

BIBLE STUDY

BOOK OF ACTS

SEATTLE CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY

Table of Contents

Acts 1: Understanding of the Church.....	3
Acts 2: Experiences of the Church (Source of Power).....	4
Acts 3: Service of the Church.....	5
Acts 4: Warfare of the Church.....	6
Acts 5: Judgment of the Church.....	7
Acts 6: First Response to the Holy Spirit's Moving Forward.....	9
Acts 7: History of the Building of God's House.....	10
Acts 8: Second Response to the Holy Spirit's Moving Forward.....	12
Acts 9: Paul's Calling and the Progress of Peter's Experience.....	13
Acts 10: Expansion of Peter's Vision.....	15
Acts 11: Decline of the Church at Jerusalem and Rise of the Church at Antioch.....	17
Acts 12: Authority of the Prayers of the Church.....	18
Acts 13: Testimony of the Church at Antioch.....	19
Acts 14: Testimony in Galatia — Two of One Accord.....	20
Acts 15: Debate for the Faith Entrusted to the Saints.....	21
Acts 16: Establishment of the Church at Philippi.....	22
Acts 17: At Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens.....	23
Acts 18: At Corinth and the Third Missionary Journey.....	24
Acts 19: At Ephesus.....	25
Acts 20: Lastly in Asia.....	26
Acts 21: The Test of God.....	27
Acts 22: Answering All Questions with the Vision.....	28
Acts 23: Wisdom and Protection of the Lord.....	29
Acts 24: Accusations and Defense.....	30
Acts 25: Trial Before the King — Higher Judgment.....	31
Acts 26: Retelling the Vision.....	32
Acts 27: Tests in Circumstances (More Than Abundant).....	33
Acts 28: The Kingdom of God Will Never End (More Than Conquerors).....	34

Acts 1: Understanding of the Church

I. The Book of Acts Is the Continuation of Christ's Work (vv. 1–2)

A. The Gospels versus Acts

1. The former book (Gospel of Luke)

- the Lord in the flesh
- Person (Head)
- under limitation

This book (Acts)

- the Lord in the Holy Spirit
- Church (Body)
- in unlimited fullness

B. Different in form, unchanged in essence

1. The Son is the manifestation of the Father, the Church is the manifestation of the Son — God appears in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16)

II. The Last Forty Days: The Requirement to Enter the Commission Is Knowing the Glory Revealed (vv. 3–14)

A. The assurance of the resurrection — the direct experience of God's appearance

B. The teaching of the forty days — the correct and full understanding of God's kingdom

C. Waiting for the promise of the Father — the baptism of the Holy Spirit (vv. 4–8)

1. Waiting is not only a matter of time but also of attitude

- a) the baptism of power
- b) being witnesses throughout the world

D. The vision of ascension governs all

1. The Lord is the heavenly way

2. The meaning of ascension

- a) opening the heavenly way: the church is connected with heaven
- b) passing through and overcoming all tests

3. The glory of ascension covers all

4. Angels proclaimed the blessed hope — He will return in the same manner in which He went into heaven

E. Prayer: Preparation for entering into God's reality

1. Praying in one accord
2. Praying continuously

III. Days Prior to Pentecost and the Disciples' Last Actions (vv. 15–26)

A. Peter's speech concerning Judas — a tragic ending for a person who rejected and betrayed the Lord

1. Judas lost his share in the glorious ministry

2. His homestead became desolate — the result of serving his belly

B. Choosing Matthias as an apostle

1. Casting lots — a historical practice, not a model to be followed

2. Prayer and testifying of the resurrection — this principle still stands firm today

Acts 2: Experiences of the Church (Source of Power)

I. The Holy Spirit Descends at Pentecost — the Coming of the Reality (vv. 1–4)

- A. As strong wind and fire — entering into subjective experience
- B. Receiving eloquence — entering into service

II. The Influence by the Power of the Holy Spirit (vv. 5–13)

- A. The power of breakthrough manifested in the disciples (the power of change)
 - 1. Overcoming the weakness of the flesh
 - 2. Breaking the bondage of forms
 - 3. Crushing human teachings
 - 4. Transcending service limitations
- B. The strength of building up manifested in circumstances
 - 1. Going beyond the sphere of Judaism
 - 2. Triumphant over Roman political power
 - 3. Overwhelming Greek philosophies and wisdom
- C. The power of witnessing manifested in man's heart

III. The Sole Purpose for Supernatural Experiences: Preaching God's Great Deeds (v. 13)

- A. The purpose and nature of the work of the Holy Spirit are more important than the form and expression of experience
- B. All experiences are for the purpose of testifying of the resurrected Lord

IV. The First Message by Peter (vv. 14–41)

- A. The Lord Jesus was the center
- B. The experience of the Holy Spirit had an absolute relation to the Person and work of the Lord
- C. Content
 - 1. The filling of the Holy Spirit was out of God's promise — a stored blessing prepared by God
 - 2. The filling of the Holy Spirit was the result of the Lord's resurrection — a promise fulfilled in the realm of resurrection
 - 3. The filling of the Holy Spirit was related to the reign and glorification of the Lord — He is the center of all
- D. Strong and powerful influence — the Holy Spirit gaining freedom inside resulting in outward influence (vv. 37–41)
 - 1. The people were cut to the heart
 - 2. The way of salvation was pointed out — repentance, baptism, forgiveness of sins, and receiving the Holy Spirit
 - 3. Three thousand believed in the Lord

V. The Beautiful Life of Unity in the Church — Unity Inside and Outside (vv. 42–47)

- A. Devoted to the teaching and fellowship of the apostles, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer
- B. Unity in life — they had all things common
- C. Unity in spirit — they worshipped and served in one accord daily
- D. Fruitful service
 - 1. They enjoyed the favor of all the people
 - 2. The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved

Acts 3: Service of the Church

I. Characteristics of the Service of the Church — Life and Power (vv. 1–10)

- A. The temple represents the pitiful nature of *religious* service
 - 1. The lame man — a man with true difficulty and need
 - 2. The temple gate called Beautiful — having outward forms and orderly rituals
 - 3. The man being carried daily to the gate — having compassion
 - 4. This service has no power, cannot allow people to receive life, cannot solve real difficulties
- B. Peter and John represent the nature of *church* service — a new type of service
 - 1. “Silver or gold I do not have” (v. 6) — represents doing away with the power and methods of the world
 - note: “silver and gold I do not have” does not mean that money cannot be used, but it does not have control or influence over our hearts
 - 2. “But what I have” (v. 6) — all that the Lord’s name encompasses
 - a) the full knowledge of the revelation of Christ
 - b) being filled with the Holy Spirit — the glorious filling of the resurrected Lord (the name of the Lord represents His person and all His work on earth)
 - 3. It is God appearing in the flesh
 - a) Christ is all and in all
 - b) the normal manifestation of the church — the apostles represent the condition of the church at that time
 - 4. The lame man being healed — a glory-filled service

