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**THE CHURCH AND
THE HOLY SPIRIT**

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1. Enough time ought to be given to explain the meaning of the gospel. Paul introduced the subject of the gospel then explained it very well.
2. All people will not accept the gospel in the same way. Even when you explain it as clearly as possible, some still will not accept the truth. Some will accept the gospel before you can finish the sermon, and others will have to be reasoned with for a long period of time.
3. The greatest preachers of God have often met with failure and disappointment. Paul preached to his own people and many of them refused him and went away. Jesus himself left only a little handful of believers.

The prophet is judged on the faithfulness with which he speaks the Word of God, not by the response of his hearers.

4. In missionary work, success often appears where we do not expect it to appear. Those who might be expected to believe may reject Christ, while the Lord opens the hearts of others who seem most unpromising.
5. Whatever the circumstances in which a Christian finds himself, he will have opportunities to give a testimony for Christ.

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CHAPTER 1

MISSIONS UNLIMITED

Paul knew the doors that were open to the gospel. The doors of the hearts of the Jews were closed. The hearts of the Gentiles were wide open to him. There are two themes interwoven throughout the book of Acts. One is the tragedy of the closed door of the Jews. The other theme is the open door and the glad acceptance by the Gentiles.

Verse 30: "And he lived there two whole years at his own expense."

At this time, if the accusers failed to present their case against Paul within two years, then the case was dropped. It was Paul's custom to pay his own way wherever he went. This means that he did not beg others to help him. He was given a place to stay but he paid his way.

It seems clear that Paul was not totally restricted. He was guarded in this house where he stayed. He kept writing letters, witnessing, and doing all he could to make the church stronger. It is plain that he strengthened the church at Rome. He converted run away slaves and many other people at this time. There were officials in the government who believed. It is believed that a great number of the army was converted because they were in contact with Paul.

Verse 31: "Preaching the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ quite openly and unhindered."

Paul did two great things: winning converts from outside the church and proclaiming the Lord Jesus Christ to those within the church. He taught the way in which they should live.

It appears that Paul was not hindered by the Romans nor the Jews to preach the Word of God in prison and that he was able to make great headway in the church because of this.

III. THE MESSAGE

This closing study of our series from the book of Acts is full of practical applications.

BIBLE MATERIAL: Acts 13

Memory Verse: *"For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, 'I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth.'"*

Acts 13:47

I. BACKGROUND STUDY

There are three things that we want to note about Acts 13:1-3:

1. This chapter begins a new section in the Book of Acts. Jerusalem had been the centre of the work of the church up to this time. Now the centre changed to the church at Antioch of Syria.

2. Acts 13 begins a new time of growth in Christianity. The church in Antioch begins the movement of the gospel into the world. This church moves under the direction and leadership of God through the Holy Spirit. This church lifts up its eyes and sees a lost world. It realizes there is no limit to the task it must do. The gospel must go to all the people no matter what their race. The gospel must go to all people no matter about the distance from Antioch.

3. The Bible at this point shows the Holy Spirit placing the burden of the whole world on the local church. In answer to the call of the Holy Spirit those of the church laid their hands on Barnabas and Saul to preach the gospel to the Gentiles of the world.

The men at Antioch: Barnabas was one of the apostles, a Jew. Symeon Niger and Lucius were of Cyrene. These men were from North Africa. They could had been Jews who were chased from

Jerusalem. They also could have been Africans. They preached to the Gentiles without discrimination. They had probably lived among the Gentiles all of their lives and did not notice the difference as did the Jews of Jerusalem. Manaen was a member of Herod's court who had been converted and had to run for his life from Herod who was killing Christians at this time.

II. THE TEXT Acts 13:1-3

Verse 1: "In the church at Antioch."

This church had always reached out for lost people. The people who started the church at Antioch were from other lands. They shared the gospel with the Greeks from the beginning (Acts 11:20).

Because the church was a soul-winning church, it drew strong leaders. Barnabas was sent from Jerusalem. He brought Saul (Paul) from Tarsus. Symeon was from Cyrene in North Africa as well as Lucius. It was highly possible they were African. Manaen was a man in political work who had fled for his life.

Prophets and teachers are mentioned in the New Testament church life. Teachers seemed to remain in the church. Prophets seemed to travel from one church to another. Teachers taught known truth. Prophets brought new revelation from God for the teachers to teach to the people.

Verse 2: "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul."

It is possible that the Holy Spirit spoke to the church through one of the prophets. He had already spoken to the missionaries.

We know this was God's call because the other Christians, while in prayer and fasting, agreed. A young man may feel he is called to preach, if his home church is impressed with his life and another church calls him to be their pastor. This is the confirmation that God has called. If no one else shares the impression of

This has been the story of the gospel since the beginning of time. Some continue in unbelief.

Verse 25: "They disagreed among themselves." Paul quoted Isaiah's call (Isaiah 6:9-10) to rebuke those who rejected the Messiah. He said these were words of the Holy Spirit by the prophet. These were not the words of man. Jesus used the same quotation to explain the unbelief of his hearers (Mark 4:11-12).

Verse 26: "You shall indeed hear but never understand."

Those people who did not want to follow Christ refused to hear the words of Paul. They became blind to the revelation of God. They were deaf to the message he was giving from heaven.

The man who studies the Bible purely for literature and human writings always fails to understand it. No one can learn about Christ without accepting him as Lord and Saviour. No one can understand the Word of God while hearing it only as if it were the word of man. Men hear only what they want to hear in their hearts. If the words condemn them they will refuse to hear and believe them.

Verse 27: "For this people's heart has grown dull."

We know that every speaker for God has experienced this rejection. We know that Paul did not convert a 11 of those who heard him. Jesus said these same words of the prophet Isaiah to those who heard him and refused to believe. The mark of a man of God is not how many converts he has but the faithfulness with which he proclaims the message God has given him.

Verse 28: "This salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles."

Paul did not say that the invitation to the Jews to come to Christ had been withdrawn. He still believed that one day they would accept Christ (Romans 11:26). Their rejection of the gospel sent it to the Gentiles.

It was God's invitation to the whole world. He used Philip to win an African. He used Peter to win a Roman. Those who went to Antioch won the Greeks. He called Saul of Tarsus and used him to change the attitude of the church. The battle was won; the gospel was given to the world. The church became Gentile rather than Jewish.

II. THE TEXT Acts 28:23-31

This week's lesson is about Paul at the time he was in prison in Rome. Paul told the Jews first about the Lord and then those who came to him, whether they were Jew or Gentile.

Verse 23: "They came to him at his lodging in great numbers."

Paul spoke at first to a small group of Jewish people who lived in Rome. A date was set for a fuller discussion about Jesus. At the end, as at the beginning, Paul carried the message first of all to the Jews.

These people came to his house at his invitation. We do not know if he fed them or not. The word "Lodging" could mean that he fed them. However, this is doubtful.

His textbook for teaching these Jewish people was the Scripture of the Old Testament. He taught about the kingdom of God as it was made plain by the work and life of Jesus. It was not one long lecture but more of a conversation. People were asking questions and Paul was answering them.

Time was allowed for the discussion from the morning until the evening. We need not think that we can hurry the way through these questions of God. We cannot get the answers into our hearts more quickly than those who were there.

Verse 24: "Some were convinced..... while others disbelieved."

Some believed what Paul was teaching. Some were not convinced. Apparently there were many who were not convinced.

God's call to this young man to preach, he does well to examine that call.

Verse 3: "Laid their hands on them."

The whole church laid their hands on these missionaries. This was not to give them power. This laying on of hands were to express that they were in agreement with what the missionaries were about to do.

Note that this church was independent. It did not ask the apostles in Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit spoke directly to them and they obeyed him. The church "Sent them away," and they were "Sent out by the Holy Spirit." The church simply released them from their former duties. The Holy Spirit told them what they were to do.

III. BACKGROUND STUDY Acts 13:42-49

After the church had sent Paul and Barnabas out to preach the gospel, they sailed to Cyprus. Here Paul became the leader. Then they went to Antioch of Asia. (Look at your maps in your quarterly). This is where the remainder of our lesson for today takes place.

They went to the Jewish synagogue on Saturday. After the Scripture was read, they asked Paul to preach to them. The remainder of our lesson is about these men and women who heard the gospel for the first time and what the gospel did for them. These were both Jews and Greeks.

IV. THE TEXT Acts 13:42-49

Verse 42: "Begg'd that these things might be told them."

Paul had preached Christ in the Synagogue. He told the people that Christ was sent from God to be the Saviour. He taught them that Christ was crucified and raised from the dead. Christ offered all these people salvation from their

sins. The people heard Paul and invited him to come back again the next Saturday.

Verse 43: "Many followed Paul and Barnabas."

Some of the people who heard Paul's message followed him to his house. They wanted to know what they must do to be saved. Paul explained to them. These people were Jews and Greeks. They were saved.

Verse 44: "Almost the whole city gathered."

These people were not silent about the message of Jesus. They talked about it all week. When the time came for worship the next week, almost all of the city was there to hear. There were many Greeks and Jews.

Verse 45: "Filled with jealousy."

The preaching of the gospel had upset the Jews. It was not the message but the fact that the uncircumcised Gentiles were coming in such numbers. Paul had been bold enough to invite these people to the meeting. They were resented.

The synagogue invited the Greeks but only a few at a time. The Jews were angry to see their place filled with un-invited people. Greeks were considered unclean.

Verse 46: "We turn to the Gentiles."

There were both joy and sorrow in the announcement Paul made. Paul knew he was sent to the Gentiles. He was happy when they received the message of Jesus. He would always be sorry for his people because they refused Jesus as Saviour.

