoices for the freedom in Christ *to do right*, not to do religion! Got encouraged because of unity and preaching!
3. Paul and Barnabas renew their missionary work (15:36-41)
 - a. Only this time, they split up - Over personality differences
 - 1) Had the right motive - to go strengthen ALL new Christians
 - 2) Had the right volunteers - extra helpers this time
 - 3) But Paul was wary of John Mark's _____ - didn't want to give him another chance - did not have much grace with other Christians yet - Christianity at this time was like being in a war: no time for wimps!
 - 4) Developed into “_____” - an argument - the best Christians get into arguments - because they have convictions (firm beliefs about things)
 - b. Barnabas takes John Mark again - always a risk taker - Amen!
 - c. Paul takes Silas - a strong Christian (15:22)

Notice that God designed the Christian life to be one of serving along side a companion - not usually alone

4. God used this disagreement to multiply the number of workers - troubles, and hurdles, are usually intended by God to get us to stretch further than we think we can go, and to force us to get out of our comfort zones and reach more people with the Gospel

IV. Conclusion and Application

V. Study Questions

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter 16

The Second Missionary Journey

Focus Verse: 1 Peter 2:19,20

“For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.”

I. Introduction

- A. Currently Studying the book of the Acts of the Apostles.
- B. The importance of understanding that Acts is a transitional book:
 1. The emphasis is changing in Acts from being placed upon the Jews to being placed upon the Gentiles.
 2. These changes make a perfect breeding ground for doctrinal heresy since things are in a state of "change."
 3. An example of this was seen in Chapter 15 with Jews trying to teach that a man had to become a Jew and keep the Law to be saved.

II. Lesson - The Second Missionary Journey

- A. **The Return to the Mission Field** (15:40,41) It is now Paul and Silas without Barnabas.
 1. Headed back to the churches they had started - missed them, and wanted to make sure they were growing, and spreading out!
 2. They head what direction? North-by-northwest. Special direction.
- B. **The Recruiting of Timotheus, (Timothy)** (16:1-5; 2 Tim 1:5)
 1. Timothy was a _____ with a godly mother and grandmother.
 2. But Timothy was a half-breed in the minds of the Jews.
 3. He had a very good reputation:
 - a. All Christians thought well of him - what a testimony!
 - b. Had unfeigned or _____ faith - not faked
 - c. Had set out to do right from his youth - instead of living like the devil, and then trying to get right later!
 4. Paul chooses Timothy - Like Elijah chose _____
 5. It cost Timothy to serve God:
 - a. He had to be _____ - not for his own salvation, but for that of the Jews. What are **you** willing to do so others can be saved?
 - b. Had to work UNDER somebody - didn't start at the top! Had to put up with Paul, so that he could learn from, and serve with, all for God's glory, and many soul's salvation! Play second fiddle!
 6. First Task - Deliver the letter from Jerusalem (16:4,5)
 - a. Guidelines (decrees) on HOW to ACT in front of the Jews
 - b. Because they understood the New Testament is all about "others," and since they easily yielded, the churches grew **daily**!
- C. **Recognizing God's Will and Direction** (vss 6-8; Eph 5:17)
 1. You must be in _____, i.e., you must already be in God's will as best you know how. Not in BIG ways, but just faithful in small things!
 - a. Obeying the clear commands that you know showed be lived: in the Bible, praying, tithing, in church, soul-winning
 - b. Open to God giving you further instructions as you go - learning
 2. You must be _____ God's will - asking for it, and accepting it!
 3. You must be willing to "try the doors" - of opportunity - pray and ask ___ to open doors, and to CLOSE them if He thinks best!
 4. You must be sensitive (able to sense God's indications) - don't always be like a tank ramming through closed doors!
 5. You must seek a "vision" from God. Not a "pizza" vision, but rather a "God-given" _____ - a heart pain to do something for God!
 6. SUMMARY: God's will is impressed upon the Christian who is searching for it by constantly seeking to *serve*, and is willing to do whatever God wants them to - there will be great joy, and peace when you discover God's will, and then there will be miraculous events that propel you forward into the center of God's will!
- D. **Receiving the "Macedonian Call"** (vss 9-13)
 1. Again, they head West right into _____

2. The vision asked specifically for "_____." The Gospel **HELPS**:
 - a. By turning people back to God, Bible, sanity - **salvation**
 - b. By cleaning up lives, homes, cities - **sanctification**
 - c. By focusing our attention on glorifying God - **servicing**
3. And away they go _____. No procrastination here - headed out to "preach the gospel" (an urgent task)!
4. _____ joins Paul and Silas here - from here on, people start crowding around Paul, and Paul starts duplicating himself in the lives of others
5. They go right to Phillippi, the chief city of Macedonia in Greece.

E. **The Salvation of Lydia** - The First European Convert (vss 14,15)

1. She _____ God - Like _____ (Acts 10:1,2) - but not saved. The women there gathered together regularly to PRAY, not gossip. Women used to know the urgency of prayer groups, and dependence upon God, even though not Christian - there is something inside that craves to walk again with our Creator.
2. She probably had been praying for _____ (16:9) - like Cornelius did in Acts 10:4. Help in understanding God, the Bible, salvation, etc.
3. Paul preached the _____ to all the women there. Did not treat them as already saved, but told them about Christ - they had to examine themselves and see if what they believed was what the Bible said!
4. Then the Lord opened (unlocked) her _____.
 - a. Satan closes the heart and keeps it blind (2Cor 4:3,4; Act 26:18) - unable to see God's light, nor see a way out of bondage to sin
 - b. A person must seek by a surrendered heart to have God show them the way out - Danger: Satan uses this to just keep people going further into bondage
 - c. It is God who opens (unlocks) the heart
5. Lydia _____ the gospel, and THEN, and only then was _____.
 - a. Not sprinkled - immersed!
 - b. Her household also believed and were baptized - issue: **Covenant Theology** (reformed theology of the Protestants) takes this verse and makes it so that if an adult becomes a Christian, then all the family is to be baptized to ensure that THEY become Christians as well - makes no sense at all! Belief then baptism in every case (Acts 2:41; 8:34)

F. **Satan is Never far Behind** (vss 16-21)

1. When they started to pray - trouble shows up - always the same
2. Here comes a "damsel of divination." (fortune teller)
 - a. A Prophetess (Profitess - captialism: making money off of religion, like Christmas)
 - b. Demon-possessed
 - c. Spoke the truth about Paul and Silas - mocking, and making the Gospel a "side show"
3. Paul picks up on what Satan is trying to do and stops it cold! Why?
 - a. Everyone knew the woman was of the devil
 - b. People would have thought the two were alike - ecumenism
 - c. People would have concluded that all gods were the same - no better than their current god (like Pharaoh's magicians duplicating everything that Moses and Aaron did)
 - d. Paul did not need the devil's help to get people to believe - **and neither do we!!!** Interdenominational cooperation is not of God - makes people comfortable where they are at spiritually instead of telling them to repent, and get right (1 Tim 1:3; 2 Tim 2:2)
4. When you kick the Devil out of control, religion becomes very unprofitable to the world. Religion can make no more money on people, nor can the distillers, nor the pornographers, etc!
 - a. Causes intense hatred by religionists - they become killers
 - b. Causes Christians to be persecuted instead of the real trouble makers - you would think that people would thank Christianity!
 - 1) Teachers of evolution, and social engineering are tolerated
 - 2) Liquor sellers are tolerated - because they pay large taxes!
 - 3) Drug dealers are tolerated - especially when they start paying taxes
 - 4) Rock singers are tolerated
 - 5) But Christians are hated and shoved away!

G. **Suffering Wrongfully** (vss 22-25; 1 Pet 2:19,20)

1. They were publicly _____ - stripped
2. They were publicly beaten
3. They were thrown into prison

4. They were placed in stocks - to make it see that these guys were so dangerous that they had to be locked-down so they could not get out - maximum-security prison!

H. Supernatural Soul-winning (vss 26-34)

1. Soul-winning starts "at _____" for Paul and Silas. They prayed and sang the entire time they were in jail
 - a. Easy to sing on the mountaintop, or during the day
 - b. Job talks about the songs in the night (Job 35:10)
 - c. Paul and Silas sing LOUD and CLEAR - so everyone could hear the message of the songs - NOT the MELODY! The melody, rhythm, beat, or swing of a song never won a soul!
2. Now, God can step in - He has been _____ - people have been prepared for His arrival (as John the Baptist prepared hearts and lives for the arrival of Jesus; Mt 3:1-3)
 - a. Earthquake
 - b. Doors open up
 - c. Everyone just sits, and it quiet, and calm
3. The Jailer goes crazy with fear - fear of death! _____ is a great motivator to Christ (Jude 21-23)!
 - a. Fears the earthquake killing him
 - b. Fears the loosed prisoners killing him
 - c. Fears his boss literally killing him for letting the prisoners free
 - d. Fears something else happening - out of his control
4. Paul speaks first - "*Do thyself no harm!*" Paul cared not for his own life (it was in the hands of Jesus)! But he cared for the life of those who would be lost for eternity in hell. Suicide, drugs, etc., are things that harm people beyond the physical- if they die they end up in hell!
5. The Jailer asks the greatest question: "*What must _____ do to be _____?*" He had heard about SALVATION! Not Christianity, or about church, or about theology, but about heaven, and hell, and forgiveness, and Jesus the SAVIOUR!
6. The greatest answer (I'm glad Paul was there and not a JW, or Mormon, or a Catholic priest):
 - a. _____ on the Lord Jesus Christ - already of a repentant heart
 - b. **And thou shalt be _____** - no ifs, ands, or buts! Eternity settled!
 - c. **And thy _____** - It won't just affect you, it will affect everyone you touch, and is dear to you! That is how Christianity works!
7. The Jailer brings home all these prisoners, and Paul and Silas preaches to them all, including all of the Jailer's household - they all get saved, and THEN get baptized - there was great rejoicing!

I. Spiritual Obstinacy (vss 35-40) - A time for Paul to be stubborn

1. Now it is Paul's turn to have some fun
 - a. Paul is a Roman _____ who has been publicly beaten and judged without a trial
 - b. Paul could have brought all the magistrates to ruin - could have gotten even with them. They wanted everything to be low-key now, and for Paul and Silas to leave quietly
2. But Paul is interested in _____ - interested in THEM doing some fearing, and thinking. Not interested in his **rights**, but in reminding them that they must do right - Paul's life was in God's hand!
3. So, Paul just makes the magistrates sweat a little, and then come to them - it is humiliating now for the magistrates
4. Paul, and Silas head back to spend some time with Lydia, and the Christian _____ that was developing at her house!

III. Conclusion - What We Learned From Acts 16

- A. Understanding God's Will
- B. Satan Never Gives Up
- C. Be Ready To Suffer Wrongfully
- D. Be A Supernatural Soul-winner - Always, in All Situations!

IV. Study Questions

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter 17

Searching the Scriptures

Memory Verse: 2 Timothy 2:15 (See also 3:15,16)

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

I. Introduction

- A. Currently Studying the book of the Acts of the Apostles.
- B. This is a verse-by-verse study with the following presuppositions:
 1. The Bible (what you hold in you hand, the King James Bible) IS the word of God from cover to cover preserved WITHOUT ERROR.
 2. That no Scripture is of any private interpretation:
 - a. No one can dictate to you what something "means."
 - b. If a thing is "so" (i.e., true), then it is "so" by its virtue of being clearly "so." In other words, it can be proven in a court of law any time. None of this "I have a vision from the Lord" stuff!
 - c. You are told not to believe everyone, but to "check 'em out."
 - d. You therefore are responsible for finding the "truth" and living by it.
 3. Welcome therefore to a Bible Believing Church!
- C. So far we have covered:
 - 1 **The Church Commissioned** - The Ascension of Jesus
 - 2 **The Church Empowered** - The Day of Pentecost
 - 3 **Christianity Meets The Need** - The Invalid Man Healed
 - 4 **How To Stand-Up For Christ** - Handling Persecution
 - 5 **Staying True!** In Spite of Sin in Christian's Lives
 - 6 **Delegating the Work** - Choosing Deacons
 - 7 **Learning the Lessons of History** - Stephen's Attack on Religion
 - 8 **The Church Expanding** - Saul Begins His Persecution
 - 9 **The Conversion of Saul** - Saul on the Road to Damascus
 - 10 **Cornelius Meets Christ** - Peter Tells Cornelius About Christ
 - 11 **The First Christians** - The Birth of the Church at Antioch
 - 12 **The Church Learns to Pray** - Peter escapes death due to prayer
 - 13 **God's Call to Service** - Calls Paul and Barnabas to evangelise
 - 14 **Suffering while Serving** - Doing God's will is going to be hard
 - 15 **Settling New Testament Salvation**
 - 16 **The Second Missionary Journey**

IV. Lesson - Acts 17

A. The Trouble With Thessalonians (17:1-9)

1. Paul, Silas, and Timothy leave Philippi and head into a city called Thessalonica
2. They head straight for the _____ - place of Jewish worship.
3. Paul _____ with the Jews - draws conclusions, proves, uses their heads as he "opens" (unlocks) and "alleges" (challenges) their minds
 - a. Based upon the written _____ (not signs and wonders).
 - b. Proving that _____ (Messiah) must _____ (Isa 53) **first** before He can reign. The Jews overlooked the need for a Saviour.
 - c. Proving He must have risen from the dead (Daniel 9:25,26).
 - d. Proving that _____ is the Christ!
4. Only a few Jews end up getting saved. Why?
 - a. The Thessalonians did not check out what Paul said in the Scriptures - they only sat and listened, but did not search!
 - b. So few people get saved today because they have neither the desire, nor the energy to check things out-information overload!