II. Peter’s Second Sermon Explains the Secret to Power in Service (vv. 11–26)

- A. It is not by our own ability and piety
- B. The reason we lose our power is that we do not glorify the Lord Jesus
 - 1. “Disowned the Holy and Righteous One” (v. 14) — denial of the holiness and righteousness of the Lord
 - 2. “Killed the author of life” (v. 15) — represents destroying the sensation of life
 - 3. “Acted in ignorance” (v. 17) — represents being deceived through ignorance and not believing in the name of the Lord
- C. Path of restoration
 - 1. Repent and turn to God (v. 19) — turn one’s heart back to God
 - 2. “Times of refreshing may come” (v. 19) — there is refreshing in the Lord’s presence
 - 3. The Lord will descend — the Lord being in our midst is power
 - 4. Receive Him daily — during restoration, only that which is from the Lord is acceptable
- D. Raise up a prophet (v. 22)
 - 1. The Lord is the greatest Prophet
 - a) a prophet is one who directly expresses the heart of the Lord
 - b) a prophet faces every failure and is the most reactive in spiritual matters
 - 2. “You are heirs of the prophets” (v. 25)
 - a) inherit all that the Lord has already established
 - b) ought to receive all the teachings of the prophets, each person repenting of and turning from sin

III. Message Full of Life and Power (4:4)

- A. Do not only talk *about* power — the message *is* power
- B. The number of men who believed was about five thousand

Acts 4: Warfare of the Church

I. The Church Enters Spiritual Testing

- A. The church, like her Lord ([Matthew 4](#)), has to sustain the enemy's tests
- B. The church must stand in her spiritual position
 - 1. Not focusing on how things change or the methods and wisdom to deal with testing
 - 2. What the Lord desires of us is the right reaction and attitude when being tempted

II. Satan's Double Opposition and Threat (vv. 1–7)

- A. The priests, the captain of temple guard, and the Sadducees — represent religious and theocratic power
- B. The rulers, elders, teachers of the law, and the high priest and his family — represent worldly politics, man's experience and knowledge, and the power and authority of status
- C. The most important question when the church faces trials: By what power and what name? (v. 7)

III. The Filling of the Holy Spirit Is the Strength in Warfare — the Holy Spirit Comes to Fight (vv. 8–14)

- A. Being filled with the Holy Spirit should be a constant experience
- B. Powerful speech — “know this”
 - 1. The crucified and resurrected Lord was the reason for the healing
 - 2. Salvation is in no one else — no other name by which we must be saved
- C. The people were astonished and had nothing they could say

IV. The Enemy Is Defeated (vv. 15–22)

- A. “We cannot deny it” (v. 16)
- B. The disciples' victory
 - 1. It is right to obey God
 - 2. “We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard” (v. 20) — true strength comes from real life experiences
 - 3. The enemy's further threats were in vain, and glory was given to God

V. Victory Brings Joyful Praise and Prayers with One Accord (vv. 23–31)

- A. The people knew that all things are under the Lord's sovereignty
- B. They knew that the enemy's main purpose is to attack the Lord
- C. All things happened according to “what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen” (v. 28)
- D. They asked the Lord for boldness and to perform miraculous signs and wonders
- E. The place was shaken and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit — triumph and joy came down from heaven

VI. Ushering in Greater Unity in the Church (vv. 32–35)

- A. “All the believers were one in heart and mind” (v. 32)
- B. The apostles had great power — spiritual gifts were fully expressed
- C. “There were no needy persons among them” (v. 34)

VII. Producing a New Witness — Grace upon Barnabas (vv. 36–37)

Acts 5: Judgment of the Church

I. The Highest Spiritual Condition of the Church in Jerusalem

- A. The church has the authority to judge
- B. The purpose of judgment is purification — analogous to the human body's ability to purge waste

II. The Judgment of the Church: Ananias and Sapphira (vv. 1–11)

- A. Light within the spirit of an apostle — Peter was filled by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:15)
- B. Judgment is within the realm of the Holy Spirit
 - 1. The Holy Spirit was in control
 - 2. The Holy Spirit was in opposition to the evil spirit
 - 3. Cannot lie to nor test the Spirit of the Lord
- C. Judgment caused the purification of the church — Ananias and Sapphira fell down (vv. 5, 10)
 - 1. Hidden things in small matters are often the cause of catastrophic destruction
 - 2. The purpose of judgment is to remove evil and maintain the spiritual health of the church
 - 3. "Great fear seized the whole church" (v. 11) — resulted in fearful and reverent hearts
 - 4. Young men carried out the dead man — the life that is strong extinguishes death

III. The Church Rose Up Because of Purification (vv. 12–16)

- A. Gifts were expanded and their functions flowed more smoothly
- B. The church was highly esteemed and believers were increasingly added to the Lord
- C. Unprecedented spiritual honor was revealed — honor comes from the Lord Himself

IV. Judgment Leads to Warfare (vv. 17–32)

- A. The rise of the church provoked the jealousy and hatred of the enemy even more
 - 1. The religious world will always be the instrument in the enemy's hand
 - 2. Outward pressure was allowed by the Lord so that the church could progress unceasingly — spiritual authority is only used to deal with spiritual matters
- B. The church is under the responsibility and protection of heaven
 - 1. "During the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail" (v. 19) — the angel is a sign of heavenly authority
 - 2. The intervention of heaven was the reason for the apostles' courage
 - 3. The enemy was puzzled, not knowing what the outcome would be (v. 24)
- C. Man and the Holy Spirit having the same testimony is the perfect partnership
 - 1. The most powerful instrument of Satan — the power of tradition — cannot hinder the Lord's testimony
 - 2. "We must obey God rather than men" (v. 29) — must stand on God's side
 - 3. Witness for the resurrected Lord — honor the Lord as Prince and Savior, holding fast to the ground of testimony (vv. 31–32)
 - 4. The Holy Spirit is also a witness of these things (v. 32)

V. What Is of God Cannot Fail: Gamaliel's Speech (vv. 33–39)

- A. Boasting in self will result in nothing — Theudas (v. 36)
- B. Those who revolt will be scattered — Judas the Galilean (v. 37)
- C. Purpose and activity of human origin will fail (v. 38)

VI. Exalt Jesus Forever (vv. 40–42)

- A. Rejoice in suffering disgrace for the Name (v. 41)
- B. Never stop teaching and proclaiming that Jesus is the Christ (v. 42)

Acts 6: First Response to the Holy Spirit's Moving Forward

I. Introduction

The condition of the church was perfect as recorded in the first five chapters — full of influence and impact. Nonetheless, all the responsibilities of service fell only on a few — the apostles. As far as the principle of body service is concerned, it was not enough and not complete. The Holy Spirit had to lead the church toward the goal, and therefore there was some response necessary amid the circumstances.

