

Verse 21. In this verse Peter manifests a very natural curiosity, but which will be interpreted by Christ as an intrusion by Peter into matters that should not have concerned him. Jesus had exhorted Peter to follow Him by faithfulness even to the extent of a violent death. The question of the apostle means as if he had said, "And what do you expect John to do; will he have to die a violent death also?"

Verse 22. Jesus did not answer Peter's question directly. *Tarry till I come* means not only that he would not die a violent death, but would not die at all before Jesus returned to earth. But Jesus did not say that such a thing would happen, only that if it did, it would be no concern of Peter's; his duty was to follow Jesus.

Verse 23. This verse gives a clear example of the disposition of men to formulate rumors with no truth as a basis. Jesus only asked Peter a hypothetical question by way of rebuking him for his meddlesome attitude. Then the gossiping spirit of the disciples made an affirmation out of it, and made Jesus say that John was promised that he would live to see the second coming of Christ.

Verse 24. This verse, together with other passages, shows us that the disciple "whom Jesus loved" was John. (See chapter 13: 23.)

Verse 25. Jesus lived and worked with his disciples and among men for more than three years. It would have made a volume or volumes of immense size had all of His deeds been recorded. *World* means the people of the earth. *Contain* is from *CHOREO*, and as Thayer defines it, the meaning is, "To receive with the mind or understanding, to understand; to be ready to receive, keep in mind." The entire Bible is very brief, and the Lord has placed before mankind enough only to make the necessary preparation for usefulness in this life, and happiness in the next.

ACTS 1

Verse 1. The Greek word for *treatise* is *LOGOS*. The definitions in the lexicon are very numerous, likewise the word is translated by a great variety of terms in the King James Version. I believe it will be well to state the different terms, and the number of times it is so rendered by each, so the reader may form a general idea of the scope

of the original. It has been translated by account, 8 times; cause, 1; communication, 3; doctrine, 1; game, 1; intent, 1; matter, 4; mouth, 1; rumor, 1; saying, 50; shew, 1; speech, 8; talk, 1; thing, 4; things to say, 1; tidings, 1; treatise, 1; utterance, 4; word, 208; Word, 7; words, 4; work, 2. In our present passage it means volume or document, since it refers to the Gospel of Luke. The salutation to *Theophilus* is the same as in Luke 1: 3, which proves that one man is the author of both books. All of the writers in the Nicene Library, a work composed by scholars in the church in the first four centuries of the Christian Era, agree that Luke is the author of the book we are now studying, as well as the Gospel bearing his name. Referring to his former work (his Gospel record), the author says it was a *treatise of all that Jesus began both to do and teach*.

Verse 2. The preceding verse states something of the subject matter of Luke's former book, and the present tells of the event at which it concluded its narrative. *Was taken up* refers to the ascension of Jesus, recorded in Luke 24: 51. These *commandments* pertain to the "Great Commission" given to the apostles, to go and preach the Gospel in all the world. (See Matthew 28: 19, 20; Mark 16: 15, 16; Luke 24: 47, 48.)

Verse 3. *Whom* means the apostles referred to in the preceding verse, who were to be the witnesses for Jesus in the nations of the world. In order for them to be qualified as witnesses to the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead, it was necessary for him to show himself to them. *Passion* is from *PASCHO*, and Thayer's general definition is, "to feel, have a sensible experience, to undergo; to suffer sadly, be in bad plight." As Luke uses it, it refers to the sufferings and death of Jesus on the cross. *Showed himself alive* indicates how long after his death it was that he showed himself, namely, after his resurrection, since he was *alive*. *Infallible proofs* comes from one Greek word *TEKMERION*, and Thayer's definition is, "That from which something is surely and plainly known; an indubitable [unquestionable] evidence, a proof." A proof that was merely reasonably sure was not enough, but it must be so evident that it would be impossible to misunderstand it, and there were to be *many* of them. That would enable the apostles

to say, "we know that Jesus lived after his death on the cross, for we saw him, heard him speak, and had this experience so often that it could not have been any delusion or imagination. And this kind of experience extended over a period of forty days, which would make it impossible to have been mistaken about it. Another thing that confirmed their recognition of the identity of Jesus, was the fact that he talked with them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, a subject that no stranger would have known anything about, especially if he had been an impostor.

Verse 4. This book reaches back over the last part of the Gospel record, which connects the line of thought regarding Christ. The assembling mentioned in this verse took place before Jesus made his ascension, at which event this book is supposed to begin. The *promise of the Father* was the bestowal of the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into all truth. That promise may be found in Joel 2: 28-29; John 14: 16, 17; 15: 26; Matthew 3: 11. The apostles were *not to depart from Jerusalem* until they had received this Spirit, since it was necessary for their guidance in the work assigned to them.

Verse 5. When John predicted the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3: 11), he also included that of fire. But he was talking to a mixed multitude, in which were some whom John knew would live and die in sin and finally be cast into the lake of fire. And there also were some in his audience who were destined to become apostles, and hence would receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. John's speech was addressed to the multitude as a whole. But when Jesus uttered the promise of this verse, he was talking to his apostles only, so it was unnecessary to say anything about the baptism of fire.

Verse 6. The apostles held to their notion that Christ was going to erect a temporal kingdom like the one the Jews had before, and deliver it to them as a restoration of their power as a nation. They had given up that hope for a time on account of the death of Jesus (Luke 24: 21). But after his resurrection, they seemed to think they had been a little hasty in their despondency, and that now perhaps he would give them the kingdom, hence the question of this verse.

Verse 7. The specific *time* or date of the plans of the Father were not to be announced beforehand to the apostles. That is why they were told to tarry in Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit, and then they would know all they needed to know to carry on the work for which they had been called.

Verse 8. *Power* is from DUNAMIS, which means might or ability. The Holy Ghost or Spirit was to impart this qualification to the apostles, so that they could take the testimony to the uttermost parts of the earth. The need for such power was the reason they were told to wait in Jerusalem for the descent of the Spirit as promised through the prophets.

Verse 9. This verse corresponds with the closing ones of the book of Luke. Both places record the ascension of Jesus, but the present one only mentions the cloud; the other merely says he disappeared. The cloud feature in the ascension is significant, because Revelation 1: 7 says that He will come in the clouds. That agrees also with what will be stated in verse 11 of the present chapter.

Verse 10. *Looked steadfastly toward heaven*. The last word is from OURANOS, which is the only word in the Greek New Testament for the English word "heaven." Yet the inspired writers speak of the third heaven (2 Corinthians 12: 2) which means there are a first and second. Hence we have three definitions of the word in Thayer's lexicon, which I will quote in their order: "1. The vaulted expanse of the sky with all things visible in it. 2. The sidereal or starry heavens. 3. The region above the sidereal [starry] heavens, the seat of an order of things eternal and consummately [entirely] perfect, where God dwells and the other heavenly beings." Jesus finally entered the third heaven, but the one the disciples saw Him enter was the first. It was logical that Jesus went "up" to heaven, since that is the only direction that can be realized by human eyes. But the term is accommodative only, for literal directions as to altitude are based on the earth; "up" meaning away from the earth, and down meaning toward it. Were the earth and other material bodies destroyed, there would be no "up" or "down" as we use those terms. Whether Jesus left the earth at noon or midnight, he would still have gone "up."

as we use the word. The *two men in white apparel* were the "angels" of John 1: 51.

Verse 11. Jesus will come in *like manner*, which is why Revelation 1: 7 says he will come in clouds, and also adds that "every eye shall see him." That prediction explodes the heresy that Jesus has come to the earth in such a manner that only the self-styled "witnesses" can see him.

Verse 12. In Luke's Gospel record, he merely states (chapter 24: 52) that the disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy. In our present verse he states from where they made the journey, namely, from the mount called *Olivet*, which is the same as the Mount of Olives, a distance from Jerusalem of a *sabbath day's journey*, or about three-quarters of a mile. The law of Moses has nothing to say about "a sabbath day's journey," but that was a tradition of the Jews, based on a strained interpretation of Exodus 16: 29 and Joshua 3: 4. Neither Jesus nor the inspired writers endorsed the tradition, but on account of its common use, the term came to have a secular meaning as to distance.

Verse 13. *Where abode* does not mean they resided there, as the word generally denotes, but that they were remaining or passing the time there. That was in obedience to the command of Jesus that they "tarry" and wait for the coming of the "power from on high" (Luke 24: 49). The word *both* commonly denotes that two things only are being considered, but Thayer explains the Greek as meaning, "things are thus connected which are akin, or which are united to each other by some inner bond, whether logical or real." The men named were related to each other as apostles of Christ.

Verse 14. While waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit, the disciples were improving the time by religious devotions. These exercises included the *women*, for it says they continued thus *with the women*. This is the last time the mother of Jesus is mentioned by name in the New Testament; others are named of that term, but not His mother. *His brethren* means the children of Joseph and Mary; not his disciples, for they were already named in verse 13.

Verse 15. As usual, Peter was the spokesman on this occasion. The *hundred and twenty disciples* means the

ones who were present in this assembly. In 1 Corinthians 15: 6 Paul says that Jesus was seen (after his resurrection) by "above five hundred brethren," most of whom were living when the apostle wrote the epistle. Just where they were when the assembly was going on mentioned in the present verse we do not know, for only the apostles had been commanded to tarry at Jerusalem; the others were there by their own voluntary desire only.

Verse 16. The Holy Spirit had not yet come down, but the divine record afterwards indicates full approval of all the proceedings, hence we must conclude that what Peter and the others said and did was by the guidance of the Lord. Peter began his speech with a reference to Psalms 69: 22-25, pertaining to the conduct and fate of Judas.

Verse 17. This means that Judas had been included among the apostles. The verse also indicates that the purpose of the present session was to secure a man to become an apostle in the place of Judas.

Verse 18. *Purchased a field* refers to the "potter's field," mentioned in Matthew 27: 7. *With the reward of iniquity*. Judas did not personally have any part in purchasing this field, for it was done after his death (Matthew 27: 5-8). The phrase means the field was bought with the money that Judas had received as a reward for betraying Jesus. *Falling headlong*. If two statements seem to disagree, they should not be taken as a contradiction if it is possible for both to be true. The other record of the death of Judas says he "hanged himself." There were no "up-to-date" scaffolds available in those days, so Judas would naturally select a place, such as a tree near a precipice, for clearance of his body when he plunged from the footing under him. Then when his weight pulled suddenly on the limb (as the tradition reports it), his body broke it off and he was ruptured as he fell down upon the rocks below.

Verse 19. There is nothing strange in the general knowledge of the affair of Judas. The suicide of a man prominently associated with Jesus could not escape the attention of the people. And the setting aside of a piece of land that ordinarily was discarded, would naturally bring forth many inquiries,

and that in turn would suggest the title given to the place. *Field of blood*. Judas did not actually shed the blood of Jesus, neither did the crucifixion directly shed it. The law of capital punishment in Genesis 9: 6 says, "He that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Nobody would think this is restricted to cases where the veins of another were literally opened and the blood poured out, either in the act of murder or the punishment for it. Were that the case, a murderer could escape the penalty by merely using some other method of slaying his victim besides bloodletting. The origin of the term is in the declaration of God that the blood is the life (Genesis 9: 4). From this truth the term "bloodshed" came to mean any act of violence that would cause one to lose his life. Judas caused Jesus to lose his life by violence, and hence he was properly charged with bloodshed.

Verse 20. The quotation being cited is in Psalm 69: 25. *Habitation* means a house or place of dwelling, and to be *desolate* means that it was to be deserted. There is no information that the home of Judas was ever occupied by others, or that he left any family to take charge of it. *Bishoprick* is from *EPISKOPOS*, and is the word for "office of a bishop" in 1 Timothy 3: 1. Thayer defines the word as, "oversight, office, charge," which explains why it was applied to the apostle Judas. *Let another take* denotes clearly that the man who is about to be appointed as apostle was to take the place of Judas, and should therefore be regarded as an apostle after the Lord has indicated his choice.

Verse 21. One of the qualifications required in the man to be placed in office as an apostle, is that of constant association with the others and with the Lord Jesus. This idea of being "with him" is set forth in Mark 3: 14.

Verse 22. The extent of time when this association was to have been had was from the baptism of John to the ascension of Jesus. Such an experience would qualify him to be a witness of the resurrection of Jesus, because the death and return to life of the Lord took place between those two events. The proper man would be *ordained* to the office of apostle. (See the notes on ordain at John 15: 16.)

Verse 23. *Appointed* is from *HISTEMI*, which Thayer defines in this place,

"To bid to stand by." It has the same meaning as our modern word "nominate," but not placed in any office as yet. They named Barsabas called Justus, and Matthias, who were to "stand by" and be ready for whatever might be determined upon.

Verse 24. As far as the apostles knew, each of these men named for the office left vacant by Judas' death was qualified. But the Lord could see defects that man could not, or could observe superior qualities of one over the other that could not be known by human beings. That is why they prayed to the Lord who *knoweth the hearts of all men*, to make the final choice between their candidates.

Verse 25. *Ministry* is from *DIAKONIA*, and its general meaning is "service." The word will apply to anyone and to any activity that is of service to the Cause of Christ. The *apostleship* was a specific service to be administered only by those qualified and authorized to do it. Judas fell from his position as apostle *by transgression*, hence was responsible for his actions. *His own place* meant perdition according to John 17: 12.

Verse 26. The appointment of an apostle was such an important event, that I believe a full explanation should be made of the *lot* as a means of determining the selection. The word is from *KLEROS*, which Thayer defines, "An object used in casting or drawing lots." He then explains the performance, "which was either a pebble, or a potsherd, or a bit of wood . . . the lots of the several persons concerned, inscribed with their names, were thrown together into a vase, which was then shaken, and he whose lot first fell out upon the ground was the one chosen." *Fell* is used figuratively, as it is used in Romans 14: 4, where Paul uses the statement, "to his own master he standeth or *faileth*." This also is according to Robinson's definition for the Greek word for "fall" which is, "To fall to or upon any one, Acts 1: 26." A natural question would be why such a thing as a "game of chance" would be used in determining the selection of an apostle. That was still in the period when the Lord used "sundry times and diverse manners" (Hebrews 1: 1) to communicate his will to mankind. When He was pleased to use the lot on any matter, he would see that the proper piece would come

out. That is the meaning of Proverbs 16: 33, and it is the reason the apostles prayed that the Lord would "show whether [which] of these two thou hast chosen." The inspired writer is the one who says Matthias was numbered with the eleven *apostles*, which he would not have done, had the proceeding not been in harmony with the divine will. Hence we must understand that Matthias was the man divinely selected to take the place of Judas, and to fill out the original quota of the "twelve apostles."

ACTS 2

Verse 1. *Pentecost* is from *PENTEKOSTE*, which Thayer describes as follows: "Properly the fiftieth day after the Passover, the second of the three great Jewish festivals; celebrated at Jerusalem yearly, the seventh week after the Passover, in grateful recognition of the completed harvest." Being a Greek word, it is not found in the Old Testament, but the feast is referred to in other terms. It is called "feast of harvests" in Exodus 23: 16; "new meat offering" in Leviticus 23: 16; "feast of weeks" in Deuteronomy 16: 10. *Fully* does not have any original as a separate word, but *fully come* is from the one Greek word *sumpleroo*, and one phrase in Thayer's definition is, "be fulfilled." After the Passover observance, with the 7-day period of unleavened bread immediately following, the next great event with the Jews was Pentecost. During that space of fifty days, the devoted people of Israel were waiting and looking forward to this feast that was observed for one day only. The phrase *fully come*, then, merely means that the waiting days were over and the important day at last had come. *They* is a pronoun that stands for the "apostles," the last word of the preceding chapter. These men had two reasons for being in Jerusalem at this time. They were Jews who were loyal toward the institutions of the law, and more important, they had been commanded to tarry in that city while waiting for the Holy Spirit or "power from on high" (Luke 24: 49). *All with one accord* includes Matthias, the apostle newly ordained, which gives us the significant information that the entire group of apostles was of one mind.

Verse 2. The *sound* was what filled all the house; not the wind nor the Spirit. The sound came from heaven

or the region of the atmosphere, since that is the place where winds originate, being the movements of the air.

Verse 3. There appeared unto *them*, the apostles, these tongues, for none but they had been promised the "power from on high" on this occasion. *Cloven* is from a Greek word that has been translated by such terms as "parted, disparted, distributed, separated," etc. The significance was that the apostles were to speak in various tongues or languages. That was not only for use on this occasion, but they were expected to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature," and to do that it would be necessary for them to be able to speak several hundred languages. These cloven tongues were *like fire*, but it does not say they were fire. They sat upon *each* of the apostles, indicating that each apostle would be able to speak in as many kinds of tongues as occasion required when he got out into the world.

Verse 4. It was the house that was filled with the sound, but it was *they*, the apostles, who were filled with the Holy Ghost. This enabled them, *each of them*, to speak with other tongues. This refutes the theory that the Lord assigned to each apostle the ability to speak with some specific foreign tongue, giving him the task of speaking to some of the foreigners present. That will not do anyway, for there were fifteen or more tongues represented at Jerusalem, but there were only twelve apostles, and hence there would not have been enough speakers to go round on that plan.

Verse 5. These Jews were *dwelling* at Jerusalem temporarily only. They had come there to attend the feast of Pentecost as required by the law of Moses.

Verse 6. *When this was noised abroad*. I believe the pronoun "this" refers to the circumstance as a whole, not merely to the "sound," for the text states only that it "filled the house," not the whole vicinity. But such a performance as happened on that occasion could not but be reported by those nearest the scene, and that would bring the multitude to the place to see "what it was all about." When they got to the place they were *confounded*, which means they were confused or amazed, to discover that these men could all so speak that each of them in the multitude could under-

I Cor. 15: 20
1st Thes. 5: 1-18

stand the speakers, although no two of them spoke the same tongue, whenever they used that of the country where they were born.

Verse 7. *Are not all these which speak Galileans?* It is true that Galilee and its people did not have a very exalted place in the estimation of many in the time of Christ and the apostles. However, that was not the reason the multitude made the remark here. It was in reference to the fact that all of these spokesmen were of that group and generally spoke in a tongue peculiar to themselves. (See Mark 14: 70; Luke 22: 59.) But here they were departing from their own native speech, and using those of the Jews from other countries all over the world "under heaven."

Verse 8. *Wherein we were born* denotes the language peculiar to the country where they were born and where they had acquired the individual speech.

Verses 9, 10. This paragraph with a part of the next, names the various countries from where these Jews had come to be present at the feast of Pentecost. The number of the different places has been given a variety of counts, ranging from 15 to 17, depending on how technically the distinctions are made. The information as to their location is a matter of simple history or geography, and I do not think that space needs to be used here for that purpose.

Verse 11. The pronouns *we* and *our* refer to the people from the several countries named; *them* means the apostles. *Tongues* being plural is significant, and denotes that the apostles were speaking in more than one tongue. All of this was done for the purpose of demonstrating the miraculous power and divine authority being vested in the apostles, and not with the intention of imparting any doctrinal information to the multitude. That was to come later, after the attention or interest had been sufficiently fixed for them to listen thoughtfully. *Wonderful works* as a phrase comes from the Greek word *MEGALEIOS*, and Thayer's definition is, "magnificent, excellent, splendid, wonderful." It does not mean "works" as some physical or material deeds, but that God's ability to enable these apostles to speak in this extraordinary manner was wonderful.

Verse 12. *Doubt* is from *DIAPHORES* which Thayer defines, "To be entirely at a loss, to be in perplexity." Some of the multitude had a respectful attitude toward the situation, but were perplexed over it and honestly wondered what it all meant.

Verse 13. *Mocking* means to sneer or make fun, which was done by a different part of the people than the ones who were honestly and respectfully perplexed. *New wine* is from the one Greek word *GLEUKOS*, and Thayer defines it, "sweet wine," and he explains the definition to mean, "The sweet juice pressed from the grape." I have consulted seven other lexicons, and they all agree with Thayer on the meaning of the word. If that be true, then the question would arise, how could the apostles be drunk on such an article? They could not, but it was an indirect and cowardly way these scoffers took of accusing the apostles of being drunk. And Peter took it to mean that, for in his reply he did not deny the accusation on the ground that new wine would not make anyone drunk; he knew they were insincere in the foolish charge.

Verse 14. *Peter, standing up with the eleven.* The apostles all stood up as a token that what Peter was about to say would be the word of all the apostles. They did not all speak at this time, for that would have been disorderly. Besides, the miraculous demonstrations had all been done as far as was necessary for the purpose of evidence. There will not be any further miracle performed except that of inspiration, to enable Peter to preach the Gospel with unerring accuracy and authority. We are not told just what language he used, but we know it was one that the entire multitude could understand. Verse 7 tells us the multitude (assembled from 15 or 17 countries), *said one to another*, etc. This shows they knew some kind of tongue that was common to all of them, else they could not have conversed with each other. Whatever that tongue was, it doubtless was the one the apostle used. Having stood up for a more effective way of addressing that vast throng, Peter urged them to give serious attention to his words.

Verse 15. *These are not drunken.* The unkind critics had only accused the apostles of being full of new wine, but Peter knew they were wanting to besmirch them with the charge of

drunkenness, and hence he treated their remark from that viewpoint only. The *third hour* is the same as our 9 A. M. Isaiah 5: 11 indicates that it was not the common practice to begin drinking in the early part of the day. Those people who arose early in the morning for that purpose were of a class that the prophet was condemning. Peter meant that it was too early in the day for these apostles to have become drunken, even if they had been using fermented wine, as that is a slow intoxicant anyway. And that would be especially true of these men who had been in the assembled condition all day, due to the sacredness of the occasion.

Verse 16. The passage to which Peter refers and quotes is in Joel 2: 28-32. The pronoun *this* refers to the entire line of events that was predicted by the prophet, and that had just started with the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles. Having made the reference to Joel's prediction, Peter goes ahead and quotes the entire passage, although some of the things will not take place on the day of Pentecost. The things predicted were to begin their fulfillment at that time, and others were to come at the proper time later, which will be explained as the commenting on the verses proceeds.

Verses 17, 18. *Last days* means the closing days of the Jewish Dispensation. That era was still in force until the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles, and Peter then introduced the Gospel of Christ and the church was set up. *Upon all flesh* indicated that the Gospel was to be given to the Gentiles as well as the Jews. That was one of the things that Joel saw in the over-all vision that was to start on this day of Pentecost. But that item did not come until the conversion of Cornelius in chapter 10. *Sons and daughters shall prophesy* was another item that came later, but it was actually fulfilled according to chapter 21: 9.

Verses 19, 20. This paragraph refers to the events recorded in Matthew 27: 45; Mark 15: 33; Luke 23: 44, 45. Of course no literal changing into blood and smoke took place, but the conditions were such that the terms were a fitting illustration. *Before* is used as if it said, "just before," or "only a short while before." The darkness that came as Jesus was on the cross came only 50 days before the day

of Pentecost. In a period of time spread out over as large a scale as several centuries, a space of 50 days would be virtually the same date for each of the events predicted. The circumstance is mentioned by way of identifying the noted prediction. Such an event as the falling of sunshine in the middle of a day, that happened as Jesus was on the cross, had never occurred before. And when it did come so short a time before the *day* on which the Holy Spirit came down, the people would easily associate the two events as parts of the same prediction. Another thing to consider, the time of the Passover (which was also that of the crucifixion) was so near the feast of Pentecost that many pious Jews just "remained over," hence among those on this great day now at hand, were many who had personally seen that darkening of the sun, which would help to verify the prediction.

Verse 21. *Call* is from EPIKALEO, and Thayer defines it at this place, "To call upon (on one's behalf) the name of the Lord, i. e., to invoke, adore, worship, the Lord, i. e., Christ." It is the same Greek word for "calling" in chapter 22: 16, where the context shows that calling on the name of the Lord for salvation means to obey His commands.

Verse 22. Having quoted in full the prophecy of Joel, Peter proceeded to recite the story of Jesus, describing briefly the outstanding deeds of his life, which he will do through several verses, bringing the narrative down to His death and resurrection, and even to the very hour then at hand. He asserted that men were not asked to receive Christ merely on the claims of God, but that He had testified to his Son's divinity by enabling him to perform *wonders and signs*. The apostle further reminded them that they knew about these things, and they never disputed it as we shall find. And the fact that Peter accused this very crowd of guilt in the crucifying of Jesus, verifies my remarks on verses 19, 20, that many of these people had been in Jerusalem at the time when Jesus was on the cross and the sun was darkened for three hours.

Verse 23. *Determinate counsel*. It was determined by the Lord God that his Son should die by violence, and it was also foretold through the foreknowledge of God. (See Luke 22: 22; Revelation 13: 8.) Had it not been

the will of God that Jesus should be delivered into the hands of wicked men, they never could have taken and killed him. (See Matthew 26: 53, 54.) But this determination of God did not excuse the wicked Jews, for their motive was an unrighteous one. *Ye have taken* was what the Jews did by their perverted Sanhedrin, and *by wicked hands* means those of the Roman soldiers, because the Jews could not legally put a man to death.

Verse 24. *Loosed the pains of death.* Death does not bring any pain afterward to a righteous man. The statement means that God released his Son who had been bound in a death that had been accompanied by pain. *Not possible.* The impossibility was on the part of the bondage of death, not God, for he determined his Son should rise again.

Verse 25. *David speaketh concerning him* means that David made a prophecy concerning Christ. (See Psalms 16: 8-11.) In this passage David represents Christ as saying the things that are set down in this verse through 28. In these verses all of the pronouns of the first person refer to Christ, while the second and third person pronouns mean God. The present verse expresses the confidence of Christ that God would always be at hand to support and comfort him.

Verse 26. Christ rejoiced because of a hope he had concerning his fleshly body. He knew that he must die, and that his fleshly body would be without its soul for a time. The usual result of such a separation of soul and body is for the latter to decay. Jesus not only had hope that involved his soul (inner man), but also one that was favorable for his fleshly body. That twofold hope will be revealed in the next verse.

Verse 27. When a man dies, his soul (inner man) goes to the unseen or intermediate realm, called Hades in the Greek New Testament, which is rendered "hell" by the King James translators. His body remains on the earth, and after three days it will begin to decompose or *see corruption*. This fact explains the words of Martha in John 11: 39. But this noted passage means that the soul of Jesus was not to remain in hell (Hades) long enough for his body that had been placed in the tomb of Joseph to start decaying. That was why it was neces-

sary for Jesus to be raised from the dead after three days.

Verse 28. *Hast made known* is past tense as to grammatical form, but it is a prediction that God would fully reveal to his Son the *ways of life*, or plan of salvation through his own blood. This assurance filled Jesus with joy because of the agreeable *countenance* or face of his Father.

Verse 29. The listeners might not understand the form of language where one writer would speak as if meaning himself, but was really talking for another. To show them that David was not writing about himself personally, Peter reminded them that he had been dead all these years, because his tomb (still occupied) was yet with them, whereas his prediction concerned a person who was to leave his grave after three days.

Verse 30. Having explained that David was not writing about himself, Peter thought it well to account for his statements. They showed that he was personally interested in Christ because he was to be his (David's) own famous descendant. The most significant item was that this descendant was some day to sit upon the throne (of course in a spiritual sense) left vacant by the change in dispensations.

Verse 31. To do as just predicted, it would be necessary for him to come forth from the grave so that he could establish that throne. "Being a prophet," it was possible for David to make the prediction of the resurrection.

Verse 32. *We* means the apostles who had seen Jesus after his resurrection.

Verse 33. After all these verses from 16, Peter comes directly again to the purpose of his speech; to explain the meaning of what the multitude had seen and heard. That it was according to a promise that the Holy Ghost was to be *shed forth* upon the apostles.

Verses 34, 35. Coming back to David, Peter reminds them again that the prophet had not ascended to heaven and was therefore not at God's right hand. That would explain that another noted prophecy could not have meant him (David), for it says that the Lord (who was Christ) was to sit on the right hand of God, until he (Christ) had become a universal conquerer. This prediction is in Psalms 110: 1.

Verse 36. Peter laid the foundation consisting of prophecy and its fulfillment, citing facts that could not be doubted nor disputed. Upon that foundation he declared that Jesus, the very one they had crucified, had been made by the God of Heaven, both *Lord* and *Christ*. The first word means a ruler, and the second denotes one who is anointed. The sentence means that God had anointed his Son to be the ruler of His people.

Verse 37. *Pricked* is from KATANUSO which Thayer defines, "To pain the mind sharply, agitate it vehemently." They were pained because they were convinced they had killed the very One whom God ordained to be the Saviour of the world. That fact also meant to them that some great condemnation was in store for them unless something could be done about it. In their grief and feeling of guilt, the only thing they could say was to ask the apostles what they should do.

Verse 38. This verse has two distinct parts; command and promise. The command would have to be obeyed at once in order to obtain the desired result, while the promise would be carried out according to the Lord's own plan, to be observed as we consider the conditions connected therewith. *Repent* means to turn from a sinful course and choose a righteous one. *Be baptized* means to be buried in water, the details of which will be discussed at chapter 8: 38. *For* is from *ergo*, which means in order to, or into, the remission of sins. The gift of the Holy Ghost (or Spirit) was the promise, and it meant that the Holy Ghost was to be given, not that it was to give something to anyone, for it is in no place spoken of as a giver. Besides, in chapter 10: 44, 45, the terms "Holy Ghost" and "the gift of the Holy Ghost" are used in the same sense, proving that the promise that Peter meant in this verse was the Holy Ghost was to be given. The inevitable question that comes up, is what was this gift or when was it to be given? This verse does not answer that question, hence we must look elsewhere for the answer. Chapter 19: 2 shows that men did not receive this Holy Ghost simultaneously with repentance and baptism, else Paul would not have asked the question he did, for he thought he was talking to people who had been baptized with "Christian baptism." The information we are seeking may be

found in chapter 8: 14-17. The people of Samaria had been baptized just as Peter commanded, yet they had not received the Holy Ghost until the apostles came and laid hands on them. Hence the conclusion is unavoidable, that when Peter made the promise in chapter 2: 38, he meant that if they would repent and be baptized, they would be entitled to the gift of the Holy Ghost whenever an apostle laid hands on them.

Verse 39. *The promise* that is meant may be learned from the companion passage in chapter 3: 25, where Peter is speaking on the same subject, but where he calls it "the covenant." It was first made to Abraham (Genesis 12: 3), and concerned both Jews and Gentiles. That is why our present verse says it is to all that are *afar off*. That same phrase is used in Ephesians 2: 17, where the context plainly indicates that it means the Gentiles. The promise was that both Jew and Gentile were to be offered the blessing of salvation through Christ, who was the promised descendant of Abraham.

Verse 40. To *exhort* means to insist on doing one's known duty. Peter had clearly shown the Jews their duty, then it was fitting that he should exhort them to do it. *Save yourselves* means for them to do their part in their salvation by performing the duty mentioned in verse 38. *Untoward* is from *SKOLIOS* which is defined, "perverse, wicked." To save themselves from that wicked generation, means to escape the fate awaiting it, by obeying the commands the apostle had just given.

Verse 41. *They that gladly received his word were baptized*. This is a very significant statement. Baptism, like all other commandments from the Lord, must be acts of faith in order to benefit one. And when a man has been convinced of the truth, and has been shown his duty as set forth in that truth, he will obey it without hesitation or question. As we proceed in the study of this book, it will frequently be observed that the act of baptism followed the belief of a sinner, and it will be stated in a manner that implies it to be a matter-of-course that if he believes the word he will obey. *Unto them* is not in the original but is supplied by the translators. However, the last verse of the chapter furnishes information that people who were saved (by obedience to the Gos-

pel) were added to the church. We do not know how many of the *three thousand* were baptized on that day, since the text does not deal with that question. But we may properly conclude that ere the day was gone, the "membership" of the newly-founded church had come to be that numerous. And then, as the days passed by, whenever a person obeyed the Gospel, the Lord added him to the church.

Verse 42. *They* means the *three thousand* (and all others daily being saved). *Continued steadfastly*. Both words come from the Greek word *PROSKARTEROO*, which Thayer defines, "to give constant attention to a thing." That explains how some of the items of the verse could be observed as the Lord expected, even though the nature of them required only that they be done periodically. One such item is the *breaking of bread*, which we know was to be done only on the first day of the week (chapter 20: 7). This verse is a historical statement of the general practice of the early disciples, and not a set form or order of worship for the public assembly. Besides, some of the items are too individual in their character to be restricted to the public assembly. *Apostles' doctrine* means the teaching of the apostles. In all of their religious activities, whether private or public, they were guided by the teaching that the inspired apostles had given and were giving them. *Fellowship* is from *KOINONIA*, which is defined in Thayer's lexicon, "The share which one has in anything, participation." That would include financial contribution, but does not apply to that item exclusively. And of course all true disciples would make their entire life a matter of prayer, in recognition of the need for divine guidance, and as expressions of their love for and devotion to the Lord.

Verse 43. This *fear* was not one of terror, but rather a feeling of profound awe settled upon the vast throng who had seen and heard such great things. They had witnessed the demonstrations that followed the descent of the Holy Spirit. They had also been brought to see the light of divine truth, and made to rejoice in the pardon of their sins. The *wonders and signs* were done by the apostles, not by the ones who had been baptized that day. This is another proof that they did not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost at the time of their bap-

tism, for if they had they would have been able to perform signs and wonders (chapter 10: 45, 46; 19: 6).

Verse 44. *Common* is from *KOINOS*, and Thayer defines it at this place with the one word that is used in the text. He then explains it to mean, "belonging to several." Robinson defines it, "common, shared alike by all." This will be more specifically brought out in the next verse.

Verse 45. *Possessions* is from *KTEMA*, and Robinson defines it, "a possession, property, estate," which agrees with the definition of Thayer. *Goods* is from a Greek word that has a more general meaning. But since the first word in the passage is shown to apply specifically to real estate, we know the second refers to their personal belongings. Many of these disciples had come from far countries to attend the feast of Pentecost. They had not intended remaining at Jerusalem so long, consequently had not made preparation for such a prolonged stay. In their newfound joy they were loath to leave the community. This induced the resident disciples to create this common fund by turning all their property into money and placing it in one pool, to be drawn from according to the needs of the various members. It should be remembered that no apostle instructed the disciples to start this movement, but it was purely a voluntary action upon the part of the disciples. The Bible in no place teaches or encourages the practice of communism or socialism. On the contrary, it teaches the principle of individual holding of property, granted and guaranteed by the law of the land, with the result that as long as the world stands there will be men who have titles to property, and those who have not; there will be rich and will also be poor people. (See Genesis 23: 17-20; Matthew 26: 11; 1 Corinthians 16: 2; Galatians 2: 10; James 2: 1-5; 4: 13, 14.) This arrangement of the community of goods was not instituted in any city outside of Jerusalem that we know of. It was not a divine system, and finally got some people into serious trouble as we shall see in a later chapter.