Paul's Second Gospel Journey - Europe!

5. But a lot of Gentiles get saved - usually do - they love the truth!
6. Yet, comes the trouble - Unbelieving Jews
 - a. Driven by _____ - a problem (Pr 27:4; Mt 27:18; Acts 7:9; 13:45)
 - b. The unbelieving Jews set the city in an riot against the Gospel
 - c. Time to move on - sometimes, it is not possible to reach a group of people, and you may have to just move on - very sad!
7. Notice the testimony that these few Christians had - "*These that have turned the world **upside down!***" They weren't ruining it, they were making it back right-side up again!
8. Notice that it was not an event over in China, or somewhere, far off, but it had come to their town! Oh, may it come to Blarney, and Mallow, and Cork, and Dublin, and every town and village!!!

B. The Treasure at Berea (vss 10-14)

1. Straight to the synagogue again! They are not ones to give up easily!
2. These were more "_____" than those at Thessalonica because:
 - a. They had a "_____ of mind." Eager, hungry, willingness, open-mind - not numb of mind!
 - b. They "_____ the _____." They KNEW them already, but needed some prodding, to get them to put 2 and 2 together! Get people to know more and more ABOUT this Book, and God guarantees that more and more people will get saved!
 - c. They searched the scriptures "_____!" Paul taught them everyday he could (Cf Lk 22:53; Acts 2:46,47; 5:42; 16:5)
3. This time _____ believed! Our attitude towards the **BOOK** always makes the difference!
4. But look who's coming! Those unbelieving Jews - religious zealots!
5. Time to move on again. That's Ok - there's more fish (Mt 4:19)

C. The "Tough One" - Athens (vss 14-34)

1. Paul's spirit is "stirred" within him - because of the _____!
2. Athens was the headquarters for:
 - a. Western Philosophy (see Colossians 2:8)
 - b. Science (see 1 Timothy 6:20)
 - c. Worship of **Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle** - they taught that man evolved from animals - that we could bring about a "golden age" through education, and reform - that science was the search for god! *They are still searching* (SETI, NASA, ESA, etc)
 - d. Epicurians - "_____ is the highest good"
 - e. Stoicks - "_____ is the highest good - but _____ is undefinable!"
3. Paul goes first to the _____ - where he can build on some foundation!
4. Then, out to the market - basically, Paul goes anywhere there was someone who would listen.
5. Paul is invited to "speak" at Mars' Hill. He is not hiding his actions! Preaches the "Mars' Hill Address," or "*Just-in-case Religion*"
 - a. Paul **prepares** his audience - i.e., gets them lost. Doesn't joke with them, "relate" to them, or encourage them! He _____ them by God's Book (1 Cor 1:23)! The cross judges us all!
 - 1) They are _____ in **ALL** things. All highly educated people are superstitious!
 - 2) They are _____ when it comes to worship - Blind leaders of the blind - made allowances that *maybe* you missed Him!
 - 3) They are _____ - can't make up their mind! Education makes people idolaters! They end up worshipping "Man," themselves, their achievements, their progress, potential, etc
 - 4) They are _____ - always having to have something NEW!
 - b. Paul **magnifies** God - i.e., points them in the right direction. He even uses some of their own well known poets to show it is not "something new" he was preaching!
 - 1) God is **the** Creator of:
 - a) This planet and the entire universe they worshipped.
 - b) All things on this planet.
 - c) All life - all humans have the SAME _____!
 - d) You! (*No room for evolution*)
 - 2) God is _____ of His creation - this universe is IN Him!
 - 3) God cannot be _____ - made into idols!
 - 4) God made you the way you are (did away with all psychiatrists), where you are with all the troubles you may have so that you would _____ Him and find Him, and so be saved by Him! That does away with all the professional mental health people in one clean shot! You are where you are because that is where God wants you, and it really is best!
 - c. Paul offers an invitation for everyone listening to repent!

- 1) Calls **all** men to repent, because **judgement** day is coming!
 - 2) Declares that _____ will be the Judge. Not Mary, or Joseph Smith, or Allah, or ANYONE else!
 - 3) Cries out for people to seek the Lord while He may be found
6. The Results (17:34)
- a. "Slim pickings" here at Athens. Why? (See 1 Corinthians 1:26)
 - 1) Rejection and ridicule - "some mocked" (17:32)
 - 2) Postponement and indecision - "we will hear thee again" - they never did!
 - 3) Acceptance - "some believed" (17:34)!
 - b. Nevertheless, the preaching of the word always bears fruit.

V. Conclusion - A Review of the Principles:

- A. Getting a person to deal with Scripture is the soul-winners primary goal when dealing with people.
- B. A Christian should "search the Scriptures daily" in order to know what is right and wrong.
- C. Every Christian's goal should be to have a testimony of "turning the world upside-down!!!"
- D. Learn how to deal with different people in different ways - know who you are witnessing to.
- E. Ask God for boldness like Paul had when witnessing.

IV. Study Questions

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter 18

Spiritual Overdrive

Focus Verse: Romans 10:1

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved."

I. Introduction

A. By way of review:

1. Author - Luke
2. Date Written - 63 AD
3. Theme - The acts of the Holy Spirit through the apostles in confirming the word of God, and the spread of Christianity following the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
4. Type of book - Historical Account: not primarily a Doctrinal book.
5. Doctrinally - A Transitional book - covers the emphasis being moved from primarily upon the Jews, to now primarily upon the Gentiles.

B. So far we have covered 17 power-packed chapters in Acts!

II. Lesson - "Spiritual Overdrive"

A. **A New Missionary Team (18:1-4)**

1. Entering the city of _____
 - a. Here is an immoral, pagan, sin-sewer of a town.
 - b. Yet, much more receptive to the Gospel than the "great intellectual" city of Athens.

PRINCIPLE: Where sin abounds, grace "doth more abound."

- c. Worshipped the goddess "Aphrodite" (Venus)
2. A New Team - Paul, Aquila, and Pricilla (18:2-4). *Timothy, Silas, and Luke come and go as they are sent out by Paul for specific tasks*
 - a. Their "trade" - _____. They were not lazy or leeches
 - b. Their goal - Same old goal of getting out the Gospel:
 - 1) To the Jews first
 - 2) Then to the Gentiles
3. Success At Corinth (18:4)
 - a. This Church becomes the most "_____" Church (Cf 1 Cor 12).
 - a. Yet, this Church becomes also the most _____ Church (the theme of the epistles of I and 2 Corinthians).
 - b. Principle: All the blessings in the world, only SPOIL people!

B. **Paul's Renewed Burden (18:5-23)**

1. Seeing Silas and Timothy return just does something to Paul (18:5). He gets encouraged to go a little further, and do a little more! Christians can either discourage you, or encourage you - lets all exhort one another (Heb 10:24,25)!
2. The Four Levels of Commitment to God's Will for your life (18:5):
 - a. Being "*stirred in the spirit*" (17:16)- _____ to do something
 - b. Being "*pressed in the spirit*" (18:5) - _____ to do something NOW, not putting it off!
 - c. Being "*purposed in the spirit*" (19:21) - _____ of what to do!
 - d. Being "*bound in the spirit*" (20:22) - _____ - Never turning back! It leads Paul to being "bound in chains" as we shall see.

APPLICATIONS:

- a. In Dating and Marriage
- b. In friendships
- c. In being a member of a church
3. The Jews "*_____ themselves*" reveals the principle that when a person rejects the Gospel, he really is turning away the best thing that could ever happen to him! They were not opposing Paul, or even God - they were fighting themselves!
4. Paul "*turns to the Gentiles*" AGAIN!!! (18:6)
 - a. _____ time out of three (Acts 13:46; 18:6; 28:28)
 - b. Claims that he is currently "debt-free" from his responsibility (Acts 20:20,21; 26,27).

PRINCIPLE: ALL Christians have a responsibility to warn the wicked of their sins (Ez 3:17-21). If we fail in our task, we will have to give an account for it at the Judgement Seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:9-11; Rom 14:10-12) and our hands will be covered with the blood of those we did not warn that we were responsible for!

Who we are responsible for?

- 1) Obviously our _____ (As with Lot, Gen. 19:14)
 - 2) Obviously those we work with - daily contact with them.
 - 3) Obviously our _____ (Mt 22:37-39).
 - 4) Obviously those whom we can go out and find (Lk 14:23)!
- c. Paul says that he will now turn to only the Gentiles, but he knows that he can't keep this promise (Rom 9:1-3; 10:1,2).

PRINCIPLE: Real love for someone (as Paul has for the Jews here) cannot be broken, no matter how they treat you.

5. In Corinth, Justus (a Gentile) and Crispus (a very devout Jew - lived right next to the synagogue; 18:7,8) get saved! Notice how God takes notice of individual names!
6. God personally encourages Paul (18:9-11)
 - a. Looks like Paul was getting tired of not seeing the Jews saved, and was thinking about quitting. Have you ever been there?
 - b. The Lord "cheers Paul on!" (vs 10) Resembles Jeremiah 20:7-9.
 - c. Reminds Paul of ALL those who have gotten saved recently, not just the few Jews! Keep your eyes fixed on the ___ picture!
 - d. God is trying to prepare Paul for what's up ahead - a battle.

PRINCIPLE: When things don't go the way we want, we get discouraged and think about quitting (See Jonah). Paul here wanted a better response from the Jews than he was getting!

7. The insurrection - Satan "*never gives up*" (18:12-17).
 - a. Gallio - a top-rate civil ruler! As fair and as impartial as a judge could get! Don't you wish all judges were as fair?!
 - b. Sosthenes gets saved (18:17; 1Cor 1:1)- the beating drove him to consider WHY he had gotten in so much trouble with the Jews
8. Paul's ___ (vss 18-23) - He Cannot Give Up On His People
 - a. Paul takes a "_____" vow in vs 18 (Numbers 6). His reason for shaving his head is connected with his Jewish testimony to his own people. He was desperate to prove his sincerity!
 - b. It takes him back to Jerusalem temporarily, and then to Antioch also briefly.
 - c. Ultimately, this is going to take him back to _____ in chapter 21 and pit him squarely against the Pharisees one more time. Paul goes into a sort of "Spiritual Overdrive". In other words, Paul wants to try once more what Stephen attempted to do in Acts 7 - see the Jewish nation saved from the "*wrath to come*":
 - 1) The Roman General Titus destroying Jerusalem in 70AD
 - 2) The Jewish dispersion for the next 1800 years
 - 3) The many holocausts (1300 Black Plague, 1940's, etc.)
 - 4) The coming Tribulation - called "_____*Trouble*"
 - d. See also Acts 28:20 - for the hope of "_____"
 - e. It leads to the "_____"(19:1-21:15).
 - f. Notice how Paul was focused on strengthening Christians (18:23) - they need maintenance (preaching, teaching, prayer)

C. The "Know-Not-All" Man - Apollos (vss 24-28)

1. Background
 - a. A Jew born in Alexandria Egypt - highly educated.
 - b. Eloquent and _____ in the O.T. Scriptures. A rare combination indeed!
 - c. Knew the "way of the Lord" up to the _____ of John (Mt 3:11)
 - d. Fervent in spirit - had a zeal that just wouldn't stop!
 - e. A bold teacher - not ashamed of the truth as he knew it!
 - f. _____! How do we know? Because he only believed as far as John the Baptist taught, but had not trusted *in Jesus*, the very One whom John preached about!
2. Note the role that Aquila and Priscilla play: _____ - See Hebrews 5:11-14
 - a. They took him to Isaiah 52 and 53 and showed him _____ (8:35)

- b. They then took him forward to the cross of Calvary!
 - c. Apollos knew an awful lot, but was not a "know-it-all", and allowed a simple Bible-believing couple to teach him the things of God more perfectly! **Thank God for teachable hearts!**
3. Apollos responds, and immediately dedicates his life to the work of the Gospel... PUBLICLY - right out in public!!!
- a. None of this "Life-style Evangelism" - live it without preaching
 - b. Apollos becomes a Street-Preaching, Bible-Toting, Hell-Raising, Barn-Storming, Shingle-Rattling, Leather-Lunged, Pulpit-Pounding, Soul-Saving, Devil-Hating, God-Loving, Fundamental, Independent, Missionary-Minded, Baptist Preacher!

V. Conclusion - Review of the Principles

- A. Don't be ashamed of the fact that "not many wise" get saved and committed to Biblical Christianity these days.
- B. When a person rejects the Gospel, he really is turning away the best thing that could ever happen to him!!!
- C. ALL Christians have a responsibility to warn the wicked of their sins (Ez 3:17-21). If we fail in our task, we will have to give an account for it at the Judgement Seat of Christ (2 Cor 5:9-11; Rom 14:10-12) and our hands will be covered with the blood of those we did not warn that we were responsible for!
- D. Real love for someone cannot be broken.
- E. When things don't go the way we want, we get discouraged and think about quitting instead of finding God's purpose and direction in the experience.