II. The Expansion of Service (vv. 1–7)

- A. Urgency of the circumstances — complaints (internal imbalance) and difficulties arose
- B. The apostles needed to give their attention to prayer and the ministry of the word
 - 1. Had no time to wait on tables
 - 2. Could not allow spiritual service to be diminished
- C. The establishing of deacons — the apostles laid their hands on and established seven deacons
 - 1. Stephen was a vessel specially chosen by the Holy Spirit for a greater spiritual response
 - 2. Philip was a hidden vessel
- D. The increase of the supply of the word — in the first five chapters, it was only a few apostles who spoke, but now anyone who had gifts spoke
 - 1. The word of God spread
 - 2. Spiritual influence increased — the number of the disciples increased and priests obeyed the faith

III. Stephen's Ministry and Influence (vv. 8–15)

- A. Equipped by God
 - 1. Well spoken of
 - 2. Full of the Holy Spirit
 - 3. Full of wisdom
 - 4. Full of faith
 - 5. Full of grace and power — did great wonders and miraculous signs
- B. Strong and powerful debate — people were not able to stand up against him
 - 1. People from the synagogues argued with him
 - 2. Stephen spoke with wisdom and by the Holy Spirit
- C. The persecution of the enemy
 - 1. Men were persuaded to accuse Stephen and bear false witness
 - 2. He shone under the persecution of the enemy — his face was like that of an angel

Acts 7: History of the Building of God's House

- I. **God Desires to Obtain a Dwelling Place** (1 Corinthians 3:16-17, 6:19; Ephesians 2:22)
- II. **God Is the Designer, Christ is the Model** (Foundation [1 Corinthians 3:11], Cornerstone [Ephesians 2:20]), and the Holy Spirit Is the Executor (Building Through the Discipline of Man)
- III. **The Reality of God's House Is the History of Man's Spiritual Experience: Four Spiritual Principles** (vv. 1–47)
 - A. Abraham: Faith
 1. The glorious God revealed Himself to Abraham — a personal encounter with God is the first step
 2. Lived in God's promise — pointing to the things to come, salvation, and a never-changing goal
 - a) cut off all old earthly relationships — leaving these relationships is entering into God's promise
 - b) Christ is the heavenly inheritance — having “not even a foot of ground” (v. 5)
 3. God gave the covenant of circumcision — living by relying not on the flesh but on God
 4. Faith was the response in everything
 - B. Joseph: The journey of life (a life with God's presence)
 1. Sold — no freedom, in bondage
 2. “But God was with him” (v. 9)
 - a) saw God in all circumstances
 - b) freedom in the spirit is God's greatest deliverance
 3. Exalted through sufferings
 4. Reigned to bring in an abundant supply of life in order to preserve life
 - a) experiencing life supplies life
 - b) authority comes out of life; life is glory
 - C. Moses: Service
 1. The first forty years — fleshly service
 - a) the oppression of God's people — the time and background of the oppression
 - b) unordinary birth
 - c) unordinary wisdom and abilities — excellent natural talents
 - d) the failure of fleshly service — became a fugitive
 2. The second forty years — the burning bush: the vision of the cross controls the life of service
 - a) the desert near Mount Sinai — the place where life was purified under God's strict requirements
 - b) cut off earthly ties and stood on holy ground
 - c) experienced life that came out of being oppressed, ready to receive God's mission
 3. The third forty years — bearing spiritual responsibilities, being a ruler and a deliverer
 - a) led the Israelites out of Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the desert — the most loyal and beautiful service
 - b) experienced God's work, became God's masterpiece, was built up so all the people would be built up — a type of Christ
 - c) passed on living words through the Lord's presence
 - d) rejected by the people — experiencing agony caused by man's betrayal of God
 - refusing to obey
 - turning their hearts to the world
 - making an idol
 - honoring what their hands had made
 - e) built the tabernacle in the desert
 - faithful to the pattern he had seen

- establishing the testimony of the Lord in the world

D. David and Solomon: Building God's kingdom and house

1. David
 - a) the purpose of being blessed is for God to be King, to be glorified
 - b) enjoyed favor and asked to provide God a dwelling place — a resting place for God
2. Solomon: Built God's house during a time of peace

IV. God Desires a Spiritual House: The Most High Does Not Live in Houses Made by Men (vv. 48–53)

- A. The prophet's two questions revealed the desire of the Lord's heart (v. 49)
 1. "What kind of house will you build for me?"
 2. "Where will my resting place be?"
- B. To resist the Holy Spirit is to resist God's purpose
 1. Stiff-necked with uncircumcised hearts and ears — manifestation of religious forms
 2. Killed the prophets and even killed the Lord

V. Stephen Was Martyred for This Very Purpose (God's House) (vv. 54–60)

- A. He was full of the Holy Spirit
- B. He looked up and saw heaven open
 1. Saw the glory of God
 2. Saw the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God — the Lord gave him the highest honor
 3. Stephen's martyrdom was similar to the Lord's — "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (v. 60)
- C. He became a vessel of the Holy Spirit's response — caused God's house to move forward

Acts 8: Second Response to the Holy Spirit's Moving Forward

I. Expansion of the Domain of the Work of Service (vv. 1–4)

- A. Great persecution was the pressure in circumstances permitted by the Lord
 - 1. Followed the Lord's command to the ends of the earth
 - 2. Broke through the stagnation and complacency in Jerusalem
 - a) the Holy Spirit moved forward
 - b) heading toward the goal
- B. Being scattered meant expansion
- C. The Holy Spirit was secretly preparing a vessel — all of Saul's life history was under the Lord's control
- D. Being scattered did not mean fleeing; it was to preach the word in all places

II. Philip: A Person Absolutely Following the Holy Spirit (vv. 5–40)

- A. Proclaimed the Christ — people heard and also saw
- B. Brought people the real joy of salvation
- C. Exposed the false Great Power, Simon the magician
- D. The apostles brought the gift of the Holy Spirit — grace upon grace in serving together
 - 1. Brought in the experience of filling of the Holy Spirit — an evident gift
 - 2. The Holy Spirit is God and cannot be exchanged for any conditions or monetary gains — the heart has to be upright
 - 3. The gospel spread to Samaria — the shoes of the gospel
- E. Obedience allowed God's kingdom to expand
 - 1. Philip had a life of absolute obedience — the Holy Spirit was Lord
 - a) Without a word, he obeyed and went to the desert
 - b) He followed the voice of the Holy Spirit all the way
 - 2. An Ethiopian eunuch received Christ — the firstfruit in Africa
 - a) The eunuch had outward worship but did not have the Lord Himself
 - b) He was blessed because of his love for the word of the Lord
 - c) Philip was prompted by the Holy Spirit to preach Jesus — the Lord was the only topic
 - d) The eunuch was baptized
 - 3. Philip was taken away by the Holy Spirit — a glorious experience
 - a) Those who serve the Lord always follow the Holy Spirit, not the work
 - b) The Holy Spirit is the continuation of the work
 - c) Everyone should rely on the Holy Spirit — the eunuch went on his way rejoicing

