English: Bible Commentary, Translation Notes for Acts, Luke

Formatted for Translators

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Notes: English ULB Translation Notes

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### Introduction to the Book of Acts

#### Who wrote this letter?

Luke wrote the book of Acts. He was a Gentile doctor from Antioch, He also wrote the gospel of Luke

See: Gentile; Gospel

See Map: Antioch

#### To whom did Luke write?

Luke wrote this book to Theophilus. This was the same man to whom he wrote the gospel of Luke to Theophilus. Theophilus can be translated as “friend of God.” Some scholars think that Theolophilis was a man who helped Luke. Perhaps he helped him to write this book by giving him money. Other scholars think Luke wrote to anyone who loves God. That is, he wrote to all Christians.

See: Gospel

#### What did Luke write about in Acts?

Luke wrote about church as more people believed in Jesus. He wrote about the days immediately after Jesus’ death and resurrection until the time when Paul arrived in Rome. Luke wrote about the great things the Holy Spirit did to help people to know about Jesus. He also wrote about how both the Jews and Gentiles believed in Jesus.

See: Church; Resurrect (Resurrection);Holy Spirit; Gentile

See Map: Rome

#### Why did Luke write this letter?

Luke wrote this letter so that people would know what happened to the Christians after Jesus died and was resurrected. He wanted people to know that both the Jews and the Gentiles could be Christians. He wanted all people to believe in Jesus.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection); Gentile

## Outline of the Book of Acts

1. The beginning of the church (1:1–2:41)
2. The early church in Jerusalem (2:42–6:7)
3. Increasing opposition to the gospel and persecution (6:8–7:60)
4. The persecution of the church and Philip's ministry (8:1–40)
5. Paul becomes an apostle (9:1–31)
6. The ministry of Peter and the first Gentile Christians (9:32–12:24)
7. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, Law of Moses, and the gathering of church leaders in Jerusalem (12:25–16:5)
8. The church growing and many people becoming Christians (16:6–19:20)
9. Paul travels to Jerusalem and becomes a prisoner in Rome (19:21–28:31)

See: Church; Gospel; Persecute (Persecution); Apostle; Gentile; Law of Moses

## Chapter 1

# Acts 1 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

This chapter records an event, commonly known as the "Ascension," when Jesus returned to heaven after he became alive again. He will not come back until he returns at his "second coming." (See: heaven and resurrection)

The UDB has set the words "Dear Theophilus" apart from the other words. This is because English speakers often start letters this way. You might want to start this book the way people start letters in your culture.

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the two quotes from Psalms in 1:20.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Baptize

The word "baptize" has two meanings in this chapter. It refers to the water baptism of John and to the baptism of the Holy Spirit ([Acts 1:5](../../act/01/05.md)). (See: baptize)

#### "He spoke about the kingdom of God"

Some scholars believe that when Jesus "spoke about the kingdom of God," he explained to the disciples why the kingdom of God did not come before he died. Others believe that the kingdom of God did begin while Jesus was alive and that here Jesus was explaining that it was beginning in a new form.

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### The twelve disciples

The following are the lists of the twelve disciples:

In Matthew:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James son of Zebedee, John son of Zebedee, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot.

In Mark:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James the son of Zebedee and John the son of Zebedee (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder), Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot.

In Luke:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon (who was called the Zealot), Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot.

Thaddaeus is probably the same person as Jude, the son of James.

#### Akeldama

This is a phrase in Hebrew or Aramaic. Luke used Greek letters so his readers would know how it sounded, and then he told what it means. You should probably spell it the way it sounds in your language and then explain the meaning.

## Links:

* [Acts 1:1 Notes](./01.md)
* [Acts intro](../front/intro.md)

**| >>**

### 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 twelves 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 (Prophesy) ; Church; Israel

#### Acts 1:1

##### The former account I wrote

The "former account" is the Gospel of Luke.

##### Theophilus

Luke wrote this book to a man named Theophilus. Some translations follow their own culture's way of addressing a letter and write "Dear Theophilus" at the beginning of the sentence. Theophilus means "friend of God"

#### Acts 1:2

##### until the day that he was taken up

This refers to Jesus's ascension into heaven. Alternate translation: "until the day on which God took him up to heaven" or "until the day that he ascended into heaven"

##### he had given commands through the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit had led Jesus to instruct his apostles on certain things.

#### Acts 1:3

##### After his suffering

This refers to Jesus's suffering and death on the cross.

##### he presented himself alive to them

Jesus appeared to his apostles and to many other disciples.

#### Acts 1:4

##### General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Jesus. Except where otherwise noted, the word "you" in the book of Acts is plural.

##### Connecting Statement:

This event happened during the 40 days that Jesus appeared to his followers after he had risen from the dead.

##### When he was meeting together with them

"When Jesus was meeting together with his apostles"

##### the promise of the Father, about which he said

This is a reference to the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit, whom the Father promised to send, about whom Jesus said"

#### Acts 1:5

##### John indeed baptized with water ... baptized with the Holy Spirit

Jesus contrasts how John baptized people in water with how God would baptize believers in the Holy Spirit.

##### John indeed baptized with water

"John indeed baptized people with water"

##### you will be baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will baptize you"

#### Acts 1:6

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the apostles.

##### is this the time you will restore the kingdom to Israel

"will you now make Israel a great kingdom again"

#### Acts 1:7

##### the times or the seasons

Possible meanings are 1) the words "times" and "seasons" refer to different kinds of time. Alternate translation: "the general period of time or the specific date" or 2) the two words are basically synonymous. Alternate translation: "the exact time"

#### Acts 1:8

##### you will receive power ... and you will be my witnesses

The apostles will receive power that will enable them to be witnesses for Jesus. Alternate translation: "God will empower you ... to be my witnesses"

##### to the ends of the earth

Possible meanings are 1) "all over the world" or 2) "to the places on earth that are farthest away"

#### Acts 1:9

##### as they were looking up

"as they watched." The apostles "were looking" at Jesus because Jesus rose into the sky. Alternate translation: "as they were looking up at the sky"

##### he was raised up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he rose up into the sky" or "God raised him up into the sky"

##### a cloud hid him from their eyes

"a cloud blocked their view so that they could no longer see him"

#### Acts 1:10

##### looking intensely to heaven

"staring at the sky" or "gazing at the sky"

#### Acts 1:11

##### of Galilee

"from Galilee"

##### will return in the same manner

Jesus ascended into the sky, through the clouds, and the clouds hid him [Acts 1:9](./09.md). He will return from the sky, through (or on) the clouds, and people will be able to see him.

#### Acts 1:12

##### Then they returned

"The apostles returned"

##### a Sabbath day's journey

This refers to the distance which, according to Rabbinical tradition, a person was allowed to walk on a Sabbath day. Alternate translation: "about one kilometer away"

#### Acts 1:13

##### When they arrived

"When they reached their destination." Verse 12 says they were returning to Jerusalem.

##### the upper chamber

"the room on the upper level of the house"

#### Acts 1:14

##### They all were devoted ... to prayer

They all spent much time ... praying

##### with one purpose

The phrase "with one purpose" translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

#### Acts 1:15

##### Connecting Statement:

This event happened during the time that Peter and the other believers were staying together in the upper room.

##### In those days

These words mark the beginning of a new part of the story. They refer to the period of time after Jesus ascended. On many days after Jesus ascended, the disciples met in the upper chamber. Alternate translation: "During that time"

##### 120 names

"one hundred and twenty names"

##### names

The word "names" is a metonym for the people whose names they were. Alternate translation: "people"

##### in the midst of the brothers

Here the word "brothers" refers to fellow believers and includes both men and women.

#### Acts 1:16

##### it was necessary that the scripture should be fulfilled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things that we read about in scripture had to take place"

##### by the mouth of David

The word "mouth" refers to the words that David wrote. Alternate translation: "through the words of David"

#### Acts 1:17

##### General Information:

Although Peter is addressing the entire group of people, here the word "us" refers only to the apostles.

##### Connecting Statement:

In verse 17 Peter continues his speech to the believers that he began in Acts 1:16.

#### Acts 1:18

##### General Information:

The author begins to tell the reader background information about how Judas died and what people called the field where he died. This is not part of Peter's speech.

##### Now this man

The words "this man" refers to Judas Iscariot.

##### the earnings he received for his wickedness

"the money that he earned from the evil thing that he did." The words "his wickedness" refer to Judas Iscariot's betraying Jesus to the people who killed him.

##### there he fell headfirst, and his body burst open, and all his intestines poured out

This suggests that Judas fell from a high place, rather than just falling down. The fall was severe enough to cause his body to burst open. Other passages of scripture mention that he hanged himself.

#### Acts 1:19

##### General Information:

The author finishes telling the reader background information about how Judas died and what people called the field where he died. This is not part of Peter's speech.

##### Field of Blood

When the people living in Jerusalem heard of the way in which Judas died, they renamed the field.

#### Acts 1:20

##### General Information:

Based on the situation with Judas that Peter just recounted, he recalls two Psalms of David that relate to the incident. The quote ends at the end of this verse.

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter continues his speech to the believers that he began in Acts 1:16.

##### For it is written in the Book of Psalms

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For David wrote in the Book of Psalms"

##### Let his field be made desolate, and do not let even one person live there

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words.

##### Let his field be made desolate

Possible meanings are 1) that the word "field" refers to the field where Judas died or 2) that the word "field" refers to Judas's dwelling place and is a metaphor for his family line.

##### be made desolate

"become empty"

#### Acts 1:21

##### General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the apostles and does not include the audience to whom Peter is speaking.

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes his speech to the believers that he began in Acts 1:16.

##### It is necessary, therefore

Based on the scriptures that he quoted and on what Judas had done, Peter tells the group what they must do.

##### the Lord Jesus went in and out among us

Going in and out among a group of people is a metaphor for openly being part of that group. Alternate translation: "the Lord Jesus lived among us"

#### Acts 1:22

##### beginning from the baptism of John ... become a witness with us of his resurrection

The qualification for the new apostle that began with the words "It is necessary ... that one of the men who accompanied us" in verse 21 ends here. The subject of the verb "become" is thus "one of the men." Here is a reduced form of the sentence: "It is necessary ... that one of the men who accompanied us ... beginning from the baptism of John ... must become a witness with us."

##### beginning from the baptism of John

The noun "baptism" can be translated as a verb. Possible meanings: 1) "beginning from when John baptized Jesus" or 2) "beginning from when John baptized people"

##### to the day that he was taken up from us

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "until the day when Jesus left us and rose up to heaven" or "until the day that God took him up from us"

##### become a witness with us of his resurrection

"must begin to testify with us about his resurrection"

#### Acts 1:23

##### They put forward two men

Here the word "They" refers to all of the believers who were present. Alternate translation: "They proposed two men who fulfilled the requirements that Peter listed"

##### Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus

This can be translated with an active form. Alternate translation: "Joseph, whom people also called Barsabbas and Justus"

#### Acts 1:24

##### They prayed and said

Here the word "They" refers to all of the believers, but it was probably one of the apostles who spoke these words. Alternate translation: "The believers prayed together and one of the apostles said"

##### You, Lord, know the hearts of all people

Here the word "hearts" refers to the thoughts and motives. Alternate translation: "You, Lord, know the thoughts and motives of everyone"

#### Acts 1:25

##### to take the place in this ministry and apostleship

Here the word "apostleship" defines what kind of "ministry" this is. Alternate translation: "to take Judas's place in this apostolic ministry" or "to take Judas's place in serving as an apostle"

##### from which Judas turned away

Here the expression "turned away" means that Judas stopped performing this ministry. Alternate translation: "which Judas stopped fulfilling"

##### to go to his own place

This phrase refers to Judas's death and likely to his judgment after death. Alternate translation: "to go where he belongs"

#### Acts 1:26

##### They cast lots for them

The apostles cast lots to decide between Joseph and Matthias.

##### the lot fell to Matthias

The lot indicated that Matthias was the one to replace Judas.

##### he was numbered with the eleven apostles

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the believers considered him to be an apostle with the other eleven"

## Chapter 2

# Acts 2 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 2:17-21, 25-28, and 34-35.

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted material in 2:31.

The events described in this chapter are commonly called "Pentecost." Many people believe that the church began to exist when the Holy Spirit came to live inside believers at Pentecost.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Tongues

The word "tongues" has two meanings in this chapter. Luke describes what came down from heaven (Acts 2:3](../../act/02/03.md)) as tongues that looked like fire. This is different from "a tongue of flame," which is a fire that looks like a tongue. Luke also uses the word "tongues" to describe the languages that the people spoke after the Holy Spirit filled them ([Acts 2:4).

#### Last days

No one knows for sure when the "last days" ([Acts 2:17](../../act/02/17.md)) began. Your translation should not say more than the ULB does about this. (See: lastday)

#### Baptize

The word "baptize" in this chapter refers to Christian baptism (Acts 2:38-41). Though the event described in [Acts 2:1-11](./01.md) is the baptism of the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised in [Acts 1:5](../../act/01/05.md), the word "baptize" here does not refer to that event. (See: baptize)

#### The prophecy of Joel

Many of the things that Joel said would happen did happen on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17-18), but some things Joel spoke of have not happened yet (Acts 2:19-20). (See: prophet)

#### Wonders and signs

These words refer to things that only God could do, things that showed that Jesus was who the disciples said he was.

## Links:

* [Acts 2:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 some back to earth.

See: Sign; Prophecy (Prophesy) ; 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 (Prophesy)

## 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 (Prophesy) ; 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:

1. 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.
2. By calling on the name of Jesus, the Jews accepted that forgiveness for sins was only possible by believing in Jesus.
3. 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”(σῴζω/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 2:1

##### General Information:

This is a new event; it is now the Day of Pentecost, 50 days after Passover. Here the word "they" refers to the apostles and the other 120 believers that Luke mentions in Acts 1:15.

#### Acts 2:2

##### Suddenly

This word explains that no one expected to hear the sound or to have it fill the house.

##### a sound like the rush of a violent wind came from heaven

Possible meanings are 1) "heaven" refers to the place where God lives. Alternate translation: "a sound came from heaven" or 2) "heaven" refers to the sky. Alternate translation: "a sound came from the sky"

##### the whole house

This may have been a house or a larger building.

#### Acts 2:3

##### There appeared to them tongues like fire

These might have been something that looked like tongues or like fire, not actual tongues or fire. Possible meanings are 1) tongues that looked like they were made of fire or 2) small flames of fire that looked like tongues. When fire burns in a small space, such as on a lamp, the flame can be shaped like a tongue.

##### that were distributed, and they sat upon each one of them

This means that the "tongues like fire" spread out so that there was one on each person.

#### Acts 2:4

##### They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The Holy Spirit filled all of those who were there and they"

##### speak in other tongues

They were speaking in languages that they did not already know.

##### as the Spirit gave them the ability

The Holy Spirit gave them the ability to speak; they were dependent on the Spirit to speak in different languages.

#### Acts 2:5

##### General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to the believers; the word "his" refers to each person in the multitude. Verse 5 gives background information about the large number of Jews who were living in Jerusalem, many of whom were present during this event.

##### godly men

Here "godly men" refers to people who were devout in their worship of God and tried to obey all of the Jewish laws.

##### every nation under heaven

"every nation in the world." The word "every" is an exaggeration that emphasizes that the people came from many different nations. Alternate translation: "many different nations"

#### Acts 2:6

##### When this sound was heard

This refers to the sound that was similar to a strong wind. Alternate translation: "When they heard this sound"

##### the multitude

"the large crowd of people"

#### Acts 2:7

##### They were amazed and marveled

These two words share similar meanings. Together they emphasize the intensity of amazement. Alternate translation: "They were greatly amazed"

##### Really, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?

The people ask this question to express their amazement. The question could be changed to an exclamation. Alternate translation: "All of these Galileans could not possibly know our languages!"

#### Acts 2:8

##### Why is it that we are hearing them, each in our own language in which we were born?

Possible meanings are 1) this is a rhetorical question that expresses how amazed they were or 2) this is a real question for which the people wanted an answer.

##### in our own language in which we were born

"in our own languages that we have learned from birth"

#### Acts 2:9

##### Parthians ... Medes ... Elamites

These are names of people groups.

##### Mesopotamia ... Judea ... Cappadocia ... Pontus ... Asia

These are names of large areas of land.

#### Acts 2:10

##### Phrygia ... Pamphylia ... Egypt ... Libya ... Cyrene

These are names of large areas of land.

#### Acts 2:11

##### Cretans ... Arabians

These are names of people groups.

##### proselytes

converts to the Jewish religion

#### Acts 2:12

##### amazed and perplexed

These two words share similar meanings. Together they emphasize that the people could not understand what was happening. Alternate translation: "surprised and confused"

#### Acts 2:13

##### They are full of new wine

Some people accuse the believers of having drunk too much wine. Alternate translation: "They are drunk"

##### new wine

This refers to wine that is in the process of fermentation.

#### Acts 2:14

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter begins his speech to the Jews who were there on the Day of Pentecost.

##### stood with the eleven

All the apostles stood up in support of Peter's statement.

##### raised his voice

This is an idiom for "spoke loudly."

##### declared to them

Made a formal, important speech to them. See how you translated "make declarations" in Acts 2:4.

##### let this be known to you

This means that Peter is about to explain the meaning of what the people had witnessed. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "know this" or "let me explain this to you"

##### pay attention to my words

Peter was referring to what he was saying. Alternate translation: "listen carefully to what I am saying"

#### Acts 2:15

##### it is only the third hour of the day

"It is only nine o'clock in the morning." Peter expected his audience to know that people do not get drunk that early in the day.

#### Acts 2:16

##### General Information:

Here Peter tells them a passage about which the prophet Joel wrote in the Old Testament that relates to what is happening with the languages in which the believers spoke. This is written in the form of poetry as well as being a quotation.

##### this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "this is what God told the prophet Joel to write" or "this is that which the prophet Joel spoke"

#### Acts 2:17

##### It will be

"This is what will happen" or "This is what I will do"

##### I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh

Here the words "pour out" mean to give generously and abundantly. Alternate translation: "I will give my Spirit abundantly to all flesh"

##### all flesh

This is a hyperbolic metonym that refers to all people by speaking of them as all living creatures, who have flesh. Alternate translation: "all people"

#### Acts 2:18

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter continues to quote the prophet Joel.

##### my servants and my female servants

"both my male and my female servants." These words emphasize that God will pour out his Spirit on all of his servants, both men and women.

##### I will pour out my Spirit

Here the words "pour out" mean to give generously and abundantly. See how you translated this in [Acts 2:17]

#### Acts 2:19

##### vapor of smoke

"thick smoke" or "clouds of smoke"

#### Acts 2:20

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes quoting the prophet Joel.