IV. Study Questions

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter 19

The Securing of Ephesus

Memory Verse: Titus 1:5

“For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:”

I. Introduction

- A. The work of the Holy Spirit in this day and age involves a battle between the forces of God and Satan.
1. In the Book of Acts, we are witnessing the battlegrounds where beachheads were landed and taken by God's soldiers.
 2. We will see today the fall of Ephesus to the Gospel by the establishment of the Ephesian church by the apostle Paul.
- B. Recently we have covered:
1. Chapter 13 “God's Call to Service”
 2. Chapter 14 “Suffering While Serving”
 3. Chapter 15 “Settling New Testament Salvation”
 4. Chapter 16 “The Second Missionary Journey”
 5. Chapter 17 “Searching the Scriptures”
 6. Chapter 18 “Spiritual Overdrive”

II. Background

At this point in Acts, we leave Apollos in Corinth and pick up Paul:

- A. He is starting his *Third Missionary Journey* (see 18:23)
- B. He is approaching the city of Ephesus
- C. He is alone again - shouldn't be this way, but it is sometimes

III. Lesson - "The Securing (Conquest) of Ephesus"

A. Re-born and Re-baptized (19:1-7)

1. Paul meets some “disciples” (19:1-4) of _____ in this city of Ephesus some 700 miles away from Israel! The Bible, and its message has always been well-read throughout the world. The principle of “waves of influence” (O.T., John the Baptist, then N.T.)
2. Paul says, “Have ye received the _____ since ye believed?”
 - a. This chapter is a charismatic favourite!
 - b. Notice that everybody “believes” something. It is _____ you believe that matters
 - c. According to the charismatic crowd, the following is true:
 - 1) A person can be “saved” but not have the “_____” (Cf Rom 8:9) - referred to as the second blessing
 - 2) You can receive the “HOLYGHOST,” but you must have _____ of it
 - 3) The definitive evidence of the “HOLYGHOST” is speaking in _____ (what Scripture they use I do not know!)
 - 4) We will deal with more of this in a minute
3. The disciples reply with “Who is this Holy Ghost?” The Holy Spirit is not clearly identified in the Old Testament (see Gen 1:2; Ps 51:11)
4. Paul now attempts to find out just “what” these disciples believe:
 - a. Questions their baptism! “Unto WHAT then were ye baptized?”
 - b. They respond, “Unto John the Baptist's baptism”
 - 1) A baptism of _____ (Mt 3:11)
 - 2) Preparing people's hearts **for** the _____. Not sufficient in itself! It didn't save anyone, just _____ them.

DOCTRINALLY: These men only knew and believed what John the Baptist taught - that the Messiah was coming very soon, and people had better get ready for Him. But John's baptism was not enough! Questioning them about the Holy Ghost helped them see their need for the Saviour!

EXAMPLE: God asking Adam “Where are you?” in Gen 3:9. God knew where Adam was, but the question was whether ADAM knew where he was?

5. Paul re-baptizes the disciples (19:5) - not every disciple is saved!
- a. These disciples " _____ " the good news about Jesus the promised Christ, and become "born-again", not just religious (i.e., following a man).
PRINCIPLE: They had no pride about what they believed when it was compared to the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross! They accepted that **they were wrong**, and that God was right! Oh, give us a nation of surrendered hearts!
 - b. They were then "re-baptized"
 - 1) Their first baptism was just "getting wet" It did not count!
 - 2) Your baptism identifies what you believe, and who you are following (1 Cor 10:1) - Israel believed God was working through Moses, and that they were to follow him!
 - 3) So, who needs to be "re-baptized"?
 - a) Anyone who believes that Jesus Christ was not sufficient to save you from sin and hell, but that a person must work his/her way to heaven!
 - b) Anyone who was baptized as an infant without a full understanding of even "WHAT" they believe!
 - c) Anyone who did not believe that Jesus is God in the flesh when they were baptized! Includes someone who denies the virgin birth, and total deity of Christ.
 - d) Anyone who was not truly "born again" when they were baptized before.
- PRINCIPLE: Baptism identifies you with what you believe just like a military uniform identifies a person with what branch of the military they are serving in (Rom 6:1-6)! Make sure you are truly born again, and correctly baptized!
- False Baptisms:
- a) A baptism performed by yourself - must be by a mature Christian, considered an elder or Pastor
 - b) A baptism done in secret - must be public
 - c) A baptism done as part of your salvation - not of works!
 - d) A baptism done when you are a part of a church that denies the Bible in part or in whole, and therefore denies the Gospel in part or in whole

6. God brings about a change in those disciples (19:6,7)
- a. Paul lays his hands upon them... Uh Oh! Here come them charismatics again!
 - 1) A supposed "proof text" for Healing meetings, miracles, signs and wonders, etc...
 - 2) "Place your hands upon the radio, or TV and FEEL the power of God as it..."
 - b. The Holy Ghost comes upon them at the time of their salvation.
 - 1) They spoke in *true* tongues (See 1 Cor 14:22) - understood languages (as those spoken in Acts 2 and 10), not "unknown" gibberish! They SPOKE-UP (were not ashamed)
 - 2) They prophesied (began to witness) - told the future, "People are headed for hell"
 - 3) In other words, a change had taken place in their lives! These guys had been religiously waiting for the Messiah, but were now saved and on fire for the Lord!

PRINCIPLE: Salvation is "SOMEBODY MOVING INTO YOUR LIFE." Therefore, your life should change.

EXAMPLE: Marriage. Somebody "moves into your life" and "cleans it up" AMEN, and makes it better than before!!!

B. The Revival at Ephesus (19:8-20)

1. By way of background, revival starts with the consistent _____ of the Gospel, and Bible truth! Doesn't come out of "thin air!"
 - a. Paul goes to the Jew First (right to the synagogue in Ephesus) - tries to teach the Bible to them - they reject it. Notice the effort to persuade people (Cf 26:18) - there is urgency and striving
 - 1) People can either become soft, or hardened under the gospel
 - 2) These Jews ended up disgusted with it - their own choice
 - b. Paul then goes to the Gentile (he rents out a school building to keep teaching the Bible)
 - 1) To dispute is to _____ - challenge what people believed
 - 2) It is sad when no one wants to think - want it done for them
 - 3) Paul taught this Bible EVERYDAY for ___ years -
 - 4) From that little schoolroom went preachers, and missionaries that spread out into all of Asia minor! That is the normal result of believing this Book - action (1 Thes 1:5-8)!
2. Revival always has _____ associated with it - maybe not these kind of miracles, but miracles nonetheless! These were special miracles by a special man with a special ministry (19:11,12; 9:15,16)

- a. God was doing the miracles through Paul, not every Christian!
 - b. With the apostles, there almost was a “free-for-all” where just about anything they did would work (see Matt 10:1) - not today!
3. Revival is always in _____ to the devil and his counterfeits (19:13-16):
- a. Vagabond Jews were outcasts, not accepted as Jews - weird, cults - the cults were expanding (as they are today)
 - b. *Exorcists* are _____ that pretended to “free people from evil spirits.” Sometimes, they tap into some real power using different incantations, and medicines (drugs) - using names, sayings.
 - c. These “exorcists” tried out the name of _____ - they had been to one of Paul’s meetings, and instead of repenting and receiving Christ, they thought to just USE Him - still standard today - people only want to USE Jesus (fire escape, Genie service)!
 - d. The head honcho of the group of vagabond Jews is named Sceva - he has seven sons who try out this new “formulae” first on a well known demon possessed man.
 - e. To *adjure you* is to command. This is where charismatics got it!
 - f. But it all backfires (19:15,16) - God teaches the entire city some things about devils, and about messing with them:
 - 1) The devils know Jesus - every demon knows and fears Jesus (James 2:19)
 - 2) The devils know Paul - what a great thing!
 - a) Do the devils know _____ name!
 - b) Does YOUR prayer life shake heaven and hell?
 - c) Heaven and hell knew all about Job - that’s what they talked about in Job 1 and 2
 - d) Heaven and hell knew all about Simon Peter (Lk 22:31)
 - 3) Supernatural _____ is associated with demon possession (Mk 5:1-4)
 - 4) These 7 sons had only been dabbling in exorcism - *it would be like a couple of kids trying to take on Arnold Swartzenegger* - Demons are very powerful
 - 5) Don’t mess with Oui-ja boards, Tarot cards, Fortune tellers, Horrorscopes, etc! You will only end up wounded, and more empty (19:16)!
4. What is Revival?
- a. **Coming alive** after a long sleep, or even death - resurrection
 - b. Examples include: _____, _____ on the day of Pentecost and following weeks, and _____ here.
 - c. It is when people who are spiritually dead, are quickened (come to life) by being truly saved by Almighty God’s grace (Eph 2:1)
 - d. Revival can happen to just one individual, or to an entire community - it all just depends upon the number of people who have been prepared (ie, the harvest depends upon how much ground has been plowed).
5. The Five Signs of Real Revival (19:17-20) - It comes when we have:
- a. **The Fear of God!** (19:17) - This is the most important key!!!
 - 1) Godly fear is _____! The right kind of fear can save a person's soul from hell (Jude 21-23; Acts 10:2)! And it can keep them out of trouble!
 - 2) We normally only fear ____ (Prov 29:25; Gen 20:11)
 - 3) But there comes a time when we forget about man (John 12:42,43), and submit only to God because we realise:
 - a) Only He is GREAT in _____ (Ex 14:31) as at Red Sea, and in comprehending creation (Heb 1:1-3)!
 - b) Only He is _____ (Eccl 12:13,14; Mt 10:28)
 - c) Only He is _____ (Isa 43:11) - Don’t try and bypass His great love that He has presented us!
 - 4) The fear of God is shown in our:
 - a) Respect of His _____ (Isa 66:1,2) - being in awe of it!
 - b) Respect of His will (James 1:22) whether we do it, or just say it (Mt 15:8,9) - opposite is being stubborn
 - c) Love back to God - not living in terror of Him, but knowing Him - the fear of God gives us a right balance
 - d) Disgust of sin - true fear will keep you from sinning. If you have a problem with sin, it is because you feel nothing will happen if you sin anyway!
 - 5) How fear should be part of your life:
 - a) In your _____ - realise you have no rights, and so all the more depend upon Christ
 - b) In your struggle with ____ - realise that God WILL chastise us when we sin (Prov 8:13; Heb 12:9,11)

- c) In your presentation of the _____ - not to be all “love, love, love,” but explain the reason for their need to be SAVED - sin sends us to hell (Rom 6:23)!
- d) In your _____ - learn to not be afraid of anybody, except God - be a God-fearing man, or woman, and people will respect you greatly, and God will honour you highly (Ps 112:1)
- b. **Jesus Christ being magnified** (19:17; Ezek 36:23)
- 1) The fear of the Lord (Acts 19:17) produces a healthy respect for the Name of the Lord (Acts 19:13; Ex 20:7)!
 - 2) What is important in your home; in your heart; on your job? Money, prestige, accomplishment? For the Christian, it is the magnification of ___ NAME above all others - Jesus!
 - a) Above all rock stars - Spice Girls, Michael Jackson, etc
 - b) Above all movies stars
 - c) Above all money makers and successful business people
 - d) Above all goals, and desires, and hopes
 - e) Above yourself, and even above your needs
 - 3) Not just dealing with the name “___” which is really a title. Everyone (even devils) believes in God, and talks about God (which ‘god’ I am not always sure). Yet everyone has a problem with *the Name of Jesus* - from presidents, on down to newspaper editors! And even ministers now don’t want to offend anyone by using that name - as generic as possible!
 - 4) Not dealing with _____ of Jesus on walls in homes, or on buildings in Cuba, but with the person and Name of Jesus! What happens when the name **Jesus** is spoken in your home? Is it a curse word, or only used in desperation?
 - 5) What is so special about that Name?
 - a) It is a _____ name (Acts 3:6; 4:10; Philp 2:9-11)
 - b) It is a _____ name (Acts 4:12; Rom 10:13)
 - c) It is our authority in prayer (John 14:13,14; 15:16; 16:23,24) - His name is all we need to refer to!
 - d) It is the only name we _____ (Acts 9:15; 1 Cor 1:22,23) - all Scriptures point to Christ!
 - e) It is the name we _____ (Mt 18:20)! Any religion that places the emphasis on ANY other name than Jesus is of the devil - period!
 - 6) The name of the Lord must be magnified (Ps 34:3; Phil 2:9-11), glorified, projected BIG - How?
 - a) In your confidence in _____ - all because HE promises, and because of the power that is simply in His name! Not as in a magical spell, but in a sweet surrender to the One that **will** supply your every need!
 - b) In your _____ as an open testimony - All glory should go to His name - like an athlete representing his or her country - their country should receive the glory - where Christ’s name proudly like a runner does the name of their country on their jersey.
 - c) In your _____ - they are to reflect His heritage, His investment - they should proudly carry Christ’s name as they do yours! Your children carry Christ’s name better than you usually because they do it with no fear!
 - d) In your _____ - that name is HOLY, and should be praised as often as possible, and used in thankfulness.
- c. **Sinners confessing their sin publicly** (not to some priest!) (19:18; 2Chron 7:14; 1Jn 1:9) real humiliation, real repentance!
- 1) Salvation occurs in the following stages
 - a) First there is a realization of sin’s power and design
 - b) Then there is a _____ of God
 - c) Then a repentance of heart - hatred of sin and self
 - d) Then the receiving of God’s gift of forgiveness
 - e) Then the _____ of what happened (Rom 10:9-11) - they have an openness of life - their old life is dead now anyway, and they don’t want to keep it around, so it is proudly dumped!
 - 2) Confession means _____ *out our sins*! Don’t be general! Some of the sins we need to confess:
 - a) _____ (Rom 1:21)- complaining, and disrespectful
 - b) _____ - not willing to trust God
 - c) Neglect of _____ duties (Hab 2:5; Tit 2:3-5)
 - d) Our _____ (1 Tim 5:13)
 - e) Our _____ (Col 3:5; Heb 13:5,6)
 - f) Our _____ (Prov 6:16-19)! Self-righteousness
 - g) _____ in our hearts (Mt 5:28) - dreaming about someone else to replace our one-and-only!
 - 3) Confession means _____ *about your sin* - not trying to cover it (Prov 28:13), but the free release of it.