Verse 47: "So the Lord has commanded."

Paul knew God's concern for all nations. He knew that Christ died for the sins of all who believe. He had been called to preach to the Gentiles. They were receiving the gospel. As he turned from the Jews to the Gentiles, he was following the clear command of God.

CHAPTER 13

THE CONTINUING WITNESS

BIBLE MATERIAL: Acts 28:17-31

Memory Verse: *"I am under obligation both to Greeks and barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish: so I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome."*

Romans 1:14-15

I. BACKGROUND STUDY

Many changes took place in the thinking of the early followers of Jesus. Their thoughts toward him changed from: "Can there anything good come out of Nazareth?" to saying: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Their cowardice changed to courage. When Jesus was arrested they forsook him. A few weeks later they stood and defied everyone to preach in his name.

Their relations to each other changed. They stopped quarrelling over who would be the first in the kingdom of God and began to be of one accord.

Their furthest step came when they stopped asking, "Lord will you restore the kingdom of Israel now?" and ended by inviting the whole world to come to the Lord.

Rather than being different from others and keeping themselves away from the Gentiles, the Jewish Christians went to the Gentiles with the message of salvation and then received them as brothers.

There was a strong resistance. But they had to decide whether the church would be a world missionary force or remain a minor sect within Judaism.

When the Lord through his angel spoke to Paul, he made him feel better. But that was not the main purpose. Rather it was to prepare him to act effectively in the trouble that was ahead. The demonstration of the value of religious faith is not in what we say we believe, but rather in how we behave in life's testing hours.

Verse 48: "The Gentiles were glad."
All the Gentiles were glad to hear that God had sent Jesus to save them. Not all of them accepted the gospel. Only those people who accept Jesus were and are saved. We are free to choose concerning salvation.

Verse 49: "The word of the Lord spread."
The Gentiles were not silent. They went to places where there was no synagogue and told others about Jesus. They told the story everywhere to everyone. The gospel spread further and further.

V. THE MESSAGE

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The first thing we learn from this study is that God made the first step toward spreading the gospel to the whole world. God led in calling the proper people for the job of preaching the gospel. God led in providing salvation. He still does this. When we are saved, it is because God finds us, not because we find him. When we preach for him it is always because of his will. No church can listen to the Holy Spirit without wanting the world to know about Christ. No church can have the presence of God without telling the story to other people. The purpose of being a Christian is to lead others to know Christ.

The second lesson we see is that God needed, chose, and called human messengers. The church was not told to select the people to send on this journey for God. God had done that already. At the time of Saul's conversion the Lord called him to preach to the Gentiles. Paul believed he was chosen before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4). God was preparing him for his life's work long before he knew it.

The third thing we learn is that God calls churches to send missionaries to the lost world. He did not call the church in order to call the missionaries. He called the missionaries and used them to call the church.

The same God who called the missionaries to go out, called the churches to send them. The missionaries needed the church as a home base to pray for them and help them. They may have shared at least in some measure in the money to support them; but spiritual support was more important.

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are some records of ancient ships where there were more people on board than this.

Verse 38: "When they had eaten enough."

At first they thought they could not eat. When they had started, they found that they were really hungry and ate until they were satisfied.

Verse 38: "They lightened the ship."

This meant they had thrown part of the cargo overboard. In the rough seas, weight was needed to hold the ship steady. Now they were preparing to run the ship on the ground and needed it to rise as far out of the water as possible. So they threw all of the food out of the ship. They believed what Paul had said. They were willing to sacrifice the ship in order to save all the lives of the people.

III. THE MESSAGE

Paul was a man of great physical courage, though he was small and frail of body. We almost tremble to read (2 Corinthians 11:23-27) his list of the things he had endured. A storm at sea was not new to him. He had been shipwrecked three times before. Once he had spent a day and a night in the water. Three times he had been beaten brutally. Once he had been stoned and left for dead. None of this conquered him or caused him to weaken in his zeal for the Lord.

What was the secret of his courage? He was not a super-human. Paul had heard the voice of God. He could stand and face death. He could tell the other people to be of good cheer because of the faith he had in God. The more Paul knew about his Master, Jesus Christ, the more he knew he could trust him.

The crises of life test our faith, whether it be adequate or not. If we are not prepared to meet loss, sickness, suffering or even death itself, we are ill prepared. For these are the things that await us all.

The place where they landed is generally accepted as St. Paul's Bay on the island of Malta. Every detail of Luke's account bears out the record. The time that elapsed, the direction of the winds, and the view they saw when dawn came - all of these things fit the geography and tradition.

Verse 33: "Paul urged them all to take some food."

The first thing the people on this lost and tossing ship needed was assurance. The second thing they needed was food. It would take a lot of strength to get off the ship when it ran aground and broke up. They had been without food for a long time and they were weak.

Verse 34: "It will give you strength."

In these ancient ships there were no tables and waiters to bring food to the passengers. Each one had to get his food for himself. Paul was not inviting them to eat what was before them. He was urging them to prepare a meal and eat.

Verse 35: "He took bread, and giving thanks to God."

Paul gave thanks to God in the presence of them all because it was the normal thing for a Christian to do. He told them that they were all in the hands of God.

In taking food, it was an expression of hope that he had already shared with the other people. This was a sharing of that hope with them. They had not eaten because there was no hope for them. Now Paul urged them to take hope and to refresh their bodies. God had given the promise. Paul believed it and urged the others to do the same thing.

Verse 36: "Then they all were encouraged." Whether they shared Paul's faith or not, we do not know. He shared his faith with them and they were encouraged and ate.

Verse 37: "Two-hundred-seventy-six persons."

The large number has troubled some, and some think these were too many people. However, there

CHAPTER 2

MEN WITH GOOD NEWS

BIBLE MATERIAL: Acts 14

Memory Verse: *"We also are men, of like nature with you, and bring you good news, that you should turn from vain things to a living God."*

Acts 14:15

I. BACKGROUND STUDY

In our last lesson, we saw how God called churches to send people out to preach to lost people in other places. God had already called these people. God led these people each step. He led them where to preach. He led them in what to preach. God led these men to preach to other races. These men, Paul and Barnabas, knew the gospel was for everyone. They saw God's hand open the doors to these nations to permit them to preach.

Today we study about Paul and Barnabas as they progress in spreading the gospel. We find them in Asia in Lystra. (Look at your map and find Lystra).

Lystra was a pagan town. There was a large group of Roman soldiers there. There were not enough Jews to build a synagogue. Paul had to preach where he could find the people. He probably began in the market place. There was a crippled man who was listening to Paul preach in the market place. He believed in the Eternal God. Paul saw that he had faith.

II. THE TEXT Acts 14:8-18

Verse 8: "A cripple from birth." The man was a helpless cripple. He had no hope that he would ever walk. We do not know

if he was a beggar but he could have been. Why else would he have been on the street? We find that this man was a God-fearer. He probably believed in God as the Jews did.

Verse 9: "He had faith to be made well." Paul noticed how this man listened. He believed that the man believed the word of God. In Acts and the Gospels, faith is often the condition of healing. We must have faith in God. The man's faith made the healing of the legs possible. We must notice that he had not only his legs healed but his spirit. He leapt and praised God. He seemed to know where the power came from that healed him.

Verse 10: "He sprang up and walked." When Paul called to the man to stand up, he called in a loud voice. Many people looked at him. The man stood to his feet. He had never walked before. All the people began to listen to Paul at this time. They became happy and accepted what Paul said. This man's faith grew and he was healed. He was also saved. His life was changed.

Verse 11: "The gods have come down." The people did not speak in Greek. They spoke in the language of the Lycaonians. These people were not Romans or Greeks. Paul and Barnabas did not know what they were saying. They did not know what they were about to do.

Verse 12: "Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul Hermes." Zeus was a false god of both Greece and Rome. Because Barnabas was the older and quieter, the people called him Zeus. Zeus was the chief god of Rome. Hermes was the messenger of the gods of Rome and Greece. Because Paul was the one speaking, they called Paul, Hermes. The Greek word for messenger or spokesman means "angel." In the letter to Galatians, which would include this church, Paul tells the people that they had received him as an angel (Galatians 4:14).

Verse 24: "The angel told Paul three things."

- (1) "Do not be afraid." Great man of faith that he was, Paul was subject to fear and needed reassurance. Along with the people travelling with him on the ship, he had lost hope that they would be saved. God did not want his servant to be afraid.
- (2) "You must stand before Caesar." Two years before, he had been told by the Lord that he would witness at Rome (Acts 23:11). Sometimes the greatest encouragement that we can have is for God to tell us what we already know. This tells us that God is dependable.
- (3) "God has granted you all those who sail with you." The crew who worked on the ship and all the people travelling with him were to be saved. This was not because they had faith, but because they travelled with Paul.

Verse 25: "I have faith in God." Some might have said, "The sea is calmer." Paul said, "I believe God. He will keep his word." This was the faith of a man who was waiting to be killed but could say, "I know whom I have believed and I am sure that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me" (2 Timothy 1:12).

Paul took command here because he was the only one who had any courage left.

Verse 26: "We shall have to run on some island."

This was a prophecy from God. Paul had no way of knowing that there was an island. He did not know where they were. No one knew. God had revealed to him that they would run aground on an island.

II. THE TEXT

Acts 27:21-26; 33-38

Verse 21: "They had been without food."

The ship was in the middle of a storm and had been for fourteen days. The people had not eaten in all this time. Preparation of food in this wildly tossing ship would have been difficult. Many were seasick and vomiting. We can understand the days and nights of horror.