Verse 46. *Continuing* is from the same word as *continued steadfastly* in verse 42, and has the same definition in each passage. The *continuing* was done *daily*, hence we know the *breaking bread* was not the Lord's Supper, for that was done only on the first day

of the week (chapter 20: 7); it referred to partaking of food for material purposes in this passage. It was a season of general visiting and social happy times together as brothers and sisters in Christ. *Did eat their meat* means they partook of their food. *Singleness of heart* means with humbleness and sincerity.

Verse 47. *Favor* means good will and admiration. It was *the people* who had this feeling for the disciples, when they beheld how they loved each other. The opposition of the rulers had not yet been aroused, hence the general good attitude of the multitude had not been corrupted by the spirit of persecution. *Added* is from *PROSTHEMI*, which Thayer defines, "To add, i. e., join to, gather with." *Should* does not occur in the original as a separate word, but *should be saved* all comes from *sozo*. That word is defined by Robert Young, "To make or keep sound or safe." Robinson defines it, "To save, to deliver, to preserve safe." Thayer defines it, "To save, to keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction." The Englishman's Greek New Testament translates it, "were being saved." The Lord *added* these *saved* ones to the church, which agrees with Ephesians 5: 23, which says that Christ is the Saviour of the body, which is the church (Ephesians 1: 22, 23). Outward forms of church membership are necessary for the sake of order in the divine government, but unless the law pertaining to salvation (which is completed in baptism) is obeyed, all such forms of becoming members of a congregation will be ignored by the Lord.

ACTS 3

Verse 1. The *ninth* hour was 3 o'clock in the afternoon. There is no ordinance in either Old or New Testament that designates any certain time as *the hour of prayer*. Some pious Jews formed a practice of praying daily at regular hours (Psalms 55: 17; Daniel 6: 10), but it was a voluntary service. The "daily sacrifice" was required by the law of Moses (Numbers 28: 3-6), and this called for two lambs each day. The second one was offered "at even," and the margin words it, "between the two evenings," which was the same as our 3 o'clock, called *the ninth hour* in the present verse. The Jews formed the practice of going into the temple and engaging in a

prayer service at that time, while the priests were out at the altar performing the sacrifice. The apostles were going up to the temple at that time because they knew they would have opportunity of meeting the people, to whom they could preach the Gospel.

Verse 2. As the apostles approached the temple the following events took place. An "object of charity" was lying just outside of the temple, where the people coming and going would see him and perhaps bestow upon him a gift of money. This man was forty years old and had been a cripple from birth. The Old Testament does not give the special name of *beautiful* to any gate of the temple. The passage says it was *called* that, which indicates that the people had come to speak of it in that way, which probably was because of its appearance after Herod had remodeled and adorned the building (Luke 21: 5). Robinson has the following to say of this gate: "Supposed by some to have been the large gate leading from the court of the Gentiles to the court of the Israelites, over against the eastern side of the building, called by the Rabbins the gate of Nicanor, and described by Josephus as covered with plates of gold and silver, and very splendid and massive."

Verse 3. The original word for *alms* means generally any favor or mercy or pity bestowed upon an unfortunate person, but its most specific definition is, "a donation for the poor," and this is what the lame man asked of Peter and John.

Verse 4. When Peter told the lame man *to look on us*, he should have concluded that some kind of favor was in store for him other than a gift of money, for such an action would not have required that he look at them.

Verse 5. But the lame man had never been treated to anything but the kindness of those who carried him to the place daily, and the alms that people bestowed on him. Hence he did not form the conclusion here suggested, but instead he gave the apostles an earnest look, expecting to receive some money.

Verse 6. *Silver and gold have I none*. We are not to suppose that the apostles were paupers, but they had no occasion for carrying supplies of money around with them, for Jesus had assured them that the necessities of life

would be given them. In the present case however, if Peter had possessed an abundance of money, it would not have benefited the lame man physically as to his infirmity. He told the man to *rise up and walk*, but preceded the order with a statement as to the source of the power. We should understand that not only did Peter derive his ability to heal the man from the Lord, but he wished him also to know upon whom he was to trust for his recovery.

Verse 7. Miraculous cures may be performed with or without any outward cooperation on the part of the patient. Jesus required the blind man to go wash the clay off his eyes, but He previously had put the anointment on the eyes of the patient. Peter commanded the lame man to rise up and walk, but he encouraged him by taking the initiative and grasping his hand and helping him to arise. This verse tells us in what way the man was lame; it was a weakness in his feet. The mere act of taking him by the hand did not heal him, for any other person could have done that; there had to be some miraculous power exerted by the apostle. It is stated that the healing was *immediate*, which was always the case with genuine miraculous cures. Professed divine healers of today always require "time and patience" for their cases, which proves they are frauds.

Verse 8. A lame man might use enough will power to come to his feet, but he would not be able to show much energy in the enforced action. This man leaped up, and he did not stop with that; he walked and leaped alternately, and continued his movements along with the apostles, so that he entered with them into the temple. While doing all this he was *praising God*. Why did he do that, when it was Peter who had lifted him up? The answer is in the statement of the apostle that he was to arise in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. The man had been carried each day and laid by the gate. He knew that in that act those men had used more physical force upon him than Peter did, as far as the outward performance was concerned, and yet no improvement in his condition had ever been experienced. The only conclusion he could reach was that it was God working through Peter, and that caused him to give his praise to the right one.

Verse 9. The whole event was so evident and public that all the people saw it, and that means there were a great many who witnessed it, for it was in a prominent spot, and there were thousands of Jews in the city at that time.

Verse 10. *They knew* it was the man who had been seen at the gate of the temple, for he had appeared there daily for a long time, and it was easy to recognize him. The natural effect upon the people was that they were filled with wonder and amazement. They knew it was not their own imagination that was affecting them, nor could it have been a forced action on the part of the lame man, for they were too well acquainted with the nature of his case to allow such a conclusion.

Verse 11. *Held* is from *KRATEO*, and Robinson defines it in this place, "So to hold one fast, i. e., to hold fast to him, to cleave to him." Thayer defines it in the same way then gives the explanation, "To hold one fast in order not to be sent away." This action was perfectly natural. The man had been a cripple since his birth, and had to depend upon alms for a living. Now he was healed and had become an able-bodied man so that he could be on his own. However, since the condition was another one that might be described by the familiar phrase "too good to be true," he had a feeling of dependency that made him afraid to leave the apostles. Another thing that should be considered about his action, it emphasized the part the apostles had in the recovery. When the people saw this man clinging so firmly to the apostles, it announced publicly that they were the actors in the deed, and that the former lame man knew it. Another result that was natural was the gathering of *all the people* near the scene, for it was an extraordinary thing that had happened. *Solomon's porch* was a convenient and comfortable place for the crowd to gather; a description of this porch is given at John 10: 23.

Verse 12. Peter was able to speak with inspiration, but ordinary reasoning would have brought the conclusion indicated here. The people could see the lame man holding fast to the apostles, and as they were *greatly wondering*, it was because they thought these men had caused the patient to be cured through some mysterious virtue of their own. It would have been easy

for them to obtain a following from this multitude because of the frame of mind that possessed them. But Peter was the faithful apostle of Christ, and humbly told the crowd that it was not in them (the apostles) that the lame man had found his recovery.

Verse 13. The circumstance gave Peter another opportunity for preaching Christ to the people. The crowd was composed of Jews, and they were the people who were responsible for the condemnation of Jesus. They were acquainted with the Old Testament (John 5: 39), and knew about the promise that was made to the fathers that a descendant of theirs was to come into the world to bless the nations of the earth. Now Peter connected that promise with the very man they of this audience had caused to die. Peter showed them as being worse even than Pilate, who would have been willing to let Jesus go. The apostle told them that God had glorified that very man in spite of their intended destruction of his great plans. *Glorified* is from *doxazo*, which Thayer defines in this passage, "To exalt to a glorious rank or condition." It was a stinging rebuke to these people, not only to accuse them of condemning Jesus, but to be told that God had over-ruled their malicious attempt and had exalted their victim to a rank in glory.

Verse 14. This verse names two distinct crimes the Jews committed, either of which would have entitled them to the severest condemnation. It refers to the time when they were to name the prisoner to be released under a custom of that season (Luke 23: 16-21). They denied freedom to a holy and just person against whom no charge had been sustained. In their choice of prisoners they did not name one who was even an ordinary evil-doer, but called for a man who was a murderer and a member of a seditious gang.

Verse 15. The Jews could not lawfully put any man to death, and did not personally put Jesus on the cross. But Peter told them they had killed Him, and it was because they were the ones who caused it to be done. *Prince* is from a word that means the author or leader in an important movement. That is true of Christ as announced by John, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1: 4). The apostles almost invariably mentioned the resurrection of Jesus when-

ever they told of his death. Many persons have been killed by the people who were objectionable to them for some reason, but none of them ever lived again until the event of Christ. He not only came back to life, but God did the raising of him, thereby defeating the plans of the Jews who pretended to believe in Him, while disbelieving in his Son. Peter was not relating this to the multitude on some mere hearsay, but declared *we are witnesses*.

Verse 16. *Through faith in his name*. The name and power of Jesus would not have caused this man to be healed, had he not manifested faith in that name by making what attempt he could to arise. *The faith which is by him*. Not only was the lame man required to have faith in the name of Jesus, but Peter could perform the miracle only because he also had faith in the name of Jesus.

Verse 17. *Ignorance* does not excuse anyone in wrongdoing, but it may explain how it came about. The word is from *agnoia*, which Thayer defines, "Want of knowledge." The idea is different from being lacking in common intelligence, for then they might not have been held so strictly to account. But the information was available had they made use of it; they did not, and were like Israel of old who did not know, simply because they did not consider (Isaiah 1: 3). *Wot* is an obsolete word for "know" as the apostle was considering his own frame of mind. As to the *rulers*, they were the ones in power and who were chiefly responsible for the death of Jesus.

Verse 18. The Jews were condemned for having Jesus slain, because they had an evil motive in the act. But Peter informed them that in doing so, they fulfilled the words of the prophets concerning the fate that was to come upon the Son of God.

Verse 19. The first Gospel discourse is in chapter 2, which consists mainly of the story of Jesus, and closes with an exhortation to the hearers to recognize Him as the Lord. The present passage is the second discourse that is recorded, and consists of the same matter as the first, although the wording is somewhat different. The present verse corresponds with chapter 2: 38 in thought. "Repent and be baptized" is equivalent to *repent and be converted*. "For the remission of sins"

is the same as *that your sins may be blotted out*. "Gift of the Holy Ghost" corresponds with *times of refreshing*, and of course it all comes from the presence of the Lord.

Verse 20. Peter then deviates slightly in his subject matter, and speaks of the *sending of Jesus Christ* which refers to His second coming to earth; the same Jesus who was *preached* (prophesied about) before in the Scriptures.

Verse 21. The next phase of this discourse explains some things that must take place before Jesus comes again. *Receive* is used in the sense of giving a guest continued hospitality or reception, until it is the desired and proper time for him to leave. In the case of Jesus, that time will not come until certain things that were predicted of him have been fulfilled. Robinson defines the word in the Greek for *restitution*, "full establishment," and Peter tells us that he refers to the predictions that had been made by the holy prophets, that were to be accomplished by Christ. We understand these things were to be brought to pass through the services of the apostles, while Jesus is still on his Father's right hand in Heaven.

Verse 22. Peter next specifies one of the predictions that Moses made concerning the prophet who was to come up from among the Jewish people (Deuteronomy 18: 18-20). That prediction called upon the people to hear the prophet in whatever he said to them.

Verse 23. The fate of all who refused to hear (heed) that prophet was that *he be destroyed from among the people*. The form of that threat is based on the usages of the times of Moses, when the "law of sin and death" was in force (Romans 8: 2). Its meaning under Christ is that all who refuse to hear him, will be condemned as disobedient in this world, and will be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" when he comes again (2 Thessalonians 1: 9).

Verse 24. *Prophets, from Samuel*. There were other men before the days of Samuel who made prophetic statements, so there must have been a special sense in which he was regarded as one. The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia says: "Samuel was not only a prophet like others, but he was also the first of the regular succession of

prophets." 1 Kings 19: 16 says God spoke to Elijah as follows: "Elisha the son of Shaphat shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room," which verifies the quotation from the Encyclopedia, and shows there was a succession of national prophets. The mention of Samuel by Peter indicates that he was the first of the prophets in that succession. Other prophets after Samuel spoke of the time when the promise made to the fathers would be fulfilled.

Verse 25. *Covenant* in this verse is the same as the *promise* in chapter 2: 39. *Children of the prophets and of the covenant*. How could men be children of a covenant? The word *children* is from *huioi*, and Thayer explains that one meaning of the word is, "One to whom anything belongs; those to whom the prophetic and covenant promises belong; for whom a thing is destined." Peter meant that the people to whom he was speaking were intended by the Lord as among those who were to be benefited by the covenant. It is the same as the statement in chapter 2: 39 that "the promise is unto you and your children."

Verse 26. *Unto you first*. Peter was speaking to Jews, and he meant to tell them that they were to receive the blessings of the promised seed of Abraham before the Gentiles. (See chapter 13: 46; Romans 1: 16.) *Turning away every one of you from his iniquities* in this discourse, corresponds with "save yourselves from this untoward generation," in chapter 2: 40.

ACTS 4

Verse 1. The first Gospel discourse was delivered in some building suitable for an auditorium, not especially connected with the Jewish institutions. The present one was in the temple, which was the capitol of the religious system that had been established by Moses. That is why the *priests* and other public men became stirred up over the preaching. *Captain* is from *strategos*, which originally means "the commander of an army." Thayer explains it (citing a passage in Josephus) to mean, "The commander of the *Levites*, who kept guard in and around the temple." The Sadducees were a sect of the Jews who did not believe in the resurrection. A full description of this sect is given with the comments on Matthew 16: 12. All of the classes named came upon the apostles

as they were preaching to the people in the temple.

Verse 2. *Grieved* is from DIAPNEO, which the Thayer lexicon defines at this place, "To be troubled, displeased, offended, pained, worked up." The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection and would naturally resent any teaching in favor of the subject. The main cause of this displeasure, however, was that the apostles were telling that it was *through Jesus* that the dead would be resurrected. They had already come to hate Him because of His exposure of their sins and inconsistencies (Matthew 16: 1-4; 22: 23, 34), and now to have Him held up to the people as the hope of the resurrection, a doctrine they rejected with all the bitterness possible, was more than they could stand.

Verse 3. *Laid hands on them* means they arrested the apostles. *Hold* is another word for "prison," but they were put there and held "without charge" for the time, because it was too late in the day to have any hearing on the case.

Verse 4. *Howbeit* is not in the original text, and does not serve any important purpose, although it is not out of line with the thought of the passage. The original does justify the statement that *many believed*. That is a frequent expression used by the inspired writers to mean that the people obeyed the commands given them. If the word is used in a restricted sense it will say so, as in the case of the rulers in John 12: 42. *Number of the men was*, etc. The Englishmen's Greek New Testament renders this passage, "the number of men became about five thousand." Moffatt translates it, "bringing up their number to about five thousand." It means that the new believers made on this occasion, added to what they already had, made the total number of disciples in fellowship with the apostles about five thousand.

Verses 5, 6. This paragraph shows a meeting of the *council* or Sanhedrin (verse 15), to see what could be done about the stir that was being caused over the work and preaching of the apostles. According to Thayer, the *rulers* were leading men of the Jews who were members of the Sanhedrin. The *elders* in this case is defined by Thayer, "Members of the great council or Sanhedrin," then explains "because in early times the rulers of the people, judges, etc., were selected from the

elderly men." *Scribes* came to have a very influential position in the time of Christ and the apostles. A full description of the word is given with the comments at Matthew 13: 52. *Annas* and *Caiaphas* are both mentioned in connection with the high priesthood. That was due to some interference by the secular government in the affairs of the Jews. (See the comments at Luke 3: 2.) All we know of *John* and *Alexander* is that they were leading men in Jerusalem at this time, and related in some way to the high priest. Others of the high priesthood who were not so outstanding are merely referred to as such.

Verse 7. After this meeting of the Sanhedrin was called, they brought Peter and John out of the prison where they had been held overnight, and placed them in the midst of the assembly. The last word of the verse is a pronoun that refers to the healing of the lame man. No attempt was made to deny the fact for it was too well known for them to try that plan in their persecution of the apostles (verse 16). Hence they were foolish enough to think they could oppose the work by showing that it was done illegally. As though any law could be made that would forbid curing a man of a physical infirmity! *Power* is from DUNAMIS and means strength or ability. This was another question that showed how desperate the council was in its desire to punish the apostles. Whatever might have been the power that was used, if it actually healed a man of a life-long infirmity, and without doing anyone else any harm, there could not possibly be any wrong about it. But these persecutors would not depend solely on the one point of attack; they also demanded to know by what *name* they had done the deed, which means by what authority they did it. One of Thayer's definitions of the original word is, "To do a thing by one's command and authority, acting on his behalf, promoting his cause." This was also a foolish question, and could not in any way touch the matter of right and wrong in the deed performed. If a man was pretending to offer remedial services to the public independent of the laws of the land, and was suspected of defrauding people, it would be entirely proper to require him to "show his license." But nothing of that kind was being done, for the actual healing of the patient had been

done without any infringement of authority, either human or divine. However, the apostles did actually perform their deed under authority to act, as we shall soon see.

Verse 8. *Filled with the Holy Ghost.* This does not mean that Peter just then was filled with the Spirit, for he received that in the second chapter in fulfillment of the promise made the apostles by Jesus (John 14: 16), and it was to *abide with them forever*. The writer means that Peter was qualified to speak with authority to this audience, because he was in possession of the Holy Ghost or Spirit. All persons present were expected to hear what Peter said, but the rulers and elders were the ones who had taken the lead in this action against the apostles, hence it was appropriate to make his address especially to them.

Verse 9. *To be examined* means to be questioned and investigated. Peter did not object to being questioned, but he did not consider that they had even accused him of anything wrong, much less been shown any testimony that was claimed to hint at such a thing. Instead, he virtually held his investigators up to shame by the statement that the investigation was over a *good deed done to the impotent (weak) man*.

Verse 10. In all of the circumstances that ever came upon the apostles that concerned their work, they never failed to use the opportunity for preaching Christ to the hearers. Peter not only told them that it was in the name of Jesus that the deed was done, but he reminded them that it was the same person whom they had crucified. This was not said in the spirit of petty resentment, for an inspired apostle would not need to resort to that sort of speech. It was in order to show them that even death on the cross did not prevent Him from accomplishing his intended work for mankind. As definite proof that death could not overthrow the plans of Jesus, Peter reminded them that God had raised his Son from the grave.

Verse 11. While the vital facts concerning the experiences of Christ were under consideration in this "investigation," Peter cited these leading Jews to a prophecy in Psalms 118: 22, which they had fulfilled by slaying Jesus. And when God overruled their wicked deed and brought his Son out from the grave, and seated him on the throne

in Heaven, he caused that Son to be the *head of the corner*.

Verse 12. All of the discourses of the apostles contained the same thoughts, even though they were not always worded alike. This verse corresponds to chapter 2: 36, 38 and 3: 16, 19, and is similar in thought to the "closing exhortations" of evangelistic sermons today. Peter made a strong and exclusive claim for Christ. He not only declared that salvation could be had in Him, but that no salvation could be found in any other. *Under heaven given among men*. There is much truth involved in this phrase, for it designates the only part of the universe where any means of salvation is being offered. *Under heaven* would denote that no salvation is planned (or needed) for beings living in Heaven. *Among men* restricts the realm outside of heaven to the place where men live as human beings, and that would exclude those in the unseen world or Hades, even though they are "under heaven." *Must* is from *dei* which Thayer defines, "It is necessary, there is need of, it behooves, is right and proper." Robinson gives the general definition, "It is binding on anyone, it behooves one to do, i. e., one must, one ought." He then says that in the New Testament it means, "It behooves, it must needs, one must or ought." The passage does not teach that anyone *must* be saved at all, for the matter of accepting salvation is one to be decided by man; "Whosoever *will* may come." The verse means that if a man is saved, it *must* be through the name (or authority) of Christ.

Verse 13. The lexicon defines the original for *boldness* to mean, "Freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speech; openly, frankly; free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage." *Perceived* is from *KATALAMBANO*, which Thayer defines at this place, "To lay hold of with the mind; to understand, learn, comprehend." *Unlearned* and *ignorant* does not refer to their natural intelligence, for even their enemies did not think the apostles were lacking along that line; had they thought so, they would not have been so uneasy about their influence with the people. The phrase means the apostles were not cultured in the art of learning as taught in the public institutions, but were private citizens without what the world would call "education." The leaders in the San-

hedrin perceived (realized) that the apostles were without these advantages of learning, yet beheld their boldness and ability of speech, and that caused them to marvel. They had to account for it in some way, which they did by concluding that the men *had been with Jesus*. These Jewish leaders did not know what Jesus had taught his apostles, but many of them had heard Him speak and had known how bold and outspoken he was. Now they conclude that the apostles had been with Jesus so much that they had imbibed the same spirit of courage and force of speech, which made them (the leaders in the Sanhedrin) fearful of the influence they might have over the common people.

Verse 14. *It refers to the boldness of Peter and John*. The reason the Jews could not say anything against their outspoken claims for the power of Jesus by which they were working, was that the man whom they had healed was right there with them, and was *standing*, something no one had ever seen him do before.

Verse 15. *Commanded them* means they ordered the apostles to leave the Sanhedrin while a consultation was being held. It was much like the circumstance where a jury is taken out of the court room, while the lawyers argue over some question of the testimony, as if they feared the men might catch some truth they did not want them to hear.

Verse 16. These Jews knew they could not deny the fact of the lame man's recovery. And it would not have been so bad if only they knew about it; but it was *manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem*.

Verse 17. *Threaten* means an indefinite warning that something very bad will be done, without stating what that will be. It is an intimation that does not have any specific charge, as the word is being used in this case. It is very much like the warning of some irresponsible parent or guardian, "If you do not behave yourself, you will wish that you had." These rulers knew they could not cite any law that was being violated by the preaching of the apostles, hence they thought they could daunt them by their cowardly threats.

Verse 18. The leaders in the Sanhedrin concluded that they did not have any recourse to the law, hence all they could do was to threaten the apostles.

They brought their victims back into the assembly and ordered them to cease speaking in Christ's name.

Verse 19. The apostles made a respectful but firm reply to the order against speaking in the name of Christ. They made no reference to the *threat*, doubtless regarding such a subject such a petty thing that it was beneath their dignity. But they put the issue in its true light by showing that the leaders of the Sanhedrin were demanding more consideration for themselves than they allowed the apostles to show for God.

Verse 20. *Cannot but speak* has a double force as to obligation. The apostles had seen Jesus after his resurrection, and had heard him command them to tell the story to others. Therefore when they preached the Gospel of Christ they were dealing with matters of evidence on which they could speak without any guesswork. They also were under the duty to speak these things to the world, or else they would be guilty of failing in their obligation to Him who had commissioned them for the work.

Verse 21. *Because of the people*. Public sentiment is a powerful influence, and when it is aroused in favor of a good cause, not many leaders are willing to defy it, especially if they are desirous of maintaining a popular standing. The Sanhedrin officials knew there was nothing in the deed of healing a lame man that could call for any punishment, and if they attempted such a thing the public would unite against it, because they had already expressed an attitude of glory to God for the good deed.

Verse 22. It would have been useless to claim the whole circumstance was a delusion, for the man was more than forty years old who had been healed. A mere child or very young man might have been said to be ready for improvement through the course of nature. Such a theory would not be accepted concerning a man forty years old.

Verse 23. *Their own company* means the believers who were assembled (verse 31), no doubt waiting to see the outcome of the action against the apostles. When Peter and John were released they went and joined the gathering of disciples and made a report.

Verse 24. The report did not dis-

courage the believers but strengthened their faith. It did not even cause any dissension among them, for they spoke *with one accord*. They offered a prayer to God whom they recognized to be the Maker of all things.

Verse 25. One reason the disciples were not discouraged, was the fact that what had occurred to the apostles was a fulfillment of one of the prophecies. They were acquainted with the predictions that David made in Psalms 2: 1, 2, but acknowledged that it was God speaking through the mouth of the Psalmist. The prediction is in the form of a question, because the prophetic style is not always in the regular form of literal language. *Heathen* is from *ETHNOS*, which means the nations in general who are not Jews. The leaders of the Sanhedrin were Jews, but they could accomplish their purposes against Christ and the apostles only by resorting to the Roman courts which were Gentile. *Rage* is from *PHRUSO*, and its general definition is, "To neigh, stamp the ground, prance, snort; to be high-spirited." *Imagine* is from *MELETAO*, which Thayer defines, "To meditate or devise, contrive." *Vain* is from *KENOS* and is defined, "Vain, fruitless, without effect." The idea is that the enemies of the Lord planned and schemed to destroy the work He was doing on the earth, even to the extent of persecuting his Son first, then the servants who were doing His work. But the prediction was that their schemes would prove to be in vain, for God would finally overrule all to the good of the world.

Verse 26. This verse is somewhat indefinite, meaning that the powers of government in various domains among men would be arrayed against the Lord (the Divine Ruler) and his Christ (or Anointed One).

Verse 27. *Of a truth*. It was a true prediction that David made, for such opposition actually took place within the knowledge of these disciples. Herod was in the line set up by the Maccabees, and was supposed to represent the interests of the Jews. Pilate was a governor in the Roman Empire, and represented the heathen or Gentile nations. *Gentiles and people of Israel* are named as a general summing up of the forces that worked against the Lord. The Herod who is named in this verse is Antipas, son of Herod the

Great; he is the one mentioned in Luke 23: 7-12.

Verse 28. They did not do this planning for the purpose of carrying out the work of God, for they were enemies of Him. The statement means that their schemes were what God had aforetime determined should be done. But although their work was according to the plans of God, they were not justified, for their motive was wicked throughout.

Verse 29. The disciples called the attention of the Lord to the threatenings of the Sanhedrin, but not to ask for any personal relief from persecutions. Instead, they prayed for divine help for the speakers of truth, that they might be able to speak the word *with all boldness*. The last word is from the same original as in 13, meaning to be outspoken and fearless in proclaiming the truth. They were not worrying about what sufferings it might bring on them; they were concerned only in the effectiveness of the truth that was going to be offered to the people.

Verse 30. Knowing that human might alone would not avail, they asked the Lord to confirm the preaching by demonstrations of miraculous power. It should be observed that they wished all of this to be done in the name of Jesus, the very One whose name they had been forbidden by the Sanhedrin to proclaim.

Verse 31. In the days of miracles, God sometimes answered prayers with a physical demonstration, or by something that could be discerned by the natural sense (John 12: 27-30), and the present case is another of such an evidence. *Were all filled with the Holy Ghost*. In the book of Acts there are no less than ten places where the expression to be "full" or "filled" with the Holy Ghost is used. It is said of both official and unofficial disciples; sometimes applying to the apostles and at others referring to the ordinary disciples. Since we know that the qualifications of the apostles were greater than those of any other Christians, we should understand that the expression under consideration is one with various shades of meaning, and the connection must always be considered in each instance for determining the force of the term. It would be natural to ask how two people could be "full" of anything, and yet

one of them have more of it than the other. The passage in John 3: 34 should always be remembered when the subject of the Holy Ghost or Spirit is being studied. That statement shows that the Spirit can be measured or limited according to the will of God. But the mistake that is commonly made is to limit the word "full" or "measure" to the one quality of volume. But that is not a correct or necessary conclusion. A room could be "full" of smoke and still be capable of admitting more of it by making it more dense. A disciple could be full of the Holy Ghost, yet the density of it not be such as to enable the possessor to perform the same works as could the apostles. And so in the present verse, they were filled with the Holy Ghost in such measure or density or strength, that it encouraged them to speak the word *with boldness*. In the case of the apostles, the measure was such that they could testify *with great power*, which was what the other disciples prayed for in verse 30.

Verse 32. *Was his own* (personally), but that it was to be deposited in the common stock of money. For a complete discussion of this subject, see chapter 2: 44, 45.

Verse 33. The *great power* came in answer to the prayer of the other disciples in verse 30, and it consisted in the miraculous deeds that they performed upon the people. The question might be asked, what would the miraculous performances of the apostles have to do with the resurrection of Jesus. It confirmed the testimony they were giving that they had seen Jesus alive after his death on the cross. Had they been false witnesses of that claim, they never could have performed the miracles, for God would not work with them in their activities. All of this proved that when they affirmed that Jesus had appeared to them after his resurrection, they were telling the truth.

Verse 34. As to the merits of this community of resources, see the comments at chapter 2: 44, 45. For the present verse and onward, we shall study the outworkings of the system with various kinds of disciples.

Verse 35. The money received for their property was deposited with the apostles. That was logical since no other officials had been designated for any special work.

Verse 36, 37. We might wonder at the purpose of this paragraph, as it seems to be mentioned casually without any connection with the line of narrative being run. But it really does have a related purpose in what Luke knew he was about to report on the subject. There was to be given the sad story of some people who met with disaster because of their dishonesty. The present instance was given first to show that some disciples fulfilled their promise and came up to the agreement without a fault. The details of identity for this man are important because of the prominent place Barnabas occupies later in the work of the Lord. We shall hear much of him while studying this book, and even in one of the epistles of Paul he will be named (1 Corinthians 9: 6).

ACTS 5

Verse 1. This verse gives the brief but important information that both Ananias and his wife acted in the transaction. I do not know what arrangements could be had in those times as to joint titles to property. However, the fact remains that the husband and wife acted jointly in the disposal of their property.

Verse 2. *Kept back part of the price*. There was no wrong in this for the whole system was voluntary to begin with. This item will be noticed again in a later verse. *Being privy to it*. This phrase is from *SUNEMON* which Thayer defines, "To see (have seen) together with others." The Englishman's Greek New Testament renders it, "being aware of it." The husband doubtless took the lead in the transaction, but the wife's knowledge of what was being done made her a full partaker in the deed. The whole family of Achan was stoned because the goods was stored in the tent, so that they had knowledge of it (Joshua 7: 21). If a person has knowledge of an evil deed and does not object to it, he is thereby made as guilty as the actual perpetrator. However, the wife of Ananias went further than guilty knowledge as we shall soon learn.

Verse 3. Jesus said that the devil is the father of lies (John 8: 44), hence Peter told Ananias that Satan had caused him to lie. Keeping back part of the money is mentioned again in connection with the sin of Ananias, but that is still not what constituted his sin. The mere fact of retaining

part of the money would not be a lie, but the cause of his guilt will be shown before the case is finished.

Verse 4. This verse clearly shows that Ananias could have kept possession of his land and not been blamed. And even after he sold it, he could have kept all of the money and still been guiltless, since no divine command had been given for any of this arrangement. Not only so, but Ananias could have brought a part of the money only and have been accepted. The sin is mentioned in the close of this verse, which was the committing of a lie as will be explained soon. And what made it all the more condemnable was their attempt to deceive man, thinking thereby to escape the judgment of God. But Peter informed Ananias that he had not lied to men (only) but unto God.

Verse 5. *Hearing these words.* Even a human court of justice does not sentence and execute a prisoner without first informing him of the crime laid against him. Hence it was just for Ananias first to hear the accusation he was under, after which he was stricken with immediate death. *Great fear* means that a profound feeling of awe came over all the people by the mighty demonstration of the Lord's wrath against sin. Peter never as much as touched Ananias, yet at his words of denunciation of the shameful attempt to deceive the Lord, he fell down dead as if by a stroke of lightning. The crowd was thus made to know that the Lord had sent the punishment.

Verse 6. *Wound him up* means the young men drew his garments up close around him, which was the only burial shroud that was given this unworthy character. He was taken out for immediate burial, as it was sometimes the custom anyway to bury on the day of death.

Verse 7. Had Ananias and his wife come together in the first place, she might have tried to change her story when she saw the fate of her husband. But that would have been a change outwardly only, and one born of terror and not from a godly sorrow. The text says only that she *came in*; nothing said about her having any of the money. Of course it would have been foolish for her to bring it, for her husband had already brought all of the amount they had received for the

land according to the story in their conspiracy. So her presence at this time was only to confirm the statement of her husband.

Verse 8. *For so much.* This phrase is all from resources which Thayer defines at this place, "For so much," just as it is in the text. Robinson combines his definition and explanation in one sentence and gives us, "Of a specific amount, so much and no more." The necessary conclusion is that when Sapphira came into Peter's presence, he named the amount that her husband had brought, then asked her if that was exactly the price they had received for their property. She confirmed it by repeating the very word the apostle had used. This was the first time that the lie of which they were accused of doing was directly stated as far as the record informs us. But Peter did not have to hear the falsehood verbally for his own information; he was being informed by the Holy Spirit. The statement was drawn from her so that all could know about the wicked attempt of this couple to practice deception.

Verse 9. It is always bad for men to commit wrong when they act individually, but worse when they conspire with others in the act. The daughters of Zelophehad made this point in their plea for their fathers' estate (Numbers 27: 1-7), and the Lord accepted their reasoning. Peter charged Ananias and his wife with *agreeing together* in their covetous lie. He accused them of trying to *tempt the Spirit of the Lord*, and such a sin was condemned even in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 6: 16). The text does not inform us directly as to any instructions previously given to these burial servants. However, the necessary inference is that they were told to "stand by" and complete their task when it was ready for them. In compliance with such an understanding, they were at that very moment *at the door*, waiting to perform their duty in the sad affair.

Verse 10. *Yielded up the ghost* means her spirit left her body as was done in the case of her husband. This gives us another instance that proves there is something in a human being besides his body and that they separate when death occurs. This woman's body was buried in the same tomb as that of her husband.