- a) These Ephesian Christians showed HOW they deceived people into following them by coming clean on the “tricks of the trade” - showing that most of it was a lie, but that the other was demonic!
 - b) They acknowledged that there was NOTHING good about their old lives - it was dumped!
 - c) They let everyone in on all their secrets about how they tricked people into following idols and false worship (i.e., astrology, hypnosis, magic tricks, drugs - all playing on the mind, and all to get your money)
 - d) If your sin is behind you, you will have no problem discussing it, and hating it - not always talking about it, but publicly taking sides when necessary!
- 4) Confession means _____ (19:19; Prov 28:13)
- a) They burned the stuff that was demonic and sinful
 - b) They did it publicly - just like baptism - burying the old life, and setting out on the new one!
 - c) They benefited nothing off of it - did not sell it, or even give it away - they destroyed it by fire!

It would do us a world of good if we had a bon-fire of all the records, CDs, and videos that plague our homes - the demonic books and magazines that have no place in our lives!

b. **The "burning of bridges" (19:19)**

- 1) They had a book burning. The *right kind* of book burning!
 - a) Got rid of the things that had kept them away from God
 - i) Books on magic, tarot cards, hypnosis
 - ii) Books on the strange and unusual (UFOs, ESP)
 - iii) Books on drugs - all religions have _____ men
 - b) Resisted the devil's influence in their lives and community! Were not going to _____ it anymore - that's where it all starts - with a tolerance with rock music, drink, drugs (legalized drugs), etc!
 - c) Made their commitment to God a public matter! Public baptism begins this commitment!
- 2) If today, then it would have included records, and CDs, and Magazines, Videos, Satellite frequencies, MMDS boxes!!!
 - a) Realize our natural tendency to _____ (Acts 7:39)
 - b) Stop being _____ of where you came from (Heb 11:14-16; Cf Ps 40:2)
 - c) Pay the price - make a visible presentation of your vow (that's what baptism is - a visible representation of what happened on the inside):
 - 1. Don't try to hide your sins under a rug (Ex 32:20)
 - 2. Don't think things won't affect you (Dt 7:25,26)
 - 3. Don't hold onto things that keep you from being what Christ wants you to be (Mt 5:29,30)

PRINCIPLE: Burn the _____ back to those "old ways" of yours that kept you away from serving and loving God. Don't retain tempting materials! Too many people get “saved,” but keep old Elvis, Beatles, and Oasis albums; old beer bottle collections; keep the Satellite dish up, etc.

People end up keeping a way “back” to the old life, and seem to keep ending up back where they came from!

- 3) Other things we hold onto that belong in the bin:
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____

c. **The prevalence of the word of God (19:20).** The word of God was growing, and **prevailing** in every home over the TV, newspaper, radio, football games, lottery winnings and video games!

- 1) People _____ to know what God said, and what God thought, and what God wanted! Tired of all the hype about “self” and fashion, and soaps, and shapes, etc!
- 2) Started in every _____ - you cannot legislate total morality (some legislation is needed: pornography, theft, etc), but you can change a world one house at a time, one family at a time! Just work on one person!
- 3) Spread throughout each city and village (Acts 13:49)

NOTE: Nowhere does anybody speak in tongues, get healed, or prophesy! This was real revival!

- 4) The word of God _____ mightily, not the word of men (Acts 6:7; 12:23,24; Isa 55:11; 2 Thes 3:1). That is **THE** characteristic of true revival!
 - a) It had the _____ that the people had been looking to the other books for

- b) It had the _____ to modern spiritual ills - not in drugs, or in education, or in leadership and politics, but in trusting the promises and obeying God's commands!
 - c) It had something about it that was majestic and powerful - not wimpy and empty - the word of God (Mt 4:4)
 - d) It was the power behind _____ - no longer vain repetition, but confidence because you knew God's will!
- 5) So, what are the enemies to the word of God?
- a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____
 - e) _____

C. The Retaliation of the Devil (19:21-41)

1. Paul has got to be on his way to Jerusalem. He just can't stick around and enjoy "the blessings" - He has work to do that beckons him on!
 - a. He has a long-term vision: the call of starting churches (plural) - can't just sit around and enjoy growing old!
 - b. He needed to gather an offering for the struggling Christians (saints) in Jerusalem (famine)
2. Beyond Jerusalem lies _____, Paul's final destination, with a detour to Spain and maybe even England (Rom 15:24,28).

PRINCIPLE: Mountaintop experiences can lead to some deep dark valleys, as we shall see here.

3. The Riot (19:23-34)
 - a. The Gospel and big-business don't mix. Yet, _____ and big-business DO! (Christmas, Easter Bunnies, Halloween)
 - b. Demetrius calls his union officials together and organizes a stand-off against these economic trouble-makers (vss 24-28)
 - 1) Silversmiths - primarily _____ makers (Barbies, Spice-Girl dolls, posters, pornographic magazines - all idol-makers)
 - 2) Paul's message was ruining the custom, the trade of these silversmiths - how? By stealing silver? No!
 - a) By transforming the hearts and hunger of individuals!
 - b) The only way to completely ruin the drug culture is one _____ at a time!
 - c) God's word destroys liquor shops, pubs, adult shops, Sky movies, music, MTV, etc, etc! Amen!
 - d) Paul's message attacked their god (Phlp 3:18,19) Amen
 - c. The whole city goes into a state of _____ (19:29-32).
 - 1) The world loves a demonstration!
 - 2) Yet most who participate in riots and demonstrations don't even know WHAT they are demonstrating against or for! (See the Middle East for instance)
 - d. People rarely deal with facts - only with fear and shouting!
 - 1) "GREAT IS _____ OF THE EPHESIANS!" Really should be "GREAT IS OUR INCOME BY DIANA"
 - 2) Diana was not the goddess of hunting, but the goddess of the _____! She was the power of fertility (love), and was portrayed as a hunter that went out to strike with a love dart - she was a sex goddess, and was pornographic in design - and all Ephesus loved her, worshipped her, and had idols of her! She is still around today as female singers and models!
 - 3) 25,000 screaming Ephesians fill the theatre as two of Paul's helpers are seized and placed in the centre of the mob!
4. The conclusion of the riot. God handled things through a lost man! The _____ (19:35-41)
 - a. Paul attempted to face the crowd - he wanted to do *something*!
 - b. But many influential people who were now Christians worried about Paul's life - did not know what was right to do.
 - c. Alexander, an unbelieving Jew, attempts to explain that the Jews had nothing to do with this "_____" - but he is shut-out too!
 - d. For _____ hours the shouting continued!
 - e. Then a simple town-clerk arrived and kicked everybody out!

PRINCIPLE: Sometimes you don't even have to speak for God to get you out of tough situations! You just keep faithful to God and God will keep faithful to you!

VI. Conclusion - Review of the Principles

IV. Study Questions

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter 20

Saying Farewell

Memory Verse: 2 Cor 13:11

“Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.”

I. Introduction

- A. Paul today says "farewell" to some of his most precious friends, as he "homes-in" on _____.
1. There comes a time in the parenting cycle where you no longer can make the decisions for your child.
 2. It is at this time that you can only “commend” (surrender up) your child into God's hands.
 3. In much the same way, today we will see Paul as he commends the churches that he has started in Turkey into the hand of God where they belong.
 4. From here on out, Paul will be making just short stops in areas that he has already been in, and will just check on the churches, as he heads back home to Jerusalem
- B. In Jerusalem there awaits a major turning point in Paul’s ministry - where Paul will never be the same, and neither will the churches. Up until this point, they have been so dependent upon Paul, but now will stand on their own, and they will do it quite well!

II. Background

- A. At this point in Acts, we pick up Paul leaving Ephesus and heading west into Macedonia continuing his Third Missionary Journey (see 18:23).
- B. This chapter follows Paul as he quickly makes his rounds through all the cities he has visited before, and then winding-up back near Ephesus.
- C. In the next chapter, we will find Paul in chains and bound for Rome.

III. Lesson - "Saying Farewell" - Acts 20

A. Paul Charts the End of His Last Missionary Journey (20:1-16)

1. Paul leaves Ephesus and heads into _____ (20:1) - an area in the eastern regions of Greece.
 - a. He “_____” the disciples - nothing wrong with embracing, just don’t do it so much that it loses its meaning and effect!
 - b. He _____ the Christians - he gives them a kick in the pants!
2. Visits the Christians in Greece (20:2) - stays with them 3 months. Evidently trying to make sure they can stand without him.
3. Passing through Macedonia, Paul picks up the seven helpers (the fruits of his ministry were not just churches, but MEN totally dedicated to doing the work of Christ - preaching and church planting):
 - a. Sopater- from that great church in _____ that searched the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:10-12)
 - b. Aristarcus of Thessalonica, a special friend (Ac 19:29; Col 4:10)
 - c. Secundus - an unknown helper
 - d. Gaius - had at first been a pastor in _____ (Ro 16:23; 3John 1:1)
 - e. Timotheus - Paul’s most faithful friend
 - f. Tychicus - Col 4:7)
 - g. Trophimus - (2 Tim 4:20)
 - h. Paul had many others like _____ (the author of Acts).
 - i. And some of his men were not always faithful (2Tim 4:9-11).
 - j. Thank God for families, that stay, and grow, and mature as they help build their local church. But thank God also for young men who set off to take the Gospel to those who need to hear it!
4. These seven men were sent ahead to Troas (20:5) while Paul remained at Philippi and celebrates the Jewish _____ (20:6).

NOTE: Now Paul only has ___ days until Pentecost. Paul must get to Jerusalem by then to fulfill his vow that he has made to God to try once more to win the nation of Israel back to God! He evidently wants to recreate the day of Pentecost all over again - but he will find out you can’t!

5. Paul finally arrives at _____ (20:6) - a coastal town back in Turkey
6. He gets together with the Christians in that city
 - a. On the first day of the week (not the seventh day - sabbath)
 - b. The believers came together - church is mainly for Christians
 - c. They came to specifically "break bread"

- 1) In the last chapter we dealt with *baptism* (that a person baptized by John the Baptist needed to be re-baptized once they got saved).
 - 2) Now we deal with Christians having the Lord's Supper.
 - 3) Referred to as "Close" Communion - Paul was not a member of the church at Troas, and yet partook with them.
 - 4) This was a church that broke bread regularly (they celebrated the Lord's Supper often; see 1 Cor 11:26).
- d. The Christians in Troas came together primarily for "preaching." There should never be a gathering of Christians without opening God's word, and somebody declaring some good news!
 - e. They had an _____ meeting - not just on Sunday mornings!
 - f. One man (Eutychus) was literally "bored to _____." He messes up the whole meeting by dying (20:9-12)!

PRINCIPLE: The Lord always has a way of blessing a seemingly "messed-up" service even when things go wrong. Notice that Paul seems to preach *by the calendar* instead of the clock! *An all nighter!*

7. On through Assos, Mitylene, Chios, Samos, Trogyllium, and then to Miletus (20:13-16) - going down the coast of western Turkey.
 - a. Paul wanted to sail "by" Ephesus, without actually stopping there. If he had stopped in, he probably never would have been able to get back out - too many friends, and spiritual family members there - too hard to just drop in and back out again!
 - b. Paul has got less than 31 days to be at Jerusalem for Pentecost.
 - c. He knew that if he landed at Ephesus, he would have had to have dinner at half of the homes before he could leave!
 - d. From Miletus Paul calls for the _____ (Pastors, and mature Christians) of the church at Ephesus to come to him - the entire church totaled _____ in the first century.

B. Paul's Charge To The Ephesian Church (20:17-35).

NOTE: Paul is the example to modern day missionaries. The picture here is one of a missionary leaving a church in the hands of God, no longer able to have the missionary around, but having to make and live by all its own decisions according to the direction of God's word.

