

English: Bible Commentary for Acts

Formatted for Translators

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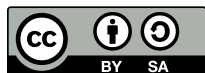
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Acts 1 Commentary

1:1-11

What does the kingdom of God mean in this passage?

[1:3]

In this passage, the “kingdom of God” means two different things.

God rules over everything. However, some scholars think that Christians agree for him to rule over themselves now in this life. This is why they obey him and trust in him. When Luke says that God rules over his kingdom, he means that these Christians agree to trust in him and obey him. But this is not the same as God ruling over the whole world, because most people still reject Jesus.

God rules over everything, but other scholars believe that he will also rule over the earth when Jesus comes back to earth and stays here. These scholars think that this is what Jesus was talking about in 1:3.

Most Jews thought that the Messiah would free Israel from the Gentiles ruling them. Some scholars believe that this meant that the nation of Israel would be free once again. They believe that Jesus will do this for Israel in the future and it will last forever.

Other scholars think that Jesus was talking about a new kind of kingdom. In this kingdom, Christians agree for God to rule over themselves, and they will obey him. While Jesus has always ruled over everything, he now rules over Christians in a special way. They also believe that Christians are the new “people of God” and therefore can also be called Israel.

See: Kingdom of God; People of God; Messiah (Christ); Jesus' Return to Earth; Gospel; Glory (Glorify)

Why did the disciples wait for the Holy Spirit?

[1:4, 1:5]

What the disciples waited for was for the Holy Spirit to do something new and different. They waited for him to give them his power in a new way. This new way would begin a new time when God would do new things for mankind.

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Disciple

How is a person baptized with the Holy Spirit?

[1:5]

To baptize something means to dip it into water or to cover it with water. The Jews dipped things in water to make them pure, that is, so they could use them as the Law of Moses instructed them. They also bathed themselves in order to make themselves pure or clean, that is, so that God would continue to accept them as his people.

In the same way, some scholars think that God baptizes people with the Holy Spirit when they begin to believe in Jesus. When God does that, he joins that person to himself. That person then becomes part of the Church, which is also called the “body of Christ.”

However, other scholars think that when God baptizes a person with the Spirit, he makes that person able to do miracles, such as speaking in unknown languages. However, only some Christians experience this.

See: Baptize (Baptism); Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

How does one receive the Holy Spirit?

[1:8]

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Why did Jesus talk about how the church would grow?

[1:8]

In 1:8 Jesus told his disciples how the Church will grow, that is, how more people would believe in him. Jesus said, “In Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” In the book of Acts, Luke tells how the Christians announced the gospel to people in these places, first in Jerusalem, next in Judea and Samaria, and finally much farther away, in Greece and in Rome.

See: Gospel; Israel; Samaria

What is the purpose of the church?

[1:8]

Christians are to tell people about God. They are also to share the gospel with everyone, no matter where they come from. They are to continue doing this until the whole world hears the gospel. This is the work that the church must do.

The church is able to do this by the power of the Holy Spirit, who is always with the church. The nation of Israel did not always have the Holy Spirit with it. But in the church, the Holy Spirit lives in all Christians. Because of this, Christians have become the primary means by which God draws people to himself.

See: Church; Gospel; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Israel

See Map: Jerusalem and Judea

1:12-26

Who were the apostles?

[1:13]

Eleven apostles were mentioned in 1:13. They are not always called by the same name in Scripture. However, they were the same eleven men.

Jewish people often had Greek names in addition to their Hebrew names. For example, Simon Peter had a Hebrew name (Simon) and a Greek name (Peter). He is sometimes called by one name, sometimes by the other, and sometimes by both. Judas, son of James, is also called Thaddeus. Simon the zealot is also called Simon the Canaanite. Thomas is also called Didymus ("twin" in Greek). James is identified as a son of Zebedee (see: Matthew 4:21)

See: Mark 6:7-13, Matthew 10, and Luke 9:1-6

See: Apostle

Who were the "zealous people"?

[1:13]

The "zealous people" were a group of Jews who wanted to stop the Romans from ruling their own nation. The zealous people were often willing to fight with violent force in order to stop the Romans. They may have even murdered leaders in the government.

In 1:13 Luke shows that Simon was a member of this group. Scripture probably referred to Simon as a zealous person in order to tell him apart from Simon Peter. Scholars think that Simon did not continue to act as a zealous person after he started following Jesus.

See: Matthew 10:4

See: Zeal (Zealous, Zealot)

Who were Jesus' "brothers"?

[1:14]

"Brothers" usually referred to brothers born from the same mother. However, it also refers to Christians together. They are brothers because they believe in Jesus. Most scholars believe 1:14 referred to Jesus' brothers who were born from Mary, his mother. But perhaps "brothers" in 1:14 referred to Christians.

See: Family of God; Family of Jesus

Why were Jesus' brothers praying?

[1:14]

If brothers referred to other Christians, then they were obeying Jesus' command to pray.

Brothers might have also referred to Jesus' brothers who were also born from Mary. However, these brothers did not believe in Jesus before he died on the cross. It would have been surprising for them to obey the commands of Jesus if they did not believe in him. Therefore, they probably came to believe in Jesus after he died and rose again.

See: Matthew 12:46-50, Galatians 1:18-19, 1 Corinthians 15:7, and Mark 6:3

See: Family of God; Family of Jesus

How did Judas Iscariot die?

[1:18]

Matthew said that Judas hanged himself (see: Matthew 27:5). In the book of Acts, Luke perhaps told what happened to Judas' body after he died. If no one found his body, it would have decomposed and, after some time, have fallen down to the ground. The rotten corpse could easily have burst open.

Was the role of apostle possible only in the very early Church?

[1:20, 1:21, 1:22]

Some scholars think that only the first Christians could be "apostles." They think this, because in 1:21-22 Luke says who could be an apostle. To be an apostle, a man had to be someone who had followed Jesus while Jesus lived on earth. He also had to have seen Jesus after he rose from the dead. This is why only people who lived in the time of Jesus could be apostles.

However, some scholars think that God still makes certain people able to be apostles. These people are of course different from the twelve apostles in the time of the first Christians.

Still other scholars think that the apostles sinned in selecting Matthias as the twelfth apostles. They do not think that God wanted Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot; they think that God wanted Paul instead.

These scholars say that the disciples sinned when they cast lots in order to find out what God wanted. It is true that Israelites cast lots in order to know what God wanted (see: Leviticus 16:8-10 and Numbers 26:55-56. Also, the book of Proverbs appears to permit the casting of lots (see: Proverbs 16:33.

However, most scholars do not think that Christians should cast lots. Few Christians cast lots today. Some scholars say that people who cast lots do sorcery. Others scholars say that Christians do not need to cast lots, because the Holy Spirit now lives in them and guides them.

See: Acts 6:2

See: Apostle; Cast Lots; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Will of God

Why were there twelve apostles?

[1:26]

In Matthew 19:28, Jesus prophesied that the twelve apostles would judge the twelve tribes of Israel. This is probably the reason that the apostles appointed another disciple to replace Judas Iscariot.

In addition to this, some scholars believe that the Church has replaced Israel as the people of God. They think that the twelve apostles represent this new Israel. However, other scholars believe that the church and Israel remain distinct

groups.
See: Luke 22:30
See: Apostle; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Church; Israel

Acts 2

2:1-4

What was the day of Pentecost?

[2:1]

Pentecost was a Jewish festival. This festival came 50 days after the Passover week ended. It was one of the three most important festivals in the Jewish faith. For these three festivals, the Law of Moses made all Jewish men come to Jerusalem to “appear before the Lord” (see: Deuteronomy 16:16). These men brought offerings of the grain from the summer wheat harvest. These offerings gave thanks to God for helping the harvest. Pentecost was also called “The Feast of Weeks.” It was celebrated seven weeks after the Passover week ended (see: Leviticus 23:15).

The Feast of Pentecost brought the most visitors of Jews and Gentiles who believed in God to Jerusalem. It was the best time of year to travel. Some scholars think this is why God chose the Pentecost festival to baptize the followers of Jesus with the Holy Spirit. That is, the most people possible were there to see it.

See: Passover; Pentecost; Law of Moses; Baptize (Baptism)

Who was there when the Holy Spirit came?

[2:1]

Scholars disagree on how many people were there when the Holy Spirit came. They do not know if it was only the twelve apostles or if Jesus’ relatives and the 120 disciples were also there (see:1:14-15). The house or upper room was big enough for the twelve apostles (see:1:13). If 120 disciples were there, then the “house” where they met was thought to be a large house with many rooms. Or some scholars think they met in part of the outer courts of the temple.

See: Holy Spirit; Apostle; Disciple; Temple Courts

How did Luke describe the coming of the Holy Spirit?

[2:2]

The Holy Spirit came with the sound of a strong “rushing” (φέρω/g5342) “wind”(πνοή/g4466). Luke said all the people in the house heard this sound. The word wind, or “breath”(πνοή/g4466), is used other places in the Bible to talk about the Holy Spirit (see: 17:25; Ezekiel 37:9-10). In those places, it is the Spirit who gives life. The Holy Spirit is also a part of giving Christians a new life after they believe in Jesus (see: Titus 3:5).

Luke also talked about the Holy Spirit coming in little flames in the shape of tongues. These tongues laid on top of all those in the house. Some scholars think Luke was talking about the Holy Spirit’s coming in the same way John the Baptist spoke of it (see: Luke 3:16-17).

See: Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

What did it mean that the disciples spoke in other tongues?

[2:4]

When the disciples spoke in other “tongues”(γλῶσσα/g1100) on the day of Pentecost, it meant they spoke in commonly known languages. But, the disciples did not know these languages. That is, they did not learn these languages by studying them or learning them. The Holy Spirit caused the disciples to speak in other languages. In this way, the Jews from many language groups heard the disciples speaking in their own languages.

See: Speak in Tongues

2:5-13

What places did Luke speak about?

[2:5, 2:9, 2:10, 2:11]

See Map: Ancient Middle East

Why did many in the crowd think the disciples were drunk?

[2:13]

Many in the crowd thought the disciples were drunk because they did not know what the disciples said. Because they spoke in languages that the people did not know, they thought they just spoke from drunkenness. Others became confused and amazed when they heard the disciples speaking in their own language. This confusion and amazement allowed Peter to tell them about what really happened.

2:14-21

What was the third hour of the day?

[2:15]

The Jews counted time each day beginning with the sunrise. The third hour of the day was about nine o’clock in the morning. Three hours after the sun rose where they lived. When are the “the last days”?

Some scholars think the “last days” began when Jesus first came to earth. That is, they began at his birth. These scholars think the last days continue until Jesus comes back to earth. Other scholars think the last days began after Jesus came

back from the dead and the Holy Spirit came to the disciples. These scholars also think the last days will end when Jesus comes back to earth.

See: Last Days

Who are “all flesh”?

[2:17]

Some scholars think Luke said “all flesh” to say all kinds of Jewish people. In the past, God only spoke to certain people, that is, prophets, kings, or priests with messages from the Holy Spirit. Other scholars think the words “all flesh” meant the Gentile nations of the world along with the Jews.

See: Prophet; Priest (Priesthood) ; Gentile

When did the people think Joel’s prophecy was going to happen?

[2:17]

Peter knew the signs of flames of fire and the speaking of foreign languages to be the “signs on the earth below.” Some scholars think the prophecy of the “wonders in the heavens” happened on the day when Jesus died (see: Luke 23:44-45). Other scholars think the signs of blood, fire, smoke, the sun changing to darkness, and the moon changing to blood all speak about when Jesus is going to come back to earth.

See: Sign; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Jesus’ Return to Earth

What is the “great and glorious day of the Lord”?

[2:20]

The ‘great and glorious day of the Lord’ is the day of judgment. It is the time when Jesus comes back to earth and judges the whole human race (see: Matthew 24:30-31 and 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4) Scholars think the word glorious also meant fearful or dreadful.

See: Day of the Lord; Glory (Glorify); Day of Judgment

2:22-36

What does it mean that God “accredited” Jesus to the men of Israel?

[2:22]

When Peter said God “accredited” Jesus to the men of Israel, he said that through the many miracles he did, God helped people to know that Jesus was the promised messiah.

See: Miracle; Messiah (Christ)

What was meant by “God’s predetermined plan and foreknowledge”?

[2:23]

God’s predetermined (ὁρίζω/g3724) plan spoke about God’s specific and unchangeable will. That is, God knew what would happen before it happen because he wanted it to happen or allowed it to happen. God planned Jesus’ death on the cross before he created the world (see: 2 Timothy 1:9; Revelation 13:8). God’s foreknowledge (πρόγνωσις/g4268) spoke about God setting the time for Jesus to be crucified by “lawless” (ἄνομος/g0459) men. Some scholars think “lawless men” spoke about the Romans who beat Jesus and nailed him to the cross. Other scholars think both the Jewish leaders and the Romans were guilty of having Jesus killed.

See: Predestine (Predestination); Foreknow (Foreknowledge); Will of God

Why was death not able to keep Jesus?

[2:24]

In the same way that God planned Jesus dying on the cross, he also planned to make Jesus live again. God controls living and dying. Dying could not stop Jesus because he is God.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

What is “Hades”?

[2:27]

Here, Hades means the general place where the dead people go. Peter said David was a prophet because he spoke about Jesus dying and that his body would not decay or rot.

See: Hades (Sheol); Prophet

What did the people see and hear that showed the Holy Spirit came to them?

[2:33]

The people saw and heard the disciples speaking in languages that the disciples did not know how to speak (see: 2:6-8). This showed the fulfillment of the promise Jesus made. Also, it showed that the Holy Spirit came to the disciples. The Holy Spirit came with power in the same way Jesus said the Holy Spirit was going to come.

See: Disciple; Holy Spirit

What do the words, “The Lord said to my Lord” mean?

[2:34]

Scholars think the words, “The Lord said to my Lord” spoke about God saying that Jesus is also the Lord. That is, Jesus is God. Only God could be a master of God.

See: Psalm 110:1

See: Lord; Jesus is God; Trinity
How is Jesus at the right hand of the Father?
[2:34]

Some scholars think the words meant “having been exalted by the right hand of God” instead of “to the right hand of God.” That is, Jesus was given back the honor he had in heaven before he came to earth. By coming to earth, he humbled himself and was not honored as much while he was on the earth. When someone sat at the right hand of a king, he was honored greatly. They were given power and permission to rule.

When someone sat down, it meant that they were finished working. The writer of Hebrews talks about the difference between Jesus finishing the things he wanted to do and the Jewish priests who continuously stand because they never finish the things they need to do (see: Hebrews 10:11-12). Jesus was given the highest place of honor and permission to rule in heaven.

See Psalm 110

See: Right Hand; Disciple; Heaven

How do Jesus’ enemies become a stool for his feet?

[2:35]

This is a prophecy from Psalm 110:1. God placed the enemies of Jesus under Jesus, who was given permission to rule them. That is, Jesus holds complete rule over his enemies.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy)

2:36-41

Who was “the whole house of Israel”?

[2:36]

The whole house of Israel was all the Jewish people who rejected Jesus (see: Mark 14:61-65).

What did Peter mean when he called Jesus both Lord and Christ?

[2:36]

Peter called Jesus lord and christ. He meant that Jesus completed the prophecy David wrote in Psalm 110:1. Jesus is “lord”(κύριος/g29362) because God placed him at his right hand after he rose from the dead (see: Psalm 16:8). Jesus is ruler over everything.

Jesus is the “christ.” That is, he is the messiah, the one to complete God’s plan for saving people from their sins. Paul also spoke of Jesus as the Christ. Jesus showed that he was the Christ because he did not stay dead (see: Romans 1:4).

See: Lord; Messiah (Christ); Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

What does it mean to be pierced to the heart?

[2:37]

Scholars think to be “pierced to the heart” spoke of when a person would know something quickly and very strongly. They think the people knew quick and strong sorrow and felt guilty. They understood they killed their messiah. Their words of “what shall we do” were desperate words.

See: Messiah (Christ)

What was meant by the word “repent”?

[2:38]

See: Repent (Repentance)

Why did Peter command the Jews to be baptized in the name of Jesus?

[2:38]

Scholars think several things happened when baptism “in the name of Jesus” happened:

By calling on the name of Jesus, the Jews acknowledged that Jesus is Israel’s messiah and savior. They knew that Jesus did not stay dead and is sitting at God’s right hand. By calling on the name of Jesus, the Jews accepted that forgiveness for sins was only possible by believing in Jesus. By calling on the name of Jesus, the Jews publicly said that only Jesus can cleanse them from their sin and impurity.

See: Baptize (Baptism); Name; Messiah (Christ); Savior; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Clean and Unclean

What was the “gift of the Holy Spirit”?

[2:38]

The gift of the Holy Spirit was the comforter that Jesus promised (see: John 14:16). The Holy Spirit comes to live inside those who believe in Jesus (see: Romans 8:9-11; Ephesians 1:13-14). Scholars agree that the gift of the Holy Spirit is different from the gifts of the Holy Spirit. All Christians are given the gift of the Holy Spirit. But the gifts the Holy Spirit gives each Christian are different. He chooses to give different people different gifts to help the church (see: 1 Corinthians 12:11).

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Why does Peter say this promise is “for you, your children and to all those who are far off”?

[2:39]

This promise of the Holy Spirit is for all Christians of all ages everywhere. The promise of the Holy Spirit was not only for

the first Christians but also for all who will become Christians. Luke also wrote that the promise of the Holy Spirit was for the Jews and the Gentiles (see Acts 10:45; 11:16,17). Peter did not fully know that the Holy Spirit was also for the Gentiles when he spoke. But the Holy Spirit spoke this through him.

See: Gentile

What did it mean when Peter said, “to as many as the Lord our God will call”?

[2:39]

Peter again quoted from the prophet Joel when he said, “to as many as the Lord our God will call.” The prophecy spoke of both those who call on the name of the Lord, and of those whom the Lord will call.

See: Romans 1:6; 9:1-33, John 3:16

See: Call (Calling)

Why did Peter say “save yourselves from this wicked generation”?

[2:40]

Scholars think Peter told the Jews to “save themselves”(σώζω/g4982) because he told the Jews to allow themselves to be saved by Jesus. The book of Acts speaks about God being the one who saves (see: 2:21, 39; 4:11-12). These scholars think that God’s call offers salvation. The people who are called must respond to the gospel with faith and by repenting (see: 2:38; 16:14-15, 30-34).

A “wicked generation” spoke about people who continually reject God and the things he says. Moses wrote about a wicked generation in the Old Testament (see: Deuteronomy 32:5), and Paul wrote about a wicked generation in the New Testament (see: Philippians 2:15).

See: Generation; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Gospel; Repent (Repentance)

2:42-47

What was the “apostles’ teaching”?

[2:42]

The apostles taught about the things Jesus said and did. The apostles saw the power of Jesus in the miracles he did while they were with him. The teaching also talked about God’s plans and promises. God planned to save people from their sins even before he created the world. That is, he planned for Jesus to die on the cross, be buried, and be brought back to life even before he created the world. The apostles strongly taught that Jesus is the messiah whom God promised to come.

They taught that it was through Jesus alone that someone could be at peace with God (see: 2:36-39; 3:17-23).

See: Apostle; Miracle; Messiah (Christ); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

What was meant by “the fellowship”?

[2:42]

The word “fellowship” meant to share or be a part of something. Here, it meant sharing in each other’s lives. That is, in the same way they shared life in Jesus, they also shared life together. To share life with each other meant to know others, care for others, and allow them to care for you and to help one another in times of suffering (see: Romans 12:10-13; 1 Peter 4:8-10).

See: Fellowship

What was meant by “the breaking of bread”?

[2:42]

Some scholars think the “breaking of bread” took place at any ordinary meal time where people gathered together to eat. They think Jesus gave this command when he celebrated his last Passover meal with the disciples (see: Luke 22:14-19).

That is, they took the loaves of bread they ate, broke them into small pieces, and shared them with one another. Other scholars think the “breaking of bread” was for Christians to regularly be a part of, so that they specifically remembered Jesus’ death on the cross, the forgiveness of sins, and the new covenant made by God with Christians (see: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

See: Passover; Disciple; New Covenant

What were the prayers about which Luke wrote?

[2a:42]

Scholars think the prayers were Jewish prayers and possibly the Jewish times of prayer as well (see: 3:1). Certainly, the Christians prayed together. They also went to the prayer times in the temple together (see: 2:46).

See: Pray (Prayer)

Why did those gathered experience “awe”?

[2:43]

Because the apostles did signs and wonders similar to the miracles done by Jesus, the people felt great “awe”(φόβος/g5401) about God. This means the people felt great respect and reverence for God.

See: Awe (Awesome); Sign; Miracle

What did it mean to have all things in common?

[2:44]

Some scholars think “to have all things in common” meant the Christians wanted to share the things they owned. Though

they kept the things they owned, they willingly sold them to help people with needs near them (see: 4:32). When someone needed something, the Christians sold some of their things, land, or other things they owned. Then they brought the money to the leaders or apostles to give to all with needs (See: Acts 4:32-37).

See: Apostle

Why did the early Christians worship at the Temple?

[2:46]

The Christians went to the temple daily for prayers because the first Christians were Jewish. This was before they were not allowed to go to the temple because they believed in Jesus. They went there to pray Jewish prayers and to praise God who sent the messiah into the world (see: John 17:18).

See: Temple; Pray (Prayer); Messiah (Christ)

What did Luke mean when he wrote “the Lord added to their number”?

[2:47]

Scholars think Luke wrote “the Lord added to their number” because it was God’s church. He is the one who adds people to his church (see: 11:21).

See: Lord; Church

Acts 3

3:1-10

What was the “hour of prayer”?

[3:1]

The Jewish people went to the temple three times a day to pray. The “ninth hour” was in the middle of the afternoon. Jews also prayed in the middle of the morning at the middle of the day (see: Psalm 55:16-19). Peter and John were Christians. But they were also Jews. So they continued to pray at the temple three times a day after they became Christians.

Why did Luke write that the man was “lame from birth”?

[3:2]

Some scholars think Luke wrote that the man was “lame from birth” because it showed how powerful Jesus was because he healed this man. Scholars think “lame” (χολός/g5560) meant a man with legs, ankles and feet not formed correctly.

That made this man not strong enough to walk or stand (see: 3:7). What was the “Beautiful Gate”?

The “Beautiful Gate” was one of many gates that went into the Jewish temple. Scholars think the greatest number of people entered into the temple through this gate. Perhaps they carried the lame man to this gate so that they could ask people for gifts of money.

See: Temple

Why did Peter “fasten his eyes” on the lame man?

[3:4]

The phrase “fastening his eyes” (ἀτενίζω/g0816) meant that Peter looked specifically and closely at the lame beggar. Also, Peter commanded the man saying, “Look at us.” Scholars think the lame man looked at Peter and this man had expected a great gift.

Advice to Translators: A beggar was someone who asked people for money because they were poor or because they could not do anything.

Why did Peter tell the man to stand and walk, “in the name of Jesus”?

[3:6]

The lame man did not stand up and walk before Peter spoke the name of Jesus. The phrase “in the name of Jesus” meant that Jesus gave him permission to heal this man and the power to do so. People knew Jesus’ power because of what Peter did (see: 3:16). Some scholars say the power that caused the lame man to stand up and “walk” (περιπατέω/g4043) and he was strong enough to walk for the rest of his life (see: 3:16).

See: Name

3:11-16

Where was Solomon’s porch?

[3:11]

Solomon’s porch was on the east side of the temple courts. Scholars think the court of the Gentiles was near this area.

Jesus taught on this porch to many people (see: John 10:23).

See: Temple; Gentile

See Map: Show map of Jewish temple with its various gates, and porches

Why did Peter speak about the “God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob”?

[3:13]

Peter spoke about God in a way that the Jewish people would understand. Scholars think Peter wanted the Jews to think about God promised to do certain things. God not only healed a lame man, but he made it so that people would know that Jesus is the promised messiah. The things Peter said also helped people to know he and the apostles served the God of

Israel. They did not worship another god.

See: Messiah (Christ); Apostle

Why did Peter say that Jesus was God's servant?

[3:13]

Scholars think Peter said the same thing the prophet Isaiah said to show that Jesus is the messiah. Jesus is the servant who brings the justice of God, he brings people back to God, and he is the servant who suffers for the people of God (see: Isaiah 42:1; 49:5-6; 52:13-15). The Jewish people knew what Isaiah said and expected a suffering servant to come.

See: Prophet; Messiah (Christ); Justice (Just, Unjust); Serve (Servant, Slave)

Who is the "Holy and Righteous One"?

[3:14]

Jesus is the holy and righteous one.

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Righteous (Righteousness)

How is Jesus the "Founder of Life"?

[3:15]

Peter spoke about Jesus as the "founder of life" (ἀρχηγός/g0747). This meant that Jesus created the universe and created everything on earth. It also meant that Jesus was the leader of the whole world. Jesus also made it so that Christians would live together with God in heaven forever.

See: Create (Creation, Creature)

3:17-21

What was meant by the words, "you acted in ignorance"?

[3:17]

Peter knew the people and the religious leaders did not fully understand the plan of God for Jesus. God made this plan before the beginning of the world (see: Ephesians 1:4). The prophets spoke how the messiah must suffer and die (see: Isaiah 53:1-12; Zechariah 12:10). Some scholars think Jesus spoke about how those who crucified him did not really know what they were doing (see: Luke 23:34).

See: Messiah (Christ); Prophet

Why did Peter command the people to "repent and turn back"?

[3:19]

Peter told the Jewish people and leaders they must "repent." This meant they must believe that Jesus is the messiah. It also meant they must think differently about what the Scriptures teach about the messiah (see: 2 Corinthians 3:12-16). The people refused to believe that Jesus was God's servant. They did not think that Jesus was the "holy one." They refused to believe that Jesus was the one who created everything and was the messiah. Peter's told the people that they needed to repent and believe in Jesus. In this way, their sins were to be "blotted out," that is, the penalty for their sins was removed because Jesus served the penalty for their sins. They were made clean.

See: Repent (Repentance); Messiah (Christ); Serve (Servant, Slave); Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Sin; Clean and Unclean

What were "periods of refreshing"?

[3:19]

Some scholars think "refreshing" meant to experience a relief from trouble or to have a time of peace before Jesus returns. They think that Scripture teaches that there will be a time of peace and forgiveness when God would not judge people. Other scholars think the "periods of refreshing" spoke about the time when Peter lived. They think that Luke was speaking about God given them peace from different things. Still other scholars think the periods of refreshing came when the people repented and trusted in God. That is, the Holy Spirit brings refreshing in the life of a person who repents (see: Acts 2:38; John 14:15-21).

See: Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Repent (Repentance); Holy Spirit

What does "the final restoration of all things" mean?

[3:21]

Some scholars think when Luke spoke about "restoration," he wanted to say that God will bring Israel back to their land (see: 1:6). That is, he will bring back the kingdom of Israel. These scholars also think this is a time when God will fulfill his promises made through the prophet Malachi (see: Malachi 4:2-6). This is when the messiah returns to the world to judge the world for its sin. Other scholars think Peter spoke about the world being restored. That is, the world will be returned to be perfect in the same way it was perfect before Adam and Eve sinned (see: Genesis 3). These scholars think Peter spoke about something still to have that the prophets spoke about (see: Isaiah 65:17; 66:22).

However, God began the restoring people making it possible for them to be at peace with him because Jesus died. In Scripture, there is a metaphor about people who reject God are far away from him. People who were far away from God because of sin, were brought near to God because of the sacrifice for sin made by Jesus on the cross. That is, But, most scholars think there will still be a future time in which all of creation will be brought back to God.

See: Fulfill (Fulfillment); Prophet; Metaphor

3:22-26

Who was the prophet that was like Moses?

[3:22]

The Old Testament spoke of a prophet coming in the future (see: Deuteronomy 18:15-18). The Jews thought of Moses as the first and greatest of all prophets. They thought Moses said that the prophet coming in the future was the messiah. Peter said clearly that the people needed to “listen” to the prophet, that is, to obey the prophet God sent, the messiah. This meant they needed to listen and obey the words of the messiah. That is, they needed to do what Jesus told them to do. Peter said that the people who did not listen to the prophet from God were going to be punished. God raised this prophet up to a high position in the same way he raised up Moses to a high position (see: Deuteronomy 18:19). Scholars think the punishment which Peter spoke was the removing of the people from being in the family of God.