Verse 11. This was the same kind of fear that is mentioned in verse 5, except that with *the church* it would include a feeling of reverence for the majesty of the Lord.

Verse 12. There was a continual need for the evidence of signs and wonders at that time, because the New Testament had not been composed and the people did not have any written instructions. But when the apostles performed the miracles it proved them to be the true servants of God. When they spoke to the multitudes, therefore, they were heard as the authentic representatives of the Lord. At the time of these events the assembly of all the people in general was in Solomon's porch, the same place where they saw the lame man who had been healed (chapter 3: 11).

Verse 13. *The rest* refers to unconverted persons, but not to all such, for it immediately says *the people* magnified them. Hence the *rest* must refer especially to those not favorably disposed toward the apostles and other faithful disciples. They would not *join themselves* to them means they stayed away from the assembly. But some others were sufficiently interested to remain in the gathering, and even *magnified* (lauded or admired) the apostles.

Verse 14. The aforesaid conclusion is justified by this verse which says that *believers were added to the Lord*.

Verse 15. *Insomuch* should be connected with the statement in verse 12, about the "signs and wonders" that were performed by the apostles. Those wonders had produced so much interest among the people that they began to bring their sick folks into the vicinity. They had so much faith in the work of the apostles that even the presence of Peter was thought by them to be sufficient to heal them. Such an act was like those performed by the woman in Mark 5: 27, and the men in Matthew 14: 36.

Verse 16. This verse tells us that the people were not disappointed in their efforts recorded in the preceding one, for they were *healed every one*. The healing was done by the Lord as a reward for the faith that had been shown by their actions. *Vexed with unclean spirits* is the same as being possessed of devils. (See the note on the subject of being possessed of devils at Matthew 8: 28.)

Verse 17. The Sadducees are mentioned especially as being in sympathy with the high priest in opposition to the apostles. That is understandable because they were disbelievers in the resurrection, which was the outstanding fact that the apostles had been stressing in their work in connection with the story of Christ.

Verse 18. It has been a prominent weakness of man from the beginning that if he does not like the teaching someone is giving, the way to stop it is by persecuting the teacher. Jeremiah was put into a dungeon because the king did not like his teaching (Jeremiah 38: 6), and John the Baptist was imprisoned and slain because of his teaching that was objectionable to some wicked people (Matthew 14: 1-11). The Sadducees thought they could stop the preaching of a resurrection by imprisoning the apostles. *Common prison* means one "belonging to the people or state, public." It was the kind of detention place where captives in time of war were locked up.

Verse 19. The tomb of Joseph that had been sealed with a Roman stamp was no hindrance to the act of an angel in opening the place (Matthew 28: 2). Likewise, the Lord's angel was able to open the door of this public prison and free the apostles.

Verse 20. The angel did not tell them to "make good their escape" and flee while they had a chance. That is what he would have done, had his purpose been only to help them to avoid further persecution. Instead, he told them to go into the temple, the most public place in the city, and resume their preaching of the same facts that had got them into trouble in the first place. Life is from *zoë*, which Thayer defines at this place, "Real life after the resurrection." Robinson defines it, "Eternal life, salvation." Since the Greek word generally means life of any kind, we can understand why the angel specified *this* life in his instruction to the apostles. The great issue at that time was the question of the resurrection which the Sadducees denied. That would make it especially appropriate for them to emphasize the truth of the resurrection, even in the face of possible further and more bitter persecution.

Verse 21. This "jail delivery" by the angel was made in the night, and the apostles made no delay in carrying out the instructions of the angel, but en-

tered the temple *early in the morning* and taught. All of this was unknown to the Jews, who called a meeting of the Sanhedrin in the morning to handle the case of the apostles, and sent officers to the prison to bring the captives into court.

Verses 22, 23. In another case where Peter was miraculously released from prison (chapter 12: 19), the keepers were put to death; we are not told why it was not done in this instance. An angel may be invisible if he wishes to be, but that was not indicated here, for no uncertainty was manifested by the apostles about whether they had actually seen or heard anyone speaking to them. The only explanation that can be offered is that some kind of miracle was performed that prevented the keepers from seeing what was done. The men were not taken out through some "hole in the wall" at the rear of the building, for the account states that the angel opened the prison doors, the very spot where the keepers were found standing faithfully attending to their duty. It was a demonstration that God is able to care for his own, even in circumstances where "no earthly help is nigh."

Verse 24. *Doubted* is from a word that means to wonder or be perplexed. Grow is from *GINOMAI*, which has such a wide range of meanings that it would be hard to settle on a definite one in any one place. Some idea of the word may be gathered from the fact that in the King James Version, the word is translated by 39 different terms; one of them is "be," used 249 times. The verse simply means the captain and chief priests did not know what to make of the situation revealed by the report.

Verse 25. It would be difficult to imagine the surprise these Jewish leaders must have felt upon the news of this verse. They were already perplexed over the mere absence of the apostles from the prison, with the parts of the building intact and the keepers at their post of duty. They might finally have recomposed themselves and made further investigation with a view of discovering some unfaithfulness in the keepers. But before they had time for anything of the kind, here came the officers with this strange report. That would shut out any surmise of crookedness on the part of the keepers, for had the apostles been able and disposed to bribe the

keepers, it would have been from a motive of cowardice, and in that case they would have fled from the city.

Verse 26. In view of the foregoing considerations, they could but conclude that some unseen power stronger than theirs was working on behalf of the apostles, and that it would be dangerous for them to mistreat their prisoners. *Without violence* means they did not use or even threaten to use physical force upon the apostles. Had they done so, public sentiment that was on the side of the apostles was so strong, that the officers would have suffered violence from the people.

Verse 27. The *council* was the Sanhedrin, the highest court the Jews were allowed to have in the time of Christ and the apostles. It had the power to arrest a man and examine him, and pass its own judgment upon the case. But if it passed a verdict of capital punishment, the case had to be taken before the secular court that operated under the Romans before it could be executed.

Verse 28. The faithfulness of the apostles in preaching the Gospel of Christ was proved by the statement of these enemies, that they had *filled Jerusalem with it. Bring this man's blood upon us*. These rulers knew that if the people were fully informed of the story of Jesus as he was dealt with in Jerusalem, they would hold them (the Jewish rulers) responsible for His death. In a threatening attitude, they reminded the apostles of their order not to teach in the name of Christ.

Verse 29. *We ought to obey God rather than men*. This is one of the most important sentences in the New Testament concerning the conduct of man. It states a rule or principle that should be observed whenever two or more requirements are made on one that conflict with each other, and yet where they come from sources that are supposed to have authority to command. For instance, children are commanded to obey their parents in all things (Colossians 3: 20); wives are commanded to submit themselves unto their husbands (Ephesians 5: 22), and Christians are commanded to be subject unto the *higher powers* or laws of the land (Romans 13: 1). If any one of these sources of authority should give a command that would interfere with one's duty to God, then that child

or wife or disciple should refuse to obey it, regardless of the possible consequences.

Verse 30. Having made the reply shown in the preceding verse, the apostles began to preach to these wicked Jews the very doctrine they had forbidden them to preach anywhere. As was always the case, they began their story with the resurrection of Jesus. But they also connected that subject with the guilt of their hearers in the death of the One in whose name they were preaching.

Verse 31. *Exalted with his right hand.* Other translations word it "at" or "to" his right hand, and likewise the lexicon so defines it. The word *right* in this place comes from *DEXIOS*, which never means "right" in contrast with "wrong," but always means the right hand instead of the left, and hence has no moral significance. It is the rule for men to use their right hand in their one-handed manual activities, while it is an exception to use the left. When such an exception exists the writer will generally call attention to it (Judges 3: 15; 20: 16). There is no information in the Bible why God created man thus, we only know it is so. And the fact has been a source of some figurative uses of the word, meaning the more exalted or honorable place with reference to the person of God or Christ or any other being of dignity. God overruled the wicked purposes of the Jews and exalted his Son to be a Prince (leader) and a Saviour for all who would accept him. *Give repentance* means to give Israel the chance to repent (reform) their lives, with the promise that their sins would be forgiven.

Verse 32. *We are his witnesses.* This denotes that the apostles were witnesses to the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead. *So is also the Holy Ghost.* Jesus had said (John 16: 7) that if he did not go away (back to Heaven) the Comforter (Holy Ghost) would not come. Therefore, the fact that He did come and was possessed by disciples, was a proof (witness or testimony) that Jesus had arisen from the dead and had ascended to his Father. As to how or when the gift of the Holy Ghost was received, see the comments on chapter 2: 38.

Verse 33. *Cut* is from *DIAPHRO*, which Thayer defines at this place, "to be sawn through mentally," and explains

it to mean, "to be rent with vexation." This was different from the case in chapter 2: 37, which says they were "pricked in their heart," which means they were overwhelmed with a conviction of guilt. In the present instance the Jewish leaders were overcome with anger, because they realized that everything the apostles said was true, yet they were not in a penitent frame of mind. Instead of wanting to do the right thing as did the ones on Pentecost, they plotted to bring violence upon the apostles. *Took counsel* denotes that they held a consultation to decide on some means by which they could have the apostles slain. They knew they would have to do some kind of scheming to get it done, for they could not lawfully slay anybody (John 18: 31).

Verse 34. Gamaliel was a member of the Sanhedrin, the man referred to by Paul in Chapter 22: 3. He was a *doctor* or teacher of the law of Moses. We know nothing about his qualifications of education in the branches of secular learning. The frequent expressions that represent him as a "professor" in the sense that term is used in connection with schools of literary training are only guesswork. But he did have a good reputation among the people, and his advice was regarded with respect.

Verse 35. Gamaliel advised the council to be careful how they proceeded against the apostles. But he did not ask them to act solely on his general suggestion; he proposed to support it with some facts with which they were evidently acquainted, or at least which they accepted as true due to their respect for Gamaliel.

Verse 36. Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Bible Dictionary says the following about this Theudas: "A Jewish revolutionist in the reign of Augustus [Caesar] who instigated a political uprising in Palestine that came to an inglorious end." We may also read the account of Josephus in his *Antiquities*, Book 20, Chapter 5, Section 1, as follows: "Now it came to pass, while Fadus was procurator [agent] of Judea, that a certain magician, whose name was Theudas, persuaded a great part of the people to take their effects with them, and follow him to the river Jordan; for he told them he was a prophet, and that he would, by his own command, divide the river, and afford them an easy passage over it; and many were deluded

by his words. However, Fadus did not permit them to make any advantage of his wild attempt, but sent a troop of horsemen out against them; who, falling upon them unexpectedly, slew many of them and took many of them alive. They also took Theudas alive, and cut off his head, and carried it to Jerusalem." Some historians question whether this is the same Theudas as the one Luke writes about, while others say he is the same. All agree, however, that the account in Josephus is true, and we know it corresponds with the description as Gamaliel gave it.

Verse 37. I shall quote from Josephus, Wars. Book 2, Chapter 8, Section 1: "Under his [Coponius, an agent] administration it was that a certain Galilean, whose name was Judas, prevailed with his countrymen to revolt; and said they were cowards, if they would endure to pay a tax to the Romans, and would, after God, submit to mortal men as their lords. This man was a teacher of a peculiar sect of his own, and was not at all like the rest of those their leaders." As a further support of the account of Gamaliel touching the downfall of the claims of Judas, I shall quote Josephus, Antiquities, Book 20, Chapter 5, Section 2: "And besides this, the sons of Judas of Galilee were now slain; I mean of that Judas who caused the people to revolt, when Cyrenius came to take account of the estates of the Jews" [for the purpose of taxing them].

Verses 38. 39. Gamaliel based his reasoning on the outcome of the historic cases to which he referred. He was considering the subject very much along the line of some familiar sayings that "history repeats itself," or that "time will tell." On that principle, he thought these Jewish leaders need not be so concerned about the activities of the apostles. He was correct in saying that if their work was of God, they would not be able to overthrow it. This passage has been used by professed disciples today, to show that we should not oppose any new doctrine or institution that might appear among us, but should let time decide whether it is right or wrong. There are at least two phases of this reasoning that shows it to be a perversion. Gamaliel was only a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, and had no special authority that we know of.

The most that could be said about his speech was that it was his personal judgment as to the better procedure to follow toward the apostles, and hence it was no authentic principle on which to handle the question of conduct in the affairs of the church.

Again, even if it had been a statement produced by approval of the Lord, that would not make it a proper rule today. The New Testament was not in existence at that time, and hence there was no written document by which to test new teachers or new propositions. Today we have the completed book given to the church by the inspired apostles. If something appears among us that is new (to us), and that could easily occur, we do not have to wait until experience has tested it, but can learn at once whether it is "of God," by examining it in the light of the New Testament. (See 1 Peter 4: 11.)

Verse 40. The leaders of the Sanhedrin accepted the advice of Gamaliel, not to do anything too rash against the apostles. It was not because of any just feeling of righteousness or fair consideration for the prisoners, for they just could not stand to let them go until they had given them a parting threat accompanied with a beating.

Verse 41. It was and still is an honor to suffer persecution for the name of Jesus (1 Peter 4: 16): it indicates that one is living a godly life (2 Timothy 3: 12).

Verse 42. Their persecutions did not intimidate the apostles, even to the extent of decreasing the amount or frequency of their preaching, but they preached *daily*. Neither did they seek for private spots or places of safety to do their work. They preached in the temple, the most public building, and in every private house, where they ran a risk constantly of coming in contact with some telltale member of the Sanhedrin.

ACTS 6

Verse 1. *Number of the disciples was multiplied.* This was said as an explanation of how there came to be some difficulty over caring for the needs of the dependent ones. The *Grecians* were Jews who spoke the Greek language; I shall quote from history: "The church, though consisting wholly of Hebrews, comprised two classes of persons; one party under-

stood only the Hebrew and Chaldean languages, which was used in their synagogues at Jerusalem and its vicinity, while the other had been accustomed chiefly to use the Greek language, into which the Old Testament scriptures had been translated (the version which we now call the Septuagint), and which had been for some time in common use, previous to the coming of Christ, in all the Jewish synagogues dispersed throughout the cities of Greece, as well as Egypt. These last were called Hellenists or Grecians." Jones' Church History, Chapter 1, Section 2. The Hebrew-speaking Jews had a feeling of superiority over the others, and the Grecians thought that feeling had crept into the church, so that partiality was being shown in the distribution of food. *Daily ministration* refers to the disbursements that were made out of the funds of the "community of goods" that was introduced in chapter 2: 44, 45 and 4: 34, 35. It should be observed that this distribution was made on the basis of need or dependency. The statement in connection with the work is worded, "according as he had need." This idea is further set forth by the fact that it was the *widows* for whose sake the disturbance of our present verse was caused. And this point should not be overlooked when we come to considering the work of the men who will be chosen later in this chapter.

Verse 2. This is the only place in the New Testament where the work of the deacons is shown. Their qualifications are stated in another passage (1 Timothy 3: 8-12), but the work belonging to men as official deacons is not to be found in any passage but this verse. *The twelve* means the apostles who were busy delivering instructions to the people on spiritual matters. *Not reason* denotes it would not be acting with good judgment. *Leave the word of God* would mean a ceasing of their preaching the word of God. *Serve* is from *DIAKONEO*, and Thayer's definition at this place is, "To minister, i. e., supply food and the necessities of life." He then comments, "To provide, take care of, distribute, the things necessary to sustain life, Acts 6: 2. Absolutely, those are said to take care of the poor and the sick, who administer the office of deacon in the Christian churches, to serve as deacons." It is interesting to know that the six words "use the office of a dea-

con" in 1 Timothy 3: 10 all come from this one Greek word translated *serve* in our present verse. Incidentally, this shows that we should regard the men whom the apostles appointed as being deacons. In truth, were we to reject them as deacons, then we would be left with the baffling situation of having been given important qualifications of deacons, but no instructions as to what they were to do, for no information on that subject is in any other place.

It is true that the Greek word *DIAKONEO* in general, without any consideration of the context, could mean unofficial as well as official deacons, and also their work might consist of any manner of service. In that general sense, all members of the church are deacons, both men and women. But we cannot put that meaning unto the word in the present instance, for the apostles stated the kind of service for which they proposed to *appoint* (making them officials) the men; that was shown in the word *tables*. This is from *TRAPEZA*, which Thayer defines, "a table," then gives his explanation, "a table on which food is placed, an eating table." He gives a specific definition of the word in our verse which is, "To set a table, i. e., food before one." This settles the question of the work belonging to men as deacons, that it is to see that food is provided for those who are needy.

The amount of loose thinking and acting on this subject that has been done is deplorable. Many people think that the work of the deacons is to "pass the emblems." Others even today will insist that it is the place of the deacons to "attend to any of the temporal affairs of the congregation." They will then expose the weakness and inconsistency of their position by allowing those things to be done by almost any member of the congregation, even though they may not possess half of the qualifications required of deacons. If the elders see fit to ask the deacons to perform some of the temporal affairs of the church, that is their right, and these men may comply with the request of the rulers. But they should not do so as deacons, for such things are no part of the office of deacons.

Verse 3. *Look ye out* is from *ERISKEPTOMAI*, which Thayer defines, "To look (about) for, look out." Robinson combines his definition and explana-

tion in one sentence as follows: "To look at in order to select, to look out, to seek out, e. g., persons for office." The *brethren* were to find the men, but the qualifications were stipulated by the apostles. Some of the qualifications that are required of deacons in 1 Timothy 3: 8-12 are not mentioned in the present instance. This was in the beginning of the church, and also was while the apostles were present in person. As time went on and the organization of the institution of Christ was being made more complete, He added other qualifications, but nothing was added to their work as deacons. For the phrase *full of the Holy Ghost*, see the comments at chapter 4: 31. That information will explain why these men could have some measure of the Holy Ghost at the time of their selection, and yet require the laying on of the apostles' hands (verses 6, 8) for them to work miracles. *Wisdom* is from *SOPHIA*, and Thayer defines it in general as follows: "Wisdom, broad and full intelligence." He explains that any particular shade of meaning must be determined by the context in which it is used. Hence in the passage of this paragraph he says it means, "skill in the management of affairs." That is appropriate since these men were to handle the distribution of goods. And being full of the *Holy Ghost* corresponds with the requirement in 1 Timothy 3: 8 that they be "not greedy of filthy lucre." The wording is different in the two places, but both refer to the qualification that would be needed in the work of handling the funds that were contributed by the disciples. A man who is *full of the Holy Ghost* would not be so interested in his own temporal affairs that he would come short of his duty on such a matter.

Verse 4. After completing the arrangements for taking care of the temporal needs, the apostles said they would devote their time to spiritual matters.

Verse 5. A spirit of cooperation prevailed between the apostles and the multitude of disciples. Stephen is mentioned especially in connection with being full of the Holy Ghost. It was fitting to give him special mention in view of the glorious work he did in defending the faith, and sealing his courage in a violent death. But we know the others also had the qualifications, for they were required of them

all and the apostles would not have appointed them had they not been qualified as stipulated. Philip is the same one who became known as "the evangelist," who preached to the people of Samaria. Nothing is said of any of the others that we know about, except what is said of them as a group working in conjunction with the apostles.

Verse 6. Having selected these men according to instructions, the multitude presented them to the apostles who laid hands on them, accompanying the act with prayer.

Verse 7. *Word of God increased*. After the deacons were appointed to handle the temporal needs of the disciples, the disturbances were evidently calmed. That gave the apostles fuller opportunity for preaching the word of God, and this is why the word *increased* is used, meaning increased occasions for offering it to the people. The aforesaid furtherance of the preaching resulted in the increase of disciples in Jerusalem. Another thing that helped the spread of the Gospel, was the work of the deacons who engaged in the preaching as well as attending to their official work. For while the specific function of the deacons is to care for the temporal needs of the congregation, that does not need to prevent them from spiritual activities as their talents and opportunities permitted. The mention of priests becoming obedient to the faith is for the purpose of showing the growing influence that the word of God was having among those who were usually opposed to the work of Christ.

Verse 8. Stephen could do these miracles because the hands of an apostle were laid on him (verse 6). The New Testament was not in existence yet and it was necessary to have men equipped to support their preaching with such special evidence. This is taught in Ephesians 4: 8-14, where Paul is considering both the temporary and the permanent form of the plan of salvation under Christ. But while these deacons could preach the word, and even confirm it with miracles, they could not bestow such power upon others, not having that "measure" of the Spirit. Hence after they would make converts to the Gospel, it required the hands of an apostle to confer miraculous power on them. (See chapter 8: 14-17.)

Verse 9. *Certain of the synagogue.* The first definition in the lexicon for synagogue is, "In the New Testament, an assembly of men." It is used in the same sense as "a congregation." For a full description of the subject, see the notes at Matthew 4: 23. *Libertines.* In his historical comments of this word Thayer gives the following: "Jews who had been made captives by the Romans under Pompey but were afterward set free; and who, although they had fixed their abode at Rome, had built at their own expense a synagogue at Jerusalem which they frequented when in that city. The name Libertines adhered to them to distinguish them from the free-born Jews who had subsequently [afterward] taken up their residence in Rome." *Cyrenians* were Jewish dwellers in Cyrenalca who were in Jerusalem at Pentecost (Acts 2: 10), and gave their name to one of the synagogues of that city. *Alexandrians* were Jewish colonists of Alexandria in Egypt, who were admitted to the privileges of citizenship and had a synagogue in Jerusalem. *Cilicia* was a province lying on the northeast shore of the Mediterranean Sea, and was the native country of Paul. The *Asia* that is meant here is a part of the province of Asia Minor (today known as Turkey). Jews from these various places were in Jerusalem on account of the feast of Pentecost, and were displeased with the teaching of Stephen.

Verse 10. One part of the definition for *resist* in the lexicon is "to withstand," and means that although the Jews from all the places named combined in disputing with Stephen, they were not able to meet his claims for the doctrine of Christ. *Wisdom* is from *SOPHIA* which Thayer defines, "Wisdom, broad and full intelligence." *Spirit* is from *PNEUMA* which the same lexicon defines in this passage, "The disposition or influence which fills and governs the soul of any one; the efficient source of any power, affection, emotion, desire." The personal intelligence of Stephen was backed up by the Spirit that was given him through the laying on of the hands of an apostle. This explains why those envious Jews could not "meet the arguments" that he put before them.

Verse 11. *Suborned* is from *HUPBALLO* which Thayer defines, "To instruct privately; instigate, suborn." It means they influenced these false wit-

nesses in an underhanded sort of way that was in the nature of a bribe. The inspired writer says that Stephen spoke with *wisdom* and *spirit*, so we know these witnesses made false statements, even though we do not have any record of what they said up to this point. But his speech that is recorded in the next chapter will show us that they were the ones who had blasphemed, for that speech is made up of a respectful recital of the history of many centuries, and that account was written by Moses whose inspiration Stephen recognized.

Verse 12. Stephen was out before the public where he had a perfect right to be; he was preaching the Gospel, which every Christian has a right to do. *They* means the people from the different countries named in verse 9, who had disputed with Stephen but could not show anything wrong with his teaching. On the strength of the false witnesses of verse 11, they worked up a riotous spirit among the people under their leaders. These men ignored all rules of justice and forced him into the *council* (Sanhedrin).

Verse 13. Once within the grasp of that prejudiced assembly it was not hard to produce false witnesses, for they had already been prepared in mind for such a work by the crookedness mentioned in verse 11. The accusations of this verse are general, and if looked at without any explanation would certainly make an unfavorable impression on any court, and more so on one that was already ill-disposed toward a prisoner. It would be a very wicked thing to *blaspheme* the *holy place* (Jerusalem with its temple) and *the law* (of Moses). To blaspheme means to speak reproachfully, rail at, revile, calumniate" [falsely accuse.]

Verse 14. These false witnesses pretended to specify concerning the general accusations of verse 13. The falsity of the charges will be realized by all who will follow the teaching of Jesus while he was on the earth. He always spoke respectfully concerning Moses, and censured the hypocritical Jews for not being true to the law. *Change the customs.* Jesus never taught that in the sense those enemies placed in the term. It is true He often announced that a change of rules was to take place among God's people, but he

showed that even Moses predicted such a change. (Deuteronomy 18: 18-20.)

Verse 15. *Angel* is from *AGGELOS*, and its primary meaning is, "A messenger, one who is sent," according to both Thayer and Robinson. There could be nothing in the face of a man from the physical standpoint that would show any indication of his being a messenger, except when considered on the negative basis. Had Stephen been guilty of the evil things charged against him, his face or countenance would have reflected it, for he certainly would have had "a guilty look." Instead of such an expression, the countenance of this righteous man had the appearance of one who was faithfully delivering the message (the business of an angel) of Him whose truth was offered for man's benefit. Stephen was not cowed or in the least intimidated by the brazen stare fixed toward him by the crowd in the council.

ACTS 7

Verse 1. We are still in the Sanhedrin where the false witnesses have just made the serious charge of blasphemy against Stephen. *Are these things so?* This was said by the high priest, because under a practice started by the Jews, he was the presiding judge of the Sanhedrin. The act of proposing this question was about the only just thing that was done for Stephen. It was the order in any fair court, religious or otherwise, to permit a prisoner to speak for himself concerning accusations being brought against him. (See John 7: 51; Acts 22: 25.)

Verse 2. From this verse through verse 50 is Stephen's answer to the question put to him by the high priest. A simple denial of the accusations would have been the whole truth, but Stephen's purpose was to give the entire historical background of the issue at stake; not only to show their charges to be false, but also to present a basis of truths and facts for the conclusion he intended to draw in their hearing. We shall see that when all this was done, it showed up these false accusers to be really the ones who could justly be charged with the things they maliciously said against him. The speech will consist of the history that began with Abraham and ended with Solomon. In addition to Stephen's principal reason for reciting these historical matters, I shall com-

ment on the verses in their order because of their general interest. *Fathers* is used in the sense of respect for them as being among the older members of the Jewish nation, and hence those who should be respectfully interested in the history of their race. *Before he dwelt in Charran* (Haran). Genesis 12: 1 says that God *had said* for Abraham to make this move, even before the command stated in that verse, and that is the reason for Stephen's phrase underlined in this place.

Verse 3. *Which I shall show thee* is significant, and denotes that the patriarch was not told even what country it was when the Lord first appeared to him. He was to obey the command purely upon his faith in the wisdom and goodness of God. That is why Paul says, "and he went out, not knowing whither he went" (Hebrews 11: 8).

Verse 4. Abraham moved immediately out of his home territory which was the *land of the Chaldeans* (called "Ur of the Chaldees" in Genesis 11: 31). This place was in the general territory of that later containing the city of Babylon. To reach the land of Canaan (where God intended him to go), it was necessary for Abraham to journey up and around the northern extremity of the country, due to the geographical character of the land. (See the historical note given with Isaiah 14: 31, in volume 3 of the Old Testament Commentary.) *When his father was dead.* The necessary inference is that Abraham's father became more infirm on account of old age, so that the Lord suffered Abraham to pause in this land of Haran until his father was dead. We know this pause was not displeasing to God, for Stephen says that after the death of his father, *He* (meaning God) *removed him into this land*, which indicates that Abraham was acting in God's favor.

Verse 5. *Gave him none inheritance.* Let us not become confused over this phrase and the account in Genesis 23: 9-20. Abraham became a possessor of that real estate in the land of Canaan, but he bought it with money, and thus obtained it by his own business transaction; he even refused to accept it as a gift from the owners. But *inheritance* is from *KLEONOMAI*, and Thayer defines it, "an inheritance, property received by inheritance." Abraham did not receive a foot of that land in that

way, but it was promised that he would indirectly receive it some day through his descendants. *When he had no child* is mentioned to show Abraham's faith in the promises of God.

Verse 6. This prediction is recorded in Genesis 15: 13, and refers to the hardships of the Israelites in Egypt. *Strange land* means one outside their own promised land.

Verse 7. *Will I judge* refers to the plagues that God brought upon the Egyptians (Exodus 7 to 12). *Serve me in this place* means their service at Mount Sinai.

Verse 8. This verse includes the years from Abraham's 99th to the birth of Jacob's sons in Mesopotamia and Canaan.

Verse 9. *The patriarchs* means the brethren of Joseph who sold him to travelers going to Egypt. *God was with him* denotes that assistance was given Joseph from the Lord because he was righteous and was being persecuted.

Verse 10. This verse includes the events of Genesis 41.

Verse 11. This verse includes the events of Genesis 41: 30, 31.

Verse 12. See Genesis 42: 1-3.

Verse 13. This is recorded in Genesis 43, 44, and 45.

Verse 14. *Threescore and fifteen souls*. For an explanation of this phrase, see the comments on Genesis 46: 26, 27, in volume 1 of the Old Testament Commentary.

Verse 15. *Our fathers* means the sons of Jacob and other early ancestors.

Verse 16. The last word in the preceding verse is "fathers," and they are the ones who were buried in Sychem. No explanation is offered by the historians or critical works of reference of the name of Abraham in the place of Jacob, concerning the purchase of this burying place. But all of them are agreed as to the particulars of the transaction, and hence we may be assured that some incidental fact or custom in use at the time of Stephen's speech would explain it if we had access to the literature of those days.

Verse 17. God promised to Abraham that his posterity would become a great nation, and would be delivered from their bondage in a strange land. It was getting along near the time for

the fulfillment of that promise, hence the people were becoming numerous.

Verse 18. *Knew not Joseph*. (See the comments on Exodus 1: 8.)

Verse 19. *Dealt subtilly* means to use schemes or tricks to get advantage of them. One of such was to take the supply of straw from them, when they knew that the crop had been gathered and that nothing but stubble could be found. (See Exodus 5: 10-14.) *Cast out their young children* refers to the decree that all male infants should be drowned.

Verse 20. *Exceeding fair* is explained by Thayer to mean he was fair "unto God," and the Greek text does have those words. The significance of this subject will be realized when we consider the history that will be cited at verse 25.

Verse 21. Read this history in Exodus 2: 3-10.

Verse 22. This information is not given in any other place in the Bible, but Stephen was speaking by the Spirit and his report is authentic.

Verse 23. *Full forty years* is more definite than the account in Exodus 2: 11, which says he "was grown." *Came into his heart*. Moses acted on his own authority only, for there is no information that God told him to take on the work at that time.

Verse 24. There is no question about the injustice of the Egyptian's attack upon the Hebrew. The point is that Moses acted before he was told to by the Lord. The details of this episode are given in Exodus 2: 11-14.

Verse 25. *He supposed his brethren would have understood, etc.* This proves the point made in the two preceding paragraphs; Moses acted on his own supposition. The question will be raised as to why Moses formed this notion. The information is given in Josephus, Antiquities, Book 2, Chapter 9, Section 3. That paragraph is too long to be quoted in full, but I shall give the gist of it, and the reader may verify it by consulting the history of Josephus. The father of Moses had gone to God in prayer concerning the danger his people were in and had received assurances that deliverance would be provided. That, as Abraham had been blessed with a son who meant so much to him, so, through the child soon to be born to him and his wife, great deliverance would be experi-

enced by their people. It is reasonable to conclude that Moses' father had told him about that prayer and the promise, and hence Moses "supposed" all of his brethren had heard about it also.

Verse 26. *Them* means his brethren mentioned in the preceding verse. Exodus 2:13 states that it was two Hebrews who were striving. Moses thought he would interfere with the wrangle, and no doubt he was acting on the *supposition* just explained above.

Verse 27. The one who objected to the attempt of Moses was the one who was in the wrong. That is frequently the case today, for when a man is doing what is wrong he will resent any interference with what he says is "his business." However, Moses could not have given a satisfactory answer to the question asked by this Hebrew.

Verse 28. When Moses "looked this way and that way" (Exodus 2:12), he either did not see everybody who was near, or the avenged Hebrew reported the event.

Verse 29. Exodus 2:15 tells us that Pharaoh heard about the deed of Moses and tried to have him slain. That caused him to flee the country in fear, and go into the land of Midian, a country lying between the two arms of the Red Sea. *Where he begat two sons* condenses the history in Exodus 2:15-22.

Verse 30. *Forty years were expired* from the time Moses came into the land of Midian. In the course of this period Moses cared for the flocks of his father-in-law. He was with them when he came into the region of Sinai, where the angel appeared to him.

Verse 31. *He wondered* because the bush was burning but was not being consumed, and decided to investigate the situation. (See Exodus 3:1-3.)

Verse 32. *Fathers* is often used as a general reference to the early ancestors of the race, but here it applied to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Moses was overawed by the voice and the scene before him.

Verse 33. *Put off thy shoes*. It was customary in that country to remove one's shoes in the presence of a dignitary as an act of courtesy, very much as a man will lift his hat under like circumstances. *Holy ground* did not refer to the essential quality of the earth, for it was the same place where Moses had been taking the sheep for

pasture. But in the present instance it was holy because of the person who was present, and the purpose for the appearance of the angel. A place is holy where and when holy proceeding takes place.

Verse 34. *I have seen, I have seen*. Both phrases are in the original, and the inflection of the terms is somewhat different in each case, showing the purpose of the statement is for emphasis. God was speaking to Moses by the angel in the bush. Having seen the afflictions of his people in Egypt, God proposed sending Moses to deliver them.

Verse 35. Stephen does not include the conversations between God and Moses about his (Moses') fitness for the commission: that record is in Exodus 3 and 4. But he reminds his hearers that the very man whom the Hebrew resented was the one God sent to rule over them. He is getting his speech shaped up for application to his hearers.

Verse 36. This brief verse covers the history from Exodus 7 to Joshua 5.

Verse 37. This prophecy is in Deuteronomy 18:18-20.

Verse 38. *Church* is from *EKKLESIA*, and Thayer gives its primary meaning to be, "A gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place; an assembly." In the present passage he defines it, "The assembly of the Israelites." *With the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina*. God gave the law at Sinai through the services of angels (Galatians 3:19).

Verse 39. *In their hearts turned back*. The Israelites could not return to Egypt literally, but their desire to do so made them as guilty as if they had done so.

Verse 40. Moses had gone up into the mountain to receive the law, and the people became restless because of his absence; they demanded of Aaron that he make the idol.

Verse 41. In response to the cry of the people, Aaron made the calf out of the gold they had brought from Egypt.