##### The sun will be turned to darkness

This means that the sun will appear to be dark instead of light. Alternate translation: "The sun will become dark"

##### the moon to blood

This means that the moon will appear to be red like blood. Alternate translation: "the moon will be turned to blood" or "the moon will appear to be red"

##### the great and remarkable day

The words "great" and "remarkable" share similar meanings and emphasize the intensity of greatness. Alternate translation: "the very great day"

##### remarkable

great and beautiful

#### Acts 2:21

##### everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Lord will save everyone who calls on him"

#### Acts 2:22

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter continues his speech to the Jews that he began in Acts 1:16.

##### hear these words

"listen to what I am about to say"

##### accredited to you by God with the mighty deeds and wonders and signs

This means that God proved that he had appointed Jesus for his mission, and proved who he was by his many miracles.

#### Acts 2:23

##### by God's predetermined plan and foreknowledge

The nouns "plan" and "foreknowledge" can be translated as verbs. This means that God planned out and knew beforehand what would happen to Jesus. Alternate translation: "because God planned out and knew beforehand everything that would happen"

##### This man was handed over

Possible meanings: 1) "you handed Jesus over into the hands of his enemies" or 2) "Judas betrayed Jesus to you."

##### you, by the hand of lawless men, put him to death by nailing him to a cross

Although "lawless men" actually crucified Jesus, Peter accuses the crowd of having killed him because they demanded his death.

##### by the hand of lawless men

Here "hand" refers to the actions of the lawless men. Alternate translation: "through the actions of lawless men" or "by what lawless men did"

##### lawless men

Possible meanings are 1) the unbelieving Jews who accused Jesus of crimes or 2) the Roman soldiers who performed the execution of Jesus.

#### Acts 2:24

##### But God raised him up

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "But God caused him to live again"

##### freeing him from the agonies of death

He speaks of the agonies of dying as if God were freeing Christ from ropes that were binding Jesus. Alternate translation: "ending the pains of death"

##### for him to be held by it

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for death to hold him"

##### for him to be held by it

Peter speaks of Christ remaining dead as if death were a person who held him captive. Alternate translation: "for him to remain dead"

#### Acts 2:25

##### General Information:

Here Peter quotes a passage that David wrote in a Psalm which relates to Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection. Since Peter says that David said these words about Jesus, the words "I" and "my" refer to Jesus and the words "Lord" and "he" refer to God.

##### For David says about him, 'I saw

The context makes it plain that this is an elliptical way of saying that David was speaking as if David were the Messiah. Alternate translation: "For David spoke these words as if he were the Christ: 'I saw"

##### before my face

"in front of me." Alternate translation: "in my presence" or "with me"

##### beside my right hand

To be at someone's "right hand" often means to be in a position to help and sustain. Alternate translation: "right beside me" or "with me to help me"

##### I should not be moved

Here the word "moved" means to be troubled. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will not be able to cause me trouble" or "nothing will trouble me"

#### Acts 2:26

##### my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced

People consider the "heart" the center of emotions and the "tongue" voices those emotions. Alternate translation: "I was glad and rejoiced"

##### my flesh will live in hope

Possible meanings of the phrase "my flesh" are 1) it indicates that the writer is a mortal who will die. Alternate translation: "even though I am only mortal, I will live in hope" or 2) it is a synecdoche for the writer's entire person. Alternate translation: "I will live in hope"

##### will live in hope

Here the word "hope" refers to a person's confidence that what he desires will happen. Since the speaker hoped that God would rescue him, "in hope" could be translated as "in confidence in God." The phrase "live in hope" can also be translated with the phrases "confidently expect," "confidently wait," or "trust." Alternate translation: "will live with confidence in God" or "will confidently wait for God to rescue me"

#### Acts 2:27

##### General Information:

Since Peter says that David said these words about Jesus, the words "my," "Holy One," and "me" refer to Jesus and the words "you" and "your" refer to God.

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes quoting David.

##### neither will you allow your Holy One to see decay

The Messiah, Jesus, refers to himself with the words "your Holy One." Alternate translation: "neither will you allow me, your Holy One, to see decay"

##### to see decay

Here the word "see" means to experience something. The word "decay" refers to the decomposition of his body after death. Alternate translation: "to decay"

#### Acts 2:28

##### the ways of life

"the ways that lead to life"

##### full of gladness with your face

Here the word "face" refers to the presence of God. Alternate translation: "very glad when I see you" or "very glad when I am in your presence"

##### gladness

joy, happiness

#### Acts 2:29

##### General Information:

The words "he" and "his" refer to David.

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter continues the speech to the Jews that surround him and the other believers in Jerusalem, which he began in Acts 1:16.

##### Brothers, it

"My fellow Jews, it"

##### it is proper for me to speak

Or "it is possible." He is able to speak because it is proper for him to do so.

##### he both died and was buried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he died and people buried him"

#### Acts 2:30

##### he would set one of the fruit of his loins on his throne

"God would set one of David's fruit upon David's throne." Alternate translation: "God would appoint one of David's fruit to be king in David's place"

##### one of the fruit of his loins

This is a metaphor for a child or other descendant. Alternate translation: "one of his children" or "one of his descendants"

#### Acts 2:31

##### he was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see decay

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Neither did God abandon him to Hades nor did his flesh see decay" or "God did not abandon him to Hades, and his flesh did not see decay"

##### did his flesh see decay

Here the word "see" means to experience something. The word "decay" refers to the decomposition of his body after death. See how you translated this in [Acts 2:27]

#### Acts 2:32

##### This Jesus—God raised him up

Peter talks again about Jesus. Alternate Translation: "It is this Jesus whom God raised up" or "God raised up this Jesus"

##### God raised him up

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "God caused him to live again"

#### Acts 2:33

##### having been exalted to the right hand of God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because God has exalted Jesus up to his right hand"

##### having been exalted to the right hand of God

"Right hand of God" here is an idiom that means that Christ will rule as God, with God’s authority. Alternate translation: "Christ is in the position of God"

##### he has poured out what

Here the words "poured out" mean that Jesus, who is God, made these events to happen. It is implicit that he did this by giving the Holy Spirit to the believers. Alternate translation: "he has caused to happen these things that"

##### has poured out

"has given generously and abundantly." See how you translated a similar phrase in Acts 2:17. Alternate translation: "given abundantly"

#### Acts 2:34

##### General Information:

Peter again quotes one of David's Psalms. David is not speaking of himself in this Psalm. "The Lord" and "my" refer to God; "my Lord" and "your" refer to Jesus the Messiah.

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes his speech to the Jews that he began in Acts 1:16.

##### Sit at my right hand

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "Sit in the place of honor beside me"

#### Acts 2:35

##### until I make your enemies the footstool for your feet

This means that God will completely defeat the Messiah's enemies and make them subject to him. Alternate translation: "until I make you victorious over all of your enemies"

#### Acts 2:36

##### all the house of Israel

This refers to the entire nation of Israel. Alternate translation: "every Israelite"

#### Acts 2:37

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the people in the crowd to whom Peter spoke.

##### Connecting Statement:

The Jews respond to Peter's speech and Peter answers them.

##### when they heard this

"when the people heard what Peter had said"

##### they were pierced in their hearts, and said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Peter's words pierced their hearts, and they said"

##### pierced in their hearts

This means that the people felt guilty and became very sad. Alternate translation: "deeply troubled"

#### Acts 2:38

##### be baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "allow us to baptize you"

##### in the name of Jesus Christ

"In the name of" here is a metonym for "by the authority of" Alternate translation: "by the authority of Jesus Christ"

#### Acts 2:39

##### all who are far off

This means either 1) "all people who live far away" or 2) "all people who are far from God."

#### Acts 2:40

##### he testified and exhorted them

"he seriously told them." Here the word "testified" and "begged" share similar meanings and emphasize that Peter urged them strongly to respond to what he was saying. Alternate translation: "he strongly urged them"

##### exhorted

or "pleaded with"

##### Be saved from this perverse generation

The implication is that God will punish "this perverse generation." Alternate translation: "Be saved from the punishment that these wicked people will suffer"

##### Be saved

Possible meanings are 1) Peter was urging people to let God save them. Alternate translation: "Let God save you," or 2) Peter was simply urging them in a general way to avoid being punished. Alternate translation: "Save yourselves" or "Flee" or "Escape"

#### Acts 2:41

##### Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story that happened on the Day of Pentecost.

##### they received his word

Here the word "received" means that they accepted what Peter said to be true. Alternate translation: "they believed what Peter said"

##### were baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people baptized them"

##### there were added in that day about three thousand souls

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "about three thousand souls joined the believers on that day"

##### about three thousand souls

Here the word "souls" refers to people. Alternate translation: "about 3,000 people"

#### Acts 2:42

##### Connecting Statement:

This section explains how the believers continued to live after the Day of Pentecost.

##### the breaking of bread

Bread was part of their meals. These words could refer to 1) any meals they might eat together. Alternate translation: "eating meals together" or 2) meals they would eat together in order to remember Christ's death and resurrection. Alternate translation: "eating the Lord's Supper together"

#### Acts 2:43

##### Fear came upon every soul

Here the word "Fear" refers to deep respect and awe for God. The word "soul" refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: "Each person felt a deep respect and awe for God"

##### many wonders and signs were done through the apostles

Possible meanings are 1) "the apostles performed many wonders and signs" or 2) "God performed many wonders and signs through the apostles"

##### wonders and signs

"miraculous deeds and supernatural events." See how you translated this in Acts 2:22.

#### Acts 2:44

##### All who believed were together

Possible meanings are 1) "All of them believed the same thing" or 2) "All who believed were together in the same place."

##### had all things in common

"shared their belongings with one another"

#### Acts 2:45

##### property and possessions

"land and things they owned"

##### distributed them to all

Here the word "them" refers to the profit that they made from selling their property and possessions. Alternate translation: "distributed the proceeds to all"

##### according to the needs anyone had

They distributed the proceeds that they earned from selling their property and possessions to any believer who had a need.

#### Acts 2:46

##### they devoted themselves with one purpose in the temple

You may need to supply the words that have been omitted in this ellipse. What they devoted themselves to doing is stated in verse 42. Alternate translation: "they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching with one purpose in the temple"

##### with one purpose

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

##### They also broke bread in homes

Bread was part of their meals. Alternate translation: "They also ate meals together in their homes"

#### Acts 2:47

##### praising God and having favor with all the people

"praising God. All the people approved of them"

##### those who were being saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those whom the Lord saved"

## Chapter 3

# Acts 3 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### The covenant God made with Abraham

This chapter explains that Jesus came to the Jews because God was fulfilling part of the covenant he had made with Abraham. Peter thought that the Jews were the ones who were truly guilty of killing Jesus, but he wanted them to understand that Jesus, by living and dying, had fulfilled God's promise to Abraham and that if they repented, God would forgive them.

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### "You delivered up"

The Romans were the ones who killed Jesus, but they killed him because the Jews captured him, brought him to the Romans, and told the Romans to kill him. For this reason Peter thought that they were the ones who were truly guilty of killing Jesus. But he tells them that they are also the first ones to whom God has sent Jesus's followers to invite them to repent ([Acts 3:26](../../act/03/26.md)). (See: repent)

## Links:

* [Acts 3:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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”(χωλός/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 531-12; 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 3:1

##### Connecting Statement:

One day Peter and John go to the temple.

##### into the temple

They did not go into the temple building where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation: "to the temple courtyard" or "into the temple area"

#### Acts 3:2

##### a man who was lame from his mother's womb was being carried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people were carrying a man who was lame from from his mother's womb"

##### from his mother's womb

"ever since he was born"

##### the temple gate called Beautiful

This was one of the gates in the high, strong wall that surrounded the temple. People sometimes gathered near the gate.

##### lame

unable to walk

#### Acts 3:3

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 3:4

##### Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said

Both Peter and John looked at the man, but only Peter spoke.

##### fastening his eyes upon him

Possible meanings are 1) "looking directly at him" or 2) "looking intently at him"

#### Acts 3:5

##### The lame man looked at them

Here the word "looked" means to pay attention to something. Alternate translation: "The lame man paid close attention to them"

#### Acts 3:6

##### Silver and gold I do not have

"I do not own any silver or gold"

##### Silver and gold

These words refer to money.

##### what I do have

It is understood that Peter has the ability to heal the man.

##### In the name of Jesus Christ

Here the word "name" refers to power and authority. Alternate translation: "With the authority of Jesus Christ"

#### Acts 3:7

##### Peter raised him up

"Peter caused him to stand"

#### Acts 3:8

##### he entered ... into the temple

He did not go inside the temple building where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation: "he entered ... the temple area" or "he entered ... into the temple courtyard"

#### Acts 3:9

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 3:10

##### noticed that it was the man

"realized that it was the man" or "recognized him as the man"

##### the Beautiful Gate

This was the name of one of the entrances to the temple area. See how you translated a similar phrase in Acts 3:2.

##### they were filled with wonder and amazement

Here the words "wonder" and "amazement" share similar meanings and emphasize the intensity of the people's amazement. Alternate translation: "they were extremely amazed"

#### Acts 3:11

##### General Information:

The phrase "in the porch that is called Solomon's" makes it clear that they were not inside the temple where only the priests were allowed to enter. Here the words "us" and "we" refer to Peter and John but not to the crowd to whom Peter is talking.

##### Connecting Statement:

After healing the man who could not walk, Peter talks to the people.

##### the porch that is called Solomon's

"Solomon's Porch." This was a covered walkway that consisted of rows of pillars that supported a roof, and which people named after king Solomon. It was in the temple courtyard.

##### greatly marveling

"extremely surprised"

#### Acts 3:12

##### When Peter saw this

Here the word "this" refers to the amazement of the people.

##### You Israelite men

"Fellow Israelites." Peter was addressing the crowd.

##### why do you marvel?

Peter asks this question to emphasize that they should not be surprised by what had happened. Alternate translation: "you should not be surprised."

##### Why do you fix your eyes on us, as if we made him walk by our own power or godliness?

Peter asks this question to emphasize that the people should not think that he and John had healed the man by their own abilities. This could be written as two statements. Alternate translation: "Do not fix your eyes on us. We did not make him walk by our own power or godliness."

##### fix your eyes on us

This means that they looked intently at them without stopping. Alternate translation: "stare at us" or "look at us"

#### Acts 3:13

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter continues his speech to the Jews that he began in Acts 3:12.

##### rejected before the face of Pilate

Here the phrase "before the face of" means "in the presence of." Alternate translation: "rejected in Pilate's presence"

##### when he had decided to release him

"when Pilate had decided to release Jesus"

#### Acts 3:14

##### for a murderer to be given to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for Pilate to release a murderer to you"

#### Acts 3:15

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" includes just Peter and John.

##### the Founder of life

This refers to Jesus. Possible meanings are 1) "the one who gives people eternal life" or 2) "the ruler of life" or 3) "the one who leads people to life"

#### Acts 3:16

##### On the basis of faith in his name

Possible meanings are 1) this is the reason the man was made strong. Alternate translation: "Because of faith in his name" or 2) this is how the man was made strong. Alternate translation: "By faith in his name"

##### On the basis of faith in his name

The word "his" refers to the Founder of life, Jesus. The abstract noun "faith" can be translated with the verb "believe." Possible meanings are 1) the lame man had faith in Jesus. Alternate translation: "Because he believed in Jesus name" or 2) Peter and John, and perhaps the lame man, had faith in Jesus. Alternate translation: "Because we believed in Jesus's name"

##### his name

The phrase "his name" is a metonym either for Jesus or for Jesus's power.

##### made this man ... strong

"made this man ... well"

##### The faith that is through Jesus

Possible meanings are 1) this is the faith that Jesus enables people to have. Alternate translation: "The faith that comes from Jesus" or 2) this is faith in Jesus.

#### Acts 3:17

##### Now

Here Peter shifts the audience's attention from the lame man and continues to talk to them directly.

##### you acted in ignorance

Possible meanings are 1) that the people did not know that Jesus was the Messiah or 2) that the people did not understand the significance of what they were doing.

#### Acts 3:18

##### God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets

When the prophets spoke, it was as though God himself was speaking because he told them what to say. Alternate translation: "God foretold by telling all of the prophets what to speak"

##### God foretold

"God spoke about ahead of time" or "God told about before they happened"

##### the mouth of all the prophets

Here the word "mouth" refers to the words that the prophets spoke and wrote down. Alternate translation: "the words of all the prophets"

#### Acts 3:19

##### and turn

"and turn to the Lord." Here "turn" is a metaphor for starting to obey the Lord. Alternate translation: "and start obeying the Lord"

##### so that your sins may be blotted out

Here "blotted out" is a metaphor for forgiving. Sins are spoken of as if they are written in a book and God erases them from the book when he forgives them. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that God will forgive you for sinning against him"

#### Acts 3:20

##### times of refreshing

Possible meanings are 1) "times when God will strengthen your spirits" or 2) "times when God will revive you"

##### from the presence of the Lord

Here the words "presence of the Lord" is a metonym for the Lord himself. Alternate translation: "from the Lord"

##### that he may send the Christ

"that he may again send the Christ." This refers to Christ's coming again.

##### who has been appointed for you

This may be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom he has appointed for you"

#### Acts 3:21

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter continues the speech that he began in Acts 3:12 to the Jews who stood in the temple area.

##### He is the One heaven must receive

"He is the One heaven must welcome." Peter speaks of heaven as if it were a person who welcomes Jesus into his home.

##### heaven must receive until

This means that it is necessary for Jesus to remain in heaven because that is what God has planned.

##### until the time of the restoration of all things

Possible meanings are 1) "until the time when God will restore all things" or 2) "until the time when God will fulfill everything that he foretold."

##### about which God spoke from ancient times by the mouth of his holy prophets

When the prophets spoke long ago, it was as if God himself was speaking because he told them what to say. Alternate translation: "about which things God spoke long ago by telling his holy prophets to speak about them"

##### the mouth of his holy prophets

Here the word "mouth" refers to the words that the prophets spoke and wrote down. Alternate translation: "the words of his holy prophets"

#### Acts 3:22

##### General Information:

Peter begins to quote something Moses told the Israelites before the Messiah came.

##### will raise up a prophet like me from among your brothers

"will cause one of your brothers to become a true prophet, and everyone will know about him"

##### your brothers

"your nation"

#### Acts 3:23

##### that prophet will be completely destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that prophet, God will completely destroy"

#### Acts 3:24

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes his speech to the Jews that he began in Acts 3:12.

##### Yes, and all the prophets

"In fact, all the prophets." Here the word "Yes" adds emphasis to what follows.