Paul said, "I told you so," as the storm raged. He had tried to get them to stay the winter in a safe harbour. They had left to get a good price in Italy for their grain. Now it was all lost.

Verse 22: "There will be no loss of life among you."

The people on the ship had been living in great fear for many days. They could think of nothing but death. First Paul had to encourage these people. He started by telling them there would be no loss of life.

The fact that the ship would be lost was just one bad thing along with the news that all lives of the people would be saved. When they first set sail from Alexandria, the loss of their grain would have seemed very bad indeed. Now, however, it was a small matter when all lives would be saved.

Sometimes when our lives are threatened, the value of property takes its proper proportions.

Verse 23: "There stood by me an angel of God."

Paul was discouraged. He needed encouragement. God sent his angel to speak with him and reassure him of their condition.

Our happiest spiritual experience sometimes comes at our greatest trouble. The Lord who encouraged Paul was the Lord to whom he belonged. There are those people who live as though God does not exist. When they are in trouble they expect him to send his angel to assure them.

Verse 13: "Priest wanted to offer sacrifice."

The temple of Zeus was at the gate of the city. The people thought their false gods had come to them in person. The priest of this false god must then lead the worship. The priest was brought and told that the gods had come. This meant Paul and Barnabas. The oxen were secured for sacrifice. The disciples had returned to their house.

Because these pagan people did this, we know that they did not receive the gospel. Paul and Barnabas' words had not been heard. Perhaps it was because they did not use the right language. Perhaps it was because the people made up their minds before they listened to what the men had to say. The people thought they were gods. Some of the friends of Paul and Barnabas went and told them what was about to happen at the pagan temple.

Verse 14: "They tore their garments."

Tearing the clothes among the Jews was the sign of strong disagreement in spiritual matters. Paul and Barnabas were not pleased with the people of Lystra for what they were doing. They did the thing that would most show the people that they did not want this. They tore their clothes. Because the people wanted to sacrifice to them meant that they had failed in preaching Christ. It is not possible to accept Jesus as the Christ and still worship false gods. We cannot worship the preachers but God whom they preach.

Verse 15: "Turn from these vain things to a living God."

This is one of the two sermons by Paul to a group of people who did not know the God of the Jews. The other was at Mars' Hill in Athens, Greece. God is the creator and Lord of all things. Paul did not teach these men the Scriptures because they did not know what had been written about God. He called them to look at the world around them. Paul taught the people these things:

God is a living God.
He created all.
Other gods are useless.
The one God keeps all.
He provides for all our
needs.
God judges our deeds.

Verse 16: "Allowed all nations to
walk in their own ways."

These people had been allowed to live as they chose to live. They were not excused for their wrong doing. These people had not tried to see the one Great Eternal God in nature around them. (Romans 1:18-25) God had always known about the people of Lystra. He had created them and they were His (Acts 17:26-28). God does not expect the same love from those who have never heard of him as he does from those who know him. God gives life to all men and he had provided a Saviour for all men.

Verse 17: "He did not leave himself
without witness."

Paul then calls the people to know that God sends rain, fruitful crops, all material things. These things speak of the goodness of God and the wisdom of our creator.

God had not brought judgment upon them because he was merciful. They were ignorant but they were not without responsibility. He had given them knowledge of God and they must accept this responsibility for their action. Paul was trying to win them. He did not want to frighten them. He wanted them to face God about whom they had always known.

Verse 18: "They scarcely restrained
the people from offering
sacrifice."

They stopped the sacrifice. The people were still doubting that they were not gods. It is difficult to change the thinking of the people once they have become convinced about a matter. Those who believed in Christ, at Lystra, continued to be faithful. There were disciples to

CHAPTER 12

COURAGE IN TIME OF TROUBLE

BIBLE MATERIAL: Acts 27:1 to 28:16

Memory Verse: "So take heart, men, for I
have faith in God that it
will be exactly as I have
been told."

Acts 27:25

I. BACKGROUND STUDY

A great preacher of some years ago was a spiritual and intellectual giant, but had a tiny, deformed body. One man told of his thoughts when he heard this minister for the first time. "When he first stood, I looked at the little man and said, 'Well! Is that it?'" But he began to speak, and within five minutes I leaned forward in my seat whispering, "Yes, that's it!"

Tradition says that Paul was a small man, balding, bow-legged, and with a large nose. He was not handsome to look upon, but when he spoke men stopped to listen. Paul spoke of his Lord, and when he did so he took on something of the majesty of Jesus.

Today's lesson takes place on a tiny, primitive boat in the middle of a fierce storm at sea. The real difference between Paul and the other people on the boat was not Paul's strength or courage. It appears, as we read this Scripture, that he had lost courage. He, too, was wondering if they would live. The difference between Paul and the others was God's presence and purpose in Paul's life.

Christians are strongest when they are tried. This is why Christianity has existed for all these centuries, because with buffeting we are purified as Christians.

was not guilty and should not be in prison (Acts 23:29). Festus could find nothing wrong (Acts 25:25) and now Agrippa could find nothing.

Verse 32: This man might be set free.

As a Roman citizen, Paul was free to appeal to Caesar. Once the appeal was made, he had to be sent to Caesar. The appeal could not be revoked. The reason the leaders of this government would not free Paul was because they were afraid of the Jews who accused him. The Jews were powerful in the kingdom. By sending Paul to Rome, Festus did not anger the Jews; at the same time he saved an innocent man.

The appearance before Agrippa was not an official trial. It was to satisfy the king about a famous apostle to the Gentiles. Festus had no charge to lay before Caesar. This would be an offence to the ruler. Festus wanted Agrippa to help him. But Paul was innocent and Agrippa could not help.

III. THE MESSAGE

The main message in today's lesson is that wherever we are, we have the responsibility to our Saviour that we should be a witness. We are the representatives of Christ. We are the people who must carry his name. Paul did this when he was free. He travelled the world to take the message. When he was in prison, he preached before kings and rulers. When he sat waiting for trial in Rome, he wrote books and letters to the churches that he had established. Paul was never silent. He was a witness for the Saviour wherever he was.

We must learn that wherever we are we must give an honest witness. We must not fear the position of another man. Our Master is Christ and there is none higher than he. We must respect the laws of the land and the way of the government but we must not lose sight of the fact that Christ is our Master. We must preach him and his forgiveness regardless of the position of the man who stands before us.

stand around Paul after he was stoned. They went back into the city with him.

III. THE MESSAGE

Sometimes we find those who will believe in Christ in strange places. We would not expect to find a believer in this city where strange gods were worshipped. The crippled man had grown up in a home where Christ was unknown and where God was not worshipped. He was a cripple. He was helpless. When Paul told this man to stand, he stood up.

We do not help Christ by praising the preacher. Paul and Barnabas did not know the language of the people so they did not know what they were planning to do. When these men knew, they stopped them immediately. One of the best ways a preacher can deny the power of the gospel is to proclaim his own power and his own goodness. The preacher must point the people to Christ and not to himself.

Everywhere we go there are people who do not know Christ. This is a challenge to us. We must find the way to tell them. We must know that without Christ they are L O S T. THEY ARE CONDEMNED, AND WITHOUT HOPE! With Christ as our helper we can do anything that he asks us to do. He will give us the wisdom and the power to do his work.

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CHAPTER 3

DEFENDING THE GOSPEL OF GRACE

BIBLE MATERIAL: Acts 15

Memory Verse: *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."*

Romans 1:16

I. BACKGROUND STUDY

Paul and Barnabas had lived and worked among the Gentiles. They knew the Holy Spirit came into their lives and changed them. They knew God was saving the Gentiles as well as the Jews.

The people in the home church at Jerusalem had not seen these things happen. The Church was still tied very closely with the Jewish religion. They felt everyone must be circumcised in order to enter the church.

Paul and Barnabas, with their wider experience, argued with the church. They told of each town where they went. They would go to the synagogue and preach to the Jews first. The Jews would refuse the gospel. Then they would turn to the Gentiles to preach. The Gentiles would accept the gospel gladly. They gave witness of what God had done in the lives of these people without their being circumcised.

The church at Jerusalem said the disciples were more anxious for converts than for the standards of God. This was not true. The disciples refused to believe that God would work among the Jews only. God understands all people. The only necessity for him to work with them is for them to yield themselves to God.

Agrippa scorned what Paul was saying. He thought it impossible that he would be made a Christian. He used the word "Christian" to show that he was familiar with the group. It also indicated that others knew the term.

Agrippa refused to take Paul seriously. He was really making fun of Paul for giving a witness before him.

Verse 29: I wish you were like me.

There sat Agrippa with many attendants around him. His clothes were those of a king. Before him was Paul, chained, showing that he had been in prison for many months. He was accused by influential people who wanted him to die. Do you think the king would benefit by becoming like the prisoner?

Paul was not speaking about his character and greatness, but of the fact that he knew the Saviour. His boast was of Christ. He who knows Christ is blessed whatever his troubles are. He who knows Christ has eternal life. Agrippa would not be mentioned in history if he had not one day met a man named Paul.

Verse 30: "Then the King arose."

Because of the sins of Agrippa and Bernice, and the preaching of Paul, this king and queen were glad to terminate the relationship with Paul. Bernice had lived in incest with her brother. She was married to her uncle which was intolerable to the Jews.

Paul turned completely preacher and evangelist when he stood before them because he knew their sin. They could not stand his preaching and were determined to get away. They left trembling.

Verse 31: This man is not guilty.

This was the third time that Paul was announced innocent of the charges that were laid upon him. He still was not released. The Roman army commander who sent Paul to Caesarea said he

Verse 26: This was no secret thing.