Acts 9: Paul's Calling and the Progress of Peter's Experience

- I. Paul's Conversion Experience: The Apostle to the Gentiles Is Saved Among the Gentiles (vv. 1–30)**
- A. A blind religious fanatic
 - B. Persecuted those belonging to the Way — walking in the Way was the reason for persecution
 - 1. A people absolutely following the Lord
 - 2. Knowing what is the Way of the Lord
 - C. The Lord's appearing — an Irresistible Power
 - 1. A great light shining — the first step and deep experience
 - 2. Falling to the ground — the second step experience, all the hardness fell down — losing self-will, knowledge, pride, and self esteem
 - 3. Hearing the Lord's voice
 - D. Realized the church was the body of Christ — persecuting the church meant persecuting the Lord
 - E. The changes of Saul
 - 1. "Lord" — revered Jesus as Lord and "self" was no longer the master
 - 2. "Who are you?" — a saint's deeper experience is established by the continuous revelation hinged on the question, "Who are you?"
 - 3. Eyes to the world were closed — only directed by the Lord from then on
 - 4. Became a man of prayer — entering into spiritual reality and maintaining constant fellowship with the Lord
 - F. The obedience of Ananias — accepting Paul on the Lord's behalf
 - 1. "Here I am, Lord" — in a servant's position
 - a) a person in constant fellowship with the Lord
 - b) a vessel always ready to be used by the Lord
 - 2. Pointed out that Paul was a vessel chosen by the Lord
 - a) to proclaim the name of the Lord
 - b) to suffer much
 - 3. Delivered the commission — in grace and truth
 - a) "Brother Saul" — in the Lord there is nothing in-between; fellowshiped with laying on of hands
 - b) "so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit" — the principles in chapters 1 and 2
 - G. Paul began to preach the gospel — proclaiming with power that Jesus is the Son of God
 - 1. A complete change
 - 2. Confounded the Jews — must first prove to himself within in order to have power
 - 3. Became one in the Way and was persecuted
 - H. The ministry of Barnabas — ministry of encouragement to bring unity
 - 1. "But Barnabas took him" — unique in perspective and love
 - 2. Removed misunderstanding and ushered in fellowship
 - 3. Increased Paul's strength in service
- II. The Progress in Peter's Experience (vv. 31–43)**
- A. The progress of the church is established on the progress in the saints' experiences; progress in concept and understanding leads to progress in action; action ushers in the expansion of God's kingdom
 - B. The church was being built
 - 1. Enjoyed peace, was strengthened, feared the Lord, and was encouraged by the Holy Spirit

2. Grew in numbers
- C. Peter departed from Jerusalem — left a small sphere so experience moved forward
1. Traveled about the country — did not stay in one place
 2. The miracle in Lydda — healed a paralytic, causing people to turn to the Lord
 3. The miracle in Joppa — the pinnacle of Peter's experience
 - a) raised Dorcas from the dead
 - b) Peter's experience proved the unity between the Lord and the church; the church can experience all that is in the Lord

Acts 10: Expansion of Peter's Vision

I. The Appearance of a Vision Signifies That God's Work Is Moving Forward

- A. A vision is the seeing of God's ultimate purpose

II. Cornelius' Salvation Is Prepared by God (vv. 1–8)

- A. One who lives before God with good conduct is remembered by God
 - 1. Praying indicates having faith
 - 2. Giving generously indicates having works produced by faith
- B. A vision leads people to enter into God's eternal purpose
 - 1. God's vision to Cornelius reveals that he is part of His purpose
 - 2. The outward experience is eventful, but to God it is a step forward for His work
- C. Cornelius sends for Peter according to God's command

III. Peter's Vision Expands Under God's Guidance (vv. 9–16)

- A. The first and foremost principle is to follow the Holy Spirit. At this point Peter already has abundant experience and knowledge, and is also extremely humble. Although he is already quite experienced spiritually, the Lord asks him not to follow or rely on experience but to follow the Holy Spirit
- B. The Lord causes Peter to keep moving forward in his prayer life
- C. The vision brings about deeper training and more brokenness
 - 1. God's instructions in the vision
 - a) Gentiles will also receive salvation — there is no partiality in Christ
 - b) the gospel must go to the ends of the earth
 - 2. Peter's traditional viewpoint and self-righteousness
 - 3. The breakthrough of Peter's traditional viewpoint
 - a) God is the center
 - b) whatever originates from God is right — what He has made clean must not be called impure

IV. The Holy Spirit Makes the Vision a Reality (vv. 17–33)

- A. The vision brings about revolutionary actions towards the goal
- B. The Holy Spirit urges Peter to move forward without hesitation
- C. There is confirmation in the environment — the coming of the three men and the centurion's testimony
- D. Peter's inappropriate words — he goes forward, groping all the way

V. The Second Message by Peter: The Central Theme Is the Lord Jesus (vv. 34–48)

- A. Receive vision, preach the Lord Jesus; the goal of understanding salvation is to preach the Lord Jesus
 - 1. He is the Lord of all — the Lord Jesus is the center of everything
 - 2. He is the Word become flesh — the Holy Spirit and power confirm He is both God and man
 - 3. He has risen — the disciples are witnesses
 - 4. He is the Lord of judgment — He is the ultimate judge of everything
 - 5. Salvation is from Him — those who believe will receive forgiveness of sins through His name
- B. Baptism of the Holy Spirit and baptism of water — entering into the body of Christ
 - 1. The fervent confirmation of the Holy Spirit
 - 2. Baptized into the same Holy Spirit — just like the apostles

3. The Gentiles also receive salvation and have a part in the body of Christ
- C. The first great breakthrough in the work of the gospel — reaching to the Gentiles

Acts 11: Decline of the Church at Jerusalem and Rise of the Church at Antioch**I. The Vision Stirs Up Criticism — Some Cannot Keep Up with God's Leading (vv. 1–18)**

- A. Criticism from the circumcised — those who hinder the work of the Holy Spirit
 - 1. Those who follow traditions
 - 2. A narrow and legalistic view regarding conduct — an enemy to the Lord's work; those with this view are under bondage and put others under bondage as well
- B. Peter uses the vision to answer and explain everything — not by tradition but by revelation
 - 1. Seeing is better than mentally knowing
 - 2. Hearing is better than teaching
 - 3. What is from God cannot be opposed by anyone — accomplished by the Holy Spirit Himself
 - 4. God purposed to also give grace to the Gentiles — vision reveals God's desire

II. The Rise of the Church at Antioch — the Holy Spirit Uses a Second Group That Fits God's Desire (vv. 19–30)

- A. The church at Antioch originated from the spiritual impact Stephen had made
- B. A brand new testimony
 - 1. Not bound by religious form
 - 2. Both Jews and Gentiles have received grace
 - 3. The Lord was with them — evidence of the Lord's favor
- C. Barnabas is added into service — a man full of the Holy Spirit and faith
 - 1. Not influenced by tradition
 - 2. Preferred only what was of God
 - 3. Grace upon grace to strengthen and build up the Lord's church
- D. The addition of Paul leads to a greater revival
 - 1. Service with strength upon strength
 - 2. The origin of the term Christians — more like Christ
- E. God's word appears in Antioch — prophecy by Agabus
- F. The church at Antioch desires to fellowship in love and without bias — supported the brethren in Judea out of their means during the famine

Acts 12: Authority of the Prayers of the Church**I. James Is Martyred (vv. 1–3)**