1. Paul charges the Pastors at Ephesus (he gives last instructions):
 - a. By first reminding them of their _____ together (20:18-21):
 - 1) Paul's "_____ life and ministry" with them (1Tim 4:12).
 - 2) His faithfulness through all seasons (Cf 2 Tim 4:1-5).
 - 3) His service was to the Lord first (not to man - *not a person pleaser*). Paul lists what is involved in serving the Lord:
 - a) Humility of _____ - your own self-awareness
 - b) Tears of concern - for the lost, and for solid growth
 - c) _____ temptation (Cf 2Cor 6:4-11; 11:21-30)
 - d) Profiting others at your own expense
 - e) Faithfully presenting a life owned by Jesus Christ
 - 4) His preaching style (20:20)
 - a) No holding back - no hesitations
 - b) A _____ ministry - not behind closed doors (Jn 18:20)
 - c) Teaching, and discipleship - wanted them to be fed!
 - 5) His audience (20:21) - Jews, Gentiles, everybody!
 - 6) His fundamental message (20:21)
 - a) _____ toward God - surrender, hatred toward sin
 - b) _____ toward Jesus Christ - confidence that HE and He ALONE is all anyone needs to be forgiven, and fulfilled
 - c) They go for both the lost, and the Christian!
 - i) The unsaved: repent of sinfulness
 - ii) The Christian: repent of each individual sin
 - iii) Both must live by faith (Rom 1:17)
- b. Paul then tells them of his _____ (20:22-25)
 - 1) Going "*bound in the spirit*" to Jerusalem (and then to Rome)
 - 2) Heading into the roughest waters of his life yet. He was expecting "bonds and afflictions" like never before.
 - 3) But nothing can change his course - great determination.

- 4) His desire is to just "_____." PRINCIPLE: You don't have to be *first* in the Christian race; just finish. (1Cor 4:2; 1Ti 4:7)
 - 5) Not even his very life is important to him anymore (Cf Luke 14:25-33; 9:24) - he just hungers to have an impact for God
 - 6) Paul knows he will never see them again.
- c. Paul "takes them to record" (20:26-27). Goes on record saying:
- 1) He is pure/free from the blood of ALL men. He has no regrets about his life efforts, and was glad to say he never hid the light Christ gave him (Mt 5:14-16).
 - 2) He has not kept back anything from them - "*the _____ counsel of God*" (includes Genesis - Revelation; hell, heaven, salvation, damnation, exposing sin, and how to raise your family for God, etc.)

PRINCIPLE: There is nothing more to the gospel than what we find right plainly in the word of god. All other religions that add to the word of god are therefore outside of god's authority: EX. Mormons, Islam, Catholic and Protestant Traditions, etc!!!

- d. Paul now warns the preachers and elders (20:28-36) Tells them to "Take heed" or "watch out":
- 1) _____ - you have the ability to "blow it" for people by letting sin ruin you, and blind people to Christ (1 Tim 1:15; 2 Cor 9:26,27; 1 Cor 9:25; 1 Cor 6:12,13)!
 - 2) _____ (or zoo) that the Holy Ghost has made you "overseers" of.
 - 3) And to take heed, in order that you might:
 - a) _____ the church of God which He has purchased with HIS OWN _____ 1 Pet 5:2,3). Involves preaching and teaching and not tickling their ears (2 Tim 4:2-4).

NOTE: The importance of the blood (Rom 3:24,25; Col 1:14)

PICTURE: Adam deliberately disobeying God's commandment to save his wife by losing his own life. In the same way, Jesus had to deliberately lose his life to save ours!

- b) _____ the church of God (Jude 1:4):
 - i) From _____ wolves IN the flock - Pastors are supposed to protect young and old Christians from bad attitudes that can spread and ruin a church, and from fakers within it.
 - ii) From wolves within *yourselves* - the dangers of leadership and power - it makes wolves of men!
- e. Reminds them, "***For three years I prepared you for this day.***" It took a lot of time and training these Christians to be able to stand on their own feet without an apostle around. They now had their own pastor, their own teachers, and their own commission from God: to reach further into the darkness with the Light!
- f. Paul finally "_____ " the brethren unto two things (20:32):
- 1) _____
 - 2) The _____ of God

APPLICATION: Same thing happens when a missionary has built a church, and now must move on, he has to commend them to God and the word, and then go start another church. God wants local church autonomy, not a hierarchy.

God's word is able to build you up because it is like:

- a) _____ (Heb 5:12)
- b) _____ (Heb 5:12)
- c) _____ (Luke 4:4)
- d) _____ (Ps 119:103)
- e) _____ (Prov 25:11)
- f) _____ (Eph 5:26) What a Diet!!!

PRINCIPLE: A weak faith in the word of God produces a weak Christian. A partial faith in the word of God produces only a partial Christian (that's the majority). A strong faith in the word of God produces a strong Christian!

2. Paul's Last Words to the Ephesians (20:33-35)
- a. I have not _____ things of this world (Heb 13:5; 1 Tim 6:6-8). Paul was content - a right heart attitude.
 - b. I have _____ (2 Thes 3:10-13) - willingness to work.
 - c. I have left you therefore with an example so that you will:
 - 1) Support the weak - therefore, _____ must become strong, and strive to be someone others can lean upon!

- 2) Learn that it is more blessed to _____ than to _____ - Christians ought to be the first to give anything and everything! Minister to one another - fix each other's roofs, cars; mow their grass when they are not well, etc!

PRINCIPLE: You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving. You can even preach, win souls, read your Bible, obey God without love, but you cannot love without doing those things for God.

C. Paul's Closing Prayer with These Ephesians (20:36-38) - Real Prayer:

1. Prayer is an _____ act - not an act for show
2. Prayer is primarily for _____ (Cf 20:24)
3. Prayer comes from the _____ - not from a prayer book
4. Prayer brings out _____ - tears ought to be for:
 - a. Facing into hard times - not that you are defeated, but that you are being honest
 - b. Lost _____ - get the heart of God, and you will never be the same - you will never look at people the same!
 - c. Failure and shame - broken hearts cry - hard hearts laugh and joke on!
5. Prayer brings a church together, and binds them even when events separate them like they were with Paul
6. Prayer gives _____ to go on - don't pray just to go through the motions!

VI. Conclusion - Review of the Principles

IV. Study Questions

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter 21

Saving the Best For Last

Memory Verse: 1 Corinthians 9:20-22

“And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.”

I. Introduction

- A. Most of us when we were children were told at the dinner table to always eat things on our plates that were the least enjoyable first, and save the best for last. The principle is good, even though most of us never did it.
1. Paul, since becoming one of the greatest soul-winners there ever was, had started probably a hundred churches, seen thousands of Gentiles become born-again, and covered almost all of the entire free-world of that time with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
 2. But his efforts now increase as he turns back home to Jerusalem and the Jews for one last attempt to see them turn back to God. He has saved his best for the last.
- B. So far we have covered:
1. Chapter 13 “God's Call to Service”
 2. Chapter 14 “Suffering While Serving”
 3. Chapter 15 “Settling New Testament Salvation”
 4. Chapter 16 “The Second Missionary Journey”
 5. Chapter 17 “Searching the Scriptures”
 6. Chapter 18 “Spiritual Overdrive”
 7. Chapter 19 “The Securing of Ephesus”
 8. Chapter 20 “Saying Farewell”

II. Lesson - "Saving The Best For Last"

A. Paul Leaves Miletus - Heading South - Next Stop Jerusalem (21:1-14)

1. Sails through Coos, Rhodes, Patara, Phenicia, past Cyprus, into Syria at Tyre, where he stays for seven days with believers (21:1-4). They, AS EVERYONE ELSE HAS, tell Paul that it was not God's "perfect" will for him to go to Jerusalem.

NOTE: Paul's motive was love for his people (1 Cor 13:1-8)

PRINCIPLES:

- a. Three areas of God's will (Rom 12:1,2):
 - 1) _____ - All things work together for "good" (Rom 8:28)
 - 2) _____ - Pleases God, but is not the best
 - 3) _____ - God's clearest, and best will
- b. Two primary categories of God's will:
 - 1) _____ Will - What God allows
 - 2) _____ Will - What God wants
- c. God is going to allow Paul to go through with this desire of his (to go to Jerusalem) because He knows Paul's heart motive (Rom 10:1).
2. Paul comes to Ptolemais and finds believers - They're everywhere! (21:3,4) What a testimony if that would be true here in Ireland soon!
3. They have an *open-air prayer meeting* - no preaching or music, just PRAYER (21:5).
4. Arrives at Caesarea (21:8)
 - a. Meets Philip the _____ (Acts 6:5; 8:12, 35) - soul-winner!
 - 1) An evangelist wins people to Christ
 - 2) A discipler (teacher) trains those new Christians
 - 3) A Pastor feeds the entire group of Christians
 - 4) Every Christians needs to become evangelists (soul-winner)
 - 5) When a Christian wins someone to Christ, they need to then become disciplers, to train them
 - 6) The Pastor coordinates everything, and keeps everyone operating together in unity and for God's glory.

- b. Philip had four daughters that did _____ (21:8)
- c. Does this mean that we should have "Women Preachers?"
- 1) Women **DO** prophecy (1 Cor 11:5) - declare the future before the New testament was completed. They also have a "sixth-sense" about things that ought to be listened to!
 - 2) Acts is a _____ book. God used lots of people to bridge the gap between the Old Testament and the New Testament.
 - 3) God said that a day would come when He would "*pour-out his Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your _____ shall prophecy*" (Joel 2:28,29) But notice what the rest of those verses say, "*dreams... visions... wonders in the heavens and in the earth... the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible DAY OF THE LORD come.*" Second Coming of Christ! (See Rev 6:12 for the fulfillment of Joel 2).

NOTE: Paul is getting near Jerusalem, and all throughout history, you have seen that Jews always require a **sign**, whether it be tongues, prophecy, or "a word of knowledge."

- 4) Notice that God only used women when there weren't any men available (which was sometimes often):
 - a) _____ & Balak (Judges 4)
 - b) It is not God's perfect will to use a woman in a place of spiritual authority, but God has had to do it. See how God had to use a Samson (Judges 13-16)
 - 5) God puts several restrictions on these "women preachers" (See 1 Cor 14:34-35 and 1 Tim 2:11-14)
 - a) They are to teach _____ - most important (Tit 2:3-5)
 - b) They are to teach _____, along with their husbands
 - c) They are to present the Gospel like all other Christians
 - d) They just **cannot** assume *authority* over men in the church. They have equal input, but not final authority.
- d. Here comes the real prophet - _____ (21:10,11; also 11:28).
- 1) Gives an object lesson using simple cloth - shows the _____ (prison terms) that Paul will go through.
 - 2) This is the **forth** warning to Paul in the last four months.
 - 3) He says, "Paul, you are going to go to the Gentiles where you are supposed to be whether you like it or not." Paul's primary mission was to reach the Gentiles - but his heart was for the Jews, and just "had" to be in Jerusalem at a "Jewish" feast!
 - 4) Paul had over-ruled what he knew was best, for what he thought would be *better*.

PRINCIPLE: We are just the same, constantly attempting to do what we think is better, when we should be doing what God wants. We think that we can improve on God's plan!

- e. Paul was "*willing to ___ at Jerusalem*" (21:12-14) - WHY?
- 1) He remembers _____ death at Jerusalem (Acts 7:58).
 - 2) He also remembers all the _____ who died there as well (Lk 13:33,34).
 - 3) What Bible-believing Jew, if he had to die, would not want to die "at Jerusalem"? That is where king David is buried. That is where Christ was crucified and buried and rose again from. That is where 3,000 were saved in one day on the day of Pentecost. Now, we are talking about one of the greatest Christian who ever lived, and we see that he is not perfect, as only One is perfect, Who always obeyed the perfect will of God - Jesus Christ.

B. Hello Jerusalem (21:15-26)!

1. Here in Jerusalem, the "brethren" received them _____ (but you had better watch out!) You will notice that things really haven't changed here in Jerusalem since Chapter _____. Everything is *stagnated* because:
 - a. They were too ____ - 30,000 Christians had become bogged down as a huge church instead of being smaller churches.
 - b. They were too _____ - focused mainly on themselves, and not on the world they were to be reaching (Acts 1:8).
 - c. They had grown tired of "being _____" than the culture (Jewish) around them.

PRINCIPLE: People don't like it when Christians are different that the world. Christians don't even like it when other Christians are spiritual! Everybody just wants everyone the SAME!!! Yet God says "Come ____ from among them, and be ye _____ saith the Lord" (2 Cor 6:17; Rom 12:1,2; 1 Pet 2:9).

2. A meeting is immediately called, with _____ (the pastor of the church at Jerusalem - not the apostle; Acts 12:1,2) and all the elders:

- a. Paul reports first (21:19). Things are going great! People are getting saved, towns are closing down liquor stores, idol sales are way down, churches are being built instead of sports arenas, and so on...!
- b. Then James speaks (21:20-25)
 - 1) That's fantastic Paul... but, things haven't been going so good here in Jerusalem.
 - 2) The Jews aren't getting saved like they used to - everyone has settled back down for the emphasis on the ____.
 - 3) And, there are some bad _____ going around about you teaching the Jews everywhere to forsake Moses:
 - a) No need to circumcise the Jewish children
 - b) No need to retain the Jewish customs

FIRST PRINCIPLE: The first thing is that James should not pay attention to rumors! The second worst sin of Christians (beside losing your first love; Rev 3:15,16) is that of gossip - talking about each other instead of the Lord!