When Paul spoke of Christ rising and becoming the light of the world, Festus thought he was insane. To prove he was serious about this matter, Paul turned to King Agrippa who knew the claims of the gospel. He knew the history of what had happened. The father of King Agrippa had beheaded the apostle James. So Agrippa knew about the gospel.

Paul knew that Agrippa would not witness to the truth of the gospel. He could witness to the fact that the gospel was preached and many believed. The resurrection story was not the imagination of a madman. It was a fact that was believed by thousands of people.

The crucifixion was not done secretly. Crowds of people witnessed it. The resurrection was a great truth with over five hundred witnesses. These things were not secret. The story was not a secret, it was preached all over the world and had believers everywhere.

Verse 27: "King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets."

Paul's question was very clever. Agrippa was the ruler of the Jews and must believe the prophets. He did not want to seem to agree with Paul. He did not want to say he did not believe the prophets because he could see that Paul was a learned man and would defeat him in any argument. Agrippa had to agree with Paul. If he did not, Paul would take the Scriptures of the Prophets and prove beyond any shadow that Jesus was the Promised Messiah. For in the prophets Paul found everything there was to know about Jesus.

Verse 28: Agrippa's fear of becoming a Christian.

Agrippa did not want to be trapped into saying either that he agreed with Paul or did not believe the prophets. He certainly did not want people to think he agreed with Paul.

The text today talks about the problems in the church. The church had always had troubles. These problems were:

- (1) If one is not circumcised, can he be a Christian?
- (2) If one could be a Christian without circumcision, should the Jews accept them and associate with them?

II. THE TEXT Acts 15:1-11

Verse 1: "Unless you are circumcised you cannot be saved."

The men in Jerusalem in the church felt that people could not be saved without doing what the law said, being circumcised. Ten years before this time this question had arisen. Peter had preached to Cornelius. The church had agreed to accept Cornelius. They felt this was an exceptional case.

The church at Antioch had baptized Gentiles and received them as members of the church. This church had sent missionaries to preach to the Gentiles. These missionaries, Paul and Barnabas, had taught these people that they did not need to be circumcised in order to be saved. To these Jewish Christians this was not acceptable. This made Christianity for all people and made it more than a Jewish religion. They could not accept this. This meant the Messiah did not come to the Jews alone. This meant the Messiah would save the whole world, not the Jews alone.

Verse 2: "No small dissension."

The disciples were able to understand more clearly than the Jews at Jerusalem. If the Gentiles could not be saved then no one could be saved without keeping the law. This matter was more than just a church law. If the Gentiles or Jews would not be saved without keeping the law, then Jesus died without cause. His death did no good at all. There would be no

salvation for the world. There would be only salvation for the Jews. Christianity would be only a part of Judaism.

All the people involved in these problems decided they would send representatives to Jerusalem. Paul wanted the whole church to be in agreement concerning the gospel of grace and the invitation to the whole world to come to Christ. Titus, a Gentile, went to the conference to show what God had done among the Gentiles (Galatians 2).

Verse 3: "They passed through both Pheonicia and Samaria."

Philip had preached to the Samaritans. Many had been saved and received the Holy Spirit. Peter and John had gone and shared in the revival there in Samaria. It was thought that these people would not be acceptable to the Jews. They were circumcised, but they did not agree with the Jews.

Verse 4: "They declared all that God had done with them."

The delegation was received by the apostles and elders. They did not approve of what Paul and Barnabas had been doing. There was a real division in the church.

Paul and Barnabas told the story of how God had worked among the Gentiles. They told how the Jews had rejected the gospel and how the Gentiles had accepted it. The Holy Spirit had worked and entered all who had received the message. It did not matter what race they were.

Verse 5: "Some believers who belonged to the part of the Pharisees."

These Pharisees believed in the resurrection of Jesus. They believed that he was the Messiah. They still believed in the law and felt they were superior to all other men. They wanted all other people to be like them.

their midst. Persecution came in the first century. Many of the leaders of Christianity died for their faith. Today the world of Communism is no less opposed to Christ and his cause than were the leaders of the first century.

The important thing is not that Paul was freed from death. The time came when he was not, and they killed him. The real point is that although the preacher may "Suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds" (2 Timothy 2:9), King James Version) his truth is marching on to victory in the hearts of men.

II. THE TEXT Acts 25:24-32

Verse 24: Festus declared that Paul was crazy.

In the day of Paul, a mad man was looked upon as being possessed by some supernatural power and was looked upon with great fear and respect. In this Scripture, Festus declared that Paul had lost his reason. The friends of Jesus thought this about him. "He is beside himself." (Mark 3:21). One who is possessed by the Spirit of God may seem insane to those who do not know God.

Verse 25: The Greatest truth. Paul spoke the truth in three ways:

- (1) He spoke the truth about the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He spoke honestly about the death and resurrection.
- (2) These were the words of an honest man. He had spoken them sincerely about the death and resurrection of Jesus.
- (3) He was really concerned about the truth of life and death. He was concerned about God and man.

CHAPTER 11

AMBASSADOR IN CHAINS

BIBLE MATERIAL: Acts 25:13 to 26:32

Memory Verse: *"And Paul said: 'Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am except for these chains.'"*

Acts 26:29

I. BACKGROUND STUDY

If the gospel of Christ is to be taken to the whole world, three questions must be answered:

1. How can Christian leaders and churches be led to understand their whole world as a mission field to undertake to do the work of Christ? The first step is to get the complete picture since that time we have taken this task.
2. How do the different kinds of people in the world view the gospel? Some are ready to accept other beliefs already held and they will resist the Christian message. Others have little or no preconception for understanding the story of Jesus. Many seek longingly for God. Some people completely refuse Him.
3. What will happen when powerful forces determine to destroy Christianity from the world? The time was bound to come when the political leaders would feel they could not rule as they wanted with Christians in their midst. Religious leaders would fear their religion would be destroyed by Christianity in

Verse 6: "The apostles and elders were gathered together."

The leaders in the church were respected and followed in their decision. When the time came, the whole church joined in the final decision (Acts 15:22).

Verse 7: "Peter rose up."

Peter told of his experience with Cornelius again. He said that salvation of the Gentiles was not a new thing. Peter told that it was God who had done it. He left no doubt at this point. God had led in all things that he did.

Verse 8: "Giving them the Holy Spirit."

Peter told how the Holy Spirit had changed the people who believed. They continued the rest of their lives as believers. The Jews had seen these changes in these Gentiles for many years.

Verse 9: "Made distinction between us."

The Pharisees felt they were better than others because of their good lives. They wanted to be separated from others. Peter was saying that God did not see the difference. The hearts of both Jew and Gentile had been made clean, and only by faith could this be done.

Verse 10: "A yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear."

No one but the hypocritical Pharisees claimed to keep all the law. They found no assurance of spirit in keeping these laws. To cause the Gentiles to have to do these things was to tempt God. This would insult God in saying that none were to be saved.

Verse 11: "We shall be saved just as they will."

The way the Gentiles were saved was clear. The Jews would be saved only in this way. There was none other. All were to be saved by the grace of God. Salvation is given to all who surrender to Jesus Christ as Redeemer and Lord.

III. THE MESSAGE

Salvation is God's work because of what Christ has done. Man cannot work and save himself. This is God's work. People who discipline themselves and live good lives cannot believe that God does not count this toward their salvation.

A second lesson is the importance of harmony and love in the church. Paul and Barnabas did not have to go to Jerusalem to find out if God would save the Gentiles. They already knew this. It was important to them that the church be united in the mission of saving the world. It was important that all Christians be equal everywhere and not one better than the other.

The Christian's fellowship is our shared life in Christ. We have been born again into the family of God. He is our Father. Christ is our Elder Brother: and we are brothers and sisters to each other.

The best defence of the gospel is simply the straightforward accounting of what God is doing. If he is calling people to preach, converting sinners, sending the Holy Spirit, giving growth to his work, then there is no defence necessary.

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witnesses. The witnesses were not there because their case was false.

Verse 20: Let the lawyers say that they found fault.

Paul's accusers had come a long way but they were not witnesses. Paul pointed out that these people were not qualified. He wanted them to tell what they knew. Absent people cannot be questioned.

Verse 21: I am called to trial because of the resurrection of the dead.

Paul said, "If I did anything in question, it was to stand for the resurrection of the dead."

III. THE MESSAGE

The message of this lesson is to teach us what the conscience of a Christian is:

1. The conscience of a Christian is to be obedient to the will of God, as he understands it.
2. The Christian must seek to know the will of God in his life.
3. The Christian's conscience may require him to disagree with others.
4. A Christian's conscience not only calls him to stop doing evil but that he is to do good.

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there comes the judgment. Paul spoke of having a clear conscience. The word conscience means "A knowing within oneself." We believe the Holy Spirit is the guide in the Christian conscience. Because of this there must not be offence to God or to men.

Paul pointed out, because he must have a clear conscience, that he could not do the things they were accusing him of doing.

Verse 17: The time Paul had been away, and the reason for his return.

Paul had been away for four or five years. He had returned for the purpose of worship. Because he had been gone so long he could not have been one who continuously disturbed in Jerusalem.

The purpose for his return was to bring together the Jews and the Gentile believers. The Jews had absolutely refused to accept these Gentile people. Paul brought money from the Gentile churches to help the Jews. He felt this might really bring these people together.

Verse 18: Paul's reasons why he was not guilty of the charges against him.

The Jews who caught Paul in the Temple were perhaps from Ephesus. The Gentile who was with him in the city but not in the Temple was Trophimus.

The Jews from Ephesus, where Paul had done work with the Gentiles, would remember him. They may have already stirred up the people against him.