Verse 42. *Gave them up* denotes that if a man is determined to do wrong God will not use force to prevent it. *Host of heaven* means the sun and other heavenly bodies. *As it is written* refers to Amos 5:25. The statement is

in question form, but the thought is an admission from God that his people went through that form for forty years.

Verse 43. The preceding verse seems to speak well of ancient Israel but the present one shows the other side of the story. It begins with the word *yea*, while the corresponding verse in Amos 5: 26 starts with "but." The point is that Israel was not satisfied to sacrifice to the true God but also took up idolatrous worship. *Moloch* and *Remphan* were heathen gods that the Israelites worshipped by making *figures* (images) of them for that purpose. The last sentence is a prediction of the Babylonian captivity.

Verse 44. *Tabernacle of witness*. The tabernacle was a visible and constant symbol of the wisdom and goodness of God, so that Israel could always have His presence.

Verse 45. *Fathers that came after*. Most of the older men died in the wilderness for the sin at Kadesh-barnea (Exodus 32: 8-11), and it was their descendants who brought in the tabernacle to Canaan. *Jesus* is from *Jesus*, and Smith's Bible Dictionary says it is "the Greek form of the name Joshua," and Thayer's lexicon agrees with it. Joshua was the leader of the Israelites when they crossed the Jordan. *Possession of the Gentiles*. These were heathen nations living in Canaan when the Israelites came, and they were attacked by Joshua and driven out (Joshua 12). *Unto the days of David*. Joshua did his duty in fighting the heathen, but on account of the unfaithfulness of Israel, God suffered some of the nations to remain in the land to harass them for many years.

Verse 46. The preceding verse does not mean that no heathen existed in the land after David's time. The pause in the narrative at him is because of his outstanding importance in the affairs of Israel, the ancestors of these rebellious Jews to whom Stephen was speaking. David was in the favor of God and desired to find a tabernacle, referring to his desire to build the temple (2 Samuel 7: 1-3).

Verse 47. The reason that Solomon and not David was permitted to build the temple is shown in 1 Chronicles 22: 6-10.

Verse 48. God permitted Solomon to build the temple to replace the tabernacle. That was not because He wanted

a better building in which to dwell for he does not dwell ("settle down") in man-made temples. *Saith the prophet* is reference to Isaiah 66: 1. He uses earthly structures only as a place for people to meet with him spiritually.

Verse 49. God is a personal (though spiritual) Being, and his dwelling place is in Heaven. *What house will ye build me* was quoted by Stephen because these Jews had boasted so often of their temple, and pretended to be offended at anyone who even intimated that it would ever be destroyed. (See chapter 6: 14.)

Verse 50. God was already the Maker of all things in the universe, hence it was foolish for the Jews to think they could build a temple as a permanent dwelling for Him.

Verse 51. Stephen made his long speech to portray the history of the Jews, showing a record of continual rebellion against the law of God and persecution of His true servants. His application was by showing these Jews before him that their conduct was running "true to form." *Stiffnecked* means stubborn, and *uncircumcised in heart and ears* denotes their unconsecrated minds as manifested by resistance against the Holy Ghost.

Verse 52. A man is not to be blamed for the sins of his forefathers, unless he imitates those sins and boasts of his relation to the ancestors. These rebellious Jews had done that very thing, and were following in the steps of their immediate fathers who had slain Jesus as predicted by the holy prophets of God.

Verse 53. The law which the disobedient Jews were resisting had been given through the agency of angels (Galatians 3: 19).

Verse 54. To be cut to the heart means to be rent asunder in mind, and caused to gnash or grind their teeth in an insane fit of anger.

Verse 55. *Full of the Holy Ghost* is explained at chapter 4: 31. *Saw the glory of God*. No man in normal condition can see God and live (Exodus 33: 20). When He wanted Saul to see Jesus in the glorified state, he performed a miracle for the purpose; he did the same thing for Stephen.

Verse 56. In defiance of their threatening gesture, Stephen declared his vision of the very One whom they had murdered, standing in glory at the right hand of God.

Verse 57. *Stopped their ears* was an admission that the truth being spoken by Stephen was unwelcome to them, but they had no honorable means of meeting it.

Verse 58. The Jews told Pilate it was not lawful for them to put any man to death. That was true, but it was not the real motive for their plea that Pilate have Jesus slain. It did not prevent them from carrying out their murderous rage upon Stephen, who had not even been sentenced by any court, religious or secular. *Witnesses*. The law (Deuteronomy 17: 7) required that the witnesses to a crime must be first in an execution. That is why Jesus said what he did to the men who had witnessed the sin of the woman (John 8: 7). *Laid down their clothes*. When any manual action was to be done, it was the usual practice for the men to lay aside their loose outer garments. As a guard to protect them, they were placed in charge of someone standing by, and this was done by placing the garments at the feet of Saul, of whom we will hear much in later chapters.

Verse 59. Stephen was calling upon God while the Jews were hurling stones at him. *Receive my spirit* shows Stephen had an inner being that was not within reach of these murderers. (See Matthew 10: 28.)

Verse 60. Before his body collapsed, Stephen kneeled in prayer to God. *Cried with a loud voice*. The first word is from *KRAZO* which Thayer defines at this place, "to call out aloud, speak with a loud voice." It was not the involuntary outburst of a body because of pain, but an intelligent utterance so expressed that all in the crowd could hear. *Charge* is from *HISTEMI* and Thayer defines it, "to cause to stand." It does not mean that these men were to be declared innocent, for that would be endorsing sin. The prayer meant for God not to hold it against them. Jesus prayed for his Father to forgive his murderers, but that did not mean it should be done before they repented, which they did on Pentecost. Likewise, the prayer of Stephen means for God to forgive these murderers whenever they repented. *Fell asleep* is a figurative way of saying that Stephen died. (See notes on literal and figurative language at Matthew 9: 24.) Stephen's death is the first one on record that was imposed in persecution for faith in Jesus. There will be

others committed to which reference will be made later.

ACTS 8

Verse 1. *Consenting* is from *SUNEUDOKEO*, which Thayer defines at this place, "To approve together," and Robinson gives virtually the same definition. Paul verifies the definition in his statement in chapter 22: 20. *At this time* is rendered "on that day" by the Englishman's Greek New Testament. Like a ravenous beast that gets a taste of blood, these murderers became infuriated by the case of Stephen and started a general persecution of the church in Jerusalem. The disciples were scattered on account of the danger to their lives. A Christian has the right to save his life when he can do so without compromising any truth. I do not know why the apostles did not have to flee.

Verse 2. The original for *lamentation* is defined by Thayer, "lamentation with beating of the breast," and Robinson defines it in the same way. It was a formal demonstration of grief that such a righteous man should die as he did.

Verse 3. The church as an established organization cannot be overthrown, for it was destined to "stand for ever" (Daniel 2: 44). But it can be hindered in its work, and its individual members can be persecuted and even put to death in certain instances. That is what Saul did, for *havoc* means to "treat shamefully or with injury." It states he was *entering into every house*, which shows he was not attacking the church as an assembled unit. *Haling* is defined "to draw, drag," and denotes that disciples were used roughly while being taken to prison.

Verse 4. *Therefore* indicates a conclusion is to be drawn from facts stated or understood. Saul was persecuting the disciples so cruelly that they fled from the community and went into various territories. *Preaching the word* was not a part of the conclusion from *therefore*, but was added for our information to show that the disciples were not weakening in their love for the word. Their being scattered is the only part that is offered as a conclusion after the word *therefore*. The motive in preserving their lives was that they might be able still to defend the faith in other places. Chapter 11: 19 names some of the places where they went preaching.

Verse 5. Cornelius is commonly referred to as the first Gentile convert to the Gospel, which is correct. This verse says that *Philip* (one of the seven deacons) preached to the people of Samaria. All people who were not full blooded Jews were regarded as Gentiles, hence some confusion might arise here. But the explanation is in the fact that the Samaritans were distinguished from the Gentiles proper because they were a mixed race, part Jew and part Gentile, both in their blood and in their religion. The history of their origin is in 2 Kings 17, volume 2 of the Old Testament Commentary.

Verse 6. *With one accord* denotes that no dissension arose among the people over the preaching of Philip. He was able to perform these miracles by the laying on of the apostles' hands in chapter 6, verse 6.

Verse 7. *Unclean spirits* is another name for devils or demons with which people were possessed. *Palsies* and *lame* were afflictions of the body that were healed by Philip.

Verse 8. This joy was natural, for doubtless the afflictions had been suffered for many years. Both the afflicted and their friends would rejoice over the miraculous relief.

Verse 9. *Used sorcery* is from *MAGEVO* which Thayer defines, "To be a magician; to practice magical arts." In past ages, God suffered Satan to exert supernatural power through the agency of men (Exodus 7: 11, 12, 22; 8: 18, 19). Because of the real existence of such works, it was possible for men to impose on the credulity of the people and thus pass for such supernaturally-endowed performers even though they were frauds. Whether Simon was the former or the latter kind of actor we are not informed.

Verse 10. Any such demonstrations that would seem to be divine would have a profound effect on the people, and cause them to think the performer was a man of God.

Verse 11. *Bewitched* is from *EXISTEMI* which means, "to amaze, astonish, throw into wonderment," hence it refers to some effect Simon had on the mind and not the body.

Verse 12. *When they believed . . . they were baptized.* It will be seen that the inspired writer takes it for granted when a man believes the Gospel he will also obey it. (See the com-

ments at chapter 2: 41.) *Men and women.* We never read in the scriptures that infants or young children were baptized; it is always men or women.

Verse 13. *Simon himself believed.* This is the statement of Luke and therefore must be taken as the truth, and not merely that Simon pretended to believe. *And when he was baptized.* (See the comments on the preceding verse about this form of expression.) *Continued* is from *PROSKARTERO*, and Thayer defines it at this place, "To adhere to one, to be his adherent; to be devoted or constant to one." We have no reason to think that Simon was not genuinely interested in the work of Philip. The record says that Simon continued with Philip because he saw the miracles that were performed, and John 20: 30, 31 expressly says that the signs and wonders were performed to produce belief.

Verse 14, 15. Philip preached the word of God and even performed miracles in proof of his authority. But he could not confer the Holy Ghost on his converts in the measure necessary to enable them to work miracles; none by apostles could do that. And since converts in those days were promised such a gift (chapter 2: 38), the apostles went down to Samaria to confer it.

Verse 16. These people had obeyed the Gospel but had not received the Holy Ghost, which shows that the gift was not bestowed simultaneously with baptism.

Verse 17. This gift was not to make them Christians or bring them forgiveness of sins; their obedience to the Gospel did that for them.

Verse 18. The inspired Luke says that Simon *saw* a certain fact, not that he only thought he saw it. Hence this verse is inspired authority for saying it was *through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given. He offered them money.* This was what constituted the sin of Simon (see next verse). It does not indicate that Simon's primary obedience was not sincere. (See the comments on verse 13.) Disciples who have been in the church for years are known to commit sin, so it is not to be doubted that a babe scarcely out of his spiritual swaddling clothes might backslide also.

Verse 19. Simon was not asking merely for the power to perform mir-

acles; he might have received that sooner or later as the others did. But he wanted the power that was possessed by the apostles, so he could lay hands on others and give them ability to perform miracles. The sight of the performance of the apostles seemed to arouse his former interest in that which was marvelous, so that he yielded to the temptation and offered to buy that which cannot be valued in "dollars and cents."

Verse 20. *Money perish with thee* is a declaration of solemn truth, not in the sense of a special denunciation. We know that money is destined to pass away some day, and so also will evil men if they do not repent. *Money perish . . . because*, etc. This was an evil thought and constituted the sin of Simon.

Verse 21. *Part* means a share of something that is "assigned" to one, and *lot* denotes something won or "obtained by lot." There is not a great deal of difference between the two words in question, but the use of them together makes a statement that is more emphatic, and rules out both measures of the Holy Ghost. That which the apostles only could possess would not have been given Simon even if he had not been corrupt in heart. But that condition prevented him from receiving even the measure that other disciples were promised to receive.

Verse 22. The original word for *wickedness* often means some very bad bodily conduct, but Simon had not done anything of that kind. One word in Thayer's definition is "depravity," and that would apply in this case. Nothing but a depraved mind would think the Holy Ghost could be bought with money. Hence Peter told him to repent of the *thought of his heart*. Perhaps ordinarily denotes a doubt, which would not be a proper sense to attach to the word when thinking of the mercy of God. The original carries the idea of an earnest frame of mind on the part of Simon as if he should say, "Lord, I beseech thee," etc. *Repent and pray* is the law of pardon for a disciple when he has sinned. Chapter 2: 38 gives the law for one who has never been a child of God, and that is to "repent and be baptized." An alien sinner would not avail himself anything to repent and pray, neither would it avail anything for an erring disciple to repent and be

baptized, because baptism is to be performed only once.

Verse 23. *Gall and bitterness* are virtually the same in thought, and are used together for the sake of emphasis. It denotes a state of mind that is poisoned with depravity. *Iniquity* is defined in the lexicon, "unrighteousness of heart." The heart of Simon was bound up in a state of depravity, indicated by the sordid estimate that he placed on the value of the Holy Ghost.

Verse 24. Simon wished Peter to pray that he be released from the guilt of *these things*, meaning the state of corruption in his mind and the judgment of God that such a condition of mind would deserve. The scripture does not tell us anything about the conduct of Simon after this, and secular history is uncertain about the subject.

Verse 25. *They* means Peter and John who returned to Jerusalem, but preached in many of the Samaritan villages on their way.

Verse 26. The New Testament was not completed and the apostolic period was still with the world. In that situation God used various means to get his will to men. It should be carefully noted that he never did tell a sinner directly what to do to be saved. But until the plan of salvation was put on record where everyone could read it, the Lord used miraculous means to contact the sinner. In the present instance an angel (in what form he appeared we are not told) appeared to Philip who had just done his wonderful work in Samaria. The only thing the angel did was to tell Philip where to go. God knew where the preacher would meet the man to whom the Gospel message was to be delivered. *Desert* is from *EREMOS* which means an "uninhabited wilderness," and has reference to the physical condition of the land.

Verse 27. There is no history available that tells us whether this eunuch was a Jew or Gentile. If he was a Jew born in Ethiopia, he would be an Ethiopian by nation. The question that is sometimes raised is how it can be said that Cornelius was the first Gentile convert, if this eunuch was an Ethiopian by race. That need cause no confusion, for there were proselytes to the Jewish religion all through the years, and such persons were regarded

as Jews. That is why this man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, for that was the headquarters of the Jewish system. It also explains why he was reading the book of Isaiah. (For notes on the proselytes, see Matthew 23: 15.)

Verse 28. Chariots were made for two purposes: war, and transportation in times of peace. The eunuch was riding in one of the latter.

Verse 29. The angel was used to direct Philip into the general location of the eunuch, and after arriving there, the Spirit gave him specific instructions about joining the chariot. But it should be noted in each case that the eunuch never learned anything about his duty until he got it from the preacher. (See Romans 10: 14.)

Verse 30. Philip was evidently traveling on foot, for after reaching the chariot (and entering it) he journeyed on with the eunuch. The speed of the chariot also was slow enough that Philip was able to overhear what the eunuch was reading, and also to enter into conversation with him.

Verse 31. In answer to Philip's question, the eunuch said he could not understand what he was reading without a guide. This should not surprise us, for he was reading in one of the prophetic books, and we are told that even the prophets themselves did not know "what it was all about" when they were inspired to do their writing. (See Matthew 13: 17; 1 Peter 1: 10-12.) The attitude of Philip indicated his willingness to explain the scripture, and the eunuch asked him to sit with him in the chariot.

Verses 32, 33. This scripture is in Isaiah 53: 7, 8; it is in the past tense as to grammatical form, but that is a common thing in the prophetic writings. It pictures the unresisting attitude of Jesus when he was sentenced and executed upon the cross. *Judgment was taken away* means Jesus was treated with injustice. *Declare* is defined, "to set forth, recount, relate in full," and *generation* means one's family descent. The question is asked in the sense of asserting that no one can declare the family descent of Jesus. The reason is given in the words, *his life is taken from the earth*. Jesus died without having produced any fleshly offspring, because his only purpose in this world was to leave behind him a spiritual family. (See Ephesians 3: 15.)

Verse 34. See the comments on verse 31 for the eunuch's question.

Verse 35. *Opened his mouth*. No sinner was ever induced to accept salvation by miraculous means, but it was always by the use of words. (See chapter 11: 14.) *Began at the same scripture* denotes he explained the passage to be referring to Jesus. But after that start of his speech, the context indicates that he taught the eunuch the acts of faith that Jesus requires of sinners in order to receive forgiveness of sins.

Verse 36. The Old Testament says nothing about baptism, hence the eunuch could have learned about it only from Philip. This proves beyond any question that to *preach Jesus* means to tell of His requirements, including baptism in water. *Certain* is from τὸν which Thayer defines, "a certain, a certain one." *Water* is from ὕδωρ, and the definitions of Thayer and Robinson agree, but the latter is fuller at this passage which is, "A stream, river." Hence a *certain water* means a permanent body of water, and one large enough for two men to enter. (See verses 38, 39.) The only material element necessary for baptism being present, the eunuch wished to know if he might be baptized.

Verse 37. There was just one item in his duty still undone that had to precede baptism, which was the good confession. (See Romans 10: 9, 10.) Philip told the eunuch that if he believed with all his heart *thou mayest*. The last two words are from ΕΞΕΣΤΙ, which Thayer defines, "it is lawful." Robinson defines it, "It is lawful, it is right, it is permitted, one may." Philip meant it would be scriptural for him to baptize the eunuch if he was a believer in Jesus. The contrary would necessarily be true, that it would be unscriptural to baptize a person who is not a believer. That would make it unscriptural to baptize infants since they cannot believe. The confession of the eunuch was his own as far as the wording was concerned, for no one told him just how it was to be made. In 1 Timothy 6: 13 Paul says that Jesus made a good confession before Pilate, yet his words were merely "thou sayest" in answer to the governor's question (Matthew 27: 11.) This shows that no formal kind of confession should be considered necessary. The form the eunuch used is all right,

and so is any other that means that one believes Jesus to be the Son of God.

Verse 38. A chariot is an inanimate object and cannot receive an intelligent order. Hence Philip addressed his command to the driver, for had he been doing his own driving he would not have commanded the chariot either. All of this proves that at least three persons were present at this baptism. The remark and question of the eunuch, also the answer of Philip and the eunuch's confession all took place after they came in sight of the "certain water," and they were still in sight of it when the command was given for the chariot to stop. This is another proof that the water was of some considerable size. *Into* is from *eis* and is properly translated in the King James version. They both had to go down *into* the water for the act of baptism. The word *baptize* is from *baptizo*, and Thayer defines it, "To dip repeatedly, to immerse, submerge." Robinson defines it, "To dip in, to sink, to immerse." Groves defines it, "To dip, immerse, plunge." Greenfield's definition is, "To immerse, immerse, submerge, sink." In its noun form, Donnegan defines it, "An object immersed, submerged, soaked."

Verse 39. *Come up out of the water* gives emphasis to the comments in the preceding verse on the necessity of going down *into* the water. *Into* and *out of* are opposite terms, and agree with the necessary movements in performing baptism. However, the purpose for the statement is to inform the reader that no supernatural act was done until the baptismal service was concluded. Philip had to make his way *into* this territory in whatever manner was available, but now that the object of his journey was accomplished, the Spirit of the Lord used some means of snatching him away suddenly out of the eunuch's sight; but he went on his way rejoicing in his new relation to the Lord.

Verse 40. Azotus was a town north of Gaza, the place to which Philip was told by the angel to go. Going on in his northward journey, he preached in all the cities to which he came until he reached his destination which was Caesarea on the coast.

ACTS 9

Verse 1. *Breathing out* is from *empneo* and is defined, "to breathe in or on." When a person has a "bad

breath" it is supposed to come from some undesirable condition within his body. It is used to illustrate the attitude and conduct of Saul towards the disciples. His mental breath was coming from a mind filled with desire to persecute them. He went unto the high priest because he was the president of the Sanhedrin, which was the highest court allowed the Jews.

Verse 2. *Desired of him letters*. Paul says he was "mad" against the saints (chapter 26: 11), but there was "method in his madness." He never acted independently of the authorities whom he regarded as having the right to punish offenders. These letters showed his authority to arrest the disciples, and they designated even the city and circumstances in which he was empowered to act. The original word for *way* means a way of life, and in our passage it refers to the way being professed by the disciples. Saul had the authority to bind disciples as an officer would put irons on a criminal.

Verse 3. The Lord let Saul proceed until he was near his destination (Damascus), then caused the light to envelop him. Saul afterward described this light as being "above the brightness of the sun" (chapter 26: 13).

Verse 4. Chapter 26: 14 says they all fell to the ground, but in Luke's original account of the event we have only *he* falling to the ground. That evidently was because Saul was the only one in the group who was to receive the full effect of the shock. The other men did not even know the source or meaning of the voice. (See comments verse 7).

Verse 5. *Who art thou?* Saul did not know it was the Lord speaking or he would not have asked the question. The word translated *Lord* is rendered "sir" 12 times in the King James version, which means merely a title of respect and was all that Saul meant. It is Luke that tells us it was the Lord speaking, who told Saul that He was the person whom he was persecuting. This charge was made on the principle of Matthew 25: 45. *Pricks* is from *kenon* which Thayer defines, "an iron goad," and explains it to mean, "for urging on oxen, horses and other beasts of burden." If an animal kicks back when his master prods him with the goad, it only makes it pierce him the more. Likewise, if Saul continues

to rebel against the authority of the Lord, it will make his experience that much more disagreeable at last.

Verse 6. Saul then addressed Jesus as *Lord* in the true sense. He was convinced of his terrible error and began to tremble. Unlike Felix (chapter 24: 25) who trembled only, Saul asked what he should do. Of course, that meant with reference to his personal duty to get right with the Lord. But Jesus would not give him that information, and told him where to go for it. (See comments at chapter 8: 26.) However, Jesus did give him some other information, which is written in chapter 26: 16-18.

Verse 7. *Hear* is from *AKOUO*, and the lexicon gives several distinct meanings, but they may be classified under three heads; I shall quote Thayer's definitions for the three: "1. To be endowed with the faculty of hearing. 2. To attend to, consider. 3. To understand, perceive the sense of what is said." The particular sense of the word in any given place must be determined by the context. Hence we know the word is used with the first meaning here; they merely knew by their ears that a voice was speaking, while in chapter 22: 9 the third meaning is used. *Seeing no man* was because the voice came from Heaven, and no one but Saul was to see Jesus then.

Verse 8. When the remarks of the Lord were concluded, Saul arose from the earth. The dazzling light that struck him to the ground also closed his eyes, and upon arising he naturally opened them. However, he was unable to see on account of what the light had done to his sight. (See chapter 22: 11.) He had to be led by the men who had come with him, who took him into the city of Damascus.

Verse 9. Smith's Bible Dictionary says, "The instance given of individual fasting under the influence of grief, vexation or anxiety are numerous." It was natural, therefore, for Saul to fast in view of the change in his plans, including the strange blindness.

Verse 10. Any disciple has the right to tell the story of Jesus and baptize the believers. We have seen that the Lord never told any man directly what he must do to be saved (chapter 8: 26); hence this disciple was to do that for Saul.

Verse 11. The Lord mentioned the

fact of Saul's praying to assist Ananias in identifying him. Saul was a Jew and would have the right to pray under the Mosalic religion. We are not told specifically the subject of Saul's prayer, but it is not strange that he would be praying under the circumstances. It would also be reasonable to think he was praying for help in his undone condition, and that it was in reply to his prayer that the Lord permitted him to have the vision of Ananias coming to heal his blindness.

Verse 12. All inspired visions are one form of predictions. God had caused Saul to see this vision, now He was sending Ananias to fulfill it for him.

Verses 13, 14. The report of Saul's activities against the disciples was so widespread it had reached the city of Damascus before he arrived. The remarks of Ananias were not made with the idea of giving the Lord any information; so worthy a disciple would know better than that. They were the natural expression of his sincere emotions, and the Lord regarded them as such since he did not give him any rebuke.

Verse 15. The Lord's reassurance consisted in telling Ananias that Saul had been chosen by Him to bear his name before others, both Gentiles and Israelites. Of course, the Lord would not suffer such a chosen servant to harm any disciple sent to him.

Verse 16. The fulfillment of this prediction is described at chapter 20: 23; 21: 11; 2 Corinthians 6: 4-10; 11: 23-28. After such a devoted life filled with persecutions, Paul closed it by shedding his blood upon the block (2 Timothy 4: 6).

Verse 17. It will be well to take another look at the matter of being filled with the Holy Ghost. (See the comments at chapter 4: 31.) Also the subject of the "measure" of the Spirit should receive further consideration. The measure that would cause one to be baptized with the Holy Ghost, even, has some variation. The Gentiles in the house of Cornelius were baptized with the Holy Ghost (chapter 11: 15-17), yet all they could do was to speak in tongues (chapter 10: 46). Ananias did not lay hands on Saul for the same purpose that the apostles laid hands on others, for they did that to baptized believers only, while this was done to Saul before he was bap-

tized (as it was done in the case of Cornelius' groups, it being an emergency): that shows it was another emergency or special case. God needed another apostle, and instead of sending the Holy Ghost as it was done on Pentecost, He gave Ananias the special commission and power to install the man Saul into office. Ananias called him *brother Saul* because they were members of the same Jewish race.

Verse 18. *As it had been* means that what fell from his eyes was like scales. The reason Saul was baptized is given at chapter 22: 16. In both passages it should be noted that Saul *arose* to be baptized, because that ordinance is done by immersion.

Verse 19. *Received meat* means he took food after his period of fasting. *Certain days* is really indefinite, and denotes merely that Saul remained with the disciples in the city where he had become one himself.

Verse 20. Saul began at once to discharge his assignment of preaching Christ. He did this in the synagogue where the Jews assembled to read the law.

Verse 21. It should be expected that the people would be amazed at the preaching of Saul. He did not merely subside from his persecution of the disciples, but became an active proclaimer of the faith he had been opposing.

Verse 22. *Increased in strength* denotes that he became more powerful in proclaiming the Gospel. He *confounded* (confused and bewildered) the Jews by showing from their own scriptures that Jesus was the Christ predicted therein.

Verse 23. The preaching of Saul finally roused the Jews to anger, and they plotted to kill him whenever he came outside the city walls.

Verse 24. They lay secretly near the gates, where they expected to attack him as he came through. Saul learned about their plot, which really proved to be to his advantage. Knowing that his enemies were lying near the gates, he was left to feel safe in escaping if he could by-pass those places.

Verse 25. According to 2 Corinthians 11: 32, 33, the secular officers joined with the Jews in their plot by maintaining a military guard near the gates of Damascus. But the disciples helped Saul to escape by lowering him

down the outside of the wall in a basket, a vessel made by plaiting reeds or ropes.

Verse 26. *When Saul was come to Jerusalem*. This was after he had been in Arabia and returned to Damascus, a period of three years after his conversion (Galatians 1: 16-18). When he *assayed* (tried) to join the disciples they were afraid of him, thinking he was only posing as a disciple in order to get an advantage of them.

Verses 27, 28. Barnabas was a native of Cyprus (chapter 4: 36) which was not far from Damascus. It was natural that he would be more or less familiar with the events that took place in that city, especially as they concerned the religion he professed. His introduction of Saul to the apostles was satisfactory, so that he was with them in their movements in and out of Jerusalem.

Verse 29. Wherever Saul went, he was persecuted for preaching in the name of Jesus. *Grecians* were Greek-speaking Jews as explained at chapter 6: 1.

Verse 30. Caesarea was a seaport from which Saul sailed for his old home Tarsus. He was not idle while there, but preached "the faith he once destroyed" (Galatians 1: 21).

Verse 31. *Rest* is from *EREINE* which Thayer defines, "a state of national tranquility; exemption from the rage and havoc of war." Then in its application to our passage he explains it to mean, "of the church free from persecutions." This indicates the extent and success of Saul's persecutions of the church as it pertained to the uneasiness caused among the disciples. *Fear* is used in the sense of reverence for the Lord. It shows us that while persecutions will not take from true disciples their love for Christ (Romans 8: 35-39), yet they may hinder them from advancing in numbers and strength. This will be the last we will hear of Saul until we get to chapter 11: 25, 26.

Verse 32. The condition of "rest" which the churches were enjoying opened up opportunities for the further spread of the Gospel. Peter used this situation to travel among the churches of Palestine and made Lydda one of his stopping places.

Verses 33, 34. *Palsy* was a form of paralysis that rendered the victim helpless from weakness. This man's

case was of eight years' standing and hence was not imaginary. To make his bed was especially appropriate since his ailment was one of weakness. The cure was *immediate* as were all of the cases of miraculous healing.

Verse 35. *Saw him and turned to the Lord.* While the New Testament was in the making, the Lord empowered his apostles and other workers to perform miracles as evidence of their connection with Him. (See John 20: 30, 31; Ephesians 4: 8-14.)

Verse 36. Joppa was a seaport about ten miles from Lydda. The original word for *good works* means the general conduct is good and practical, and *almsdeeds* refers especially to things done for those in need, which is indicated in verse 39.

Verse 37. Thayer defines the original for *upper chamber*, "The highest part of the house, the upper rooms or story where the women resided." Here is where they laid Dorcas after preparing her body for burial.

Verse 38. The miraculous work of Peter had become known to the people of Joppa. Desiring him to come could have been only in the hope of restoring Dorcas to life.

Verse 39. *Widows stood by.* These were the ones for whom the "almsdeeds" of verse 36 were done. Their weeping was a sincere expression of appreciation for what Dorcas had done for them. *While she was with them.* Her body lay in their presence as they did this, which is another proof that there is something in a human being that leaves the body and the world when death occurs.

Verse 40. We are not told why Peter wished to be alone while performing this miracle, but it was not the first time such a thing was done. (See 1 Kings 17: 19-23; 2 Kings 4: 32-36; Matthew 9: 25.) Life was restored to the woman at the voice of Peter, and she opened her eyes only upon hearing it. She had enough physical strength to sit up, but was evidently somewhat weak from her recent illness.

Verse 41. *Gave her his hand.* Peter restored the woman to life independent of any cooperation on her part, as a matter of course, but he encouraged her to "arise" by giving her his hand. The miracle having been performed, he called her friends back into the room and presented her alive to them.

Verse 42. *Many believed.* See notes on verse 35 for the use of miracles in making believers. The case of Dorcas was reported throughout the city of Joppa.

Verse 43. The decision to spend more time in the city is mentioned as a mere incident, but it connects up with the events of the next chapter.

ACTS 10

Verse 1. This Caesarea was on the coast of Palestine. It was the official headquarters for the Roman government in that province. That is why Cornelius was stationed there, he being a military officer of the government, a centurion or commander of a hundred soldiers. *Italian band* means soldiers recruited from captives out of Italy.

Verse 2. Cornelius was a Gentile and lived under the Patriarchal Dispensation, which made it appropriate for him to worship God in the manner described. That dispensation, like the two others, had its better as well as less devoted members, and Cornelius was one of the best. He was a busy man in practical matters, so his praying to God *always* means he was continually a praying man.

Verse 3. He saw *evidently* denoted it was so plain that it could not leave any doubt as to what he saw. God was about to put an end to the Patriarchal Dispensation, and selected one of the best men in that system for the occasion. That was significant and showed that the change was not made just because the system was an absolute failure. The angel was not to tell Cornelius what to do to be saved, but to direct him to a man who would tell him. (See the comments at chapter 8: 26.)

Verse 4. Was *afraid* means he was overcome with awe at the appearance of this being. It was at the *ninth hour* which is three o'clock P. M., in broad daylight, so that no mysterious condition surrounded the place. He used the word *lord* in the sense of "sir," a title of great respect, and inquired what he wanted of him. Before telling him of his duty, the angel first quieted his fears with some words of commendation for his past life. *Memorial* is from MNEMOSUNON which Thayer defines, "a memorial (that by which the memory of any person or thing is preserved), a remembrance." It de-

notes that God had not overlooked his righteous life, and was going to use him as the first Gentile to be offered membership in the Christian Dispensation.

Verse 5. Up until *now* Cornelius had lived in accordance with the obligations of the Patriarchal Dispensation. That system was for the Gentiles and had been in force since the days of Adam. In the meantime the Jewish Dispensation had been "added" (Galatians 3: 19) as the system for the Jews, and that was lifted from them by the cross (Colossians 2: 14), leaving the Gentiles still under the Patriarchal Dispensation for a few years. *Now* that, too, was to be discontinued, and Cornelius was to do something else. That placed him under a new obligation, cancelling the authority of the former system. From *now* he was expected to do something else in order to be saved, and he was told to send for Peter at Joppa that he might tell him what it was.

Verse 6. Specific directions were given so that the right Simon would be called for. *Oughtest* is from *dei* which Thayer defines, "It is necessary, there is need of, it behooves, is right and proper," and he explains it at this place to mean, "Necessity in reference to what is required to attain some end." It has been rendered "must" 58 times in the King James translation. *He shall tell thee*. This is in keeping with the Lord's plan not to tell sinners directly what to do to be saved. (See chapter 8: 26.)

Verses 7, 8. Most public officers have their servants to wait on them in the affairs of the home, and military men who compose a bodyguard. Cornelius sent a group of three from these two classes to go to Joppa.

Verses 9, 10. The story now leaves the three men in their journey but nearing the city of Joppa the following day. Meanwhile Peter went upon the roof of the house to pray. Homes had flat roofs and they were occupied in much the same way as verandas are used today. It was at noon and Peter was hungry, but the meal was not ready, hence it furnished an opportunity for the Lord to add another portion to the story. A *trance* differs from a dream in that it occurs while the person is physically awake, but is lost to the immediate surroundings; a sort of "daydream." When the Lord

uses that plan for making a special revelation, he will cause the person to "draw in his mind from the things around him," and see with his mind's eye the things He wishes him to see.

Verse 11. *Saw heaven opened* refers to the region above him that could be seen with the natural eye under ordinary circumstances. A square piece of cloth could be gathered up by the four corners and thus form a vessel in which objects could be held. The four corners represented the "four corners of the earth," and denoted that God was about to offer an additional opportunity to mankind for salvation, that would include the Gentiles or nations of the whole earth.