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Prophet; Messiah (Christ)

Why did Peter mention the prophet Samuel?

[3:24]

God told him to anoint King David (see: 1 Samuel 16:11-13). God gave David promises from the prophet Nathan that spoke of someone to come. This person was to reign forever. This person to come was the messiah (see: 2 Samuel 7:8-17).

See: Anoint (Anointing); Prophet; Messiah (Christ)

What was meant by the words, “these days”?

[3:24]

Scholars think the words “these days” spoke about the times when Peter and the other apostles lived. They think it was the beginning of the days of the promised New Covenant (see: Jeremiah 31:31-34). Scholars think the phrase “these days” also meant the beginning of the last days spoken of by the prophet Joel (see: 2:17-21).

See: Apostle; New Covenant; Last Days

What was the covenant that God made with Abraham?

[3:25]

God made a covenant with Abraham. He promised to bless all the nations of the world through Abraham (see: Genesis 22:15-18). One promise was that one of Abraham’s descendants would bring about a certain blessing. That is, the messiah was going to be a descendant of Abraham (see: Galatians 16-18).

See: Covenant with Abraham; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Bless (Blessing); Messiah (Christ)

Why did Peter say that God sent his servant, Jesus, to the Jewish people first?

[3:26]

The Old Testament spoke about God’s covenant with the nation of Israel as the people. He made Israel his people. The Jewish people thought about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as their fathers. They thought about Moses as their greatest prophet. Keeping his covenant with Abraham and Israel, God sent the promised messiah to the Jews (see: Genesis 22:18; Jeremiah 31:31-34). God’s plan from the beginning of the world was to give his favor to all the nations of the world. Jesus was how God gave his favor to the world. Paul also spoke about God’s plan to save people from all of the nations. God gave the gospel first to the Jews and then to the rest of the world (see: Romans 1:16).

See: Serve (Servant, Slave); Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Prophet; Covenant with Abraham; Messiah (Christ); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Gospel

Acts 4

4:1-7

Who were the captains of the temple and the priests?

[4:1]

The captain of the temple controlled soldiers. These soldiers protected the temple area. This made the temple a peaceful area to worship. The priests offered sacrifices and worshiped in the temple (see Exodus 28).

See: Temple; Priest (Priesthood)

Who were the Sadducees?

[4:1]

See: Sadducees

Why did the Sadducees question Peter and John?

[4:2]

Some scholars think the priests and Sadducees questioned Peter and John because they taught that after people died, they would be resurrected. That is, their bodies will be made alive again. The Sadducees did not believe anyone would be made alive again (see: 4:2; 5:17). Peter and John taught that some people will be made alive again to live in heaven, and other people will be made alive again to live in hell. They taught that by believing in Jesus, people will be made alive again to live in heaven. That is, they will live together with God in heaven forever. Those who do not believe in Jesus will live separated from God forever and be punished for their sins. Other scholars think the priest and Sadducees questioned Peter and John because Peter and John taught in the temple area without permission from the Sadducees.

See: Sadducees

Why did the Sanhedrin arrest the apostles, Peter and John?

[4:3]

The Sanhedrin arrested the apostles because it was evening. The Sanhedrin, a group of Jewish leaders, could not gather together until the morning. They did not want the apostles to leave without questioning them. They wanted to know how the lame man was healed.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Apostle

How did people respond to the apostles' preaching after the healing miracle?

[4:4]

People responded to the apostles' preaching that day in two different ways. First, the religious leaders opposed the apostles. Second, Luke wrote that about 5,000 men who came to believe the apostles' teaching about Jesus. Some scholars think this number is the total number of men and women who believed in Jesus at that time. Other scholars think the number is simply the men who believe in Jesus that day. Fewer scholars think Luke wrote the total number of Christians from the entire area, including Galilee.

See: Apostle; Preach (Preacher)

See Map: Galilee

Who came together to discuss the actions of Peter and John?

[4:5, 4:6]

Verse 5 talks about three types of people: the rulers, the elders, and the teachers of religious laws. Scholars think these three groups combined to make the Sanhedrin. At that time, Rome allowed the Sanhedrin to make many decisions for the nation. The elders were the ordinary people. They were leaders of the community and the leaders of powerful families. They were mostly Sadducees. The teachers of the law were scribes. They were also the lawyers. They were mostly Pharisees. The rulers were mostly priests, including the chief priests and the high priest.

The ruling High Priest, Caiaphas, was the Chief (or High) Priest. He was the High Priest when Jesus was killed (see Matthew 26:3; John 18:28). The former High Priest, Annas, was the father-in-law of Caiaphas. Therefore, though the verse says Annas was the High Priest, he was the former High Priest. Many still called Annas High Priest to honor him. So, it was Caiaphas who was the High Priest at the time.

See: Elder; Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar); Sadducees; Pharisees; Scribe; Chief Priest; High Priest

Why did the leaders ask the apostles who gave them permission to heal the crippled man?

[4:7]

The Jews at that time believed that the power to heal a lame man came either from God or from Satan. So the Sanhedrin wanted to know if God or Satan gave him permission to heal this man (see: Luke 11:15; Matthew 9:34).

See: Satan (The Devil); Jewish Council (Sanhedrin)

4:8-12

Why did Luke write, "Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit"?

[4:8]

Scholars think God gave Peter special power to speak what God needed him to say to the Jewish leaders. This fulfilled the promise Jesus made to his followers (see: Luke 12:11; 21:14-15).

See: Holy Spirit

What did Peter say to the people listening?

[4:8, 4:9, 4:10]

Some scholars think the things Peter said confronted the Jewish leaders for arresting them. People normally gave thanks when a sick person was healed. Instead, they arrested Peter and John. Other scholars think Peter wanted to know why the Sanhedrin arrested him and John. Peter said clearly that Jesus has the power and permission to heal the man.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin)

What was a cornerstone?

[4:11]

Builders used a cornerstone to make buildings. This was the first stone used when building. They used this stone to know the direction the building needed to go and where the building needed to be placed. They did not bury this stone, but they always made it so that people could see it. The prophet Isaiah spoke of this cornerstone. He said that God placed this cornerstone in Jerusalem. It was firm, tested, precious, and it prevented people from needing to be afraid (see: Isaiah 28:16). Finally, Jesus used this metaphor when speaking about himself (see: Mark 12:1-12).

Peter quoted the well-known passage about the messiah from Psalm 118:22: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." However, Peter added the words, "by you." He used the words "by you" to say that the religious leaders rejected God's cornerstone, Jesus the messiah.

See: Prophet; Metaphor; Messiah (Christ)

How is Jesus the only way to be saved?

[4:12]

Peter said there “is no other name... by which we must be saved.” He was talking about Jesus. He wanted to say that people could only be at peace with God by believing in Jesus.

See: John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Name

4:13-22

How were Peter and John “ordinary, uneducated men”?

[4:13]

Luke wrote that Peter and John were ordinary, uneducated men. That is, they did not have any formal training in the Old Testament from certain teachers. The Jewish teachers did not teach them about the Old Testament in the synagogues.

See: Synagogue; Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

Why did the Sanhedrin not know what to do with the apostles?

[4:16]

The Sanhedrin did not know what to do to stop the apostles from talking about Jesus. Everyone knew about the miracle they did in Jesus’ name.

Advice to Translators: To do something in Jesus’ name means that they did something to honor Jesus and that Jesus gave permission to them to do these things.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Apostle

Why did the Sanhedrin tell the apostles not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus?

[4:18]

The Sanhedrin didn’t want the apostles to speak or teach in the name of Jesus because they did not think Jesus was the messiah. They did not think Jesus was the reason the crippled man was healed (see: 4:10). They thought Jesus was dead. Therefore, they did not think that Jesus was the messiah.

Advice to Translators: To do something in Jesus’ name means that they did something to honor Jesus and that Jesus gave permission to them to do these things.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Apostle; Name: Messiah (Christ)

What did it mean for Peter to obey God rather than man?

[4:19]

Obedying God meant not doing what people said to do if what they said to do was something God said not to do. Jesus said to tell the whole world about him and to feed his sheep (see: Matthew 28: 18-20; John 21:15-20; Acts 1:8) The apostles had to obey Jesus (See: Acts 5:29).

See: Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 15:22

See: Apostle; Shepherd

Why did Luke say the crippled man was over 40 years old?

[4:22]

Luke said the crippled man was over 40 years old to say that a great healing occurred. Everyone knew this man. He lived in that area all of his life.

4:23-31

How did the other Christians pray and praise God together?

[4:24]

Some scholars think one person led the group by praying aloud. The others repeated what he said or agreed with him by saying “Amen.” Other scholars think the Christians prayed one at a time. That is, one prayed and then another prayed until all the people prayed.

See: Pray (Prayer)

Why did the disciples of Jesus call God Lord?

[4:24]

The disciples of Jesus called God “Lord”(δεσπότης/g1203). This is how the Jewish people began their prayers.

See: Isaiah 37:16-20

See: Disciple; Lord; Pray (Prayer)

Why did Peter say, “You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David?”

[4:25]

Peter said, “You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David.” God spoke through King David. God fulfilled the prophecy he gave to David (see: Psalm 2:1-3). Some scholars think this makes known that God spoke to the prophets and apostles. He inspired them to write the words of the Bible.

See: 2 Timothy 3:16; Ephesians 3:5; 2 Peter 1:20; 1 Thessalonians 1:5

See: Holy Spirit; Serve (Servant, Slave); Fulfill (Fulfillment); Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Prophet; Apostle; Inspired

What does Psalm 2 say about Jesus?

[4:25, 4:26]

The Jewish religious teachers taught that Psalm 2 was about the messiah. The words “his anointed,” “my king,” and “my

son” were ways of talking about the messiah. The apostles knew the “holy servant Jesus” was the “Son of God” in Psalm 2. The “raging gentiles” were the Roman soldiers who killed Jesus. The “peoples” were the Jewish leaders. The “kings of the earth” was Herod Antipas (ruler of Galilee; see Luke 23:7-12). And the “rulers” was Pontius Pilate (v. 27).

See: Messiah (Christ); Anoint (Anointing); Son of God; King Herod; King Herod

Why did Luke say, “your hand and your plan”?

[4:28]

The Christians knew Jesus suffered because God wanted him to and because he made a plan for him. The words “your hand” means God used the gentiles, rulers, and king to kill Jesus (see Exodus 3:20, 13:3, 15:6).

See: Acts 2:23; 3:18; Ephesians 1:4,5; Exodus 3:20, 13:3, 15:6)

See: King Herod

How did they “speak the word with all boldness”?

[4:29]

Jesus’ disciples prayed for God “boldness”(παρρησία/g3954). They wanted boldness to “speak the word.” That is, they wanted boldness to speak of the gospel to other people clearly and without fear. They wanted God’s word to be proven true. That is, they wanted more great things through the name of Jesus. This would make people know that Jesus was the messiah.

Advice to Translators: To do something in Jesus’ name means that they did something to honor Jesus and that Jesus gave permission to them to do these things.

See: Disciple; Gospel; Messiah (Christ)

What was meant by the words, “they were all filled with the Holy Spirit”?

[4:31]

God filled the Christians with the Holy Spirit. This made them speak boldly about Jesus. This same power gave Peter the boldness to speak about Jesus to the Jewish leaders.

See: Filling of the Holy Spirit

4:32-37

How were the Christians “of one heart and soul”?

[4:32]

The Christians were “of one heart and soul.” First, the Christians did not say they owned anything. They knew God owned everything. That is, their property was not truly theirs. Knowing this made them want to share. Second, the apostles spoke powerfully about Jesus being made alive again (v.33). Third, Luke said, “there was no person among them who lacked anything.” That is, all the Christians had everything they needed to live. The Christians gave generously after selling their fields, properties, and houses.

See: Heart (Metaphor); Soul; Apostle

How did they place the money “at the apostles’ feet”?

[4:35]

The Christians brought the money to the apostles. The apostles decided who received the money. It was given to other Christians when they needed it to live.

See: Apostle

Barnabas was a Levite. Why did he own a field?

[4:37]

God did not give the Levites any land in the Old Testament (see: Numbers 18:20; Deuteronomy 10:9). Some scholars think the Old Testament laws of inheritance were not being followed during the time of the New Testament. Other scholars think Barnabas’s wife owned the land that he sold.

See: Tribes of Israel; Inherit (Inheritance, Heir)

Acts 5

5:1-11

What did it mean to keep back part of the price of the land?

[5:2]

Luke wrote that Annanias and Sapphira kept back part of the price of the land. They sold a piece of land and gave the money to the apostles. However, they did not give all of the money to the apostles. It was not wrong for them to do this. However, they made the apostles think they gave all of the money to them. They wanted to be honored for doing this. This was wrong.

What did Peter mean about Satan filling Ananias’ heart?

[5:3]

Peter said that Satan filled Annaias’ heart. Peter said that Satan wanted Ananias to lie to the apostles. Satan put the idea for doing the wrong thing into the heart of Ananias. He made Annanias think about doing the wrong thing.

See: Satan (The Devil); Heart (Metaphor); Apostle

How did Ananias lie to the Holy Spirit?

[5:3]

Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit. Some scholars think that when Ananias lied to the apostles, this was the same as lying to the Holy Spirit. This was because the Holy Spirit had created Christians. Other scholars think Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit because he lied to the apostles who have the Holy Spirit in them.

See: Hebrews 4:12-13

See: Holy Spirit; Apostle; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

How did Peter know that Ananias lied?

[5:3]

Luke wrote that Peter knew Ananias lied to the apostles. Luke does not write how Peter knew this. Some scholars thought there was someone told Peter. Other scholars think the Holy Spirit told Peter in some way.

See: Apostle; Holy Spirit

Why did Peter write, "You have not lied to men but to God?"

[5:4]

Scholars think when Peter said, "you have not lied to men but to God," he wanted people to know that Ananias lied to the apostles and to God. This was because Ananias gave an offering to God when he gave money to the apostles.

See: Apostle; Offer (Offering); Sacrifice

How did someone test the Spirit of the Lord?

[5:4]

How did someone test the Spirit of the Lord. Ananias and Sapphira tested the Holy Spirit when they lied to the apostles. When they did this it also tested the Holy Spirit. This is because they did not think the Holy Spirit knew what they were doing.

See: Holy Spirit; Test; Apostle

When speaking to Sapphira, why did Peter say, "they will carry you out"?

[5:9]

When speaking to Sapphira, Paul said, "they will carry you out." Some scholars think that because Peter watched Ananias die for lying to the Holy Spirit, he also thought Sapphira was also going to die. Other scholars think the Holy Spirit helped Peter to know that Sapphira was going to die for deceiving the Holy Spirit. Peter was not judging them. God judged Ananias and Sapphira.

See: Holy Spirit; Judge (Judgment)

How did great fear come upon the whole church?

[5:11]

Great fear came upon the whole church. He was speaking about a certain group of Christians. Scholars think the Christians suddenly became afraid because God quickly judged Anania and Sapphira.

See: Church

5:12-16

What were "signs and wonders"?

[5:12]

See: Sign

Why were the people afraid of joining the apostles in the Temple area?

[5:12]

People were afraid of joining the apostles in the Temple area. Scholars think the people were afraid of what happened to Ananias and Sapphira or that they feared the Jewish leaders. The Jewish leaders rejected Jesus and they arrested the apostles.

See: Apostle; Temple

Why did people hope that Peter's shadow might fall on some of them?

[5:15]

People hoped that Peter's shadow would fall on them. This is a metaphor. Scholars think that because many signs and wonders were being done through the apostles, the people hoped that Peter would heal them. They think the people believed that if the crowds were too large, that even if Peter's shadow crossed over a sick person, they would be healed. Luke wanted people to know that the people who were brought before the apostles were all healed.

See: Metaphor; Sign; Apostle

5:17-21

Why did the high priest and Sadducees arrest the apostles?

[5:18]

The high priest and Sadducees arrested the apostles. Some scholars think the high priest and the Sadducees were filled with "jealousy" (ζήλος/g2205) because many people believed the things the apostles taught about Jesus (see 13:45). The Jewish leaders believed the apostles taught the wrong things so they arrested the apostles. Other scholars think that the

Jewish leaders really wanted to protect the Temple, the Law of Moses, and what they believed about God. The Sadducees zealously protected the things they taught would honor God.

What is an angel?

[5:19]

See: Angel

What were “all the words of this life”?

[5:20]

The angel of the Lord told the apostles to speak “all the words of this life.” He wanted them to preach the gospel and help people to know how to be at peace with God by believing in Jesus.

See: Angel; Apostle; Preach (Preacher); Gospel

Who were “all the elders” and “the council”?

[5:21]

Scholars think the assembly, which was the council and all the elders was made up of the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and even Gamaliel, an honorable teacher of the Law of Moses (see: Acts 5:34).

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Sadducees; Pharisees; Law of Moses

5:22-26

Why did the Captain of the Temple guard and the guards fear that the people might stone them when they arrested the apostles?

[5:24]

The people thought the apostles were great because of the things they did. They did many miracles and healed many people (see: Acts 5:12-16). The guards thought the people would begin to throw stones at them if they were to hurt the apostles in any way. For this reason the guards feared the people.

See: Apostle; Miracle

5:27-32

What was meant by the words, “to bring this man’s blood upon us”?

[5:28]

The words, “to bring this man’s blood upon us” meant to make someone responsible for a death. They were willing to be the reason people died. Perhaps the Jewish leaders were willing to have people blame them for Jesus dying.

Why did God exalt Jesus to his right hand?

[5:31]

In ancient times, a person on the right hand side of the king was greatly honored. The king gave this permission to do things for the king. Some scholars think Luke wrote this so that people would know that God gave Jesus permission to do all things and power to do anything. Other scholars think Luke wrote this so people would know that Jesus should be honored.

See: Psalm 110:1-8

See: Exalt; Right Hand

How was the Holy Spirit a witness to these things?

[5:32]

The Holy Spirit was a witness to things. Some scholars think the Holy Spirit was causing people to understand the things the apostles taught. Other scholars think the Holy Spirit enabled the apostles to perform miracles to prove to people that they were saying true things about Jesus.

See: Holy Spirit; Witness (Martyr); Apostle; Miracle

5:33-42

What kind of beating did the apostles receive from the Sanhedrin?

[5:40]

The apostles were beaten because of the Sanhedrin. Scholars think the apostles were beaten with whips. A whip is made from leather strips. Other scholars think the apostles were beaten with rods. In ancient Israel, they would not hit someone 40 times because of something taught in the Law of Moses (see: Deuteronomy 25:3). Instead, they hit someone 39 times.

See: Apostle; Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Law of Moses

Why did the apostles rejoice to be counted worthy to suffer dishonor for Jesus?

[5:41]

The apostles left the Sanhedrin rejoicing because they believed they were suffering to honor Jesus.

See: Apostle; Jewish Council (Sanhedrin)

Acts 6

6:1-7

What was a disciple?

[6:1]

See: Disciple

Who were the “Grecian” Jews and the Hebrews?

[6:1]

Scholars think the “Grecian Jews” were to Greek-speaking Jewish Christians. They think these Jews were raised in other countries and only spoke Greek. The Hebrews referred to Jewish Christians who spoke Hebrew or Aramaic.

What did it mean that the “widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food”?

[6:1]

The widows that were among the Grecian Jews were being “overlooked”(παρεβλέω/g3865) when the daily food was distributed. That is, they were not given food regularly. Instead, the Hebrew widows were given food instead.

What did Luke mean by saying, “give up the word of God in order to serve tables”?

[6:2]

Luke wrote about giving up the Word of God. He did not want the apostles to stop telling people about Jesus in order to do something else. The apostles did not think that it was right for them to stop teaching so they could make sure people were given food. Some scholars think this was because Jesus specifically commanded the apostles to preach and teach the message of the gospel. The apostles were not too great to serve people by giving them food.

See: Word of God; Apostle; Preach (Preacher); Gospel

Who were men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom?

[6:3]

A man of “good reputation” was a man who other people spoke well about. People trusted this type of man to do the right things. It was the Holy Spirit who gave these men the wisdom they needed to serve other people.

See: Filling of the Holy Spirit

Why did Luke write, we will always continue in prayer and in the ministry of the word?

[6:4]

Scholars think the apostles wanted to “devote”(προσκαρτερέω/G4674) themselves completely to prayer and teaching people about Jesus. They wanted to pray for people. They also wanted to preach and teach about Jesus and the things he taught.

See: Apostle; Pray (Prayer)

Why did the apostles place their hands upon the men chosen to the community?

[6:6]

When someone laid their hands on someone, they gave this permission to do something. The apostles then prayed for them while they laid their hands on these men.

See 13:1-3; 1 Tim. 4:14

See: Laying on of Hands ; Apostle

How did the priests become obedient to the faith?

[6:7]

When the priests became “obedient”(ὕπακούω/G5219) to the faith, they accepted that Jesus was the messiah God promised to Israel.

See: Priest (Priesthood); Messiah (Christ); Faith (Believe in)

6:8-14

How was Stephen full of grace and power?

[6:8]

How was Stephen full of grace and power. Because of God’s favor toward Stephen, God gave Stephen power in the Holy Spirit. Some scholars think the power God gave him was the power to do amazing miracles. Other scholars think that God gave Stephen great wisdom and courage to speak the truth about Jesus in a bold way.

See: Grace; Holy Spirit; Miracle

What was the “Synagogue of the Freedmen”?

[6:9]

The synagogue of freedom was a place where certain people went to worship God. These people were once slaves or prisoners of war who now lived in Jerusalem as free people.

See: Synagogue

How were the freedmen not able to stand against Stephen?

[6:10]

Stephen was wise and full of the Spirit. Because of this, some scholars think that when Luke said the freedmen “were not able to stand against” Stephen, he wanted to say that they could not prove that what Stephen was saying was wrong.

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

How did someone blaspheme Moses and God?

[6:11]

The people from the synagogue charged Stephen with blaspheming against Moses and against God. When he wrote about Moses, he was writing about the Law of Moses. These people accused Stephen of saying things that were untrue about the Law of Moses and God.

See: Blaspheme (Blasphemy); Synagogue; Law of Moses

What were the “holy place” and the “law” about which Luke wrote?

[6:13]

The “holy place” was the temple and the “law” referred to the rules for the running of the temple.

See: Temple; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart)

Were the witnesses right about what Stephen said about Jesus?

[6:13]

The witnesses misunderstood what Jesus taught about the temple and the Law of Moses. Jesus did say he would destroy the temple and in three days he would rebuild it again (see: John 2:19, 20). However, Jesus was using a metaphor. He was speaking about dying and being resurrected.

They said the same thing Stephen said. Stephen taught about what Jesus said, but people did not understand what Jesus meant about dying and resurrecting on the third day (see: Matthew 12:40). Jesus body was a temple of the Holy Spirit. Jesus also prophesied about the destruction of the Jewish Temple (see Luke 21:6). This happened about 40 years after Jesus died. So Stephen knew the current temple was temporary and the Law of Moses had been replaced after Jesus’ resurrection.

See: Witness (Martyr); Temple; Metaphor; Law of Moses; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Prophecy (Prophecy) ;Aton (Atonement)

What did Luke mean when he said Stephen’s face was “like the face of an angel”?

[6:15]

Luke wrote that Stephen’s face was like the face of an angel. Some scholars think Stephen’s face was shining in the same way that Moses’ face shone after God had talked with Moses (see: Exodus 34:29-35). Other scholars think Stephen’s face was shining because the Holy Spirit was completely controlling Stephen.

See: Angel; Holy Spirit

Acts 7

7:1-8

Why did Stephen call the council members his “brothers” and his “fathers”?

[7:2]

Stephen called these members of the council his “brothers” because they were all Jews. He called them “fathers” because they were older so he wanted to honor them when he spoke.

What did Stephen mean by calling their God “the God of glory”?

[7:2]

Scholars think the words “God of glory” referred to God’s glory. Though Stephen did not write how God showed himself to Abraham, scholars think it was in a way that Abraham knew that it was God.

See: Glory (Glorify)

Where were Mesopotamia and Haran?

[7:4]

See Map: Mesopotamia; Haran

Why did Stephen say God gave none of the land as an inheritance to Abraham?

[7:5]

Stephen said that God did not give any of the land as an inheritance to Abraham. Abraham did not possess the land that was promised to him. Instead, his descendants inherited the land promised to Abraham.

See: Canaan (Promised Land); Covenant with Abraham; Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

Where was the land where the descendants of Abraham went and became slaves?

[7:6]

The descendants of Abraham first went to the land of Egypt when Abraham’s great-grandson, Joseph, was sold into slavery there (see: Genesis 39:1-4; 46:3-4). They were slaves in Egypt for 400 years.

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Serve (Servant, Slave)

See Map: Egypt

Where was the place where God said Abraham’s descendants will worship him?

[7:7]

God said that Abraham’s descendants will worship him in Canaan.

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Worship

See Map: Canaan

What was the covenant of circumcision that God made with Abraham?

[7:8]

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Covenant with Abraham

What was a Patriarch?

[7:8]

The Patriarchs are the 12 sons of Jacob. The twelve tribes of Israel are named for each of the sons of Jacob.

See: Tribes of Israel; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

7:9-19

Why were Joseph's brothers jealous of Joseph?

[7:9]

Scholars think Joseph's brothers were "jealous" (ζηλόω/g2206) of him because their father, Jacob, showed more favor to Joseph than he did to the other brothers (see: Genesis 37:3-4).

What did Stephen mean by saying "our fathers"?

[7:11]

When Stephen spoke the words, "our fathers" he was referring to the twelve sons of Jacob.

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

Why did Joseph have to reveal himself to his brothers?

[7:13]

Scholars think that because Joseph lived in Egypt for thirteen years after his brothers sold him, Joseph acted and spoke in the same way the Egyptians did. Because of this, his brothers did not know him immediately. Joseph also spoke to his brothers through a translator to cause them to think he was an Egyptian (see: Genesis 42:23).

See Map: Egypt

Where was Shechem?

[7:16]

See Map: Shechem

Who was buried in Shechem?

[7:16]

Scholars think that Stephen was speaking about the twelve sons of Jacob when he spoke of those buried in Shechem.

What was "the time of the promise"?

[7:17]

Stephen spoke about the time of promise. Some scholars think Stephen was speaking about two different parts of the same promise. That is, God promised Abraham that he would give the land of Canaan to his descendants. The second part of the promise was that Abraham's descendants would first be enslaved in Egypt for 400 years (see: Genesis 15:13).

See: Covenant with Abraham; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Serve (Servant, Slave)

See Map: Canaan

What is important about the new king not knowing Joseph?

[7:18]

While Joseph was in Egypt, he became one of their most recognized leaders under Pharaoh. That is, everyone in Egypt knew Joseph. However, sixty years after Joseph died, a new king began to rule in Egypt. The new king hated and was very afraid of the people of Israel.

See Map: Egypt; Israel

7:20-36

How was something "beautiful before God"?

[7:20]

Scholars disagree about how something was beautiful before God. Some scholars think it meant that God was very pleased with Moses. Other scholars think this was something the Israelites said when they wanted to say that someone was a very beautiful child.

How was Moses placed outside?

[7:21]

Moses' parents hid Moses for three months without Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, knowing. Some scholars think that after three months, Moses' parents could no longer keep him hidden, so they placed him in a basket that was then placed in the river. This basket floated. They think this was done so that the king's daughter would find him (see: Exodus 2:3-10)

How had the daughter of Pharaoh adopted Moses and raised him as her own son?

[7:21]

Pharaoh was the king of Egypt. Pharaoh's daughter adopted Moses. Stephen meant that Pharaoh's daughter took Moses and cared for him, raising him up in her family as if Moses was her own son. She made him part of her own family.

How did Moses avenge an Israelite by "striking the Egyptian"?

[7:24]

When Stephen said that Moses avenged an Israelite by "striking the Egyptian," he wanted people to know that Moses killed the Egyptian. The Old Testament does not say how Moses killed the Egyptian (see: Exodus 2:12).

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

Why did the people ask, “Who made you a ruler and a judge over us”?

[7:27]

The people asked Moses, “who made you a ruler and a judge over us.” These people wanted to say that Moses was not a ruler over them and could not judge them.

See: Judge (Judgment)

Where was the land of Midian?

[7:29]

See Map: Midian

Where is the wilderness of Mt. Sinai?