He was accused of profaning the Temple. The Jews, if they associated with the Gentiles, must do certain things to make themselves pure. Paul had been careful to do this. They accused him of causing a disturbance. It was not Paul, but the ones who accused him who caused the trouble.

Verse 19: Paul's accusers should have been there.

Paul was pointing out the weakness of his opponent. Every one was at the trial except the

CHAPTER 4

THE GOSPEL GOES TO EUROPE

BIBLE MATERIAL: Acts 15:36 to 16:12

Memory Verse: *"And when he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them."*

Acts 16:10

I. BACKGROUND STUDY

We have watched, in the book of Acts, as God has led the Christians from one single nation to the people of the world. We have seen that Jesus was to meet the needs of a 11 people everywhere. We know now, we must accept the responsibility of witnessing to every nation, race and tribe. We must learn to accept them even as God accepts them.

Each lesson told the specific step toward a world wide witness. The church at Antioch sent missionaries. At Antioch of Pisidia, they turned from the Jews to the Gentiles. At Lystra, they preached to the people in the market place and in the streets. The council at Jerusalem accepted the Christians without circumcision. The Jews were slowly rejected because they would not accept the Gentiles.

Each step forward was taken under the leadership of the Holy Spirit of God. It was a fight all of the time against those who wanted to keep the church under the direction of the Jews.

II. THE TEXT Acts 15:36-41 and 16:6-12

Acts 15:36: "Let us return and visit the brethren."

When Paul and Barnabas left the new churches, they ordained elders in each group. They prayed and fasted with them. They gave them to the Lord. These people had all believed in Jesus (Acts 14:23). The leaders of these churches did not see other leaders in other churches. God gave each church growth. Paul found believers wherever he preached.

Paul visited the churches at later times. Messengers came and reported to Paul about the churches. Because of this, he was able to help the churches. Because Paul was concerned about these young churches, he wanted to return and help them.

Verse 37: "To take with them John called Mark."

John Mark was the nephew of Barnabas. He was the son of Barnabas' sister (Colossians 4:10). Barnabas wanted to take him. Barnabas had also encouraged Paul. Barnabas had sponsored Paul at the Jerusalem church (Acts 9:27). He had called Paul to Antioch (Acts 11:25-26). He wanted now to give John Mark a second chance.

Verse 38: "But Paul thought best not to take with them one who had withdrawn."

Paul did not want John Mark to come. John had turned back on the first missionary journey. We do not know the real reason. John was from Jerusalem. It is thought that because Paul and Barnabas wanted to go to the Gentiles, John Mark did not want to be a part of this. We know that Barnabas was a bit prejudiced and wanted to be more Jewish (Galatians 2:13). There was some really serious reason for Paul not wanting to take John Mark. He certainly would not have wanted a helper who did not want to include the Gentiles.

Verse 39: "They separated from each other."

The argument was so sharp and angry that they departed from each other. Each had strong feelings and spoke these feelings. The main

When Paul defended himself against these charges, he simply denied that they were true. Paul said he had not taught in the Temple. He had not gathered the crowd.

Paul had agreed with the Christians in Jerusalem that he would preach to the Gentiles and that they would preach to the Jews. Paul agreed and proclaimed that he was a Christian.

Verse 13: Paul challenged his opponent. Paul said they could not prove the three charges they had brought against him. They could not bring proof. They brought only words. They were lying. They had no witnesses present at all.

Verse 14: Paul admitted he followed the Christian Way.

Paul said he followed the "Christian Way." He further said that this way was not untrue to the Jewish belief. He worshipped the same God according to the Scriptures. He declared he believed all things written in the law.

Paul agreed that he was a leader of the Christians. He declared that this was not an illegal religion. He preached that the "Christian Way" was a fulfillment of the Scriptures.

Verse 15: Resurrection of the dead.

Paul claimed to be on trial because he believed in the resurrection of the dead. He claimed that in this hope lay the hope of Israel.

Paul was not dealing with the general belief of the resurrection. He was concerned with the resurrection of Jesus. He had seen Jesus after his death. He had experienced his presence. The Jews had always argued about the resurrection. There was no longer any need for this. Jesus was alive and this was the truth Paul wanted to share.

Verse 16: Paul had no self-guilt.

Because we believe the good and the bad will be resurrected, the Christians should avoid giving offence to God or man. We know that after death

that he believes. Paul's greatest testimony was given in prison. He stood in court to be a witness. He waited for the decision of the court, and he witnessed. When he stood to die, he was a witness.

II. THE TEXT Acts 24:10-21

Verse 10: A greeting to Felix.

Felix had been a slave to a man in a high position in the Roman government. He had been freed. Somehow he had been appointed governor over this part of Judea. He had been in the position for a number of years. He had destroyed the robbers and thieves of the country. He loved to be cruel. He was lustful. He was a king but his mind was still that of a slave.

Paul began by complimenting his king. He did not lie in this compliment. He only spoke the facts. Paul stated that he was glad to give his evidence before a man qualified by experience to judge.

Paul gave the greatest defence of his life here. His accuser was the greatest lawyer in Judea. Paul was careful and completely destroyed the man's case.

Verse 11: The time was too short.

Paul's accusers had said he had stirred up a movement against the Roman government. Paul told Felix he had only been in Jerusalem twelve days. The time was too short for him to do what the lawyer accused him of doing. Felix knew all the Jewish customs and holidays. He could trace what Paul had done.

Verse 12: The charges against Paul.

- (1) That he was causing people to riot.
- (2) That he was the leader of a sect of disturbers.
- (3) That he had profaned the temple.

thing was that instead of one missionary party, there were two. Barnabas took John Mark and went to his home on the island of Cyprus. We do not know anything further about him.

Verse 40: "Paul chose Silas."

Silas had been one of the prophets at the church at Jerusalem. This church was all Jewish. When the problems of circumcision came, Silas was chosen to carry the letter of instruction and decision to the church at Antioch. This letter told the Gentiles that they were accepted. Silas preached at Antioch (verse 32). Silas was needed and wanted in the church at Antioch. He did not return to Jerusalem. He remained to help Paul and Barnabas. He was a Roman Citizen. He spoke Greek. He had a kind attitude toward the Gentiles. This is probably the reason that Paul chose him as a partner.

Acts 15:41 and

Acts 16:6-8:

The travel and work at the beginning of the second missionary journey.

Notice on your map the location of the churches in Syria and Cilicia. These churches were near Tarsus, Paul's home. They were probably begun by Paul before Barnabas went to him to take him to Antioch. Paul did not go into churches where others had started them (Romans 15:20).

At Lystra Timothy joined them. He was half Jew and half Greek but uncircumcised. Paul circumcised him in order that he could work with the Jews as well as the Gentiles without dispute.

Paul passed through all of Galatia (see your map). The Holy Spirit forbade him to preach there. He did preach there on the third journey.

Look at your map and find Bithynia. This country is far to the north. Paul and Silas planned to go in this direction, but they could not. It is at this point that Luke, the physician, joined them. It is thought by

many that Paul was very ill. Paul, Silas, Luke and Timothy went to Troas. We see that Paul was just across the bay from Europe. He was a long way from home. God was still leading him on.

Verse 9: "A vision appeared to Paul."
We do not know if Paul was awake or asleep when he had the vision. We know that it was the cry of a lost man for Paul to come and help. No one had ever preached in this place before.

Verses 10-11: "God had called us."
They went immediately to Macedonia to answer the call of the Lord. Luke was there with Paul. This call had come to Paul but it included a 11 who were with him.

Verse 12: "From there to Philippi."
Philippi was a gold mining town that had been made a Roman colony. There were people of every kind in the town. It was not an important town. Here a church was formed that became greatly loved by Paul.

III. THE MESSAGE

1. God sometimes uses human weakness and failure to make the gospel go out to others.

John Mark deserted Paul and Barnabas on the first journey. In the Bible it is nowhere suggested that this was a good thing to do. This caused a great disagreement between Paul and Barnabas on the second journey. The anger was so sharp. This could not be called the leading of the Lord. The Spirit of God cannot lead in the anger of men. Luke says that they separated with anger.

However, God used this controversy for good. Two missionary groups were formed instead of one. This gave John Mark a second chance and proved him to be a good missionary. Silas was chosen to be a missionary instrument of God.

CHAPTER 10

THE CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE

BIBLE MATERIAL: Acts 23:12 to 25:12

Memory Verse: *"So I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward God and toward man."*

Acts 24:16

I. BACKGROUND STUDY

It is daring for a young soldier to swear to defend his country. He becomes a hero when he dies on the battlefield.

It is noble for a young man to swear he will love his bride in sickness and in health. It is far greater when he remains true and faithful to her when she is a helpless invalid.

It is a brave thing to risk persecution for Christ's sake. It is another thing to endure persecution for him.

In spite of the warnings from his friends, Paul had been determined to go to Jerusalem. It impresses us when we read:

"I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

We must outwardly admire Paul when the persecution came. He stayed for months in a Roman prison. He faced the mob who wanted to kill him. He spoke before the Roman governor. Each time, he witnessed for Christ. He wrote letters to the Christians. He encouraged the young churches.

The more the Christians are willing to sacrifice and suffer for Christ the more others believe their testimony. When a person dies for his faith in Christ, it is not necessary for him to swear

3. The courage of Paul is the greatest thing of this lesson. He did not want to be killed. On other occasions he had run away from persecution in order to work in more receptive fields. Now he felt the cause of Christ required a trip to Jerusalem. The Jews and Gentiles were drifting apart and tearing the church apart. Paul wanted to pull these people together again.