##### from Samuel and those who came after him

"beginning with Samuel and continuing with the prophets who lived after he did"

##### these days

"these times" or "the things that are happening now"

#### Acts 3:25

##### You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant

Here the word "sons" refers to heirs who will receive what the prophets and the covenant promised. Alternate translation: "You are the heirs of the prophets and heirs of the covenant"

##### In your seed

"Because of your offspring"

##### all the families of the earth will be blessed

Here the word "families" refers to people groups or nations. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will bless all the people groups in the world"

#### Acts 3:26

##### After God raised up his servant

"After God caused Jesus to become his servant and made him famous"

##### his servant

This refers to the Messiah, Jesus.

##### turning every one of you from your wickedness

Here "turning ... from" is a metaphor for causing someone stop doing something. Alternate translation: "causing every one of you to stop doing wicked things" or "causing every one of you to repent from your wickedness"

## Chapter 4

# Acts 4 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 4:25-26.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Unity

The first Christians wanted very much to be united. They wanted to believe the same things and share everything they owned and help those who needed help.

#### "Signs and wonders"

This phrase refers to things that only God can do. The Christians wanted God to do what only he can do so that people would believe that what they said about Jesus was true.

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### Cornerstone

The cornerstone was the first piece of stone that people put down when they were building a building. This is a metaphor for the most important part of something, the part on which everything depends. To say that Jesus is the cornerstone of the church is to say that nothing in the church is more important than Jesus and that everything about the church depends on Jesus. (See: and faith)

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### Name

"There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" ([Acts 4:12](../../act/04/12.md)). With these words Peter was saying that no other person who has ever been on the earth or will ever be on earth can save people.

## Links:

* [Acts 4:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 questioned 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]

Obeying 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 (Prophesy) ; 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 we “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 4:1

##### Connecting Statement:

The religious leaders arrest Peter and John after Peter's having healed the man who was born lame.

##### came upon them

"approached them" or "came to them"

#### Acts 4:2

##### They were deeply troubled

"They were very angry." The Sadducees, in particular, would have been angry about what Peter and John were saying because they did not believe in resurrection.

##### proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead

Peter and John were saying that God would raise people from the dead in the same way as he had raised Jesus from among the dead. Translate this in a way that allows "the resurrection" to refer to both Jesus's resurrection and the general resurrection of other people.

##### from the dead

From among all those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

#### Acts 4:3

##### They laid hands on them

"The priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees arrested Peter and John"

##### since it was now evening

It was common practice not to question people at night.

#### Acts 4:4

##### the number of the men who believed

This refers only to men and does not include how many women or children believed.

##### was about five thousand

"grew to about five thousand"

#### Acts 4:5

##### General Information:

Here the word "their" refers to the Jewish people as a whole.

##### Connecting Statement:

The rulers question Peter and John, who answer without fear.

##### It came about ... that

This phrase is used here to mark where the action starts. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

##### their rulers, elders, and scribes

This is a reference to the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling court, which consisted of these three groups of people.

#### Acts 4:6

##### John, and Alexander

These two men were members of the high priest's family. This is not the same John as the apostle.

#### Acts 4:7

##### By what power

"Who gave you power"

##### in what name

Here the word "name" refers to authority. Alternate translation: "by whose authority"

#### Acts 4:8

##### Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said

This can be stated in active form. See how you translated this in [Acts 2:4]

#### Acts 4:9

##### we are on trial today

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you are questioning us today"

##### by what means this man was healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "by what means we have made this man well"

#### Acts 4:10

##### let it be known to you all and to all the people of Israel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "May all of you and all of the people of Israel know this"

##### to you all and to all the people of Israel

"to you who are questioning us and to all the other people of Israel"

##### in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth

Here the word "name" refers to power and authority. Alternate translation: "by the power of Jesus Christ of Nazareth"

##### whom God raised from the dead

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "whom God caused to live again"

#### Acts 4:11

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter completes his speech to the Jewish religious rulers that he began in Acts 4:8.

##### Jesus Christ is the stone ... which has been made the cornerstone

Peter is quoting from the Psalms. This is a metaphor that means the religious leaders, like builders, rejected Jesus, but God will made him the most important in his kingdom, as a cornerstone in a building is important.

##### you builders rejected

"you builders thought was worth nothing"

#### Acts 4:12

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Peter as well as those to whom he is speaking.

##### There is no salvation in any other person

The noun "salvation" can be translated as a verb. This can be stated positively. Alternate translation: "He is the only person who is able to save"

##### no other name under heaven given among men

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "no other name under heaven that God has given among men"

##### no other name ... given among men by which

The phrase "name ... given among men" refers to the person of Jesus. Alternate translation: "no other person under heaven, who is given among men, by whom"

##### under heaven

This is a way of referring to everywhere in the world. Alternate translation: "in the world"

##### by which we must be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which can save us" or "who can save us"

#### Acts 4:13

##### General Information:

Here the second instance of "they" refers to Peter and John. All other occurrences of the word "they" in this section refer to the Jewish leaders.

##### the boldness of Peter and John

Here the abstract noun "boldness" refers to the way in which Peter and John responded to the Jewish leaders, and can be translated with an adverb or an adjective. Alternate translation: "how boldly Peter and John had spoken" or "how bold Peter and John were"

##### boldness

bravery, courage, lack of fear. A person with boldness is not afraid.

##### realized that they were ordinary, uneducated men

The Jewish leaders "realized" this because of the way Peter and John spoke.

##### and realized

"and understood"

##### ordinary, uneducated men

The words "ordinary" and "uneducated" share similar meanings. They emphasize that Peter and John had received no formal training in Jewish law.

#### Acts 4:14

##### the man who was healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the man whom Peter and John had healed"

##### nothing to say against this

"nothing to say against Peter and John's healing of the man." Here the word "this" refers to what Peter and John had done.

#### Acts 4:15

##### the apostles

This refers to Peter and John.

#### Acts 4:16

##### What should we do with these men?

The Jewish leaders ask this question out of frustration because they could not think of what to do with Peter and John. Alternate translation: "There is nothing that we can do with these men!"

##### For a remarkable sign has been done through them, and this is evident to everyone who lives in Jerusalem

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For God has done a remarkable sign through them, and everyone who lives in Jerusalem has seen it" or "For everyone who lives in Jerusalem knows that they have done a remarkable sign"

##### sign

The miracle of healing was a sign that Peter and John were obeying God, who did the healing.

##### everyone who lives in Jerusalem

This is a generalization. It may also be an exaggeration to show that the leaders think that this is a very big problem. Alternate translation: "many of the people who live in Jerusalem" or "people who live throughout Jerusalem"

#### Acts 4:17

##### in order that it spreads no further

Here the word "it" refers to any miracles or teaching Peter and John might continue to do. Alternate translation: "in order that news of this miracle spreads no further" or "in order that no more people hear about this miracle"

##### not to speak anymore to anyone in this name

Here the word "name" refers to the person of Jesus. Alternate translation: "not to speak anymore to anyone about this person, Jesus"

#### Acts 4:18

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 4:19

##### Whether it is proper in the sight of God

Here the phrase "in the sight of God" refers to God's opinion. Alternate translation: "Whether God thinks it is right"

#### Acts 4:20

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Peter and John but not to those whom they are addressing.

#### Acts 4:21

##### After further warning

The Jewish leaders again threatened to punish Peter and John.

##### They were unable to find any excuse to punish them

Although the Jewish leaders threatened Peter and John, they could not find a reason to punish them without causing the people to riot.

##### for what had been done

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for what Peter and John had done"

#### Acts 4:22

##### General Information:

This verse gives background information about the age of the lame man who was healed.

##### The man who had experienced this sign of healing

"The man whom Peter and John had miraculously healed"

##### this sign

The miracle of healing was a sign that Peter and John were obeying God, who did the healing.

#### Acts 4:23

##### came to their own people

The phrase "their own people" refers to the rest of the believers. Alternate translation: "went to the other believers"

#### Acts 4:24

##### General Information:

Speaking together, the people quote a Psalm of David from the Old Testament. Here the word "they" refers to the rest of the believers, but not to Peter and John.

##### they raised their voices with one purpose to God

To raise the voice is an idiom for speaking. "they began speaking with one purpose to God"

##### with one purpose

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

#### Acts 4:25

##### You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David

This means that the Holy Spirit caused David to speak or write down what God said.

##### through the mouth of your servant, our father David

Here the word "mouth" refers to the words that David spoke or wrote down. Alternate translation: "by the words of your servant, our father David"

##### our father David

Here the word "father" refers to an ancestor.

##### Why did the Gentile nations rage, and the peoples imagine useless things?

This is a rhetorical question that emphasizes the futility of opposing God. Alternate translation: "The Gentile nations should not have raged, and the peoples should not have imagined useless things."

##### the peoples imagine useless things

These "useless things" consist of plans to oppose God. Alternate translation: "the peoples imagine useless things against God"

##### peoples

people groups

#### Acts 4:26

##### Connecting Statement:

The believers complete their quotation from King David in the Psalms that they began in Acts 4:25.

##### The kings of the earth set themselves together, and the rulers gathered together against the Lord

These two lines mean basically the same thing. The two lines emphasize the combined effort of the earth's rulers to oppose God.

##### set themselves together ... gathered together

These two phrases mean that they joined their armies together to fight a battle. Alternate translation: "set their armies together ... gathered their troops together"

##### against the Lord, and against his Christ

Here the word "Lord" refers to God. In the Psalms, the word "Christ" refers to the Messiah or God's anointed one.

#### Acts 4:27

##### Connecting Statement:

The believers continue praying.

##### in this city

"this city" refers to Jerusalem.

##### your holy servant Jesus

"Jesus, who serves you faithfully"

#### Acts 4:28

##### to do all that your hand and your plan had decided

Here the word "hand" is used to mean God's power. Additionally, the phrase "your hand and your desire decided" shows God's power and plan. Alternate translation: "to do all that you in your power had decided and planned they would do"

#### Acts 4:29

##### look upon their warnings

Here the words "look upon" are a request for God to take notice of the way in which the Jewish leaders threatened the believers. Alternate translation: "notice how they threaten to punish us"

##### speak your word with all boldness

The word "word" here is a metonym for God's message. The abstract noun "boldness" can be translated as an adverb. Alternate translation: "speak your message boldly" or "be bold when we speak your message"

#### Acts 4:30

##### Connecting Statement:

The believers complete the prayer that they began in Acts 4:24.

##### Stretch out your hand to heal and to give

Here the word "hand" refers to God's power. This is a request for God to show how powerful he is. Alternate translation: "Show your power by healing people and by giving"

##### through the name of your holy servant Jesus

Here the word "name" refers to power and authority. Alternate translation: "through the power of your holy servant Jesus"

##### your holy servant Jesus

"Jesus, who serves you faithfully." See how you translated this in Acts 4:27.

#### Acts 4:31

##### the place ... was shaken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the place ... shook"

##### they were all filled with the Holy Spirit

This can be stated in active form. See how you translated this in Acts 2:4. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit had filled them all" or "God had filled them all with the Holy Spirit"

#### Acts 4:32

##### were of one heart and soul

Here the word "heart" refers to the thoughts and the word "soul" refers to the emotions. Together they refer to the total person. Alternate translation: "thought the same way and wanted the same things"

##### they had everything in common

"they shared their belongings with one another." See how you translated this in Acts 2:44.

#### Acts 4:33

##### great grace was upon them all

Possible meanings are: 1) that God was greatly blessing the believers or 2) that the people in Jerusalem held the believers in very high esteem.

#### Acts 4:34

##### all who owned title to lands or houses

The word "all" here is a generalization. Alternate translation: "Many people who owned title to lands or houses" or "People who owned title to lands or houses"

##### owned title to lands or houses

"owned land or houses"

##### the money from the things that were sold

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the money that they received from the things that they sold"

#### Acts 4:35

##### laid it at the apostles' feet

This means that they presented the money to the apostles. Alternate translation: "presented it to the apostles" or "gave it to the apostles"

##### it was distributed to each one according to their need

The noun "need" can be translated with a verb. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they distributed the money to each believer who needed it"

#### Acts 4:36

##### General Information:

Luke introduces Barnabas into the story.

##### Son of Encouragement

The apostles used this name to show that Joseph was a person who encouraged others. "Son of" is an idiom used to describe a person's behavior or character. Alternate translation: "Encourager" or "one who encourages"

#### Acts 4:37

##### laid it at the apostles' feet

This means that they presented to money to the apostles. See how you translated this in [Acts 4:35]

## Chapter 5

# Acts 5 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### "Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit"

No one knows for sure if Ananias and Sapphira were truly Christians when they decided to lie about the land that they sold (Acts 5:1-10), because Luke does not say. However, Peter knew that they lied to the believers, and he knew that they had listened to and obeyed Satan.

When they lied to the believers, they also lied to the Holy Spirit. This is because the Holy Spirit lives inside believers.

## Links:

* [Acts 5:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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]

Annanias 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 Annanias 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 Annanias lied to the apostles and to God. This was because Ananias gave and 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. Annanias and Sapphira tested the Holy Spirit when they lied to the apostles. When the 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”(ζῆλος/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 Gamiel, 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 kind 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 apostle 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 5:1

##### Connecting Statement:

Continuing the story of how the new Christians shared their belongings with other believers, Luke tells about two believers, Ananias and Sapphria.

##### Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story to tell a new part of the story.

#### Acts 5:2

##### his wife also knew it

"his wife also knew that he kept back part of the sale money"

##### laid it at the apostles' feet

This means that they presented to money to the apostles. See how you translated this in [Acts 4:35]

#### Acts 5:3

##### General Information:

If your language does not use rhetorical questions, you may reword these as statements.

##### why has Satan filled your heart to lie ... land?

Peter uses this question to rebuke Ananias. Alternate translation: "you should not have let Satan fill your heart to lie ... land."

##### Satan filled your heart

Here the word "heart" is a metonym for the will and emotions. The phrase "Satan filled your heart" is a metaphor. Possible meanings of the metaphor are 1) "Satan completely controlled you" or 2) "Satan convinced you"

##### to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the price

This implies that Ananias had told the apostles that he was giving the entire amount that he had received from selling his land.

#### Acts 5:4

##### While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own ... authority?

Peter uses this question to rebuke Ananias. Alternate translation: "While it remained unsold, it was your own ... authority."

##### While it remained unsold

"Before you sold it"

##### after it was sold, was it not under your authority?

Peter uses this question to rebuke Ananias. Alternate translation: "after it was sold, you had control over the money that you received."

##### after it was sold

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "after you sold it"

##### Why did you put it in your heart to do this?

Peter used this question to rebuke Ananias. Here the word "heart" refers to the will and emotions. Alternate translation: "You should not have thought of doing this thing." or "It is Satan who has put this activity in your heart."

#### Acts 5:5

##### fell down and breathed his last

Here "breathed his last" means "breathed his final breath" and is a polite way of saying that he died. Ananias fell down because he died; he did not die because he fell down. Alternate translation: "died and fell to the ground"

#### Acts 5:6

##### The young men arose

This means that they began to act. This does not necessarily mean that they had been sitting or that Peter and Ananias had been at the front of the room or a meeting hall. If your language has a phrase that speaks of people responding to something by beginning to act, you may use it.

#### Acts 5:7

##### his wife came in

"Ananias' wife came in" or "Sapphira came in"

##### what had happened

"that her husband had died"

#### Acts 5:8

##### for so much

"for this much money." This refers to the amount of money that Ananias had given to the apostles.

#### Acts 5:9

##### General Information:

Here the word "you" is plural and refers to both Ananias and Sapphira.

##### How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?

Peter asks this question to rebuke Sapphira. Alternate translation: "You should not have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord!"

##### you have agreed together

"the two of you have agreed together"

##### to test the Spirit of the Lord

Here the word "test" means to challenge or to prove. They were trying to see if they could get away with lying to God without receiving punishment.

##### Look, the feet of the men

The word "Look" is an idiom for "Pay attention!" Peter is probably telling Sapphira to pay attention to the sound of the men's footsteps, which indicate that they are about to enter the building, not to look at their feet. Here the phrase "the feet" can be either a synecdoche for the men whose feet they are or a metonym for the sound that they make. Alternate translation: "Pay attention! The men" or "Listen! The footsteps of the men"

##### they will carry

"the men will carry"

#### Acts 5:10

##### Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Ananias and Sapphira.

##### fell down at his feet

This means that when she died, she fell on the floor in front of Peter. This expression should not be confused with falling down at a person's feet as a sign of humility.

##### breathed her last

Here "breathed his last" means "breathed her final breath" and is a polite way of saying "she died." See how you translated a similar phrase in [Acts 5:5]

#### Acts 5:11

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 5:12

##### General Information:

It is not clear whether here the word "They" refers to the believers or only to the apostles.

##### Connecting Statement:

Luke continues to tell what happens in the early days of the church.

##### Many signs and wonders were taking place among the people through the hands of the apostles

"Many signs and wonders took place among the people through the hands of the apostles." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people"

##### signs and wonders

"supernatural events and miraculous deeds." See how you translated these terms in Acts 2:22

##### through the hands of the apostles

Here the word "hands" refers to the apostles. Alternate translation: "through the apostles"

##### all together

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose. The people were more than just in the same place at the same time.

##### Solomon's Porch

This was a covered walkway that consisted of rows of pillars that supported a roof, and which people named after king Solomon. See how you translated "the porch that is called Solomon's" in Acts 3:11.

#### Acts 5:13

##### General Information:

The words "them" and "they" refer to the apostles.

##### none of the rest

Possible meanings are 1) the apostles were in Solomon's Porch, but the rest of the believers were afraid to join them there, or 2) all the believers were in Solomon's Porch, and the word "none" is a hyperbole that means that most of the people who were not believers were afraid to join them.

##### they were held in high esteem by the people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people held the believers in high esteem"

#### Acts 5:14

##### more believers were being added to the Lord

This could be stated in active form. See how you translated "were added" in [Acts 2:41]

#### Acts 5:15

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the people who lived in Jerusalem.

##### his shadow might fall on some of them

It is implied that God would heal them if Peter's shadow touched them.

#### Acts 5:16

##### those afflicted with unclean spirits

"those whom unclean spirits had afflicted"

##### they were all healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God healed them all" or "the apostles healed them all"

#### Acts 5:17

##### Connecting Statement:

The religious leaders began to persecute the believers.

##### But

This begins a contrasting story. You may translate this in the way that your language introduces a contrasting narrative.

##### the high priest rose up

Here the phrase "rose up" means that the high priest decided to take action, not that he stood up from a seated position. Alternate translation: "the high priest took action"

##### they were filled with jealousy

The abstract noun "jealousy" can be translated as an adjective. This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they became very jealous"

#### Acts 5:18

##### laid hands on

This means they had the believers arrested. See how you translated this in [Acts 4:3]

#### Acts 5:19

##### General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to the apostles.

#### Acts 5:20

##### in the temple

This phrase here refers to the temple courtyard, not to the temple building, where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation: "in the temple courtyard"

##### all the words of this life

The word "words" here is a metonym for the message that the apostles had already proclaimed. Possible meanings are 1) "all this message of eternal life" or 2) "the whole message of this new way of living"

#### Acts 5:21

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the apostles.