[7:30]

See Map: Mt. Sinai

See: Sinai

Who was the “angel” who appeared to Moses?

[7:30]

The “angel” who appeared in a flame of fire to Moses was the angel of God. That is, God showed himself to Moses in the form of a flame (see: Exodus 3:2).

See: Angel

Why did God say that he was the God of Moses’ fathers--Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?

[7:32]

God revealed himself to Moses as the God of his fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Scholars think God wanted Moses to know that God kept his promises. That is, Moses experienced part of the covenant promise God made with Abraham.

See: Covenant; Covenant with Abraham; Reveal (Revelation)

Why did God command Moses to remove his sandals?

[7:33]

God commanded Moses to remove his sandals because God declared the place where he was standing was holy. When he did this, it was a sign of great respect and honor for God.

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Sign

How did God “come down” to rescue His people from their sufferings in Egypt?

[7:34]

God came down in the form of an angel to speak to Moses and to send Moses to rescue the Israelites. God was going with Moses to be with him to tell him what to say and do.

See: Angel

Where did God send Moses to deliver God’s people?

[7:35]

God sent Moses back to Egypt to deliver his people from the suffering and slavery.

See: Serve (Servant, Slave); People of God

See Map: Egypt

Why did Stephen speak about the people of Israel rejecting Moses?

[7:35]

Stephen spoke about the people of Israel rejecting Moses. Scholars think Stephen spoke about Israel rejecting Moses to show that Israel rejected many of the prophets God sent to them. Ultimately, the people of Israel rejected Jesus, the one Moses declared would come after him (see: 1 Corinthians 7:37, 51-52).

See: Prophet

How did Moses lead Israel out of Egypt?

[7:36]

Moses did many miracles so the king of Egypt would let the Israelites leave Egypt. However, he did not let them leave.

Then God used Moses to punish Egypt and help the Israelites leave Egypt.

See: Exodus 7-14

See: Miracle; Exodus

Where was the Red Sea and the wilderness of Mt. Sinai?

[7:36]

See Map: Red Sea; Mt. Sinai

7:37-43

What did Stephen mean by saying, “God will raise up a prophet”?

[7:37]

The words, “God will raise up a prophet” meant that God was going to appoint and send a prophet to the people of Israel. Scholars think Moses was speaking about the Messiah. Just as Moses was the mediator between the people of Israel and

God, so the Messiah is the greatest mediator who mediates between all the peoples of the world and God.

See: Prophet; Appoint; Messiah (Christ); Mediator

What were the “living words” Moses received to give to the Israelites?

[7:38]

Scholars think the “living words” about which Stephen spoke were the messages from God that told people how to live in a way that honored God. They think these “living words” were also seen in the laws given to Moses (see: Deuteronomy 30:15-20).

See: Law of Moses

What did Stephen mean when he said, “in their hearts they turned back to Egypt?”

[7:39]

Some scholars think that when Stephen spoke about the fathers who “in their hearts they turned back to Egypt,” he was speaking about the Israelites who wanted to return to Egypt where they had plenty to eat and drink. Fewer scholars think the fathers wanted to return to Egypt to reject God and worship the idols of Egypt.

See: Exodus 16:3; Numbers 11:4-6

See: Heart (Metaphor); Idolatry (Idol)

Where was Moses when the Israelites asked Aaron to make other gods to lead them?

[7:40]

Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the laws from God when the Israelites asked Aaron to make other gods. The Israelites were impatient, and wanted instead the kind of gods they worshipped in Egypt.

See: Exodus 32:1-6

See: Law of Moses; False gods; Idolatry (Idol)

See Map: Mount Sinai

Why did Aaron and the people make a calf as their idol?

[7:41]

Scholars think Aaron and the people made a calf as an idol because it was like the bull worship of the Egyptians.

See: Idolatry (Idol)

How did God give them up?

[7:42]

The words “God gave them up” meant that God let the Israelites go and follow their own desires. That is, God let the Israelites do the sins they wanted to do. Some scholars think that the Israelites sinned more and more, so God let them suffer the consequences of sinning.

See: Sin

What was the “book of the prophets”?

[7:42]

The “book of the prophets” referred to the last twelve books of the Old Testament. These books were also known as the books of the minor prophets. Stephen quoted from one of the minor prophets (see: Amos 5:25-27).

See: Prophet; Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

What was the “tabernacle of Molech” and the “star of the god Rephan?”

[7:43]

Scholars think the Israelites misused the tabernacle to worship false gods, Molech and the star of Rephan. Scholars think Molech represented the planet Venus, while the star of the god Rephan was the planet Saturn.

See: False gods; Tabernacle

What and where was Babylon?

[7:43] Babylon was in modern day Iraq and it represented a far away place from home and captivity as slaves. Stephen quoted the passage from Amos where God threatened to send the Israelites there as slaves because they worshipped idols.

See: Babylon; Serve (Servant, Slave); Idolatry (Idol)

See Map: Babylon

7:44-53

What was the tabernacle of the testimony?

[7:44]

See: Tabernacle; Testify (Testimony)

How did Israel gain possession of the promised land?

[7:45]

God gave the Israelites the land by driving out the people who were there. He did this by giving the Israelites good leaders like Joshua and by doing miracles (see: Joshua 6).

See: Canaan (Promised Land); Miracle

What did it mean that David “found favor in the sight of God”?

[7:46]

David “found favor in the sight of God.” That is he lived in a way that honored God.

What was a dwelling place for the God of Jacob?

[7:46]

David wanted to build a beautiful temple for God and for the Ark of the Covenant that represented God’s presence with the people. Jacob was the father of the 12 tribes of Israel.

See: Temple; Ark of the Covenant; Presence of God; Tribes of Israel

Who was Solomon?

[7:47]

Solomon was David’s son from his wife Bathsheba. He ruled Israel.

See: 1 Kings 6

What was the house that Solomon built?

[7:47]

Solomon built a house, which is the temple. This was a place where Israel could go to worship God. It was a house because it was where God’s presence was on the earth at that time.

See: Temple; Tribes of Israel; Presence of God

Did the Most High live in houses made with hands?

[7:48]

Stephen said the same thing that Isaiah wrote (see: Isaiah 66:1-2). He wanted to show that God is far greater than any house that can be made with human hands.

How did Stephen say the people of Israel acted?

[7:51] Stephen spoke about four different ways in which the people of Israel acted:

Stephen said the people were “stiff-necked.” This was a way of saying the people were very stubborn in doing wrong.

Scholars think the people did not want to obey God. Stephen said the Israelites were “uncircumcised in heart and ears.”

This meant that though the Israelites has the outward signs of belonging to God, they did not obey God, or even listen to him. That is, they acted like the people who did not believe in God. Stephen said to the Israelites “you always resist the Holy Spirit.” This meant the Israelites had a history of rejecting or fighting against the Holy Spirit (see Isaiah 63:10).

Stephen said to the Israelites “you act just as your fathers acted.” This meant the Israelites were doing the same thing as their ancestors who resisted the Holy Spirit by rejecting the messages of the prophets.

See: 1 Kings 19:14; Nehemiah 9:26; Luke 6:22-23; 11:49; 13:34

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Heart (Metaphor); Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Prophet

Did the people of Israel persecute every prophet?

[7:52]

Stephen asked a rhetorical question. That is, he did not expect any answer from the Israelites. The Israelites persecuted most of the prophets. They repeatedly rejected Moses, even though they said that Moses was their greatest teacher.

See: Matthew 23:29-36

See: Persecute (Persecution); Prophet

[7:52]### Who was the righteous one?

The righteous one was the Messiah. People knew that Stephen was talking about Jesus.

See: Isaiah 53:11; Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15

See: Messiah (Christ); Righteous (Righteousness)

What was Stephen accusing these members of the Jewish council of doing?

[7:52, 7:53]

Stephen accused the members of the Jewish council of being traitors (προδότες /g4273) and killing Jesus because they helped the Romans to kill Jesus (see John 19:11).

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin)

What was the law the “angels had established”?

[7:53]

Scholars think that God used angels to give the Law of Moses to the Israelites. That is, God created the Law of Moses and then sent his angels to deliver the Law of Moses (see: Deuteronomy 33:2; Galatians 3:19; Hebrews 2:2).

See: Angel; Law of Moses

7:54-60

Who were the council members?

[7:54]

The Council members were the religious leaders of the people, that is, the Sanhedrin.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin)

What was meant by the words, “cut to the heart”?

[7:54]

When Luke wrote that the council members were “cut to the heart,” it was a metaphor. It meant that the council members were extremely angry.

See: Heart (Metaphor); Metaphor; Jewish Council (Sanhedrin)

What did Luke mean when he said the council “ground their teeth at Stephen”?

[7:54]

When Luke wrote the words “ground their teeth at Stephen” he meant the council members were so angry they closed their mouths tightly. Perhaps they did this to not do some bad because they were angry.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin)

How was Stephen “full of the Holy Spirit”?

[7:55]

See: Filling of the Holy Spirit

Why was Jesus “standing at the right hand of God”?

[7:56]

Scholars think that Jesus being at the “right hand of God” was to show that Jesus had all the power of God and God gave him permission to rule everything. Some scholars think Jesus was “standing” to welcome Stephen into heaven. Stephen also called Jesus the “Son of Man.” Those who heard Stephen understood that Stephen was claiming that Jesus was God.

See: Heaven; Son of Man; Jesus is God

See: Mark 14:62; Daniel 7:13-14

How were the heavens opened?

[7:56]

The words that the heavens were opened was a way to say that God revealed things about heaven. God did this to honor Jesus. At the baptism of Jesus, the heavens were also opened and the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus.

See Matthew 3:16; Ezekiel 1:1

See: Heaven; Reveal (Revelation); Baptize (Baptism); Holy Spirit

Why did the council members stone Stephen?

[7:58]

Scholars think the Jewish council stoned Stephen to death because they believed he blasphemed God. They think he did this when he said that Jesus is God. However, this is not blasphemy because Jesus is God.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Blaspheme (Blasphemy); Jesus is God

Why did the witnesses lay their clothing at Saul’s feet?

[7:58]

Scholars think the witnesses laid their clothing at Saul’s feet simply so that he would guard the clothes while they cast stones at Stephen. Some scholars do not know if Saul was leading this stoning. Other scholars think he was just watching Stephen being stoned.

Who was Saul?

[7:58]

Saul was the same one who had the name Paul (see: Acts 13:9) He became an apostle.

See: Apostle

What did Stephen mean when he cried out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit”?

[7:59]

Scholars think that when Stephen cried out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” he was asking Jesus to welcome him into heaven, that he might be with Jesus. This prayer is very similar to that which Jesus himself prayed (see: Luke 23:6).

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Heaven

What did Stephen mean when he asked God to “not hold this sin against them”?

[7:59]

Scholars think Stephen prayed that Jesus would forgive the people who were stoning him. This prayer is very similar to the prayer Jesus prayed (see: Luke 23:34).

See: Sin

How did Stephen fall asleep?

[7:59]

When Luke wrote that Stephen “fell asleep,” he wanted to write that Stephen died.

Acts 8

8:1-3

How was Saul “in agreement” with Stephen’s death?

[8:1]

Saul thought that Stephen should die. When the angry people threw stones at Stephen, Saul guarded their clothes they took off themselves (see: Acts 7:58). Scholars think Saul later changed his name to Paul after he became a Christian.

See Acts 22:20

What was a “great persecution”?

[8:1]

A “strong and violent persecution” began when the angry people killed Stephen. The people from a certain synagogue organized attacks in Jerusalem. They put many Christians in prison. Saul went from house to house and put Christians in prison (see: Acts 8:3). The Christians who were not in prison quickly left Jerusalem and went to Samaria and other places in Judea to escape persecution. Only the apostles stayed in Jerusalem at that time.

Some scholars think those who left Jerusalem were the Greek-speaking Jewish Christians and not the Hebrew and Aramaic speaking Jewish Christians. The Hebrew and Aramaic speaking Jewish Christians were more loyal to Jerusalem. Other scholars think the persecution was stronger against the Greek-speaking Jewish Christians. Thus, the apostles, who were Hebrew and Aramaic speaking Jewish Christians, were able to stay in Jerusalem.

See: 1 Thessalonians 2:14

See: Persecute (Persecution); Synagogue; Apostle

See Map: Jerusalem; Samaria; Judea

Who were the “devout men” who buried Stephen?

[8:2]

The “devout men” were men who feared God and lived in a way that honored God. These men took Stephen’s body to bury it in the way the Law of Moses required. Scholars think these men believed in Jesus.

See: Fear of God; Law of Moses

8:4-8

What was “preaching the word”?

[8:4]

See: Galatians 2:19-20

See: Preach (Preacher); Word of God; Gospel

What was “proclaimed to them the Christ”?

[8:5]

Philip told those in Samaria the important story about the messiah. He told them that Jesus was the messiah of the Jewish and Samaritan people, and that he lived a perfect life. Jesus did many miracles and taught them about God. Jesus suffered, died, and became alive again on the third day.

See: Messiah (Christ); Miracle; Atonement (Atonement); Resurrect (Resurrection)

See Map: Samaria

Who was Philip?

[8:5]

Philip was one of the seven brothers the Christians chose to help widows (see: Acts 6:5).

How did people give “close attention”?

[8:6]

The crowds listened together with complete attention. All of the people watched and listened to what Philip said because he did miracles and he spoke strongly.

See: Miracle

What was a sign?

[8:6]

A sign was a miracle that God did and people were able to see it (see: Acts 8:7).

See: Miracle; Sign

What is an unclean spirit?

[8:7]

An unclean spirit is an evil spirit. It is also called a demon. Unclean spirits and demons obey Satan.

See: Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Demon; Satan (The Devil)

What was a paralyzed person? A lame person?

[8:7]

A paralyzed person was someone who was partially or completely unable to move.

A lame person was someone who was injured or had an illness and were not able to walk well or they were not able to walk at all.

8:9-13

Why did the people think God gave power to the man who did sorcery?

[8:9]

The people believed God gave power to the man who did sorcery because he did amazing things for a long time and he claimed to be someone great (see: Acts 8:9,11).

See: Sorcery

What was the gospel of the kingdom of God?

[8:12]

See: Gospel; Kingdom of God

What did the people do after they believed the good news about Jesus and the kingdom of God?

[8:12]

The people, both men and women, were baptized immediately after they believed the good news about Jesus and the kingdom of God.

See: Baptize (Baptism); Gospel; Kingdom of God

Why did Simon, who had great power of God, believe and be baptized?

[8:13]

Simon believed and was baptized because he was surprised when he saw the signs and mighty works Philip did with God's power. That is, the Samaritans thought Simon had great power of God, but Simon himself was amazed when he saw God's power through Philip. Simon knew about power from God and he knew something more powerful than his power worked through Philip. His trust in miracles and power was not enough for him to believe for very long. He soon became more interested in power than in believing (see: Acts 8:18-19). Jesus knew Simon was thinking in the wrong way (see: John 2:23-24).

See: Baptize (Baptism); Sign

8:14-25

What did the apostles in Jerusalem think about the Samaritans believing in Jesus, the Messiah?

[8:14]

The apostles in Jerusalem were glad the Samaritans believed in Jesus and they were not surprised. They did, however, feel it was their duty to inspect the new work to make sure it was true and good (see: Acts 11:22). Before, John went to Samaria because before that he wanted Jesus to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans for rejecting Jesus since Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem (see: Luke 9:52-55). Now, John went to see for himself if the Samaritans believed in Jesus. Then, John told other Samaritan villages about Jesus and the gospel (see: Acts 8:25).

See: Apostle; Samaria; Fire; Heaven; Gospel

See Map: Jerusalem

How did Samaria receive the "word" of God?

[8:14]

Samaria received the "word" (λόγος/g3056) of God when they believed Jesus is the messiah, the Son of God, and the power of salvation (see: Romans 1:2-5). It was a way to say they believed the things Philip said about Jesus, who is the "Word" of God (see: John 1:1).

See: Word of God; Messiah (Christ); Son of God; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Why did the apostles send Peter and John to Samaria?

[8:14]

Scholars give several reasons why the apostles sent Peter and John to Samaria.

The Jewish Christians in Jerusalem needed evidence that God accepted the Samaritans. The Jews in general did not accept the Samaritans because the Samaritans were a mixed race of Jews who married Gentiles (see: 2 Kings 17:26). So the apostles sent Peter and John to see the new work of God in Samaria.

It was necessary for the apostles from Jerusalem to welcome the Samaritan Christians. Then the Christians in Jerusalem would be able to fully include Samaritan Christians into the Christian community. The Christian community was only Jewish people until that time.

It was not necessary for the apostles from the Jerusalem church to welcome the Samaritan Christians. Luke did not write it was necessary. Later, Paul wrote that other Christians who were not apostles baptized people (see: 1 Corinthians 1:14-17).

God wanted to use the apostles when the first Gentiles received the Holy Spirit.

See: Apostle; Samaria; Gentile; Baptize (Baptism); Holy Spirit

See Map: Samaria

Why did Luke write "to come down" to Samaria?

[8:15]

Samaria was lower in elevation from Jerusalem. Jerusalem is high in elevation. So they came down to Samaria from Jerusalem.

See: Samaria

What happened when the apostles Peter and John prayed and laid hands on the Samaritans for them to receive the Holy Spirit?

[8:15, 8:16, 8:17]

Luke did not write what happened when the apostles Peter and John prayed and laid hands on the Samaritans for them to receive the Holy Spirit. Some scholars think they spoke in tongues because that happened at other times when the Holy

Spirit filled people in Acts (see: Acts 2:4; 10:44-46; 19:6). Other scholars think there were other gifts of the Spirit or signs because Luke did not write the Samaritans spoke in tongues.

See: Baptize (Baptism); Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Holy Spirit; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Pray (Prayer; Laying on of Hands); Samaria; Speaking in Tongues; Sign

Why did Simon want to give the apostles money to give the Holy Spirit to people?

[8:18]

Simon wanted to do the same things an apostle did. Then he will have the power to give people the Holy Spirit when he laid his hands on people. He liked having power and this was another way for him to have power over people and bring glory to himself.

See: Apostle; Holy Spirit; Laying on of Hands ; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Glory (Glorify)

Why did Peter rebuke Simon for wanting to buy the power of God from the apostles?

[8:20, 8:21]

Peter rebuked Simon for wanting to buy the free gift of God with money. The Holy Spirit was not for sale. People did not need money to have the gifts of God (see: Acts 8:20). Instead, a person repented and believed in Jesus. God's gift of the Holy Spirit to live in everyone was a free gift for all who believed in him.

See: Acts 3:6

See: Holy Spirit; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Repent (Repentance); Redeem (Redemption)

What did Peter wish will perish?

[8:20]

Peter wanted Simon to not have money. Peter did not wish for Simon to die.

What was the "part or allotted portion" for which Simon did not have the right heart?

[8:21]

Peter and John knew Simon did not have the right heart. That is, he did not think the right things and they did not think Simon should be a leader.

See: Heart (Metaphor)

When was a person's heart not right with God?

[8:21]

A person's heart was not right with God when a person did not live in a way that honors God or does not want to live in a way that honors God.

See: Heart (Metaphor)

Why did Peter say God "might perhaps forgive"?

[8:22]

Peter did not question if God was able to forgive Simon. He said these words because he did not know if God will forgive Simon. His sin of offering money for the gift of God was a serious sin. God will not allow man to control God (see: 2 Samuel 6:1-7).

See: Joshua 7:1

How did a person repent?

[8:22]

See: Repent (Repentance)

How was Simon "in the poison of bitterness and in the bonds of unrighteousness"?

[8:23]

Some scholars think Simon was still controlled by his old self. That is he sinfully wanted power and glory. Simon was a Christian. He believed the message from Philip and he was baptized, but he still wanted to do evil (see: Romans 7:8,19). Other scholars think Simon was not a Christian. He was not part of the kingdom of God (see: John 8:31,44-47). Simon really wanted to have power over others by having the permission to give the Holy Spirit to others. If he repented and asked God's forgiveness, then God would forgive and heal him. Then, God would give him the Holy Spirit to help him to stop sinning and wanting to sin

See: Deuteronomy 29:17-18

See: Faith (Believe in); Baptize (Baptism); Old and New Self; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Holy Spirit; Repent (Repentance); Sin

How did Simon respond to Peter?

[8:24]

Simon did not respond according to what Peter said. Peter told Simon to pray and repent. Instead Simon asked Peter to pray for him.

See: Pray (Prayer; Repent (Repentance))

8:26-31

What is an angel?

[8:26]

See: Angel

Where was Gaza?

[8:26]

See Map: Gaza

Where was Ethiopia?

[8:27]

Ethiopia, or Cush, was where the ancient kingdom of Nubia was located. It was in the southern part of Egypt in what today includes part of Sudan.

See Map: Ethiopia; Sudan; Cush.

What was a eunuch?

[8:27]

A eunuch was a man whose testicles were cut off. This was usually done for a certain purpose. Sometimes this was done so the man could guard the women in a royal palace. This eunuch was the treasurer for the queen of the Ethiopians. He had great power. In Israel, a eunuch was not allowed in the military and could not worship God with other people. God did not want the people of Israel to make their boys eunuchs (see: Genesis 1:27-28).

See: Worship

Why did the eunuch go to Jerusalem to worship?

[8:27]

The eunuch went to Jerusalem to worship God because he feared the God of Israel. However, because this man was an eunuch and a gentile, he was not allowed to go into the temple area. He was reading the book of Isaiah. Some scholars say he wanted to see the memorial for eunuchs inside the temple (see Isaiah 56:3-5). Other scholars say the prophecy of Isaiah became complete when this eunuch believed in Jesus and was baptized (see: Isaiah 56:3-7). There was also another Ethiopian eunuch who went to Jerusalem (see Jeremiah 38:7-13).

See: Leviticus 23

See: Worship; Fear of God; Gentile; Temple; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Baptize (Baptism)

What was a chariot?

[8:28]

A chariot was a two-wheel vehicle pulled by horses or a horse. It was often used for war or racing. Certain leaders travelled in chariots to go from one place to another place. Since this eunuch was the treasurer of the queen of the Ethiopians, this was a larger chariot.

See: Chariot

How was the man reading?

[8:28]

The man was reading aloud from the book of Isaiah and Philip heard him reading. In ancient times, people did not often read silently.

See: Isaiah 53:7-8

Why did the man not understand the things Isaiah wrote about?

[8:30, 8:31]

The man did not understand the things Isaiah wrote about because he did not have anyone to explain this prophecy. He asked Philip to sit beside him and tell him about what Isaiah wrote (see: Isaiah 53).

Whom did the prophet Isaiah write about in Isaiah 53?

[8:32, 8:33, 8:34, 8:35]

The prophet Isaiah wrote about Jesus in Isaiah 53. It was a prophecy about a servant of God who was persecuted. Isaiah wrote about Jesus. The servant of God suffered and was rejected for other people. That is, God forgave others because Jesus died. However, the suffering servant prophesied about Jesus' resurrection when Isaiah spoke about Jesus seeing the light of life again (see: Isaiah 53:11).

See: Atonement (Atonement); Prophecy (Prophecy); Persecute (Persecution); Resurrect (Resurrection)

What things did the eunuch read from Isaiah 53 about the death of Jesus?

[8:32, 8:33, 8:34, 8:35]

The eunuch read several things read from Isaiah 53 about the death of Jesus.

Jesus was led like sheep to the slaughter. This is a metaphor. Jesus died in the same way sheep died. Sheep follow and go where they are led, even if they will die. Jesus died to obey God and was willing to die to obey God.

Jesus was silent like a lamb before his shearer. This is a metaphor. Jesus did not argue with God to try to keep living. He did not try to stop people from killing him. He did not open his mouth (see: Matthew 26:62, 63).

In his humiliation, justice was taken away from Jesus. That is, Jesus was humble and did not speak and try to defend himself. People said he was guilty and punished him even though he was innocent.

No one can give a full account of all of Jesus' descendants. That is, Jesus has more children than anyone can count. Jesus did not have any children and never had sex. However, all Christians are part of Jesus' family and are children of God.

See: Prophet; Prophecy (Prophecy); Crucify (Crucifixion); Metaphor; Lamb of God; Punish (Punishment); Family of God; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

Why did the eunuch ask to be baptized?

[8:36]

The eunuch asked to be baptized because Philip explained the prophet Isaiah's words about Jesus. That is, if someone believed in Jesus, then they should be baptized. The eunuch believed in Jesus so he asked to be baptized. There was much more about "the gospel about Jesus" Philip told the eunuch that Luke did not write. This was why Luke wrote, "Beginning with this Scripture." Philip began with the Scripture from Isaiah that the eunuch was reading, but Philip explained more than just those few verses.

See: Baptize (Baptism); Prophet

Did Luke write verse 37?

[8:37]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament have verse 37. More and older copies of the Greek New Testament do not have verse 37. Scholars do not think Luke wrote the words in verse 37.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible)

How did the Spirit of the Lord take Phillip away?

[8:39]

The Spirit of the Lord took Philip away miraculously. That is, Philip vanished quickly and then he appeared somewhere else. The Spirit of the Lord is also called the Holy Spirit.

See: 1 Kings 18:12; 2 Kings 2:16; Ezekiel 3:14; 8:3

See: Holy Spirit; Lord

Why did the eunuch go on his way with rejoicing?

[8:39]

The eunuch experienced the same joy the Samaritans did when they believed in Jesus (see: Acts 8:8). The eunuch continued on the road home "rejoicing" (χαίρω/G5463) or "being glad." It did not matter to him that God took away Philip.

See: Rejoice (Joy, Joyful); Samaria

Where were Azotus and Caesarea?

[8:40]

Azotus was the Greek name of the city of Ashdod in the Old Testament.

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

See Map: Azotus

Acts 9

9:1-9

What was a high priest?

[9:1]

See: High Priest

How was the high priest in Jerusalem able to approve Saul's request to bring people back to Jerusalem?

[9:2]

At that time the high priest in Jerusalem had permission to bring back a prisoner to Jerusalem from other areas under Roman control. Saul looked for Christians who left Jerusalem when the people persecuted Christians (see: Acts 8:1).

See: Persecute (Persecution)

See Map: Jerusalem

What was a synagogue?

[9:2]

See: Synagogue

Where was Damascus?

[9:2]

See Map: Damascus

What was "the way"?

[9:2]

"The way" was a name for Christians (see: Acts 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22).

See: John 14:6

What did Saul want to do when he found Christians in Damascus?

[9:2]

Saul wanted to bring Christians back to Jerusalem in ropes or chains to punish them (see Acts 22:5). The high priest and the Jewish council in Jerusalem gave permission to Paul to bring Christians back to Jerusalem. He also planned to kill Christians and destroy the church (see: Acts 8:3; 9:1; 22:4-5).

See: Persecute (Persecution); Punish (Punishment); Church

Why did Saul fall to the ground?

[9:4]

Saul fell to the ground because he was blinded by the very bright light from heaven. It was mid-day so the light shone even more than the sun. He was not able to see any more. Luke used the same word for a lightning flash. Thus, Saul saw a light bigger than a lightning flash around him that blinded him. However, it did not make the men with him blind.

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Heaven

Why did Saul call the person speaking “Lord”?

[9:5]

Some scholars think Saul did not know who spoke, so he used the word “sir” or “master” out of respect or fear. Other scholars think he said “Lord”(κύριος/g2962) to talk to God because the voice he heard seemed to be God. However, Saul did not know at first who it was because he had to ask who spoke to him (see: Acts 9:17,27; 1 Corinthians 15:8). The voice replied to Saul’s question and told Saul it was Jesus who spoke.

See: Lord

Why were the men with Saul speechless?

[9:7]

The flash of light from above and then heard Saul speak but could not see to whom he was speaking. This made the men afraid so that they were not able to speak. They heard the voice but the words of the voice came only to Saul. They saw the bright light shining all around but it did not blind them and they did not see anyone.

See Acts 22:9

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

Why did Saul not eat or drink for three days?

[9:9]

Saul was not able to see for three days. Some scholars think he was still in shock so he did not want to eat. Other scholars think he was praying and fasting to repent (see: Acts 9:11). He felt terrible about killing and persecuting Christians because Jesus told him when he persecuted Christians, Saul actually persecuted Jesus.