"I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

Ours is a faith that lifts up the cross where a man died. This man rose again. Christian faith has been set apart by the blood of those who died in every age. We as Christians have found something dearer than life itself. We are willing to die for Jesus if it is necessary. Jesus said,

"Whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." (Matthew 16:25).

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2. In many ways God guides the lives of those who are ready to follow him.

On the road to Damascus, God directed Paul and he became the great missionary. In the church at Antioch, the Holy Spirit spoke to them to send out men to tell the world of the gospel of Christ.

In our lives, if we will listen to God, he will guide us in order that we may be used of him.

3. People without Christ constantly appeal to those who can hear.

The man from Macedonia called to Paul because he was willing to hear. Men who are lost are always crying to the heart of God. God has no one else to tell them except you and me. Are you willing to hear the cry of need from the lost man?

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CHAPTER 5

RESPONSES TO THE GOSPEL

BIBLE MATERIAL: Acts 16:11-40

Memory Verse: *"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."*
Acts 16:31

I. BACKGROUND STUDY

The lesson today tells what the gospel does to those who hear and believe it. The first one is Lydia, a very wealthy business woman who was seeking God. She was at prayer when she found Christ.

The second person was a demon possessed girl who was aggravating the disciples. Her healing caused Paul and Silas to be persecuted.

The third person was the jailer. He was keeping Paul and Silas in jail when the hand of God shook him and he believed on Jesus.

In each of these cases the Lord prepared the way for the gospel. The Lord opened the heart of Lydia while she was listening to the gospel. Only God can do this. He healed the afflicted girl who was repeating the truth of the gospel. He sent the earthquake that convicted the jailer of the power of the Lord.

II. THE TEXT Acts 16:11-40

1. The Conversion of Lydia (verses 11-15):

When Paul and the missionary party arrived at Philippi, they found there was no synagogue where they could worship. They asked many people. They found there were some women who prayed by the river (verse 13). Paul and the party went to this place of prayer. They taught

to try to settle the trouble between the Jews and the Gentiles there. For this cause he was willing to die.

We must obey God whatever the cost. This is the kind of determination that Paul had.

Verse 14: "The will of the Lord to be done."

Because Paul was sure of what God had said to him, his friends accepted his decision. Each one must seek guidance for himself. He must be left free to follow the leadership of the Lord.

It is not always easy for us to know the will of the Lord. Even Jesus in Gethsemane prayed, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me" (Matthew 26:39). But he went on to add, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." This must be our prayer when we seek to know His will for our lives.

III. THE MESSAGE

There are three great lessons in this study for today:

1. Opposition and persecution may be expected by those who serve Christ. Many believe that if we are faithful Christians the Lord will take care of us and no trouble will come to us. Jesus never promised us this. He promised us that he would give us courage and strength to do whatever he has called us to do.
2. Christian friends play an important part in testing times. Paul seemed to want to be with friends. He looked for them and spent as much time as possible with them. Fellowship with true Christians in life's crisis is a real comfort and strength.

about a famine (11:28). Agabus and Paul were old friends. He was a missionary, he had preached at Antioch among the Gentiles. He wanted to warn Paul of the danger that was awaiting him in Jerusalem. God does not choose people who are ignorant to be his prophets. God's prophets always know what is going on around them in the world. They can read the signs of the times from the hand of God.

Verse 11: "So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this girdle."

Often the Old Testament prophets acted out a warning to the people. This is what Agabus did to warn Paul. The prediction of Agabus was fulfilled absolutely. The Jews did deliver Paul into the hands of the Gentiles. They really wanted to kill him.

Verse 12: "We begged him not to go." Those who travelled with Paul and those who were members of the church at Caesarea begged Paul not to go to Jerusalem. Luke says "We" which indicates that he too, was one who begged Paul not to go. They wanted Paul. They wanted to decide for him. Paul wanted to decide for himself. He wanted to follow God in whatever God had for him to do.

A Christian should always be willing to listen to points of view of other people. He must weigh their words. He must always decide to follow the voice of God. There are times when a missionary must go to another land when all others have told him that he must not go. There are times when a pastor must preach the truth when all the people disagree with what he preaches. We must choose to follow God not the opinion of man.

Verse 13: "For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die."

Paul was not eager to suffer and die for Christ. He did not shrink or run away from death. He was determined to go to Jerusalem because he believed this was where God was calling him. Paul was not going to Jerusalem to die. He was going

about Jesus. They preached the gospel. There were only women present.

There was a woman whose name was Lydia. She heard the preaching. The Lord opened her heart and she believed (verse 14). Lydia was a Greek name. Her home was in Thyatira. The people there were famous for making purple dye.

There was a Jewish colony and a synagogue at Thyatira. Lydia had probably been won to the Jewish faith there. She worshipped God (verse 14). In Philippi Lydia was converted and baptized, and all of those in her house. After she was baptized, she begged the party to stay at her house. At first they refused. Then she said, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." (Acts 16:15).

2. The conversion of the demon-possessed girl (verse 16-24):

The spirit was called the "Spirit of the python." The Greeks thought the python snake gave a spirit that could speak of the future. This is the only place where "Python" is used in the New Testament. In the Old Testament "Python" is used for "Evil spirit."

This girl cried "These men are servants of the Most High God." Pagans often called Jehovah "The Most High God." Evil spirits recognized Jesus and called him "The Son of the Most High God." Paul commanded the evil spirit to come out of the girl. Notice he called the spirit out in the name of Jesus (verse 18). This was the way Jesus healed people.

The girl was a slave. She brought much money to her owners because she could tell fortunes. When she was cured, her power was gone. Her masters were angry. They took Paul and Silas to court (verse 19). They accused Paul and Silas falsely (verses 20-21). The accusers forgot two things:

1. The good done by Paul in healing the girl.

2. The money they had lost because she was healed.

Paul and Silas were beaten as part of their punishment. They were put into prison. Their feet were locked in the stocks (verses 22-24).

3. The conversion of the jailer (verses 25-40):

The jail was dark. Paul and Silas were suffering from bleeding backs. They had been whipped. They were witnesses for Jesus and they must witness even in jail. At midnight they began to sing and pray. Paul and Silas knew God would hear. They brought their troubles to him in prayer (verse 25).

Out of the darkness God heard their prayer. He put forth his finger. The earth began to shake. The doors fell off their hinges. The chains were loosed. The feet were out of the stocks. God heard. The prisoners were free. The preachers were not free to run. They must stay and witness (verse 26).

The jailer saw the doors were open. He knew if one prisoner escaped he would have to take that prisoner's place. There may have been people in jail who were to die for their crimes. If a prisoner escaped the jailer was punished. The jailer started to kill himself (verse 27). Paul cried to him "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here (verse 28). The jailer fell before Paul and asked, "What must I do to be saved?" (verse 29). Paul told the man to believe in Jesus and when he had done this he was saved (verse 31).

The jailer helped Paul. He led Paul and Silas up to his house and treated their wounds, gave them food, then the jailer and his family were baptized (Verses 33-34).

II. THE TEXT Acts 21:7-14

Verse 7: "And we greeted the brethren and stayed with them for one day."

When Paul visited a place, he always sought the Christians and greeted them. He would stay some time with them. He felt this strengthened him and the church. This visit encouraged the church. It told of the unity of the church in this early day. Today we sometimes have people coming from other places who refuse to find the church and identify with it. They think it unnecessary.

Verse 8: "And we entered the house of Philip the evangelist."

Philip was one of the seven chosen by the church at Jerusalem. He was one of the deacons. He preached in Samaria. He was led by the Holy Spirit to preach to the man from Ethiopia (Acts 8:26-39). Philip went to Caesarea (Acts 8:40). He continued to live there. He was still a preacher of the gospel. These two, Paul and Philip, were great friends.

Verse 9: "And he had four unmarried daughters, who prophesied."

None of the four daughters of Philip had married. Sometimes this happens to families. Luke does not say that this was a blessing. They remained in their father's house. They were dedicated Christians.

Prophets and prophetesses were not elected by the church. They were recognized as having been chosen of God to speak his revelation to the church. Prophetesses are mentioned in the Old Testament:

Miriam - (Exodus 15:20).
Deborah - (Judges 4:4).
Anna is mentioned in the New Testament (Luke 2:36).

Verse 10: "A prophet named Agabus came down from Judea."

This was probably the same man who had gone from Jerusalem to Antioch. He prophesied there

CHAPTER 9

READY EVEN TO DIE

BIBLE MATERIAL: Acts 21:1 to 23:11

Memory Verse: *"For I am ready not only to be imprisoned but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."*

Acts 21:13

I. BACKGROUND STUDY

In the past months we have studied how the church has become conscious of the rest of the world. We have seen how God has provided salvation for all men. Men and churches have been called by God to go into the world and tell men and women about the Lord Jesus Christ. Everyone must share in the task of bringing the world to Christ.

We have also learned how different people accepted or rejected the gospel. We may expect all people to act differently toward the gospel. We know that Christians have different talents and do work differently. God can use all of us if we will let him have his way in our lives.

Today we are starting a group of lessons about the way the gospel was opposed. We will learn how men were imprisoned and killed for the name of Jesus. At the same time, we will see how the Christian faith spread even when men were being killed for this cause. We see Paul in chains and a captive of his enemies. Many of these enemies he wins to Christ. We wins them because he is free to preach the gospel of Christ. He can convert his enemies because he is unafraid to preach and teach in the name of Jesus. Today we will look at the courage with which Paul faces death.

III. THE MESSAGE

Let us notice something about these people: Lydia and the jailer were important people. Lydia was a merchant. She was seeking the Lord. The jailer was a Roman officer. He was brought face to face with God in the earthquake.