SECOND PRINCIPLE: Circumcision does nothing anymore (it did under the Old Testament), and Jewish "customs" (i.e., ways of doing things that were distinctly Jewish, not necessarily Biblical) were not important anymore!

- 4) James then says, "YOU have got to do something Paul about those rumors to prove them false!"

PRINCIPLE: Paul didn't waste one minute of his time worrying about what other people said or thought about him since he was doing what God wanted him to do. Therefore, don't waste your time worrying what other people say or think about you. Worry about what **God** says and thinks about (see Job and how God talked about him!)
- 5) Go with four Nazarites into the Temple (see Num 6:13,15) and show everyone that you are a "good little Jew", and that you "keep the Law".

NOTE: James has a "double-standard": He still believed the Jews must "keep the Law" to be a good Jew, while the Gentiles just have to only believe in Christ!

EXAMPLE: A Roman Catholic becoming born-again and then going back and attending one Sunday Mass so that his parents won't think that he has denied the Virgin Birth, or the authority of the Pope!

- c. Since Paul has gotten himself this far in, he will now have to go all the way through (21:26), so he accepts their proposal without a word.
- d. Paul even pays for an offering to be made for him! (21:26)

NOTE: Paul believed that NO OFFERING would do any good anymore now that THE sin offering had been paid! People still think that they can "pay off" or "impress" God by doing something "religious."

C. Goodbye Jerusalem! (21:27-40) Paul's time in Jerusalem is cut short!

1. The unbelieving Jews spot Paul in the _____ (21:27-31)
 - a. His mug-shot was in the local Barber Shops, and the Post Offices, as one of the ten most wanted criminals!
 - b. These Jews go fanatical as they kick Paul OUT of the Temple:
 - 1) Begin lying about Paul teaching "against" Jewish things. (always thinking preachers are negative):
 - a) Against the people of Israel (Cf Rom 9 and 10)
 - b) Against the law (Cf Rom 7)
 - c) Against the Temple!
 - 2) Lie about Paul bringing Greeks into the Temple - a violation of the holiness and sanctity of that place (yet Paul believed they COULD go right into the holy of holies)!
 - 3) These good, God-fearing, religious, zealous Jews set out to "kill" Paul! Real "godly" men! It is always the "religious" that have no problem killing their enemy. Paul is severely beaten by this mob!
2. The chief captain of the Roman army division there ran down and grabbed Paul before they tore him apart (21:31-40).
 - a. Paul is bound *with chains* because the captain believed that he must be dangerous. He then is hoisted up in the air since the people were so intent on killing him!

NOTE: The people treated Paul just like they treated Jesus, and said, "*Away with him!*"

- b. Paul requests to address the crowd in _____ - This is his best, and this is *his last chance* to turn the hearts of the Jews to their Messiah! (21:39-40)

VI. Conclusion - Review of the Principles

IV. Study Questions

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter 22

Spreading the Gospel by Testimony

Lesson Verse: 1 Peter 3:15,16

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ."

I. Introduction

- A. Most people think that to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ requires a person to have had years of Bible College and Seminary training, and years of experience in public speaking!
1. But God says that all that is required is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, which will result in us having a testimony of what God has done for each of us. This includes how God changed lives and attitudes, and feelings, where we had only tried and failed before.
 2. People need to see real people who have *experienced* what they are talking about. This kind of Gospel presentation is the most effective!
 - a. Advertisements use it. "*Let's see how Mrs. Jones reacts to Johnny's muddy pants now that she has tried new Gravel laundry detergent...*"
 - b. Politicians use it. "*Let me tell you what this country means to me...*"
- B. So far we have covered:
1. Chapter 13 "God's Call to Service"
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 8. Chapter 20 "Saying Farewell"
 9. Chapter 21 "Saving the Best for Last"

II. Background

At this point in Acts, Paul is standing in front of a large crowd of very religious Jews that had just tried to kill him. Paul goes right to the most powerful means of persuasion - the testimonial. Paul was not going to waste time talking about theology, eschatology, and dispensationalism. Paul was going to present simply what God had done for him personally!

III. Lesson - "Spreading the Gospel by Testimony"

A. Paul's Testimony (22:1-21)

1. His Religious Background (22:1-5)
 - a. A purebred, pureblood - Jew of a Jew (22:1-3) - not a proselyte
 - b. Taught by the best - at the feet of Gamaliel (22:3; 5:34-40)
 - c. Zealous toward God - Or so he thought (22:3)
 - 1) I persecuted *unto death* this heretical sect (a real women's libber). Threw both men and WOMEN into prison (22:4)
 - 2) I persecuted unto the end of the earth - went out of my way to eradicate the Christians, even to Damascus (22:5).

Paul just thought that his religion was better than another, so he was on a "holy war" against the "Christian religion." Did you ever notice how that 99% of all wars are over religion - ie, one religion trying to overtake another?
2. His Salvation (22:6-10)
 - a. Found out that "religion" does not save.
 - 1) Eternal life depends upon a personal relationship with the Savior of the world (and not just a "personal encounter"), nor with "head-knowledge" (James 2:19)
 - 2) Definitions:
 - a) Religion - Trusting what *you* DO in life - a process
 - b) Salvation - Trusting what *Christ* DID - a promise!

Which is better to risk your eternal destiny upon?

- b. Paul speaks the magic word - **LORD** (22:6-10)
 - 1) This one word from the heart can seal your relationship with Jesus Christ:
 - a) Example of the thief on the cross (Lk 23:42)
 - b) Romans 10:9,10,13
 - 2) Paul dealt directly with Jesus Christ - no middle-men!
 - 3) He discovered he could not go directly to God through the priesthood, or by himself - *had to have Jesus the Messiah!*

3. His Calling (22:10-21)

- a. Paul asks Jesus first off, "What do I do now?"
 - 1) Trying to make up for his past life. Many a new-born Christian feels this same way, and OUGHT to!
 - 2) Wants to turn his energy from a sinful lifestyle into a lifestyle that God would be pleased with - and so he did!
- b. Notice that Jesus gives him only a portion of His will for his life at a time.

PRINCIPLE: If you knew everything that God wanted you to do for the next 40 years it would blow your mind! You couldn't handle it. God says, be faithful in that which is least, then he will make you faithful over many things.

4. Paul's new habits (22:12-21)

- a. He gets baptized immediately (22:16) as a step of obedience
 - 1) In those days, people got saved and baptized the very same day (Acts 2:42)
 - 2) It was not the baptism that saved, but the calling on the name of the Lord that did!
- b. He becomes a real praying man (22:17)
- c. He seeks God's will for his life
 - 1) Knows where he came from - such atrocities
 - 2) Learns where he is going - to the **Gentiles** (Isa 42:1,6; 49:6; Mal 1:11; Acts 1:8)

B. **Jerusalem's Final Rejection of the Truth** (22:22-24)

1. Just one word (Lord) can save a soul, but then again, just one word can incite a riot too (GENTILE)!
 - a. Like saying "CIA" down in Cuba
 - b. Like saying "Ian Paisley" in Dublin
2. Saying just ONE WORD can turn people off because of what they associate with that word! Forget the message, forget the point, just home-in on ONE WORD!!!
3. This crowd says a man is not fit to live if he is a Jew who goes to the Gentiles!!! All religions are racists at heart!

C. **Roman Custody** (22:25-30)

1. God protects Paul from a roman scourging (22:24-29)
2. Notice the little "nugget" phrase, "_____ BORN"

PRINCIPLE: Paul was a Roman Citizen by BIRTH, while many others had to pay great sums of money to purchase their freedom. Paul, as all Christians, are FREE BORN by BIRTH as well, citizens of HEAVEN, by the NEW BIRTH, while there are so many who think that by "paying a large sum" they can purchase "FREEDOM". It cannot be purchased!

VI. Conclusion - Review of the Principles

IV. Study Questions

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter 23

Spreading the Gospel by Testimony

Lesson Verse: 1 Peter 3:15,16

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III. Lesson - "Spreading the Gospel by Testimony"

A. Paul's New Strategy - Divide and Conquer (22:30-23:10)

1. Paul meets his accusers face-to-face (22:30)
2. Paul presents the evidence of his life, not just words (23:1)
3. The high priest has Paul slapped (23:2)

Notice that people really don't care about the facts. They are only interested in their emotions. They didn't care enough about what Christ had to say. The religious muckety-mucks really have no "religion" when it comes right down to freedom of speech:

- a. It is all right for a person to sell Playboy, and Penthouse but, not all right for a preacher to stand on a street corner and proclaim the free Gospel of Jesus Christ!
 - b. It is ok to rally in Washington to ALLOW abortions, but, not ok to rally in Washington to STOP them!
 - c. It is great when someone points out all the flaws in fundamentalism, but watch-out when someone tries to point out the problems with the Catholic Church!!!!
4. Paul reviles back (23:3-5) - strikes back in word
 5. Paul then takes the opportunity to split his accusers into two factions - divide and conquer! (23:6-11)
 - a. The easiest way to defeat an enemy is to divide them! This is how the devil works in your life:
 - 1) Splits the authorities in your life
 - 2) Splits the relationships in your family
 - 3) Splits your convictions into gray areas
 - 4) Makes people fight each other instead of the real enemy (Isa 14:16)
 - b. Paul has side-tracked the courtroom and made "lemon-aid" out of the lemons that they gave him.

- 1) Sadducees - do not believe in the resurrection - therefore they are "sad you see." These represent the modern day Liberal who does not believe in any miracles.
- 2) Pharisees - believe in all the "fundamentals" especially the resurrection. These represent the modern day conservative Catholics. They are not saved, but this group do get saved (Acts 15:5), but they do have problems with Christianity!

c. Paul leaves the courtroom unscathed (23:10)

B. The Lord encourages Paul (23:11)

1. Yes Paul, you are going on to Rome, but it is going to be rough. Note that this encouragement comes just before the devil really lets loose (vs 12-15)

C. The Conspiracy Against Paul (23:12-22)

1. Some real God-fearing men take on a "vow" to kill Paul.
2. God protects his own, Amen! (23:16)
3. The Captain of the guard takes concern.

D. On to the Next Trial/Witnessing Opportunity (23:23-35)

IV. Conclusion - Review of the Principles

V. Study Questions

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapters 24

Savouring Every Moment

Memory Verse: 1 Timothy 6:17

“Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy”

I. Introduction

To the world, and even to most Christians, "Christianity" is something only to be endured. Yet to Bible-believers, living the Christian life yields the only true source of pleasure and happiness since their sights have been set on eternal things, and not on the things of this world.

II. Background

At this point in Acts, Paul is in chains (in which he will remain in for the rest of his life), and is about to begin a trek toward Rome that leads him to witness to Governors, Procurators, Kings, and then ultimately, the Emperor Caesar Augustus!

III. Lesson - "Savoring Every Moment"

A. Felix The Governor Hears Paul (24:1-27)

1. Meet The Great _____ - Tertullus
 - a. Tries to convince based upon SOUNDING better
 - 1) This is the aim of today's 24 hour-a-day advertising.
 - 2) 95% of all Christians have abandoned the truth of God and gone after "up-to-date" rubbish that SOUNDS BETTER!
 - a) New "bibles" - Good News, The Living Bible, 150 "NEW" translations since 1611!
 - b) New churches, fellowships - sound so much better
 - c) New lifestyles - that don't offend anyone!
 - b. Starts by buttering-up Felix - "*You are the greatest...*"
 - 1) We enjoy great quietness because of you...
 - 2) Very worthy deeds are done unto us by thy providence...
 - 3) We are so thankful for your very existence!
Where is God in all this?!
 - c. Lists the 4 charges against Paul that make him worthy of death:
 - 1) A Pestilent fellow (a pest)
 - 2) A mover of sedition - revolt, rebellion against authority
 - 3) A ringleader of the sect (cult) of the Nazarenes
 - 4) A profaner of the temple - somebody who seeks to ruin it
2. Meet The Great _____ - Paul (24:10-21; 1 Cor 2:1-5)
 - a. He has one goal in mind - tell them about Jesus
 - b. He first refutes the charges
 - 1) Not a mover of sedition - I disputed no man in the Temple
 - 2) Not part of a sect - I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation - he truly loved his people, and would not ruin them
 - 3) They cannot prove that I profaned the Temple
 - 4) My "heresy" is simply believing in the resurrection

NOTE: A real heretic has to use coercion, litigation, slander, political power, force, violence, or persecution to obtain his objectives. A Bible believer just prays and preaches!

EXAMPLE: The Moslem "faith". It used force to bring in new converts for a thousand years - as did the Catholic "faith".