See: Fasting; Repent (Repentance); Pray (prayer); Persecute (Persecution)

9:10-19

How did Ananias become a disciple?

[9:10]

Luke did not write how Ananias became a disciple of Jesus. Some scholars think he came from Jerusalem after people began persecuting Christians. Other scholars think he lived in Damascus and heard the gospel.

See: Discipline (To Disciple); Persecute (Persecution); Gospel

See Map: Jerusalem; Damascus

What was a vision?

[9:10]

See: Vision

Why did the Lord tell Ananias the name of the street?

[9:11]

Jesus told Ananias the name of the street so he was able to find the right house where Saul was staying. Straight Street was the long street that ran east to west through Damascus.

See Map: Damascus

Who was Judas?

[9:11]

Judas was a Jew and the host of Saul when Saul came to Damascus. He was not the same person as Judas Iscariot.

See Map: Damascus

Where was Tarsus?

[9:11]

Paul was from Tarsus, but he moved from Tarsus to Jerusalem to study Judaism (see: Acts 22:3). He came to Damascus directly from Jerusalem.

See Map: Tarsus

Why did the Lord want Ananias to lay hands on Saul?

[9:12]

Some scholars think Jesus wanted Ananias to lay hands on Saul so Saul will see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit. That is, the laying on of hands made Saul receive the Holy Spirit in the same way Peter and John prayed and laid hands on the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit (see: Acts 8:14-17). Other scholars think Jesus called Saul to serve him and then Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit after his baptism (see: Acts 9:18). In ancient Israel, the Israelites laid on hands so people were able to know God wanted someone to do something (See Numbers 8:10; 27:18).

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Holy Spirit; Laying on of Hands ; Pray (prayer); Samaria; Baptize (Baptism)

Who were the Lord's holy people?

[9:13]

The Lord's holy people or holy ones were Christians. The New Testament wrote Christians were holy people because God forgave them (see Ephesian 1:1,4,7).

See: Holy Ones; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); People of God

What was a chief priest?

[9:14]

See: Chief Priest

Why did people call upon the Lord's name?"

[9:14]

People called upon the Lord's name to ask Jesus to save them. That is, anyone who believed in Jesus became a Christian (See Acts 4:12; 26:16-18). Saul was coming to get any Christians and bring them to Jerusalem in chains.

See: Lord

How was Saul a chosen instrument for God?

[9:15]

God chose Saul to be an apostle to bring the gospel to people. Saul was going to tell kings and rulers of the Gentiles and the Jews about Jesus. He told them he has seen and heard Jesus after Jesus died (see: Acts 22:15).

See: Apostle; Gospel; Gentile; Resurrect (Resurrection)

How did Saul "suffer for the cause of my name"?

[9:16]

Saul will suffer to serve Jesus. He was persecuted because he told many people about Jesus. Saul was often put in prison for telling people about Jesus.

See: Acts 16:16-40; 17:-9; 21:30-36; 22:21-29; 27:27-28:6; 2 Corinthians 6:4-5; 11:23-27

How was someone filled with the Holy Spirit?

[9:17]

See: Filling of the Holy Spirit

Why was Ananias able to call Saul "brother"?

[9:17]

Ananias was able to call Saul "brother"(ἀδελφός/g0080) because Jesus told Ananias that Saul was a different man. The word "brother"(ἀδελφός/g0080) was a gentle term to tell Saul he was no longer an enemy of Christians. Saul was now part of the family of God.

See: Family of God

Why was Saul baptized?

[9:18]

Saul was baptized to obey Jesus (see: Matthew 28:18-20). Saul was also able to receive the promise of the Holy Spirit (see: Matthew 3:16; Acts 19:5-6).

See: Baptize (Baptism); Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Why did Saul stay with the disciples in Damascus for several days?

[9:19]

Some scholars think Saul stayed with the disciples in Damascus to learn from them about Jesus. Other scholars think Jesus revealed to Saul everything he needed to know about Jesus (see: Galatians 1:11-12).

The Christians in Damascus wanted to give Saul a safe place to stay. The Jews wanted to harm him (see: Acts 9:23).

See: Discipline (To Disciple); Reveal (Revelation)

See Map: Damascus

9:20-25

How did Saul right away proclaim "Jesus in the synagogues"?

[9:20]

Some scholars think the high priest and Jewish council in Jerusalem gave permission to Saul to teach people about Jesus. Other scholars think Jesus gave Saul permission to do this. Saul told the Jews Jesus is the Son of God and he proved Jesus is the messiah. He told the Jews about what he saw and heard on the road to Damascus (see: Acts 9:20). He wanted them to know Jesus was resurrected and Jesus spoke to him.

See: Synagogue; Son of God; Messiah (Christ); Heresy; Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Resurrect (Resurrection)

See Map: Damascus

Why did Luke write, "But Saul became more and more powerful?"

[9:22]

Luke wrote, "But Saul became more and more powerful," because Saul became more effective in proving that Jesus is the Son of God and the promised messiah. It did not mean Saul was getting stronger physically.

See: Son of God; Messiah (Christ)

Why did Saul distress the Jews in Damascus?

[9:22]

Saul distressed the Jews in Damascus because they thought Saul went there to bring Christians back to Jerusalem. Instead, he became a Christian and persuaded other Jews to also believe in Jesus.

See Map: Damascus

Why did the Jews in Damascus want to kill Saul?

[9:23]

The Jews in Damascus wanted to kill Saul because they thought he tried to make Jews worship other gods (see: Deuteronomy 13:6-11). The Jews were wrong to think that. They did not believe Jesus is the Son of God and the messiah. See: Son of God; Messiah (Christ); Worship; False gods

Who were Saul's disciples?

[9:25]

Scholars think Saul's disciples were people in Damascus who Saul helped to believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the messiah.

See: Disciple; Son of God; Messiah (Christ)

9:26-30

Why were the disciples in Jerusalem afraid of Saul?

[9:26]

The disciples in Jerusalem remembered how Saul helped people to stone Stephen and other Christians. They had not heard that Saul became a Christian.

Who were the Grecian Jews?

[9:29]

The Grecian Jews were the ones who made trouble for Stephen and who stoned him when Saul looked upon this.

Where was Caesarea?

[9:30]

See Map: Caesarea

9:31-35

Where were Judea, Galilee, and Samaria?

[9:31]

See Map: Judea; Galilee; Samaria

How was the church one?

[9:31]

The church was one. That is, they all served Jesus together.

How was the church built up?

[9:31]

The church in Jerusalem was built up. That is, more people became Christians.

See: Church

How did the church "walk in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit"?

[9:31]

The church walked in fear of the Lord. They honored God and did the things God wanted them to do. They knew God has power and is very holy. Yet, they did not fear people because the Holy Spirit comforted them.

See: Walk; Fear of God; Holy Spirit

Who were God's holy people?

[9:32]

See: Holy Ones; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); People of God

Where was Lydda?

[9:32]

See Map: Lydda

How did God completely heal Aeneas?

[9:33, 9:34]

God completely healed Aeneas when he was no longer paralyzed after eight years. That is, there was nothing to make him paralyzed. It was the same as if he was not paralyzed for eight years. Also, God healed him right away. Peter told him to make his bed because he was not going to need it there anymore. He was healed.

How did everyone in Lydda and Sharon turn to the Lord?

[9:35]

Everyone in Lydda and Sharon saw the healed man and they heard how he was healed, so they believed in Jesus. That is, they turned away from the things God did not want them to do and believed in Jesus.

See: Repent (Repentance)

See Map: Sharon; Lydda

9:36-43

Where was Joppa?

[9:36]

See Map: Joppa

Why did Luke write Tabitha was translated to Dorcas?

[9:36]

Luke wrote Tabitha was translated to Dorcas because Tabitha was the woman's name in the Aramaic language. Dorcas was her name in the Greek language. Peter and others called her Tabitha.

Why did they wash the dead woman and place her in the upper room?

[9:37]

In ancient times, some people washed a body before they buried it. These people heard Peter healed the paralyzed man in Lydda. So they put her body in the upper room and asked Peter to come there. They were Christians, and because Tabitha helped the poor, they hoped God will make her alive again.

According to the Law of Moses, these people needed to bury Tabitha before sundown so they sent two men to ask Peter to come right away. Even though Lydda was near Joppa, it took three or four hours for him to walk from Lydda to Joppa.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Law of Moses

See Map: Lydda; Joppa

Why did the widows show Peter the tunics and garments Tabitha made?

[9:39]

The widows showed Peter the clothes Tabitha made. They wanted Peter to know how generous and kind Tabitha was to them. It was a way for Peter to know who she really was and convince him to ask God to make her alive again.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Peter ask everyone to leave the room?

[9:40]

Peter asked everyone to leave the upper room so he was able to pray for her without anyone doing or saying anything against him praying to God. He prayed a similar prayer that Jesus prayed when Jesus made Jairus's daughter alive again (see: Mark 5:41).

See: Matthew 10:8

See: Pray (prayer)

Why did Peter stay in Joppa?

[9:43]

Luke did not write why Peter stayed in Joppa. Scholars think he stayed to teach the many Christians there because of the miracle God did for Tabitha (see Acts 9:42).

Acts 10

10: 1-8

Where was Caesarea?

[10:1]

See Map: Caesarea

What was a centurion in the "Italian Regiment"?

[10:1]

A centurion in the "Italian Regiment" was an officer in the Roman army. He lead about eighty soldiers. The Roman army recruited these soldiers in Italy.

See Map: Italy

Why was Cornelius a devout man?

[10:2]

Cornelius was a devout man because he worshipped God, but he was not a Jew. He was not circumcised. He helped the poor and he often prayed (see: Acts 10:4).

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Pray (Prayer)

Who was included in Cornelius' household?

[10:2]

The household of Cornelius included his wife, children, and all relatives living in his home. It also included his servants and their children.

See: Serve

What time was "the ninth hour of the day"?

[10:3]

"The ninth hour of the day" was about 3 PM. It was during the hot part of the day. What was a vision?

See: Vision

Why was Cornelius “very afraid” of the angel?

[10:4]

Cornelius was “very afraid” of the angel because the angel knew him. Cornelius was not dreaming (see: Acts 10:10). Instead, Cornelius was fully awake.

See: Luke 2:9

See: Angel

What was a “memorial offering”?

[10:5]

The angel spoke about the prayers of Cornelius and his gifts to the poor as if they were a sacrifice that God had commanded the Israelites to give. Here the angel called what Cornelius had done a “memorial offering.” A “memorial” is something that reminds someone about a person or about something that happened. A memorial offering was an offering that was burned. The aroma of the burnt offering was said to smell good to God. That is, God was pleased with the offering and accepted it. The memorial offering shows the person that God remembers them and hears their prayers. In this situation, God had heard the prayers of Cornelius and had seen what Cornelius had done.

See: Pray (Prayer); Sacrifice; Offer (Offering); Fragrant Offering (Aroma)

Where was Joppa?

[10:5]

See Map: Joppa

Why did the angel tell Cornelius to send for Peter?

[10:5]

The angel told Cornelius to send for Peter because he was the apostle Jesus called the rock (see: Matthew 16:18-19). Peter’s name was Simon, but Jesus called him Peter. Peter was the name for “rock.” Jesus was going to build his church upon Peter, the rock.

See: Angel; Apostle; Church

Where was Peter?

[10:6]

Peter was visiting with a tanner named Simon. A tanner worked with leather skin.

What was a house servant?

[10:7]

A house servant was a person who helped with housework by preparing food and cleaning. Sometimes they helped a leader of an army and did not do the cleaning. They were trusted servants. Scholars think they took horses since it was fifty kilometers away, and they brought an extra horse for Peter to ride on the way back to Joppa.

See: Serve

See Map: Joppa

How was this man a devout soldier?

[10:7]

Scholars think this soldier worshipped God since Cornelius told them everything about his vision (see: Acts 10:8). For the servants and this soldier to talk with Peter about the vision, they needed to believe and worship God in the way Cornelius did. They also needed to listen to and follow the Holy Spirit.

See: Worship; Vision; Holy Spirit

10:9-16

What time was the “sixth hour”?

[10:9]

The “sixth hour” was midday, about noon.

Why did Peter go up to the housetop to pray?

[10:9]

Peter went to the housetop to pray because he was able to pray to God alone there. The roofs were flat. People used an outer stairway to go up and down from the housetop. Often there was a cover to give people shade.

See: Pray (Prayer)

What was a “trance”?

[10:10]

A “trance” (ἐκστασις/g1611) was something that happened to a person. Sometimes it was a dream. Peter’s trance was stronger than the vision God gave to Cornelius. Often, a person focused on what God showed him and he was no longer aware of anything near him.

See: Vision

Why were there different animals in this large sheet?

[10:12]

The four-footed animals, things that crawled on the earth, and birds of the sky were the three groups of living things God created and delivered in Noah's ark (see: Genesis 6:20). God was saying all of creation was open to Peter. The news about Jesus was going to all of creation. This includes Gentiles, Jews, slaves, free people, women, and men (see: Galatians 3:28).
See: Clean and Unclean; Gentile; Serve

Why did the voice tell Peter to rise, kill, and eat?

[10:13]

God told Peter to rise, kill, and eat the unclean animals because he wanted people to know that it was not evil to eat these things. God did not want people to follow the Law of Moses anymore. God also wanted the Jews to know that the Gentiles could become Christians.

See: Clean and Unclean; Fellowship

Why did Peter not want to eat unclean food?

[10:14]

Peter did not want to eat unclean food because he always obeyed the law of Moses (see: Ezekiel 4:14). However, Peter did not know God's new and bigger plan. The new and bigger plan was that both Jews and Gentiles were joined together in some way and could both become Christians.

10:17-23

How many men looked for Peter?

[10:17]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament say that three men looked for Peter. Some scholars note it was the same number Luke wrote in verse seven. Fewer ancient copies of the Greek New Testament say that two men looked for Peter. Some scholars say two men spoke to Peter and the third man was a guard. Some ancient copies did now say how many men looked for Peter. Some scholars say Luke did not write how many men there were in the same way he wrote verse seventeen. Scholars think Luke wrote that three men looked for Peter.

What nationality was Cornelius?

[10:22]

Cornelius was a Gentile from Italy (see: Acts 10:1).

See: Gentile

See Map: Italy

Who were the brothers from Joppa?

[10:23]

The brothers were Jewish Christian men from Joppa.

See: Family of God

See Map: Joppa

10:24-33

Why did Cornelius fall down at the feet of Peter?

[10:25]

Cornelius fell down at Peter's feet and honored him because God sent Peter. Cornelius did not want to worship Peter but Peter wanted to be sure of this so he told Cornelius to get up. Peter was only a man in the same way Cornelius was a man (see: Acts 10:26).

See: Worship

To whom was Peter talking?

[10:26]

Peter was talking with Cornelius when they entered into the house. Then Peter addressed the crowd of relatives and close friends of Cornelius. They were Gentiles so Peter wanted to let them know he was not permitted to come inside a Gentile home. However, God changed this and Peter went into the house of a Gentile (see: Acts 10:28).

See: Gentile

How did Peter know God did not want him to call any person unclean or impure?

[10:28]

Peter knew God did not want him to call any person unclean because Peter believed the vision God gave him. The vision was a sheet with all kinds of animals, both pure and impure, that he saw coming from heaven. It was a sign of God accepting all people if they believed in Jesus (see: Acts 10:35).

See: Clean and Unclean; Offer (Offering); Heaven; Sign

Whom did Cornelius see "in bright clothing"?

[10:30]

Cornelius saw an angel of God "in bright clothing" (see: Acts 10:3).

See: Angel; Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

What was a tanner?

[10:32]

A tanner was someone who worked with leather to make it certain colors and thicknesses.

What did Luke write in verse 32?

[10:32]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament have the words about Peter coming and speaking at the end of verse 32. Older and more copies of the Greek New Testament do not have these words. Scholars do not think Luke wrote these words.

10:34-43

Why did Peter say “God is not partial”?

[10:34]

Peter said “God is not partial” because God is just. God knows what a person thinks. Peter thought about how God equally judges and loves the Jews and the Gentiles.

See: People of God; Gentile

Why did Peter say Jesus will be the “Judge of the living and the dead”?

[10:42]

Peter said Jesus will be the “Judge of the living and the dead.” One day, Jesus will judge all people.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Judge (Judgment); Day of Judgment

10:44-48

How did the Holy Spirit fall on the Gentiles?

[10:44]

The Holy Spirit “fell”(ἐπιπίπτω/g1968) (see: Acts 10:44) on the Gentiles in the same way the Holy Spirit was “poured out”(ἐκχέω/g1632) (see: Acts 10:45) on the Gentiles to work in them. Some scholars think Peter was thinking about how the Holy Spirit came from heaven. Other scholars think this meant that people began to speak in tongues and began to praise God (see: Acts 2:4,11).

See: Gentile; Filling of the Holy Spirit; Holy Spirit; Speaking in Tongues

What was the gift of the Holy Spirit poured out on the Gentiles?

[10:44]

Some scholars think the gift of the Holy Spirit was the power of God to help people live in a way that honors God (see: John 14:15-18; 16:5-15). Other scholars think it was the power of God to tell other people in the world about Jesus (see: Acts 1:8). In this story, the power caused the Gentile listeners to speak in tongues and to praise God(see: Acts 10:46,43).

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Gentile; Speaking in Tongues

When did God save Cornelius and his household?

[10:44]

God saved Cornelius and his household when Peter they each believed in Jesus (see: Acts 11:14; 10:39-40,43). Before they were able to say they believed in Jesus, God gave them the Holy Spirit. That is, Peter did not even finish speaking. They believed in Jesus while Peter was still speaking.

See: Acts 11:17

See: Faith (Believe in); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Angel

Who were the people who belong to the “circumcision group”?

[10:45]

The people who belonged to the “circumcision group” were the Jewish Christians who went with Peter from Joppa to the house of Cornelius. They were amazed God gave the Holy Spirit to the uncircumcised Gentiles in the same way God filled Jews with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (see: Acts 2:4).

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Gentile; Filling of the Holy Spirit; Pentecost

See Map: Joppa

Why did Peter talk about baptizing Cornelius and his household?

[10:47]

Peter talked about baptizing Cornelius and his household because he saw the Holy Spirit work in these Gentiles. That is, they spoke in tongues in the same way the disciples did at Pentecost (see: Acts 2:4). Because of this, he knew they believed in Jesus in the same way Jewish disciples believed in Jesus (see Acts 11:16-17). Peter knew they must be baptized in the same way other Christians were baptized (see: Acts 2:37-41). They should be baptized because God accepted them (see: Acts 10: 35,46; 15:8).

See: Baptize (Baptism); Holy Spirit; Gentile; Speaking in Tongues; Disciple; Pentecost

Why did these people ask Peter to stay with them for several days?

[10:48]

These people asked Peter to stay with them for several days because they wanted to learn and ask questions. They had much to learn about Jesus and how to live in a way that honors God.

Acts 11

11:1-10

Who were the “brothers”?

[11:1]

The “brothers” were men and women who believed in Jesus.

See: Family of God

Where was Judea?

[11:1]

See Map: Judea

How did the Gentiles receive “the word of God”?

[11:1]

The Gentiles “received the word of God” when they believed God’s word about Jesus. That is, they believed Jesus is the messiah.

See: Gentile; Word of God; Messiah (Christ)

Who was “the circumcision group”?

[11:2]

“The circumcision group” was Jewish Christians.

See: Acts 10:45

See: Circumcise (Circumcision)

Why did the Jewish Christians think it was wrong to be with uncircumcised people and eat with them?

[11:3]

See: Acts 10:34.

What was a “trance” and what was a “vision”?

[11:5, 11:6]

See: Acts 10:10

Why did Peter add “wild beasts” to the animals Luke wrote about in Acts 10:12? Peter added “wild beasts” to the animals Luke wrote about in Acts 10:12 because Peter was thinking about how God created the animals (see: Genesis 1:25) when he said this. Elsewhere, Luke was thinking about the animals God delivered in Noah’s ark (see: Genesis 6:20; Acts 10:12).

Why did the voice tell Peter to get up, kill and eat?

[11:7]

See: Acts 10:13

Why did Peter refuse to kill and eat?

[11:8]

See: Acts 10:13.

See: Clean and Unclean

Why did God say defiled food was clean?

[11:9]

God said defiled food was clean. That is, God said that unclean foods were now clean. God made a way for Jewish Christians to worship God with Gentile Christians and visit Gentile houses. That is, since Jews were able to eat the food Gentiles ate, they were able to do other things with Gentiles.

See: Clean and Unclean; Worship; Gentile

11:11-18

Where was Caesarea?

[11:11]

See Map: Caesarea

Why did the Holy Spirit tell Peter to “make no distinction” about the men who came to him?

[11:12]

The Holy Spirit told Peter to “make no distinction” about the men who came to him. God wanted Peter to tell the Gentiles at Cornelius’ house about Jesus. God wanted him to do this even though they were Gentiles. He brought other Jewish Christians with him. Six of those Jewish Christians also went with him to Jerusalem. They were also able to say what happened at Cornelius’ house.

See: Holy Spirit; Gentile

Who were the six brothers who went with Peter into the house of Cornelius?

[11:12]

The six brothers were Jewish Christians from Joppa. They went with Peter into the house of Cornelius and saw what happened when the Holy Spirit came upon everyone and everyone spoke in tongues and praised God. They were able to say the good news about Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit were available to Gentiles.

See: Family of God; Holy Spirit; Speaking in Tongues; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Gentile

Where was Joppa?

[11:13]

See Map: Joppa

What was the message Peter spoke to the people in the house of Cornelius?

[11:14]

Peter spoke about Jesus to the people in the house of Cornelius. That is, Peter told them about how Jesus healed people, but people killed Jesus and God made him alive again (see: Acts 10:38-40). Then Peter told them that Jesus is the one who all the prophets spoke about.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection); Prophet

How did the Holy Spirit come upon these people?

[11:15]

See: Acts 10:44-46.

See: Filling of the Holy Spirit

Who is “the Lord” in verse sixteen?

“The Lord” in verse sixteen is Jesus. Jesus is Lord and he is the one who rules from heaven.

See: Lord; Heaven

Why did Peter change his mind about salvation for the Gentiles?

[11:17]

Peter changed his mind about salvation for the Gentiles because he saw God give the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles. Peter knew that if God did that, then Peter knew this is what God wanted.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Gentile; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

How did God give “repentance for life to the Gentiles also”?

[11:18]

God gave “repentance for life to the Gentiles also.” That is, God gave them repentance through the Holy Spirit. If the Gentiles repented of their sins, then they were at peace with God and God gave them eternal life and a new life. God also did this for the Jews. God helped them to repent, believe in Jesus, and be at peace with God.

See: Repent (Repentance); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Gentile; Holy Spirit; Eternal Life; Born Again (New Life, Regeneration)

11:19-30

Where were Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch?

[11:19]

See Map: Phoenicia; Cyprus; Antioch

Why did the Christian Jews speak only to Jews in the areas where they went?

[11:19]

The Christian Jews from Jerusalem spoke only to the Jews in the areas where they went because they did not think the gospel was for the Gentiles. However, other Christian Jews from Cyprus and Cyrene went and told the Gentiles about Jesus and the gospel.

See: Gospel; Gentile

See Map: Cyprus; Cyrene

Who were “some of them” in verse 20?

[11:20]

“Some of them” in verse twenty were Greek-speaking Jews who believed in Jesus. They were not from Jerusalem but were from Cyprus and Cyrene.

See Map: Cyprus; Cyrene

Where is Cyrene?

[11:20]

See Map: Cyrene

Whom did the men from Cyprus and Cyrene speak to?

[11:20]

The men from Cyprus and Cyrene spoke about Jesus to both Jews and Gentiles. Luke wrote the word “also” because they treated the Jews and Gentiles the same. The gospel was for everyone.

See: Gentile

See Map: Cyprus; Cyrene

How was “the hand of the Lord was with them”?

[11:21]

Luke wrote that “the hand of the Lord was with them.” That is, when they taught people about Jesus, they had God’s power with them. God helped them. Because of this, many people believed and turned to the Lord Jesus.

How did people “turn to the Lord”?

[11:21]

See: Repent (Repentance)

Who was Barnabas?

[11:22]

Barnabas was a Christian leader named Joseph. He was from the Levite and he came from Cyprus. The apostles called him Barnabas, “son of encouragement” (see: Acts 4:36). He was a prophet and teacher (see: Acts 13:1). He was also an apostle but not one of the twelve apostles (see: Acts 14:14).

See: Prophet; Apostle; Tribes of Israel

Where was Antioch?

[11:22]

See Map: Antioch

How did Barnabus tell the people to “remain with the Lord with purpose of heart”?

[11:23]

Barnabus told the people to “remain with the Lord with purpose of heart.” That is, they completely served Jesus.

See: Heart (Metaphor)

How was Barnabas “full of the Holy Spirit and of faith”?

[11:24]

See: Galatians 3:2

See: Filling of the Holy Spirit; Faith (Believe in)

Where was Tarsus?

[11:25]

See Map: Tarsus

Why did Barnabus bring Saul to Antioch?

[11:26]

Barnabus brought Saul to Antioch because he wanted Paul to serve in Antioch. Many people there believed in Jesus. Later the Christians in Antioch sent out people to tell others about Jesus.

See Map: Antioch

Why did people at Antioch first call the disciples “Christians”?

[11:26]

People at Antioch first called the disciples “Christians”(Χριστιανός/g5546) because the people at Antioch knew they followed Jesus, who is the “Christ”(Χριστός/g5547). Scholars think the people at Antioch mocked the disciples of Jesus or were persecuting them when they called these people Christians (see: Acts 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16). In ancient times, Christians did not call themselves Christians. Instead, they called themselves disciples, holy ones, or brothers. They started calling themselves Christians about 100 years after Jesus died.

See: Messiah (Christ); Disciple; Holy Ones; Family of God

How did some prophets “came down” from Jerusalem?

[11:27]

Jerusalem was higher in elevation than Antioch. Some prophets went down the hill from Jerusalem rather than traveled south to get to Antioch.

See Map: Jerusalem; Antioch

Who were the prophets?

[11:27]

The prophets were Christians who had the gift of prophecy.

See: Prophet; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Who was Agabus?

[11:28]

Agabus was a Christian prophet from Jerusalem. God revealed to him bad things that will happen in the future.

See: Prophet; Reveal (Revelation)

See: Acts 21:10

How did Agabus indicate “by the Spirit” a great famine?

[11:28]

Agabus indicated “by the Spirit” when the Holy Spirit helped Agabus to know to give a prophecy about the coming famine. This famine happened about 15 years after Jesus died.

See: Holy Spirit; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Famine

What was “all the world”?

[11:28]

“All the world” was Rome, Greece, and Egypt, and Judaea. That is, it was the whole Roman empire. It was not the entire world.

See: Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

What were the “days of Claudius”?

[11:28]

Claudius ruled the Roman Empire. He did this starting about 10 years after Jesus died and stopped about 20 years after Jesus died. There were several famines during this time.

See: Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar); Famine

Where was Judea?

[11:29]

See Map: Judea

Why did God give Agabus a prophecy about the famine?

[11:29]

God gave Agabus a prophecy about the famine so the Christians in Antioch had time to prepare to help the Christians in Judea. The time allowed the Christians in Antioch to help them more than if they had not known the famine was going to happen.

See: Prophecy (Prophesy) ; Famine

See Map: Judea

Acts 12

12:1-4

Who was king Herod?

[12:1]

This King Herod was Herod Agrippa. The Jewish people liked this Herod. He wanted them to like him. Because of this, he began to persecute the Christian leaders (see: Acts 12:3).

See: King Herod; Persecute (Persecution)

How did king Herod “lay hands on” some of the church?

[12:1]

Herod laid hands on people. That is, he persecuted Christians

See: Persecute (Persecution); Laying on of Hands ; King Herod

Who were “those in the church”?

[12:1]

“Those in the church” were people who believed in Jesus.

See: Church

What did Herod plan to do to Peter?

[11:3]

Herod planned to kill Peter. He planned to bring Peter before the people and kill him in the way he killed James. Herod wanted people to see Peter being killed.

See: King Herod

What were the “days of unleavened bread”?

[12:3]

The “days of unleavened bread” were seven days during the festival of Passover. Scholars say the seven days were after the night of Passover.

See: Festival of Unleavened Bread; Passover

How many soldiers were in a squad?