Both of them believed in Christ. Both of them were baptized immediately. Both of them won their families to Jesus. Both of them invited the preachers to their homes for food and a place to stay. They both wanted to give of what they had. Zacchaeus wanted to give of what he had (Luke 19:8). The pentecost converts wanted to share (Acts 2:45). The church at Antioch wanted to give (Acts 11:29). In Philippi the natural thing for them to do was to take care of these preachers of God.

There were two groups here who did not want to hear the gospel.

- (1) The owners of the slave girl did not want to hear. They were more concerned about making money than they were for the girl's health. They wanted the apostles punished. They would not listen to the Lord.
- (2) The magistrates were willing to hear the mob because they were afraid of Rome. They were willing to follow the mob because this is what the crowd wanted more than what was right. Right must be done because it is right not because it pleases someone of high authority.

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CHAPTER 6

THE TRUE AND LIVING GOD

BIBLE MATERIAL: Acts 17

Memory Verse: *"The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by man."*
Acts 17:24

I. BACKGROUND STUDY

In the first four lessons of this quarter we were told how the church began to see the world as it's mission field. At first, the church of Antioch was directed to send Paul and Barnabas out as missionaries. They were directed by the Holy Spirit to turn to the Gentiles.

In Jerusalem, the church agreed to accept the Gentiles without circumcision.

The Holy Spirit led Paul and Silas from Asia into Europe to establish new churches.

It had become clear that God had given salvation for all men. Churches are to be at the work of winning men to Christ everywhere.

The next four lessons of this quarter are about different groups of people. These lessons are to show how these people accepted the gospel. When we have studied these lessons, we will understand that no two people accept the gospel in the same way.

At Philippi the missionaries found Lydia seeking the way of salvation. They only had to preach to her. However when they tried to win the slave girl, they found they were strongly opposed.

The judges beat the Christian disciples. When they found that the disciples were Roman citizens,

(2) The Greek gentleman was always quiet and reasoning. They were not.

(3) Their position was strong, when they were acting weak.

The clerk told them Paul and his party had not robbed the people nor blasphemed the goddess. He told them the law of Ephesus was open and they could bring charges against Paul if they wanted. The clerk reminded them that this matter could be settled in an assembly of the council of the city. This man was skilled in keeping the peace and courageous in speaking to these people.

III. THE MESSAGE

The great message in this lesson is that we must seek the common good for all the people rather than the private gain. We must be careful not to be a part of business that will hurt the Kingdom of God. Let us expect to be enemies of those whose business will be hurt by the furtherance of the gospel. If we are true to Christ, we are not afraid of enemies. We have always had them (Matthew 5:11-12).

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The silversmiths at Ephesus were concerned because people were stopping their worship at the temple of Artemis. If people no longer worshipped Artemis it would destroy the city. All of the wealth of Ephesus was built around the goddess Artemis.

Verse 28: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians."

Demetrius called the silversmiths together. He spoke to them about their money, their town, and their religion, until they wanted to act. The act they did was to riot. All the people of the city went through the streets crying, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians." People like to join a crowd. They will join in everything from a riot to beating others. At Ephesus, because Paul preached, they were losing money. These people were not religious. They were not interested in the town for more than the money they got from their trade. They really wanted the blood of Paul and his party.

Verse 35: "A r t e m i s."

The town clerk tried to quiet the mob because any riot in his city would mean the loss of the freedoms for that city under Roman rule. He quieted the people by assuring them that Artemis was worshipped everywhere and no one would put her out. He assured them she had fallen from heaven.

The image Artemis was spoken of as a "Many breasted woman." We are told she had fallen from the sky. In other places meteorites have been found which were worshipped. This one resembled a many breasted female and was worshipped as a goddess.

Verses 36-39:

The town clerk told the people they must be quiet. He told them strong people did not make a noise like this, only the weak. These people were unreasonable because:

- (1) They ran the risk of stern action from Rome.

they apologized in order to stay out of trouble. The jailer wanted to kill himself but when he found Christ he was ready to defy the court and help the prisoners.

Now we find Paul in Athens. He had been trained in Jerusalem, the religious capital of the world. In our lesson today we find him in Athens, the cultural and educational capital of the world. At Philippi, he had found people who accepted the message of Christ. He had found bitter enemies, but no one ignored him. Now he would speak to the philosophers. Would they accept him? Would they laugh at him? What would they do?

II. THE TEXT Acts 17:22-31

Verse 22: "Men of Athens."

The term 'Mars Hill' may have referred to a group of people whose responsibility was to bring famous speakers to Athens. It may not have been a place as thought by many. When Paul spoke of the people being very religious, he may have also thought of them as superstitious as well. Paul would have been thinking of both religious and superstitious. He would not have started to win people to Christ by insulting them. The people of Athens were very religious. They worshipped many gods.

Verse 23: "I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To an unknown god.'"

There was once a great sickness (plague) in Athens. The people of the town released a great herd of sheep. Wherever one of these sheep stopped, he was sacrificed to the god whose altar was nearest. If no altar was near then the sheep was sacrificed to the "Unknown god."

There were many altars in Athens. These altars were to every god known to man. Almost every corner was covered by an altar. As Paul spoke of the altar of the unknown god and at the same time identified his God with this god he was

able to get the people to listen. They confessed ignorance of this God by calling him "The Unknown God." Paul wanted to tell them who this God was.

From this point in this lesson, it is necessary to help you to understand some of the Greek religions. You must understand a bit of these false religions of the Greeks in order to understand what Paul was saying.

Verse 24: "The God who made the world and everything in it."

Paul is now telling them of the true God. He is quoting Isaiah 42:5. A group of Greeks called Stoics agreed with this doctrine. Paul knew this. God's creation of the world is a basic doctrine of the Jews. Paul knew all of Greek religion very well. For this reason he was able to make them understand what he said.

Verse 25: "He himself gives to all men." God does not depend on men to furnish him a place to live. He does not depend upon them to give him the sacrifices to eat. He says, "If I were hungry, I would not tell you: for the world is mine, and all that is in it is mine." (Psalm 50:12). One of the Greek wise men had said, "God, if he really is God, has need of nothing." Paul could take the Bible and show the Greeks that he was talking about the true God.

It is interesting to see how Paul spoke to his audience to bring the message of God. To the Jews, he always brought Christ out of their history, which they knew very well. To the philosophers at Athens he spoke of the nature of God and the world. He looked at their altars to false gods and quoted the writings of their own writers in order to help them understand about the true God. He talked to the people in the words that they understood.

Verse 26: "And he made from one every nation of men."

The Greek people who were Stoics (a certain Greek philosophy) taught that all men were brothers. Most people in Athens thought the Greeks were a special race of people. The Greeks

II. THE TEXT Acts 19:23-28, 35-39

Verse 23: "No little stir concerning the Way."

Luke refers to the Christian life as "The way" Paul went to Damascus to bind those of this way (Acts 9:2). People of the synagogue in Ephesus "Spoke evil of the Way" (Acts 19:9). When they went to the temple and took Paul, he confessed "I persecuted this Way to the death" (Acts 22:4).

This tells us that Christians were known by the way they lived. Usually the reason for people being against Christianity is the behaviour of the Christian. The action of the Christian condemns the lost man. The way we worship does not cause people of the world to oppose us. It is the way we live that makes them hate us.

Verses 24-25: The silversmiths and their money.

Ephesus was a religious capital of the world at that time. This was the place of the great temple for the worship of Artemis. Artemis was the great false god. She was worshipped all over Asia at that time.

There was great profit for all because of the pilgrims who came to the temple at Ephesus. The silversmiths made small statues, like the big one, for people to take to their homes. They made a lot of money in this way.

Verses 26-27: Paul's preaching and its results.

The silversmiths got a lot of money from the making of trinkets for the worship of Artemis. Paul's preaching had caused people to stop buying the silver images. The craftsmen were afraid of Christianity because of what it was doing to the lives of the worshippers of Artemis.

It would be wonderful if we could close the pubs, the houses of prostitution, and the gambling places by the preaching of the word of God. As Christians, we should take a real stand concerning sin.

CHAPTER 8

THE GOSPEL VERSUS MONEY

BIBLE MATERIAL: Acts 19:21 to 20:38

Memory Verse: *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."*

Matthew 6:24

I. BACKGROUND STUDY

We are still considering people's response to the gospel in to-day's lesson. We have studied about people who gladly accepted Christ. There were those people who did not care for Christianity at all. There were people who definitely opposed the gospel. The first people who opposed the gospel were religious people. These were leaders of the Jewish faith. They were afraid the new people would corrupt their faith. Later, some of the people were against the gospel because of financial loss. An example of this was the slave girl in Philippi who was cured and lost her power to earn money for her masters. Some of the Gentiles hated the Jews and would not accept what the Jewish missionaries said. The people in Philippi charged, "These men are Jews and they are disturbing our city." (Acts 16:20). The feeling against the Jews in Ephesus probably contributed to the anger of the mob.

Prejudices against people other than one's own race or tribe has been in the world for a long time. These prejudices cause people to act unfairly, unkindly, and sometimes cruelly.

The opposition at Ephesus, which we are studying this week, grew out of prejudice and the desire to gain money. They were also trying to save their pagan religion. They worshipped Artemis and there was a great temple there at Ephesus.

generally thought of people as Greeks and barbarians. They thought if one was not a Greek he was of no use.

Paul opposed this thought among the Jews and the Greeks. Paul says that all men are made from one man. All men are in one family. God gave a place for every man to live because that one is a part of his family and he makes no difference between his children.

Verse 27: "That they should seek God."

God gave men a place to live so that they could find God in that place. He is everywhere. The altar of the Greeks for the Unknown God was a witness that they were seeking. It also said that they had not found him.