##### into the temple

They went into the temple courtyard, not into the temple building, where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation: "into the temple courtyard"

##### about daybreak

"as it began to be light." Although the angel led them out of the jail during the night, the sun was rising by the time the apostles reached the temple courtyard.

##### sent to the prison to have the apostles brought

This implies someone went to the jail. Alternate translation: "sent someone to the jail to bring the apostles"

#### Acts 5:22

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 5:23

##### we found no one inside

Possible meanings are 1) they found no one inside the apostles' cell Alternate translation: "we did not find them inside" or 2) the apostles had been the only prisoners and now there were no prisoners at all in the jail.

#### Acts 5:24

##### General Information:

Here the word "you" is plural and refers to the captain of the temple and the chief priests.

##### they were much perplexed

"they were very puzzled" or "they were very confused"

##### concerning them

"concerning the words they had just heard" or "concerning these things"

##### as to what would come of it

"and what would happen as a result" or "what would happen next"

#### Acts 5:25

##### General Information:

Here the word "you" is plural and refers to the captain of the temple and the chief priests.

##### standing in the temple

They did not go into the part of the temple building where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation: "standing in the temple courtyard"

#### Acts 5:26

##### Connecting Statement:

The captain and the officers bring the apostles before the Jewish religious council.

##### brought them back

"brought the apostles back"

##### they feared the people, that they might be stoned

This can be expressed with an active form. Alternate translation: "they feared that the people might stone them"

#### Acts 5:27

##### they had brought them, they set them ... interrogated them

"the captain and officers had brought the apostles, the captain and the officers set the apostles ... interrogated the apostles"

##### interrogated

questioned to find out what was true

#### Acts 5:28

##### We ... us

The speakers were referring to themselves, but not to the apostles, so these words are exclusive.

##### you ... your

These words refer to the apostles and so are plural.

##### in this name

Here the word "name" refers to the person of Jesus. See how you translated this in [Acts 4:17]

##### you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching

Teaching many people in a city is spoken of as if they were filling the city with a teaching. Alternate translation: "you have taught many people in Jerusalem about him" or "you have taught about him throughout the Jerusalem"

##### desire to bring this man's blood upon us

Here the word "blood" is a metonym for death, and to bring someone's blood on people is a metaphor for saying that they are guilty of that person's death. Alternate translation: "desire to make us responsible for this man's death"

#### Acts 5:29

##### General Information:

Here the word "We" refers to the apostles, and not to the audience.

##### Peter and the apostles answered

Peter spoke on behalf of all of the apostles when he said the following words.

#### Acts 5:30

##### The God of our fathers raised up Jesus

Here "raised up" is an idiom. Alternate translation: "The God of our fathers caused Jesus to live again"

##### by hanging him on a tree

Here Peter uses the word "tree" to refer to the cross, which was made of wood. Alternate translation: "by hanging him on a cross"

#### Acts 5:31

##### God exalted him to his right hand

To be at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "God exalted him to the place of honor beside him"

##### give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins

The words "repentance" and "forgiveness" can be translated as verbs. Alternate translation: "give the people of Israel an opportunity to repent and have God forgive their sins"

##### Israel

The word "Israel" refers to the Jewish people.

#### Acts 5:32

##### those who obey him

"those who submit to God's authority"

#### Acts 5:33

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 5:34

##### Connecting Statement:

Gamaliel addresses the council members.

##### Gamaliel, a teacher of the law who was honored by all the people

Luke introduces Gamaliel and provides background information about him.

##### who was honored by all the people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom all the people honored"

##### to take the men outside

The words "the men" refers to the apostles.

#### Acts 5:35

##### pay close attention to

"think carefully about" or "be cautious about." Gamaliel was warning them not to do something that they would later regret.

#### Acts 5:36

##### Theudas rose up

Possible meanings are 1) "Theudas rebelled" or 2) "Theudas appeared."

##### claiming to be somebody

"claiming to be somebody important"

##### He was killed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People killed him"

##### all who had been obeying him were scattered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "all the people scattered who had been obeying him" or "all who had been obeying him went in different directions"

##### came to nothing

This means that they did not do what they had planned to do.

#### Acts 5:37

##### After this man

"After Theudas"

##### in the days of the census

"during the time of the census"

##### drew away some people after him

This means that he persuaded some people to rebel with him against the Roman government. Alternate translation: "caused many people to follow him" or "caused many people to join him in rebellion"

#### Acts 5:38

##### keep away from these men and let them alone

Gamaliel is telling the Jewish leaders not to punish the apostles any more and not to put them back in jail.

##### if this plan or work is of men

"if men have devised this plan or are doing this work"

##### it will be overthrown

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone will overthrow it"

#### Acts 5:39

##### Connecting Statement:

Gamaliel finishes addressing the council members.

##### if it is of God

Here the word "it" refers to "this plan or work." Alternate translation: "if God has devised this plan or commanded these men to do this work"

##### So they were persuaded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "So Gamaliel persuaded them"

#### Acts 5:40

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the council members and all instances of "them" refer to the apostles.

##### they called the apostles in and beat them

The council members would have ordered the temple guards to do these things.

##### to speak in the name of Jesus

Here "name" refers to the authority of Jesus. See how you translated a similar phrase in Acts 4:18. Alternate translation: "to speak anymore in the authority of Jesus"

#### Acts 5:41

##### General Information:

All instances of "they" refer to the apostles.

##### they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name

The apostles rejoiced because God had honored them by letting the Jewish leaders dishonor them. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God had counted them worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name"

##### for the Name

Here "the Name" refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "for Jesus"

#### Acts 5:42

##### General Information:

The word "they" refers to the apostles.

##### Thereafter every day

"After that day, every day." This phrase marks what the apostles did every day through the following days.

##### in the temple and from house to house

They did not go into the temple building where only the priests went. Alternate translation: "in the temple courtyard and in different people's houses"

## Chapter 6

# Acts 6 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### The distribution to the widows

The believers in Jerusalem gave help—probably money but possibly food—every day to women whose husbands had died. All of these widows had been raised as Jews, but some of them had lived in Judea and spoke Hebrew. Others had lived in Gentile areas and spoke Greek. Those who gave out the money or food gave it to the Hebrew-speaking widows but not to the Greek-speaking widows. To please God, the church leaders appointed Greek-speaking men to make sure the Greek-speaking widows received their share of help. One of these Greek-speaking men was Stephen.

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### "His face was like the face of an angel"

No one knows for sure what it was about Stephen's face that was like the face of an angel, because Luke does not tell us. It is best for the translation to say only what the ULB says about this.

## Links:

* [Acts 6:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 were 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”(παραθεωρέω/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 became obedient to the faith?

[6:7]

When the priests became “obedient”(ὑπακούω/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 Stepehen 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 (Prophesy) ; Prophecy (Prophesy) ;Atone (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 6:1

##### General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story. Luke gives important background information to understand the story.

##### Now in these days

Consider how new parts of a story are introduced in your language.

##### was multiplying

"was greatly increasing"

##### Grecian Jews ... Hebrews

These were both groups of Jews who had become believers. The writer assumes that the reader understands that these people were all believers because at this point all believers had grown up as Jews.

##### Grecian Jews

These were believers who had grown up as Jews or become converts living somewhere in the Roman Empire outside of Israel and speaking Greek. Their language and culture were somewhat different from those who had grown up in Israel.

##### the Hebrews

These were believers who had grown up as Jews or become converts in Israel speaking Hebrew or Aramaic.

##### widows

A widow is a woman who has not remarried since her husband died.

##### their widows were being overlooked

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Hebrew believers were overlooking the Grecian widows"

##### being overlooked

"being ignored" or "being forgotten." There were so many who needed help that some were missed.

##### daily distribution of help

The disciples were able to help the widows because believers were giving money to the apostles Acts 4:34-35. Possible meanings are 1) the disciples used the money to buy food, which they would give to the widows, or 2) the disciples gave the money directly to the widows.

#### Acts 6:2

##### General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the 12 apostles and not to their hearers, so it is exclusive.

##### The twelve

This refers to the eleven apostles plus Matthias, who was selected in Acts 1:26.

##### the multitude of the disciples

"all of the disciples" or "all the believers"

##### give up the word of God

This is an exaggeration in order to emphasize the importance of their task of teaching the word of God. Alternate translation: "stop preaching and teaching the word of God"

##### serve tables

This is a phrase meaning to serve food to the people.

#### Acts 6:3

##### General Information:

Here the word "you" refers to the believers and so is plural.

##### men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom

Possible meanings are 1) the men have three qualities—a good reputation, being full of the Spirit, and being full of wisdom or 2) the men have a reputation for two qualities—being full of the Spirit, and being full of wisdom .

##### men of good reputation

"men that people know are good" or "men whom people trust"

##### over this business

"to be responsible to do this task"

#### Acts 6:4

##### General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the 12 apostles and not to their hearers, so it is exclusive.

##### the ministry of the word

"the ministry of teaching and preaching the message"

#### Acts 6:5

##### Their speech pleased the whole multitude

"All the disciples liked their suggestion"

##### Stephen ... Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus

These are Greek names, so it seems that all of the men elected were from the Grecian Jewish group of believers.

##### proselyte

a Gentile who converted to the Jewish religion

#### Acts 6:6

##### placed their hands upon them

This represented giving a blessing and imparting responsibility and authority for the work to the seven.

#### Acts 6:7

##### General Information:

This verse gives an update on the church's growth.

##### the word of God continued to spread

The writer speaks of the growing number of people who believed the word as if the word of God itself were covering a larger area. Alternate translation: "the number of people who believed the word of God increased" or "the number of people who believed the message from God increased"

##### became obedient to the faith

"followed the teaching of the new belief"

##### the faith

Possible meanings are 1) the gospel message of trust in Jesus or 2) the teaching of the church or 3) the Christian teaching.

#### Acts 6:8

##### General Information:

The writer begins to give background information about Stephen and other people that is important to understanding the story.

##### Connecting Statement:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story.

##### Now Stephen

This introduces Stephen as the main character in this part of the story.

##### Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing

The words "grace" and "power" here refer to power from God. This could be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "God was giving Stephen power to do"

#### Acts 6:9

##### General Information:

The writer continues giving background information about Stephen and other people that is important to understanding the story.

##### there arose some people ... Asia. These people were debating with Stephen

The word "arose" is an idiom that represents beginning to act. These people did not begin to rise into the air, nor did they necessarily get up from a sitting position. Alternate translation: "some people ... Asia, began to debate against Stephen"

##### the synagogue of the Freedmen, of the Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia

Possible meanings are 1) the Cyrenians, the Alexandrians and those from Cilicia and Asia were all members of the synagogue of the Freedmen; 2) the Cyrenians and the Alexandrians were members of the synagogue of the Freedmen, but those from Cilicia and Asia were not; or 3) there were three separate groups of people: those from the synagogue, those from Cyrene and Alexandria, and those from Cilicia and Asia.

##### synagogue of the Freedmen

"Freedmen" were probably ex-slaves from these different locations. It is unclear if the other people listed were part of the synagogue or just participated in the debate with Stephen.

##### the Cyrenians and Alexandrians

"people from Cyrene and Alexandria." Cyrene and Alexandria were cities in Northern Africa. They were south of the Mediterranean Sea.

##### some from Cilicia and Asia

Cilicia was a city and Asia was a Roman province, both north of the Mediterranean Sea.

##### debating with Stephen

"arguing with Stephen"

#### Acts 6:10

##### Connecting Statement:

The writer finishes giving background information about Stephen and other people that is important to understanding the story.

##### not able to stand against

This phrase means they could not prove false what he said. Alternate translation: "could not argue against"

##### Spirit

this refers to the Holy Spirit

#### Acts 6:11

##### General Information:

Here the word "We" refers only to the men they persuaded to lie. The word "they" refers back to the people from the synagogue of the freemen

##### some men to say

They were given money to give false testimony. Alternate translation: "some men to lie and say"

##### blasphemous words against

"bad things about"

#### Acts 6:12

##### General Information:

The word "they" most likely refers back to the people from the synagogue of the Freedmen (Acts 6:9). They were responsible for the false witnesses and for inciting the council, the elders, the scribes, and the other people.

##### stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes

"caused the people, the elders, and the scribes to be very angry at Stephen"

##### seized him

"grabbed him and held him so he could not get away"

#### Acts 6:13

##### General Information:

The word "they" most likely refers back to the people from the synagogue of the Freedmen (Acts 6:9).

##### does not stop speaking

"continually speaks"

#### Acts 6:14

##### General Information:

The words "we" and "us" refer only to the speakers, not to the hearers, and so is exclusive.

##### handed down to us

The phrase "handed down" means "passed on." Alternate translation: "taught our ancestors"

#### Acts 6:15

##### fixed their eyes on him

This is an idiom that means they looked intently at him. Here "eyes" is a metonym for sight. Alternate translation: "looked intently at him" or "stared at him"

##### was like the face of an angel

This phrase compares his face to that of an angel but does not say specifically what they have in common.

## Chapter 7

# Acts 7 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 7:42-43 and 49-50.

It appears that 8:1 is part of the narrative of this chapter.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### "Stephen said"

Stephen told the history of Israel very briefly. He paid special attention to the times that the Israelites had rejected the people God had chosen to lead them. At the end of the story, he said that the Jewish leaders he was talking to had rejected Jesus just as the evil Israelites had always rejected the leaders God had appointed for them.

#### "Full of the Holy Spirit"

The Holy Spirit completely controlled Stephen so that he said only and all of what God wanted him to say.

#### Foreshadowing

When an author speaks of something that is not important at that time but will be important later in the story, this is called foreshadowing. Luke mentions Saul, also known as Paul, here, even though he is not an important person in this part of the story. This is because Paul is an important person in the rest of the Book of Acts.

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### Implied information

Stephen was talking to Jews who knew the law of Moses well, so he did not explain things that his hearers already knew. But you may need to explain some of these things so that your readers will be able to understand what Stephen was saying. For example, you may need to make explicit that when Joseph's brothers "sold him into Egypt"

#### Metonymy

Stephen spoke of Joseph ruling "over Egypt" and over all of Pharaoh's household. By this he meant that Joseph ruled over the people of Egypt and of the people and possessions in Pharaoh's household.

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### Background knowledge

The Jewish leaders to whom Stephen spoke already knew much about the events he was telling them about. They knew what Moses had written in the Book of Genesis. If the Book of Genesis has not been translated into your language, it may be difficult for your readers to understand what Stephen said.

## Links:

* [Acts 7:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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]

Stepehen 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 Pharoah. 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:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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).
4. 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 (προδόται /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 7:1

##### Connecting Statement:

The part of the story about Stephen, which began in Acts 6:8, continues. Stephen begins his response to the high priest and the council by talking about things that happened in Israel's history. Most of this history comes from Moses's writings.

#### Acts 7:2

##### General Information:

The word "our" includes both Steven, the Jewish council to whom he spoke, and the entire audience.

##### Brothers and fathers, listen to me

Stephen was being very respectful to the council in greeting them as extended family.

#### Acts 7:3

##### General Information:

The word "your" refers to Abraham and so is singular.

#### Acts 7:4

##### General Information:

In verse 4 the words "he," "his," and "him" refer to Abraham. In verse 5 the words "He" and "he" refer to God, but the word "him" refers to Abraham. Here the word "you" refers to the Jewish council and audience.

#### Acts 7:5

##### He gave none of it

"He did not give any of it"

##### enough to set a foot on

Possible meanings for this phrase are 1) enough ground to stand on or 2) enough ground to take a step. Alternate translation: "a very tiny piece of ground"

##### as a possession to him and to his descendants after him

"for Abraham to own and to give to his descendants"

#### Acts 7:6

##### God was speaking to him like this

It may be helpful to state that this occurred later than the statement in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "Later God told Abraham"

##### four hundred years

"400 years"

#### Acts 7:7

##### I will judge the nation

"nation" refers to the people in it. Alternate translation: "I will judge the people of the nation"

##### the nation that they serve

"the nation that they will serve"

#### Acts 7:8

##### gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision

The Jews would have understood that this covenant required Abraham to circumcise the males of his family. Alternate translation: "made a covenant with Abraham to circumcise the males of his family"

##### so Abraham became the father of Isaac

The story transitions to Abraham's descendants.

##### Jacob the father

"Jacob became the father." Stephen shortened this.

#### Acts 7:9

##### the patriarchs

"the founders of our tribes" or "our ancestors." A patriarch is a man who rules a family.

##### sold him into Egypt

The Jews knew their ancestors sold Joseph to be a slave in Egypt. Alternate translation: "sold him as a slave in Egypt"

##### was with him

This is an idiom for helping someone. Alternate translation: "helped him"

#### Acts 7:10

##### over Egypt

This refers to the people of Egypt. Alternate translation: "over all the people of Egypt"

##### all his household

This refers to all his possessions. Alternate translation: "everything he owned"

#### Acts 7:11

##### Now a famine and great tribulation came

"a famine came." The ground stopped producing food and this caused a terrible suffering.

##### our fathers

This refers Jacob and his sons, who were the ancestors of the Jewish people.

#### Acts 7:12

##### grain

Grain was the most common food at that time.

##### our fathers

Here this phrase refers to Joseph's older brothers, who were Jacob's sons.

#### Acts 7:13

##### On their second trip

"On their next trip"

##### made himself known

Joseph revealed to his brothers his identity as their brother.

##### Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Pharaoh learned that they were Joseph's family"

#### Acts 7:14

##### sent his brothers back

"sent his brothers back to Canaan" or "sent his brothers back home"

#### Acts 7:15

##### he died

Make sure it does not sound as though he died as soon as he arrived in Egypt. Alternate translation: "eventually Jacob died"

##### he and our fathers

"Jacob and his sons, who became our ancestors"

#### Acts 7:16

##### They were carried over ... and laid

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Jacob's descendants carried Jacob's body and his son's bodies over ... and buried them"

##### for a price in silver

"with money"

#### Acts 7:17

##### As the time of the promise ... the people grew and multiplied

In some languages it may be helpful to say that the people increased in number before saying that the time of the promise arrived.

##### time of the promise approached

It was close to the time that God would fulfill his promise to Abraham.

#### Acts 7:18

##### there arose another king

"another king began to rule"

##### over Egypt

"Egypt" refers to the people of Egypt. Alternate translation: "over the people of Egypt"

##### who did not know about Joseph

"Joseph" refers to the reputation of Joseph. Alternate translation: "who did not know that Joseph had helped Egypt"

#### Acts 7:19

##### General Information:

The word "our" includes Stephen and his audience.