[12:4]

There were four soldiers in a squad. There were a total of sixteen soldiers who guarded Peter.

What was the Passover?

[12:4]

See: Passover

12:5-11

How did God answer the prayers of the church for Peter?

[12:5]

Some scholars think Luke did not write how God answered the prayers of the church for Peter. Other scholars think the prayers for Peter made God want to send an angel to rescue Peter.

See: Acts 16:25-26

See: Pray (Prayer); Angel

What was an angel?

[12:7]

See: Angel

How did a light come into the prison cell?

[12:7]

Luke did not write how a light came into the prison cell. Scholars think different things.

The light was part of the glory of God (see: Luke 2:9).

The light was from the glory of God that shone through the angel.

The light was from the angel.

See: Glory (Glorify); Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Angel

How did the light help Peter?

[12:7]

The light helped Peter find his clothes and sandals and put them on before they left the prison cell. It was very dark in the night of the prison and the angel wanted Peter to get up quickly before the guards woke up.

See: Angel

What was an outer garment?

[12:8]

An outer garment was worn for going outside a house or building. It is a type of coat.

What was a vision?

See: Vision

What was an iron gate?

[12:10]

An iron gate was a heavy, metal gate that allowed people to go in and out of a city.

How did Peter come to himself?

[12:11]

Peter “came to himself” when he knew his release from prison was real. That is, he knew he was not dreaming and he was thinking clearly. He was not confused. Peter knew God sent an angel.

See: Angel

12:12-19

Why did Luke write both names of Mary’s son?

[12:12]

Luke wrote both names of Mary’s son because he had both a Jewish name, John, and a Roman name, Mark. There were other people in Acts who had two names. Saul was also Paul (see: Acts 13:9). Scholars think this John Mark was the same Mark in other places in the Bible (see: Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24; 2 Timothy 4:11; 1 Peter 5:13). Scholars also think Mark wrote the gospel of Mark.

See: Gospel

How did the servant girl know Peter’s voice?

[12:14]

The servant knew Peter’s voice because Peter was from Galilee. People in Galilee spoke in the same way and this was different than how other people spoke (see: Matthew 26:73). She also knew the sound of Peter’s voice because she heard him speak before this.

See Map: Galilee

Why did the people not think it was Peter who was at the door?

[12:15]

Some scholars think the people did not think it was Peter who was at the door because they did not know Peter escaped from prison even though they prayed for him. They prayed for James but Herod killed him. Other scholars think they did not believe what a woman said about Peter in the same way the disciples did not believe the women who told them that Jesus was alive again (see: Luke 24:9-11).

See: Pray (Prayer); King Herod; Disciple; Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did the disciples say, “it is his angel”?

[12:15]

Some scholars think the disciples believed it was Peter’s spirit that was outside the house. They thought Peter became an angel. In ancient times, some Jewish people wrongly thought that certain people become angels after they die. Other scholars think the disciples thought the angel was an angel who protected Peter. They believed there were angels guarding people (see: Psalm 91:11; Matthew 18:10; Hebrews 1:4; Acts 12:7-10).

See: Angel; Spirit (Spiritual); Disciple

Why did Peter want the people to be silent?

[12:17]

Peter wanted the people to be silent so they will not wake the neighbors or attract attention for any guards trying to find him. Perhaps the Jewish leaders lived near this house. Peter did not want to go back to prison and be killed. Also, Peter needed them to listen to him. The people were very excited to see Peter alive and free, and to know God rescued Peter.

Why did Peter want them to tell James and the brothers what happened to him?

[12:17]

Peter wanted James and others to know that he escaped prison. This is because they were Christian leaders in this area (see Acts: 15:13; 21:18).

See: Family of God

Why did Peter leave so soon?

[12:17]

Luke did not write why Peter left so soon. Scholars give several reasons.

Peter thought it was not safe for him to stay at the house very long.

He left for Antioch and told people in Antioch about Jesus (see: Galatians 2:11-14).

He went to Lydda and Joppa (see: Acts 10:9-48).

He was out of the area for a while but he came back to Jerusalem to meet with other Christian leaders (see: Acts 15:1-7).

See Map: Antioch; Lydda; Joppa

Why did Herod kill the guards?

[12:19]

Herod killed the guards because Roman law allowed the same penalty for the guards the prisoner was going to have if the guards let the prisoner escape. They failed to keep Peter in prison and Peter was going to be executed. Therefore, Herod carried out Peter's penalty on the guards. The guards were killed.

See: King Herod

Why did Herod go to Caesarea?

[12:19]

Herod went to Caesarea for two reasons.

He went to make celebrations in honor of Caesar. This was why many important officials from the region were there.

He went to help settle a trade disagreement between his country and the cities of Tyre and Sidon. The people of those cities persuaded King Herod's assistant, Blastus, to help them settle the dispute because their food came from the place Herod Agrippa ruled. The food was mostly wheat from Galilee. During the festival, Herod spoke so that people would know that there was peace between himself and the cities of Tyre and Sidon.

See: King Herod

See: Map: Judea; Caesarea; Tyre; Sidon; Galilee

12:20-25

Why did the people think Herod was a god and not a man?

[12:22]

The people thought Herod was a god and not a man because his royal clothing was made from silver that shone brightly and beautifully. It made the people afraid. Also, the people from Tyre and Sidon praised him in the same way they praised a god.

See: King Herod; False gods; Praise

See Map: Tyre; Sidon

What did the angel do to Herod?

[12:23]

The angel made Herod become sick and die. Herod accepted the praise of being a god and did not give God the glory for being God. Another ancient Jewish writer wrote that Herod did not tell the people to stop praising him.

See: Angel; King Herod; Praise; False gods; Glory (Glorify)

What were the "worms"?

[12:23]

The "worms" (σκωληκόβρωτος/g4662) were crawling insects. Some ate plants (see: Exodus 16:20) but others ate meat (see: Job 7:5). Sometimes they were inside a person's body and made the person ill. Some scholars think they were a metaphor. Luke wrote that Herod died from a disease. Other scholars think Luke wanted to say God judged Herod (see: Isaiah 66:24).

See: Metaphor; King Herod; Judge (Judgment)

How did Herod die?

[12:23]

Herod died from the angel's blow to him. The angel either hit him or made him sick. Another ancient Jewish writer wrote that it took five days for Herod to die. Luke did not write how long it took for Herod to die but he wrote about how Herod died. When Luke wrote about Herod eating worms, he wanted people to know that Herod died in a terrible way. It was very painful for Herod to die in this way.

See: Deuteronomy 32:39; Luke 1:20; 19:44; Acts 5:1-11; 8:10,20-23

See: King Herod; Angel

How did the word of God increase and multiple?

[12:24]

The word of God increased and multiplied. This is a metaphor. More and more people believed in Jesus (see: Acts 6:7).

See: Word of God

What was the mission of Barnabas and Saul?

[12:25]

Paul and Silas served God in a certain way. The Christians in Antioch gave Barnabas and Saul money to bring to the poor Christians in Judea (see: Acts 11:29-30) to help them because they were about to have a famine.

See: Famine

See Map: Antioch; Judea

Did Luke write that Barnabas and Saul returned from or to Jerusalem?

[12:25]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament say that Barnabas returned from Jerusalem. Older and more ancient copies of the Greek New Testament say that Barnabas and Saul returned to Jerusalem. Scholars think Luke wrote that Barnabas and Saul returned to Jerusalem.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

Acts 13

13:1-12

Where was Antioch?

[13:1]

See Map: Antioch

What was a prophet?

[13:1]

See: Prophet

What was a foster brother?

[13:1]

A foster brother was a boy who was raised with a family that was not his family. This foster brother was a friend or companion to the son of the king. Manaen was a close childhood friend of King Herod the Tetrarch.

See: King Herod

Who was Herod the Tetrarch?

[13:1]

See: King Herod

Why did Luke write Christians fasted two times?

[13:2, 13:3]

Luke wrote Christians fasted two times because the Christians fasted in two ways.

Christians in Antioch worshiped God by fasting in the same way priests and others who served in the temple in Jerusalem did.

Christians fasted, prayed, and laid on hands when the Holy Spirit chose leaders to serve.

See: Fasting; Worship; Priest (Priesthood); Temple

Who worshiped the Lord and fasted?

[13:2, 13:3]

Luke did not write who worshiped the Lord and fasted. Some scholars think the Jews usually used the word “worshiped” when they were talking about the priests and Levites when these people served in the temple. Therefore, Luke was writing about the prophets and teachers. Other scholars think the priests and Levites were no longer the only ones who served and worshiped God. Everyone in the church served and worshiped God (see: Romans 12:1; 1 Peter 2:5). Thus, “they” were everyone in the church.

See: Worship; Priest (Priesthood); Tribes of Israel; Temple; Prophet; Church

How did the Christians set apart Barnabas and Saul?

[13:2]

The Christians set apart Barnabas and Saul when they separated or divided Barnabas and Saul from the others for the work of telling people about Jesus. The Christians also fasted, prayed, and laid on hands because the church wanted Barnabas and Saul to do this for God.

See: Fasting; Pray (Prayer); Laying on of Hands

What was the work the Holy Spirit called them to do?

[13:2]

Luke wrote about the work the Holy Spirit called them to do. The work was to go out and tell people about Jesus and the gospel.

See: Gospel; Call (Calling); Holy Spirit

See Map: Cyprus, Perga, Asia Minor

Why did the leaders lay their hands on Barnabas and Saul?

[13:3]

The leaders put their hands on Barnabas and Saul because they prayed for them to have God's blessing and power. It was also a sign that they supported these men (see: Acts 6:6; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6; Heb. 6:2).

See: Laying on of Hands ; Pray (Prayer); Bless (Blessing); Sign

How did the Holy Spirit send out Barnabas and Saul?

[13:4]

Luke did not write how the Holy Spirit sent out Barnabas and Saul. There were several ways the Holy Spirit led Christians.

Speech (see: Acts 13:2).

Prophecy (see: Acts 21:10-11).

Vision (See: Acts 16:6-10).

The Holy Spirit sent them out from the church in Antioch.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy); Vision); Church; Holy Spirit

See Map: Antioch

Where was Seleucia?

[13:4]

See Map: Seleucia

Where was Cyprus?

[13:4]

See Map: Cyprus

Why did Barnabas and Saul go to Cyprus?

[13:4]

There were several reasons why Barnabas and Saul went to Cyprus.

Barnabas was from Cyprus

It was easy to travel there.

Barnabas and others already told Jews there about Jesus (see: Acts 11:19-20).

Christians were there (see: Acts 21:16).

The Holy Spirit led them to go there.

See: Holy Spirit

See Map: Cyprus

Where was Salamis?

[13:5]

See Map: Salamis

What is the word of God?

[13:5]

See: Word of God

What was a synagogue?

[13:5]

See: Synagogue

Where was Paphos?

[13:6]

See Map: Paphos

What was a magician?

[13:6]

A magician did things using sorcery. This was evil. The Law of Moses commanded Jews not to do this (see: Leviticus 19:31). This was why Luke wrote Bar-Joshua was a false prophet (see: Acts 13:6).

See: Sorcery; Prophet

What was a proconsul?

[13:7]

A proconsul was a Roman leader who was given permission to rule a certain area.

How was Paul filled with the Holy Spirit?

[13:9]

Paul was filled with power from the Holy Spirit. Paul needed power from the Holy Spirit to defeat the evil power of the magician.

See: Filling of the Holy Spirit; Holy Spirit
Why was the magician a “son of the devil”?

[13:10]

The magician was a “son of the devil” because he did the same things the devil did and he served the devil.

See: Satan (The Devil); Sorcery

Why was the magician full of “deceit and wickedness”?

[13:10]

The magician was full of “deceit” because he said wrong things about God and Jesus. That is, he made people believe wrong things about God and Jesus. He was also full of “wickedness” because he made people do wrong things the devil wanted them to do.

See: Satan (The Devil); Sorcery

How was the magician an “enemy of every kind of righteousness”?

[13:10]

This magician was an “enemy of every kind of righteousness” because he did not love or do the things God wanted him to do. Instead he “made crooked”(διαστρέφω/g1406) the “straight paths of the Lord”. That is, he stopped people from doing the things God wanted people to do.

See: Righteous (Righteousness)

What were the “straight paths of the Lord”?

[13:10]

The “straight paths of the Lord” were the right and true ways of God. This is a metaphor. Luke was writing about doing the right thing and obeying God.

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Walk

What was the “hand of the Lord”?

[13:11]

“The hand of the Lord” was a metaphor. Luke was writing about God judging the magician. God caused him to be blind for a time. The words, “Now look,” told the magician that God revealed this judgement to Paul.

God also made Paul temporarily blind. The result was he was later able to see the truth about Jesus. God also healed his eyes. God sometimes struck people with blindness to stop them from doing evil or to get their attention (see: Genesis 19:11; 2 Kings 6:18-20, Acts 9:8-9).

See: Lord; Metaphor; Judge (Judgment)

Why did the proconsul believe in Jesus?

[13:12]

The proconsul believed in Jesus because he was amazed at the teaching about Jesus. Luke did not wrote that this man believed because of the power of God working through Paul. However, the teaching about Jesus included stories about Jesus healing people and becoming alive again. Scholars also think Paul talked about his own story about God blinding him on the way to Damascus (see: Acts 9:3-9).

This proconsul was an intelligent man (see: Acts 13:7). That is, he believed because of other things about Jesus and he knew Jesus is Lord and Savior. So the power of God over the magician helped him to believe in Jesus. When someone showed other people that Jesus had power over the devil, this helped people in Jesus (see: Mark 1:22, 27).

See: Faith (Believe in); Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Lord; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Satan (The Devil)

See Map: Damascus

13:13-16

Where were Paphos, Perga, and Pamphylia?

[13:13]

See Map: Paphos; Perga; Pamphylia

Why did John leave Barnabas and Paul and return to Jerusalem?

[13:13]

Luke did not write why John left Barnabas and Paul and returned to Jerusalem. Paul said John deserted them in Pamphylia (see: Acts 15:38), but years later Paul wrote Mark was useful (see: 2 Timothy 4:11). Some scholars think John Mark was not ready for the persecution that came when they told people about Jesus. Other scholars think John Mark wanted Barnabas to be the leader instead of Paul. Up to this time Luke always listed Barnabas first and then Saul. Now Luke wrote about Paul and “his friends.” All of them continued to serve. Barnabas took John Mark with him and Paul took Silas (see: Acts 15:39).

See: Persecute (Persecution)

Where was Antioch of Pisidia?

[13:14]

See Map: Antioch of Pisidia

What was a synagogue?

[13:14]

See: Synagogue

What was the Sabbath?

[13:14]

See: Sabbath

What were the law and the prophets?

[13:15]

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

How did the leaders of the synagogue sent a message to them?

[13:15]

The rulers of the synagogue sent someone to Paul and his friends inside the synagogue. The messenger told them the message during the synagogue meeting. The leaders of the synagogue did not sent a message to them over a longer distance or outside of the synagogue.

See: Synagogue

Why did Paul motion with his hand?

[13:16]

Paul motioned with his hand. People often did this to invite other people to listen. Also, Paul wanted people to be silent so they would pay attention to the things he said.

Who were those who honored God?

[13:16]

Those who honored God worshiped the God of Israel and obeyed the Law of Moses. However, they were not Jews themselves. People called them “God-fearers.” They were not born Jews and they did not become circumcised.

See: Worship; Law of Moses; Circumcise (Circumcision)

13:17-22

What happened to the Israelites in Egypt?

[13:17]

The Israelites were slaves in Egypt until God used Moses to free them from the Egyptians.

See: Serve

See Map: Egypt

What was God’s “uplifted arm”?

[13:17]

God’s “uplifted arm” was a metaphor to say God has great power. God led the Israelites out of slavery.

See: Metaphor

What were the seven nations in the land of Canaan?

[13:19]

The seven nations in the land of Canaan were the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites (see: Deuteronomy 7:1). Each nation was larger and stronger than the Israelites.

See: Canaan (Promised Land)

See Map: Canaan

Why did God drive out the seven nations from Canaan?

[13:19]

God drove out the seven nations from Canaan to give the Israelites an inheritance. This land promised to their ancestor Abraham (see: Genesis 15:18). Also, the nations from Canaan were evil so God punished them (see: Leviticus 18:24-25).

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Canaan (Promised Land); Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs);

Punish (Punishment)

See Map: Canaan

What events made up the 450 years?

[13:19]

The 450 years included the time Israel spent in Egypt, 400 years, and the time they travelled in the wilderness, 40 years, and about 10 years of time it took to control Canaan. The time to control Canaan was the time they entered into Canaan to when they finished dividing the land among the tribes of Israel.

See: Canaan (Promised Land); Tribes of Israel

See Map: Canaan

What was a judge?

[13:20]

A judge was someone who helped lead or rule the Israelites in the Promised Land before there were kings in Israel

See: Judge (Judgment); Canaan (Promised Land)

Why was Samuel at the time when the period of the Judges ended?

[13:20]

God began to do something different with Israel after Samuel. Samuel was a priest, a prophet, and the last judge of Israel. Samuel anointed Saul as the first king of Israel (see: 1 Samuel 2:35; 3:20; 7:15–17).

See: Judge (Judgment); Priest (Priesthood); Prophet; Appoint

Why did the people ask for a king to rule over them?

[13:21]

The people asked for a king to rule over them because they rejected the judges. When they asked for a man to be king, they rejected God who was their king (see: 1 Samuel 8:6-7).

Why did God remove Saul from being king?

God removed Saul from being king because he did not obey the Lord (See: 1 Samuel 13:13-14; 15:23,26-28).

Why did Paul call David a man after God's heart?

[13:22]

Paul called David a man after God's heart because David did the things God wanted him to do. God was in the process of replacing King Saul with a new king, David.

See: Heart (Metaphor)

13:23-37

How did Paul know Jesus was a descendant of King David?

[13:23]

Paul was a Jewish teacher and he knew the promise of God to David that one of David's descendants rule forever (see: 2 Samuel 7:12-14). Because of this, the Jews kept records of everyone's ancestors.

See: Luke 3:23-38; Matthew 1:1-17

See: Covenant with David; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Son of David

What was a savior?

[13:23]

See: Savior

What John was Luke writing about?

[13:24]

Luke wrote about John the Baptist. The Jews in Palestine knew John the Baptist at that time. John the Baptist was not the messiah, but he came before the messiah to prepare people to receive the messiah. John the Baptist preached repentance from sins and he baptized people for this repentance (See: Mark 1:4-5).

See: Messiah (Christ); Preach (Preacher); Repent (Repentance); Repent (Repentance); Baptize (Baptism)

Who is the "one"?

[13:25]

John spoke of the "one" to come after him who will be Jesus (see: Isaiah 40:3; Mark 1:3). John said this "one" is far greater than he was. Jesus is so much greater than John and John thought he was not even able to be his servant (see: Mark 1:7).

John baptized with water, but this "one" that comes after John will baptize with the Holy Spirit (see: Mark 1:8).

See: Baptize (Baptism)

Who were children of the offspring of Abraham?

[13:26]

The children of the offspring of Abraham were the Jews. Paul spoke to both the Jews and Gentiles who were with the Jews in the synagogue and who worshiped God.

See: Gentile; Synagogue; Worship

What was the message of salvation?

[13:26]

The message of salvation is the gospel

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Gospel

How did the people and rulers of Jerusalem fulfill the voices of the prophets?

[13:27]

The people and rulers of Jerusalem fulfilled the voices of the prophets when they did not recognize Jesus. That is, they did not believe Jesus was the messiah, so they rejected Jesus (see: John 12:37-40; Romans 9:33). This was what the prophets prophesied would happen.

See: Isaiah 6:10; 2 Corinthians 4:4

See: Prophet; Messiah (Christ); Prophecy (Prophecy)

Who was Pilate?

[13:28]

Pilate was the Roman leader who ruled Judea when Jesus was alive on the earth.

See Map: Judea

What were "all the things that were written about him"?

[13:29]

“All the things that were written about him” were the things that happened to Jesus. These things were written about in the Old Testament, long before Jesus lived on the earth.

See: Isaiah 53:3-5,7; Psalm 22; Zechariah 12:10

Why was Jesus on a “tree”?

[13:29]

When Luke wrote about a tree, he was writing about the cross.

See: Galatians 3:13

See: Cross

How did Jesus become alive again?

[13:30]

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

Where was Galilee?

[13:31]

See Map: Galilee

What did the people do after they saw Jesus alive again?

[13:31]

The people who saw Jesus alive again told other people about Jesus, his resurrection, and the gospel.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection); Gospel

What was the “promise that came to our fathers”?

[13:32]

The “promise that came to our fathers” were the promises God made to Abraham, Moses, and David.

See: Galatians 3:8-9; Isaiah 55:3

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

Where did God say, “I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David”?

[13:34]

God said, “I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David,” to the prophet Isaiah (see Isaiah 55:3). Paul was thinking about Isaiah 55:3 when he repeated the second Psalm. David wrote about God saying he is the Father of his Son Jesus in the second Psalm (see: Acts 4:25-26).

See: God the Father; Son of God

When did God “become” the Father of the Son?

[13:33]

God has always been the Father of the Son. That is, Jesus was already God’s Son even before God and Jesus made the world (see: John 17:5; 1:1-3). Paul did not say the word “become”(γεννάω/g1080) to say God became the father of Jesus when Jesus came into the world, or when Jesus was baptized, or even when Jesus became alive again. Paul wrote God powerfully “declared” or “said”(ὀρίζω/g3724) Jesus is the Son of God when he made Jesus alive again (see: Romans 1:4).

See: God the Father; Son of God

See: Matthew 3:17; 17:5

Why did Jesus’ body not decay?

[13:35]

Jesus’ body did not decay because it was dead only three days.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

13:38-43

How did Jesus forgive sins?

[13:38]

See: John 3:16

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Sin; Atonement (Atonement)

Why were Christians justified?

[13:39]

See: Romans 8:1-4; 10:9-10

See: Justify (Justification)

Why did Paul say “the prophets”?

[13:40]

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

Why did Paul say the same thing Habakkuk wrote?

[13:40]

Paul said the same thing the prophet Habakkuk wrote. He did not want people to reject Jesus in the way the Israelites of Habakkuk’s day rejected God.

What were “devout proselytes”?

[13:43]

“Devout proselytes” were Gentiles who became Jews. They worshiped God, obeyed the Law of Moses, and were circumcised.

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Gentile

How did someone “continue in the grace of God”?

[13:43]

Luke wrote about continuing in the grace of God. Scholars think the people continued to believe in the gospel about Jesus.

See: Gospel; Grace

13:44-52

What was the word of the Lord?

[13:44]

See: Word of God; Lord

Why were the Jews envious?

[13:45]

The Jews were envious because they saw large crowds listening to Paul and Barnabas. They wanted the people to listen to them instead of Paul and Barnabas. Some Jews believed in Jesus but many did not. This is because some people did not want God to be at peace with Gentiles who did not obey the Law of Moses (see: Acts 13:39).

Why did Paul speak the word of God to the Jews first and then the Gentiles?

[13:46]

Paul spoke the word of God to the Jews first because God gave them promises, the covenants, the Law of Moses, and the temple (see: Romans 9:4). Also, Jesus was a Jew (see: Romans 9:5). Paul wanted the Jews to know their Messiah, Jesus. Also, God wanted the Jews to help the Gentiles know about God. However, because most of the Jews did not believe in Jesus, they were not able to do this.

See: Isaiah 42:6; 49:6; Galatians 2:7).

See: Word of God; Covenant; Law of Moses; Temple; Messiah (Christ); Gentile

How did the Gentiles glorify the word of the Lord?

[13:48]

The Gentiles glorified the word of the Lord when they believed in Jesus. They praised God that they were worthy to have God save them.

See: Glory (Glorify); Faith (Believe in); Word of God; Praise; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

What is “eternal life”?

[13:48]

See: Eternal Life

How did God appoint people to eternal life?

[13:48]

God appointed people to eternal life. Scholars think God chose who would have eternal life in some way. Scholars disagree about how and when God did this.

See: Eternal Life

How did the “word of the Lord” spread?

[13:49]

The “word of the Lord” spread. That is, Christians told other people about Jesus and more people knew about Jesus. As Christians began to do this, more and more people learned about Jesus and God.

See: Gospel; Faith (Believe in)

Why did the Jews incite leading men and women?

[13:50]

The Jews incited leading men and women. That is, they made these people angry. This is because these Jews rejected Jesus and they did not want people to believe in Jesus. These Jews did not want more Jews to become Christians so they tried to get people to force Paul and Barnabas out of the city.

See: Gospel; Faith (Believe in); Persecute (Persecution)

Why did Paul and Barnabas shake the dust off of their feet?

[13:51]

Jesus told his followers to shake the dust off their feet or sandals to warn people about rejecting his followers (see: Luke 9:5; 10:11). This was a sign that there will be judgment against their actions. Paul and the others did this against the Jews and the leaders who forced them out of the city.

See: Sign; Judge (Judgment)

Where was Iconmium?

[13:51]

See Map: Iconium

How were the disciples filled with joy and the Holy Spirit?

[13:52]

The disciples were filled with joy by the power and work of the Holy Spirit inside them. When people persecuted them, the Holy Spirit helped them to have joy.

See: Disciple; Holy Spirit; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Persecute (Persecution) ; Rejoice (Joy, Joyful)

Acts 14

14:1-7

Where was Iconium?

[14:1]

See Map: Iconium

What was a synagogue?

[14:1]

See: Synagogue

What did the Jews and Greeks believe?

[14:1]

Scholars think that the Jews and Greeks believed the message about Jesus. That is, Jesus was the one God had promised to send to save people from their sins.

See: Gentile; Messiah (Christ); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Sin

What was “a great multitude”?

[14:1]

A great multitude means a very large number. Some scholars think there were several hundreds of people who believed in Jesus.

Who were disobedient Jews and what did they do?

[14:2]

When Luke wrote about Jews who were disobedient, he was speaking about Jews who refused to believe the message about Jesus. When Luke wrote that these Jews made the minds of the Gentiles “bitter”(κακώω/g2559) against the brothers, he meant the Jews turned the Gentiles away from believing the truth about Jesus.

See: Gentile; Family of God

How did Paul and Barnabas spoke boldly with the Lord’s power?

[14:3]

Paul and Barnabas spoke boldly with the Lord’s power. That is, Paul and Barnabas spoke without being afraid of who might hear them. Scholars think that Jesus gave Paul and Barnabas power to keep on teaching and preaching.

See: Preach (Preacher)

What was the message of God’s grace?

[14:3]

The message of God’s grace was the gospel.

See: Gospel; Grace

What were signs and wonders?

[14:3]

See: Sign

What was an apostle?

[14:4]

See: Apostle

Where were Lycaonia, Lystra, and Derbe?

[14:6]

See Map: Lycaonia; Lystra; Derbe

What was the gospel?

[14:7]

See: Gospel

14:8-18

How did the man have faith to be made well?

[14:9]

The man had faith to be made well. Scholars think that Paul saw something and he knew the man believed in Jesus. They think the Holy Spirit helped Paul to know that the man believed Jesus was going to make him well.

See: Acts 3:1-10

See: Faith (Believe in); Holy Spirit

Who were Zeus and Hermes?

[14:12]

In ancient times, some people worshipped the Greek gods. The king of the Greek gods was Zeus, and Hermes was the god who delivered messages to the people from Zeus. After the healing miracle, the people began to call Paul “Hermes” because he did most of the speaking. They also called Barnabas “Zeus”.

See: False gods; Miracle

Why did Paul and Barnabas tear their clothes?

[14:14]

Scholars think Paul and Barnabas tore their clothes as a sign of strong disapproval of what the people wanted to do. Paul and Barnabas wanted the crowds to know that they were just men and that the actions of the crowd were blaspheming God.

See: Sign; Blaspheme (Blasphemy)

Why did Paul tell the crowd that they should turn from these useless things?

[14:15]

When Paul urged the crowd to “turn from these useless things,” he wanted them to stop worshipping those things. Scholars think Paul was speaking about the idols because they had no power and were not real.

See: Worship; Idolatry (Idol)

How did God allow all the nations to walk in their own ways?

[14:16]

God allowed the nations to walk in their own ways. God allowed the Gentile nations to live in the way they wanted to live. That is, he allowed them to live without the Law of Moses. He allowed them to sin because they wanted to sin. The nations worshipped many things, but not the one true God.