Verses 12, 13. The Jews were restricted against eating certain kinds of animals that were considered unclean (ceremonially). They likewise held themselves above the Gentiles and regarded them as "dogs" (Matthew 15: 26, 27). The time had come when the Lord was going to consider any of the nations of the world good enough to be offered the Gospel, and he was introducing the subject by this object lesson. It was to be literally true that under the new dispensation no religious objections would be made against any kind of meat (1 Timothy 4: 3, 4). Likewise, no discriminations were to be made against any race of mankind, whether Jew or Gentile.

Verse 14. Peter took the language of the Lord to be used literally of these living creatures, and that perhaps He was putting him to the test. *Common* means food that the common classes of mankind used.

Verse 15. *What God hath cleansed* is explained at verses 12, 13.

Verse 16. This (conversation) was done thrice, the second being mentioned in the preceding verse. After the three times, the vessel was taken back out of Peter's sight.

Verse 17. Peter pondered over the vision as to what it signified, and by that time the men sent by Cornelius had arrived at Simon's gate.

Verse 18. The men specified whom they wanted according to the instructions they received from Cornelius.

Verse 19. The Lord was supervising this whole drama and bringing the various parts of it together at just the right time. Peter was still wondering about the vision at the time these men

were making their inquiry. The "voice" of verses 13 and 15 is here seen to have been the Spirit, speaking on behalf of the Lord.

Verse 20. The purpose of the Spirit in speaking was to reassure Peter that the call was legitimate. That would prepare him to receive whatever message they gave him.

Verse 21. Peter identified himself to the three men, which was the only response we have recorded as to their inquiry when they arrived at the gate. The Spirit had not told him what the men wanted, but simply assured him they were there because of Him.

Verse 22. In answer to Peter's question the men told their story. The original for *warned* at this place is defined by Thayer, "To be divinely commanded, admonished, instructed." Admonition always implies that some danger is possible for the one being admonished. Cornelius had been asked to learn his duty from Peter, and should he neglect it his soul would be in danger. This verse adds the information that Cornelius (though a Gentile) had a good reputation among the Jews.

Verse 23. It being evening of the day after the men started from home, Peter procured lodging for them over night; the next chapter will explain about *certain brethren*.

Verse 24. *Morrow after* means the next day after the group left the house of Simon the tanner. By way of tabulating the days, if the men left the house of Cornelius on Monday, they got back on Thursday. Cornelius was not selfish about the good words he expected to hear, but had assembled his relatives and friends who were waiting for Peter.

Verse 25. It was very natural for Cornelius to offer worship to the man who was to show him the way of salvation. We do not know what actions he attempted further than his falling down at the feet of Peter. For information on the various meanings of the word "worship," see the notes on Matthew 2: 2.

Verse 26. Peter's remark that he was himself *also a man* indicates that what Cornelius was attempting to offer was a kind due only to the Lord.

Verse 27. The above conversation took place near the entrance of the house of Cornelius. Peter then went

on in and observed that quite an audience had assembled.

Verse 28. The first part of this verse states the long-standing attitude of the Jews toward the Gentiles. Peter makes his application of this vision of the sheet and the conversation in connection with it. In that instance nothing was said about common or unclean men; only articles of food. But the apostle understood the lesson and stated it to this assembled audience.

Verse 29. Acting upon the lesson as he understood it, he came *without gainsaying*, which means without calling it in question. Being convinced that whatever was the purpose in calling him, it was proper, he asked them what that purpose was.

Verses 30-32. This paragraph corresponds with verses 3-6 in its main thoughts. It adds the information that he *was* fasting at the time the *man* (angel) appeared.

Verse 33. Cornelius was the spokesman in this reply to Peter's question. He was appreciative of the fact that Peter had come at his request. In the original conversation there was nothing said directly about the commandments coming from the Lord, but Cornelius recognized that He was back of all this, because the angel told him it was God who had remembered his good deeds. *We are all here . . . to hear*. This denotes an audience that was open to the words of the Lord.

Verse 34. *Opened his mouth*. (See the comments at Matthew 5: 2.) God is no *respector of persons* is from PROSOPOLEPTER which Thayer defines, "an acceptor." It has the idea of one who can be bribed or induced to show partiality in bestowing mercy.

Verse 35. Through the combination of several circumstances, Peter was convinced that all races were equally acceptable to God if they feared him and lived righteously.

Verse 36. Peter then began his sermon about Jesus, whose life's story was begun among the children of Israel, and which declared that Jesus was Lord (or ruler) of all.

Verse 37. The work for Jesus began with the introductory labors of John in the wilderness, and consisted of his baptism of the people, connected with belief of the story that Jesus was to come.

Verse 38. Literal anointing was

done by rubbing oil over a person being introduced into an office. Figurative anointing was done by bestowing the Holy Spirit upon someone who was expected to have a prominent work under God. When the word is extended to apply to unofficial persons, it means to be endowed with the words which the Holy Spirit gave the disciples through the apostles. (See 1 John 2: 27.) Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost and power at his baptism (Matthew 3: 16, 17). Devil is from *DIABOLOS* which means the being called Satan, who is considered responsible for the entrance of sin and disease into the world.

Verse 39. *We are witnesses* was made possible by the arrangement recorded in Mark 3: 14, which also is in line with Peter's statement in chapter 1: 21, 22.

Verses 40, 41. *Openly* does not mean generally, but evidently, "by many infallible proofs" (chapter 1: 3). The *witnesses* were the apostles, who were chosen beforehand for that purpose. Having seen Jesus alive, and eaten with him and handled him, they could testify from personal knowledge that Jesus lived again after his three days and three nights in the tomb.

Verse 42. Unlike his previous speeches, Peter did not accuse his hearers of guilt when he mentioned the death of Jesus, but the event needed to be told in connection with the resurrection. For the meaning of *ordained*, see the notes at John 15: 16. The *quick* are the people who will be living when Jesus comes. The dead will be raised, and all will be judged by this One who was ordained for that work. (See chapter 17: 31.)

Verse 43. *All the prophets witness*. The Gentiles were not expected to be acquainted with the Old Testament prophecies. The purpose Peter had in mentioning this was to show Cornelius and his group that it had long been God's will to offer salvation to all the world who would believe, whether they were Jews or Gentiles.

Verses 44, 45. It is better to consider these two verses together because of their relation to each other. Notice that the terms *Holy Ghost* and *gifts of the Holy Ghost* are used for the same event, showing that the Holy Ghost was the thing given. The gift was not bestowed to make them disciples, for they were told next to be

baptized. The reference to the astonishment of the disciples of the Jewish nation, and the argument Peter makes in verse 47, shows that God bestowed the gift as an evidence that from then on the Gentiles would be acceptable to become converts to Christ. (See Romans 15: 16.)

Verses 46-48. These verses may be bracketed and entitled, "end of the Patriarchal Dispensation." *Speaking with tongues* was necessary as evidence that these Gentiles had received the Holy Ghost. Upon all the accumulated evidence before Peter, which began with his trance on the roof of the house, he proposed baptism in water for these believers. *In His name*. The first word is from *EN*, and means upon the authority of the Lord. It shows Peter's right to command the baptism, and not as a "formula" to be uttered by the baptizer. It was natural for them to wish Peter to spend some time with them.

ACTS 11

Verse 1. Much of this chapter is a rehearsal of the preceding one, and I shall try to avoid unnecessary repetition of the comments. The brethren around Jerusalem heard the news of the conversion of the Gentiles before Peter returned.

Verse 2. When Peter got back to Jerusalem, they of the *circumcision*, meaning the Jews, had a contention with him.

Verse 3. It was objectionable to them for Peter to have associated with the Gentiles, but it was made worse for him to *eat* with them. In those days it was regarded as one of the strongest signs of social intimacy, to sit down together with others at a meal. (See 1 Corinthians 5: 11.) See the notes at Matthew 9: 11 about eating with others.

Verses 4-11. See the notes on chapter 10: 9-18.

Verse 12. These *six brethren* are the "certain brethren" of chapter 10: 23. They were taken along to be witnesses of the events in the household of Cornelius. Peter referred to them as a verification of what he was reporting.

Verses 13, 14. See the comments on chapter 10: 30-33.

Verse 15. See notes on chapter 10: 44, 45. Also note that Peter says the Holy Ghost fell on them *as it did* on the apostles at the beginning. As to

what "measure" it was that was given them, see the comments at chapter 4: 31.

Verse 16. *Then* is an adverb of time and refers to the moment when the Holy Ghost fell. That event reminded Peter of what John said in Matthew 3: 11. See the comments on that verse as to why Peter does not mention the baptism of fire.

Verse 17. Peter again calls the gift received by them and the Gentiles a *like gift*. Had he even hesitated about baptizing these Gentiles he would have been resisting God, for the bestowal of the Holy Ghost on them was to show that they were acceptable to God upon obedience to the Gospel ordinance.

Verse 18. The brethren showed the right spirit when Peter presented the facts to them. They did not merely give a reluctant agreement, but gave God the glory for what he had bestowed on the Gentiles. *Granted repentance unto life* means God gave the Gentiles the chance to repent (reform their lives), with the promise of forgiveness of sins.

Verse 19. This subject is mentioned in chapter 8: 1, 4, but the places are not named in that passage. *To the Jews only*. That was because they had left Jerusalem before the Gentiles had been accepted into the Gospel work.

Verse 20. The Grecians were Jews who spoke the Greek language.

Verse 21. The Lord blessed the labors of these men by causing their work to be received. The result was that a great number became disciples.

Verse 22. The church in Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch (in Syria), because the scattered disciples had carried the Gospel message as far as to that city.

Verse 23. The mission of Barnabas was to encourage the new converts, also to exhort them regarding their responsibility. *Purpose of heart* denotes a service into which one puts his whole heart.

Verse 24. *Full of the Holy Ghost*. (See the notes at chapter 4: 31.) The work and influence of Barnabas resulted in many more conversions.

Verse 25. The last account we had of Saul was when the brethren helped him get started towards this town of Tarsus (chapter 9: 30). The work at Antioch was growing in numbers and influence, and Barnabas believed that

the help of Saul would be beneficial, hence he went to Tarsus to find him.

Verse 26. These two men spent a year with the church, teaching them their duties that follow induction into the Lord's service. *Called Christians*. The second word is defined in the lexicon, "a follower of Christ," hence it is not likely that enemies would attach that title to them as in disrespect, for the disciples themselves claimed to be that, and rejoiced in the thought of being known by that name. The first word is from *CHREMATIZO*, and Thayer defines it at this place, "to assume or take to one's self a name from one's public business." That is exactly what was done in this case, for the (religious) business of the disciples was to work for Christ which made the name Christian an appropriate one for them.

Verse 27. Among the miraculous gifts bestowed upon the disciples in the early period of the church was that of prophesying. Peter cited the prediction of it in his reference to Joel's writings, in chapter 2: 17.

Verse 28. This famine is verified by Josephus; *Antiquities*, Book 20, Chapter 2, Section 5. I shall quote only one sentence from his lengthy paragraph: "Whereas a famine did oppress them at that time, and many people died for want of what was necessary to procure food withal." The context shows Josephus was writing of the days of Claudius Caesar. *All the world* was a common phrase to refer to the Roman Empire.

Verse 29. The disciples at Antioch were in better circumstances than those in Judea, and concluded to send them some relief. This was done on the basis of voluntary contributions, and the giving was according to each man's ability. That is the principle on which all giving is to be done by Christians (1 Corinthians 16: 2).

Verse 30. *Sent it to the elders*. We learned at chapter 6: 2 that the deacons are the ones whose work is to distribute the funds for the necessities of life. That was always true, but the work of those officials, like everything else pertaining to the affairs of the church, is under the supervision of the elders.

ACTS 12

Verse 1. This was Herod Agrippa, I, the grandson of Herod the Great. After a career of "ups and downs" with vari-

ous powers, he was finally placed in a ruling position over Palestine by authority of the Roman Emperor. His idea in vexing persons of the church was to win the favor of the Pharisaic Jews. (See verse 3.)

Verse 2. This James was one of the sons of Zebedee (Matthew 4: 21).

Verse 3. Peter was not slain but was put into prison. *Days of unleavened bread* denotes it was the time of the feast of the Passover (Leviticus 23: 4-8).

Verse 4. A quaternion consisted of four soldiers, and four of them would make 16 soldiers charged with the guarding of the prison, changing their shifts every three hours. Two of the ones on duty were with the prisoner and two watched the gate. *Easter* is from PASCHA. Thayer defines it, "The paschal festival, the feast of Passover." It has no connection with Easter as that term is used today.

Verse 5. *Without ceasing* is from the Greek word EKTENES, and Thayer defines it, "Intent, earnest, assiduous [persistent]." The prayers were continuous and earnest.

Verse 6. *Sleeping between two soldiers*. (See the notes at verse 4.)

Verse 7. An angel of the Lord would be given supernatural power, by which he could perform this service to Peter unknown to the soldiers. (See Hebrews 1: 13, 14.)

Verse 8. Peter had taken off his sandals and outer garment when he was preparing for sleep. The angel meant for him to resume them, tightening his belt about him.

Verse 9. *Wist [knew] not that it was true*. The last word is from ALETHES, which Thayer defines with the same word used in the text, and adds by way of explanation, "an actual occurrence." Peter thought he was in a trance and was seeing a vision only.

Verse 10. *First and second ward* were the two soldiers stationed some distance apart to guard the prison. (See notes at verse 4.) The same supernatural power that loosened the chains unknown to the soldiers in the prison (verse 7), enabled them to pass these other soldiers unseen. The *iron gate* was what closed the outer wall of the entire prison structure. *Opened of his own accord*. The Lord was still working in the case and miraculously

removing all the barriers to Peter's freedom. *Passed through one street*. The angel remained with Peter until they were safely out of reach of the prison officers and guardsmen, then disappeared.

Verse 11. *Come to himself*. After the angel disappeared, Peter observed that he was on one of the streets of the city, out of the vicinity of the prison. He knew that to be there it was necessary to escape the two soldiers lying by him, and the two near the gate, likewise get through the iron gate in the prison outer wall. This is what caused him to come to himself and to conclude that his experience was not "only a dream."

Verse 12. *Considered the thing*. The last two words are not in the original. The phrase means that after Peter had come to himself he considered the whole situation and decided to call at the home of one of the disciples. It was at the home of Mark's mother, where a prayer service was being conducted on his behalf.

Verse 13. *Door of the gate*. The last word refers to the porch in front of a house, and the first is the smaller opening through which to pass into the porch. *Came to hearken* means to inquire or to ask, "who is it?"

Verse 14. When Peter answered her question she recognized his voice. She was so joyously surprised she seemed to forget to open the door. She left Peter standing and knocking and went to tell the group that Peter was at the gate.

Verse 15. We are not told just what the church said in its prayer for Peter. If it was a scriptural prayer, the disciples placed their request on condition "if the Lord will." The favorable answer to the prayer was so gladdening that they thought it was "too good to be true." The girl was so positive about her report they thought some explanation should be resorted to that would harmonize all the phases of the situation. Their solution was that it was *his angel*. After his definition of the Greek word for *angel*, Thayer explains that "guardian angels of individuals are mentioned in Matthew 18: 10; Acts 12: 15." Funk and Wagnalls Standard Bible Dictionary says the following: "There was a popular idea that each person had assigned to him a special guardian angel, and it is to this that Jesus refers in Matthew 18:

10. Peter's escape from prison (Acts 12: 15) is an illustration of the thought that when such guardian angel appeared on earth he took the form of the person guarded." Luke does not say anything for or against such a theory, since in the present instance the expression was that of the astonished group, and their statement had no authority in the nature of inspiration.

Verse 16. The continual knocking made it necessary to open the door. Their amazement caused them to make some kind of clamor. (See next verse.)

Verse 17. Peter indicated with his hand that he wished them to be quiet and listen. He then rehearsed the manner in which he was released from prison. He asked them to tell the good news, first to James and then to the other brethren. This was James the Lord's brother, and the writer of the epistle that bears his name. Special mention is made of him because of his prominence in the work at Jerusalem. (See chapter 15: 13; 21: 18; 1 Corinthians 15: 7; Galatians 1: 19; 2: 9, 12.) After giving the group his request, Peter went into another place. That meant some spot in Jerusalem, for in chapter 15: 7 we find him in the city and speaking to the assembly on the issue before it.

Verse 18. By the aid of the angel, Peter had escaped prison unseen by the soldiers, hence the confusion over his absence, but we know that the soldiers were innocent.

Verse 19. *Examined* is from ANAKRINO, and Thayer defines it, "To hold an investigation; to interrogate, examine, the accused or witnesses." The keepers would not be able to give Herod any information as to the escape of their prisoner, hence they were condemned to a death they did not deserve. Caesarea "was the official residence of the Herodian kings," according to Smith's Bible Dictionary, hence we have the statement that Herod went there and abode.

Verse 20. *Highly displeased* is from THUMOMACHEO, which is defined in Thayer's lexicon, "to carry on war with great animosity; to be very angry, be exasperated." Adjoining countries frequently have trouble with each other; we do not know what was the cause of Herod's displeasure. But the country of Tyre and Sidon became anxious for peace because it depended

on Palestine for necessary products. (See 1 Kings 5: 11; Ezekiel 27: 17.) A chamberlain is an intimate servant to a king, and the people of Tyre and Sidon induced this one to use his influence with his master. As a result, Herod agreed to drop hostilities and fixed a date when he would grant a hearing to the interested partisans.

Verse 21. When the set day arrived, Herod put on his royal garments and made a speech (of conciliation) to the people, which aroused them to making foolish compliments.

Verse 22. In their wild joy the people said that Herod was a god.

Verse 23. Josephus, *Antiquities*, Book 19, Chapter 8, Section 2, says that Herod did not rebuke the people for their flattery. Our passage merely states that Herod was eaten of worms and died. But the passage in Josephus cited above says, "A severe pain arose in his abdomen, and began in a most violent manner. . . . When he had said this, his pain was become violent. . . . And when he had been quite worn out by the pain in his abdomen for five days, he departed this life."

Verse 24. The significance of this verse is that in spite of all the disturbances going on between rival countries, the word of God gained many adherents.

Verse 25. *Fulfilled their ministry*. Chapter 11: 29, 30 shows this mission was to take the contribution collected at Antioch for the famine-stricken disciples in Judea. When they came back to Antioch they brought with them Mark, who is the writer of the book that bears his name.

ACTS 13

Verse 1. I shall quote from the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia: "Antioch in Syria, the second capital of Christianity, and the third city of the Roman Empire in population (500,000), wealth, and commercial activity, was situated about 300 miles north of Jerusalem, upon the left bank of the Orontes, and 16 miles from the Mediterranean." The importance of this city is indicated by the fact that Paul had it for his starting place for the "missionary journeys" that he made, returning each time to report his work to the church there. It was the place where the disciples first called themselves Christians (chapter 11: 26). The church there was strong in num-

bers and talented men, including the ones whose names are mentioned in this verse.

Verse 2. See the notes on Matthew 6: 16 on the subject of fasting. The Holy Ghost speaks only through men, so this instruction was made through one of the prophets in the church. *Separate* is from *APHORIZO* which Thayer defines, "To appoint, set apart, one for some purpose." Barnabas and Saul were to be thus appointed for a special work to which the Lord had called them.

Verse 3. We know from chapter 8: 18 that it required the laying on of an apostle's hands to confer any miraculous gift. Besides, Saul was already an apostle of Christ with the power to confer such gifts, hence no hands were laid on him for that purpose. But since such a manual act was used in those days for that important office, it came to be also a gesture of approval, similar to giving the "right hand of fellowship" (Galatians 2: 9). The church at Antioch sent them on this mission, which is one of the meanings of being an apostle.

Verse 4. The Holy Ghost sent them forth by speaking through the church. This was the start of the first "missionary journey." Seleucia was a seaport town, from where they sailed to Cyprus, an island in the Mediterranean Sea.

Verse 5. Salamis was one of the two chief cities of Cyprus, situated on its eastern coast. Here the missionaries preached in the synagogue of the Jews because they could meet people there. It was John Mark who was going with them as a *minister*. The original for that word is defined in the lexicon, "Any one who serves with his hands, a servant." John Mark went with them as an attendant to do whatever service that was needed.

Verse 6. Paphos was the other chief city of the island and it was situated on the western shore. *Sorcerer* is from *MAGOS* which is the word for "wise men" in Matthew 2: 1. See the notes at that place for a fuller explanation of the word. This sorcerer was using whatever talent of wisdom he had to make false predictions and to oppose the truth. Bar-Jesus was the proper name given to this man as his personal name. Elymas (verse 8) was a common noun applied to him because

of some special meaning derived from the name.

Verse 7. Sergius Paulus was the *deputy* (acting governor) of the island, which was a part of the Roman Empire. This man was *prudent* (very intelligent) and wished to hear what Barnabas and Saul were preaching.

Verse 8. *Elymas the sorcerer* (See verse 6) was associated with the deputy in some way, and tried to prevent him from believing the Gospel. He was a Jew by race, and feared that if the deputy became a believer it would affect his standing with him.

Verse 9. *Also is called Paul*. A common but erroneous saying is that Saul's name was changed to Paul. The text only says that he was *also* called Paul. Thayer says that Saul was his Jewish name, while Paul (from *PAULUS*) was a Latin proper name. From here on the name Saul will not be applied to him except historically when referring to his conversion. *Filled with the Holy Ghost*. (See notes at chapter 4: 31.)

Verse 10. *Subtly* means deceitfulness, which the sorcerer used with a *mischievous* motive. *Child of the devil*. The first word is explained at John 17: 12.

Verse 11. *Hand of the Lord* was said to let the deputy know that he (Paul) was working under Him. A man who is so blind that he cannot see even the sun is certainly very much so, although this was to be on this man only for a season. This miracle was *immediate*, as all of them were that the Lord brought to pass. The fact the man sought for someone to lead him proved the genuineness of the deed.

Verse 12. The deputy *believed* when he saw the miracle. That was according to the Lord's purpose for miracles, stated in John 20: 30, 31.

Verse 13. Pamphylia was in Asia Minor, and was a province of the Roman Empire. We are not told why John (Mark) deserted them, but the act was so distasteful to Paul that it later caused a serious dispute between him and Barnabas (chapter 15: 37-40).

Verse 14. Pisidia was another province in Asia Minor adjoining Pamphylia, in which the present Antioch was situated. The Jews assembled in the synagogues on the sabbath day to hear the reading of the law, since copies of it were scarce and only a few people could possess it. The preachers

went into it because it gave them an opportunity to speak to the people about the Gospel. It was the custom to invite persons in the audience to speak, after the reading service was completed.

Verse 15. *Sent unto them, saying.* The first word is from APOSTELLO, which Thayer defines at this place, "to say through a messenger." In a large room and in a numerous gathering of people, it would be more courteous and orderly for the rulers at the front of the auditorium to have a messenger go to the visitor and personally invite him to speak.

Verse 16. Paul *stood up* according to the custom in that community for public speakers. *Beckoning with his hand* was a gesture as an invitation or request for the people to give their attention to him. *Ye that fear God* was not said in flattery, but was an honest comment based on the fact that they were at that place for the purpose of hearing the reading of the law of God.

Verse 17. As a preparation for his main subject, the story of Christ, Paul rehearsed the history of the Jews, beginning with their sojourn in Egypt. *High arm* means one of great might and authority.

Verse 18. *Suffered he their manners* means that God tolerated them, not that He endorsed them. Instead, He frequently punished them for their sins.

Verse 19. The *seven nations* are named in Deuteronomy 7: 1. Joshua conquered 31 kings (chapter 12: 24), but many of them ruled only over single cities. The *seven nations* were important groups in Canaan. The division of the land is in Joshua, chapters 15, 16 and 17, and the division was decided by means of the lot.

Verse 20. This is the only passage that states the entire period of the judges. *Until Samuel* is said because he was the last one of the judges (1 Samuel 7: 15).

Verse 21. This is the only passage that states the length of Saul's reign.

Verse 22. The throne was not only removed from Saul's house but also from his tribe (Benjamin), and given to David of the tribe of Judah. It remained in that tribe as long as the kingdom existed.

Verse 23. The importance of David

was due to the fact that he was to become the ancestor, both fleshly and spiritually, of the Saviour of Israel and all the world.

Verse 24. *John had first preached* refers to the work of John as the forerunner of Jesus, baptizing people in preparation for His service. *Baptism of repentance* means that John baptized those only who repented. (See Matthew 3: 7, 8.)

Verse 25. This verse is explained at John 1: 19-27.

Verse 26. Paul was showing these Jews that they were the ones who were first to be concerned in the promise made to Abraham. (See verse 46.)

Verse 27. The leaders among the Jews did not know (recognize) Jesus nor the prophecies that went before concerning him. Notwithstanding, when they condemned him (Jesus), they fulfilled them (the prophecies that foretold that condemnation).

Verse 28. In spite of there being no charge sustained against Jesus, the Jews called for his death. In so doing they fulfilled the prophecies about him. (See verse 27.)

Verse 29. The pronoun *they* refers to both the enemies and the friends of Jesus, for it was the friends who placed him in the tomb. But the next verse shows that the enemies were still interested in His death, for they placed a guard about the tomb in the hope that he would not be able to come out alive. In this sense *they laid him in the tomb*.

Verse 30. This brief verse means that God overruled the acts and expectations of the Jews, by raising his Son to life.

Verse 31. As a rebuke to the murderers of Jesus, God saw to it that many "disinterested" people would have full opportunity to see Jesus after his resurrection.

Verses 32, 33. *Glad tidings* is another term for "Gospel," and Paul was announcing it to this synagogue audience. *Second Psalm.* The quotation stated by Paul can be found in no other place than the Psalm that is so numbered today. This proves that the Book of Psalms was arranged as to chapter numbers then the same as today.

Verse 34. *No more to return to corruption* means that Jesus arose from the dead to die no more. *Sure mercies*

of David. The second word is from *hosios* which Thayer defines at this place, "The holy things (of God) promised to David." These things included the resurrection of his illustrious descendant, Jesus, to die no more.

Verses 35, 36. Jesus was to be raised from the dead, but God also promised David that his "son" was not to remain in the grave long enough to decay. (Psalms 16: 9, 10.)

Verse 37. *Served his own generation* denotes that David did his duty in serving God in that age or generation. After doing that, however, he died and his body went back to the dust, while the One concerning whom the promise was made to David was raised before His body had time to decay, thus fulfilling the promise made to the patriarch.

Verse 38. *This man* was said to emphasize that Christ and not David—the new law and not the old—is the only means by which one must obtain forgiveness of sins.

Verse 39. *By him* has the same force as the italicized words in the preceding verse. The law of Moses could not bring the justification that is possible by belief in Christ.

Verse 40. Paul referred to a statement in Habakkuk 1: 5.

Verse 41. The prophet was writing about ancient Israel and the judgments that were brought upon them through the Chaldeans. Paul warned the Jews in his audience that a like judgment might come upon them. It was similar to his statements in Romans 15: 4 and 1 Corinthians 10: 11.

Verse 42. The synagogues were public places and came to be attended by Gentiles as visitors. They were less prejudiced than the Jews and wished to hear more of the subject that Paul was preaching. *Next sabbath* would be the next gathering in the synagogue.

Verse 43. *Congregation* is from the same Greek word as *synagogue*. (See the notes at Matthew 4: 23.) The more favorable among the Jews, also the Gentiles who had become proselytes to the Jewish faith, were so well impressed that they accompanied Paul and Barnabas as they went on their way out into the city. Seeing their attitude, Paul encouraged them to continue in the good life they were following. He was not ready to make a direct appeal for them to take their

stand for the Gospel; that will come soon.

Verse 44. In the week following the events just mentioned, the news of them was spread so that a large crowd came the next sabbath to hear the word.

Verse 45. No outspoken opposition was manifested against the preaching of Paul until the Jews saw the great throng of people. Their envy was so bitter that they even blasphemed the work of the preachers, denying the truths they were uttering.

Verse 46. The Gospel was intended for the whole world, but the Jews were to be given the "first chance" for it. Indeed, it was not even offered to the Gentiles until the case of Cornelius. And on that principle Paul made his first appeals to the Jews in his preaching. But when they rejected the favor, Paul considered it as rendering themselves *unworthy of everlasting life*. In turning to the Gentiles he was acting in keeping with the events of chapter 10.

Verse 47. Paul verified his work by quoting Isaiah 49: 6.

Verse 48. *Gentiles heard this* means the announcement of Paul that he was turning to them with the word of God. The Bible does not contradict itself, and the whole of God's dealings with man shows that no person will be either saved or lost by any predestined decree, but that all who will may be saved. The passages on the subject are too numerous to be cited here, but the reader should see 2 Peter 3: 9. All of the words in our verse are correctly translated, but the construction of the sentence is inaccurate. The proper form is, "As many as believed were ordained to eternal life," and the reader should see the notes at John 15: 16 on the word "ordain."

Verse 49. This publishing of the word was due to the conversion of the Gentiles throughout that territory, who repeated the good news to others.

Verse 50. These *devout and honorable women* were of the better class of citizens, who generally had much respect for established law. The Jews worked on their emotions and got them so excited that they became uneasy about the work of Paul and Barnabas. The result of the excitement was a movement of persecution against the preachers. This expelling was not a formal or legal act, but a persecuting one that forced them to leave.

Verse 51. *Shook off the dust.* (See the notes on Matthew 10: 14.) Iconium was a large city in the next province, a place of many wealthy people.

Verse 52. Notwithstanding the opposition of the envious Jews the disciples were happy. (See the notes on chapter 4: 31 on being filled with the Holy Ghost.)

ACTS 14

Verse 1. As his manner was, Paul went into the synagogue to have opportunity to preach the word. Both Jews and Greeks believed the word, due to the convincing way in which Paul (and Barnabas) spoke the truth.

Verse 2. The Jews ordinarily had little or no interest in the Gentiles, but it grieved them to see these people becoming interested in the work of the brethren. They agitated them so much that it turned their minds against Paul and Barnabas.

Verse 3. *Gave testimony* was done as it was in Mark 16: 20. This was necessary because the New Testament had not been produced, and something was required to prove that the preachers were not frauds.

Verse 4. The multitude was divided in sentiment between the Jews and the *apostles*. The last word will be explained at verse 14.

Verses 5, 6. This *assault* did not reach the stage of actual attack, for the men heard about it and escaped. The word means "a hostile movement" according to Thayer, and would have ended in violence had Paul and Barnabas remained in the city. Lystra and Derbe were in another province nearby, and the preachers stopped at Lystra first.

Verse 7. Persecution did not dampen the devotion of the missionaries, for at every opportunity they preached the Gospel to all who would hear it.

Verse 8. *Impotent* means to be weak, and this man had been too lame in his feet to walk, having been that way since his birth.

Verse 9. *Faith to be healed.* Paul knew the man showed the proper attitude toward the preaching, and that frame of mind would prompt him to cooperate with the apostle.

Verse 10. Paul put that faith to a test by telling the man to stand. Sure enough, he proved his faith by his works by leaping and walking.

Verse 11. Lycaonia was the province where Lystra was situated. This miracle was so unusual that the heathen people of the country thought Paul and Barnabas were gods; that is, the planets (which these people worshiped) in the form of men.

Verse 12. The planets *Mercurius* and *Jupiter* had these characteristics as indicated in the work of Paul and Barnabas, according to the heathen mythology.

Verse 13. True to their opinion of the preachers, the heathen priest of that city was preparing to do homage to them as gods. The oxen were for the purpose of sacrifice, and the garlands were to be used as crowns.

Verse 14. *Apostles Barnabas and Paul.* The first word is from *apostolos* which Thayer defines, "A delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders." The outstanding idea in the word is, "one sent." Both these men had been "sent" out by the church at Antioch (chapter 13: 3, 4), and hence were apostles of that church. It is true that Paul was an apostle of Christ independent of the church at Antioch, but when the two are mentioned together as apostles, it means their commission from that church. They manifested much displeasure at the attempt to treat them as gods.

Verse 15. Some men would be vain enough to enjoy being worshiped, but Paul and Barnabas were true worshipers of the God of creation. A part of their mission among the heathen was to lead them out of such vain worship. Instead of worshiping the planets, men should honor Him who created those planets. (See James 1: 16, 17.)

Verse 16. God *suffered* nations to walk in their own ways. That is different from permitting it, for that would be equivalent to endorsing it.

Verse 17. The *witness* consisted of the blessings of nature. These heathen should know that none of the planets could bestow such things on the world.

Verse 18. It took all of this teaching to prevent the people from performing religious services to Paul and Barnabas.

Verses 19, 20. Persecution is a persistent evil, even following the victims from place to place. Note the inspired writer says only that they *supposed* that Paul was dead. There is no evidence of any miracle having been per-

formed upon Paul to revive him. Neither is there any proof that he was unconscious. A man can be so stunned that he would be unable either to move or speak for a while, and yet retain full consciousness. But this condition did not continue very long, for the disciples were standing about him, and they certainly would not have neglected doing something for his body before long. But without any help, while they were looking on, Paul got up and went into the city, with no sign of bodily injury indicated. Therefore, to connect this incident with 2 Corinthians 12: 1-4 is pure speculation.

Verse 21. Derbe was the farthest city to which they went in this part of their journey, which was given advance notice in verse 6. After preaching here, they retraced their steps and entered the very city where Paul was supposed to have been killed, then going on as far as Antioch where they did some work with the disciples they made at the previous visit.

Verse 22. Paul's persecution did not discourage him, but he did not want the disciples to be so either. The work in this city consisted in *confirming* or strengthening these brethren. And lest they might think that the things just happening showed that "something was wrong," he told them that entrance into the kingdom of God must be accompanied with much tribulation.

Verse 23. The original word for *ordain* in this place is defined by Thayer "To elect, appoint, create." Notice that they ordained *elders in every church*, which clearly shows that a plurality of elders in each congregation is the Lord's arrangement. Prayer and fasting was a voluntary devotional service performed in keeping with the solemnity of the occasion.

Verse 24. They passed through these places before (chapter 13: 13, 14).

Verse 25. Perga was in Pamphylia, the city where Mark deserted the work. They again preached in that city before going on to the seaport town of Attalia in Lycia.

Verse 26. From Attalia they sailed to Antioch in Syria, the place from which they started out on the work for which the church had recommended them.