#### Acts 7:20

##### At that time Moses was born

This introduces Moses into the story.

##### very beautiful before God

This phrase is an idiom that means Moses was very beautiful.

##### was nourished

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "his parents nourished him" or "his parents cared for him"

#### Acts 7:21

##### When he was placed outside

Moses was "placed outside" because of Pharaoh's command. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When his parents placed him outside" or "When they abandoned him"

##### Pharaoh's daughter ... raised him as her own son

She did for him every good thing a mother would do for her own son. Use your language's normal word for what a mother does to make sure her son becomes a healthy adult.

##### adopted him

If your language has a word for an informal procedure, not a formal legal procedure, in which one family takes a child in and raises him, you may want to use that here. Pharaoh's daughter did do for Moses what any mother would do for her child, but this involved no formal legal procedure.

##### as her own son

"as if he were her own son"

#### Acts 7:22

##### Moses was educated

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The Egyptians educated Moses"

##### all the wisdom of the Egyptians

This is an exaggeration to emphasize that he was trained in the best schools in Egypt.

##### mighty in his words and works

"effective in his speech and actions" or "influential in what he said and did"

#### Acts 7:23

##### it came into his heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for "mind." The phrase "it came into his heart" is an idiom that means to decide something. Alternate translation: "it came into his mind" or "he decided"

##### visit his brothers, the descendants of Israel

This refers to his people, and not just to his family. Alternate translation: "see how his own people, the children of Israel, were doing"

#### Acts 7:24

##### Seeing an Israelite being mistreated ... the Egyptian

This can be stated in active form by rearranging the order. Alternate translation: "Seeing an Egyptian mistreating an Israelite, Moses defended and avenged the Israelite by striking the Egyptian who was oppressing him"

##### striking the Egyptian

Moses hit the Egyptian so hard that he died.

#### Acts 7:25

##### he thought

"he imagined"

##### by his hand, was giving them salvation

Here "hand" refers to the actions of Moses. Alternate translation: "was giving them salvation through what he, Moses, was doing"

##### was giving them salvation

The abstract noun "salvation" can be translated using the verb "save." Alternate translation: "was saving them" or "was rescuing them"

#### Acts 7:26

##### when they were fighting

Some translations make it clear that two men were fighting. Alternate translation: "when two men of Israel were fighting"

##### make peace between them

"make them stop fighting"

##### Men, you are brothers

Moses was addressing the Israelites who were fighting.

##### why are you wronging one another?

Moses asked this question to encourage them to stop fighting. Alternate translation: "you should not do wrong to each other!"

#### Acts 7:27

##### General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the Israelites but does not include Moses.

##### Who appointed you a ruler and a judge over us?

The man used this question to rebuke Moses. Alternate translation: "No one appointed you ruler or judge over us." or "You have no authority over us!"

#### Acts 7:28

##### Would you like to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?

The man used this question to warn Moses that he and probably others knew Moses had killed the Egyptian.

#### Acts 7:29

##### General Information:

Stephen's audience already knew that Moses had married a Midianite woman when he fled Egypt.

##### after hearing this

The implied information is that Moses understood that the Israelites knew that he had killed an Egyptian the day before (Acts 7:28).

#### Acts 7:30

##### When forty years were past

"After 40 years passed." This was the amount of time Moses had been in Midian. Alternate translation: "Forty years after Moses fled from Egypt"

##### an angel appeared

Stephen's audience knew that God spoke through the angel.

#### Acts 7:31

##### he marveled at the sight

Moses was surprised that the bush was not burning up in the fire. This was previously known by Stephen's audience. Alternate translation: "because the bush was not burning up"

##### as he approached to look at it

This may mean Moses initially drew close to the bush to investigate.

#### Acts 7:32

##### I am the God of your fathers

"I am the God whom your ancestors worshiped"

##### Moses trembled and did not dare to look

This may mean Moses drew back in fear when he heard the voice.

##### Moses trembled

Moses shook from fear. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: "Moses trembled with fear"

#### Acts 7:33

##### Take off the sandals

God told Moses this so he would honor God.

##### for the place where you are standing is holy ground

The implied information is that where God is present, the immediate area around God is considered holy or is made holy by God.

#### Acts 7:34

##### certainly seen

"seen for sure." The word "certainly" adds emphasis to "seen."

##### the oppression of my people

The abstract noun "oppression" can be translated using the verb "oppress." Alternate translation: "the way the Egyptians are oppressing my people"

##### my people

The word "my" emphasizes that these people belonged to God. Alternate translation: "the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob"

##### I have come down to rescue them

"will personally cause their release"

##### now come

"get ready." God uses an order here.

#### Acts 7:35

##### General Information:

Verses 35-38 contain a series of connected phrases referring to Moses. Each phrase begins with statements such as "This Moses" or "This same Moses" or "This is the man" or "It is the same Moses." If possible, use similar statements to emphasize Moses. After the Israelites left Egypt, they spent 40 years wandering around the wilderness before God led them into the land he had promised them.

##### This Moses whom they rejected

This refers back to the events recorded in Acts 7:27-28.

##### deliverer

"rescuer"

##### by the hand of the angel ... bush

The hand is a metonym for the action performed by the person. In this case, the angel had commanded Moses to return to Egypt. Stephen speaks as if the angel had a physical hand. You may need to make explicit what action the angel did. Alternate translation: "by the action of the angel" or "by having the angel ... bush command him to return to Egypt"

#### Acts 7:36

##### during forty years

Stephen's audience knew about the forty years the Israelites spent in the wilderness. Alternate translation: "during the 40 years that the Israelite people lived in the wilderness"

#### Acts 7:37

##### raise up a prophet

"cause a man to be a prophet"

##### from among your brothers

"from among your own people"

#### Acts 7:38

##### This is the man who was in the assembly

"This is the man Moses who was among the Israelites"

##### This is the man

The phrase "This is the man" throughout this passage refers to Moses.

##### who received living words to give to us

God was the one who gave those words. Alternate translation: "to whom God spoke living words to give to us"

##### living words

Possible meanings are 1) "a message that endures" or 2) "words that give life."

#### Acts 7:39

##### pushed him away from themselves

This metaphor emphasizes their rejection of Moses. Alternate translation: "they rejected him as their leader"

##### in their hearts they turned back

Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's thoughts. To do something in the heart means to desire do to something. Alternate translation: "they desired to turn back"

#### Acts 7:40

##### General Information:

The quotation in this verse is from the writings of Moses.

##### At that time

"When they decided to return to Egypt"

#### Acts 7:41

##### they made a calf

Stephen's audience knew the calf they made was a statue. Alternate translation: "they made a statue that looked like a calf"

##### a calf ... the idol ... the work of their hands

These phrases all refer to the same statue of the calf.

#### Acts 7:42

##### General Information:

Stephen's quotation here is from the prophet Amos.

##### God turned

"God turned away." This action expresses that God was not pleased with the people and no longer helped them. Alternate translation: "God stopped correcting them"

##### gave them up

"abandoned them"

##### the stars in the sky

Possible meanings for the original phrase are 1) the stars only or 2) the sun, moon, and stars.

##### the book of the prophets

This was apparently a collection of the writings of several of the Old Testament prophets into one scroll. It would also have included the writings of Amos.

##### Did you bring me offerings and sacrifices ... Israel?

God asked this question to show Israel they did not worship him with their sacrifices. Alternate translation: "You did not honor me when brought offerings and sacrifices ... Israel."

##### house of Israel

This refers to the whole nation of Israel. Alternate translation: "all you Israelites"

#### Acts 7:43

##### General Information:

The quotation from the prophet Amos continues here.

##### Connecting Statement:

Stephen continues his response to the high priest and the council which he began in Acts 7:2.

##### You accepted

It is implied that they took these idols with them as they traveled in the wilderness. Alternate translation: "you carried with you from place to place"

##### tabernacle of Molech

the tent that housed the false god Molech

##### the star of the god Rephan

the star that is identified with the false god Rephan

##### the images that you made

They made statues or images of the gods Molech and Rephan in order to worship them.

##### I will carry you away beyond Babylon

"I will remove you to places even farther than Babylon." This would be God's act of judgment.

#### Acts 7:44

##### the tabernacle of the testimony

The tent that housed the ark (a box) with the 10 commandments carved in stone inside it

#### Acts 7:45

##### our fathers, under Joshua, received the tabernacle and brought it with them

The phrase "under Joshua" means that their ancestors did these things in obedience to Joshua's direction. Alternate translation: "our fathers, in accordance with Joshua's instructions, received the tabernacle and brought it with them"

##### God took the land from the nations and drove them out before the face of our fathers

This sentence tells why the ancestors were able to take possession of the land. Alternate translation: "God forced the nations to leave the land before the face of our fathers"

##### God ... drove them out before the face of our fathers

Here "the face of our fathers" refers to the presence of their ancestors. Possible meanings are 1) "As our ancestors watched, God ... drove them out" or 2) "When our ancestors came, God ... drove them out"

##### the nations

This refers to the people who lived in the land before Israel. Alternate translation: "the people who previously lived here"

##### drove them out

"forced them to leave the land"

#### Acts 7:46

##### he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob

Here "house" is probably a metonym for the ark of the covenant. David wanted to build a place for the ark, which represented God's presence, so people could go there to worship God. Alternate translation: "he might build a place where people could worship the God of Jacob"

##### the house of Jacob

Many versions read, "the God of Jacob."

#### Acts 7:47

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 7:48

##### made with hands

The hand is a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "made by people"

#### Acts 7:49

##### General Information:

In verses 49 and 50, Stephen quotes from the prophet Isaiah. In the quotation, God is speaking about himself.

##### Heaven is my throne ... the earth is the footstool for my feet

The prophet is comparing the greatness of God's presence to how impossible it is for man to build a place for God to rest on earth since the whole earth is nothing but a place for God to rest his feet.

##### What kind of house can you build for me?

God asks this question to show how useless man's efforts are to take care of God. Alternate translation: "You can not build a house adequate enough for me!"

##### what is the place for my rest?

God asks this question to show man that he cannot provide God any rest. Alternate translation: "There is no place of rest good enough for me!"

#### Acts 7:50

##### General Information:

In verses 49 and 50, Stephen quotes from the prophet Isaiah. In the quotation, God is speaking about himself.

##### Did my hand not make all these things?

God asks this question to show that man did not create anything. Alternate translation: "My hand made all these things!"

#### Acts 7:51

##### Connecting Statement:

With a sharp rebuke, Stephen finishes his response to the high priest and the council, which he began in Acts 7:2.

##### You stiff-necked people

Stephen shifts from identifying with the Jewish leaders to rebuking them.

##### uncircumcised in heart and ears

The Jews regarded uncircumcised people as disobedient to God. Stephen uses "hearts and ears" to represent to the Jewish leaders who acted the way Gentiles act when they do not obey or listen to God. Alternate translation: "you refuse to obey and hear"

#### Acts 7:52

##### Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?

Stephen asked this question to show them that they learned nothing from the errors of their forefathers. Alternate translation: "Your forefathers persecuted every prophet!"

##### Righteous One

This refers to the Christ, the Messiah.

##### you have now become the betrayers and murderers of him also

"you have also betrayed and murdered him"

##### murderers of him

"murderers of the Righteous One" or "murderers of the Christ"

#### Acts 7:53

##### the law that angels had ordained

"the laws that God caused angels to give to our ancestors"

#### Acts 7:54

##### Connecting Statement:

The council reacts to Stephen's words.

##### Now when the council members heard these things

This is the turning point; the sermon ends and the council members react.

##### they were furious in their hearts

This means that they were extremely angry.

##### ground their teeth at Stephen

This action expressed their strong anger at Stephen or hatred of Stephen. Alternate translation: "they became so angry that they ground their teeth together" or "moved their teeth back and forth as they looked at Stephen"

#### Acts 7:55

##### looked up intently into heaven

"stared up into heaven." It appears that only Stephen saw this vision and not anyone else in the crowd.

##### saw the glory of God

People normally experienced the glory of God as a bright light. Alternate translation: "saw a bright light from God"

##### and he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God

To stand at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "and he saw Jesus standing in the place of honor and authority beside God"

#### Acts 7:56

##### Son of Man

Stephen refers to Jesus by the title "Son of Man."

#### Acts 7:57

##### covered their ears

"put their hands on their ears." They did this to show that they did not want to hear any more of what Stephen said.

##### with one purpose

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

#### Acts 7:58

##### They forced him out of the city

"They seized Stephen and forcefully took him out of the city"

##### outer clothing

These are cloaks or robes they would wear outside to stay warm, similar in function to a jacket or coat.

##### at the feet

"in front of." They were placed there so Saul could watch them.

##### a young man

Saul was probably around 30 years old at the time.

#### Acts 7:59

##### receive my spirit

"take my spirit." It may be helpful to add "please" to show that this was a request. Alternate translation: "please receive my spirit"

#### Acts 7:60

##### Connecting Statement:

This ends the story of Stephen.

##### He knelt down

This is an act of submission to God.

##### do not hold this sin against them

This can be stated in a positive way. Alternate translation: "forgive them for this sin"

##### fell asleep

Here to fall asleep is a euphemism for dying. Alternate translation: "died"

## Chapter 8

# Acts 8 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 8:32-33.

The first sentence of verse 1 ends the description of the events in chapter 7. Luke begins a new part of his history with the words "So there began."

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Receiving the Holy Spirit

In this chapter for the first time Luke speaks of people receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:15-19). The Holy Spirit had already enabled the believers to speak in tongues, to heal the sick, and to live as a community, and he had filled Stephen. But when the Jews started putting believers in prison, those believers who could leave Jerusalem did leave, and as they went, they told people about Jesus. When the people who heard about Jesus received the Holy Spirit, the church leaders knew that those people had truly become believers.

#### Proclaimed

This chapter more than any other in the Book of Acts speaks of the believers proclaiming the word, proclaiming the good news, and proclaiming that Jesus is the Christ. The word "proclaim" translates a Greek word that means to tell good news about something.

## Links:

* [Acts 8:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 Aramic 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; Atone (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 Spiritwas 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 (Prophesy) ; 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 leads 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: Atone (Atonement); Prophecy (Prophesy); 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 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 (Prophesy); 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 Phillp 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 8:1

##### General Information:

It may be helpful to your audience to move these parts of the story about Stephen together by using a verse bridge as the UDB does.

##### Connecting Statement:

The story shifts from Stephen to Saul in these verses.

##### So there began ... except the apostles

This part of verse 1 is background information about the persecution that began after Stephen's death. This explains why Saul was persecuting the believers in verse 3.

##### that day

This refers to the day that Stephen died (Acts 7:59-60).

##### the believers were all scattered

The word "all" is a generalization to express that a large number of the believers left Jerusalem because of the persecution.

##### except the apostles

This statement implies that the apostles remained in Jerusalem even though they also experienced this great persecution.

#### Acts 8:2

##### Devout men

"God-fearing men" or "Men who feared God"

##### made great lamentation over him

"greatly mourned his death"

#### Acts 8:3

##### house after house

"houses one by one"

##### drag off both men and women

"took away both men and women by force." Saul forcefully took Jewish believers out of their homes and put them into prison.

##### men and women

This refers to men and women who believed in Jesus.

#### Acts 8:4

##### who had been scattered

The cause for the scattering, the persecution, was stated previously. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "who had fled the great persecution"

##### the word

This is a metonym for "the message." You may need to make explicit that the message was about Jesus. Alternate translation: "the message about Jesus"

#### Acts 8:5

##### Connecting Statement:

This begins the story of Philip, whom the people had chosen as a deacon.

##### went down to the city of Samaria

The phrase "went down" is used here because Samaria is lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

##### the city of Samaria

Possible meanings are 1) Luke expected the readers to know which city he was writing about. Alternate translation: "the main city in Samaria" or 2) Luke did not expect his readers to know which city he was writing about. Alternate translation: "a city in Samaria"

##### proclaimed to them the Christ

The title "Christ" refers to Jesus, the Messiah. Alternate translation: "told them about Jesus Christ" or "told them about Jesus the Messiah"

#### Acts 8:6

##### Crowds of people

"Many people in the city of Samaria." The location was specified in Acts 8:5.

##### were giving close attention

The reason people paid attention was because of all the healing Philip did.

##### with one mind

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

#### Acts 8:7

##### who were possessed

"who had them" or "who were controlled by them"

#### Acts 8:8

##### So there was much joy in that city

The phrase "that city" refers to the people who were rejoicing. Alternate translation: "So the people of the city were rejoicing"

#### Acts 8:9

##### General Information:

Simon is introduced to the story of Philip. This verse gives the beginning of the background information about Simon and who he was among the Samaritans.

##### But there was a certain man ... named Simon

This is a way of introducing a new person into the story. Your language may use different wording to introduce a new person into the story.

##### the city

"the city in Samaria" (Acts 8:5)

#### Acts 8:10

##### General Information:

Simon is introduced to the story of Philip. This verse continues to give the beginning of the background information about Simon and who he was among the Samaritans.

##### All the Samaritans

The word "all" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "Many of the Samaritans" or "The Samaritans in the city"

##### from the least to the greatest

These two phrases refer to everyone from one extreme to the other. Alternate translation: "no matter how important they were"

##### This man is that power of God which is called Great

People were saying that Simon was the divine power known as "The Great Power."

##### that power of God which is called Great

Possible meanings are 1) the powerful representative of God or 2) God or 3) the most powerful man or 4) an angel. Since the term is unclear, it may be best to simply translate it as "the Great power of God."

#### Acts 8:11

##### General Information:

Simon is introduced to the story of Philip. This verse ends the background information about Simon and who he was among the Samaritans.

#### Acts 8:12

##### Connecting Statement:

Verses 12 and 13 give more information about Simon and some of the Samaritans coming to believe in Jesus.

##### they were baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Philip baptized them" or "Philip baptized the new believers"

#### Acts 8:13

##### Connecting Statement:

Verses 12 and 13 give more information about Simon and some of the Samaritans coming to believe in Jesus.

##### Simon himself believed

The word "himself" is here used to emphasize that Simon believed. Alternate translation: "Simon was also one of those who believed"

##### he was baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Philip baptized Simon"

#### Acts 8:14

##### Connecting Statement:

Luke continues the news of what was happening in Samaria.

##### Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard

This marks the beginning of a new part of the story of the Samaritans.

##### Samaria

This refers to the many people who had become believers throughout the district of Samaria.