See: Gentile; Sin

Advice to translators: When speaking about the nations here, it means the people who lived in those nations.

14:19-28

Where were Antioch and Iconium?

[14:19]

See Map: Antioch; Iconium

What was a disciple?

[14:20]

See: Disciple

Where was Derbe?

[14:20]

See Map: Derbe

How did Paul and Barnabas strengthen “the souls of the disciples”?

[14:22]

Paul and Barnabas strengthened the souls of the disciples. Scholars think that Paul and Barnabas taught people about the Bible to remind the disciples about the truth about God and God’s promises. When they did this, Paul and Barnabas encouraged the disciples to make choices to trust God even when they were persecuted.

See: Soul; Disciple; Persecute (Persecution)

What was the kingdom of God about which Paul and Barnabas spoke?

[14:22]

See: Kingdom of God

How does someone enter into the Kingdom of God through many sufferings?

[14:22]

Scholars think Paul and Barnabas taught that many Christians will experience suffering and persecution while they are living in this present world. Jesus himself said, “In this world you will have tribulation” (see: John 16:33). They think that Paul and Barnabas meant that when Jesus returns to the earth to rule, Christians will no longer experience the world’s sufferings.

See: Persecute (Persecution); Tribulation

What was an elder?

[14:23]

See: Elder

What was fasting?

[14:23]

See: Fasting

What did it mean that Paul and Barnabas entrusted the elders to the Lord?

[14:23]

When they “entrusted”(παραιθῆμι/g3908) the elders to the Lord, Paul and Barnabas committed the care of the elders to

Jesus. That is, they asked Jesus to protect the elders as they served the growing number of Christians.

See: Elder

Where were Pisidia, Pamphylia, Perga, and Attalia?

[14:24]

See Map: Pisidia; Pamphylia; Perga; Attalia

What was meant by the words, “committed to the grace of God”?

[14:26]

Paul and Barnabas were first committed to the grace of God for their work among the Jews and Gentiles beyond Antioch with prayer, fasting and the laying on of hands of the Christians in Antioch (see: Acts 13:2,3). That is, they were set apart to do the work to which God had called them.

See: Grace; Gentile; Pray (Prayer); Fasting; Laying on of Hands ; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Call (Calling)

See Map: Antioch

What was a church?

[14:27]

See: Church

What was a “door of faith for the Gentiles”?

[14:27]

When Luke wrote about a “door of faith for the Gentiles,” this was a metaphor. He was writing that God opened the hearts and minds of the Gentiles to understand the gospel and believe in Jesus.

See: Heart (Metaphor); Mind; Gentile

Acts 15

15:1-5

Who were the brothers?

[15:1]

The brothers were Gentile Christians.

See: Family of God; Gentile

What did it mean to be “circumcised according to the custom of Moses”?

[15:1]

The “custom of Moses” referred to the Law of Moses. Some of the Jewish leaders were teaching that Gentiles could not be saved unless they, too, were circumcised according to the law of Moses.

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Law of Moses; Gentile; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Why did Luke write that people went up to Jerusalem?

[15:2]

Luke wrote people went up to Jerusalem because Jerusalem was on a mountain. Therefore, people said they went up to Jerusalem.

See Map: Antioch; Jerusalem

Where were Phoenicia and Samaria?

[15:3]

See Map: Phoenicia; Samaria

What were “all the things God had done” that Paul and Barnabas reported?

[15:4]

Some scholars think Luke was writing about the following events:

God filled the disciples with the Holy Spirit and with joy (see: Acts 13:52).

God did miracles (see: Acts 14:3).

Christians were persecuted (see: Acts 10:14; 15:26).

Christians became leaders in churches (see: Acts 14:23).

See: Filling of the Holy Spirit; Disciple; Rejoice (Joy, Joyful); Miracle; Persecute (Persecution)

Why did some Jews want to circumcise Gentile Christians?

[15:5]

Some scholars think that some Jews wanted to circumcise Gentile Christians men because they believed that Gentiles had to be circumcised to be at peace with God. They thought Christians needed to follow the Law of Moses. Other scholars think some of the Jews wanted to circumcise the Gentile Christian men to show that they were joined together with Jewish Christians.

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Law of Moses; Gentile

15:6-12

Why did Peter say, “making their hearts clean by faith”?

[15:9]

Peter said, “making their hearts clean by faith.” Scholars think Peter wanted people to know that God cleansed the Gentile Christians because they believed in Jesus and not because they followed the Law of Moses and were circumcision. They did not need to do these things to be at peace with God.

See: Heart (Metaphor); Clean and Unclean; Faith (Believe in); Law of Moses

Why did Peter ask the Jewish Christians, “why do you test God”?

[15:10]

Peter asked the Jewish Christians why they tested God. Some scholars think Peter to people that all Christians are at peace with God because they believe in Jesus. Here, Peter asked the Jewish Christians if they were putting God to the test to see if God really saved Gentiles simply by faith. Other scholars think Peter was asking the Jewish Christians if they were trying to make God angry by suggesting the Gentiles had to follow the Law of Moses to become Christians.

See: Test; Faith (Believe in); Gentile

What was a yoke?

[15:10]

When Peter spoke about a “yoke,” this was a metaphor. A “yoke” was a thick wooden beam that was set across the neck and shoulders of animals. This allowed the animals to pull heavy loads in a cart, or to pull a plow. Peter spoke about the Law of Moses as a yoke. He wanted to say that it was very hard to try to obey the Law of Moses.

See: Metaphor; Law of Moses

What did it mean to be “saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus”?

[15:11]

Peter wanted people to know that someone has peace with God because they believe in Jesus. They did not need to do certain things to be at peace with God. They do not need to follow the Law of Moses. When God does this, he is gracious.

See: Grace; Faith (Believe in); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Law of Moses

What were signs and wonders?

[15:12]

See: Sign

15:13-21

Why did James speak about Peter using the name Simon?

[15:14]

James spoke about Peter using the name Simon because Simon was Peter’s name in Hebrew.

Why did James say, “take from them a people for his name”?

[15:14]

James said, “take them a people for his name.” Some scholars think James was speaking about the Gentiles becoming God’s people. Other scholars think James wanted to say that both Jews and Gentiles could be Christians. This honored God.

See: Name; Gentile; People of God

Why did James say the same thing Amos wrote?

[15:15]

James said the same thing Amos wrote (see: Amos 9:11-12). He wanted people to know that even the prophets of the Old Testament spoke about Gentiles being called by God’s name. That is, Amos prophesied that the Gentiles would one day worship God and be at peace with God.

See: Prophet; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Gentile; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Worship

What are the things that have been known from ancient times?

[15:18]

Luke wrote about things that have been known from ancient times. Scholars think Luke wanted people to know that God knew everything that would happen before he even made of the world. This included knowing that both Jews and Gentiles would worship God (see: Ephesians 1:4-5).

See: Gentile; Worship

What was the “pollution of idols”?

[15:20]

Luke wrote about the “pollution of idols.” Scholars think Luke was writing about the animals used for sacrifices when people worshipped idols. James’ did not want the Gentile Christians to eat these foods. This was not because it was wrong to eat these foods because they were unclean. However, it was wrong to eat these foods if it offended the Jewish Christians (see: 1 Corinthians 10:27-29).

See: Idolatry (Idol); Sacrifice; Gentile; Clean and Unclean

What was “sexual immorality”?

[15:20]

See: Sexual Immorality

What was “meat of strangled animals”?

[15:20]

“Meat of strangled animals” was meat from animals people killed but they did not drain the animal’s blood. The Jews drained blood. This is the Law of Moses commanded people to eat blood (see: Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:10-14).

See: Law of Moses

Why did James want the Gentiles Christians to keep away “from blood”?

[15:20]

Some scholars think James did not want the Gentile Christians to eat blood. Other scholars think James wanted the Gentile Christians to hurt or kill other people.

Why did James say Moses was proclaimed from ancient times and in the synagogues every Sabbath?

[15:21]

James said that Moses was proclaimed from ancient times and in the synagogue every Sabbath. Scholars think that even though the Jewish Christians knew they did not need to follow the Law of Moses, they still felt they should do some of the things in the Law of Moses. They thought they should eat in the way taught in the Law of Moses. They think James wanted the Gentile Christians to respect the Jewish Christians and not offend the Jewish Christians.

See: Synagogue; Sabbath; Law of Moses

15:22-29

Who was Judas?

[15:22]

Judas Barsabbas known as a Christian prophet who was a leader in the Jerusalem church.

See: Prophet; Church

Who were the Gentile brothers?

[15:22]

The Gentile “brothers”(ἀδελφός/g0080) included both Christian men and women.

See: Family of God

Why did James say, “all of us have agreed”?

[15:25]

James said, “all of us have agreed.” Scholars think that after hearing what everyone said, the leaders all agreed with Paul and Barnabas. Because of this, the leaders send other people to help Paul and Barnabas.

Why did Luke write it “seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us”?

[15:28]

Some scholars think the words, “seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us” meant that because the leaders agreed about the Gentile Christians. They believed the Holy Spirit was helping them when they gathered together. That is, the Holy Spirit helped them to agree with one another.

See: Holy Spirit

Why did they write for Gentile Christians not to do four things?

[15:29]

See: Acts 15:13-21.

15:30-35

How was it that Judas and Silas “encouraged the brothers with many words”?

[15:32]

Scholars think Judas and Silas stayed in Antioch for a short time to instruct the Christians there from the scriptures and urge them to follow the teachings of Jesus. These scholars think Judas and Silas wanted to strengthen the faith of the Christians in Antioch.

See Map: Antioch

How were Paul and Silas “sent away in peace”?

[15:33]

In ancient times, it was common for people to welcome a visitor in peace and to also send them on a journey in peace.

The Christians in Antioch were sending greetings with Paul and Silas back to the Christians in Jerusalem. They sent them on their way in peace.

See Map: Jerusalem; Antioch

Did Luke write the words in verse 34?

[15:34]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament do not have the words in verse 34. Fewer ancient copies of the Greek New Testament have the words in verse 34. Scholars think Luke did not write these words. They think someone added these words to help people understand how Silas remained at Antioch.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

How does someone “proclaim the word of the Lord”?

[15:35]

Scholars think that to “proclaim the word of the Lord” meant that Paul and Barnabas taught people about the gospel and the messiah (see: Romans 3:28; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8-9).

See: Gospel; Word of God; Messiah (Christ)

15:36-41

Where were Pamphylia, Cyprus, Syria, and Cilicia

[15:38, 15:39, 15:41]

See Map: Pamphylia; Cyprus; Syria; Cilicia

How did the church at Antioch entrust Paul to the grace of the Lord?

[15:40]

Some scholars say the church at Antioch entrusted Paul to the grace of the Lord by trusting that God would lead and protect Paul. This is because they knew God is kind and powerful. Other scholars think the church also entrusted Silas to the grace of the Lord.

See: Church; Grace; Lord

See Map: Antioch

Acts 16

16:1-5

Where were Derbe and Lystra?

[16:1]

See Map: Derbe; Lystra

Why did Paul circumcise Timothy?

[16:3]

Paul wanted Timothy to be circumcised. Scholars think this is because Timothy’s mother was Jewish, Timothy was also a Jew even though his father was a Greek. Because he was not circumcised, the Jews rejected Timothy. Paul wanted Timothy to be circumcised so that the Jews would allow him to teach into the synagogues.

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Synagogue

What “instructions” did Paul deliver to the churches that they should obey them?

[16:4]

Paul delivered the “decisions”(δόγμα/g1378) about how to live as Christians from the things the Christian leaders taught in Jerusalem.

16:6-10

Where were Phrygia and Galatia?

[16:6]

See Map: Phrygia; Galatia

How was Paul forbidden by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the word in Asia?

[16:6]

Scholars think there may have been various ways in which Paul and Barnabas were forbidden the Holy Spirit to proclaim the word of God in Asia. They think the Holy Spirit helped Paul to know this in some way.

See: Holy Spirit; Word of God

See Map: Asia; Mysia; Bithynia; Troas

What did Luke mean by writing “Spirit of Jesus”?

[16:7]

Most scholars think that when Luke wrote about the “Spirit of Jesus” he was referring to the Holy Spirit. These scholars think Luke was writing about one Spirit when he wrote about either the “Spirit of Jesus”, the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God.

See: Holy Spirit; Trinity

What was a “vision”?

[16:9]

See: Vision)

Why did Luke write “immediately”?

[16:10]

Luke wrote “immediately”(εὐθέως/g2112) because Paul and his friends immediately obeyed God and went to Macedonia.

Why did Luke start writing “we” instead of “they”?

[16:10]

Luke started writing “we” instead of “they” because Luke joined Paul and his friends at that time. Luke then saw the things about which he wrote.

16:11-15

What was a “place of prayer”?

[16:13]

In ancient Israel, places of prayer were often rock enclosures with trees surrounding them. Some scholars think Paul and his companions may have noticed a place to sit near the water that they thought could be used for prayer.

See Map: Troas; Samothrace; Neapolis; Philippi

Who was Lydia?

[16:14]

Lydia was a Gentile woman who wanted to worship God in the way Jews worshiped God. She was from Thyatira, a place famous for making purple dyes.

See: Gentile; Worship

See Map: Thyatira; Asia

What was meant by the words, “The Lord opened her heart”?

[16:14]

When Luke wrote that God opened Lydia’s heart, he used a metaphor. It meant that God helped Lydia to understand all that Paul taught and that God greatly encouraged her through Paul’s words.

See: Heart (Metaphor); Metaphor

What did it mean that “she and her house were baptized”?

[16:15]

The words, “she and her house were baptized” meant that Lydia and all who lived in her house were baptized. This would have included any servants, children and relatives.

See: Baptize (Baptism)

What was meant by the words, “if you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord”?

[16:15]

Scholars think Lydia was saying, “if you have judge me to be a woman believer in Jesus.” That is, she told Paul that she believed in Jesus and was a Christian.

16:16-24

What was a “spirit of divination”?

[16:16]

Some scholars think the girl that “spirit of divination” was a demon who told the future. Scholars think the girl had no control over how the demon spoke through her, and that the demon used many kinds of voices to speak through her.

See: Demon; Sorcery; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

Why did the demon possessed woman shout out that Paul and his friends proclaimed the way of salvation?

[16:17]

Scholars think the demon possessed woman shouted that Paul and his friends proclaimed the way of salvation for several reasons:

Some scholars think she did not glorify or respect God. When she said Paul and his friends were servants of the Most High God she was not thinking about the one God of the Bible. She was thinking about many false gods where one god was greater than the other gods.

Some scholars think the girl shouted out that Paul spoke about “a way of salvation”, and not “the way of salvation.” They think she spoke the truth but only some things she said were true.

Some scholars think she was trying to get people not to serve Paul and his friends. That is, she wanted people to watch her and not to listen to what Paul said about Jesus.

Some scholars think the demons said similar things to Jesus (see: Luke 4:41). Perhaps they did this to confuse people.

See: Demon; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Glory (Glorify); False gods

Why did Paul command the spirit “in the name of Jesus Christ”?

[16:18]

Scholars think that when Paul commanded the spirit “in the name of Jesus Christ” to come out, he wanted people to know that Jesus gave him permission and power to do these things. This honored Jesus.

See: Name

What was the marketplace?

[16:19]

Most ancient cities had a city square in the center of town called a marketplace. The marketplace was where people gathered to buy things, to talk, and to plan things. Sometimes leaders resolved arguments between people in the marketplace.

Who were the magistrates?

[16:20]

Magistrates were leaders of a city. They could decide what to do if there was a problem or trouble in the city. They could also decide how a person should be punished if the person did something wrong.

Why did the magistrates tear the garments off of Paul and Silas?

[16:22]

The magistrates tore the garments off of Paul and Silas because they planned to beat Paul and Silas. People who were beaten were struck with whips or rods on their bare backs.

What were the “stocks” fastened to Paul and Silas’ feet when they were put in prison?

[16:24]

The “stocks”(ξύλον/g3586) fastened to Paul and Silas’ feet were wooden blocks that locked their feet into one position. This made it very difficult for them to walk.

16:25-34

Why was the jailer about to kill himself?

[16:27]

The jailer was about to kill himself because he knew the penalty for allowing prisoners to escape was death (see: Acts 16:12). Scholars think he did not want to be dishonored.

Why did the other prisoners not escape?

[16:28]

Scholars give several reasons why the other prisoners did not escape.

They were afraid of the prison guards.

They wanted to hear Paul and Silas talk about salvation from Jesus because they heard Paul and Silas pray and sing to God.

Perhaps the jailer secured the other prisoners before he fell down and talked to Paul and Silas.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Pray (Prayer)

Why did the jailer ask how to be saved?

[16:30]

Some scholars say the jailer might have heard the girl’s announcement that Paul and Silas knew the way of salvation. Also, he just experienced an earthquake that opened all the prison doors, yet no one escaped. Scholars think the jailer was full of fear. He wanted to know how to be at peace with God.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

What did Paul tell the jailer in order for him to be saved?

[16:31]

Paul told the jailer how to be at peace with God. All he needed to do was to believe in Jesus. Paul told the jailer about the forgiveness of sins found in Jesus.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Sin

What did it mean that the jailer and his household were baptized immediately?

[16:33]

Scholars think that when the jailer took Paul and Silas to cleanse their wounds, he likely took them to a well in the prison courtyard. While there, Paul and Silas baptized the jailer and his family in the water of the same well.

See: Baptize (Baptism)

How did the jailer and his household rejoice greatly?

[16:34]

The jailer and his household rejoiced greatly with a meal at his house for Paul and Silas. They rejoiced because they had believed in God and they now had peace with God.

16:35-40

Why did the magistrates command the jailer to release Paul and Silas the next day?

[16:35]

Scholars give several reasons why the magistrates commanded the jailer to release Paul and Silas the next day.

They thought the earthquake was a sign from their false gods.

Lydia persuaded the magistrates to release Paul and Silas.

They thought the shame from beating Paul and Silas and putting them in prison would make Paul and Silas stop talking and causing trouble in Philippi.

See: Sign; False gods

See Map: Philippi

Why did Paul want the magistrates to lead them out of prison?

[16:37]

During that time, when the magistrates led a person out from the prison, it showed that the person had been treated

unjustly. That is, they were accused falsely. Paul knew if the magistrates led them out from the prison, they would still have a good reputation with the people of Philippi.

Why did the magistrates ask Paul and Silas to leave Philippi?

[16:39]

Scholars think the magistrates asked Paul and Silas to leave Philippi because they did not want the crowds to cause another riot. Other scholars think the magistrates did not want the crowd to favor Paul and Silas and turn against the magistrates. Also, they did not want Paul and Silas to report that the magistrates beat Roman citizens and put them in prison without a trial.

See: Citizen

How did Paul and Silas encourage the Christians at Lydia's house?

[16:40]

Scholars think the Christians at Lydia's house were encouraged because they saw that God answered their prayers for the release of Paul and Silas.

Acts 17

17:1-9

Where were Amphipolis, Apollonia, and Thessalonica?

[17:1]

See Map: Amphipolis; Apollonia; Thessalonica

Why did Luke write that Paul reasoned from the scriptures for three Sabbath days?

[17:2]

Luke wrote that Paul reasoned from Scripture for three Sabbath days. Scholars think that the regular meaning of "three Sabbath days" during Paul's time meant three weeks of time. Paul taught people about Jesus from the Old Testament for three weeks.

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Sabbath

Why did Paul say "it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise again"?

[17:3]

Paul said "it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise again" because the Old Testament prophets spoke of these events, and Jesus himself also spoke of these events.

See: Psalm 22; Isaiah 53; Luke 18:31-33; 24:25-26

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Prophet; Resurrect (Resurrection)

What was meant by the words, "not a few of the leading women"?

[17:4]

The words "not a few of the leading women" meant a large number of women. These women were likely wives of the city's leaders.

Why were the unbelieving Jews jealous of Paul and Silas?

[17:5]

Scholars think the unbelieving Jews were jealous of Paul and Silas because many more Gentiles than Jews believed in Jesus. More people became Christians. Perhaps the unbelieving Jews were also afraid they will lose control of their synagogue.

See: Synagogue; Gentile

Advice to translators: The unbelieving Jews were Jews who rejected Jesus. They were not Christians.

How did the unbelieving Jews create an uproar?

[17:5]

There were several things the unbelieving Jews did to create an uproar.

They went to the marketplace and gathered wicked men to cause trouble. These wicked men did not work in the marketplace. They were always there wanting to do wrong things.

The wicked men helped them start a riot in the city.

They went to the house of Jason and broke down the door of his house. They then dragged him and other Christians in front of the city leaders. Paul and Silas were in another part of the city.

They made the crowd and the city leaders angry by shouting lies against Paul and the Christians.

Who was Jason?

[17:6]

Jason was a relative of Paul and scholars think Paul and Silas stayed with him while they were in Thessalonica.

See Map: Thessalonica

What did it mean to "act against the decrees of Caesar"?

[17:7]

When Paul and Silas were accused of acting "against the decrees of Caesar" it meant they were accused of rebelling

against all the Roman laws. This is because Jesus is a king. However, Jesus is not a king in the same way that the Roman Caesar was a king. People said that Paul and Silas were trying to get people to serve a different king other than Caesar. They wanted Paul and Silas to be arrested.

Why did the city leaders make Jason pay money as a security?

[17:9]

The leaders of the city made Jason pay a security. That is, Jason assured the city leaders that Paul and Silas would leave the city and not to return.

17:10-15

How were the people in Berea more noble than the people in Thessalonica?

[17:11]

When Luke said that the people in Berea were more noble than the people in Thessalonica, he meant they wanted to learn about Jesus from Paul and Silas. That is, they wanted Paul and Silas to teach them about the Bible.

See Map: Berea; Thessalonica

What was meant by the words, “examining the scriptures daily”?

[17:11]

When Luke said that the Bereans “examined”(ἀνακρίνω/g0350) the scriptures daily, he meant they examined the Bible and compared the Bible to the things Paul and Silas taught. They wanted to prove that Paul and Silas taught the same thing the Bible taught. They wanted to know if Paul said correct things about Jesus.

How was it that the Jews from Thessalonica “stirred up and troubled the crowds”?

[17:13]

When Luke wrote that the Jews from Thessalonica “stirred up and troubled the crowds” he meant they caused confusion among the people. That is, they kept insisting that people follow the Law of Moses instead of what Paul and Silas taught.

See: Law of Moses

See Map: Thessalonica

Where was Athens?

[17:15]

See Map: Athens

17:16-21

Why did idols “provoke” Paul’s spirit?

[17:16]

Idols “angered”(παροξύνω/g3947) Paul because idols made Israel sin against God (see: 2 Kings 17:12). Also, the Christian leaders in Jerusalem did not want Christians to worship idols (see: 15:29).

See: Idolatry (Idol); Sin

What was the marketplace?

[17:17]

See: Acts 16:19

What were philosophers?

[17:18]

Philosophers were people who loved wisdom. Philosophers taught different things about the world. In ancient Israel, many philosophers went to Athens. Paul warned that things they taught Christians were the wrong things and stopped Christians from believing the right things (see: Colossians 2:8).

See Map: Athens

What did Epicureans believe?

[17:18]

Epicureans followed a man named Epicurus who lived about 300 years before Paul. They taught certain things. They believed several things differently from Jews and Christians.

They taught that people should avoid pain .

They taught that God or other gods did not do anything with people. There were no miracles or prophecy. They did not think God or other gods controlled anything.

When a person died, nothing happened.

See: False gods; Miracle; Prophecy (Prophecy)

What did Stoics believe?

[17:18]

Stoics followed a man named Zeno who lived about 300 years before Paul. They believed several things differently from Jews and Christians.

They believed that some power created things and people.

They wanted people to think the same way gods thought.

They followed their conscience.
They did not want to feel pleasure, pain, joy, and sadness.

See: Conscience

What was a babbler?

[17:18]

A babbler was a bird pecking grain. It was a metaphor to say Paul was not a real teacher and a worthless person.

See: Metaphor

What was meant by the words “follow strange gods”?

[17:18]

People said that Paul followed strange gods. They said that Paul was teaching about foreign gods. In the ancient world, people did not worship foreign gods. When someone did this, people thought they rejected the nation where they lived.

See: False gods

What was the Areopagus?

[17:19]

The Areopagus was the highest court in Athens. It was on the hill of Ares or Mars Hill.

See Map: Athens; Ares; Mars Hill

Why did they take Paul to the Areopagus?

[17:19]

They took Paul to the Areopagus because of the things he said about Jesus and becoming alive again. They wanted to know about the things Paul taught. They were polite to Paul. They always wanted to hear new things.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

17:22-31

Why did Paul say they were “religious”?

[17:22]

Paul said these people were “religious”(δεδουλωμένων/g1174). That is, they worshipped and obey their false gods. Some scholars think Paul said something good about them. That is, they honored their gods and built altars for their gods. Other scholars think Paul said this so they will listen to him. He did not say that because he thought they were right.

See: Worship; False gods; Altar

Why did they build an altar to an unknown god?

[17:23]

They built an altar to an unknown god because they believed some god controlled the world. Because of this, they knew there may be a god who made all things. However, they did not understand anything else about this god.

See: Altar; False gods

What did Paul have to say about the altar that said, “To an Unknown God”?

[17:24, 17:25, 17:26, 17:27]

Paul saw the altar with the words “To an Unknown God” written on it. After he saw this, he wanted to teach them about God. People can know about God. However, God is not one god of many God. There is only one God.

How did Paul try to correct the wrong thinking with regard to the various altars?

[17:24, 17:25, 17:26, 17:27]

Paul told them it was wrong to worship idols. This was taught in the Old Testament.

God created everything (see: Genesis 1:1).

God is ruler over everything (see: Isaiah 45:23; Daniel 5:23).

God is too great to live in a temple (see: 1 Kings 8:27; Isaiah 57:15; 66:1-2).

People do not need to serve God in the way pagans served gods with sacrifices. God does not need anything. God gives everything people need (see: Psalm 50:8-13; Genesis 2:7; James 1:17).

See: Idolatry (Idol); Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Altar; Temple; Pagan; Offer (Offering); Sacrifice

Did Luke write the word blood in verse 26?

[17:26]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament have the word blood in verse 26. Older ancient copies of the Greek New Testament do not have these words. Scholars do not think Luke wrote this word. Paul was thinking about Adam when he said God made every nation of people (see: Luke 3:38; Genesis 3:20). Everyone is a descendant of Adam (see: Genesis 3:20).

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

Why did Paul say the same thing a pagan poet said?

[17:28]

Paul said the same thing a pagan poet said because that pagan poet was right when he wrote God gave life to people. God makes everyone alive (see: Job 12:10). However, the pagan poet was wrong about many other things. Paul only repeated

the part where the pagan was right.

See: Pagan

What was a deity?

[17:29]

Deity was a word for a divine being. It can be used to talk about the one true God or false gods.

See: God; False gods

Why did God overlook times of ignorance?

[17:30]

God overlooked times of ignorance. That is, God does not judge people when they know they are doing something wrong. This is because he loves people in the world and he did not judge them yet. People were said to be ignorant because they did not know God created them and that he rules everything. They did not know it was wrong to worship idols. However, Jesus came and God wanted everyone to repent. That is, God wanted people to stop worshipping idols and worship God.

See: Repent (Repentance); Judge (Judgment); Idolatry (Idol)

How will God judge all the people in the world in righteousness?

[17:31]

God will judge all the people in the world according to his righteousness when he judges everyone through Jesus. That is, the same righteous standard will be used by God to judge all peoples of the world.

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Judge (Judgment)

Who is the man God “has chosen”?

[17:31]

Paul spoke about the man God has chosen. Paul was speaking about Jesus. God has “chosen”(ᾧρισεν/g3724) to judge the world through Jesus. Paul taught that God chose Jesus to be the judge by raising him from the dead.

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Judge (Judgment)

17:32-34

Why did some of the men of Athens mock Paul when he said God made Jesus alive again?

[17:32]

Some of the men of Athens mocked Paul when he said God made Jesus alive again because they believed that God will not judge and God did not do miracles. They also thought the world will never end.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Judge (Judgment); Miracle

See Map: Athens

What was an Areopagite?