Verse 27. The first thing Paul and Barnabas did was to report their work to the church. That gives us a good example of how evangelists should

act toward the congregation that is sponsoring their work. The church has the right to know where their evangelists have been and what they have been doing. The most important item of news was the opening of the door of faith to the Gentiles.

Verse 28. This *long time* of their stay with the disciples will include an important visit to Jerusalem, which is reported in the next chapter.

ACTS 15

Verse 1. This chapter introduces what is commonly called Judaism. The term is not to be found in the New Testament, but the doctrine is reported at various places. It was the principal error that afflicted the church in the first century, and whole chapters and books had to be written to expose it, which will be commented upon as we come to them in the COMMENTARY. The doctrine is that people under the Christian Dispensation must keep the Jewish law also in order to please God. The men who taught that doctrine are called Judaizers. These *certain men* who came to Antioch with this agitation did not truly represent the church at Jerusalem. (See verse 24.)

Verse 2. Paul and Barnabas understood the subject but could not satisfy the brethren. It was decided that they should go to Jerusalem about the matter, that being the first church, and the place where the other apostles were making their headquarters. Certain brethren from Antioch were to go with Paul and Barnabas.

Verse 3. *Being brought on their way* was done by an escort of honor, similar to the circumstance in chapter 21: 5. Phenice and Samaria lay between Antioch and Jerusalem, and in passing through those regions Paul and Barnabas informed the brethren of the Gentile conversions, which was good news and caused much rejoicing.

Verse 4. The church and its elders with the apostles, gave Paul and Barnabas a favorable reception, and listened to their report of good work done for God.

Verse 5. *Which believed* is said to denote that these Pharisees had accepted the Gospel. These were the kind of *brethren* who had caused the disturbance at Antioch, and they were agitating the same heresy before the group from that city.

Verse 6. The authority of the twelve apostles was universal (Matthew 19: 28; 28: 19, 20), but they were then working especially with the Jerusalem church; at the same time they respected the elders of the congregation and worked with them. It should be noted that this whole matter was in the hands of the church at Jerusalem, and it was thus not a "church council" as Rome uses that term.

Verse 7. After the discussion had gone on for some time, Peter "took the floor" to make a fundamental report touching the issue involved, referring to his own personal experience. The choice that God made is recorded in chapter 10: 5, 6, which made it fitting that Peter should "speak up" at the turn of the discussion.

Verse 8. *Knoweth the hearts.* God would not have chosen the household of Cornelius for this initial work of offering the Gospel to the Gentiles, had He not seen in them a heart that was worthy of the great epoch.

Verse 9. He *put no difference* in that both Jew and Gentile could become pure in heart by accepting the faith of the Gospel and not by the law of Moses.

Verse 10. *Nor we were able to bear.* The last word is defined in the lexicon by "endure," and the term *able* does not refer to physical strength, but that it was more than they felt prepared to endure. God never intended the ritualistic yoke of the law to be perpetual, but these Judaizers would have made it permanent.

Verse 11. Instead of that formal, severe yoke of the law, Peter declared that he and the Gentiles could be saved by the grace of God through Christ.

Verse 12. The disturbers of verse 5 were quieted by the speech of Peter, which gave Paul and Barnabas an uninterrupted opportunity to report their work among the Gentiles. They proved the righteousness of their work by detailing the miracles God enabled them to perform among the people.

Verse 13. This James was not one of the twelve apostles, but he was a very outstanding man in the church at Jerusalem. (See the notes and references on the subject at chapter 12: 17.) He was the next spokesman and his advice will be respected.

Verse 14. *Simeon* means Simon Peter,

and James is referring to what he declared in verse 7. A *people for his name* means that the Gentiles were to become a part of God's people and wear His name.

Verses 15-17. James not only endorsed the statement of Peter, but quoted the prophecy that foretold it. (See the prediction in Amos 9: 11, 12).

Verse 18. All of this was according to what God always knew he was going to do. With Him all dates are the same as "now" (Isaiah 46: 10).

Verse 19. *Sentence* is from *KRINO*, and Thayer's definition at this place is, "To be of opinion, deem, think." But we must bear in mind that this opinion was inspired by the Holy Ghost. (See verse 28.) That opinion was that the Gentiles converted to Christ were not to be troubled with the Jewish ordinances.

Verse 20. The law against eating blood is older than the law of Moses, having been given in Genesis 9: 4. And that against fornication is still older, being implied by the statement in Genesis 2: 24. For if this union makes them one flesh, then no other person can have relations with one of this pair without committing fornication. Hence these two laws are permanent regardless of what Dispensation is in force. But the subject of eating meat that had been offered to idols is a later one, and the law against it is based on special conditions that are more or less local. The Gentiles had practiced it so much that the Jews had an abhorrence for it. For that reason these Gentile Christians were told to abstain from it because of the Jews who were already somewhat prejudiced against the Gentiles; otherwise there would not have been any wrong in itself for them to eat it. That is the reason Paul taught as he did in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 on this subject. *Things strangled* were forbidden because the blood would not have been all removed from the beast.

Verse 21. Because this law of Moses was known wherever there was a synagogue of the Jews, it was not expedient to offend them unnecessarily by eating this meat.

Verse 22. The judgment of James was accepted by the entire group, the apostles, elders and the whole church. Paul and Barnabas were not left to return to Antioch and expect the church there to rely solely on their word for

the decision of the Jerusalem church. They selected two *chief men among the brethren* to go with them, carrying a written document backed up by the apostles and elders.

Verse 23. This document began as a greeting to the Gentile brethren, not only those in Antioch, but also those in the whole provinces of Syria and Cilicia.

Verse 24. *We have heard . . . went out from us.* This shows that the disturbers were acting without the knowledge and consent of the church in Jerusalem. The original word for *subverting* is defined by Thayer, "to unsettle." The agitation of these Judaizers confused the minds of the Gentile Christians.

Verse 25. The *chosen men* were Judas and Silas (verse 22).

Verse 26. *Hazarded their lives* means they had risked their lives for the sake of the Gospel. One notable case was that of Paul at Lystra, chapter 14: 19.

Verse 27. The main purpose of sending Judas and Silas was to confirm the letter by their oral testimony. That would prove the document was genuine as from the church.

Verse 28. This denotes that the letter was inspired by the Holy Ghost.

Verse 29. This is the same as verse 20, with a friendly closing additional.

Verse 30. When Paul and his group reached Antioch, they assembled the multitude to which the epistle was delivered, since all were interested.

Verse 31. *Consolation* is properly translated, for a part of Thayer's definition of the original word is "encouragement." It was reassuring to these Gentile brethren to know they did not have to take up the burdensome ordinances of the Jewish system. They also looked favorably upon the exhortation to abstain from the evils named in the letter.

Verse 32. *Judas and Silas being prophets.* Those were the days of spiritual gifts and these brethren possessed that of prophecy. That was doubtless the reason they were named as *chief men* and sent along with Paul and Barnabas to confirm the letter.

Verses 33, 34. *They were let go.* Silas and Judas were given friendly release so that they could return to Jerusalem, but Silas preferred to remain at Antioch longer.

Verse 35. Paul and Barnabas remained at Antioch for the time, since that was their regular headquarters. They employed their time *teaching and preaching* the word. The italicized words are used interchangeably all through the New Testament because the distinction is slight. The second has special reference to the first announcement of the Gospel, and the first meaning to give further instruction concerning the things preached.

Verse 36. The term "missionary" is commonly used to mean a worker in new fields, but the present verse says they were to revisit the places where they had been. Hence the "second missionary journey" of Paul does not start until chapter 16, verse 10.

Verse 37. Mark was a cousin to Barnabas (Colossians 4: 10). I do not know whether that influenced him in this contention or not.

Verse 38. Paul mistrusted Mark's stability on account of his desertion of the work at Pamphylia. (See chapter 13: 13 for the account of this circumstance.)

Verse 39. The original for *contention* is defined in Thayer's lexicon by the one word "irritation." Robinson defines it, "A paroxysm, sharp contention." It should be noted that no "doctrinal" difference came up between these brethren; it was only a matter of judgment. And after they each went his own way, they preached the same Gospel; neither was there ever any personal ill feeling between them. Instead, Paul made favorable mention of Barnabas afterward (1 Corinthians 9: 6; Galatians 2: 9).

Verse 40. Silas had come with Judas from Jerusalem (verses 22, 34) and had remained. That made him available for the work with Paul on the next journey. *Being recommended* means they started on this journey with the good wishes of the brethren. Nothing is said on that subject about Barnabas, either for or against him. That is because the writer is continuing only with his report of Paul's work.

Verse 41. *Confirming the churches* means to strengthen and establish them.

ACTS 16

Verse 1. Paul had been in this city before and taught many people (chapter 14: 20, 21). Timothy is the other form of this *disciple's* name, of whom we will hear later.

Verse 2. This disciple had a good reputation at Lystra and Iconium.

Verse 3. Circumcision was a Jewish rite, and the national blood was in the veins of Timothy which made it right for him to be circumcized. *Because of the Jews.* The rite was not necessary to salvation (Galatians 5: 6), but Paul performed it on Timothy on the principle of 1 Corinthians 9: 20.

Verse 4. The *decrees* refers to the requirements stated in chapter 15: 29. Note that they were ordained by the apostles and the elders of the Jerusalem church, hence not a decision of a "council of churches" as Rome teaches.

Verse 5. *Churches established.* The starting of a church is not the same as establishing one. That has to be done by additional instruction concerning Christian duties.

Verse 6. This *Asia* was one of the smaller provinces of Asia Minor. We are not told why the Lord did not want them to do any preaching in that territory.

Verse 7. Mysia and Bithynia were in another part of Asia Minor than the *Asia* of the preceding verse. Paul *assayed* or made plans to do some work in those parts but was not permitted to do so because the Lord had other work for them to do.

Verses 8, 9. In obedience to the divine orders, Paul journeyed on until he came to *Troas*, the Troy of history. This is the time and place where the familiar Macedonian call was made upon Paul in a vision. The Gospel had never been preached in Macedonia, hence this will be new territory and the real start of his "second missionary journey."

Verse 10. *Vision* is from *horoma* which Thayer defines, "That which is seen, a sight, spectacle; a sight divinely granted in an ecstasy, a vision." *We endeavored* means they made preparations for the voyage. The first personal pronoun *we* denotes that Luke was in the group with Paul. *Assuredly gathering* means that they concluded with certainty.

Verses 11, 12. *Samothracia* was an island where Paul made his first stop over night. Next day he sailed on and landed at Neapolis on the coast of Macedonia. He went on to Philippi for the first stop of some days. This place was important because of its being a Roman colony. That means a commu-

nity of Roman citizens located there in Macedonia, but remaining subject to the mother country. (See verse 21.)

Verse 13. The *sabbath* did not mean anything special to Paul except as an opportunity to preach to some people. Out by a river side some women were *wont* (accustomed) to conduct a prayer meeting on the sabbath day. Paul entered into the group and began talking to them about the Gospel.

Verse 14. Smith's Bible Dictionary says Lydia was a Jewish proselyte, which accounts for her being present at the prayer meeting on the sabbath day, and also explains why she *worshipped God*. One meaning of *opened* is to have things explained so that the heart (mind) could understand what is said. The Lord did this for Lydia through the preaching of Paul, and the result was that she *attended* or accepted it.

Verse 15. *When she was baptized.* The wording of this phrase takes it for granted that a penitent believer in the Gospel will obey it. *Her household.* One part of the lexicon definition of this word is, "the inmates of a house"; it does not necessarily mean that they are related to each other. The inmates of Lydia's house were able to *attend* to the things spoken by Paul. *Judged me to be faithful* means that they regarded her as a true convert, and would be pleased to be her guests for some time.

Verse 16. This damsel did not possess anything supernatural as a bestowal from God. She had some kind of faculty by which she bewitched her patrons and made them think she could foretell events. She was somewhat like the modern "fortunetellers," and brought a good income for her sponsors.

Verse 17. All that the girl said was the truth concerning Paul and his group, but the Lord will not accept testimony from such characters as she.

Verse 18. Paul became tired of being hounded by this troublesome person. *Said to the spirit.* Whatever faculty she had of an extraordinary kind was what Paul commanded to leave the damsel, so that she would not have ability to mislead the people.

Verse 19. The love of money is a strong sentiment (1 Timothy 6: 10), and it caused these wicked masters of the girl to plan the persecution of Paul and Silas. They drew them by force

into the *marketplace*, "a place where assemblies are held."—Thayer.

Verses 20, 21. They were not fair enough to state their true grievance, that they had been shorn of their means of unrighteous gain. Instead, they dealt only in generalities, and made false charges against Paul and Silas about their teaching. *Being Romans* is explained at verse 12.

Verse 22. *Rent off their clothes* in order to administer a scourging. That was done by requiring the victim to lie down with his naked back exposed to the scourger, and a heavy thong of leather or ropes was lashed across the body.

Verse 23. *Stripes* means wounds made by blows inflicted with a heavy whip. The original for *safely* is defined "assuredly" in Thayer's lexicon, which denotes to take every precaution possible to prevent the prisoners from escaping.

Verse 24. *Such a charge* indicated that the jailor felt a special responsibility for keeping of the prisoners. *Stocks* is from *XULON* and the primary definition is, "that which is made of wood." Thayer describes the instrument as follows: "A log or timber with holes in which the feet, hands, neck of prisoners were inserted and fastened with thongs." *Inner prison* means a cell with its own door locked, on the inside of the general prison which is also enclosed with locked doors.

Verse 25. Persecution can torture and hamper the body, but it cannot affect the spirit of a devoted servant of God, except to stir it to greater praises to Him who always hears the prayers of the righteous. Those of Paul and Silas were expressed at an hour of the night when men are usually asleep. The righteous men here were tortured into sleeplessness, but their songs of praise to God rang out into the midnight darkness and awakened the other prisoners.

Verse 26. The power that loosened the doors and bands was the same that released Peter in chapter 12: 7-10. With God one miracle is as easy as another.

Verse 27. The Lord would not interfere with the just operation of secular government. Doubtless the other prisoners were being held lawfully, and God would not perform a "jail delivery" in opposition to the law. Hence

he unfastened all the fetters but saw to it that no one escaped. It was sure death to a jailor to let his prisoners escape, especially after receiving *such a charge* (verse 24). He thought he would prefer suicide to the shame of being executed for failure in his duties.

Verse 28. All was darkness, yet Paul knew the jailor was about to kill himself. *Loud noise* was necessary to overcome the frenzy of the officer. *We are all here* was spoken by divine knowledge, for Paul could not have seen all the conditions naturally.

Verse 29. *Called for a light* was necessary because it was utter darkness in the cell where Paul and Silas were held. *Sprang* in means he rushed in excitedly and with trembling. He fell down before Paul and Silas because the miracle convinced him these men had been imprisoned unjustly.

Verse 30. *Brought them out* indicates the preachers were taken outside the jail. *What must I do to be saved?* The jailor knew that Paul and Silas were religious men, and that their imprisonment was in connection with their religious belief. But being a heathen, he knew nothing of the merits of their teachings. Now the miraculous demonstration on behalf of them convinced him that they represented some great and righteous Being, whose law it would be dangerous to ignore. That also made him realize that he was due to suffer some kind of punishment unless something was done to prevent it, hence the question he asked of Paul and Silas.

Verses 31, 32. The jailor was a heathen and knew only the worship of idol gods. Paul's answer to his question meant only to cite him to the proper source of salvation. It was like telling an inquiring patient to put his trust in Doctor Blank, with the understanding, of course, that he would show confidence by doing what the doctor told him to do. We know that was all the statement of Paul meant, for he immediately *spoke unto him the word of the Lord*, which would have been unnecessary had the answer in verse 31 been all the jailor needed to do to be saved.

Verses 33, 34. Here was a situation similar to that in chapter 8: 35, 36. In one verse Philip preached Jesus and in the next the eunuch asked to be baptized. In our present case the preachers spoke the word of the Lord, then

the hearer arranged to be baptized. All of this shows that "the word of the Lord" means the commandments of the Lord including baptism. Verse 30 says the jailor *brought them out*, and then verse 34 says he brought them into his house. The baptizing took place between the two movements, which is explained by the act of immersion which requires their going to some place where there was plenty of water. *Washed their stripes* means the jailor bathed the wounds that the magistrates had inflicted on Paul and Silas, as a means of giving them some relief from their injuries. After the baptism the jailor served food to the preachers, while he and his household rejoiced in their newly-found religion.

Verses 35, 36. The officers evidently had learned something of the situation, and knew they had violated the law by their brutal treatment of the missionaries. They wished to get rid of them in as quiet a manner as possible. The jailor passed the word on to Paul and Silas and told them they might go.

Verse 37. Paul felt that such an unjust treatment as had been publicly inflicted on them should be reversed in as public a manner also. He refused to go in such a humiliating manner and demanded the responsible officers come in person and release them.

Verse 38. Being a Roman citizen entitled one to special consideration, and Paul and Silas had been denied such favors.

Verse 39. In their anxiety over the unlawful treatment of the prisoners, the officers came in person and very respectfully requested them to leave.

Verse 40. Paul and Silas did not leave the city until they had first visited the church in the house of Lydia, the first convert they had made in the place. It is remarkable that the very ones who had been the victims of cruel persecution were the ones to offer comforting words to others.

ACTS 17

Verse 1. Amphipolis and Apollonia were cities in Macedonia, but Paul did not pause for any work until he reached Thessalonica, another Macedonian city. The existence of a synagogue made it desirable to stop in this place.

Verse 2. *Three sabbath days*. The Jews would be engaged in their regu-

lar occupations through the week, and on the sabbath days they would assemble to hear the reading of the Scriptures. Paul based his reasoning on things written in that very book.

Verse 3. Thayer defines *opening* as follows: "To explain, expound," and *alleging* is virtually the same, except that it is a somewhat closer application of the statements in the Old Testament. Paul showed these Jews that their own Scriptures set forth the doctrine that he was giving them, namely, the death and resurrection of Jesus (Psalms 16: 8-10). Having proved by their own sacred writings that Jesus was to fulfill such predictions, he declared Him to be the Christ.

Verse 4. *Consorted* means they associated with Paul and Silas because they believed their teaching. The *devout Greeks* were the ones religiously inclined, and *chief women* were the leading persons among the female sex.

Verse 5. The original for *lewd* is defined "bad" and *baser sort* means the loafers around the markets. Such characters would be inclined toward the kind of service these envious Jews needed in their wicked plots. Paul and Silas were staying in the house of Jason (verse 7), but at the present time were not "at home."

Verse 6. Being disappointed at not finding the preachers, they took their spite out on Jason and other brethren by forcing them before the rulers of the city. *Turned the world upside down* was a reference to the success accomplished by Paul's preaching.

Verse 7. *Whom Jason hath received* was said as explanation for having him now in the presence of the rulers. *Do contrary to the decree of Caesar* was a false charge. Paul always taught obedience to the laws of the land, but he did not agree with the contentions of the Jews about the law of Moses.

Verse 8. The rulers owed their official position to Caesar, and did not want any condition to arise that might endanger their place in the public affairs. That is why the report of the envious Jews troubled them and the people.

Verse 9. *Taken security* denotes that they either required a deposit of money, or found some responsible person to stand good for their conduct toward the laws of the land. Such an arrangement would satisfy Caesar should he hear about the commotion in one of his provinces in Macedonia.

Verse 10. When Paul was chased from one city to another he continued his work for Christ. Berea was another city of Macedonia and contained a synagogue.

Verse 11. *Noble* is from *eugenes* and it means of better breeding; more highly cultured. Such a character caused them to be more reasonable in their attitude toward the preaching of Paul and Silas. Instead of attacking them enviously, they investigated their claims by reading up on the subject. If the preachers made an argument based on the statements of the Old Testament, the Bereans looked into the book to see if they were telling the truth: that was fair for both speaker and hearer.

Verse 12. Finding that Paul was giving them the truth, many were made believers. *Honorable* is from *EUSCHEMON* which Thayer defines, "of good standing, honorable, influential, wealthy, respectable." All classes need and are offered the benefits of the Gospel, but it is well to know that it found those who accepted it among the high ranks of society as well as the lower classes.

Verse 13. The envy of the Jews knew no bounds, so when they heard of the work of the Gospel at Berea they pursued the preachers there. *Stirred up the people* means they worked up a sentiment against Paul which cut off further opportunity for his work there.

Verse 14. The feeling seemed to be more sharp against Paul than against Silas and Timotheus, so that he was induced to leave for other parts leaving them for the present.

Verse 15. An escort of brethren went with Paul on his sea voyage until they came to Athens, which was the chief city of Greece, the province joining Macedonia on the south. From there they returned to Berea, taking back with them an order for Silas and Timotheus to come to Paul as soon as possible.

Verse 16. Paul could not wait until Silas and Timotheus came to him when he saw the conditions. *Given to idolatry* is rendered "full of idols" in the margin, which is correct as may be seen by other verses in this chapter.

Verse 17. *Therefore* is not a conclusion from the preceding verse because the synagogue was a meeting place of the Jews who were not idolaters. But the people in the *market* were a mixed group and contained idolaters. The

verse means that Paul followed his usual practice of preaching the Gospel, first in the synagogue where he could meet the Jews, then in any other place where he could find some hearers.

Verse 18. Athens was the chief city of Greece and the seat of learning and civilization for that province. Hence Paul would encounter various classes of citizens whose ears were alert for any literary or philosophical subject that might be introduced. The Epicureans were a class founded by Epicurus, who taught that fleshly pleasure should be the chief purpose of man on earth. The theory of the Stoicks was almost opposite of the Epicureans, but it was based chiefly on the supposed importance of philosophy. It is easy to see why both these groups would criticize the Gospel which seeks to find true pleasure in humble devotion to the risen Lord.

Verse 19. Areopagus and Mars' hill (verse 22) were names for the same place, which was the highest court in Athens in the days of the apostles. Not only were criminal cases tried in this court, but also any subject thought to affect the public welfare.

Verse 20. Thus far there was nothing particularly objectionable to the Athenians in the teaching of Paul, but he had raised their curiosity by introducing a new subject, or one that was *strange* which means an outside or unknown (to them) matter. They told him they wished to know what it all meant.

Verse 21. The inspired writer throws in this verse by way of explanation of the curious inquiry of the people. Nothing was as exciting to them as the prospect of hearing something that had not been told them before. It will develop that what Paul had to offer the Athenians was *new* to them, but yet did not meet their demands that it must be something new along the lines of philosophy.

Verse 22. Paul was invited to speak before this highest court in Athens. His audience was composed of idolaters and various classes of philosophers and Greek statesmen. His introduction was not intended as a criticism but rather a friendly comment. The adverb *too* is not justified by the Greek original, for it does not have any separate word in the Greek at this place. It is a part of the original for superstitious, so the phrase *too superstitious* should be rendered "very re-

ligious." This extensive religious attitude was indicated by the presence of so many idols or altars. (See verse 16.)

Verse 23. Paul had not seen them engaging in their idolatrous services. *Devotions* is from SEBASMA which Thayer defines, "whatever is religiously honored, an object of worship." An altar was an elevated place on which to offer sacrifices. Among the places Paul saw was one that had an inscription written upon it which read to the unknown god. The occasion for such an altar is explained by Horne, Introduction, Volume 1, Page 90, as follows: "The Athenians, being afflicted with a pestilence, invited Epimenides to lustrate [purify with sacrifice] their city. The method adopted by him was, to carry several sheep to the Areopagus, whence they were left to wander as they pleased, under the observation of persons to attend them. As each sheep lay down, it was sacrificed on the spot to the propitious [gracious] God. By this ceremony, it is said, the deity was satisfied; but as it was still unknown what deity was gracious, an altar was erected to the unknown God on every spot where a sheep had been sacrificed." It is not known just what actually took place, but since all blessings come from the true God, if any miraculous cure was bestowed upon the community, it was through the goodness of Him; hence the Athenians ignorantly gave the credit for their great blessing to the right One, whose existence and power Paul declared unto them. These idolaters actually did worship the true God though ignorantly. (See the note at Matthew 2: 2 on worship.)

Verse 24. The God who made everything in the universe could not be expected to dwell (be confined) in man-made temples, and certainly not in as small and lifeless a thing as an altar of earth or stone, such as the Athenians had erected for the purpose.

Verse 25. The Athenians offered their worship to God in connection with a supposed case of healing, hence Paul selected a word from their vocabulary that pertains to the art of medicine and healing. *Worship* in this passage is from THERAPEUO which Thayer defines, "to heal, cure, restore to health." The word also means "to serve," but Paul used it in the first sense because the Athenians were worshipping God (unknowingly) in connection with their experience in the healing of the epidemic. Since God

is the source of all the creatures of life and health, it would be foolish for such to think they could grant healing to Him through the works of their hands.

Verse 26. *One blood*. The Lord said that the blood is the life of all flesh (Leviticus 17: 14), and God is the creator of all flesh. The conclusion is that all life originated with Him, therefore it is foolish to think that he can be represented by objects made of metal or stone. *Determined the times before appointed*. Not that the moral conduct of man has been predetermined by the Lord regardless of his own will, for that would rule out any human responsibility. But the statement just means that the universe did not come "by chance," but was the intelligent work of God, who did set a boundary to the habitation of man which is the face of the earth.

Verse 27. This restricted location for man's habitation away from the visible presence of God made it necessary that they seek the Lord. If haply, etc., is said in the sense as if it said, "with the intent that man would seek or feel after the invisible God and succeed in finding Him through the evidence shown in chapter 14: 17."

Verse 28. If we live in Him with all our activities of life, it follows that He is greater than any of us or anything that we can make, which is another argument against man-made images of God. Making reference to their own heathen poets was good psychology. They would be bound to accept their own authors, and finding that they taught the same things as Paul, it would incline them to think favorably of the statements of the apostle. Chief of the quotations was the one that spoke of man as the offspring of God.

Verse 29. It would be inconsistent to think that living, intelligent beings like men could be the offspring of a God who was represented by objects made of stone or metal.

Verse 30. *Winked at* is from HUPEREIDON which Thayer defines, "to overlook, take no notice of, not attend to." The heathen in times past did not have the complete information that was to be given the whole world through the Gospel, hence God did not hold them to strict account. That leniency was to end with the period of the law of Christ, and all men were then required to come to repentance. (See 2 Peter 3: 9.)

Verse 31. *Appointed a day* but not a "date." If God has predetermined just when the judgment day is come, it must be learned from some passage other than this one. It means only that God has made an appointment with the risen One to be the judge of the people of the world whenever the proper day arrives. By raising Jesus from the dead, God not only proved that He is able to manage "all things after the counsel of his own will" (Ephesians 1: 11), but gave notice that all must meet the risen Jesus as the Judge.

Verse 32. The Athenians were interested in philosophical subjects only, as they regarded them, and the resurrection from the dead did not come under that classification in their estimation. Some of them made fun of the matter, but others were a little more polite and promised to give it their attention at some other time.

Verse 33. Paul did not take their promise seriously, but departed from the court and went elsewhere in the city.

Verse 34. The preaching of Paul was not an entire failure as to results, for one member of the Aeropagite court became a believer, also some private persons.

ACTS 18

Verse 1. Paul is traveling without his companions, Silas and Timotheus, who have not reached him yet (verse 5). Corinth was another important city of Greece, in which was planted what became one of the most noted churches of the apostolic period.

Verse 2. Aquila was not a native of Italy but had resided for some time in Rome. Claudius (Caesar) was the Roman emperor, and for some reason (not very clearly explained by the historians and commentators) had formed a dislike for the Jews and had banished them from the city; Paul met this man and his wife Priscilla.

Verse 3. *Same craft* means the same trade or occupation, which was tent-making. That was Paul's trade also, which naturally caused them to have a common interest in each other, so that Paul made his stay with them. This association gave him an opportunity to instruct them thoroughly in the Gospel, so that they became earnest disciples who were able to teach others. (See verse 26).

Verse 4. *Reasoned* is from the same word as "disputed" in chapter 17: 17.

Paul did this on the sabbath days because the Jews met then to read the law, and the Greeks often attended as spectators.

Verse 5. The original for *pressed* is defined by Thayer, "to urge, impel." Silas and Timotheus finally reached Paul (chapter 17: 15), and their arrival encouraged him to put all the more pressure in his preaching of the Gospel, affirming in the ears of the Jews that Jesus was Christ (the Anointed).

Verse 6. *Opposed themselves* means they set themselves in opposition to the teaching of Paul. *Shook his raiment* was an old custom of expressing one's attitude toward something very evil. *Blood be upon your own heads.* Whatever punishment they suffered would be their own fault because they had refused to hear the warnings of the Gospel. Paul usually gave the Jews first chance in his teaching, but if they rejected it he would turn to the Gentiles. (See chapter 13: 46.)

Verse 7. Paul left the synagogue and went into a nearby house, whose owner was a worshiper of God. (See the note at Matthew 2: 2 on *worship*.)

Verse 8. The audience in the synagogue had rejected Paul's teaching, but the chief ruler was an exception and became a believer, together with the members of his household. *Hearing, believed, and were baptized.* That was the scriptural procedure then and it is so today. A sinner must hear in order to believe (Romans 10: 14), and if he truly believes, he will be baptized in obedience to the One in whom he believes.

Verse 9. *Be not afraid* of the opposition mentioned in verse 6 or any other that might be threatened against him, but preach the Gospel to all he can meet.

Verse 10. *No man . . . to hurt thee.* Paul was to be opposed, but he would not be overcome by the enemy because the Lord assured him that He would be with him. This is the same assurance that he wrote to the brethren in Rome (Romans 8: 31). *I have much people in this city.* This was said in prospect because the Lord knew there were many who would accept the Gospel when Paul reached them with it. It was said on the same principle that Jesus meant when he said "I have other sheep" in John 10: 16.

Verse 11. Verse 8 says that many of the Corinthians became obedient believers, so it was *among them* that

Paul taught the word. And in a period of 18 months many more would hear and obey, so that the church in that city became one of the largest in numbers.

Verse 12. A *deputy* was an inferior officer in the government of Rome in one of the provinces. Achaia was a name given to Greece by the Romans. The ever-envious Jews brought Paul before the secular ruler in a disorderly manner.

Verse 13. *Contrary to the law*. They charged that Paul's teaching was contrary to the law of Moses. That was a false charge, because Paul had shown on more than one occasion that the Gospel system had even been predicted by the Old Testament.

Verse 14. Paul could and would have answered the false charge, but the "judge on the bench" interrupted him. He told the Jews that he would hear their complaints on any matter that pertained to lawlessness against the laws of the land.

Verse 15. The thought in this verse is that the Jews were wanting this man who was a secular judge, to hear a case of theirs that was strictly a religious dispute. He told them that he would not be a judge of such matters.

Verse 16. This verse means that Gallio dismissed the case and cleared the court room of the complainants. This judge set a precedent that should be observed today. No secular court has any business meddling in religious controversies, and professed disciples of Christ ought to know better than to bring religious disputes into such courts.

Verse 17. The Greeks were the Gentile spectators in the court of Gallio and had heard the remarks to the Jews that he made in answer to their complaint. Sosthenes was a Jew and doubtless was a leader in the uprising against Paul. Their sympathy would naturally be for the apostles and against the Jews who had not always shown a favorable attitude toward the Gentiles. Hearing the declaration of Gallio, that he would not interfere with any dispute of the Jews concerning their religion, they decided to take the opportunity of showing their feeling against this would-be persecutor of Paul by this personal attack. While this action was one pertaining to "law and order," yet Gallio knew it was caused by religious agitation, and, being disgusted by the attempt of the

Jews to invade his court with an improper issue, took some satisfaction out of seeing them thus punished, hence he *cared for none of those things*.

Verse 18. Cenchrea was a port of Corinth, from which Paul sailed for the shores of Asia Minor. *Shorn his head*. The Jews had a custom of making personal vows, and at the termination of the period a man was to cut his hair that had been let grow while the vow was in force. This part of the formality was similar to the Nazarite vow in Numbers 6: 5-18, but it was not otherwise bound by the other requirements. For the custom of voluntary vows, see Leviticus 27: 2; 1 Samuel 1: 11; 2 Samuel 15: 7.

Verse 19. When Paul and his companions, Aquila and Priscilla, arrived at Ephesus, he separated from them and went into a synagogue as he was accustomed to do to preach.

Verse 20. Paul's teaching seemed to meet with favor among his hearers, for they asked him to remain longer, which his plans would not permit.

Verse 21. *Keep this feast*. It was the feast of Pentecost, one of the national feasts of the Jews. Paul was a Jew and had a right to observe the national customs of his race. (See chapter 16: 3.) After a brief stay at Ephesus he again sailed.

Verse 22. Paul landed at Caesarea on the coast of Palestine. As a brief "side trip" he went to Jerusalem to salute the church. We are not given any account of this visit further than the present statement. After this incident the great apostle to the Gentiles went to Antioch (in Syria), thus ending his second missionary journey.

Verse 23. This is the beginning of what is commonly called Paul's third "missionary journey." (See the comments at chapter 15: 36.) But he really revisited some churches that had been started previously, to *strengthen* or establish them. A church can be started in a little while, but it takes time and further teaching to establish it.

Verse 24. *Eloquent* is defined "skilled in speech" in Thayer's lexicon. *Mighty in the scriptures* means he was well acquainted with the Old Testament, and had learned something of the early teaching pertaining to the New. He was regarded as a good man and one devoted to the Lord.

Verse 25. Apollos was not a careless

man, and always taught others accurately as far as he had learned, but at this time he knew no baptism except what John preached and practiced. That subject will be explained at chapter 19: 4.

Verse 26. Aquila and Priscilla had been instructed by Paul (verses 2, 3), and were able to supply the points that Apollos lacked. It should be noted that *they* expounded the way of God, showing an instance where a woman helped to get a preacher better acquainted with the teaching of the Gospel.

Verse 27. Achaia was a name that the Romans gave to Greece. After Apollos was through with his work at Ephesus he wished to go over into Greece, and we will find that he stopped at Corinth. He left Ephesus with the recommendation of the brethren. After arriving in Greece he helped the believers who had experienced the *grace* of God.

Verse 28. Apollos approached the Jews with the same kind of arguments that Paul had used, namely, showing them that their own scriptures (the Old Testament) predicted the coming of Jesus as the Christ or the Anointed One.