- A. A ministry of martyrdom
- B. The testimony of blood — the result of political and religious persecution

II. The Authority of the Prayers of the Church (vv. 4–18)

- A. Peter was imprisoned — the enemy strictly guarded him and planned to execute him
 - 1. Soldiers took shifts to guard him
 - 2. He was bound with two chains
- B. The church was earnestly praying to God for him
- C. The intervention of heaven — angels represent authority from heaven; Peter lived under the intervention of heaven all his life
 - 1. A light shone in the cell — the glorious light of the saints who suffered for the Lord
 - 2. Rest in affliction and danger — Peter's great victory in being full of faith
 - 3. There was composure in leaving — he put on his clothes, sandals, and cloak
 - 4. Experiencing the faithful protection of God's hand
- D. Special prayer — prayer at Mark's house during the night
 - 1. A family that dearly loved the Lord
 - 2. A group of saints with a special burden of prayer
 - 3. Earnest and persistent prayer — did not stop until there was peace
 - 4. Peter's leaving the prison was an answer to prayer
- E. "Tell James" (v. 17) — the Lord's earthly brother, a representative character of the law
 - 1. "Tell ... about this" — it is the Lord who rules over all
 - 2. The church is not a matter of words or doctrine but is under the free leading of the Holy Spirit

III. Judgment Comes upon Herod — Prayer Brings Forth Judgment (vv. 19–23)

- A. The result of not giving praise to God
- B. All authority on earth is under the rule of heaven

IV. The Word of God Continues to Increase and Spread — Prayer Causes the Work to Progress (v. 24)**V. Barnabas and Saul Are the Beneficiaries (v. 25)**

- A. They witnessed all that had happened
- B. Caused a great impact in their lives and ministries
- C. They took Mark to serve with them

Acts 13: Testimony of the Church at Antioch**I. The Condition of the Church at Antioch (vv. 1–3)**

- A. Complete in gifts
- B. Made no distinction based on race — Jews and Gentiles served together
- C. Lived completely in the realm of the Holy Spirit
 - 1. The Holy Spirit was in the supreme position and worked freely — freedom to speak and to send people off
 - 2. Everyone was sensitive and responsive to the Holy Spirit

II. Barnabas and Paul Are Sent Off (vv. 2–4)

- A. Did the work the Holy Spirit called them to do — workers do not have work of their own
- B. Fasting and prayer — all in one accord and of one burden
- C. Laying on of hands — united in spirit, moving forward in the principle of the body

III. First Missionary Journey — the Lord's Work Expands Outward (vv. 4–52)

- A. First in Barnabas' hometown (v. 4)
- B. The experience in Paphos — judging a false prophet (vv. 6–12)
 - 1. When we humble ourselves, the Lord is magnified — Saul's name was changed to Paul
 - 2. There was authority in service
- C. Mark's departure — difficulties in the journey (v. 13)
- D. The message in Pisidian Antioch
 - 1. The history of the Jews — the key to the Old Testament (vv. 16–23)
 - a) Israel is God's chosen people
 - b) God's work was focussed on them: chose, prospered, led, cared for, gave an inheritance, gave judges and prophets, appointed kings
 - 2. The testimony of John the Baptist — the key to the New Testament (vv. 24–25)
 - a) preached repentance and baptism — the salvation of the cross
 - b) pointed to Christ — the only one
 - 3. The rejection of the Jews (vv. 26–29)
 - a) did not accept the message of salvation
 - b) condemned Christ to die — did not recognize Christ or understand the words of the prophets
 - c) killed the Lord through Pilate
 - 4. The resurrection of Christ — will not see decay (vv. 30–41)
 - a) the disciples were eyewitnesses
 - b) the proof of the Scriptures — God's promises fulfilled
 - c) justification by faith — the result of the resurrection
 - d) perishing from unbelief
 - 5. Many believed in the Lord (vv. 42–43)
- E. Gospel turned to the Gentiles because of persecution (vv. 44–52)
 - 1. The Jews were jealous and abusive
 - 2. The Jews rejected the word and did not consider themselves worthy of eternal life
 - 3. The Gentiles were blessed — the word of the Lord was spread through that whole region
 - 4. Persecution caused the gospel to be spread even more

Acts 14: Testimony in Galatia — Two of One Accord**I. The Work in Iconium (vv. 1–7)**

- A. Stubborn opposition from the religious world
- B. Speaking boldly by relying on the Lord
- C. The Lord testifies to the word of His grace through signs and wonders done by the apostles' hands

II. The Work in Lystra — the Enemy's Double-edged Scheme (vv. 8–21)

- A. Gifts draw man's praise — one could easily be made to be an idol
- B. The faithful spirit of the two apostles
 - 1. They refused to be exalted — they dared not steal the Lord's glory
 - 2. "We too are only men" (v. 15)
- C. The central theme of the gospel
 - 1. Turn from worthless things to the living God
 - 2. God is a God of grace
- D. The poisoning of the enemy — if he cannot corrupt, he kills
 - 1. Supposed Paul to be dead — the most difficult part of the apostle's journey, had physical illness ([Galatians 4:12–20](#)) and was stoned
 - 2. The apostles continued to preach the gospel and made many disciples

III. To Enter the Kingdom of God Requires Going Through Many Tribulations (vv. 21–23)

- A. "Strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith" (v. 22 [NKJV])
- B. Established churches as usual — appointed elders in every church, committed them to the Lord with prayer and fasting

IV. The Return to Antioch (vv. 24–28)

- A. Mission accomplished — they completed the work that had been entrusted by God
- B. Opened the door of faith to the Gentiles

Acts 15: Debate for the Faith Entrusted to the Saints**I. The Teaching of Legalism**

- A. Man's work is required in addition to the Lord's salvation — one cannot be saved without circumcision
- B. The enemy intended to destroy the work of the Lord's salvation

II. The Council at Jerusalem — a Great Crisis for the Pure Faith (vv. 2–21)

- A. A sharp dispute — the conflict between the spirit and flesh — Paul and Barnabas debated for the faith
- B. Peter's testimony — broke the heavy yoke (vv. 7–11)
 - 1. Passed out God's commission
 - 2. God showed that He accepted the Gentiles by giving the Holy Spirit to them
 - 3. One faith — no distinction between Jews and Gentiles
 - 4. Do not test God by keeping the letter of the law
 - 5. The law is a heavy yoke that no one can bear
 - 6. We are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus — the same way for all
- C. The testimony of Barnabas and Paul
- D. The word of the Lord triumphed — the legalistic kept silent
- E. The compromise by James (vv. 13–21)
 - 1. He understood the Lord's work — quoted from the Scriptures about the salvation of the Gentiles
 - 2. He added additional regulations — in the New Testament, the law is spiritual and should be kept in the heart ([Hebrews 8:10-12](#); [1 John 2:27](#))

III. Delivering the Council's Decision (vv. 22–25)

- A. Choosing the faithful
 - 1. Judas and Silas — leading men among the brethren
 - 2. Barnabas and Paul — risked their lives for the name of the Lord
- B. Non-essential commands