- c. Paul states his position (24:14-21) - Confesses his guilt:
 - 1) I AM a heretic (if that is what you want to call me). I simply believe ALL the things written in the law and prophets (24:14), not pick and choose (2 Tim 2:15)!
 - a) The first 12 chapters of Genesis are NOT a "myth"
 - b) The crossing of the Red Sea, not Sea of Reeds (Ex 14:21)

- c) That the walls of Jericho fell flat with only a shout! (Josh 6:20)
 - d) That the sun stood still for 12 extra hours for Joshua (Josh 10:12,13)
 - e) That Jonah REALLY was swallowed by a whale (Matt 12:40)
 - f) That the Messiah would come (Dan 9), and die (Isa 53) and then rise again (Psalms)!
- 2) I have a great hope (confidence) toward God concerning the resurrection of dead (24:15-21)
- a) There are TWO resurrections (Dan 12:3)
 - i) Rev 20:5
 - ii) Rev 20:11-15
 - b) There are TWO births (Jn 3:3-7)
 - c) There are TWO deaths - both very REAL
 - i) Physical (Heb 9:27)
 - ii) Spiritual (Rev 20:6,14)
- PRINCIPLE: He who is born once, dies twice He who is born twice, dies once.
- 3) I live what I believe (24:16) with my conscience CLEAR toward both God and man! No guilt, or regrets!
- d. Paul calls for "witnesses" which were not there (24:18-20)
 - e. Paul refers everyone back to the issue of FAITH - which should never be debated in a court AT ALL!
3. Felix *defers* his decision (24:22-27) - can't handle TRUTH (just as Pilate couldn't - John 18:38)
- a. Knows that these Jews don't have a leg to stand on (knows Christianity has something to it all other religions don't - proof).
 - b. Waited TWO years! Remember Joseph experienced the same thing in prison (Gen 40:13-41:1). But Paul kept giving the Gospel to him (reasoned). The "faith" in Christ includes declaring:
 - 1) Righteousness - God's standard - Ex 20; Jesus (Rom 2:10)
 - 2) Temperance - Our *inability* to be perfect and under control
 - 3) Judgement to come - Pay day's a'coming (Act 17:31; Rom 2:16; Eccl 12:14; Rom 6:23)
 - c. Felix TREMBLED (24:25)!!!
- PRINCIPLE: We should never give up on people! God's timing is almost always different than ours! Remember that God is "longsuffering."
 PRINCIPLE: Be bold in your witnessing. Don't just talk about the "love of God."
- d. Felix Communed, passed the time - no longer interested (24:26)
 - e. Felix really just wanted three things:
 - 1) To keep his Jewish wife happy (24:24)
 - 2) To see if any money would come out of the situation!
 - 3) To have a "convenient" religion for himself
 - a) chose comfort for a cross
 - b) chose convenience for consecration
 - 4) To keep the Jews happy (24:27) just wanted peace and quiet

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapters 25

To The Uttermost

Memory Verse: Acts 1:8; 9:15; Heb 7:25

“But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel”

I. Introduction

- A. The message of the gospel is supposed to reach all classes of people, in all walks of life, at every level of society. It is not just for the “down-and-outer” but also for the top-dogs. Both are lost and hell-bound, in need of the Saviour (Rom 3:10, 23; Luke 14:16-24), but usually only those who have no money, do surrender - money and power can so effectively blind!
- B. The job of the Christian is to testify to everyone (Acts 20:21), but not everyone is going to accept it (1Cor 1:25-29)!

II. Background

- A. At this point in Acts, Paul is in chains, and bound by the false accusation of the Jews who “hated” what the Apostle Paul had become - a traitor to their traditions, and customs - he went against the flow, and bucked the system, and they noticed it was having an effect on everybody (Acts 17:6)!
- B. Remember those guys in Acts 23:12? If they stayed true to their word, they would be quite dead by now after TWO years of waiting of Paul! But that only means that another bunch have just taken their place (25:3)!

III. Lesson - "To The Uttermost"

A. Porcius Festus the _____ Hears Paul (25:1-12)

1. The Jews still wanted Paul dead (25:2-3), even after weeks of court and legal delays!
 - a. They came again to try to convince the government to kill him.
 - b. But non of the things could they prove (25:7)
 - c. PRINCIPLE: As a Christian, live your life so that it is " _____"! Christians are still sinners, but don't be proud of it!!!
2. Festus tries to get Paul to agree to go to Jerusalem (25:9) - a normal politician - trying to “appease” those he seeks to CONTROL!
3. Paul says, "No way! I have had enough of Jerusalem. It is time for me to go to Rome. I stand at Caesar's judgement seat. I appeal unto Caesar. (25:9-12)
 - a. A _____ plea that protects you as innocent, until proven guilty
 - b. A _____ plea, or else Paul would be set-back more years (already lost 2 years being focused on Jerusalem)!
 - c. NOTE: Paul says, "If I have done anything worthy of death, I refuse not to DIE..." (25:11). Paul accepts the concept of **capital punishment**. When you are right with God, you never worry about DEATH.
 - d. Capital punishment (Gen 9:5,6) is the only valid justice for premeditated murderers - not 2-5 years!
4. Festus tells King Agrippa about Paul (25:13-22) who says that he too would like to hear Paul preach. People in those days loved some entertainment (no TV, radio, etc). So people would listen to PREACHING - as with John the Baptist!

B. _____ is Introduced to Paul (25:23-27)

1. Paul is brought forth (25:23), and introduced by Festus (25:24-27) to a full court! Agrippa is the son of Heron Agrippa (12:1) - not friendly, but Agrippa is bored enough to want to meet this guy.
2. Festus classifies Paul the following ways:
 - a. A man that the Jews say ought not to live - should be crucified like the One that he so openly preaches about
 - b. A man that seems to be innocent by law - both by the Law of God's word, and by the law of the land - can anyone here say the same about their own life?!
 - c. A man who has appealed to Caesar - wanted to take his message all the way to the very top - use the pressure put on him for the broadcasting of the Gospel message far and wide, high and low!
 - d. A man that has no record, so no reason for me to send to Caesar. So Festus asks for Agrippa to listen to the case, and give his opinion, and so he does!
 - e. A man that has set his life to declare some “superstitions” about:
 - 1) Jesus - where is the mention of Mary, or blessed John the Baptist, or St. Peter, etc?
 - 2) His death - for sin's punishment
 - 3) His resurrection - He's alive!
3. Someone that just doesn't fit the “system” not a serial killer, or normal troublemaker – “I don't know what to write Caesar about him!”

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapters 26

Almost Persuaded!

Memory Verse: Isaiah 1:18

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool"

I. Introduction

- A. Persuasion today is left up to advertisers
- B. The greatest persuaders should be right here (Acts 17:2; 18:4, 19; 24:25)
- C. People are in need of instruction that convinces them that God is right, and to be whole-heartily followed (Mt 28:19,20)

II. Background

- A. At this point in Acts, the apostle Paul is no longer free, but is locked into a court battle for his life that has required him appealing to the supreme court of the Roman Empire, a hearing by Caesar Nero himself!
- B. Paul has been given an invitation to speak to a large crowd gathered around King Agrippa and his wife Bernice. Five generations are listed:
 1. King Herod the Great (Mt 2) - puppet king over Israel under Caesar. He met the wise men, and had all children in Bethlehem under the age of 2 murdered.
 2. Herod Archelaus (Mt 2:22). So wicked that the Roman empire had to dump him.
 3. Herod the Tetrarch, Atipas (Mt 14) - had John the Baptist beheaded. He was called "that old fox" by Jesus in Lk 13:22.
 4. Herod Agrippa (Act 12) - had the apostle James put to death
 5. Herod Agrippa II (Act 25-26) - the one before whom Paul now stands
- C. Paul could either be afraid for his life, or bold in his faith - he opts for the latter, hoping to convert this man to the grace of God for lost sinners by persuasion - THE greatest weapon of all time! Mightier than the sword!

III. Lesson - "Almost Persuaded!"

A. The Saint's Pleasure (26:1-23)

1. To be allowed to speak for Christ! Paul is allowed to speak (26:1-27) Begins to fulfill Acts 9:15 to its fullest.
 - a. Paul Introduces himself (26:1-7).
 - 1) _____. "I am happy!" Able to say that, even though in chains because:
 - a) Had a personal walk with the One who is in control
 - b) Was in the center of God's will for your life.
 - c) Was telling the wonderful story of Jesus!
 - d) He had developed this confidence by experience
 - 2) _____ (26:4-7) - well known by all the Jews
 - a) Searching for the truth all his life - honest search
 - i) As a believer of the Bible
 - ii) As a Pharisee
 - b) Finding the truth in the fulfillment of the promises, found in the Messiah, Christ Jesus!
 - b. Paul Presents the Gospel (Act 26:6-8)! The hope of Israel
 - 1) _____ - I stand before you because I KNOW what I believe - never a guess, or blind faith. Paul has a faith that propels him to risk his life to make it known world-wide!
 - 2) _____ I have a FUTURE to look forward to! Because:
 - a) The promises of God all relate to the fact of the miraculous resurrection - that is what a Bible believing Jew is SUPPOSED to believe!
 - i) Israel would be a great Nation
 - ii) A Messiah would come by means of king David
 - iii) A final sacrifice would come to finish the payment of for all sin
 - b) The Son of God, Jesus Christ is the proof of my future
 - i) He came to prove God cared, and was real
 - ii) He died to take away our punishment

iii) He arose to show that the way to God was clear

c) I am willing to believe it all, live by it, and die by it (most people would rather people rose up from an Amoebae, or an ape, than to believe the resurrection; Rom 10:9,10)!

It is sad when only cult fanatics have this kind of zeal!

c. _____ What about YOU Agrippa (26:8-23)?

1) Forget your religion (26:9-12) - I was "religious" but lost

- a) Protected my religion - like God needs protecting
- b) Persecuted the heretics - like they were not human
- c) Pursued the heretics to other countries - like a religious empire that sought only to keep people under their control - no individual faith or choice.

None of that SAVED my soul from sin or hell!

2) But then I got truly SAVED!!! (26:13-16)

- a) I was confronted by the living Christ - as God Almighty
- b) I was convicted by the "pricks" of the Holy Spirit - I was forced to admit:
 - i) My own arrogance, ignorance and hardheartedness
 - ii) My wrong - his conscience had "haunted" him!
- c) I was called upon to repent (change my direction) and live now for Christ
 - i) To call Jesus LORD (Rom 10:9,10,13; Philp 2:9-11) Jehovah
 - ii) To accept a whole new life that Christ had for him!

3) And then I got ENLISTED!!! (26:17,18) No longer an empty life, but one FILLED to overflowing!

- a) Going to people - and God protecting him
- b) Opening their eyes - reasoning, urging
- c) Turning them from darkness to God's Light
- d) Freeing them from Satan's power to God's power
- e) Enabling sinners to receive:
 - i) The forgiveness of their sins
 - ii) Inheritance (heaven) due all saints - no hierarchy

4) I have been busy ever since (26:19-22). Why did it matter?

- a) Disobedience means damnation - "I was not disobedient" (Acts 26:19)
 - i) Of the religious zealot Saul of Tarsus
 - ii) Of the religious Jews
 - iii) Of the world
- b) Obedience means hardship - people are being asked to repent, and go against "the flow"
- c) Faith means you are never alone while serving God

5) My message has never changed (26:22,23; Gal 1:6,7):

- a) The prophets and Moses were right - not myths
- b) The Messiah must suffer first, not reign
- c) The Messiah would be the first to rise from the dead, never to die again. Other resurrections were temporary
- d) The Gospel (the Light, good news) must be spread everywhere since it is TRUE!

B. **The Sinner's Confusion** - Paul is thought by Festus to be "mad" (26:24-26). Festus probably saw that Paul was "getting through" to the king, and tried to intervene (EX: my Dad when I talked to his Mom).

PRINCIPLE: People do not like Christians to talk because when they get talking about God, it gets convicting!

1. Thinking about all this can make a lot of sense, but concluding that it must just be madness - it can't really all be true (John 18:37,38)
 - a. You can't please people - either the Gospel is "too simple" or "too easy" or "too complicated." They will say it is something other than what they want
 - b. Festus recognizes that Paul's arguments make great sense, so attack PAUL and call him mad - don't dare deal with what Paul is saying! Skip over the truths!!!
2. Paul then goes for the heart.
 - a. Disregards any perceived confusion, and just goes right for the heart, knowing that people have enough understanding to believe or reject.
 - b. Says, "You know what I am talking about don't you King Agrippa? You believe don't you?" (26:27)

C. The Struggle of the Heart (26:28)!

1. First by Agrippa - "*almost becomes a Christian*"
 - a. Wonders by now, Who is the free man, and who is in chains?
 - b. However, almost is not enough. Almost, but lost. Almost cannot avail; Almost is but to fail! Sad, sad, that bitter wail - "Almost - but lost!" Almost a touchdown is never a touchdown. A "salvation" that almost gets you to heaven, will land you in hell.
2. Then by Paul! Paul's response is a broken heart! Paul says, "I wish EVERYONE was as I am." Can any other Christian say that?!

D. But it is on to Rome now (26:30-32)**IV. Conclusion - Review of the Principles****V. Study Questions**

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter 27

How To Handle the Storms of Life

Memory Verse: Acts 27:25

"Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me."