##### had received

"had believed" or "had accepted"

#### Acts 8:15

##### When they had come down

"when Peter and John had come down"

##### come down

This phrase is used here because Samaria is lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

##### they prayed for them

"Peter and John prayed for the Samaritan believers"

##### that they might receive the Holy Spirit

"that the Samaritan believers might receive the Holy Spirit"

#### Acts 8:16

##### they had only been baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Philip had only baptized the Samaritan believers"

##### they had only been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus

Here "name" represents authority, and being baptized into his name represents being baptized in order to be under his authority. Alternate translation: "they had only been baptized to become disciples of the Lord Jesus"

#### Acts 8:17

##### Peter and John placed their hands on them

The word "them" refers to the Samaritan people who believed Stephen's message of the gospel.

##### placed their hands on them

This symbolic action shows that Peter and John wanted God to give the Holy Spirit to the believers.

#### Acts 8:18

##### the Holy Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the apostles gave the Holy Spirit by laying their hands on people"

#### Acts 8:19

##### that whoever I place my hands on might receive the Holy Spirit

"that I can give the Holy Spirit to anyone on whom I place my hands"

#### Acts 8:20

##### General Information:

Here the words him, your, you, and yours all refer to Simon.

##### May your silver perish along with you

"May you and your money be destroyed"

##### the gift of God

Here this refers to the ability of a person to give the Holy Spirit by laying his hands on someone.

#### Acts 8:21

##### You have no part or allotted portion in this matter

The words "part" and "allotted portion" mean the same thing and are used for emphasis. Alternate translation: "You may not participate in this work"

##### your heart is not right

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts or motives. Alternate translation: "you are not right in your heart" or "the motives of your mind are not right"

#### Acts 8:22

##### this wickedness

"these evil thoughts"

##### he might perhaps forgive

"he may be willing to forgive"

##### for the intention of your heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts. Alternate translation: "for what you intended to do" or "for what you were thinking of doing"

#### Acts 8:23

##### in the poison of bitterness

Here "in the poison of bitterness" is a metaphor for being very envious. It speaks of envy as if it tastes bitter and poisons the person who is envious. Alternate translation: "very envious"

##### in the bonds of unrighteousness

The phrase "bonds of unrighteousness" is spoken as if unrighteousness could make Simon a prisoner. It is metaphor that means Simon is not able to stop himself from sinning. Alternate translation: "because you continue sinning you are like a prisoner" or "sin has made you its prisoner"

#### Acts 8:24

##### General Information:

Here the word "you" refers to Peter and John.

##### so that nothing you have said may happen to me

This refers to Peter's rebuke about Simon's silver perishing along with him.

##### nothing you have said may happen to me

This can be stated another way. Alternate translation: "the things you have said may not happen to me"

#### Acts 8:25

##### Connecting Statement:

This is concludes the part of the story about Simon and the Samaritans.

##### testified

Peter and John told what they personally knew about Jesus to the Samaritans.

##### spoken the word of the Lord

Here "word" is a metonym for "message." Peter and John explained the message about Jesus to the Samaritans.

##### to many villages of the Samaritans

Here "villages" refers to the people in them. Alternate translation: "to the people in many Samaritan villages"

#### Acts 8:26

##### Connecting Statement:

This begins the part of the story about Philip and the man from Ethiopia.

##### Now

This marks a transition in the story.

##### Arise and go

These verbs work together to emphasize that he should get ready to start a long journey that will take some time. Alternate translation: "Get ready to travel"

##### goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza

The phrase "goes down" is used here because Jerusalem is higher in elevation than Gaza.

##### This road is in a desert

Most scholars believe Luke added this comment to describe the area through which Philip would travel.

#### Acts 8:27

##### General Information:

This verse gives background information about the man from Ethiopia.

##### Behold

The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.

##### eunuch

The emphasis of "eunuch" here is about the Ethiopian's being a high government official, not so much his physical state of being castrated.

##### Candace

This was a title for the queens of Ethiopia. It is similar to the way the word Pharaoh was used for the kings of Egypt.

##### He had come to Jerusalem to worship

This implies that he was a Gentile who believed in God and had come to worship at the Jewish temple. Alternate translation: "He had come to worship God at the temple in Jerusalem"

#### Acts 8:28

##### chariot

Possibly "wagon" or "carriage" is more fitting in this context. Chariots are normally mentioned as a vehicle for war, not as a vehicle for long-distance travel. Also, people stood to ride in chariots.

##### reading the prophet Isaiah

This is the Old Testament book Isaiah. Alternate translation: "reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah"

#### Acts 8:29

##### stay close to this chariot

Philip understood that this meant he was to stay close to the person riding in the chariot. Alternate translation: "accompany the man in this chariot"

#### Acts 8:30

##### reading Isaiah the prophet

This is the Old Testament book Isaiah. Alternate translation: "reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah"

##### Do you understand what you are reading?

The Ethiopian was intelligent and could read, but he lacked spiritual discernment. Alternate translation: "Do you understand the meaning of what you are reading?"

#### Acts 8:31

##### How can I, unless someone guides me?

This question was asked to state emphatically that he could not understand without help. Alternate translation: "I cannot understand unless someone guides me."

##### He invited Philip to ... sit with him

It is implied here that Philip agreed to travel down the road with him to explain the scriptures.

##### He invited

Possible meanings are that 1) he offered a sincere invitation or 2) he made a sincere request.

#### Acts 8:32

##### General Information:

This a passage from the book of Isaiah. Here the word "he" refers to the Messiah.

##### like a lamb before his shearer is silent

A shearer is a person who cuts the wool off the sheep so that it may be used.

#### Acts 8:33

##### General Information:

This verse continues quoting a passage from the book of Isaiah. Here the words "his" and "him" refer to the Messiah.

##### In his humiliation justice was taken away from him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "He was humiliated and they did not judge him fairly" or "He allowed himself to be humbled before his accusers and he suffered injustice"

##### Who can give a full account of his descendants?

This question was used to emphasize that he will not have descendants. Alternate translation: "No one will be able to speak about his descendants, for there will not be any."

##### his life was taken from the earth

This referred to his death. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "men killed him" or "men took his life from the earth"

#### Acts 8:34

##### I beg you

"Please tell me"

#### Acts 8:35

##### this scripture

This refers to Isaiah's writings in the Old Testament. Alternate translation: "the writings of Isaiah"

#### Acts 8:36

##### they went on the road

"they continued to travel along the road"

##### What prevents me from being baptized?

The eunuch uses this question as a way of asking Philip for permission to be baptized. Alternate translation: "Please allow me to be baptized."

#### Acts 8:37

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 8:38

##### commanded the chariot to stop

"told the driver of the chariot to stop"

#### Acts 8:39

##### Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Philip and the man from Ethiopia. The story of Philip ends at Caesarea.

##### the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away

The words "took Philip away" imply that the Spirit took forceful, physical action, perhaps a miracle that moved Philip in an instant. The angel probably did not just suggest or even command that Philip leave the eunuch and go elsewhere.

##### the eunuch saw him no more

"the eunuch did not see Philip again"

#### Acts 8:40

##### Philip appeared at Azotus

There was no indication of Philip's traveling between where he baptized the Ethiopian and Azotus. He just suddenly disappeared along the road to Gaza and reappeared at the town of Azotus.

##### that region

This refers to the area around the town of Azotus.

##### to all the cities

"to all the cities in that region"

## Chapter 9

# Acts 9 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### "The Way"

No one knows for sure who first started calling believers "followers of the Way." This is probably what the believers called themselves, because the Bible often speaks of a person living his life as if that person were walking on a path or "way." If this is true, the believers were "following the way of the Lord" by living in a way that pleased God.

#### "Letters for the synagogues in Damascus"

The "letters" Paul asked for were probably legal papers that permitted him to put Christians in prison. The synagogue leaders in Damascus would have obeyed the letter because it was written by the high priest. If the Romans had seen the letter, they also would have allowed Saul to persecute the Christians, because they permitted the Jews to do as they desired to people who broke their religious laws.

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### What Saul saw when he met Jesus

It is clear that Saul saw a light and that it was because of this light that he "fell upon the ground." Some people think that Saul knew that it was the Lord speaking to him without seeing a human form, because the Bible often speaks of God as being light and living in light. Other people think that later in his life he was able to say, "I have seen the Lord Jesus" because it was a human form that he saw here.

## Links:

* [Acts 9:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 Chrisitans (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 Saud 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 Godd; 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 Chrsitian.

#### 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 Aenaes?

[9:33, 9:34]

God completely healed Aenaes 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 Chrsitians there because of the miracle God did for Tabitha (see Acts 9:42).

#### Acts 9:1

##### General Information:

Verses 1-2 give background information telling us what Saul has been doing since the stoning of Stephen.

##### Connecting Statement:

The story shifts back to Saul and his salvation.

##### still speaking threats even of murder against the disciples

The noun "murder" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "still speaking threats, even to murder the disciples"

#### Acts 9:2

##### General Information:

Verses 1-2 give background information telling us what Saul has been doing since the stoning of Stephen. Here the word "him" refers to the high priest and "he" refers to Saul.

##### for the synagogues

This refers to the people in the synagogues. Alternate translation: "for the people in the synagogues" or "for the leaders in the synagogues"

##### if he found any

"when he found people" or "if he found people"

##### who belonged to the Way

"who followed the teachings of Jesus Christ"

##### the Way

This term appears to have been a title for Christianity at that time.

##### he might bring them bound to Jerusalem

"he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem." Paul's purpose can be made clear by adding "so that the Jewish leaders could judge and punish them"

#### Acts 9:3

##### Connecting Statement:

After the high priest gave Saul the letters, Saul left for Damascus.

##### As he was traveling

Saul left Jerusalem and now travels to Damascus.

##### it happened that

This is an expression that marks a change in the story to show something different is about to happen.

##### there shone all around him a light out of heaven

"a light from heaven shone all around him"

##### out of heaven

Possible meanings are 1) out of heaven, where God lives or 2) out of the sky. The first meaning is preferable. Use that meaning if your language has a separate word for it.

#### Acts 9:4

##### he fell upon the ground and heard

Possible meanings are that 1) "Saul threw himself to the ground and heard" or 2) "the light caused Saul to fall to the ground, and he heard" or 3) "Saul fell to the ground the way one who faints falls, and he heard"

##### why are you persecuting me?

This rhetorical question communicates a rebuke to Saul. Alternate translation: "You are persecuting me!" or "Stop persecuting me!"

#### Acts 9:5

##### General Information:

Every occurrence of the word "you" here is singular.

##### Who are you, Lord?

Saul was not acknowledging that Jesus is the Lord. He uses that title because he understood that he spoke to someone of supernatural power.

#### Acts 9:6

##### but rise, enter into the city

"get up and go into the city Damascus"

##### it will be told you

This can be stated in the active form. Alternate translation: "someone will tell you"

#### Acts 9:7

##### stood speechless, hearing the voice, but seeing no one

This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "stood speechless. They heard the voice, but they did not see anyone"

##### but seeing no one

"but they saw no one" or "but they did not see anyone." Apparently only Saul experienced the light.

#### Acts 9:8

##### when he opened his eyes

This implies that he had closed his eyes because the light was too bright.

##### he could see nothing

"he could not see anything." Saul was blind.

#### Acts 9:9

##### was without sight

"was blind" or "could not see anything"

##### he neither ate nor drank

It is not stated whether he chose not to eat or drink as a form of worship, or if he had no appetite because he was too distressed from his situation. It is preferable not to specify the reason.

#### Acts 9:10

##### General Information:

The story of Saul continues, and Luke introduces another man named Ananias. This is not the same Ananias who died earlier in Acts [Acts 5:3]

##### Now there was

This introduces Ananias as a new character.

##### He said

"Ananias said"

#### Acts 9:11

##### go to the street which is called Straight

"go to Straight Street"

##### house of Judas

This Judas was not the disciple who had betrayed Jesus. This Judas was owner of a house in Damascus where Saul was staying.

##### a man from Tarsus named Saul

"a man from the city of Tarsus named Saul" or "Saul of Tarsus"

#### Acts 9:12

##### laying his hands on him

This was a symbol of giving a spiritual blessing to Saul.

##### he might see again

"he might regain his ability to see"

#### Acts 9:13

##### your holy people in Jerusalem

Here "holy people" refers to Christians. Alternate translation: "the people in Jerusalem who believe in you"

#### Acts 9:14

##### authority ... to put in bonds everyone here

It is implied that the extent of the power and authority granted Saul was limited to the Jewish people at this point in time.

##### put in bonds

Putting someone in bonds is a metonym for arresting that person. Alternate translation: "arrest"

##### calls upon your name

Here "your name" refers to Jesus.

#### Acts 9:15

##### he is a chosen instrument of mine

"chosen instrument" refers to something that is set apart for service. Alternate translation: "I have chosen him to serve me"

##### to carry my name

This is an expression for identifying or speaking out for Jesus. Alternate translation: "in order that he might speak about me"

#### Acts 9:16

##### for the cause of my name

This is an expression meaning "for telling people about me."

#### Acts 9:17

##### General Information:

The word "you" here is singular and refers to Saul.

##### Connecting Statement:

Ananias goes to the house where Saul is staying. After Saul is healed, the story shifts from Ananias back to Saul.

##### So Ananias departed, and entered into the house

It may be helpful to state that Ananias went to the house before he entered into it. Alternate translation: "So Ananias went, and after he found the house where Saul was, he entered it"

##### Laying his hands on him

Ananias put his hands on Saul. This was a symbol of giving a blessing to Saul.

##### so that you might receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that you might see again and that the Holy Spirit might fill you"

#### Acts 9:18

##### something like scales fell

"something that appeared like fish scales fell"

##### he received his sight

"he was able to see again"

##### he arose and was baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he got up and Ananias baptized him"

#### Acts 9:19

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 9:20

##### General Information:

Here the first "he" refers to Saul. The second "he" refers to Jesus, the Son of God.

##### Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

#### Acts 9:21

##### General Information:

Here "him" and "He" refer to Saul.

##### All who heard him

The word "All" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "Those who heard him" or "Many who heard him"

##### Is not this the man who destroyed those in Jerusalem who called on this name?

This is a rhetorical and negative question that emphasizes that Saul was indeed the man who had persecuted the believers. Alternate translation: "This is the man who destroyed those in Jerusalem who called on this name Jesus!"

##### this name

Here "name" refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "the name of Jesus"

#### Acts 9:22

##### causing distress among the Jews

They were distressed in the sense that they could not find a way to refute Saul's arguments that Jesus was the Christ.

#### Acts 9:23

##### General Information:

The word "him" in this section refers to Saul.

##### the Jews

This refers to the leaders of the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

#### Acts 9:24

##### But their plan became known to Saul

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But someone told their plan to Saul" or "But Saul learned about their plan"

##### They watched the gates

This city had a wall surrounding it. People could normally only enter and exit the city through the gates.

#### Acts 9:25

##### his disciples

people who believed Saul's message about Jesus and were following his teaching

##### let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket

"used ropes to lower him in a large basket through an opening in the wall"

#### Acts 9:26

##### General Information:

Here the words "he" and "him" refer to Saul.

##### but they were all afraid of him

Here "they were all" is a generalization, but it is possible that it refers to every person. Alternate translation: "but they were afraid of him"

#### Acts 9:27

##### General Information:

Here "him" refers to Saul and "he" refers to Barnabas.

##### had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus

This is a way of saying he preached or taught the gospel message of Jesus Christ without fear. Alternate translation: "had openly preached the message about Jesus"

#### Acts 9:28

##### He was with them, going in and out around Jerusalem

Here the word "He" refers to Saul, and the word "them" probably refers to the apostles and other disciples in Jerusalem. This is an idiom meaning that Paul was able to associate freely with the believers in Jerusalem.

##### in the name of the Lord Jesus

Possible meanings are 1) this simply refers to the Lord Jesus and tells who Paul spoke about. Alternate translation: "about the Lord Jesus" or 2) "name" is a metonym for authority. Alternate translation: "under the authority of the Lord Jesus" or "with the authority that the Lord Jesus gave him"

#### Acts 9:29

##### debated with the Grecian Jews

Saul tried to reason with the Jews who spoke Greek.

#### Acts 9:30

##### the brothers

Here the words "the brothers" refer to the believers in Jerusalem.

##### brought him down to Caesarea

The phrase "brought him down" is used here because Caesarea is lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

##### sent him away to Tarsus

Caesarea was a seaport. They brothers probably sent Saul to Tarsus by ship.

#### Acts 9:31

##### General Information:

Verse 31 is a statement that gives an update on the church's growth.

##### the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria

This is the first use of the singular "church" to refer to more than one local congregation. Here it refers to all the believers in all the groups throughout Israel.

##### had peace

"lived peacefully." This means the persecution that started with the murder of Stephen was finished.

##### was built up

The agent was either God or the Holy Spirit. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God helped them grow" or "the Holy Spirit built them up"

##### walking in the fear of the Lord

"Walking" here is a metaphor for "living." Alternate translation: "living in obedience to the Lord" or "continuing to honor the Lord"

##### in the comfort of the Holy Spirit

"with the Holy Spirit strengthening and encouraging them"

#### Acts 9:32

##### Connecting Statement:

Here the story shifts from Saul to a new part of the story about Peter.

##### Now it came about

This phrase is used to mark a new part of the story.

##### throughout the whole region

This is an generalization for Peter's visiting the believers in many places in the region of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria.

##### he came down

The phrase "came down" is used here because Lydda is lower in elevation than the other places where he was traveling.

##### Lydda

Lydda is a city located about 18 kilometers southeast of Joppa. This city is called Lod in the Old Testament and in modern Israel.

#### Acts 9:33

##### There he found a certain man

Peter was not intentionally searching for a paralyzed person, but happened upon him. Alternate translation: "There Peter met a man"

##### a certain man named Aeneas

This introduces Aeneas as a new character in the story.

##### who had been in his bed ... was paralyzed

This is background information about Aeneas.

##### paralyzed

This means he was unable to walk. He probably was unable to move any part of his body below his waist.

#### Acts 9:34

##### make your bed

"roll up your mat"

#### Acts 9:35

##### everyone who lived in Lydda and in Sharon

This is a generalization referring to many of the people there. Alternate translation: "those who lived in Lydda and in Sharon" or "many people who lived in Lydda and Sharon"

##### in Lydda and in Sharon

The city of Lydda was located in the Plain of Sharon.

##### saw the man

It may be helpful to state that they saw that he was healed. Alternate translation: "saw the man whom Peter had healed"

##### and they turned to the Lord

Here "turned to the Lord" is a metaphor for starting to obey the Lord. Alternate translation: "and they repented of their sins and started obeying the Lord"

#### Acts 9:36

##### General Information:

Verses 36 and 37 give background information about the woman named Tabitha.

##### Connecting Statement:

Luke continues the story with a new event about Peter.

##### Now there was

This introduces a new part in the story.

##### Tabitha (which is translated "Dorcas"). This woman

Tabitha is her name in the Aramaic language, and Dorcas is her name in the Greek language. Both names mean "gazelle." Alternate translation: "Tabitha, which in the Greek language was Dorcas. This woman"

##### was full of good works and merciful deeds

"doing many good things and performed merciful deeds"

#### Acts 9:37

##### General Information:

Verses 36 and 37 give background information about the woman named Tabitha.