ACTS 19

Verse 1. Paul came to Ephesus after Apollos had left that city and gone to Corinth in Greece. (See chapter 18: 27, 28.) The *disciples* he found at Ephesus were evidently the persons whom Apollos had baptized (chapter 18: 25).

Verse 2. Paul knew that in those days a baptized believer was entitled to the gift of the Holy Ghost (see the comments at chapter 2: 38), but he also knew that even their baptism did not automatically bestow that gift until an apostle had laid hands on them (chapter 8: 18). He did not know whether that special favor had yet been given to them, hence the question stated in this place. When they told him they had not heard anything about such a subject as the Holy Ghost, it showed that something was wrong.

Verse 3. In answer to his question about their baptism, they told Paul that they had been baptized unto John's baptism. (See chapter 18: 25.)

Verse 4. The difference between "John's baptism" and "Christian baptism" is indicated in this verse. When John baptized a man he was required to believe on Christ who *was to come*. He had not yet come and hence no

person could be baptized into His name or by his authority. But John was dead and Christ had come when Apollos was preaching, hence it was unscriptural to use John's baptism. Both baptisms were "for the remission of sins," and both had to be preceded by repentance (Mark 1: 4; Acts 2: 38). But the latter was by the authority of Christ which put the believer into His name.

Verse 5. These were rebaptized and it was into the name of Christ. No person but John could use his baptism, but the ones whom he baptized never had to be baptized again, for they were then *prepared for the service of Christ*.

Verses 6, 7. What happened when Paul laid hands on them, was what he was inquiring about in verse 2. Only those who were baptized with "Christian baptism" were entitled to that gift, and even then it required the hands of an apostle.

Verse 8. *Disputing* is from the same word as "reasoned" in chapter 17: 2. By reasoning on the subject, Paul was able to *persuade* some in favor of the kingdom of God.

Verse 9. After three months of effort before the general multitudes assembling in the synagogue, the opposition to the truth became such that Paul concluded he could accomplish more by working elsewhere. *Separated the disciples* means he withdrew with the ones who were truly interested and who were eager to hear more of the truth. *School* is from the Greek word *scholē*. Robinson defines it, "leisure, rest, vacation, attention, devotion, study." He then explains it to mean, "A place of learned leisure, where a teacher and his disciples came together and held discussions and disputations." Thayer defines it, "Freedom from labor, leisure; a place where there is leisure for anything, a school." Moffatt renders it, "lecture-room." This "school," then, was a place maintained by Tyrannus, a kind of public auditorium that was open to the public for the free use of any persons who wished to engage in cultural and recreational activities.

Verse 10. This *school* was frequented by many people of all races and from all over Asia, for in the two years that Paul spent in his teaching there, the word of the Lord was heard throughout that area.

Verses 11, 12. *Special miracles* denotes those that were not commonly

performed even in the days of miracles. God is able to accomplish any kind of wonders and by whatever means He wills. As an encouraging support for the work of the apostle in this center of various thought and activity, the Lord saw fit to use the pieces miraculously that had been in contact with the preacher.

Verse 13. *Vagabond* Jews were some who were wandering around from house to house. An *exorcist* was a person who expelled demons from men by pronouncing some mysterious sentence, or by commanding the evil spirit by some important name. But even evil characters can be imitated and their work be pretended to be done by mere impostors. The present ones were frauds and pretended to be working through the name of Jesus; and to add weight to their pretense, they used the name of Paul.

Verse 14. *Sceva* was a high priest, and he had seven sons who were practicing this fraud, attempting to cast out a devil from an unfortunate man.

Verse 15. *Jesus I know*. This evil spirit was telling the truth, for the devils were originally in heaven and had been cast out because of sin (2 Peter 2: 4), and it was there that they had their acquaintance with Jesus. That accounts for the statements in Mark 1: 24, 34. Since these men were frauds the spirit did not recognize them.

Verse 16. Being possessed with a devil did not have the same effect on every person. In the present instance it produced unusual physical strength and activity. Acting through the man in whom the devil was dwelling, it pounced upon these pretenders and they fled from the house in fright and stripped of their clothing.

Verse 17. The word *fear* is used in the sense of respect in this verse, since it caused the name of the Lord Jesus to be magnified by both Jews and Greeks.

Verse 18. This respectful fear was proved by their confession of evil deeds.

Verse 19. These penitent Jews and Greeks did not stop with mere confessions, for the event about the exorcists convinced them that the business of dealing in trifles was wrong. *Curious arts* is from *PERIERGOS*, which is defined by Thayer as things "impertinent and superfluous," and he explains it to mean "arts of magic." These were

chiefly a system of superstitious performances, and they had their recipes written in books by which they would mislead their victims. When they became penitent over their sinful practices, they proved their sincerity by burning the collection of their evil formulas. Moffatt renders the value of the books to be 2,000 pounds of silver.

Verse 20. The word of God grew, because every genuine demonstration of repentance was attributed to the power of that word over the minds of men. The increase of the word means that the number of believers in the word was increased.

Verse 21. *Purposed in the spirit* means that it was Paul's personal plans to accomplish the things stated. While he always intended doing and saying the things that were in harmony with the Holy Spirit, this was not an inspired purpose, for part of it was not carried out as he had *purposed*. He did actually *see Rome*, but not until he was taken there as a prisoner (chapter 28: 16).

Verse 22. Paul's purpose was to leave Ephesus and go through Macedonia and Achaia (Greece), but he did not intend starting at once, for he wished to spend some more time in the city. Timotheus and Erastus usually traveled with Paul as co-workers, but he released them to go ahead and work in the region of Macedonia while he was still in Asia.

Verse 23. *That way* is a phrase applying to the Gospel plan, so used because of its preeminence. (See verse 9; chapter 9: 2.) The original word for *stir* is defined, "commotion, stir, tumult" in Thayer's lexicon. It was because of the interference it was making with many of the evils in the community.

Verse 24. Diana was a heathen goddess and a temple was built for her at Ephesus. Demetrius and his fellow workers made a great deal of money by forming *shrines*, which were small models of the temple, selling them to travelers who wished them for souvenirs.

Verse 25. Demetrius became concerned over the prospect of losing this business and he called a meeting of his partners in the trade.

Verse 26. Demetrius called attention of his fellows to the preaching of Paul, stating that it had extended throughout Asia. The part of Paul's preaching that worried him was that

against idolatry, especially the kind that was the work of human hands.

Verse 27. These men were not concerned about the merits of the religious issue, but feared that financial loss would come to them if people were made to believe in the one living God. That is the meaning of the statement, *our craft* [business or occupation] *is in danger*. It was the old story of men being more interested in their financial than in their spiritual welfare. Yet they pretended to be concerned about the dignity of the idolatrous goddess, that was worshiped by the world.

Verse 28. The inflammatory speech of Demetrius aroused the mob spirit of these tradesmen, causing them to make a boisterous shout in behalf of the goddess.

Verse 29. The cry spread until it affected the whole city, throwing it into confusion. The excited people let their wrath be exhibited against the associates of Paul. They took them by force into a place where public performances were put on.

Verse 30. Paul wished to appear in this public place to reply to the complaints of the mob. Fearing that he might be harmed by the angry populace, the disciples prevented him from entering the theatre.

Verse 31. *Sent unto him* denotes that a general state of confusion existed, so that special means had to be used to communicate with Paul.

Verse 32. This state of disorder made it impossible to discern just what the concourse was about or what the issue was.

Verse 33. A riot is regarded by all civilized nations as something worthy of being condemned. The Jews feared that their people would be blamed by the Greeks for the present uprising. They selected this prominent member of their race to speak in their behalf, and he prepared to make an address for that purpose.

Verse 34. This outcry was the opposite of an ovation. It was a disorderly explosion of anger and disrespect against the attempt of a Jew to make a speech in the public theatre of the Greek people. This raving mob was so worked up and tumultuous that it took two hours to get it quieted.

Verse 35. A *townclerk* was a secretary or public scribe; a man supposed to be informed in matters of law and

order. After two hours he was able to get the uproar subdued so that he could speak to the people. His purpose was to state the legal and fair aspects of the situation. He proposed to show that there was no call for such a demonstration in defense of the temple of Diana. That it was common knowledge that the people were devoted worshippers of their goddess, which it was believed had come down from Jupiter, another god of the Greeks.

Verse 36. The reputation of the goddess in the eyes of the Greek people was not even questioned by them, hence there was no reason for being reckless or unnecessarily hasty in acting against Paul and his companions.

Verse 37. The townclerk was not siding with Paul in his teaching, but wished to show his fellow citizens that they were mistreating him and his friends contrary to the principles of human rights. *Robbers of churches* is from *hierosullos* which means those who commit sacrilege or who rob temples. Paul had not made any vicious attack on the goddess of the Greeks, but had emphasized the authority of the God of Heaven. But these heathen had correctly concluded that if the God whom Paul preached was the only true one, then all man-made objects of worship were false.

Verse 38. The reasoning of the townclerk was that provision had been made by the law of the land, whereby all just complaints could be handled. *Deputies* were men authorized to represent the government in the disputes arising between man and man.

Verse 39. By *other matters* he meant subjects that were differences of opinion only and not involving any personal misconduct. *Lawful assembly* means one called by the proper authorities and in accordance with the law.

Verse 40. The townclerk feared that the higher authorities might bring a complaint against the community because of the riot.

Verse 41. The mob was dispersed without further disorder, because the people had been shown the lawlessness of their actions.

•ACTS 20

Verse 1. *The uproar* refers to the disturbances recorded in the preceding chapter. After some parting words, Paul left for Macedonia which was his

previous purpose according to chapter 19: 21.

Verse 2. Paul spent some time with the churches in Macedonia, such as Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea. Greece was the province immediately south of Macedonia.

Verse 3. Syria was a part of Asia, and it contained such important places as Troas and Ephesus. After spending some time in Greece, Paul intended crossing by water over to Asia. Hearing of a plot of some kind being formed by the Jews, he changed his plans and retraced his journey through Macedonia.

Verses 4, 5. These persons were associated with Paul in the good work, but were evidently not involved in the plot of the Jews. They went on ahead across the sea and stopped at Troas where they awaited the coming of Paul and Luke, he being with Paul as the first personal pronoun *us* denotes, and as he is the author of this book (chapter 1: 1).

Verse 6. Having been in Philippi some time (verse 3) on this return journey, he and Luke went aboard a ship bound for Troas, where the group of the preceding paragraph was waiting for them. *Days of unleavened bread* is mentioned only by way of indicating the date or time of year that had arrived.

Verse 7. *Break* is from the same Greek word as it is in other places, regardless of whether a common meal is meant or that of the Lord's Supper. The connection must determine in each case as to what sense is used. In the present passage it could not mean a common meal, for the disciples would not come together for that purpose; they went "from house to house" (chapter 2: 46). Likewise, they would not have done so especially on the Lord's day any more than on some other day. The conclusion, then, is that it means the Lord's Supper. Another unavoidable conclusion is that the Lord's Supper is to be observed by disciples who come together, and not done as a private performance in some convenient place suitable to the personal program of temporal entertainment. The preaching of Paul was incidental because he chanced to be present, not that they came together for that purpose. However, the incident gives us an apostolic precedent for having preaching at the time of the regular Lord's day assembly if a

preacher is present. The long sermon was occasioned by the plans of Paul who intended continuing his journey the next day, and the interest in such a rare opportunity of hearing this great apostle held the services to the late hour.

Verse 8. *Lights* is from the Greek word *LAMPAS*, which was a device used as a torch and was fed with olive oil. The writer had just stated that Paul continued his speech until midnight, and his mention of the *many lights* was to explain how an assembly could conveniently extend its services that far into the night.

Verse 9. This verse is a simple statement of an event not especially important in itself, but furnishing an opportunity for Paul to work a miracle. The inspired writer is the one who says that the young man *was taken up dead*, so that it was not just the imagination of an excited crowd.

Verse 10. It should be observed that Paul said *his life is in him* after he had embraced him. The act of embracing the young man was when the miracle was performed that brought the life back into his dead body. (See similar acts in 1 Kings 17: 21; 2 Kings 4: 34.)

Verse 11. *Broken bread*. This was not the act for which the disciples had come together, for they did not know that such a lengthy service would be had when they assembled. But having been awake most of the night, and as Paul was soon to leave on a journey, it was courteous for them to set refreshments before him for his support.

Verse 12. This verse is an afterthought upon the event of the miracle of verse 10, showing the joyful effect of the apostle's performance for the young man and friends.

Verse 13. The entire group was making its way in the return from this third missionary journey, but Paul went on foot as far as Assos where the party was to join him.

Verse 14. At Assos the boat landed and took in Paul, then proceeded and came to Mitylene, a town on the island of Lesbos.

Verse 15. Three days after leaving Mitylene the group reached Miletus.

Verse 16. Miletus was 36 miles south of Ephesus, and in the time of Paul it was on the coast. He did not wish to spend much time in Asia (a small district in Asia Minor), because the feast

of Pentecost was near at hand, and he was eager to be in Jerusalem at that time. For information about observing Jewish customs and days, see the comments at chapter 16: 3 and 18: 21.

Verse 17. Paul knew he would lose less time by calling these elders to him while waiting for the ship to resume its journey, than for him to make this "detour" to Ephesus to see them. Chapter 14: 23 states that Paul ordained elders in every church, and evidently that included those at Ephesus.

Verse 18. The Ephesian elders complied with the request of Paul by coming to Miletus to meet him. This was to be a very important occasion, for Paul was to have a heart-to-heart talk with these rulers of the church, in which there will be some outstanding information that will be useful for all of us.

Verse 19. These elders knew about the severe trials the apostles had suffered, for many of them had taken place in their city (chapter 19).

Verse 20. *That was profitable.* The apostle never imposed any obligations or information upon the elders of the churches that would not be of assistance to them in their great work for the Lord. There are no "nonessentials" in the things the inspired writers have left to the world. Paul's teaching was done in the synagogue (*publicly*) and in the homes (*from house to house*).

Verse 21. Repentance here seems to be required before faith, which is really not the order of the items pertaining to the Gospel. (See the comments at Mark 1: 15.)

Verse 22. The original word for *bound* is defined "To put under obligation" by Thayer. Paul was always guided in his teaching and conduct of his office as an apostle, by the Holy Spirit that was sent to "guide him into all truth" (John 16: 13).

Verse 23. The Spirit did not give Paul the details of what was to come upon him, but he was told that he was to have a hard time. This "blanket" information really made a severer test of his faith than a minute statement might have been.

Verse 24. *None of these things move me* means that Paul was not disturbed by the prospect of persecutions, nor did he let it change his purpose to serve Christ faithfully to the end. *Finish my course with joy.* The true servant of God expects to receive his reward at the end of the race, not

while the conflict of this life is going on. *The ministry* refers to the charge delivered to Paul to "fight the good fight" (2 Timothy 4: 7) by testifying for the Gospel.

Verse 25. Paul did not make this sad prediction by inspiration. He did not know what particular experiences were awaiting him, but he knew that he would not be permitted to labor among the churches as extensively as before.

Verse 26. *Take you to record* means he was testifying to these elders with regard to his work among them. *Pure from the blood* denotes that he would not be held responsible for any unfavorable lot that might come upon them in the future.

Verse 27. This verse explains the statement in the preceding one. A preacher of the Gospel may not have the ability or opportunity to declare everything that pertains to the plan of salvation, and if so he will not be held accountable for such lack. But if he shuns or evades to proclaim a single requirement of the *counsel of God* that he could have made known, he will be charged with the full results of such evasion of duty.

Verse 28. *Overseers* is from *EPISKOPOS* and is the same word that is translated "bishop" in other passages. The word is defined by Thayer, "An overseer, any curator, guardian or superintendent." There is but one class of ruling officers in the church of the New Testament, and they are called by the three words, elders, overseers and bishops. The exception is the case of evangelists who have charge of churches not having elders (Titus 1: 5). *God* is the family name of the Deity, of which Christ is a member, making that word his own name as well as that of his Father. Hence the name *church of God* is equivalent to "church of Christ." It is his church because he purchased it with his own blood. The elders are commanded to *feed* this church which is likened to a flock, and the word in the original is *POIMAINO*, which is also defined, "To rule, govern." The Holy Ghost makes men overseers by revealing the qualifications and manner of appointment of such officers (1 Timothy 3: 1-7; Titus 1: 6-9).

Verse 29. The warning of this verse refers to false teachers from the outside, who would creep into the congregation and corrupt the members.

Verse 30. *Of your own selves* means that false teachers would arise among the elders. It is a fact borne out by history, that the great apostasy known as the "Dark Ages," was started within the eldership of the church, but this is not the most appropriate place to go into the details of that subject.

Verse 31. The three main duties of the elders are to feed, rule and watch. The first two are commanded in verse 28, and the third is stated here. Hebrews 13: 17 states for what or why the rulers are to watch, namely, for the souls of the flock, because the elders will have to give an account of their work with the members of the flock. The warning of three years included that recorded in chapter 19: 8, 10.

Verse 32. *Commend you to God* denotes that he advised them to look to God and to his word. That word is able to build them up or edify them in their work for Him. Such a life would make them heirs of the reward that is prepared for all who are sanctified or set apart for the service of the Lord.

Verse 33. Paul was not preaching the Gospel with the motive of obtaining the personal possessions of the brethren.

Verse 34. As proof of the preceding statement, Paul reminded them of his manual labor for the temporal support of himself and his traveling companions. (See chapter 18: 3.) Not that it would not have been right for him to receive financial support in his work, for he taught elsewhere that such support would have been right (1 Corinthians 9: 4, 14). But he refers to his own secular work as proof that temporal support was not his purpose in preaching the Gospel.

Verse 35. Another purpose Paul had in his manual labor was to set an example of working to supply the needs of those who cannot work. The words of Jesus quoted are not recorded elsewhere in the New Testament, but Paul could repeat them by inspiration.

Verses 36-38. This paragraph does not require any particular explanation. It is a word picture of a very pathetic leave-taking between Paul and the elders. His conviction that they would never meet again was the saddest item in the circumstance. The labors in the midst of many trials and persecutions for the cause of Christ, had a tendency to bind the followers of the Lord close together. The manner of embracing

upon the neck was a custom of those times. The elders went with Paul as far as they could, then parted from him as he entered the ship.

ACTS 21

Verses 1, 2. The ship they took at Miletus went as far as Patara only, where the group had to change over to another vessel bound for Phenicia. That was a small tract of country on the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

Verse 3. *Discovered Cyprus* means they came in sight of that island, but passing it on their left they sailed on into Syria, the larger territory of which Phenicia was a small part. The ship landed at Tyre, an important seaport of the last named country. Here the ship was to unload its cargo which made a delay in the journey of seven days.

Verse 4. *Through the Spirit* applies to the general condition of persecution that would beset Paul, not that it was an inspired directive for him not to go.

Verse 5. *Brought us on our way* means that they all went with them to "see them off." Leave-taking was often done in connection with a prayer service. It was done when Paul and the elders separated (chapter 20: 36).

Verse 6. After saying good-bye they separated. The disciples went to their homes and Paul and his company went into the ship which was ready to sail again.

Verse 7. Paul and his group ended their sea travel at this town. There were some brethren here with whom they visited for one day.

Verse 8. This traveling was done by land, bringing them to Caesarea which was the headquarters of the Roman government in Palestine. Philip was one of the deacons appointed in chapter 6. He is called the evangelist because of such work as he did as recorded in chapter 8.

Verse 9. These *virgins* were the maidens mentioned elsewhere and their prophesying fulfilled the prediction made in Joel 2: 28, 29 and quoted by Peter in Acts 2: 17, 18.

Verse 10. This is the same *Agabus* who made a prediction in chapter 11: 28. The primary meaning of a prophet is a foreteller, although it is not restricted to that definition, but sometimes is used of those who edify or exhort (1 Corinthians 14: 3). Agabus

was a prophet of the former kind, those being the days of spiritual gifts.

Verse 11. See the note on "prophets acting" at 1 Kings 20: 35 in volume 2 of the Old Testament Commentary. Agabus took this dramatic manner of making his prediction to impress its importance upon the group.

Verse 12. The whole group believed the prediction of Agabus, and in their anxiety and love for Paul, tried to persuade him not to go up to Jerusalem.

Verse 13. Paul did not worry over the prediction, but he was vexed because of the attitude of the group. He declared his willingness to go even further in his endurance for the sake of Jesus. He was willing to die for him if need be, although Agabus had not included that in his prediction.

Verse 14. *The will of the Lord be done* indicates their resignation to whatever lot might befall the beloved apostle. His fortitude had the effect of reconciling them to the program that Christ might have mapped out for him.

Verse 15. *Took up our carriages* is all from *APOSKEUAZO*, which Thayer defines, "To pack up and carry off." We means Luke, Paul and the others of their company.

Verse 16. *Mnason* was formerly of the island of Cyprus but was now living in Jerusalem. He was returning home with this group and arrangements were made for them to stay with him.

Verse 17. *Brethren received us gladly* indicated a friendly attitude toward the brethren of Paul's group. This was not only because of the common interest they had in the cause of Christ, but there were certain questions that had arisen among the Jewish Christians that they wished Paul to clarify.

Verse 18. The prominence of this James has been mentioned before. He is the one called "the Lord's brother" in Galatians 1: 19, and is the one in Acts 12: 17; 21: 18; 1 Corinthians 15: 7 and Galatians 2: 12. It is understandable, then, why Paul sought his company in the presence of the elders.

Verse 19. One of the main subjects of interest in those days was the admittance of the Gentiles to the benefits of the Gospel.

Verse 20. While many of the brethren rejoiced in the conversion of the Gentiles, they were confused as to their proper relation to the national

customs of the Jews under the law of Moses. *Zealous* of the law means they had a desire to continue the aforesaid customs of the law even though they had embraced the Gospel. They had the right to do so (chapter 16: 3; 18: 21), but did not understand why the Gentiles did not also.

Verse 21. Paul taught that no one was to be justified by the law of Moses. This teaching of the apostle was misunderstood and some thought that he also opposed the Jews who observed the old practices even though they did it merely as national customs. These elders understood Paul's position on the subject, but many of the Jewish brethren did not, and they were informing him of the situation.

Verse 22. Paul was told that there would be an assembling of these zealous Jewish disciples in order to inquire into the subject.

Verses 23, 24. As a proof that Paul had not turned against the law as far as the national customs were concerned, they told him of an opportunity just at hand where he could engage in one of those customs, which was in regard to vows and the formalities required. The directions for observing this vow are in Numbers 6th chapter.

Verse 25. This refers to chapter 15: 23-29.

Verse 26. Paul complied with the advice of the elders. When he did so he carried out a principle he set forth in 1 Corinthians 9: 20.

Verse 27. Paul had to be in the temple to perform the custom mentioned in the preceding verse. That attracted the attention of the *Jews of Asia*, a small Roman province in which was the city of Ephesus. They had known of Paul's work in their home city and still had a prejudice against him. They raised a commotion among the people and caused them to threaten Paul with violence.

Verse 28. Like most riotous demonstrations, the motive was a false accusation. The mob accused Paul of opposing the law. (See comments at verses 20, 21.) They even accused him of bringing some Greeks (Gentiles) into the temple for the purpose of corrupting it.

Verse 29. When people have the motive of persecuting a man whose teaching they do not like but cannot meet, they will take things for granted and

form wrongful conclusions. Paul was seen with one Trophimus somewhere in the city, then the people presumed that he had taken him into the temple to corrupt it.

Verse 30. A general uproar was caused and Paul was forcibly taken out of the temple. The doors were closed to prevent him from returning should he get loose.

Verse 31. *Went about to kill him* means they were actually beginning their acts of violence, and intended to continue until they had him killed (verse 32). Word of the riot reached the ears of the captain of the military.

Verse 32. The captain took a crew of soldiers with him to the scene of the riot. The appearance of this company caused the mob to cease beating Paul.

Verse 33. The captain partook of the mob spirit and mistreated Paul, although the apostle had not even been accused by any officer.

Verse 34. The riotous clamor of the mob confused the captain so that he concluded to remove Paul from them for further investigation, all the while treating him very roughly. The *castle* was the place that contained the barracks of the soldiers.

Verse 35. The mob spirit was so violent that Paul had to be carried by the soldiers to get him through the crowd to a place of personal safety.

Verse 36. *Away with him* was an outburst of rage prompted by the spirit of murder, for Paul had not even been accused by any legal witness.

Verse 37. While this military police was pushing Paul along, he asked permission to make a speech to the people in his own behalf. This request was made in the Greek language, which surprised the captain who thought Paul was an Egyptian.

Verse 38. The only fact that was present in both the case of the Egyptian and that of Paul, was that there was an uproar among the people. But the apostle was not to blame for the present riot, a truth seemingly unknown to the chief captain.

Verse 39. Paul did not answer the captain with a direct "no," but stated in brief his identity. Instead of being an Egyptian he was a Jew. Tarsus was *no mean city* which means it was no insignificant place. Paul's nativity, then, was an honorable and noted one.

On that basis he again asked permission to speak to the people.

Verse 40. After being given *license* or permission to speak, Paul stood on the stairway to be in sight and hearing of the people, making a signal with his hand requesting their attention. When talking to the captain (verse 37) who was a Gentile, Paul used the Greek tongue. Now that the crowd was mostly Jewish, he used their own language which he knew they could understand and would respect.

ACTS 22

Verse 1. Paul's *defence* was to meet the charge, that he was trying to influence the Jews to disrespect the customs of the Mosaic system.

Verse 2. *The more silence.* An audience will be more willing to listen to a speaker if it knows that the language to be used is one that can be understood. As soon as Paul began to speak the people realized that he was using the dialect that was being spoken in that territory.

Verse 3. A part of Paul's *defence* consisted in answering the question of the chief captain in chapter 21: 33 as to "who he was." He was a Jew of Tarsus, which was recognized even by the Romans as an important city, to the extent that Augustus had made it a "free city," which means that all of its population would be classed as Roman citizens with all the privileges and honors accorded to such residents. As to Paul's cultural training, he had been instructed in Jerusalem by Gamaliel, a great teacher of the law. As to his religious attitude, he was as zealous toward God as were these Jews before him.

Verse 4. *This way* means the Gospel system of living. Paul's mention of persecuting its followers was to show that he had once shared the same opinion of them that was now being held by his hearers. That should at least suggest that he must have good reasons for his present position.

Verse 5. Paul referred to the facts mentioned in this verse to show that his former opposition to the *way* was done under the recognized authorities of the Jews, and that he was not merely a fanatic acting for the purpose of acquiring personal notoriety.

Verse 6. The original account of Paul's conversion is in chapter 9, and it is repeated here to show the background of his activities that had

brought him into conflict with the Jews. He had almost reached Damascus, the destination in the commission authorized by the Sanhedrin, when his progress was halted by a light from heaven over which neither Jews nor Gentiles had any control.

Verse 7. The account here and that in chapter 9: 4 mentions simply that Paul fell to the ground, while chapter 26: 14 says they *all* fell down. Both accounts are true, but Paul was the only one who heard the question from the voice.

Verse 8. Paul (or Saul) knew that the person to whom he was talking was not on the earth. When he was told that it was the person whom he was persecuting, he did not express any surprise or question as to how he could be persecuting anyone who was not among men. He understood the subject of responsibility and association to mean that "he that despiseth you [the disciples] despiseth me" [Jesus].

Verse 9. For comments on *heard*, see chapter 9: 7.

Verse 10. See the comments at chapter 9: 6.

Verse 11. The glorious power of the light was due to the personality of Jesus, who was then at his Father's right hand in the glory world.

Verse 12. Ananias was a disciple of Christ as well as having been devout under the regulations of the law. (See chapter 9: 12.)

Verse 13. Ananias called him *Brother Saul* because they were both Jews, and had been servants of God under the Mosaic system.

Verse 14. Saul had to *see the Just One* in order to be a witness of his resurrection. It was the wisdom of God that Saul should also hear the voice of Jesus, which would add weight to his testimony for the divinity of the risen Christ.

Verse 15. The testimony of Saul was to be based on seeing and hearing.

Verse 16. Both in this instance and in chapter 9: 18, Saul is said to have risen to be baptized. That was because the rite had to be performed by immersion. *Wash away thy sins*. The first word is used literally because the act of baptism really washes the body, and that act is necessary for the remission of sins. (See Titus 3: 5; Hebrews 10: 22). *Calling on the name of the Lord* is associated with the act of

obedience to the command of the Lord, which shows how such *calling* is to be done.

Verse 17. *Come again to Jerusalem* was three years later (Galatians 1: 17, 18).

Verse 18. The Lord knew the stubbornness of the people of Jerusalem, that they would not receive Paul's preaching, and hence he should not waste it on them.

Verses 19, 20. Paul refers to his former persecution of the disciples as an argument that the people of the city would certainly believe him to be sincere now. A man who had taken as active a part as he in opposition to the cause of Christ, would certainly leave no doubts of the genuineness of his conversion.

Verse 21. The Lord still knew best and was not willing for Paul's labors to be given to these inappreciative people. The apostle was to be sent away to preach the Gospel among the Gentiles.

Verse 22. *Gave him audience unto this word*. The Jews had an envious feeling against the Gentiles, and when Paul made his remark of being sent to this hated race by the Lord, they could not stand it any longer.

Verse 23. This verse manifests a state of mind that is disordered, and it explains why they cried out in the preceding verse that Paul should be destroyed. They did not even intimate any specific reason for their demand against the apostle, but instead they acted like madmen.

Verse 24. The chief captain was a Roman and a Gentile, and did not understand what that commotion was all about. He ordered Paul to be brought into the *castle* (the place that contained the soldiers' barracks) for bodily protection from the rage of the crowd. He also intended to torture (scourge) him in order to force him to tell the truth, which was an ancient practice that served as a form of "lie detector." As if the great apostle Paul had to be forced into telling the truth!

Verse 25. The centurion was the military officer assigned the duty of taking Paul into custody. Being a *Roman* will be explained at verse 28.

Verse 26. It was a serious offence to claim falsely to be a Roman. The mere statement of Paul, therefore, made a deep impression on the centurion.

Verse 27. Again Paul's word was all that was required, yet the captain wished to have the word personally from the lips of the apostle.

Verse 28. *Freedom* is from *POLITEIA*, which Thayer defines, "Citizenship, the rights of a citizen," and Robinson defines it in the same way. Being born within the territory of the Roman Empire did not always confer upon one the full rights of citizenship. Some special favors might be conferred upon a region that made all of its population full citizens of the Empire. That had been done for Tarsus, the city where Paul was born, which made him a full citizen of the nation. Sometimes a man could bribe the officers in charge and buy his citizenship, which was the way the captain obtained his.

Verse 29. *Examine him* means to make a judicial investigation, and it was to have been done in connection with a scourging. (See verse 24). The persons who had been called to carry out the scourging were dismissed. The captain was afraid because he had acted rashly in his rough handling of a Roman citizen. He felt that he might be called to account for improper conduct of his office.

Verse 30. On the morrow the captain concluded to take a more orderly course and "sift the case to the bottom" by calling in the accusers of his prisoner. He loosed him from his bonds and summoned the Sanhedrin to take charge of the situation.

ACTS 23

Verse 1. No specific charge had been made against Paul, hence he had none to deny. It was appropriate, therefore, for him to make a statement to the effect that he was not conscious of any wrong ever having been committed. Paul had caused Christians to be slain and had committed general persecution against the church, yet his *good conscience* included that time. This proves that a man can be conscientious in doing wrong, which also gives us the conclusion that a good conscience alone will not justify one before God.

Verse 2. Ananias had the common but erroneous idea that if a man is conscientious he is right. To him the statement of Paul meant that he had never done anything wrong. He thought that such an assertion from one who had been opposing Judaism so persistently was one of arrogance. Smiting one on the mouth was an act of con-

tempt and humiliation, and not one especially considered as a physical punishment.

Verse 3. *Whited wall* was a figure of speech that meant Ananias was a hypocrite. It was similar to the words of Jesus in Matthew 23: 27. The hypocrisy of Ananias consisted in his posing as an administrator of justice under the law, and then directing an unlawful action against a prisoner who had not so much as been legally accused. It was like a judge in the courts of our land who will swear a jury to decide a case according to the law and evidence, then require it to bring in a "directed verdict." *God shall smite thee* was doubtless an inspired prediction. Smith's Bible Dictionary says Ananias was assassinated at the beginning of the last Jewish war.

Verses 4, 5. Paul agreed that the rulers of God's people should not be spoken against, and even cited the law that forbids such a speech (Exodus 22: 28). But the history of those times shows that Ananias was an evil character, who had been in difficulties with the civil authorities and had once been deposed from his office. Afterward, however, he assumed the place as president of the Sanhedrin, which is the meaning of Paul's words "sittest thou to judge" (verse 3). Knowing him to have been a usurper, the remark of the apostle, *I wist* [knew] not, etc., was the apostle's way of ignoring his assumption, thus showing him not to be entitled to the usual judicial courtesy.

Verse 6. Having disposed of their quibble over the highpriesthood of Ananias, Paul used the divided condition of sentiment in the Sanhedrin to bring to the fore the fundamental principle of the Gospel, the truth of which was the basis of his difficulties with the Jews. (See the note at Matthew 16: 12 on the differences between the Pharisees and Sadducees.) With regard to the most important difference between these sects, the belief in the resurrection, Paul declared he was a Pharisee.

Verse 7. Paul's declaration of faith in the doctrine of the resurrection, divided the multitude and set them at variance among themselves.

Verse 8. See the comments at verse 6.

Verse 9. Paul's declaration of faith had the effect he expected. The Pharisees believed in the existence of angels and spirits (verse 8), hence they were

prepared to listen to Paul as an inspired man. Moreover, they have given us a point on the subject of authoritative teaching, namely, to oppose the word of an inspired man is the same as fighting against God.

Verse 10. In the riot among the two sects of the Jews, their attention was turned upon Paul who was regarded as the cause of the disturbance. There was even so much indication of violence against him that the chief captain feared for his bodily safety. The reader should note that this act of soldiers under lawful direction was solely for the purpose of protecting Paul from mob violence. This should be remembered when considering the falsehoods of Tertullus in chapter 24: 6, 7. Paul was removed from the Sanhedrin by the soldiers and taken into the castle for his bodily safety.