IV. Barnabas and Paul Parted Company for Ministry (vv. 36–41)

- A. Prepared for the second missionary journey
- B. Sharp disagreement over Mark
- C. Barnabas hid himself — a turning point for Mark
- D. Paul's ministry was growing more evident

Acts 16: Establishment of the Church at Philippi

I. Second Missionary Journey (vv. 1–10)

- A. Paul receives Timothy as a coworker in Lystra — Timothy was a vessel raised up in Galatia
 - 1. Half Gentile, half Jew
 - 2. Praised by the brethren
 - 3. Paul circumcises Timothy out of fear of the Jews — Paul's weakness
- B. The unmistakable guidance of the Holy Spirit
 - 1. Going south prohibited by the Holy Spirit
 - 2. Going north prohibited by the Spirit of Jesus
- C. A vision brings clear direction
 - 1. Macedonia's plea
 - 2. Luke becomes a coworker — "us"

II. Start of the Church at Philippi — Established in the Midst of Prayer and Suffering (vv. 11–40)

- A. Preaching to a woman — Lydia's salvation (a firstfruit in Europe)
- B. The enemy interferes
 - 1. Endurance is needed in spiritual warfare
 - 2. Hope of making money gone, brought in persecution — Paul and Silas thrown into prison
- C. Overcoming through praise
 - 1. Praying, singing, and praising are the secrets to overcoming — the greatest expressions of faith
 - 2. An earthquake shakes the prison, chains are loosened
- D. The jailer repents
 - 1. Responding to brutality with love
 - 2. "Believe in the Lord Jesus" — the most clear, simple way of salvation
 - 3. His whole family receives salvation — believes in God, is filled with joy
- E. Leaving with nothing to hide
 - 1. Acting neither proud nor inferior but keeping the position of the Lord's servant
 - 2. Steady footsteps — leaving only after encouraging the brethren

Acts 17: At Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens

I. Beginning of the Church at Thessalonica (vv. 1–9)

- A. The gospel was preached based upon the Scriptures
 - 1. Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead
 - 2. Jesus is the Christ
- B. A riot ensued — the Jews gathered bad characters
 - 1. The Jews used some underhanded schemes
 - 2. The disciples were branded as those who caused trouble all over the world

II. In Berea (vv. 10–15)

- A. The Bereans were of more noble character than Thessalonians
 - 1. Eagerly received the message
 - 2. Examined the Scriptures daily
 - 3. Checked if the words spoken were true
- B. The attack of the enemy led to the expansion of God's work — the other side of the leading of the Holy Spirit

III. Paul Alone in Athens — the Birthplace of Rationalism (vv. 16–34)

- A. Challenged by the knowledge of this world (vv. 16–21)
 - 1. Athens being full of idols was the consequence of worldly knowledge
 - 2. Debating with philosophers — who represent two sides of the human nature: “self” and “happiness”
 - a) Epicureans: the greatest good is that people may pursue pleasure — fallen into a state of indulgence
 - b) Stoics: the greatest good is through self-improvement or being self-sufficient — fallen into a state of asceticism
 - 3. Preached the good news about Jesus and His resurrection
 - 4. Vanity of worldly knowledge — do nothing but talk and listen
- B. Paul's message: To proclaim the God who was unknown (vv. 22–34)
 - 1. God is the Lord over heaven and earth
 - 2. Man is created by God — “from one man he made every nation of men”
 - a) the meaning of our existence is that we may seek God
 - b) God is not far from us — no need for speculation
 - c) should not treat man-made idols as God — “we are all His offspring”
 - 3. God set Jesus Christ to judge the world with justice
 - a) all people should repent
 - b) the proof is in the resurrection
 - 4. Three different responses: Some sneered, some wanted to hear more, and some believed

Acts 18: At Corinth and the Third Missionary Journey

I. The Inception of the Work at Corinth (vv. 1–4)

- A. Corinth was under the influence of both the Athenian civilization and the Roman lifestyle
- B. The Holy Spirit gathered workers for the work — leading in circumstances
 - 1. Paul met with Aquila and Priscilla — important spiritual companions
 - 2. He lived, worked, and served with them

II. The Establishing of the Church at Corinth — Enriched in Speech and Knowledge, Not Lacking in Any Gift (vv. 5–17; 1 Corinthians 1:5–7)

- A. Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching — encouraged by the coworkers being of one accord
- B. Testified that Jesus was the Christ
 - 1. Christ is the center and hope for Jewish life and service
 - 2. Christ is also the center and hope for divine matters, mankind, and all creation
 - 3. Today we should prove how the Lord Jesus is the key to “the existence of God” and “fellowship with God”
- C. The beginning of the church — moving forward amidst resistance and blasphemy
- D. Vision is the direction for work and the strength for stability
 - 1. At night — in the darkness
 - 2. The assurance of the presence of the Lord (the greatest power behind the scenes)
 - 3. The Lord had many people in the city
 - 4. Paul was focussed and kept working
- E. Persecution arose — warfare

III. Returning to Antioch and the Third Missionary Journey (vv. 18–28)

- A. The weakness in Cenchrea — religious relics from Judaism
- B. A short stay at Ephesus — sent off by Priscilla and Aquila
- C. The Holy Spirit gathered the workers again — leading in circumstances
 - 1. Brought in Apollos — influenced the church at Corinth
 - a) was eloquent, had a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures
 - b) spoke with great fervor — but he knew only the baptism of John, not the way of life
 - c) Priscilla and Aquila helped him — he humbly learned and his gift was sharpened
 - 2. Apollos’ service in Achaia
 - a) a great help to those who by grace had believed
 - b) proved from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ — the center for one faith and service

Acts 19: At Ephesus

I. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit Brings Forth the Reality of the Church (vv. 1–7)

- A. A group of disciples who had never heard of the Holy Spirit
 - 1. They may be Apollos' spiritual fruit
 - 2. They had only received John's baptism
- B. The church must be established in the Holy Spirit
 - 1. Being baptized in the name of Jesus
 - 2. Receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands — speaking in tongues and prophesying

II. The Word of the Lord Is Preached Throughout Asia — Ephesus Is the Door to Asia (vv. 8–12)

- A. Boldly preaching about the kingdom of God
 - 1. Argued persuasively so that all heard the word of God
 - 2. Some became hardened and maligned the Way
- B. Building a spiritual peak in Asia
 - 1. God worked through Paul to make a straight path
 - 2. Did extraordinary miracles — handkerchiefs and aprons were used to heal the sick and cast out evil spirits

III. Paul Was a Witness the Enemy Feared (vv. 13–18)

- A. The seven sons of Sceva wounded trying to cast out evil spirits — borrowing others' experiences is ineffective
- B. One whom the evil spirit knows — “And I know about Paul” (v. 15)
- C. The Lord's name was magnified — many confessed their deeds

IV. The Word of the Lord Spread Widely and Grew in Power (vv. 19–20)

- A. Scrolls on sorcery burned — many people left demonic practices
- B. Caused people's thoughts to be reclaimed and turned to Jesus — a great victory in thinking