I. Introduction

- A. In these last two chapters, we will learn the following great truths:
1. The _____ of hardships and peril for every Christian
 2. The value of a *sacrifice* and a *sure anchor*
 3. The infallible promise of a safe arrival to our destination
 4. That the "Acts" do not end at chapter 28:31.
- B. These truths are not easily learned except under great stress, and pressure. But Christians can prepare their hearts for the storms, and for the battles ahead by watching how people like Paul and others got through each "storm" and battle. These are some vital steps to survival, and sanity

II. Lesson - "How To Handle the Storms of Life" - Acts 27

- A. **With Good _____** (27:1-3)
1. Paul is in chains, and a prisoner, having to go to the Supreme Court of the day to remove the death sentence from off him by the Jews
 2. But Paul is in good company
 - a. The "we" includes: Luke, Timothy, Silas, and others
 - b. And now Aristarchus joins with them on this journey to Rome - not thrill seekers, but there for Paul - they were a TEAM. They knew the importance of not being alone!
- B. **With Good _____** (27:4-13). The Plan was to sail straight to Italy. But God had "other" plans.
1. We need common sense - the ability to be able to sense that something should not be done
 - a. The winds were "contrary"
 - b. Slow sailing, the winds not "suffering us" - not helping us
 - c. Sailing now dangerous - storms ahead - well known
 - d. The time of the year was Spring - the fast was the Jewish fast of Passover
 2. We also need spiritual sense - perception, discernment (1Cor 2:14)
 - a. Concern for the ship
 - b. But more importantly, Paul was concerned for the lives at stake
 - c. Paul was rejected.
 - 1) Julius believes two professional shippers instead of a converted Jewish evangelist. As a Christian, you better learn to listen to God's man when you don't have discernment!
 - 2) Julius takes a "VOTE" - democracy is no answer here
 - 3) Took a quick sampling of the weather "supposing" that things had changed in their favour (13).
- C. **With a Good _____** (27:14-20)
1. They head right into a storm called a Euroclydon- massive hurricane
 2. This storm will last **two weeks**. Some facts about "storms":
 - a. Storms are made for us to go "through", not "around."
 - b. Storms are meant to strengthen us (27:17) - cause us to reinforce our weaknesses.
 - c. Storms in life encourage us to get rid of excess "baggage" (27:18,19).
 3. The ship was not able to withstand the storm
 - a. The ship was "caught", trapped by the storm
 - b. The ship could only go with the wind - could not stay on course
 - c. The ship was headed into danger - quicksands
 - d. The ship required a lot of effort to stay afloat
 - e. Had to lighten the ship - get rid of cargo things that were bashing around inside and causing damage to the interior
 - f. Ultimately had to strip the ship of its tackling - fixtures
 - g. Our hope is tied to the ship we are in
 4. That's why the Christian needs to be a SAFE ship (2 Cor 5:17) that can withstand the storms, and ride it out ON COURSE!

D. **With Strong _____** (27:21-26)

1. Not boastful faith - long abstinence. This is Paul's FOURTH shipwreck (2 Cor 11:25,26).
2. But he does say, "I told you so." You should have listened to me - not because I am anybody special, but because the God I serve is special!
3. Paul encourages the men in the storm - Paul was like a eagle is during a storm, always "above" it (27:22-26).
 - a. Be of good cheer because God is in control (27:24)
 - b. Be of good cheer because I have been in constant communication with Headquarters (27:23) - heard the word of God
 - c. Be of good cheer because ***I believe God*** (27:25) in spite of the circumstances!
 - d. To accept the outcome, knowing all things work together for good (27:26; Rom 8:38). Does not know what island, nor how they would be "cast upon" it, but that they would ALL be fine!
 - e. Even though you will lose the ship!

E. **With _____** (27:27-32)

1. Not instant intervention by God (14th day) - His timing
2. Still in the storm being driven
3. Darkest time of the night fear strikes - no matter
4. Dropped anchors and "wished for the day" - couldn't wait for daylight to know where they were, and whether they
5. Don't flee the ship - you surrendered to God's way in the midst of the storm, stay with His plan!
6. Notice how the soldiers know obedience (32) - ***God make us soldiers of this Book!***

F. **With a Right _____** (27:33-35) - too long only focused on getting out of the storm

1. Of health needs - rest and food (stress takes away appetite)
2. Of heart needs - hope and cheer - without the drink!
3. Of spiritual needs - give thanks!!!

G. **With _____** (27:36-44)

1. They all join in with Paul - Paul was a good example
2. They were more than just men - they were **souls** - 276 of them!
3. The resultant safety (27:39-44)
 - a. They started looking for how to go forward - a little creek
 - b. They headed into danger, but in the hands of God
 - c. Their journey ended abruptly on a sandbar
 - d. The soldiers doubt the commitment of the prisoners to the plan - they could be very dangerous to the island people.
 - e. But the centurion wants Paul alive - like Paul
 - f. Everyone got to shore - safe!!!

IV. Conclusion - Review of the Principles

A. How to Get Through the Storms:

1. **With Good Fellowship** (27:1-3)
2. **With Good Sense** (27:4-13)
3. **With a Good Ship** (27:14-20)
4. **With Strong Faith** (27:21-26)
5. **With Patience** (27:27-32)
6. **With a Right Balance** (27:33-35)
7. **With Determination** (27:36-44)

B. What We Learn About Storms:

1. Life is like a sea voyage. Your _____ (2 Tim 2:20) is the ship.
2. You cannot get "home" (to heaven) in the ship that you are in without it _____ (2 Cor 4:16).
3. Jesus Christ can be compared also to a ship. He turns out to be THE ship, and if you and I are going to arrive "safe to land" He is going to have to DIE (Hebrews 9:28).
4. In real troubles and disasters, the man who believes God, and prays is always more reliable than the professionally trained technicians who "specialize" in their field!
5. Trouble comes alike to both the saint and the sinner, but the saint has Someone "on-board" with him who will get him through if he'll trust Him to the very end.
6. A Christian witness is always appropriate even in the worst situations.
7. You must at some point commit yourself to God's providence in order to get you to land - to get you through each storm.

The Acts of the Apostles

Chapter 28

Paul's Final Journey

Memory Verse: Acts 28:30,31

“And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.”

I. Introduction

- A. Paul is about to arrive at Rome - the capital of the Roman Empire of the day. Caesar *Nero* is emperor, and he does not like Christians. He considers them *deadly enemies* because they are inflexible in their worship.
1. They will not permit the worship of Caesar (or Buddha, or Allah, or Krishna, or money, etc) - only ONE God
 2. They will not permit the inclusion of statues and idols in their worship - didn't want to liven up the church house at all - no need (just like with 1Pet 3:1-6)
 3. They constantly focusing on the negative - people are lost and headed for hell, and need to be born again - first birth was not good enough
 4. They turn the world upside down - won't leave well alone - upset whole communities
- B. Rome is only noted for one thing in both Scripture, and history - **killng Christians** (Acts 12; 18:1,2; the Dark Ages, the Inquisition)
- C. But Paul is not concerned with Rome - only with souls (20:24)
1. He set out to run the race that God had for him (Heb 12:1,2)
 2. And he finishes his course (2 Tim 4:6-8)
- D. Paul has arrived on a small island in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea called Melita in the middle of a horrendous storm called Euroclydon that last gone one for several weeks, and had wrecked their sailing ship.

II. Lesson - Paul's Final Journey - Acts 28

- A. **Paul spends the winter in Malta** (28:1-11), and leaves us an example of "_____:" (when your world stops)
1. *Keep the fire going* (28:1-3) - don't get lethargic, and lazy, and allow the cold, and discouragement to catch up with you. Be busy, physically, and spiritually! That fire in you will both warm you, and others around you! Without a fire, you will DIE!
 2. *Never worry about circumstances* (28:3-6)
 - a. Just like with the storm, troubles will come, and "latch" upon you. They all seem to be deadly, and permanent.
 - b. People will always misunderstand what is happening in your life
 - c. Shake off the attack - you can - shake it off by:
 - 1) Pleading Christ's precious blood
 - 2) Pressing on, and finishing the job you have to do - stay in the middle of God's will, and nothing can harm you until it is time to go home!
 - 3) Pray for others - don't worry all about yourself, keep your eyes focused on being a help and blessing to others (28:7).
 3. *Use every opportunity to witness* (28:7-9)
 4. *Watch the Lord meet your every need* (28:10,11; Phlp 4:15-19) AFTER you have been busy meeting other people's needs!
- B. **Paul's Final Journey** (28:11-31)
1. The winter is now past, and Paul and the 276 souls hitch a ride on a passing ship (28:11-15). Within just a few days, he has arrived to the coasts of Italy, and at Puteoli, he seeks out other Christians. When people heard it was the apostle Paul, they came from 50 and 60 miles away to meet him, and hear him preach!
- Paul was always encouraged by the presence of Christian brethren (28:14,15). He sought them out - if they don't want you around, then so be it, but seek it out, and be a blessing.
- PRINCIPLE: Don't neglect Christian fellowship (Heb 10:25). That is where you will find courage, and encouragement - Be careful, or God may just take Christian fellowship away from you.
2. Paul arrives in Rome, and is treated quite well (28:16)
 3. Paul gets down to business - even though a prisoner
 - a. *He witnesses to the Jews first* (28:17-27)

- 1) Paul still has hope Israel would turn back to their God. The only hope for Israel, and for this world is the reason why Paul would endure any and all hardships (2Tim 2:8-10).

PRINCIPLE: We ought to never give up on our family.

- 2) Those Jews in Italy had not heard all the latest "gossip" about Paul (28:21)
- 3) The Jews only wanted to hear Paul's "opinion", not WHAT GOD SAID! Modern scholars today only want "relative opinions" that they can judge by their own opinions. They are not interested in "absolute truth" of any kind!
- 4) Paul's cottage is packed to overflowing with interested hearers about this Jesus (28:23; Lk 24:25-27; Acts 17:2,3)
 - a) *Paul opened the Scriptures* (OPEN IT and let people SEE it for themselves, and READ from it clearly) - as he always did!
 - b) *Paul expounded the Scriptures* - step by step worked through the concepts of the Bible, connecting them in the minds of the hearers - this is the job of a preacher
 - c) *Talked about the Kingdom of God* - not the kingdom of heaven, or of Caesar - he wanted them to repent of their sin more than prepare for the millennial kingdom
 - d) *Persuaded them* - urged them, compelled them to choose Christ over their religion, and good works (Lk 14:23; 2 Cor 5:11,20; Col 1:28; 2 Tim 4:2; Jude 22,23)
 - e) *Took the time* (8-10 hours) to go through most of the Old Testament - he and the hearers knew it was THAT important (2 Tim 2:24-26)!
- 5) As is always the case (28:25):
 - a) SOME believed, and SOME believed not - free will
 - b) If people can't agree, then so be it - don't seek unity at any cost - that is ecumenicalism, and it is damnable!
- 6) Paul must make it clear that people who choose the wrong path, have made the **wrong** choice - don't leave it alone as if it doesn't matter (28:25-27)!
 - a) The people's ability to believe has been hindered
 - b) But it was *their own will* that blocked up their hearts - no "predestination"
 - c) God seeks to save, and heal the broken heart, if it would just allow Him!

Notice that these Jews had to be CONVERTED (28:27) from their religion, to Christ!

- b. And then for the **third** and last time, he takes the Gospel to the Gentiles (28:28). Three strikes and the Jews were out as far as Paul was concerned!
 - 1) The Gentiles usually hear and believe much more often than the Jew (Mt 15:21-28)
 - 2) Today, the civilized world is getting very hard against the Gospel:
 - a) Because of shams - false churches, bibles, teachings
 - b) Because of fake Christians - no depth, desire, realness
 - c) It all has led to the vacuum being filled by every new age idea and vain religion imaginable!
 - c. Whenever someone left Paul, after talking with him, he always got them at least thinking (28:29) - that is our job too!
 - d. Paul continues for two more years in Rome (28:30,31), preaching and teaching the truth of God's word, **with all confidence** - no one could disprove God's word. Let's all get that way as well!

C. Yet, Is This The END of the Acts? Better NOT be!

1. It only ends in the sense that the "*Acts of the _____*" are through.
2. There is still much of the "field" of the world left to be harvested (Mk 16:15).
3. Remember, it was during all this action, that God used Paul to write **14** Books of the New Testament - Paul was very busy all the time:
 - a. *Soul-winning* - winning people to Christ
 - b. *Discipling* - feeding and training the new Christians
 - c. *Church planting* - organizing the Christians into a body of committed believers
 - d. *Training men to preach and pastor* - equipping local churches to stand on their own, with their own pastors and teachers
 - e. *And writing* - leaving behind both Scripture (which is now completed), and other helps for the churches to continue to grow!

These are all things STILL needed today in Christianity - no room for laziness, or cribbing, or business in other worldly affairs (2 Tim 2:4)!

4. God sure isn't finished "acting." There is a lot of "action" coming up in the future (the Rapture, Tribulation, Millennium, Judgement Seat of Christ, the Great White Throne Judgement...)

5. We just need to "*keep preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things that concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence.*"

III. Conclusion - Review of the Principles

A.

IV. Study Questions