##### It came about in those days

This refers to the time when Peter was in Joppa. This can be stated. Alternate translation: "It came about while Peter was nearby"

##### washed her

This was washing to prepare for her burial.

##### they laid her in an upper room

This was a temporary display of the body during the funeral process.

#### Acts 9:38

##### they sent two men to him

"the disciples sent two men to Peter"

#### Acts 9:39

##### to the upper room

"to the upstairs room where Dorcas' body was lying"

##### all the widows

It is possible that all the widows of the town were there since it was not a large town.

##### widows

women whose husbands had died and therefore needed help

##### while she had been with them

"while she was still alive with the disciples"

#### Acts 9:40

##### put them all out of the room

"told them all to leave the room." Peter had everyone leave so he could be alone to pray for Tabitha.

#### Acts 9:41

##### gave her his hand and raised her up

Peter took hold of her hand and helped her to sit up in the bed and then stand up on the floor.

##### God's holy people and the widows

The widows were possibly also believers but are mentioned specifically because Tabitha was so important to them.

#### Acts 9:42

##### Connecting Statement:

The story of Tabitha ends in verse 42. Verse 43 tells us what happens to Peter after the story ends.

##### This matter became known throughout all Joppa

This refers to the miracle of Peter's raising Tabitha from the dead. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People throughout all Joppa heard about this matter"

##### believed on the Lord

"believed in the gospel of the Lord Jesus"

#### Acts 9:43

##### Connecting Statement:

The story of Tabitha ends in verse 42. Verse 43 tells us what happens to Peter after the story ends.

##### It happened that

"It came about that." This introduces the beginning of the next event in the story.

##### Simon, a tanner

"a man named Simon who made leather from animal skins"

## Chapter 10

# Acts 10 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Unclean

The Jews believed that they could become unclean in God's sight if they visited or ate food with a Gentile. This was because the Pharisees had made a law against it because they wanted to keep people from eating foods that the law of Moses said were unclean. The law of Moses did say that some foods were unclean, but it did not say that God's people could not visit or eat with Gentiles. (See: clean and lawofmoses)

#### Baptism and the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit "fell on" those who were listening to Peter. This showed the Jewish believers that Gentiles could receive the word of God and receive the Holy Spirit just as the Jewish believers had. After that, the Gentiles were baptized.

## Links:

* [Acts 10:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 good 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” (ἔκστασις/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 10:1

##### General Information:

The writer begins to give background information about Cornelius.

##### Connecting Statement:

This is the beginning of the part of the story about Cornelius.

##### Now there was a certain man

This was a way of introducing a new person to this part of the historical account.

##### in the city of Caesarea, Cornelius by name, a centurion of what was called the Italian Company of Soldiers

"from Caesarea whose name was Cornelius. He was an officer in charge of 60 soldiers from the Italian Company of Soldiers, in the Roman army"

#### Acts 10:2

##### General Information:

The writer finishes giving background information about Cornelius.

##### a devout man

a man who wanted to do what God expected of him

##### feared God

worshiped God with deep respect and awe

##### prayed to God constantly

The word "constantly" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "prayed to God often" or "he prayed to God regularly"

#### Acts 10:3

##### the ninth hour

"three o'clock in the afternoon." This was the normal afternoon prayer time for Jews.

##### he clearly saw

"Cornelius clearly saw"

#### Acts 10:4

##### Your prayers and your alms have gone up ... into God's presence

It is implied that his gifts and prayers had been accepted by God. Alternate translation: "God is pleased by your prayers and alms. They have gone up ... to him"

#### Acts 10:5

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 10:6

##### a tanner

a person who makes leather from animal skins

#### Acts 10:7

##### When the angel who spoke to him had left

"When Cornelius' vision of the angel had ended."

##### a devout soldier

a soldier who wanted to do what God expected of him. See how you translated "devout" in [Acts 10:2](./02.md).

#### Acts 10:8

##### told them all that had happened

Cornelius explained his vision to his two servants and to one of his soldiers.

##### sent them to Joppa

"sent two of his two servants and the one soldier to Joppa."

#### Acts 10:9

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Cornelius' two servants and the soldier under Cornelius' command (Acts 10:7).

##### Connecting Statement:

The story shifts away from Cornelius to tell us what God is doing with to Peter.

##### about the sixth hour

"around noon"

##### up upon the housetop

The roofs of the houses were flat, and people often did many different activities on them.

#### Acts 10:10

##### while the people were cooking some food

"before the people finished cooking the food"

##### a trance came on him

This metaphor means that Peter went into the trance without expecting it or desiring it. Alternate translation: "he went into a trance"

##### trance

Peter saw things in his mind, not with his physical eyes.

#### Acts 10:11

##### he saw the sky open

This was the beginning of Peter's vision. It can be a new sentence.

##### something like a large sheet ... four corners

The container holding the animals had the appearance of a large square piece of cloth.

##### let down by its four corners

"with its four corners suspended" or "with its four corners higher than the rest of it"

#### Acts 10:12

##### things that crawled on the earth

snakes and insects, as opposed to "four-footed animals"

#### Acts 10:13

##### a voice spoke to him

The person speaking is not specified. The "voice" was probably God, although it could possibly have been an angel from God.

#### Acts 10:14

##### Not so

"I will not do that"

##### I have never eaten anything that was defiled and unclean

It is implied that some of the "four-footed animals and things that crawled on the earth, and birds of the sky"

#### Acts 10:15

##### What God has made clean, you must not call defiled

This refers to the animals in the sheet.

##### What God has made clean

If God is the speaker, he is referring to himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "What I, God, have made clean"

#### Acts 10:16

##### This happened three times

Possible meanings are 1) Peter heard the words "What God has made clean, you must not call defiled" three times or 2) a total of three times the sheet came down from heaven and Peter heard and responded to the voice. It would be best to translate without adding information here.

#### Acts 10:17

##### Peter was very confused

This means that Peter was having difficulty understanding what the vision meant.

##### behold

The word "behold" here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows, in this case, the two men standing at the gate.

##### stood before the gate

"stood before the gate to the house." It is implied that this house had a wall with a gate one would use to enter the property.

##### after they had asked their way to the house

This happened before they arrived at the house. This could be stated earlier in the verse, as the UDB does.

#### Acts 10:18

##### They called out

Cornelius' men remained outside the gate while asking about Peter.

#### Acts 10:19

##### thinking about the vision

"wondering about the meaning of the vision"

##### the Spirit

"the Holy Spirit"

##### Behold, three

"Pay attention, because what I am about to say is both true and important: three"

##### three men are looking for you

Some ancient texts have a different number of men.

#### Acts 10:20

##### go down

"go down from the roof of the house"

##### Do not hesitate to go with them

It would be natural for Peter not to want to go with them, because they were strangers and they were Gentiles.

#### Acts 10:21

##### I am he whom you are seeking

"I am the man you are looking for"

#### Acts 10:22

##### General Information:

The word "They" here refer to the two servants and the soldier from Cornelius (Acts 10:7).

##### A centurion named Cornelius ... listen to a message from you

This can be divided into several sentences and stated in active form as the UDB does.

##### fears God

worships God with deep respect and awe

##### all the nation of the Jews

This number of people is exaggerated with the word "all" to emphasize how widely this was known among the Jews.

#### Acts 10:23

##### General Information:

The word "them" here refer to the two servants and the soldier from Cornelius (Acts 10:7).

##### So Peter invited them to come in and stay with him

The journey to Caesarea was too long for them to begin that afternoon.

##### stay with him

"be his guests"

##### some of the brothers from Joppa

This refers to believers who lived in Joppa.

#### Acts 10:24

##### On the following day

This was the next day after they left Joppa. The journey to Caesarea took longer than one day.

##### Cornelius was waiting for them

"Cornelius expected them"

#### Acts 10:25

##### when Peter entered

"when Peter entered the house"

##### fell down at his feet to worship him

"he knelt down and put his face close to Peter's feet." He did this to honor Peter.

##### fell down

He purposely did this to show that he was worshiping.

#### Acts 10:26

##### Stand up! I too am a man

Peter was rebuking Cornelius mildly for worshiping Peter. Alternate translation: "Do not worship me! I am only a man, as you are"

#### Acts 10:27

##### General Information:

The word "him" here refers to Cornelius, and "he" refers to Peter.

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter addresses the people who are gathered in Cornelius' house.

##### many people gathered together

"many Gentile people gathered together." It is implied that these people Cornelius had invited were Gentiles.

#### Acts 10:28

##### General Information:

Here the words "You" and "yourselves" include Cornelius as well as the Gentiles who were present and so are plural.

##### it is not lawful for a Jewish man

"it is forbidden for a Jewish man." This refers to the Jewish religious law.

##### a foreigner

people who are not Jews

#### Acts 10:29

##### General Information:

Here both instances of "you" include Cornelius as well as the Gentiles who were present and so are plural.

#### Acts 10:30

##### General Information:

In verses 31 and 32 Cornelius quotes what the angel had said to him when he appeared to him at the ninth hour. The words "you" and "your" are all singular. The word "we" here does not include Peter.

##### Connecting Statement:

Cornelius responds to Peter's question.

##### Four days ago

Cornelius is referring to the day before the third night before he is speaking to Peter. Biblical culture counts the current day, so the day before three nights ago is "four days ago." Current Western culture does not count the current day, so many Western translations read, "three days ago."

##### praying

Some ancient authorities say "fasting and praying" instead of simply "praying."

##### at the ninth hour

The normal afternoon time that the Jews pray to God.

#### Acts 10:31

##### your prayer has been heard by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has heard your prayer"

##### reminded God about you

"brought you to God's attention." This does not imply that God had forgotten.

#### Acts 10:32

##### call to you a man named Simon who is called Peter

"tell Simon who is also called Peter to come to you"

#### Acts 10:33

##### at once

"right away"

##### You are kind to have come

This expression is a polite way of thanking Peter for coming. Alternate translation: "I certainly thank you for coming"

##### we are all here

This refers to Cornelius and his family but not to Peter, so this is exclusive.

##### present in the sight of God

"present with God"

##### that you have been instructed by the Lord to say

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the Lord has told you to say"

#### Acts 10:34

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter begins speaking to everyone in the house of Cornelius.

##### opened his mouth

"began to speak"

##### Truly

This means that what he is about to say is especially important to know.

##### God is not partial

"God does not favor certain people"

#### Acts 10:35

##### anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him

"he accepts anyone who fears him and does what is right"

##### to him

to God

##### fears

worships with deep respect and awe

#### Acts 10:36

##### General Information:

All instances of "he" here refers to God.

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter continues to talk to Cornelius and his guests.

##### who is Lord of all

Here "all" means "all people."

#### Acts 10:37

##### throughout all Judea

The word "all" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "throughout Judea" or "in many places in Judea"

##### after the baptism that John announced

"after John preached to the people to repent and then baptized them"

#### Acts 10:38

##### the events ... and with power

This long sentence, which begins in verse 36, can be shortened into several sentences as in the UDB.

##### God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power

The Holy Spirit and God's power are spoken of as if they are something that can be poured out onto a person.

##### all who were oppressed by the devil

The word "all" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "those who were oppressed by the devil" or "many people who were oppressed by the devil"

##### God was with him

The idiom "was with him" means "was helping him."

#### Acts 10:39

##### General Information:

The word "We" refer to Peter and the apostles and believers who were with Jesus when he was on earth, not to his hearers. The word "him" here refers to Jesus.

##### in the country of the Jews

This refers mainly to Judea at that time.

##### hanging him on a tree

This is another expression that refers to crucifixion. Alternate translation: "nailing him to a wooden cross"

#### Acts 10:40

##### General Information:

Both instances of "him" refer to Jesus.

##### God raised him up

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "God caused him to live again"

##### the third day

"the third day after he died"

##### caused him to be seen

"permitted many people to see him after he was raised from the dead"

#### Acts 10:41

##### General Information:

The word "us" refers to Peter and the apostles and believers who were with Jesus when he was on earth, not to his hearers. The words "him" and "he" here refers to Jesus.

##### from the dead

From among all those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld.

#### Acts 10:42

##### General Information:

Here the word "us" includes Peter and believers. It excludes his audience.

##### that this is the one who has been chosen by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God chose this Jesus"

##### the living and the dead

This refers to people who are still living and people who have died. Alternate translation: "the people who are alive and the people who are dead"

#### Acts 10:43

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes his speech to everyone in the house of Cornelius, which he began in [Acts 10:34](./34.md).

##### About him all the prophets testify

"All the prophets testify about Jesus"

##### everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins

This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will forgive the sins of everyone who believes in Jesus because of what Jesus has done"

##### through his name

Here "his name" refers to the actions of Jesus. His name means God who saves. Alternate translation: "through what Jesus has done for them"

#### Acts 10:44

##### the Holy Spirit fell

Here the word "fell" indicates that the event happened suddenly. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit suddenly came"

##### all of those who were listening

Here "all" refers to all the Gentiles at the house who were listening to Peter.

#### Acts 10:45

##### the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out also

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God also poured out the Holy Spirit"

##### the gift of the Holy Spirit

That is, the Holy Spirit himself was the gift.

##### poured out

The Holy Spirit is spoken of as if he were something that could be poured out upon people. It implies a generous amount. Alternate translation: "generously given"

##### the gift

"the free gift"

##### also on the Gentiles

Here "also" refers to the fact that the Holy Spirit had already been given to the Jewish believers.

#### Acts 10:46

##### Gentiles speaking in tongues and exalting God

These were known spoken languages that caused the Jews to acknowledge that the Gentiles were indeed praising God.

##### speaking in tongues

Here "tongues" is a metonym for languages. Alternate translation: "speaking in other languages"

#### Acts 10:47

##### Can anyone keep water from these people so they should not be baptized, these people who have received ... we?

Peter uses this question to convince the Jewish Christians that the Gentile believers should be baptized. Alternate translation: "No one should keep water from these people! We should baptize them because they have received ... we!"

#### Acts 10:48

##### General Information:

The words "he" and "him" refer to Peter.

##### Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Cornelius.

##### he commanded them to be baptized

It is implied that the Jewish Christians were the ones who would baptize them. Alternate translation: "Peter commanded the Gentile believers to allow the Jewish Christians to baptize them" or "Peter commanded the Jewish Christians to baptize them"

##### be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ

Here "in the name of Jesus Christ" expresses that the reason for their baptism was that they believed in Jesus. Alternate translation: "be baptized as believers in Jesus Christ"

## Chapter 11

# Acts 11 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### "The Gentiles also had received the word of God"

Almost all of the first believers were Jewish. Luke writes in this chapter that many Gentiles started to believe in Jesus. They believed that the message about Jesus was true and so began to "receive the word of God." Some of the believers in Jerusalem did not believe that Gentiles could truly follow Jesus, so Peter went to them and told them what had happened to him and how he had seen the Gentiles receive the Word of God and receive the Holy Spirit.

## Links:

* [Acts 11:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 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 (Prophesy) ; 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 (Prophesy) ; 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 11:1

##### General Information:

This is the beginning of a new event in the story.

##### Now

This marks a new part of the story.

##### the brothers

The phrase "brothers" here refers to the believers in Judea.

##### who were in Judea

"who were in the province of Judea"

##### had received the word of God

This expression refers to the fact that the Gentiles believed the gospel message about Jesus. Alternate translation: "believed the message of God about Jesus"

#### Acts 11:2

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter arrives in Jerusalem and begins talking to the Jews there.

##### had come up to Jerusalem

Jerusalem was higher than almost any other place in Israel, so it was normal for Israelites to speak of coming up to Jerusalem and going down from it.

##### they who belonged to the circumcision group

This is a reference to some of the Jews who believed that every believer must be circumcised. Alternate translation: "some Jewish believers in Jerusalem who wanted all followers of Christ to be circumcised"

#### Acts 11:3

##### uncircumcised men

The phrase "uncircumcised men" refers to Gentiles.

##### ate with them

It was against Jewish tradition for Jews to eat with Gentiles.

#### Acts 11:4

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter responds to the Jews by telling them about his vision and about what had happened at Cornelius' house.

##### Peter started to explain

Peter did not criticize the Jewish believers but reacted in a friendly, explanatory manner.

##### in detail

"exactly what happened"

#### Acts 11:5

##### in a trance I saw

Peter saw something that was only in his mind. It was not physical. His mind was not working in its usual way. See how you translated similar words in Acts 10:10.

##### like a large sheet

The container holding the animals had the appearance of a large square piece of cloth. See how you translated this in Acts 10:11.

##### by its four corners

"with its four corners suspended" or "with its four corners higher than the rest of it." See how you translated this in Acts 10:11.

#### Acts 11:6

##### four-legged animals of earth

From Peter's response, it can be implied that the law of Moses commanded the Jews not to eat some of them. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Acts 10:12]

##### wild beasts

This probably refer to the animals people do not or cannot tame or control.

##### things that crawled

snakes and insects, as opposed to "four-footed animals." See how you translated this in Acts 10:12.

#### Acts 11:7

##### I heard a voice

The person speaking is not specified. The "voice" was probably God, although it could possibly have been an angel from God. See how you translated "a voice" in [Acts 10:13]

#### Acts 11:8

##### Not so

"I will not do that." See how you translated this in Acts 10:14.

##### nothing unholy or unclean has ever entered into my mouth

Apparently the animals in the sheet were animals which the Jewish law in the Old Testament forbade the Jews to eat. This can be said in a positive way. Alternate translation: "I have eaten only meat from holy and clean animals"

##### unclean

In the Old Testament Jewish law, a person became ritually "unclean" in various ways, such as eating certain forbidden animals.

#### Acts 11:9

##### What God has made clean, you must not call defiled

This refers to the animals in the sheet.

#### Acts 11:10

##### This happened three times

Possible meanings are 1) Peter heard the words "What God has made clean, you must not call defiled" three times or 2) a total of three times the sheet came down from heaven and Peter heard and responded to the voice. It would be best to translate without adding information here. See how you translated "This happened three times" in Acts 10:16.

#### Acts 11:11

##### General Information:

Here "we" refers to Peter and the believers in Joppa. It does not include his current audience in Jerusalem.

##### Behold

This word alerts us to the new people in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.

##### right away

"immediately" or "at that exact moment"

##### they had been sent

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone had sent them"

#### Acts 11:12

##### that I should make no distinction regarding them

"that I should not be concerned that they were Gentiles"

##### These six brothers went with me

"These six brothers went with me to Caesarea"

##### These six brothers

"These six Jewish believers"

##### into the man's house

This refers to the house of Cornelius.