Verse 11. The imprisonment of Paul in the soldiers' barracks was a friendly act as it pertained to his personal safety, but the whole situation was one of apparent danger, and one that had many discouraging phases. It was an appropriate time for the Lord to speak words of cheer to him. *Bear witness also at Rome.* See the comments at chapter 19: 21 as to when he would bear this testimony at Rome.

Verses 12, 13. A curse means some kind of harm to be wished upon one. This harm was to come upon these Jews if they ate or drank until they had killed Paul. It was a rash proposal, but there is no evidence that they stuck to it though Paul was not killed.

Verse 14. They notified the chief priests of their curse, thinking it would impress them with the genuineness of their determination.

Verse 15. Paul was in the castle or barracks, and these Jews suggested that the priests ask the captain to bring the prisoner before the Sanhedrin again on the pretext of a fuller hearing. That would have given them an opportunity of killing him.

Verse 16. Paul's nephew heard of the plot and told him of it.

Verses 17, 18. Paul arranged a meeting of his nephew with the captain.

Verses 19, 20. The young man first told the captain of the request that was soon to be made of him by this wicked band of 40 Jews.

Verse 21. The young man then told him of the plot to kill Paul if he should be allowed to appear outside

the castle, and he urged him to deny their request.

Verse 22. The captain bound the young man to secrecy and then dismissed him, but he intended to act on behalf of Paul's safety.

Verse 23. This was a military escort to conduct Paul to Caesarea, the headquarters of the Roman government in Palestine. Altogether there were 470 military men in the escort, some of whom had special services to perform. The horsemen were included to continue the guarded journey after the others returned to Jerusalem (verse 32). This journey was begun at 9 P. M. according to our time.

Verse 24. *Felix the governor* was a ruler at Caesarea on behalf of the Roman Empire.

Verses 25, 26. Claudius Lysias was the chief captain at Jerusalem. As a judicial courtesy, he wrote a letter to Felix explaining why he was sending Paul to him.

Verse 27. This part of the letter is a truthful report of the rescue of Paul by the soldiers of the captain, recorded in chapter 21: 32-34.

Verse 28. The captain understood that the *council* (Sanhedrin) was a place where the Jews held their examinations of accused persons.

Verse 29. The captain regarded the dispute between Paul and the Jews to be mostly a religious one and not such as he should try.

Verse 30. The court of Felix also was a secular one, but the captain felt that Paul's personal safety required that he appear there. Besides, the Jews had intimated that Paul was a general disturber of the peace (chapter 21: 28), and hence it seemed proper for the court at Caesarea to hear what the accusers had against him, they having been commanded also to appear at Caesarea for that purpose.

Verses 31, 32. Antipatris was about halfway between Jerusalem and Caesarea. The entire military escort went that far, at which place it was thought that most of the danger was over. The day after leaving Jerusalem they reached that place, from which all of the escort except the horsemen started back to Jerusalem, and the horsemen conducted Paul the rest of the journey to Caesarea.

Verse 33. Upon arrival, the horsemen presented Paul to the governor,

and also delivered the epistle that was sent by the chief captain.

Verse 34. This inquiry was to learn whether he should have jurisdiction in the case. Cilicia (the province containing the birthplace of Paul) was in such jurisdiction.

Verse 35. While waiting for the accusers to appear, Paul was to be kept in a place built by Herod, but now being occupied by Felix. Some one of the buildings attached thereto was Paul's prison, pending the arrival of his accusers.

ACTS 24

Verse 1. The word *descended* is used with reference to direction, as to or from Jerusalem, in view of its importance. Thayer defines the original word, "To come down," then explains it to mean, "as from the temple at Jerusalem, from the city of Jerusalem." Tertullus was a professional speaker whom the Jews employed to argue their case against Paul before Felix. What his nationality was is not clearly shown in the history, but he was acquainted with the procedure of courts.

Verses 2-4. Tertullus, like many court lawyers of our day, was not scrupulous in handling the truth, or in his manner of treating a serious case that pertained to the personal rights of a citizen. This paragraph is devoted to pure flattery of the governor, for the purpose of prejudicing him against Paul. I do not think this part of his speech needs any further comments.

Verse 5. An orator is supposed to make his speech before a court after the accusers and witnesses have said their part. But Tertullus acted both as accuser and witness, before the legal accusers were even present, like the unprincipled lawyer that he was. The most of this verse is false, but the part pertaining to Paul's leadership among the *Nazarenes* is true. And that was the chief grievance the Jews had against Paul, because they had previously had that feeling against Jesus, the founder of the *sect of the Nazarenes*. The last word was applied to Christians by the Jews, in reference to Jesus who had lived at Nazareth.

Verses 6, 7. This was a falsehood. (See chapter 21: 30-34.)

Verse 8. *By examining of whom* was an admission that the court had not heard any testimony furnished by Paul's accusers, thereby convicting

himself (and the court) of gross injustice.

Verse 9. *Assented* means the Jews agreed with what Tertullus had said; yet they did not even pretend to have any witnesses to present to Felix.

Verse 10. Paul began his speech with remarks that were respectful and complimentary, but not in the nature of flattery. Having been in a public position over Judea for many years, Felix could appreciate the truths Paul intended stating before him.

Verse 11. *But twelve days*. The events to which Paul refers had occurred so recently, that it would be easy to find testimony to the contrary if any doubt was felt by Felix.

Verses 12, 13. This paragraph is a general denial of all the charges of disorder made against Paul, and he challenged his accusers to present their testimony.

Verse 14. To *confess* does not mean to admit any wrongdoing; it is only an admission of certain facts of which he was not ashamed, but which were objectionable to his critics. Paul does not admit that he is worshipping God through heresy, but that he is serving Him with the system that his accusers called by such a name. He further states that the law (of Moses) and the prophets had taught that same system to be coming sometime.

Verse 15. In this verse the apostle expressed the real subject that was the motive for their objection to him, namely, a belief in the resurrection. *Which they themselves also allow*. The Pharisees professed to believe in the resurrection, but denied that it was through Jesus whom they had crucified (chapter 4: 2).

Verse 16. *Conscience* is from *SUNEIDESIS* and Thayer's main definition is, "The soul as distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, commending the one, condemning the other." This definition states the action of the conscience, but it can act on improper information as well as proper. When Paul was persecuting Christians his conscience commended him for it, because his information (which was erroneous) was to the effect that the disciples of Christ were evildoers. In our present verse he means he had always exercised himself in a way that he thought would be right regarding both God and man. His good conscience while persecuting

Christians was due to the improper information that he had received. The popular idea is not true that the conscience is "A creature of education," for it is a part of every human being. However, it is true that the conscience may be educated, and it depends on the character of that education whether it will commend or condemn what it should.

Verse 17. The *alms* refers to the collections that were made by the various churches (Romans 15: 25-31; 1 Corinthians 16: 1-4). The *offerings* were according to some Jewish customs that Paul still had the right to perform as a Jew, since they were both secular and religious, and Paul did them as the former.

Verses 18-20. This paragraph is explained at chapter 21: 27-29.

Verse 21. See the comments on verses 14 and 15.

Verse 22. Felix now had a somewhat clearer view of the situation, to the extent that he wanted to see the case through after the other parties to it appeared. He promised Paul to hear the whole matter when the captain arrived. It might be stated, however, that so far as the record shows, neither Lysias nor witnesses ever appeared.

Verse 23. Paul was detained as a prisoner, but the soldier who was made responsible for his keeping was commanded to let him have many liberties usually not given.

Verse 24. *Felix came*. He was not residing outside the community; the second word means, "to make a public appearance," according to the lexicons. His interest had been aroused by Paul's speech to the extent he wished to hear more about the faith he was preaching. We will hear more about his wife in the next verse.

Verse 25. The subjects of this verse are in response to the request in the preceding one, to discuss *the faith in Christ*, which shows that the Gospel contains more than just the "first principles." These subjects were especially appropriate at this time, for both Felix and his wife were very unrighteous people. He had induced her to desert her former husband to marry him, for no other motive than lust on the part of each. Thayer defines the original word for *temperance*, "Self-control," then explains it to mean "the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual

[fleshly or carnal] appetites." *Judgment to come* is defined by Thayer, "The last or final judgment." Being a judge himself and acquainted with the dignity of judicial sentences, Felix could feel the weight of Paul's prediction and was made to *tremble*, which is defined in the lexicon "to be terrified." *A convenient season*. The second word does not appear in the original Greek as a separate term. The phrase is from *KAIROS* which Thayer defines "opportune or seasonable time." The word has been translated in the King James Version by the single word "time" in 63 places.

Verse 26. The "convenient season" never appeared as far as the record informs us, for the same purpose that Paul had been called the first time. However, Felix was so depraved as to think the apostle would try to bribe the court into releasing him, and for that purpose he did call for him frequently.

Verse 27. After two years Felix was replaced by Festus because he had incurred the displeasure of the Romans. During those two years Paul was kept as a prisoner, his accusers never having appeared. In spite of this situation, to gratify the hatred of the Jews toward him, Felix kept Paul bound when he relinquished his office to Festus.

ACTS 25

Verse 1. Caesarea was the political headquarters of the Roman Empire in Palestine, but Jerusalem was the chief city of the province from many standpoints. Hence when Festus had been in his own official city three days, he went to Jerusalem to acquaint himself with conditions in that metropolis.

Verse 2. The leading Jews lost no time in approaching Festus with their complaints against Paul.

Verse 3. *Desired favor* means they asked Festus to grant them the favor of having Paul brought from Caesarea to Jerusalem. The inspired writer is the one who is telling the purpose of the Jews to lie in wait and kill Paul in the journey.

Verse 4. Festus evidently knew nothing of the murderous intent of the Jews, but supposed they preferred having Paul tried in their own court; it was in keeping with court form to refuse their request under the circumstances.

Verse 5. Festus invited the proper persons to accompany him to Caesarea

and press their complaint against Paul. *If there be any wickedness* indicates he thought the Jews had some serious charge against the defendant.

Verse 6. After spending ten days in Jerusalem, Festus returned to his own jurisdiction at Caesarea. He did not delay the matter at hand, but summoned Paul to be brought before him the next day after arriving from Jerusalem.

Verse 7. The Jews had never appeared at Caesarea while Felix was in office, though they had two years to do so. For some reason they seemed to think they would succeed better with their case before Festus. *Many and grievous complaints* were doubtless general, and it was not definitely shown whether Paul was accused as an offender against the secular or the religious laws, or both.

Verse 8. Whichever they meant, Paul denied having transgressed against either.

Verse 9. For reasons of political policy, Festus changed his attitude toward the request of the Jews. He proposed to try Paul at Jerusalem as they had requested.

Verse 10. In view of the twofold phase of the complaints made against him, Paul insisted that he should stand trial before Caesar, the secular ruler.

Verse 11. *If I . . . committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die.* This sentence is against the sentimentalists who oppose capital punishment, and who claim the New Testament does not endorse it. If that penalty is wrong in God's sight, then it would be impossible for a man to commit anything worthy of death, and Paul would not have admitted such a possibility, which he did by the words "if I have." Also, if capital punishment is wrong, then Paul would not have given his consent to it, which he did by *not refusing to die*. But since he denied any guilt whatsoever, and was a Roman citizen entitled to the rights of such a standing, he appealed his case to the highest secular court in the world, whose headquarters were at Rome.

Verse 12. This *council* was not the Sanhedrin, but a consultation with the advisers of Festus. After the consultation, Festus, as the "lower court," granted the appeal.

Verse 13. The full name of this man was Herod Agrippa II, who was a ruler in another part of the Roman

Empire, and who came to make a friendly judicial call upon Festus. He was accompanied by his sister Bernice, with whom he was suspected to be living in the intimacy of husband and wife.

Verses 14, 15. Festus told his royal guest of Paul, and of the circumstances that brought him as a defendant before him.

Verse 16. In this verse Festus states the just procedure of the Roman government in the case of one facing trial for life. The present "recess" in the case was caused by the absence of Paul's accusers who were supposed to appear soon.

Verses 17, 18. The preliminary hearing showed to Festus that the charges against the defendant were nothing like what was expected to be offered.

Verse 19. In the opinion of Festus, the issue between Paul and the Jews was only a matter of superstition with Paul; that he was affirming the resurrection of a man by the name of Jesus who had died. As far as Festus could see, such a question was not worth all the bother the Jews were making, and hence there certainly must be something more serious that had not been brought out.

Verse 20. The above opinions are all that Festus stated to Agrippa as his reason for proposing moving the case to the Jewish courts in Jerusalem, there to be tried by him. However, verse 9 gives us another motive he had for the proposal.

Verse 21. When Festus granted the appeal of Paul, that took the case out of his hands, and he was waiting to get the "appeal papers" ready to send up to the higher court. *Augustus* is from a Greek word that was one of the titles of the Roman emperors, not a personal name as in other cases.

Verse 22. Doubtless it was curiosity mainly that prompted the request of Agrippa, but verses 26, 27 show the real motive of Festus in granting it.

Verse 23. This verse describes the important audience that gathered in the official auditorium to see and hear the speech of Paul.

Verse 24. Festus gave Paul a respectful introduction to his audience.

Verse 25. Agrippa had not been asked to listen as a trial judge, for Paul had already taken his case to another court. The statement of Festus, therefore, in declaring Paul innocent

of any capital crime, was not an effort to prejudice Agrippa.

Verses 26, 27. *My lord* means the Roman emperor, whose personal name was Nero. Here was a strange situation; Festus had agreed to send a prisoner up to the highest secular court in the world, and yet had no charge of any importance on which to send him. He thought that if Paul were allowed to speak, something might be said as a basis for a charge.

ACTS 26

Verse 1. Agrippa was courteously invited to share the judicial "bench" with Festus. Under such a privilege, he bade the defendant to make a speech in his own behalf. *Stretched forth his hand* was a gesture of respect for the court, and a call to attention.

Verse 2. Paul made a complimentary speech to Agrippa, but it was not flattery as we shall see. He had good reasons for his happy feelings over the situation.

Verse 3. Paul here states the reasons for his happiness expressed in the preceding verse. Agrippa was not of pure Jewish blood, yet he was brought up under the influence of Jewish teaching, and was acquainted with the law of Moses. This would qualify him to appreciate the things that Paul would say.

Verse 4. Paul was brought up in Jerusalem (chapter 22: 3), so that the leaders of his own nation had full opportunity for knowing about his manner of life.

Verse 5. *Most straitest* is a double superlative and hence is an improper translation. The two words are derived from *AKRIBES* (by superlative inflection), and Thayer defines it "most exact." Paul means that he was a member of the Pharisees who were the most exacting of the Jews in their adherence to the law of Moses. They should have known, therefore, that he would not violate that law as the Jewish leaders charged him.

Verses 6, 7. The *promise* has a general reference to the benefits expected to come to the world through the seed of Abraham (Christ), but the special item of those benefits was the resurrection from the dead (verse 8). The Pharisees professed to believe in the resurrection as well as did Paul, but they resented his teaching that it was to be accomplished through Jesus (chapter 4: 2).

Verse 8. *Why should it be thought*, etc. The resurrection from the dead would not be any more impossible with God than any of the other works of His providence, therefore it was unreasonable to call that particular miracle in question.

Verse 9. The apostle then took up the history of his personal case to show that his present conduct and teaching was a complete change from what it had once been. (See the comments on this subject at chapter 22: 4.)

Verse 10. A *saint* is one who is "set apart for God, to be, as it were, exclusively his," according to Thayer. It is one of the names applied to the followers of Christ who are elsewhere called Christians and disciples. Paul's mention of the authority of the chief priests was to show he acted according to the recognized law of the Jews.

Verse 11. *Compelled them to blaspheme*. The American Standard Version translates this clause, "strove to make them blaspheme," which is evidently the meaning of the apostle. The first word is from the same original as "compel" in Galatians 2: 14, where we know that Peter did not actually induce the Gentiles to do the things mentioned, for Paul's rebuke put a stop to his perversion. But he was using pressure for the purpose of forcing them to do as he contended. Likewise, Paul tried to terrorize the disciples into blaspheming the name of Christ, but they suffered death or imprisonment before denying their Lord. *Unto strange cities* means those on the outside. His last campaign was to reach to Damascus which was a city "outside" Palestine.

Verses 12, 13. *At midday* the sun would be straight over them, hence a light that would be *above the brightness of the sun* would indeed be a strong one.

Verse 14. All of the group fell to the ground but only Paul (or Saul) heard the voice. (See the comments at chapter 9: 5 for the meaning of *pricks*.)

Verse 15. This is also explained at chapter 9: 5.

Verse 16. Jesus did not appear to Paul to make him a Christian; men were appointed for that work. But an apostle must have seen the Lord after his resurrection, and that is why he *appeared* to Paul. Having been a *witness* of the fact that Jesus was alive, he was also to *minister* or serve Him by telling it to others.

Verse 17. Paul's delivery from his enemies was to be continued until the work for which he had been appointed had been accomplished.

Verse 18. *Open their eyes spiritually* to the truths of the Gospel. *Darkness* is ignorance of those truths, and *light* is the knowledge of them. Satan is the minister of darkness, and God is the source of divine light. *Forgiveness of sins* was to be the personal benefit conferred on those who accepted these truths. *Inheritance* means a share of the spiritual possessions enjoyed by the *sanctified*, which denotes the same as the "saints" in verse 10, and this state was to be obtained by faith in the risen Lord.

Verse 19. *Not disobedient* refers to the assignment to preach as the next verse shows. Chapter 9: 20 says he "straightway" preached Christ in the synagogues.

Verse 20. *First unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem.* According to Galatians 1: 18 it was three years before Paul preached at Jerusalem and other places in Judea.

Verse 21. Paul had done nothing that called for any punishment whatsoever, much less that of being slain. He therefore wished this court to know the truth of the motive for being persecuted by the Jews.

Verse 22. Paul again declared that his preaching was according to the predictions of the very writings that the Jews professed to believe. It is good to hear him give God the glory for his endurance, as he stood in the hearing of this mixed judicial court.

Verse 23. In this verse Paul specifies the most important one of the "things" of which he made mention in the preceding one. That was the fact that Christ was the first that rose from the dead (to die no more, Romans 6: 9). And that this great fact was bringing light to the Gentiles (as well as to the Jews).

Verse 24. *Learning* is from GRAMMA which Thayer defines, "Any writing, a document or record." Paul had made such wide reference to the writings of ancient scribes that Festus thought such knowledge had thrown him into a state of frenzy, to the extent that he had lost control of himself.

Verse 25. Paul made a direct denial of the charge concerning his mental condition, *soberness* being from a Greek word that means "self-control." But his reply to Festus was respectful

and one that recognized his standing. Thayer says the word for *noble* is "used in addressing men of conspicuous rank or office."

Verse 26. *The king* means Agrippa for whose special hearing Paul was making this speech, and who was acquainted with the ancient writings to which the apostle had referred. *Corner* is from GONIA which Thayer defines, "A secret place." *This thing* means the story of Jesus including his public life, crucifixion and evidences of his resurrection, all of which was known to thousands of people.

Verse 27. Agrippa was acquainted with the Old Testament writings, and this question of Paul was a challenge to the king to make a consistent application of them.

Verse 28. Agrippa was logical enough to see the conclusion required from the premises that Paul had cited. He really believed the truth of the prophetic statements, and the facts and truths connected with the story of Christ clearly connected Him with the prophecies. His unwillingness to go all the way that his conclusions would lead, was not from any doubts as to the rightful claims of the Gospel upon his life. But many personal interests of a worldly nature intervened against his better judgment. He was willing only to make the concession to Paul that is expressed by the famous sentence that has become the subject of song and poetry in various literature.

Verse 29. This verse expresses the sincere interest of the apostle in the spiritual welfare of his distinguished listeners. There is no sign of personal triumph in his remarks, for he realizes that nothing short of wholehearted obedience to Christ will avail anything for the unsaved, hence his wish was for the completeness of the conviction that was acknowledged by Agrippa. *Except these bonds.* How gracious was this remark, which shows the complete absence of bitterness, or any feeling that others too should be humiliated who were no better than he.

Verses 30, 31. At the conclusion of Paul's speech the meeting "broke up" and the royal hearers went aside to confer with each other. That was not in order to decide on a verdict, for such action had been taken from them by the appeal of the prisoner. But to see if either of them had discovered "somewhat to write" to Caesar (chapter 25: 26). It was admitted that no

such discovery had been made, but rather that the prisoner was not worthy even of bonds.

Verse 32. Agrippa was the visiting jurist who was invited to give a critical ear to the speech of the prisoner. It was proper, therefore, for him to express the opinion that we have recorded. Had it not been for the appeal that Paul had made, he could have been released from all custody at this time.

ACTS 27

Verse 1. This chapter and half of the next has to do with the voyage to Rome in Italy, the capital city of the Roman Empire. The voyage was made necessary by Paul's appeal from the lower courts (chapter 25: 11; 26: 32). *Augustus' band*. Josephus writes of a "Troop of Sebaste [the Greek word for Augustus], of Caesarea," and it was an officer of this band of soldiers who was given charge of Paul and the other prisoners.

Verse 2. The first ship sailing in the desired direction was from the city of Adramyttium. This Aristarchus was the same who was with Paul in chapter 19: 29.

Verse 3. The ship landed next day at Sidon, a seaport on the *coasts of Asia*. While the ship was anchored here, Paul was permitted to visit his friends among the disciples.

Verse 4. *To sail under* means "to sail close by," according to Thayer. They sailed near the shore of this island to shield them from the winds that were blowing against them.

Verse 5. Sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia means the waters bordering on those provinces. Passing on they landed at Myra in Lycia, another province of the Roman Empire.

Verse 6. At Myra all on board had to change to another ship.

Verse 7. *Scarce were come* means they just barely made it to reach Cnidus on account of the opposing wind. Going on in a southwestern direction, they sailed between the islands of Salomone and Crete, passing nearer the former.

Verse 8. *Hardly* (with difficulty) they sailed round along the southern shore of Crete and came to a harbor called *fair havens*, near the city of Lasea.

Verse 9. *The fast was now already past*. The fast was the period of the

Atonement which came on the 10th day of the 7th month (Leviticus 23: 27). This ceremonial day had nothing to do with the sailing, but it so happened that it came about the beginning of a stormy season on the Mediterranean. The reference to it was merely as a date, indicating the season of the year when it was generally dangerous to sail.

Verse 10. *I perceive* is from THEOSEO, and the several definitions in the lexicon present the idea of a conclusion based on what one has seen or can see, in connection with his better judgment. From such a basis, Paul advised that it would be a risk to both their lives and to the ship for them to sail.

Verse 11. It was natural to prefer the judgment of these men to that of Paul since they were experienced seamen, and should have been in position to judge.

Verse 12. Just because the place was not *commodious* (convenient) where they were in which to winter, the majority of the crew advised leaving. They thought they could reach the haven of *Phenice* which faced the northwest and southeast. Due to some "weather conditions" with which I am not acquainted, this was thought to offer a safe place in which to remain until spring.

Verse 13. *South wind blew softly*. Such a wind seemed favorable, both as to direction and intensity. It would gently press them north and west along Crete.

Verse 14. The chief characteristic of *Euroclydon* was that of churning up the water into huge waves, which accounts for the difficulties they had with the body of the ship. Thayer defines the word, "A S. E. wind raising mighty waves."

Verse 15. *Let her drive* means they did not try to control the direction of the ship, but let it float in whatever direction the wind and waves drove it.

Verse 16. *Running under* denotes going south of the island and passing near the shore. At this place the conditions had become so severe that they had difficulty to *come by the boat*, which means they could hardly manage the boat.

Verse 17. The *boat* referred to was a lifeboat, which had been towed up to now because the waters were calm when they started. The word for *boat*

is from *SKAPHE* which Robinson defines, "A skiff, boat." They hoisted this boat (with "much work," verse 16) up on deck, then gave their attention to the ship. To strengthen the hull, they passed ropes or chains around it and drew them up tight. *Strake sail* means they lowered the sails for fear the wind in them would force the ship into the quicksands. From now on they let the ship drift as it would with the wind and waves.

Verse 18. *Lightened the ship* means they threw overboard some of the goods, thereby easing the weight the ship was compelled to carry in the storm.

Verse 19. *Tackling* means the furniture, apparatuses and all other equipment of the ship. The situation was so grave the disciples assisted in throwing these things out.

Verse 20. The obscurity of *sun* and *stars* indicates the storm continued throughout day and night. Not having any compass in those days, mariners had to depend on the heavenly bodies for their direction. This condition continued for so many days that all on board (except Paul) despaired of ever reaching land.

Verse 21. The *long abstinence* was natural under the terrible strain of the conditions. Paul was very kind and respectful, yet properly chided the group for having rejected the advice he offered them while at Crete.

Verse 22. Paul bade them to be of good cheer since the only loss that was to come to them would be regarding the ship; he then explained why he was thus assured.

Verses 23, 24. *Stood by me . . . angel.* (See Hebrews 1: 13, 14.) It was God's will for Paul to appear before Caesar; many results were to come from that great event.

Verses 25, 26. Paul predicted the wreck of the ship, which was to intervene before the personal rescue of the crowd or his appearance before Caesar.

Verse 27. Two weeks after leaving Crete the mariners thought they saw indications of being near land. They were being driven back and forth in *Adria*, the Adriatic Sea, which is that part of the Mediterranean between Greece and Italy.

Verse 28. They *sounded* (measured the depth with a line and weight) and found it *twenty fathoms*, or about 120 feet. After going only a little further

they found it *fifteen fathoms*, or about 90 feet.

Verse 29. At that rate they feared the water would soon be too shallow for the ship to float. They cast four anchors out of the rear of the boat to hold it from moving, while waiting for daylight to come when they could see better about conditions.

Verse 30. The sailors lowered the lifeboat *under color* (pretending) that they intended placing some anchors at the forepart of the ship, but in reality for the purpose of abandoning the ship and taking to the lifeboat.

Verse 31. The Lord promised to bring all the persons on board alive through the storm. However, He expected the cooperation of all concerned, especially the ones who were trained in affairs of water travel, hence Paul made this statement to the soldiers.

Verse 32. To prevent the escape of the shipmen, the soldiers cut the ropes and let the lifeboat go. As it was an emergency, the military men acted in this commandeering manner to save the lives of the whole group.

Verses 33, 34. While waiting for daylight, Paul advised them to break their fast *for their health*. Too long abstinence from food would be injurious, and besides, as their ultimate escape was assured, there was no reason for them to punish themselves more.

Verses 35-37. Paul led the way and began to eat, after giving thanks for the bread. The group of 276 persons then took courage and also partook of the food.

Verse 38. After satisfying their hunger, they decided to ease the strain on the boat further by casting the wheat into the sea.

Verse 39. *Knew not the land* denotes that they did not recognize it. All *creaks* of necessity have *shores*, so we learn that a clearer translation would be that they thought they saw a bay with a beach that would be a desirable place for a "forced landing."

Verse 40. *Had taken up* all comes from one Greek word which Thayer defines, "to cast loose." The italicized word *themselves* refers to the anchors which they abandoned in order to relieve the ship of the weight. The rudders were large oars used to steer the ship. While at anchor they would be hoisted out of the water and held by *bands* or ropes; these were now cut

loose. They next raised the mainsail and started toward the "bay" mentioned in the preceding verse.

Verse 41. *Where two seas met* all comes from *DRYHALASSOS*, which Thayer defines, "an isthmus or tongue of land," and he explains it, "the extremity of which is covered by the waves." Both sides of this projection of land were washed by the sea which formed a sort of whirlpool, into which the forepart of the ship was thrust and stranded. The rear part of the boat was then lashed with the violence of this "whirlpool" and crushed.

Verse 42. When the jailer in chapter 16: 27 thought his prisoners had escaped, he intended killing himself rather than be executed (as he thought) by the officers. The soldiers in our verse wanted to kill the prisoners, rather than face their superior officers under the charge of allowing the prisoners to escape. This indicates the harsh rules the Roman government established regarding the responsibility of those having charge of prisoners. It also explains why the Jews felt the necessity of assuring protection for the watchers at the tomb of Jesus. (Matthew 28: 12-14.)

Verse 43. Paul was one of the prisoners and would have shared the fate of the others, had the soldiers been suffered to carry out their purpose. Whether the centurion cared much for the other prisoners we are not told. But his respect for the apostle Paul moved him to dissuade the soldiers from their evil design. Instead, he gave orders for all to get to land in whatever way they could.

Verse 44. Some of the crowd were able to swim to shore. Others made it to safety by the aid of boards and pieces of the ship that helped them to float.

ACTS 28

Verse 1. Smith's Bible Dictionary says the following: "Melita, the modern Malta. . . . It is 17 miles long by 9 or 10 broad. It is naturally a barren rock, with no high mountains, but has been rendered fertile by industry and toil."

Verse 2. *Barbarous* sometimes means to be rude in speech; rough, harsh. It also means to speak in a foreign tongue. At our place Thayer says it is not used reproachfully, and that the inhabitants were of Phœnician origin, who had some refinement of manners.

These facts explain the kind treatment they gave the shipwrecked group.

Verse 3. A cold rain was falling and Paul was building a fire for warmth. A *viper* is a poisonous snake that came out of the sticks and clung to his hand. It had evidently been sheltering itself among the sticks and was numb from the cold. The heat brought it to its feeling and caused it to attack him as might be expected to be done by such a creature.

Verse 4. The islanders were rather superstitious and thought this incident was the work of some supreme being. They thought Paul was trying to escape just punishment.

Verses 5, 6. They fully expected to see Paul drop dead. Seeing his mastery over it, they reversed their opinion and said he was a god. While that was not the object of the miracle, it did serve to prove Paul and his companions to be good men.

Verse 7. *Some quarters* means that same part of the island. Publius was probably the governor of the island, because he had possessions sufficient to give hospitality to Paul and his group for a period of three days.

Verse 8. Paul had a chance to "return the favor" by healing the father of Publius of a serious disease, which he did by laying his hands miraculously on him.

Verse 9. The good deed done for Publius' father was reported over the island. As a result, others came to Paul and were healed of diseases.

Verse 10. We are not told just how these *honors* were manifested while Paul and his companions remained on the island. But when they were ready to leave, the natives gave them a supply of the necessities of life.

Verse 11. *Castor and Pollux* was the label inscribed on the side of the ship. The words were derived from some legend about heathen gods.

Verses 12, 13. The stop of three days at Syracuse was either because of the conditions of the weather, or to perform the regular business of a vessel. *Fetched a compass* means they took a circuitous route by the place, and coming to Puteoli they landed for a few days.

Verse 14. Smith's Bible Dictionary says Puteoli was "the great landing-place of travelers to Italy," so it is not surprising that some brethren would be there.

Verse 15. The brethren at Rome heard of Paul's voyage toward their city and came to meet him. According to Smith's Bible Dictionary, *Appi forum* was 43 miles from Rome and *Three taverns* was 33. The same information is given in Thayer's lexicon under the word *TABERNACULUM*. Paul was heartened by seeing this brotherly welcome from those who were willing to brave the uncertainties of the sea to meet this "prisoner of Jesus Christ."

Verse 16. Thayer says the *captain of the guard* was the "captain of the Roman emperor's body-guard." To this officer the centurion delivered his prisoners, thus discharging the duty that was imposed upon him at Caesarea. But Paul was not placed in the soldiers' camp; instead, he was permitted to dwell separately with a single soldier as his guard. This would give him opportunity for seeing persons in whom he was interested.

Verse 17. Paul called these Jews *men and brethren* because of their common blood, not that they were brethren in Christ. He related how he was made a prisoner of the Romans by the Jews, though he was not guilty of wrong-doing against any laws.

Verse 18. *Who* means the Romans into whose hands Paul had been delivered. Finding nothing wrong in him, they were disposed to discharge him from all accusations.

Verse 19. Paul appealed unto Caesar as a defendant, and not as a complainant against his nation. That is, he merely wished to clear his own good name, not that he wanted to cause his Jewish brethren any trouble.

Verse 20. Lest he might be misjudged by his Jewish brethren, however, he thought it well to explain the presence of the chain that was attached to him. *Hope of Israel* refers to the hope of a resurrection through Christ. That was the reason why he called them to him three days after arriving in their city.

Verse 21. These Jews had heard the report about the disciples in general, but had not received any news of accusations against Paul personally.

Verse 22. Because of the unfavorable report these Jews had heard about the disciples, they wished to have Paul's personal story. *Sect* is from *HAIRESIS*, and Thayer defines it at this place, "a sect or party."

Verse 23. These Jews professed to believe the Old Testament, hence Paul

used it as a basis for his speeches. He showed them that their own religious literature had foretold the coming of the kingdom of God, the institution referred to as a "sect."

Verse 24. As usual, the hearers disagreed among themselves over what they heard.

Verse 25. Because of the disagreement between themselves the Jews departed. Before they left Paul spoke *one word*, meaning one quotation from Esaias (Isaiah).

Verse 26. *Go unto this people* denotes that Isaiah was to carry a message to this people, the Jews. Hear . . . *not understand . . . see . . . not perceive*. This all means the Jews would refuse to make the proper use of their mental faculties.

Verse 27. *Waxed gross* denotes they had become stupid through their own prejudice. Their motive for such an attitude was to reject the reformation of life that the teaching of the Gospel might work in them.

Verse 28. This announcement to the Jews was on the same basis as set forth in such passages as chapter 13: 46. The Jews were given the first opportunity of hearing the Gospel. When the Gentiles had the divine truth offered to them, they showed a greater readiness to receive it.

Verse 29. *Had great reasoning*. The Jews did not agree among themselves upon the teaching of Paul, hence they got into dispute over it. They were familiar with the law as Paul quoted it, but their prejudice prevented them from accepting his teaching.

Verse 30. *Hired house* means a rented building which Paul used at his own expense. He was still in custody, hence could preach only to those who came in unto him.

Verse 31. *No man forbidding him* all comes from *AKOLUTOS* which Thayer defines, "without hindrance." We know that men objected to the preaching of Paul, but God sustained him so that the preaching of the cause of Jesus Christ continued with great zeal.

ROMANS 1

Verse 1. Paul first mentions his relation as a servant of Christ, which means "one who gives himself up wholly to another's will." He next refers to his position as apostle, and says he was *called* to that office. The word is from *KLETOS* which Thayer