V. Satan's Disturbance — What the Enemy Attacks Is the Way (vv. 21–41)

- A. The enemy is afraid of and despises the Way
- B. Using selfish contentions, he causes persecution — idols fall
- C. Meaningless confusion — not knowing why they had gathered
- D. The crowd's mentality was the enemy's tool
- E. The city clerk quieted the crowds — no reason for that day's commotion

Acts 20: Lastly in Asia

I. The Ministry of Comfort — as the Ministry of the Holy Spirit (the Helper) (vv. 1–12)

- A. Leaving Ephesus and heading to Macedonia — Paul encouraged the saints' spirits while in difficulties
 - 1. Embraced the disciples from Ephesus — a silent act of comfort and encouragement
 - 2. In Macedonia, encouraged the disciples with his words — encouragement gives strength and warms one's heart
- B. Spent seven days in Troas with the co-workers from the province of Asia
- C. An accident during the meeting revealed Paul's composure and experience — manifestation of a mature life

II. The Exhortation to the Elders of Ephesus at Miletus (vv. 13–35)

- A. Paul spoke of his own attitude in serving the Lord
 - 1. Lived the same way the whole time he was with them — showing integrity
 - 2. Served the Lord with great humility, tears, and trials
 - 3. Faithfully taught the word of God
 - 4. Did not consider his life of any account as dear to himself — a martyr's spirit
- B. Passed on the responsibility
 - 1. Did not shrink from declaring to them the whole purpose of God
 - 2. "The Holy Spirit has made you overseers" (v. 28) — to shepherd the church of God
 - 3. Be on the alert
 - 4. Commended the elders to God and to the word of His grace
- C. Purity in his life
 - 1. Coveted no one's silver or gold or clothes
 - 2. Used his own hands to minister to the coworkers' needs
 - 3. Being an example, worked hard to help the weak
 - 4. "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (v. 35)

III. Leaving Asia (vv. 36–38)

- A. Knelt down and prayed together
- B. Truly loved one another

Acts 21: The Test of God

I. At Tyre and at Ptolemais: Staying with the Disciples (vv. 1–7)

- A. Looked up the disciples
- B. Through the Holy Spirit, the disciples urged Paul not to set foot in Jerusalem
- C. Knelt down to pray and then said farewell to one another

II. At Caesarea: The Will of the Lord Be Done (vv. 8–14)

- A. At Philip's house — stayed there for some days
- B. The prophecy of the prophet Agabus — Paul to be persecuted in Jerusalem
- C. Paul's companions and the local saints begged him not to go to Jerusalem — they were weeping

III. At Jerusalem: Enormous Pressure (vv. 15–26)

- A. Stayed at the house of Mnason — a disciple of long standing
- B. The influence of the Traditionalists — many thousands had believed, zealous for the Law
- C. James' compromising statements
- D. Distinction between the letter and life
 - 1. Legalism vs. the Law of Christ
 - 2. Works vs. the works of the Holy Spirit
 - 3. Habits of tradition vs. habits of life
- E. "Do what we tell you" (v. 23) — observing the regulations and the law
- F. Paul's failure — because of human sentiment

IV. The Obstruction by the Lord's Hand (vv. 27–40)

- A. The opposition of the Jews — the Lord's hand not allowing Paul to fail further
- B. The whole city was provoked
- C. The enemy's consistent scheme — "Kill him," "away with him!"
- D. The intervention by the commander — the protection of the Lord's hand
- E. The awakening of Paul

Acts 22: Answering All Questions with the Vision

I. Stating the Blessed Experience — a Real Experience Is the Greatest Strength and Courage (vv. 1–21)

- A. Born in traditional Jewish background
 - 1. A Jew born in Tarsus
 - 2. Brought up in Jerusalem, educated under Gamaliel strictly according to the law of the fathers
- B. Persecuted “this Way” to the death
- C. Seeing the vision led to a change — fell under a very bright light
 - 1. Suddenly — the Lord came to seek us
 - a) on his way: running toward his personal goal
 - b) noontime: going toward a bright future
 - 2. A very bright light flashed from heaven all around him — seeing the light
 - 3. Heard the Lord’s voice
 - 4. Decided his lifetime pursuit and attitude — “Who are You, Lord?” “What shall I do, Lord?”
 - 5. The Lord’s glorious light covered everything — could not see anything else
- D. Ananias passed on the charge — a man who was devout and well spoken of by all
 - 1. Ananias had good reputation and lived out a beautiful testimony
 - 2. Accepted Paul into the church — “brother”
 - 3. Pointed out that Paul was appointed by God to know His will and see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance from His mouth
 - 4. Showed obedience by actions — “be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name”
- E. The command of the Lord — in a life of prayer
 - 1. “Make haste, and get out of Jerusalem quickly”
 - 2. Paul’s reasoning
 - 3. The Lord sent him far away to the Gentiles — the Lord’s heart departed from the Jews

II. The Reason for Becoming the Object the Enemy Determined to Kill (vv. 22–24)

III. The Protection and Glory of a Roman Citizen — Luke Implied the Greater Glory of Being a Child of God (vv. 25–30)

- A. The commander was afraid of Paul’s status (citizenship)
- B. The status that comes with birth is even more glorious
- C. The prosecution of Paul — the protection because of his status (citizenship)

Acts 23: Wisdom and Protection of the Lord

I. Paul Defends Himself (vv. 1–10)

- A. In all good conscience: In a world which denies God, conscience is bankrupt, has lost its value, can no longer be a protection
 - 1. Being struck
 - 2. Condemned in heart because of rebuking the high priest
- B. According to wisdom — Paul perceiving ...
 - 1. “I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee” (v. 6)
 - 2. Caused dissension and division — the result of natural wisdom

II. The Lord’s Direction — Speaking in His Presence (v. 11)

- A. “Take courage!”
 - 1. Don’t lose heart
 - 2. Don’t use your own hand
 - 3. Everything shall be accomplished according to the Lord’s will
- B. Witness for the Lord at Rome: The guideline for the saints’ life is neither conscience nor wisdom; rather it is a higher law and principle — the inner direction from the Lord

III. The Jews’ Deep Hatred (vv. 12–22)

- A. Binding themselves under an oath, the Jews formed a conspiracy to kill Paul
- B. The scheme was exposed — the Lord’s hand protected all things in secret

IV. The Commander’s Protection and Description (vv. 23–35)

- A. Sent Paul with soldiers to the governor
- B. Because Paul was a Roman citizen — every arrangement by the Lord is good
- C. Under no accusation deserving death or imprisonment

Acts 24: Accusations and Defense

I. The Jews' Accusations (vv. 1–9)

- A. Accusation is the work of Satan
- B. The spirit of accusation is behind the scenes (people and things)
 - 1. The high priest: Traditions, formalities, and rituals — the reality of words
 - 2. The elders: Representative of experience and wisdom — all of a person
 - 3. The attorney: Eloquence and persuasive arguments
- C. Baseless accusations
 - 1. Flattering words
 - 2. Description concerning Paul
 - a) a pest, stirring up dissension
 - b) a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes
 - c) tried to desecrate the temple

II. Paul's Defense (vv. 10–22)

- A. Stating the facts — no proof of the charges
- B. Admitted to one thing only
 - 1. Serving God according to the Way
 - 2. Believing everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets
 - 3. A hope in the resurrection
- C. A blameless conscience — nothing of which the enemy can accuse

III. Paul's Discourse Before Felix — a Person Bound by Wealth and Fame (vv. 12–22)

- A. Felix was well-acquainted with the Way
- B. He sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus
- C. Paul spoke powerfully about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come
- D. Felix at the same time hoped that Paul would offer him a bribe
- E. He did the Jews a favor by leaving Paul imprisoned

Note: Spiritually speaking, judgment is a demand of God

God's ultimate demand is His demand of His servants rather than the work by His servants. From this point on, God wants His contentment to be in His servant (Paul), not in his work.