[17:34]

An Areopagite was a member of the Areopagus court. Some scholars think Dionysius was one of the twelve judges of the Athenian court.

See: Judge (Judgment)

See Map: Athens

Acts 18

18:1-11

Why did Paul leave Athens?

[18:1]

Luke did not write why Paul left Athens. Some scholars think Paul was not able to make tents there because Athens was not a city where people made tents. Other scholars think Corinth needed someone to preach the gospel. Also, Corinth was a city where people made tents.

See: Gospel

See Map: Athens

Where was Corinth?

[18:1]

See Map: Corinth

Where were Pontus, Italy, and Rome?

[18:2]

See Map: Pontus; Italy; Rome

Who was Claudius?

[18:2]

Claudius was the fourth Roman Emperor. He ruled the Roman Empire about 10 years after Jesus died. He allowed the Jews to obey the Law of Moses and to do things the religious things the Jews did.

See: Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar); Law of Moses

Why did Claudius make all the Jews leave Rome?

[18:2]

The Roman Emperor Claudius made all the Jews leave Rome because the Jews caused many riots in Rome. Scholars do not know if Aquila and Priscilla participated in those riots at Rome or if they did not.

See: Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

Why did Paul go to Aquila and Priscilla?

[18:2, 18:3]

Some scholars think Paul went to Aquila and Priscilla because they were Christians. Perhaps they helped start the church in Rome. Other scholars think they were not Christians and Paul went to them because they also made tents. Then Paul taught them and they became Christians. Aquila and Priscilla helped Paul many times.

See: Acts 18:18, 26; Romans 16:3; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19).

See Map: Rome

How did the church in Corinth begin?

[18:4] The church in Corinth began when Paul persuaded Jews and Greeks to believe that Jesus is the messiah. Paul talked to these Jews and Greeks at the synagogue in Corinth. At first, the synagogue allowed Paul to tell people about Jesus.

Later, they did not want Paul to talk about Jesus.

See: Church; Synagogue; Messiah (Christ)

Did Luke write that the Holy Spirit led Paul?

[18:5] Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament have the words, the Holy Spirit led Paul in verse. However, more and older copies of the Greek New Testament have the words, Paul was devoted to the word. Scholars think Luke wrote that Paul was devoted to the word.

See: Word of God

Where was Macedonia?

[18:5]

See Map: Macedonia

Why did Paul shake out his garment at the Jews who opposed and insulted him?

[18:6] Paul shook out his garment at the Jews who opposed and insulted him. This was a sign that he stop talking to them about Jesus. Paul also warned them God will judge them. However, God will not judge Paul because Paul warned them. This was similar to what God told Ezekiel to do (see: Ezekiel 3:16-21).

See: Sign; Judge (Judgment)

Advice to translators: A garment was a piece of clothing.

What did Paul do when Silas and Timothy went to Corinth?

[18:7, 18:8]

Paul stopped making tents and give all of time to telling people about Jesus when Silas and Timothy went to Corinth. They were in Corinth with Paul. Some scholars think Silas and Timothy brought money so that Paul did not need to make tents. Other scholars think Silas and Timothy worked and made enough money so that Paul did not need to make tents.

See Map: Corinth

What was a vision?

[18:9]

See: Vision

Why did the Lord speak to Paul in a vision at night?

[18:9]

The Lord spoke to Paul in a vision at night because Paul was afraid he would have to leave Corinth. Persecution in other cities forced Paul to leave when he wanted to continue serving God. However, Paul was not afraid to suffer (see: 21:10-14). Also, the vision helped Paul know he pleased God by the way he served God in Corinth.

See: Persecute (Persecution)

18:12-17

Who was Gallio?

[18:12]

Gallio was the leader of Achaia in Greece for two years. He began ruling about 20 years after Jesus died. He was killed by a Roman emperor.

See Map: Achaia; Greece

What was the judgement seat?

[18:12]

See: Judge (Judgment)

Why did the Jews bring Paul before Gallio?

[18:12]

The Jews brought Paul before Gallio because they wanted to persuade him to judge against Paul. However, their plan failed. The Lord's promise in the vision to protect Paul at Corinth came true.

See: Judge (Judgment); Vision)
See Map: Corinth
Which law did the Jews talk about?
[18:13]

Some scholars think the law the Jews talked about was the Law of Moses. They wanted the governor to allow them to follow the Law of Moses. Other scholars think the Jews talked about Roman laws. Roman laws allowed the Jews to worship God and follow the Law of Moses. If these Jews were able to convince Gallio the Christians were different from the Jews, then Roman law would not allow Christians to worship God. Other scholars think the Jews talked about both the law of Moses and Roman laws.

See: Law of Moses
Who was Sosthenes?
[18:17]

Sosthenes was the ruler of the synagogue in Corinth. If he was the same person in 1 Corinthians 1:1, then he became a Christian at sometime and later he helped Paul write the first letter to the Corinthian church.

See: Synagogue
Why did people beat Sosthenes?
[18:17]

Scholars give several reasons why people beat Sosthenes.

Some scholars think the Jews beat Sosthenes because he was not able to persuade Gallio to judge Paul.

Some scholars think the Jews beat Sosthenes because he became a Christian.

Some scholars think the Gentiles beat Sosthenes because they did not like Jews.

See: Gentile

18:18-23

Why did Paul do a third missionary journey?
[18:8]

This was the beginning of Paul's third missionary journey. He wanted to visit and help the churches he established in his first and second missionary journeys. He wanted them to know he did not forget about them.

See: Paul's Missionary Journeys; Church

See Map: Syria; Cenchrea; Ephesus; Caesarea; Antioch; Galatia; Phrygia

What vow did Paul take?

[18:8]

Scholars have several ideas of what vow Paul took.

Some scholars think Paul made a Nazarite vow (see: Numbers 6)

Some scholars think Paul made a vow of thanksgiving because God protected him in Corinth.

Sometimes ancient sailors shaved their heads after living through a difficult journey. This was a type of vow.

Some scholars think Paul made a private vow.

See: Vow

Why did Paul say "if it is God's will"?
[18:21]

Paul said "if it is God's will" because he always depended on God leading him by the Holy Spirit. Sometimes the Holy Spirit sent Paul to a certain place (see: Acts 13:2). Other times God allowed Paul to visit churches he wanted to visit (see: Acts 15:36). Paul wanted to do God's will.

See: Will of God; Holy Spirit

18:24-28

Where was Alexandria?

[18:24]

See Map: Alexandria

What spirit was Apollos fervent in?

[18:24]

Scholars think Apollos was fervent in his own spirit. This was a metaphor. He loved to speak about Jesus and was excited to speak about Jesus (see: Romans 12:11). Fewer scholars think Luke was writing about the Holy Spirit. Fewer scholars think Luke was writing about both Apollos' spirit and the Holy Spirit.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Holy Spirit; Metaphor

How did Priscilla and Aquila tell Apollos the way of God more accurately?

[18:26]

Some scholars think Priscilla and Aquila told Apollos the way of God more accurately by telling him about Christian

baptism in water. The Holy Spirit already live him. Other scholars think the Holy Spirit did not yet live in Apollos but Priscilla and Aquila explained that to him (see: 2:1-4). In the same way, many of the five-hundred who saw Jesus alive again did not go to Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit began to live in the apostles and other Christians (1 Corinthians 15:6).

See: Baptize (Baptism); Holy Spirit; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit: Pentecost; Apostle

See Map: Jerusalem

Acts 19

19:1-7

Who were these disciples?

[19:1]

Some scholars think these disciples were Christians. They were not only disciples of John the Baptist but they were also disciples of Jesus. They think that only people who followed and believed in Jesus were disciples in the book of Acts. Some scholars think these disciples were not Christians. They did not have the Holy Spirit in them. Only people who had the Holy Spirit were Christians (see: John 3:5; Romans 8:9). They did not know about baptism in the name of Jesus. Some scholars think people believed these people were disciples. However, Paul did think they really were disciples. Some scholars think Apollos persuaded people to believe in Jesus before Priscilla and Aquila taught Apollos.

See: Disciple; Holy Spirit; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Baptize (Baptism)

How did Paul ask these disciples when they believed?

[19:2]

Scholars have two ideas of how Paul asked these disciples when they believed.

Paul asked them if God gave them the Holy Spirit when they believed in Jesus. That is, God filled Christians with the Holy Spirit when they believed in Jesus. Christians knew they already had the Holy Spirit. However, these disciples did not know God gave the Holy Spirit (see: John 7:39).

Paul asked them if God gave them the Holy Spirit after they believed in Jesus. That is, Christians had the Holy Spirit when they believed in Jesus. However, God filled Christians with the Holy Spirit at a later time so that they could better serve God. The Jews and the people John the Baptist baptized knew about the Holy Spirit. Therefore, when they said they did not hear about the Holy Spirit they were thinking about God filling people with the Holy Spirit.

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Holy Spirit; Disciple; Filling of the Holy Spirit

Why did these disciples say they were baptized with John's baptism?

[19:3]

These disciples said they were baptized by John the Baptist. However, they were not baptized as Christians. This was a different baptism.

See: Baptize (Baptism)

Why did Paul lay his hands on these disciples?

[19:6]

See: Laying on of Hands ; Disciple

How did the Holy Spirit come on these disciples?

[19:6]

The Holy Spirit came on these disciples in the same way God filled disciples with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost and they spoke in "tongues"(γλῶσσα/g1100) (see: Acts 2:4) and prophesied.

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Filling of the Holy Spirit; Pentecost; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Speaking in Tongues

19:8-20

What was the "Way"?

[19:9]

In ancient Israel, people called Christians the "Way"(ὁδός/g3598). A "way" was a road or path from one place to another. It a metaphor of how a person lived their life. That is, when a person lived in a way that honored God, they were following the right way. Christians did more than believe the right things about God and Jesus. Christians also honored God in the way they lived (see: Acts 15:11; 18:25-26; John 14:6).

See: Acts 9:2; 22:4; 24:14,22

What was the "lecture hall of Tyrannus"?

[19:9]

The "lecture hall of Tyrannus" was a place where people taught others. Here, Paul was able to speak every day rather than just one day a week at the synagogue. Paul made tents in Ephesus (see: Acts 20:34) in the mornings and taught people at the hall of Tyrannus in the afternoons. Then in the evenings he served at houses (see: Acts 20:20).

See: Synagogue

See Map: Ephesus

How did all the Jews and Greeks in Asia hear the word of the Lord?

[19:10]

All the Jews and Greeks in Asia heard the word of the Lord when Christians went to cities in Asia and told people about Jesus. Many of these people went to Ephesus to do trade with others.

See: Word of God

See Map: Asia; Ephesus

What were “extraordinary miracles”?

[19:11]

See: Miracle

Who was Sceva?

[19:14]

Some scholars think Sceva was a “chief” priest rather than the “high” priest. That is, he was not the high priest who stayed in Jerusalem but he was a priest who serve the high priests Annas and Caiphas. Other scholars think Sceva gave himself this title and Luke wrote what Sceva called himself this. He was not truly a priest in Israel. In ancient Israel, some people said they were priests when they were not priests.

See: High Priest; Priest (Priesthood)

Why did the evil spirit take control over the sons of Sceva?

[19:14]

The evil spirit took control over the sons of Sceva because they tried to do it themselves, rather than trusting in Jesus. They tried to force the evil spirit out the same way other Jewish leaders did except they also said the name of Jesus. This did not help them because they did not believe in Jesus.

See: Demon

Why did many believers have magic books?

[19:19]

Many believers had magic books because they were recently became Christians. The ancient city of Ephesus had many magicians with books of formulas for casting spells. Many people did magic all their lives before they began to believe in Jesus. However, the failure of the sons of Sceva to force out an evil spirit made Christians know their magic formulas did not have the same power as Jesus. Therefore, they burned their magic books and honored the Lord Jesus.

See Map: Ephesus

How much was fifty-thousand pieces of silver?

[19:19]

Fifty-thousand pieces of silver was the same amount two-hundred workers or soldiers earned in a year.

19:21-22

What were “these things”?

[19:21]

Some scholars “these things” were the two years Paul served the Christians in Ephesus. Other scholars think he was writing about the things in 19:13-19. Paul believed he finished serving the Christians in Ephesus. The church grew and became strong. It was time for Paul to serve in other places.

See: Church

How did Paul decide in the Spirit?

[19:21]

Some scholars think Paul decided in his own spirit to go through Macedonia and Achaia on his way to Jerusalem. More scholars think the Holy Spirit led Paul to travel. This was how the Holy Spirit led Paul.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Holy Spirit

See Map: Macedonia; Achaia; Jerusalem

Why did Paul say he must see Rome?

[19:21]

Paul said he must see Rome because he knew God wanted him to go there. Later, God told this to Paul (see: Acts 23:11) and also an angel told this to Paul (see: Acts 27:23-24).

See: Angel

See Map: Rome

How did Paul go to Rome?

[19:21]

Paul did not go to Rome right away. He needed to visit other churches first. However, from here to the end of the book of Acts Paul’s purpose was to go to Rome.

See: Church; Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

See Map: Rome

Why did Paul send Timothy and Erastus ahead to the churches in Macedonia and Achaia?

[19:22]

Paul sent Timothy and Erastus ahead to the churches in Macedonia and Achaia because he wanted them to prepare those churches for his visit.

19:23-41

What was Artemis?

[19:24]

Artemis was a pagan fertility goddess with many breasts, or planets, or fruits, or bee or ostrich eggs, or castrated organs. The ancient Ephesians built a temple to Artemis. The temple was a bank and people put money there. The temple was destroyed and rebuilt many times. During the time of Paul, people made many small silver shrines of the temple. That is, they made little copies or models of the temple. Many people went to Ephesus and bought the silver shrines and used them to worship false gods in their houses. However, when many people no longer believed in idols because they believed in Jesus, then the people who made these idols did not make as much money.

See: Idolatry (Idol); False gods; Temple

Why did Demetrius say Paul persuaded many people in Ephesus and most of Asia?

[19:24]

Demetrius said Paul persuaded many people in Ephesus and most of Asia because he wanted to gather people against Paul. However, Demetrius did not know he said Paul was very successful in persuading people to believe in Jesus.

See: Luke 13:18-20

Why did Luke write about Gaius and Aristarchus?

[19:29]

Luke wrote about Gaius and Aristarchus because he wanted people to know Paul persuaded many people to believe in Jesus when he served in Macedonia, especially in Thessalonica (see: Acts 20:4).

See Map: Macedonia; Thessalonica

Why did Luke write most of the people did not know why they gathered?

[19:32]

Luke wrote most of the people did not know why they gathered because he wanted people to laugh at the crowd. In ancient Greece, writers often wanted the people to laugh when people did stupid things.

Why did the Jews push forward Alexander to make a defense?

[19:33]

The Jews wanted Alexander to make a defense because they wanted the crowd not to think they were Christians. The people knew the Jews also did not believe in idols. The Jews wanted the people to know they had nothing to do with Paul or the Christians.

See: Idolatry (Idol)

What was the town clerk?

[19:35]

The town clerk was the highest official in the city. He kept the city and temple records. He reigned over city meetings. He also talked to Rome about the city.

See: Temple

How did the town clerk know the Christians did not rob the temples or blaspheme the goddess?

[19:37]

The town clerk knew the Christians did not rob temples or blaspheme the goddess because Christians were in Ephesus for at least three years and the Christians did not do these things. The Christians preached about Jesus and fewer people bought silver shrines of the goddess.

See: Temple; Blaspheme (Blasphemy); False gods; Preach (Preacher)

See Map: Ephesus

Acts 20

20:1-6

How did Paul encourage the disciples?

[20:1]

Paul encouraged the disciples by telling them to continue trusting in God and to live in a way that honors God. Paul wrote these things in his letters when he encouraged Christians.

See: Disciple

What was the plot the Jews formed against Paul?

[20:3]

The plot the Jews formed against Paul was a plan to do something evil to Paul or even kill him. Because of this, Paul changed his plans and went by land back to Macedonia rather than sail on a ship toward Syria.

See Map: Macedonia; Greece; Syria
Why did Luke write “us” in verse five?
[20:5]

Some scholars think Luke wrote “us” in verse five because Luke began to travel with Paul. Fewer scholars think “us” also included other Christians who traveled with Paul and Luke.

Why did the Christian men meet Paul and Luke at Troas?
[20:5]

Christian men met Paul and Luke at Troas because they sailed on a ship and arrived there before Paul did because he traveled on land. Scholars think these men had money to give to the poor Christians in Jerusalem (see: 1 Corinthians 16:1-4).

See Map: Berea; Thessalonica; Derbe; Asia; Troas
What were the days of unleavened bread?
[20:6]

The days of unleavened bread was the festival of Passover.
See: Passover; Festival of Unleavened Bread

20:7-12

How did they break bread?
[20:7]

Some scholars think they broke bread by eating a meal (see: 2:46). Other scholars think they ate a meal and had the Lord’s supper (see: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

See: Lord’s Supper

Why did Luke write there were many lamps?
[20:8]

Some scholars think Luke wrote there were many lamps because the odor, heat, or smoke of the lamps took away the air to breath in the upper room. This made Eutychus sleep even though he sat near a window. Other scholars think the lamps gave much light so that Paul was able to continue speaking to the Christians all night.

How did Eutychus die?
[20:9]

Some scholars think Eutychus died from the fall. They say Paul prayed when he stretched himself and embraced Eutychus. Eutychus then became alive again. Luke was a doctor so he knew Eutychus was dead. Fewer scholars think they do not know if Eutychus really died. They say Eutychus did not wake up until later.

See: Pray (Prayer); Resurrect (Resurrection)

20:13-16

Why did Paul travel by land from Troas to Assos?
[20:13]

Luke did not write why Paul traveled by land from Troas to Assos. Scholars think Paul wanted time alone to talk to God. The Holy Spirit told Paul many times he will go to prison (see: 20:22-23). Paul was alone and God strengthened Paul to accept God’s will and serve Jesus until Paul died (see: 20:24).

See: Acts 9:15-16

See: Holy Spirit; Will of God

See Map: Troas; Assos

Why did Paul hurry to go to Jerusalem?
[20:16]

Paul hurried to go to Jerusalem to be there for the Day of Pentecost. Many Jewish Christians were in Jerusalem for Pentecost. Paul wanted the Gentile Christians from Macedonia and Greece to give the money to the poor Jewish Christians. He knew this would help join the Gentile and Jewish Christians together.

See: Pentecost

See Map: Mitylene; Chios; Samos; Miletus; Ephesus; Asia; Jerusalem; Macedonia; Greece

20:17-35

What were the “elders” in the church?
[20:17]

The “elders”(πρεσβύτερος/g4245) were the leaders in the church. They were also called “overseers”(ἐπίσκοπος/g1985) or “shepherds”(ποιμάνω/g4165) (see: Acts 20:28).

See: Elder; Overseer; Shepherd

How did Paul do the things he wanted the church leaders to do?
[20:18, 20:19, 20:24]

There were many ways Paul did the things he wanted the church leaders to do (see: 1 Corinthians 4:6; 11:1; 1

Thessalonians 1:6).

He was with them all the time.

He served Jesus even when he was persecuted.

He did not think he was greater than other people (see: 2 Corinthians 12:7).

He was innocent of all blood. That is, Paul preached the gospel to all people and warned them to repent and believe in Jesus (see: Ezekiel 3:18,20; 33:6,8).

He warned them about people who did not teach the truth.

He did not want people to give him things.

He worked and did not rely on people to give him money.

See: Persecute (Persecution) ; Preach (Preacher); Gospel; Repent (Repentance)

How did the Holy Spirit testify to Paul?

[20:23]

The Holy Spirit testified to Paul through prophecy. That is Paul knew what the Holy Spirit wanted him to know through prophecies. Luke wrote about the prophecy in Caesarea because it was an example of prophecies in other cities (see: 21:10-11). The Holy Spirit was able to testify to Paul through visions (see: 16:9-10) or talking to Paul when he worshipped God or fasted (see: 13:2). Paul knew the Holy Spirit did not want to stop Paul from going to Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit told Paul about God's plan for Paul to tell people about the gospel and God's grace (see: 20:24).

See: Testify (Testimony); Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Holy Spirit; Vision; Worship; Fasting; Grace

See Map: Caesarea ; Jerusalem

What was "the grace of God"?

[20:24]

See: Grace

What was "the whole will of God"?

[20:27]

The "whole will of God" was the whole plan of God to save people. That is, it was God's plan in the whole Bible. Jesus fulfilled all of God's plan.

See: Will of God; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Fulfill (Fulfillment)

What were "vicious wolves"?

[20:29]

When Paul spoke about "vicious wolves," this was a metaphor. He was speaking about people from outside the church who came into the church and taught wrong things about God and Jesus. Paul called them "vicious" because they were wild and cruel. Jesus called them false prophets (see: Matthew 7:15).

See: Church; False Prophet

What was the "flock"?

[20:29]

The "flock" was a metaphor for the church. Wolves attacked the "flock" and killed sheep. False teachers will teach wrong things about God and Jesus until Jesus returns.

See: Shepherd; Metaphor; Church; False Teacher; Jesus' Return to Earth

What was the inheritance?

[20:32]

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir)

What was sanctification?

[20:32]

See: Sanctify (Sanctification)

Who were the "weak"?

[20:35]

The "weak" (ἀσθενέω/g0770) were people who were poor people or people who were sick or suffering.

Why did Paul repeat what Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than receive"?

[20:35]

Paul repeated what Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," because Paul did not want anyone to think he preached to make money. Therefore, he worked to meet his own needs. Paul was talking about how he helped a new church. That is, Paul was at the church in Ephesus when it just started. However, after a church grew Paul wanted them to support the leaders in this church (see: Galatians 6:6; 1 Timothy 5:17-18). Also, Paul was an example to them of how to help the weak.

See: Bless (Blessing); Preach (Preacher); Church

See Map: Ephesus

20:36-38

Why did Paul kneel down to pray?

[20:36]

Paul knelt down to pray because this was a time of strong feelings for Paul (see: 21:5; 9:40). Christians prayed standing or sitting.

See: Pray (Prayer)

Acts 21

21:1-6

Why did Paul and his friends find the disciples at Tyre?

[21:3]

Paul and his friends found the disciples at Tyre because they did not know where the disciples were in Tyre. When Paul and his friends found the disciples they were in Tyre for seven days while merchants unloaded cargo from the ship.

See: Disciple

See Map: Cos; Rhodes; Patara; Phoenicia; Cyprus; Syria; Tyre

Why did the disciples at Tyre urge Paul not to go to Jerusalem?

[21:4]

The disciples at Tyre did not want Paul not to go to Jerusalem because they did not want Paul to suffer and go to prison in Jerusalem. However, the Holy Spirit was sending Paul to Jerusalem to suffer (see: Acts 19:21; 20:22-23). The disciples at Tyre did not tell Paul what the Holy Spirit told them to say when they told Paul not to go. Instead, they told Paul to not go because the Holy Spirit said Paul will suffer in Jerusalem. Luke wrote more about this when the same thing happened in Caesarea (see: Acts 21:12).

See: Disciple; Holy Spirit

See Map: Tyre; Jerusalem; Caesarea

21:7-14

How was Philip an “evangelist”?

[21:8]

Scholars have several ideas of how Philip was an “evangelist”(εὐαγγελιστής/2099). He was not the same Philip who was an apostle (see: Luke 6:13-14).

He helped people to believe in Jesus in Samaria and Judea.

God gave him the gift of “evangelist.”

He started the church at Caesarea.

See: Apostle; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Gospel

See Map: Samaria; Judea; Ptolemais; Caesarea

Why did Paul and his friends stay for several days in Philip’s house?

[21:8]

Scholars say there were two reasons why Paul and his friends stayed in Philip’s house for several days.

Philip’s daughters prophesied to Paul and encouraged him.

Philip told Luke about the Christians in Jerusalem (see: 6:5).

See: Prophecy (Prophecy)

Why did Luke write Philip’s daughters were virgins?

[21:9] Luke wrote Philip’s daughters were virgins because they were under sixteen years of age and not married. Some ancient pagan leaders wanted people who served in their temples to be virgins. However, Christians did not have to be virgins to prophesy or serve (see: 1 Corinthians 9:5).

See: Pagan; Temple; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Serve

How did God did fulfill Agabus’ prophecy?

[21:10, 21:11]

Some scholars think God did not fulfill all of Agabus’ prophecy because the Romans in Jerusalem tied Paul’s feet and hands. Other scholars think God fulfilled all of Agabus’ prophecy because the Jews in Jerusalem accused Paul of doing evil things and made the Romans tie his feet and hands.

See: Acts 23:27

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Fulfill (Fulfillment)

Why did the Holy Spirit give prophecies to say Paul will suffer in Jerusalem?

[21:11]

The Holy Spirit gave prophecies to say Paul will suffer in Jerusalem. The Jewish enemies of Paul will not be able to say God judged Paul because he preached a wrong gospel. These Jews were wrong to think that Gentiles need to become Jews before they became Christians (see: Acts 15:1-29). The prophecies stopped people from thinking wrong things about how

Paul served God. The church continued to grow after Paul went to Jerusalem.

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Preach (Preacher); Gospel; Gentile; Church

See Map: Jerusalem

Why did the Christians say, “May the will of the Lord be done”?

[21:14]

The Christian said, “May the will of the Lord be done,” because they finally accepted God’s plan for Paul to suffer in Jerusalem. They agreed with Paul and prayed for the things to happen as God said (see: Luke 2:42).

See: Lord; Will of God; Pray (Prayer)

21:15-26

Why did Luke write they went up to Jerusalem?

[21:15]

Luke wrote they went up to Jerusalem because Jerusalem was on a mountain. Even when people traveled from the north to Jerusalem the Bible wrote they went up to Jerusalem.

See Map: Jerusalem; Caesarea; Cyprus

Who was this James?

[21:18]

This James was the brother of Jesus. He was the leader of the church in Jerusalem.

See: Church; Family of Jesus

Why did not any of the other apostles meet Paul?

[21:18]

None of the other apostles met Paul because none of them were in Jerusalem. All of the other apostles left Jerusalem to go and tell people about Jesus.

See: Apostle

When did the things God did for the Gentiles happen?

[21:19]

The things God did for the Gentiles happened after Paul visited Jerusalem (see: Acts 15). This was during Paul’s second and third missionary journeys.

See: Paul’s Missionary Journeys; Gentile

What vow did the four men make?

[21:23]

The four men vowed a Nazirite Vow (see: Numbers 6:14-20). At the end of the time of the vow, the person who made the vow shaved their heads and offered sacrifices. James and the leaders did not ask Paul to take the Nazirite Vow himself. However, they thought if Paul paid for the sacrifices of the four men, then the Jews will know it was wrong to say Paul did not keep the law of Moses.

See: Vow; Offer (Offering); Law of Moses

What did Luke write in verse 25?

[21:25]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament say that the Gentiles do not do these things. Older and more copies of the Greek New Testament do not say this. Scholars do not think Luke wrote these words.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

Why did James repeat the letter from Acts 15?

[21:25]

James repeated the letter from Acts 15 because he wanted everyone to know the church in Jerusalem did not change what they thought about Gentile Christians. That is, even though the Jerusalem church asked Paul to pay for sacrifices in the Law of Moses, they still did not ask Gentile Christians to become Jews.

See: Church; Gentile; Offer (Offering); Sacrifice; Law of Moses

See Map: Jerusalem

21:27-36

How did the Jews from Asia lay hands on Paul?

[21:27]

The Jews from Asia laid hands on Paul. That is, they tried to hurt or kill Paul.

See Map: Asia

How did the Jews from Asia say wrong things about Paul?

[21:28]

The Jews from Asia lied about Paul by saying Paul spoke against the Jews, the Law of Moses, and the temple. They also lied and said that Paul brought a Gentile into a part of the temple where Gentiles were not supposed to go.

See: Law of Moses; Temple

See Map: Asia

Why did they close the doors of the temple?

[21:30]

They closed the doors of the temple so the crowd in an uproar will not defile the temple. If the crowd killed Paul in the temple it will defile the temple.

See: Temple

Who was “the chief captain of the cohort”?

[21:31]

“The chief captain of the cohort” was a Roman officer. He commanded between six hundred and one thousand Roman soldiers.

Where was the fortress?

[21:34]

The fortress was a tower northwest of the temple. It was called the Antonia tower. A person was able to see the temple from the tower. It was used to protect the temple.