Verse 28: "For we are indeed his offspring."

Paul was quoting one of the Greek poets here. All of the Greeks would have known this poetry written by one of their own famous men. "Thou livest and abidest forever; for in thee we live and move and have our being." These are lines from one of the Greeks' own poets. Paul was agreeing with this wise man. He was trying to lead them to see more of what the man was trying to teach. These two things are true: that God is always near, for in him we live and move and have our being; and he is the source of our life, so we are his offspring.

Verse 29: "We ought not to think that the Deity is like gold, or silver, or stone."

God is the creator of all things. God is not dependent on any of these things that he has created. Jesus said, "God is spirit and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). God cannot be limited to a certain thing. Worship offered to an idol is not acceptable to God.

Verse 30: "The times of ignorance God overlooked."

To this time Paul had spoken the language of the philosophers. He had reasoned to them

about God. Now he comes to speak about judgment and guilt. They were not without guilt before, but God had not held them responsible for things they did not know. When the gospel was preached to them they were fully responsible for the way they responded to it. Paul was calling on them to repent.

Verse 31: "He has fixed a day on which he will judge the world."

Here is the reason for Paul's preaching with urgency. The judgment was close. There are four things about the judgment:

1. There is an appointed day for it to happen.
2. God will judge everybody in the world.
3. He will judge them fairly according to his righteousness.
4. He will judge them in comparison to Christ Jesus because he is the measure of what God wants man to be. Jesus is the Saviour, and we shall be judged by our acceptance or rejection of him.

Paul called for the Greeks to decide whether they would take Christ, or reject him.

III. THE MESSAGE

There are four important things to learn from this lesson.

1. The first is the greatness of our God. He is not far away. He is very near. He is concerned for each of us because he has given us a place to live. He provides us with food and clothes and houses. Most of all he gives us his love.

of John the Baptist. He knew it was necessary to repent and live right. He had never received the Holy Spirit. He was a great speaker and pleased the people. He lacked power to convict them of their sinfulness.

Verse 26: "Expounded to him the way of God more accurately."

Priscilla and Aquilla showed the way to help the uninstructed one. Instead of embarrassing and making an enemy of Apollos, they took him and gave him the proper instructions.

Verse 27: "He greatly helped those who through grace had believed."

The churches were widely separated. They had little fellowship together. The Christians would join the church in a new area when they went from one place to another. They wrote letters and encouraged one another. The church at Ephesus gave a good recommendation to Apollos when he went to other churches.

Verse 28: "Showing by the scriptures that the Christ was Jesus."

Apollos convinced many of the Jews that Jesus was the Christ that was to come. He was an excellent speaker. He knew the Scriptures well. He was able to show the Christ to all who would listen to him.

III. THE MESSAGE

Two lessons are quite clear in this week's lesson.

- (1) There is a place in God's service for many kinds of workers.
- (2) The second lesson is that Christian workers must be able to work together if their service is to be effective.

Verse 21: Paul must return for the Passover.

The seas were closed to travel until March 10. The Passover was probably in April. The distance from Ephesus to Jerusalem was more than a thousand miles. There was no time to lose. He promised that he would return to them. Paul saw the open door here at Ephesus and was sure he would take the opportunity to preach to them later.

Verses 22-23: Paul travels and rests.

Paul went first to Jerusalem where he would sacrifice for his vow. He saw the brethren in the church at Jerusalem. He then proceeded to Antioch. He stayed in Antioch for some time. After all the hard work on the mission journey, he probably needed to rest. It is thought by many that when he arrived at Antioch he found Timothy or one of the faithful Christians waiting for him. There he was informed about the Jewish people in the churches in Galatia who were demanding that all the Gentiles be circumcised before they could be Christians. Here Paul wrote the book of Galatians. He then set off to the churches to try to solve all the problems that the Jews had brought there about circumcising the Gentiles.

Verse 24: "Now a Jew named Apollos."

Apollos was from Alexandria. This was one of the strongest of Jewish colonies. It was best known for the high educational standards among the Jews. Christianity had been preached and taught in this city and Apollos had accepted Christ.

Here Apollos was called eloquent, this meant he was a great speaker. He was intelligent, and charming.

Verse 25: "He had been instructed in the way of the Lordthough he knew only the baptism of John."

Apollos knew the gospel. We do not know what he lacked. There was something which he did not have. He had been baptized only by a follower

2. The second great truth in this lesson is that each man is the child of God. Since God made all men, they have a common father. Racial pride and prejudice have appeared all over the world, and there are few people who have not in some way held themselves to be superior to others. God condemns this thought. God sent his son to die for everyone. (See John 3:16).
3. The next great truth is that all men whom God has created have a need for God and are capable of knowing him. God in Jesus Christ has called all men to repent. Christ came to satisfy the need for all men to know God. Even as food satisfies the stomach, Christ satisfies the soul.
4. The last truth is that there is coming a time of judgment.

The date is not as important as the fact that every one must give an account to God for what has happened in his life. I cannot blame you for your failures. You cannot blame me for my failures. You are responsible for your life. You will receive the reward or the punishment for the way you live it.

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those which are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

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CHAPTER 7

PARTNERS IN THE GOSPEL

BIBLE MATERIAL: Acts 18:1 to 19:20

Memory Verse: *"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth."*
1 Corinthians 3:6-7

I. BACKGROUND STUDY

We have been talking of the different ways people responded to the gospel. Today we want to see the different kinds of people whom God calls to do his work. Just as those who heard the gospel responded in a different way, so those who are called of God are different.

When Jesus chose the first twelve disciples, it is clear that Jesus used people who were different from each other. Simon Peter was impulsive. Andrew was quiet. Thomas was a stubborn man and doubted until he saw. John was loved and obedient. Levi was a tax-gatherer. Judas was a greedy betrayer.

After the resurrection of Jesus the Holy Spirit brought these men together in a unity of spirit. They were still not alike. They were still different men. Each worked in his own way.

In the work of Paul, all the people were different. There was room for all of them in their different ways. Timothy became as Paul's own son. John Mark and Paul could not get along very well together. Yet Christ had a work for each of them to do. Luke was beloved and a companion of Paul. Titus was dependable and seemed to be able to take care of the troubles in the church. Lydia was hospitable and able to help in her way. Whatever our talent God has a use for it when it is given to him.

II. THE TEXT Acts 18:18-28

Verse 18: "At Cenchreae he cut his hair, for he had a vow."

If a Jew wanted to express great love for God, he would sometimes take the Nazirite vow. This vow was for thirty days, or for other stated periods of time. The person taking the vow would not drink wine, eat meat, or cut his hair. At the end of that time, the hair would be cut off and offered in sacrifice. If he were away from Jerusalem, it might be kept in a container to be offered later.

Paul had completed the thirty days at the start of his return journey to Jerusalem. His hair was cut at the port where he set sail. The thanksgiving vow and trip to Jerusalem to the Jewish Passover were natural expressions of his devotion to God.

Verse 19: "They came to Ephesus."

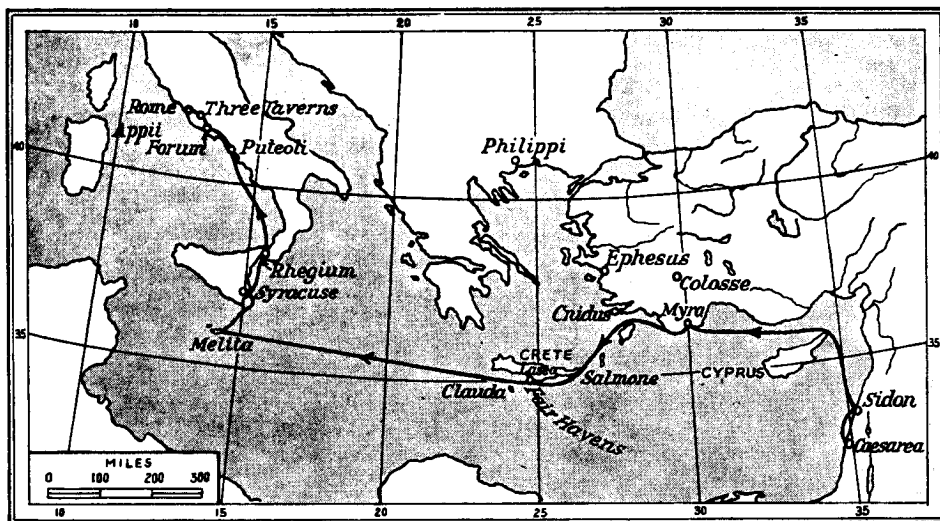
The ship on which Paul was travelling was a ship to take the Jews back to Jerusalem to the Passover. It was natural that they would stop at Ephesus on the Sabbath to worship.

Paul was not the first one to preach the gospel at Ephesus. He found that the people accepted the word well. He made plans to return to them later. He did return and spent a long time with them.

Verse 20: "When they asked him to stay for a longer period, he declined."

Many of Paul's hearers were interested in Christianity. They asked him to stay and tell them more. Paul could not stay with them because he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem for the Passover. In later years Paul returned and preached to them for three months. He was not persecuted by the Jews there.

JOURNEYS OF PAUL



PAUL'S JOURNEY TO ROME. From Caesarea Paul started on his voyage to Rome with Luke and Aristarchus (Acts xxvii, xxviii). At Myra they were put on board an Alexandrian ship which, after leaving Fair Havens in Crete, was

driven by storm to the island of Melita (Malta) and wrecked. Going on to Syracuse, they sailed to Italy, landed at Puteoli, and, passing through the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns, arrived at the metropolis by the Appian Way.