Acts 25: Trial Before the King — Higher Judgment

I. Paul Before Festus (vv. 1–12)

- A. The Jews' plot of setting an ambush to kill Paul (v. 3)
- B. "If there is anything wrong about this man, let them prosecute him" (v. 5) — God's righteous hand was protecting Paul
- C. In Caesarea
 - 1. The Jews could not prove their charges
 - 2. The uprightness in Paul's heart (v. 11)
 - a) "If, then, I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything worthy of death, I do not refuse to die"
 - b) "If none of those things is true of which these men accuse me, no one can hand me over to them"
 - c) "I appeal to Caesar" — heading to Rome for the highest judgment

II. Festus Testifies Before King Agrippa Concerning Paul (vv. 13–22)

- A. According to man's conscience, Paul was not guilty — Festus' secret discussion
 - 1. According to Roman custom — the sense of conscience for that generation
 - 2. No crimes as expected; simply some points of disagreement
 - 3. Concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ
 - 4. At a loss — sense of conscience was veiled
- B. Agrippa wanted to hear Paul

III. Paul Before Agrippa (vv. 23–27)

- A. Agrippa came with great pomp
- B. Proclamation of Festus
 - 1. "I found that he had committed nothing worthy of death" (v. 25)
 - 2. "I have nothing definite about him to write" (v. 26)
 - 3. "It seems absurd to me in sending a prisoner, not to indicate also the charges against him" (v. 27)

Note: A trial for a servant of God is a test for the purpose of investigating the truth — the best sacrifice must be without spot or blemish

Acts 26: Retelling the Vision

I. Defense Before King Agrippa (vv. 1–23)

- A. Paul motioned with his hand before giving his defense — proper, courteous and composed manner (v. 3)
- B. Childhood education and the background of his upbringing
- C. Lived in the hope of Israel — the promise of resurrection
- D. Opposed the name of Jesus and put Christians to death
- E. Turning point — seeing the vision
 - 1. Seeing the great light of God, brighter than the sun
 - 2. The Lord spoke: “It is hard for you to kick against the goads”
 - 3. Received a mission and entrustment — the Lord deliberately appeared and appointed
 - a) “as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen of me and what I will show you”
 - b) the promise of salvation — the Lord is responsible for His own calling
 - i) to open their eyes
 - ii) to stand firm in the faith of resurrection

II. If Out of Our Mind, It Is for God’s Sake — Honor and Excellence Did Not Come from Learning (vv. 24–29)

- A. People thought Paul was out of his mind
- B. What Paul saying was true and reasonable
- C. A strong, overcoming spirit
 - 1. Walked in the light
 - 2. The king’s heart was moved
 - 3. Honor and glory upon him — surpassing any earthly honor and glory

III. The Result of Passing the Judgment — a Qualified Sacrifice (vv. 30–32)

- A. “This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment” (v. 31)
- B. Purified and refined

Acts 27: Tests in Circumstances (More Than Abundant)

I. Being Handed Over (vv. 1–8)

- A. Paul was handed over as a prisoner to a centurion
- B. Luke and Aristarchus were with Paul
- C. The centurion showed kindness to Paul
- D. A long and stormy voyage

II. Saints Careful for Their Hearts (vv. 9–38)

- A. The warning from Paul
 - 1. An intuition in his spirit — a response coming from the trusting in God
 - 2. Man's natural response is to believe the experts
 - 3. It is common for man to survey the circumstances
 - 4. Circumstances are not under man's control — confidence and the goal are easily lost
- B. An angel of God spoke — the hidden governing power revealed
 - 1. God spoke and therefore Paul also spoke
 - 2. He could take courage because of God's presence
 - 3. God graciously gave him the lives of all who sailed with him
 - 4. The word of the Lord is the foundation of our faith
- C. Authority is in the hands of spiritual men
 - 1. The sailors attempted to escape from the ship
 - 2. "Unless ... you cannot be saved" (v. 31)
 - 3. So the soldiers cut the ropes
- D. Living a normal life in hardships
 - 1. Everyone had been in constant suspense and had gone without food — lost normal living pattern
 - 2. "You need [food] to survive" (v. 34)
 - 3. "Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head" — a proclamation of faith
 - 4. Paul took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all — an act of faith
 - 5. They were all encouraged

III. Everyone Was Saved (vv. 39–44)

- A. The ship was wrecked
- B. The centurion spared Paul's life, and the lives of all the prisoners were spared as well
- C. Everyone reached land in safety

Acts 28: The Kingdom of God Will Never End (More Than Conquerors)

I. Honored by the Islanders of Malta — the Last Ministry (vv. 1–10)

- A. Paul was born with hands to serve — the enemy could not hinder him from serving
- B. Glorified God in the smallest service — He is God
- C. Hands that brought in power and blessing — filled with God's power and authority
 - 1. Healed the father of the chief official and all the sick on the island
 - 2. Honored by the islanders

II. The Last Voyage to Rome — the Final Journey (vv. 11–15)

- A. Put out to sea in a ship with the figurehead of the twin gods, the two sons of Zeus
- B. At sight of the brothers, Paul thanked God and was encouraged — living in the sense of the Body

III. At Rome — the Last Record of Paul's Life (vv. 16–31)

- A. Paul preached to the Jews to the very end: The steadfast love and perseverance toward his kinsmen
 - 1. "I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors ... I was not guilty of any crime deserving death" (vv. 17–18) — a clear conscience
 - 2. "Not that I had any charge to bring against my own people" (v. 19) — no spirit of accusation
 - 3. "It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain" (v. 20)
 - 4. The Jewish leaders knew that people everywhere were talking against this sect
- B. Paul explained and declared to the Jews the kingdom of God
 - 1. From morning till evening, he explained, declared, tried to convince — urgently persuaded them
 - 2. The leaders disagreed among themselves and began to leave
 - 3. The final proclamation of the Holy Spirit: God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles (Isaiah's prophecy)
- C. No one can hinder the advancement of God's kingdom — the testimony faithful to the end
 - 1. Paul welcomed all
 - 2. Preached the kingdom of God
 - 3. Taught about the Lord Jesus Christ

IV. The Streams of the Holy Spirit Flow Toward the Ends of the Earth