See: Temple

Why did the crowd shout, “Away with him!”?

[21:36]

Some scholars think the crowd shouted, “Away with him!” because they wanted to kill Paul. Fewer scholars think they wanted to take Paul away and judge him.

See: 22:22; Luke 23:18

See: Judge (Judgment)

21:37-40

Why did the captain ask Paul if he was the Egyptian who started a rebellion?

[21:38]

The captain asked Paul if he was the Egyptian who started a rebellion because Paul spoke Greek. Many people in Egypt spoke Greek. Paul defended himself by saying he was a Jew from the city of Tarsus. That gave him Roman citizenship.

See: Citizen

See Map: Egypt; Tarsus

Who were the “Assassins”?

[21:38]

The “Assassins” were a group of certain people who fought against the Romans. They carried small knives and they killed people in crowds at festivals.

Why was Tarsus an important city?

[21:39]

Tarsus was an important city because many people lived there and they ruled themselves. Many people in Tarsus were rich.

How did Paul speak in the Hebrew language?

[21:40]

Some scholars think Paul spoke Aramaic. Aramaic was the language the Jews spoke when they lived in Babylon. At this time, the people in Israel spoke Aramaic. Only certain Jewish teachers read or spoke Hebrew. Fewer scholars think the Jews in Jerusalem read the Hebrew Old Testament.

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Babylon

See Map: Babylon

Acts 22

22:1-21

Why did speaking in Hebrew make the crowd quiet?

[22:2]

Speaking in Hebrew made the crowd quiet. When they heard Paul speaking Hebrew, they knew Paul was a Jew.

Who was Gamaliel?

[22:3]

Gamaliel was a Pharisee and teacher in Jerusalem. People respected this man. He taught many other Jewish teachers.

See: Acts 5:34

How did Paul study at the feet of Gamaliel?

[22:3]

When Paul he studied at the feet of Gamaliel, he used a metaphor. Gamaliel taught Paul. Some scholars think Gamaliel taught and raised Paul. Other scholars think Gamaliel taught Paul but he did not raise him. Because Gamaliel taught Paul, Paul had the best education in the Law of Moses and the things the Jews taught.

See: Metaphor; Law of Moses

Why did Paul say he was zealous for God?

[22:3]

Paul said he was 'zealous' (ζηλωτής/g2207) for God because he wanted the Jewish crowd to know he was not angry at them for beating him and wanting to kill him. He did the same things to Christians before he believed in Jesus. What was the Way? "The way" was a name for Christians (see: Acts 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22).

See: John 14:6

Why was the high priest able to bring Christians from another country to Jerusalem in bonds?

[22:4]

At that time the high priest in Jerusalem had permission to bring back a prisoner to Jerusalem from other areas under Roman control. Saul looked for Christians who left Jerusalem when the people persecuted Christians (see: Acts 8:1).

See: High Priest; Persecute (Persecution)

See Map: Jerusalem

How did Paul persecute Jesus?

[22:7]

Paul persecuted Jesus when he persecuted the followers of Jesus. That is, Christians represented Jesus (see: Luke 10:16).

See: Persecute (Persecution)

Why did Paul say those with him did not understand the voice of Jesus?

[22:9]

Paul said those with him did not understand the voice of Jesus, because Jesus spoke only to Paul. Why did Paul say his old name "Saul" when he talked about when Jesus appeared to him?

Paul said his name "Saul" when he talked about when Jesus appeared to him. Perhaps he did this because Paul wanted to say exactly what Jesus said to him.

See: Acts 9:4

How did Paul call Jesus "Lord"?

[22:10]

Paul called Jesus "Lord" two times. The first time Paul gave respect in the same way people gave respect to any leader.

Paul did not know it was Jesus (see: Acts 22:8). The second time Paul knew Jesus reigned over everything and everyone.

Paul was ready to obey Jesus (see: Acts 22:10).

See: Lord

Why did Jesus say things were appointed for Paul to do?

[22:10]

Jesus said things were appointed for Paul to do and God wanted Paul to be a part of his plan. Because Jesus said these things to Paul, Paul waited to hear what God had appointed for him to do.

What did it mean that Ananias was devout according to the Law of Moses?

[22:12]

When Paul said Ananias was devout according to the Law of Moses, he meant that Ananias obeyed the Lord of Moses. Ananias was also a Christian.

See: Law of Moses

Why did Ananias call Paul "brother"?

[22:13]

Ananias called Paul "brother" (αδελφος/g0080) because Ananias knew Paul was a Christian.

See: Family of God

Why did Ananias tell Paul to be baptized in water?

[22:16]

Ananias told Paul to be baptized in water because Paul needed to make others aware he believed in Jesus.

See: Baptize (Baptism)

When did Paul return to Jerusalem?

[22:17]

Some scholars think Paul returned to Jerusalem for a brief visit after becoming a Christian. Other scholars think Paul did not return to Jerusalem until three years after he became a Christian.

See: Acts 9:26-30

What was a "vision"?

[22:17]

See: Vision)

What was meant by the words, "they will not accept your testimony about me"?

[22:18]

Jesus told Paul that people would not accept the testimony about Jesus. That is, people would not believe in Jesus when Paul told them about Jesus. Scholars think this was because they would not be able to believe Paul since he had persecuted people for believing in Jesus.

See: Testify (Testimony); Persecute (Persecution)

Why did Paul talk about Gentiles?

[22:21]

Paul talked about Gentiles because God wanted everyone to hear about Jesus. Paul did that even though he knew the Jews would become angry.

See: Gentile

22:22-29

Why did the Jewish crowd want to kill Paul when he talked about Gentiles?

[22:22]

The Jewish crowd did not think God wanted to do anything good for the Gentiles. They forgot God cared about Gentiles (see: Genesis 12:3). Jews hated the Gentiles because they thought they were evil. Because they hated the Gentiles, this made them want to kill Paul.

See: Gentile

Why did the Jewish crowd shout, take off their cloaks, and throw dust?

[22:23]

Some scholars think the crowds were taking off their cloaks because they were preparing to fight Paul. Other scholars think that taking off cloaks and making dust was a way of rejecting the person speaking. Other scholars think this was a sign that they believed Paul was blaspheming God.

See: Blaspheme (Blasphemy)

What was scourging?

[22:24]

Scourging was a type of whipping. People were whipped with pieces of bone and metal sown into the leather whip. It caused permanent physical damage and sometimes people died.

Why did Paul's Roman citizenship stop the soldiers from scourging him?

[22:25, 22:26]

According to Roman law, it was not permitted to scourge a person who was a Roman citizen. It was also not permitted to punish a Roman citizen without first having a trial to determine guilt.

See: Citizen; Punish (Punishment)

How did the chief captain pay a large amount of money for his citizenship?

[22:28]

Roman Citizenship was often sold for money. Often it was a bribe. Certain Roman leaders became wealthy from selling citizenships. The chief captain used this to become an officer in the Roman army.

See: Citizen

22:30

What was the council?

[22:30]

See: Jewish Council-Sanhedrin

Acts 23

23:1-11

Why did Paul look directly at the council?

[23:1]

Paul looked directly at the council because he did not fear them. Some scholars think Paul was confident because he was also confident of the message he was about to give to them. He knew he was in God's will. He also knew the Holy Spirit led him.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Will of God; Holy Spirit

When did Paul have a good "conscience"?

[23:1]

Some scholars think Paul always had a good "conscience" (συνείδησις/g4893). That is, he always thought he did the right things. He even thought this when he persecuted Christians. Other scholars think Paul had a good "conscience" only after he became a Christian.

Paul wanted the Jewish council to know that he believed he did nothing wrong.

See: Conscience; Persecute (Persecution)

Why did the high priest command someone to strike Paul on the mouth?

[23:2]

Some scholars think Ananias had someone strike Paul on the mouth because they did not like something Paul said. Other scholars think Ananias was a man with a quick temper to become very angry.

See: High Priest

What was a whitewashed wall?

[23:3]

A whitewashed wall was a crumbling or decaying wall painted to make it look better. Whitewashed walls were usually walls facing streets. This was a metaphor. Scholars think Paul was saying that they wanted other people to think they did things that honor God. However, they did not want to do things that honor God. They wanted to do evil things. Paul thought that Ananias was being a hypocrite.

See: Metaphor; Hypocrisy (Hypocrite)

Why did Paul call the high priest a whitewashed wall?

[23:3]

Paul called the high priest a whitewashed wall to say the high priest did not obey the Law of Moses himself even when he judged Paul for not obeying the law of Moses (see: Leviticus 19:15).

See: High Priest; Law of Moses; Judge (Judgment)

Why did Paul not know the high priest?

[23:5]

Scholars think Paul did not know the high priest because Paul had been away from Jerusalem. Also, the high priest did not sit in his usual seat because the Roman leader wanted the Jewish council to meet.

See: Exodus 22:28

See: High Priest; Jewish Council (Sanhedrin)

Why did Paul say he was a Pharisee?

[23:6]

Scholars think Paul knew he would not receive justice from the council. Paul had been a Pharisee. He knew the Pharisees believed in the resurrection. Therefore, Paul spoke about the resurrection. This caused people in the Jewish council to fight with one another.

See: Pharisees; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Jewish Council (Sanhedrin)

How did Jesus stand beside Paul and speak to Paul?

[23:11]

Some scholars think Jesus stood beside Paul and helped him. Other scholars think Paul had a vision of Jesus standing with him. Other scholars think Paul must have dreamed that the Lord encouraged him.

See: Vision

23:12-22

What was meant by the words, “called a curse down upon themselves with an oath”?

[23:14]

See: Curse; Swear (Oath)

Why did the Jews want to kill Paul on the way to the council?

[23:15]

Some scholars think a group of Jews were very disappointed that the Jewish council did not kill Paul. They made a plan to have the council bring Paul back to answer more questions. They wanted to kill Paul while he was on his way to speak to the council once again.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin)

23:23-35

Why did the chief captain send Paul to Caesarea?

[23:23]

The Roman soldier sent Paul to Caesarea because Paul was a Roman citizen. Roman law required the chief captain to keep Roman citizens safe. The chief captain sent Paul to Caesarea because he thought Paul would be safer there.

See: Citizen

See Map: Caesarea

Who was Claudius Lysias?

[23:26]

Claudius Lysias was the chief captain, a Roman soldier and leader. He was born a Greek because Lysias was a Greek name. Claudius was the name of a Roman Emperor. The chief captain took the name of the Roman Emperor who reigned when he became a Roman citizen.

See: Citizen; Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

Why did the chief captain write that he rescued Paul from the Jews when he knew Paul was a Roman citizen?

[23:27]

The Roman soldier wrote that he rescued Paul from the Jews when he knew Paul was a Roman citizen because he wanted the governor to think he protected Paul. He wanted the governor to know that he wanted to know for himself if Paul was guilty of the things people said he did.

See: Citizen

Where was Antipatris?

[23:31]

See Map: Antipatris

Why did the governor ask Paul what province he was from?

[23:34]

The governor asked Paul what area he was from because Roman leaders usually heard trials for people from the places over which they reigned. Some scholars think the province of Cilicia was a large territory and the Roman leader over it did not want to hear a small court case. Therefore, Felix decided to hear Paul's case. Other scholars think the governor wanted an easy way to give Paul's case to another Roman ruler.

See Map: Cilicia

What was Herod's government headquarters?

[23:35]

Herod's government headquarters was a palace Herod the Great built. It was in Caesarea.

See: King Herod

See Map: Caesarea

Acts 24

24:1-9

What was an orator?

[24:1]

An orator was a person who made money speaking in front of many other people. The Jews hired Tertullus to speak against Paul in the Roman court. Scholars do not know if Tertullus was Jewish or not.

See: High Priest; Ancient Trials (Lawsuit)

What was the Nazarene sect?

[24:5]

The Nazarene sect was a group of followers of the Man of Nazareth. The Man of Nazareth is Jesus. However, the orator wanted to make Felix think these people will cause fighting. The orator wanted Felix to judge Paul.

See: Judge (Judgment)

What did Luke write in verse 6-7?

[24:6, 24:7]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament say that the Jews wanted to judge Paul by their law but Lysias took Paul away from them. Other ancient copies of the Greek New Testament do not have these words. Scholars do not know whether Luke wrote these words.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

How did the Jews join the accusation against Paul?

[24:9]

The Jews joined the accusation against Paul by saying again and again these lies were really true.

See: Ancient Trials (Lawsuit)

24:10-21

How did Paul talk to the governor?

[24:10, 24:11]

Paul talked to the governor with confidence because the governor had judged the Jews for years. Paul was glad because Paul did not act against Jewish laws. Paul believed the governor would make the right judgment.

Why did Paul say it was not more than twelve days since he went to Jerusalem to worship?

[24:11]

Scholars think it would have been very easy for the governor to find out whether Paul was guilty of doing evil things. This is because it had only been a period of twelve days.

See: Worship

Why was Christianity called the Way?

[24:14]

"The way" was a name for Christians (see: Acts 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22).

See: John 14:6

24:22-27

Why did Felix say he will decide Paul's case when Lysias came?

[24:22]

Felix said he will decide Paul's case when Lysias came because Felix did not want to make a decision. Some scholars think Felix knew about the Christians and did not want to make things difficult for Christians.

See: Ancient Trials (Lawsuit)

Why did Felix give Paul some freedom?

[24:23]

Felix gave Paul some freedom because he knew Paul did not do the crimes of which he was accused. Also, Paul was a Roman citizen.

See: Citizen

Why did Luke write Drusilla was Jewish?

[24:24]

Luke wrote Drusilla was Jewish because the wife of the governor influenced the governor's thinking. Some scholars think her faith made Felix listen to Paul. Other scholars think Felix wanted Paul to give him personal advice in the same way some other Roman leaders paid people to give them personal advice.

See: Faith (Believe in)

Why did Felix become frightened?

[24:25]

Felix became frightened because he and his wife, Drusilla, did many evil things. Paul's speech about righteousness, self-control, and the coming judgment reminded Felix of the evil things he did. However, Felix did not repent.

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Judge (Judgment); Day of Judgment; Repent (Repentance)

Why did Felix want Paul to give him money?

[24:26]

Felix wanted Paul to give him money because Felix wanted to be rich from bribes. Some scholars think Paul received an inheritance. Other scholars think Felix wanted Paul's friends to give Felix money.

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir)

Acts 25

25:1-12

Where was Caesarea and Jerusalem?

[25:1]

See Map: Caesarea; Jerusalem

Why did Festus refuse to bring Paul to Jerusalem?

[25:3]

Festus refused to bring Paul to Jerusalem. Some scholars think that because Paul was a Roman citizen, Festus could not transfer Paul to the court in Jerusalem. Other scholars think Festus did not want to stay in Jerusalem long enough for there to be a trial.

See: Citizen; Ancient Trials (Lawsuit)

What was a "judgment seat"?

[25:6]

A "judgment seat" was an actual chair in a court upon which the governing ruler sat to make legal decisions for the court.

See: Judge (Judgment); Ancient Trials (Lawsuit)

Why did Paul appeal to Caesar?

[25:10]

Any Roman citizen accused of crimes for which they could be killed, had the right to appeal to Caesar. The Jewish leaders wanted Paul to be killed. People accused Paul of doing wrong things, but no one tried to find out if he did these things. Felix had the opportunity and the right to release Paul earlier. Because Felix did not release Paul, Paul wanted the Roman emperor to judge him and release him.

See: Citizen; Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

25:13-22

Who were the chief priests and elders of the Jews?

[25:15]

See: Chief Priest; Elder

What was a sentence of condemnation?

[25:15]

A "sentence of condemnation" was a decision made by the courts to convict a person of a crime. In this case, the Jews were hoping for Paul to be judged and killed.

See: Ancient Trials (Lawsuit); Condemn (Condemnation); Judge (Judgment)

What was the "religion" about which Festus spoke?

[25:19]

Some scholars think when Festus spoke about a "religion" (δείσις/δαιμονία/g1175), he was speaking about the Jewish religion. That is, it was how the Jews followed the Law of Moses and did certain things to worship God. Fewer scholars think when Festus spoke about a religion, he was speaking about Christians.

See: Law of Moses; Worship

Why did Agrippa say he wanted to hear Paul?

[25:22]

Agrippa said he wanted to hear Paul. Agrippa wanted to be able to give advice to Festus about Paul (see: 25:26). Also, sometimes Roman leaders wanted to hear people teach about God (see: Luke 23:8).

See: Ancient Trials (Lawsuit)

25:23-27

Why did Festus not have something more to write about Paul's case?

[25:26]

Festus did not have anything more to write about Paul's case because there was no evidence that Paul did something wrong. Therefore, Festus did not think Paul was guilty of the things people said he did.

See: Ancient Trials (Lawsuit)

Acts 26

26:1-11

Why did Paul stretch out his hand?

[26:1]

Some scholars think it was common in those days to raise a hand toward the king in order to greet him. Other scholars think Paul stretched out his hand toward the king because it indicated he was about to make a speech.

What did Paul mean by saying he was happy?

[26:2]

When Paul said he was happy, he meant he felt fortunate or blessed to make his case before King Agrippa. King Agrippa was also a Roman and he knew Roman laws.

See: Ancient Trials (Lawsuit); Bless (Blessing)

Who were the fathers?

[26:6]

Some scholars think the fathers about which Paul spoke were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Other scholars think Paul was speaking about other ancestors of Israel.

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

What was the promise God made to the fathers?

[26:6]

God promised many things to these fathers. God promised the messiah, resurrection from the dead, the kingdom of God, and eternal life with God the Father.

See: Messiah (Christ); Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Kingdom of God; Eternal Life; God the Father

What did Paul mean when he said, "I cast my vote against them"?

[26:10]

Some scholars think Paul meant that he wanted Christians to be punished and killed. More scholars do not think Paul was a ruler on the Jewish council.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Punish (Punishment)

What did it mean to "blaspheme"?

[26:11]

See: Blaspheme (Blasphemy)

26:12-18

Why did Jesus say, "It is hard for you to kick a goad"?

[26:14]

Scholars think that when Jesus said, "It is hard for you to kick a goad" he used a metaphor. In ancient times, people used a goad to make an ox move. If an ox kicked against the stick, this caused more discomfort for the ox. Scholars think Jesus said this to Paul in order to tell Paul that he was resisting God. That is, when Paul wanted to persecute Christians, this fought against God. It was not what God wanted Paul to do.

See: Metaphor; Persecute (Persecution)

How did Paul persecute Jesus?

[26:14]

Paul persecuted Jesus when he persecuted Christians. When he did this, he persecuted Jesus (see: Luke 10:16).

See: Persecute (Persecution)

Why did Paul use his old name "Saul" when he talked about when Jesus appeared to him?

[26:14]

Paul said his old name "Saul" when he talked about when Jesus appeared to him because Paul wanted to say exactly what Jesus said to Paul.

How was Paul able to “open their eyes”?

[26:18]

Paul was able to open people’s eyes. This is a metaphor. God gave Paul the ability to teach the Gentiles about sin. Before Paul taught them, the Gentiles did not know they sinned. They now knew they sinned.

See: Metaphor; Gentile; Sin

What did it mean to turn, “from darkness to light”?

[26:18]

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

26:19-23

What was the heavenly vision?

[26:19]

Scholars think the heavenly vision was the revelation Jesus gave Paul on the road to Damascus.

See: Heaven; Vision)

Who were the small and the great?

[26:22]

When Paul wrote about the small and the great, he was speaking about all people. The small included poor and servants. The great included rich people and free people, including King Agrippa.

See: Galatians 3:28; Job 3:19

26:24-32

What did Festus mean when he said, “your great learning makes you insane”?

[26:24]

Scholars give several reasons why Festus said Paul was insane.

Festus thought it was insane to believe dead people will become alive again.

Festus thought it was insane to believe Jesus became King by suffering and dying.

Festus thought it was insane to write a report to government leaders in Rome about becoming alive again.

Because King Agrippa was a Jew, he understood Paul. However, he did not think Paul was thinking in the right way.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

Advice to translators: Someone who is insane is crazy or is ill and cannot think the right way.

What was meant by the words, “this has not been done in a corner”?

[26:26]

When Paul said, “this has not been done in a corner” he used a metaphor. He meant that all the events that were fulfilled God’s promises and people could see these promises being fulfilled. People saw Jesus resurrected. Paul also said that all these events were prophesied by Moses and the ancient prophets of Israel.

See: Metaphor; Fulfill (Fulfillment); Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Prophet

Why did Paul want people to be like him but without prison chains?

[26:29]

Paul wanted people to be like him, but without prison chains. Paul prayed that Agrippa would believe Jesus as Paul believed Jesus. However, Paul did not wish Agrippa to be imprisoned. Paul was imprisoned, but he did not do anything wrong.

Why did the king stand up?

[26:30]

Scholars think that both Agrippa and Festus had heard everything they wanted to hear from Paul. When they stood up, this meant that their meeting had ended.

Acts 27

27:1-12

Why did Luke write “we”?

[27:1]

Luke wrote “we” because he went with Paul on the ship. Luke was writing about things that he saw. Some scholars think Luke and Aristarchus were Paul’s servants on the ship. Other scholars think “we” included everyone on the ship.

What was the Imperial Regiment?

[27:1]

The Imperial Regiment was a group of eighty soldiers. This regiment was under the command of a centurion named Julius.

Where was Adramyttium?

[27:2]

See Map: Adramyttium

Why did Paul go to his friends “to receive their care”?

[27:3]

When Paul received the care of his friends, it meant they cared for Paul and helped him.

Where was Cyprus, Cilicia, Pamphylia, Myra, and Lycia?

[27:4, 27:5]

See Map: Cyprus; Cilicia; Pamphylia; Myra; Lycia

What was an Alexandrian ship?

[27:6]

An Alexandrian ship was a ship from Egypt. These ships were very large and carried a lot of grain.

See: Grain (Grain Offering)

See Map: Mediterranean Sea; Alexandria; Egypt; Rome; Italy; Cnidus; Salmone; Fair Havens; Lasea

When was the Jewish Fast?

[27:9]

The Jewish fast was usually in September or October. It was also called the Day of Atonement.

See: Atone (Atonement); Fasting

How did Paul know the voyage will bring loss?

[27:10]

Paul knew the voyage will bring loss because he was already in three shipwrecks (see: 2 Corinthians 11:25) and he knew winter storms were dangerous.

See Map: Phoenix; Crete

27:13-38

Why did Paul remind the sailors they did not listen to him?

[27:21]

Paul reminded the sailors they did not listen to him because he wanted them to know he spoke wisely when he first spoke to them. He was hoping they would listen to the things he said now. That is, he was going to give them wise advice once again.

See Map: Crete; Cauda

How did Paul talk about salvation?

[27:22]

Paul talked about salvation from the storm and shipwreck. He was not talking about the forgiveness of sins. Paul wanted them to eat so they will have the strength to survive.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Sin

What did Paul mean when he said, “not one of you will lose a single hair from his head”?

[27:34]

When Paul said they will not lose a single hair from their head, he used a metaphor. It meant the men would not die in the storm or shipwreck.

Why did they want the ship to be lighter in weight?

[27:38]

They wanted the ship to be lighter in weight so that the ship would not sink and they would be able to get closer to land.

27:39-44

Why did the soldiers want to kill the prisoners to keep them from escaping?

[27:42]

The soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners to keep them from escaping because Roman leaders killed Roman soldiers when a prisoner escaped (see: Acts 12:18-19; 16:27). However, God wanted to bring Paul to Rome. The Roman soldier did God's will when he stopped the soldiers from killing the prisoners.

See: Will of God

See Map: Rome

Acts 28

28:1-10

What did it mean that the natives offered more than “ordinary kindness”?

[28:2]

The people of Malta showed the shipwrecked people more than ordinary “kindness”(φιλανθρωπία/g5363). That is, they were more kind to these people than other would have been.

See Map: Malta; Phoenicia

What did it mean that a viper “fastened” onto Paul's hand”?

[28:3]

Scholars think the viper bit into Paul's hand and kept hanging on. That is, it attached itself to Paul's hand.

What was meant by the words, “justice does not permit him to live”?

[28:4]

The people of Malta believed in a goddess named “justice.” This false god judged a person who escaped from captivity. Other scholars think the people in Malta believed that the justice of their god would not let Paul live.

See: False gods; Judge (Judgment)

See Map: Malta

Who was Publius?

[28:7]

Some scholars think Publius was a Roman whom the Roman government appointed Publius to rule the island of Malta. Other scholars think Publius was very rich and many people knew him. He then became the leader of the island.

See Map: Malta

What kind of illness did Publius’ father have?

[28:8]

Scholars think Publius’ father often had fever and dysentery. That is, he was often ill.

How was Publius’ father, and the rest of the people healed?

[28:9]

Scholars think Publius’ father and the rest of the people were miraculously healed when Paul placed his hands upon them and prayed for them. That is, God healed the people for whom Paul prayed.

See: Miracle; Pray (Prayer)

28:11-16

What were “the twin gods”?

[28:11]

“The twin gods” were Castor and Pollux. The Greeks believed these false gods were the sons of another false god, Zeus. The Greeks thought that these gods protected ships. Pagan sailors prayed to them for protection in storms.

See: Idolatry (Idol); False gods; Pagan

See Map: Syracuse; Rhegium; Puteoli

Where was Puteoli?

[28:13]

See Map: Puteoli

Who were the “brothers” about whom Luke wrote?

[28:15]

Luke wrote “brothers”(ἀδελφός/g0080) to let his readers know they were Christians. They also included Christian women.

See: Family of God

What was the market of Appius?

[28:15]

The Market of Appius was a market on a paved road to Rome. The paved road was about 60 kilometers from Rome.

What was the Three Taverns?

[28:15]

The Three Taverns was a place on the Appian Way. It was about 50 kilometers from Rome.

How did the soldier guard Paul?

[28:16]

The soldier guarded Paul with a small chain on Paul’s wrist (see: Acts 28:20).

28:17-29

What did Paul mean by the word, “brothers” in this context?

[28:17]

When Paul spoke to the “brothers”(ἀδελφός/g0080) here, he was speaking to the Jewish leaders. They ruled over several synagogues in Rome.

See: Synagogue

See Map: Rome

What was the hope of Israel?

[28:20]

Scholars say the hope of Israel was two things.

They had hope of becoming alive again after death. This was made possible because Jesus died and became alive again. They had hope of the coming of the messiah. This hope was fulfilled when Jesus came to earth.

See: Hope; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Messiah (Christ); Fulfill (Fulfillment)

What was the “sect” about which the Jewish leaders spoke?

[28:22]

The Jewish leaders wanted to hear from Paul regarding the “sect.” That is, they wanted to know about Christianity and about the things he believed and taught. The Jewish leaders also heard the “sect” was called the Nazarenes.

Advice to translators: A sect is a group of religious people who believe the same thing.

What was meant by the words, “testified about the kingdom of God”?

[28:23]

When Luke wrote that Paul “testified about the kingdom of God,” he meant that Paul taught the Jewish leaders about Jesus. He taught them that Jesus is the messiah whom God promised to Israel.

See: Testify (Testimony); Kingdom of God; Messiah (Christ)

Why did Paul say the same thing Isaiah wrote?

[28:25]

Scholars think Paul said the same thing Isaiah wrote because he wanted people to know something. He wanted them to remember what happened when Isaiah lived. At that time, people would not understand what God said to them through the prophets. Now, Paul wanted people to know that the Jewish leaders did not understand what God said to them through the apostles and prophets (see: Isaiah 6:9-10).

See: Apostle; Prophet

What did it mean that the people’s hearts had become “dull”?

[28:27]

Some scholars think that when the people’s hearts had become “dull” it meant that the people simply refused to listen and understand God’s messengers. Other scholars think the people’s hearts were dull because they had been disobedient to God’s word for so long, they could no longer understand the things God wanted them to know.

See: Heart (Metaphor); Word of God

What did Luke write in verse 29?

[28:29]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament have the words in verse 29. Older and more ancient copies of the Greek New Testament do not have the words of verse 29. Scholars do not think Luke wrote these words.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

28:30-31

What did Luke mean when he wrote that Paul taught the things about Jesus “with all boldness”?

[28:31]

Scholars think that during these two years Paul was able to teach anyone and anywhere, and no one attempted to stop him from teaching.