#### Acts 11:13

##### Simon who is called Peter

"Simon who is also called Peter." See how you translated the same phrase in Acts 10:32.

#### Acts 11:14

##### all your household

This refers to all the people in the household. Alternate translation: "everyone who lives in your house"

#### Acts 11:15

##### General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to Peter, the other apostles, and all of the Jewish believers who had received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

##### As I began to speak to them, the Holy Spirit came on them

This implies that Peter had not finished speaking but had intended to say more.

##### the Holy Spirit came on them, just as on us in the beginning

Peter leaves out some things to keep the story short. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit came on the Gentile believers, just as he came on the Jewish believers at Pentecost"

##### in the beginning

Peter is referring to the day of Pentecost.

#### Acts 11:16

##### you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will baptize you with the Holy Spirit"

#### Acts 11:17

##### General Information:

The word "them" refers to Cornelius and his Gentile guests and household. The word "us" refers to the speaker and his hearers and so is inclusive.

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes his speech (which he began in Acts 11:4) to the Jews about his vision and about what had happened at the house of Cornelius.

##### Then if God gave to them ... who was I, that I could oppose God?

Peter uses this question to emphasize that he was only obeying God. Alternate translation: "Since God gave to them ... I decided that I could not oppose God!"

##### the same gift

Peter refers to the gift of the Holy Spirit.

#### Acts 11:18

##### General Information:

The word "they" refers to the Jewish believers to whom Peter spoke.

##### they said nothing in response

"they did not argue with Peter"

##### God has given repentance for life to the Gentiles also

"God has given repentance that leads to life to the Gentiles also." Here "life" refers to eternal life. The abstract nouns "repentance" and "life" can be translated as the verbs "repent" and "live." Alternate translation: "God has also given the Gentiles the ability to repent and then live eternally" or "God has allowed the Gentiles also to repent and live eternally"

#### Acts 11:19

##### Connecting Statement:

Luke tells about what happened to the believers who fled after the stoning of Stephen.

##### Now

This introduces the new part of the story.

##### those who had been scattered by the persecution that arose over Stephen spread

The Jews began persecuting Jesus's followers because Stephen had said and done things that the Jews did not like. Because of this persecution, many of Jesus's followers left Jerusalem and went to many different places.

##### spread

"went in many different directions"

##### who had been scattered by the persecution that arose over Stephen spread

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom the Jews had been persecuting because of Stephen, and so had left Jerusalem, spread"

##### the persecution that arose over Stephen

the persecution that happened because of what Stephen had said and done

##### only to Jews

The believers thought God's message was for the Jewish people, and not for the Gentiles.

#### Acts 11:20

##### spoke also to Greeks

These Greek-speaking people were Gentiles, not Jews. Alternate translation: "also spoke to Gentiles who spoke Greek"

#### Acts 11:21

##### The hand of the Lord was with them

God's hand signifies his powerful help. Alternate translation: "God was powerfully enabling those believers to preach effectively"

##### turned to the Lord

Here "turned to the Lord" is a metaphor for starting to obey the Lord. Alternate translation: "they repented of their sins and began to obey the Lord"

#### Acts 11:22

##### General Information:

The word "he" refers to Barnabas. The word "they" refers to the believers of the church at Jerusalem.

##### ears of the church

Here "ears" refers to the believers' hearing about the event. Alternate translation: "the believers in the church"

#### Acts 11:23

##### General Information:

The word "he" refers to Barnabas. The word "them" refers to the believers he met on his way to Antioch.

##### saw the grace of God

"saw how God acted kindly toward the believers"

##### he encouraged them

"he kept on encouraging them"

##### to remain with the Lord

"to remain faithful to the Lord" or "to continue to trust in the Lord"

##### with purpose of heart

Here the "heart" refers to a person's will and desire. Alternate translation: "with all their will" or "with complete commitment"

#### Acts 11:24

##### General Information:

The word "he" refers to Barnabas.

##### full of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit controlled Barnabas as he obeyed the Holy Spirit.

##### many people were added to the Lord

Here "added" means they came to believe the same thing as the others. Alternate translation: "many more people also believed in the Lord"

#### Acts 11:25

##### out to Tarsus

"out to the city of Tarsus"

#### Acts 11:26

##### General Information:

The word "he" refers to Barnabas and "him" to Saul.

##### When he found him

It probably took some time and effort for Barnabas to locate Saul.

##### It came about

This begins a new event in the story.

##### they gathered together with the church

"Barnabas and Saul gathered together with the church"

##### The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch

This implies that it was other people who called the believers Christians. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People in Antioch were the fist to call the disciples Christians"

#### Acts 11:27

##### General Information:

Here Luke tells background information about a prophecy in Antioch.

##### Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story-line.

##### came down from Jerusalem to Antioch

Jerusalem was higher in elevation than Antioch, so it was normal for Israelites to speak of going up to Jerusalem or going down from it.

#### Acts 11:28

##### Agabus by name

"whose name was Agabus"

##### indicated by the Spirit

"the Holy Spirit enabled him to prophesy"

##### a great famine would occur

"a great shortage of food would happen"

##### over all the world

This was a generalization referring to the part of the world that they were interested in. Alternate translation: "all over the inhabited world" or "throughout the Roman Empire"

##### in the days of Claudius

Luke's audience would know that Claudius was the emperor of Rome at that time. Alternate translation: "when Claudius was the Roman emperor"

#### Acts 11:29

##### So

This word means marks an event that happened because of something else that happened first. In this case, they sent money because of Agabus' prophesy or the famine.

##### as each one was able

The richer people sent more; the poorer people sent less.

##### the brothers in Judea

"the believers in Judea"

#### Acts 11:30

##### General Information:

The words "They" and "they" refer to the believers in the church in Antioch (Acts 11:27).

##### by the hand of Barnabas and Saul

The hand is a synecdoche for the action of the whole person. Alternate translation: "by having Barnabas and Saul take it to them"

## Chapter 12

# Acts 12 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Chapter 12 tells what happened to King Herod while Barnabas was bringing Saul back from Tarsus and they were delivering money from Antioch Jerusalem (11:25-30). He killed many of the leaders of the church, and he put Peter in prison. After God helped Peter escape the prison, Herod killed the prison guards, and then God killed Herod. In the last verse of the chapter, Luke tells how Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch.

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### Personification

The "word of God" is spoken of as if it were a living thing that could grow and become many.

## Links:

* [Acts 12:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 12:1

##### General Information:

This is background information about Herod's killing James.

##### Connecting Statement:

This begins the new persecution, first of James's death and then of Peter's imprisonment and then release.

##### Now

This begins a new part of the story.

##### about that time

This refers to the time of the famine.

##### laid hands on

This means Herod had the believers arrested. See how you translated this in [Acts 4:3]

##### some who belonged to the church

Only James and Peter are specified, which implies that these were leaders of the church in Jerusalem.

##### so that he might mistreat them

"in order to cause the believers to suffer"

#### Acts 12:2

##### He killed James ... with the sword

This tells the manner in which James was killed.

##### He killed James

Possible meanings are 1) Herod himself killed James or 2) Herod ordered someone to kill James. Alternate translation: "Herod gave the order and they killed James"

#### Acts 12:3

##### General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Herod (Acts 12:1).

##### After he saw that this pleased the Jews

"When Herod realized that putting James to death pleased the Jewish leaders"

##### pleased the Jews

"made the Jewish leaders happy"

##### That was

"Herod did this" or "This happened"

##### the days of unleavened bread

This refers to the Jewish religious feast time during the Passover season. Alternate translation: "the festival when the Jewish people ate bread without yeast"

#### Acts 12:4

##### four squads of soldiers

"four groups of soldiers." Each squad had four soldiers that guarded Peter, one group at a time. The groups divided the 24 hour day into four shifts. Each time two soldiers would have been at his side and the other two soldiers by the entrance.

##### he was intending to bring him to the people

"Herod planned to judge Peter in the presence of the people" or "Herod planned to judge Peter before the Jewish people"

#### Acts 12:5

##### So Peter was kept in the prison

This implies that the soldiers continually guarded Peter in prison. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "So the soldiers guarded Peter in the prison"

##### prayer was made earnestly to God for him by those in the church

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the group of believers in Jerusalem earnestly prayed to God for him"

##### earnestly

continuously and with dedication

#### Acts 12:6

##### On the night before Herod was going to bring him out for trial

That Herod planned to execute him can be clarified. Alternate translation: "The happened on the day before Herod was going to bring Peter out from prison to put him on trial and then to execute him"

##### bound with two chains

"tied with two chains" or "fastened with two chains." Each chain would have been attached to one of the two guards who stayed beside Peter.

##### were keeping watch over the prison

"were guarding the prison doors"

#### Acts 12:7

##### General Information:

The words "him" and "his" refer to Peter.

##### Behold

This word alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

##### by him

"next to him" or "beside him"

##### in the prison cell

"in the prison room"

##### He struck Peter

"The angel tapped Peter" or "The angel poked Peter." Peter was evidently sleeping deeply enough that this was required to wake him.

##### his chains fell off his hands

The angel caused the chains to fall from Peter without touching them.

#### Acts 12:8

##### Gird yourself and put on your sandals

Peter had probably loosened his belt and taken off his sandals so he could go to sleep. The angel was telling Peter to get ready to leave the cell.

##### Peter did so

"Peter did what the angel told him to do" or "Peter obeyed"

#### Acts 12:9

##### General Information:

Here the word "He" refers to Peter. The words "they" and "They" refer to Peter and the angel.

##### He did not know

"He did not understand"

##### what was done by the angel was real

This could be changed to active form. Alternate translation: "the actions of the angel were real" or "what the angel did truly happened"

#### Acts 12:10

##### After they had passed by the first guard and the second

It is implied that the soldiers were not able to see Peter and the angel as they walked by. Alternate translation: "The first and second guards did not see them as they passed by, and then"

##### had passed by

"had walked by"

##### and the second

The word "guard" is understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "and the second guard"

##### they came to the iron gate

"Peter and the angel arrived at the iron gate"

##### that led into the city

"that opened to the city" or "that went from the prison to the city"

##### it opened for them by itself

Here "by itself" means neither Peter nor the angel opened it. Alternate translation: "the gate swung open for them" or "the gate opened itself for them"

##### went down a street

"walked along a street"

##### left him right away

"left Peter suddenly" or "suddenly disappeared"

#### Acts 12:11

##### When Peter came to himself

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "When Peter became fully awake and alert" or "When Peter became aware that what had happened was real"

##### delivered me out of the hand of Herod

Here "the hand of Herod" refers to "Herod's hold" or "Herod's plans." Alternate translation: "brought me from the harm Herod had planned for me"

##### delivered me

"rescued me"

##### everything the Jewish people were expecting

Here "the people of the Jews" probably referred mainly to the Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "all that the Jewish leaders thought would happen to me"

#### Acts 12:12

##### realized this

He became aware that God had rescued him.

##### John, also called Mark

John was also called Mark. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "John, whom people also called Mark"

#### Acts 12:13

##### he knocked

"Peter knocked." Tapping on the door was a normal Jewish custom to let others know you wish to visit them. You may need to change this to fit your culture.

##### at the door of the gate

"at the outer door" or "at the door of the entrance from the street to the courtyard"

##### came to answer

"came to the gate to ask who was knocking"

#### Acts 12:14

##### General Information:

Here all instances of "she" refer to the servant girl Rhoda ([Acts 12:13](./13.md)).

##### out of joy

"because she was so joyful" or "being overly excited"

##### failed to open the gate

"did not open the gate" or "forgot to open the gate"

##### came running into the room

You may prefer to say "went running into the room in the house"

##### she reported

"she told them" or "she said"

#### Acts 12:15

##### General Information:

Here the words "she" and "her" both refer to the servant girl Rhoda ([Acts 10:13](./13.md)), and the words "they" and "They" refer to the people who were inside praying ([Acts 10:12](./12.md)).

##### You are insane

The people not only did not believe her, but rebuked her by saying she was crazy. Alternate translation: "You are crazy"

##### she insisted that it was so

"she insisted that what she said was true"

##### They said

"They answered"

##### It is his angel

"What you have seen is Peter's angel." Some Jews believed in guardian angels and may have thought that Peter's angel had come to them.

#### Acts 12:16

##### General Information:

Here both instances of "they" refer to the people in the house. The word "him" refers to Peter.

##### But Peter continued knocking

The word "continued" means that Peter kept knocking the entire time those inside were talking.

#### Acts 12:17

##### General Information:

Here both instances of "them" refer to the people who were inside praying (Acts 12:12).

##### Report these things

"Tell these things"

##### the brothers

"the other believers"

#### Acts 12:18

##### Now

This word is used to mark a break in the story-line. Time has passed; it is now the next day.

##### when it became day

"in the morning"

##### there was no small disturbance among the soldiers over what had happened to Peter

This phrase is used to emphasize what really happened. This could be said in a positive way. Alternate translation: "there was a great disturbance among the soldiers over what had happened to Peter"

##### there was no small disturbance among the soldiers over what had happened to Peter

The abstract noun "disturbance" can be expressed with the words "disturbed" or "upset." Alternate translation: "the soldiers were very disturbed about what had happened to Peter"

#### Acts 12:19

##### General Information:

The word "him" here refers to Peter, and both instances of "he" refers to Herod.

##### After Herod had searched for him and could not find him

"After Herod searched for Peter and could not find him"

##### After Herod had searched for him

Possible meanings are that 1) "Herod" here is a metonym for his soldiers, that is, when Herod heard Peter was missing, he sent other soldiers to search the prison, or 2) when Herod heard Peter was missing, he went himself to search the prison.

##### he questioned the guards and ordered them to be put to death

It was the normal punishment for the Roman government to kill the guards if their prisoner escaped.

##### Then Herod went down

The phrase "went down" is used here because Caesarea is lower in elevation than Judea.

#### Acts 12:20

##### Connecting Statement:

Luke continues with another event in Herod's life.

##### Now

This word is used here to mark the next event in the story.

##### very angry

This phrase translates a word that speaks of a person being so angry that he is ready to kill other people.

##### They went to him with one purpose

Here the word "They" is a generalization. It is unlikely that all the people of Tyre and Sidon went to Herod. Alternate translation: "Men representing the people of Tyre and Sidon went with one purpose to talk with Herod"

##### with one purpose

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

##### after persuading Blastus

"after these men persuaded Blastus"

##### Blastus

a man's name

##### the king's assistant

This phrase refers to a person who assists the king in his personal life, not necessarily his work as ruler.

##### they asked for peace

"these men requested peace"

##### their country received its food from the king's country

They probably purchased this food. Alternate translation: "the people of Tyre and Sidon bought all their food from the people that Herod ruled"

##### received its food

It is implied that Herod restricted this supply of food because he was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon.

#### Acts 12:21

##### On a set day

This was probably the day on which Herod agreed to meet with the representatives. Alternate translation: "On the day when Herod agreed to meet them"

##### royal clothing

expensive clothing that would demonstrate he was the king

##### sat on a throne

This was where Herod formally addressed people who came to see him.

#### Acts 12:22

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 12:23

##### Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Herod.

##### Immediately an angel

"Right away an angel" or "While the people were praising Herod, an angel"

##### struck him

"afflicted Herod" or "caused Herod to become very ill"

##### he did not give God the glory

Herod let those people worship him instead of telling them to worship God.

##### he was eaten by worms and died

Here "worms" refers to worms inside the body, probably intestinal worms. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "worms ate Herod's insides and he died"

#### Acts 12:24

##### the word of God increased and multiplied

The word of God is spoken of as if it were a living plant able to grow and reproduce. Alternate translation: "the message of God spread to more places and more people believed in him"

##### the word of God

"the message God sent about Jesus"

#### Acts 12:25

##### Connecting Statement:

This verse continues the history from [11:30]

##### completed their mission

This refers back to when they brought money from the believers at Antioch in [Acts 11:29-30]

##### they returned from Jerusalem

They went back to Antioch from Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch"

## Chapter 13

# Acts 13 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 13:33-35 and 13:41.

This chapter is where the second half of the Book of Acts begins. Luke writes more about Paul than about Peter. Luke also writes about the believers preaching to the Gentiles rather than to the Jews.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### A light for the Gentiles

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. The Jews considered all Gentiles as walking in darkness, but Paul and Barnabas spoke of telling the Gentiles about Jesus as if they were going to bring them physical light. (See: and righteous)

## Links:

* [Acts 13:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 (Prophesy); 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 Cyrus

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 (Prophesy)

#### 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; 69; 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”(ὁρίζω/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; Atone (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 13:1

##### General Information:

Verse 1 gives background information about the people in the church at Antioch.

##### Connecting Statement:

Luke begins to tell about the mission trips on which the church at Antioch send Barnabas and Saul.

##### Now in the church in Antioch

"At that time in the church at Antioch"

##### Simeon ... Niger ... Lucius ... Manaen

These are men's names.

##### foster brother of Herod the tetrarch

Manaen was probably Herod's playmate or close friend while they were growing up.

#### Acts 13:2

##### General Information:

The words "they" refers to the other three leaders ([Acts 13:1](./01.md)), not including Barnabas and Saul, and it could include other believers.

##### Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul

"Appoint Barnabas and Saul to serve me"

##### I have called them

The verb here means that God chose them to do this work.

#### Acts 13:3

##### General Information:

The words "they" and "their" refer to the other three leaders ([Acts 13:1](./01.md)), not including Barnabas and Saul, and they could include other believers.

##### laid their hands on these men

"laid their hands on these men whom God had set apart for his service." This act showed that the leaders agreed that the Holy Spirit had called Barnabas and Saul to do this work.

##### sent them off

"sent those men off" or "sent those men off to do the work the Holy Spirit told them to do"

#### Acts 13:4

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Barnabas and Saul.

##### So

This word marks an event that happened because of a previous event. In this case, the previous event is Barnabas and Saul being set apart by the Holy Spirit.

##### went down

The phrase "went down" is used here because Seleucia is lower in elevation than Antioch.

##### Seleucia

a city by the sea

#### Acts 13:5

##### General Information:

Here the words "They" and "their" refer to Barnabas and Saul.

##### city of Salamis

The city of Salamis was on Cyprus Island.

##### proclaimed the word of God

"Word of God" here is a synecdoche for "message of God." Alternate translation: "proclaimed the message of God"

##### synagogues of the Jews

Possible meanings are that 1) there were multiple Jewish synagogues in the city of Salamis where Barnabas and Saul preached or 2) Barnabas and Saul started at the synagogue at Salamis and continued to preach in all the synagogues they found while they traveled around the Island of Cyprus.

##### They also had John for an assistant

"John went with them and was helping them"

##### John

John Mark

##### assistant

"helper"

#### Acts 13:6

##### General Information:

Here both instances of "they" refers to Paul, Silas, and John Mark.

##### the whole island

They crossed from one side of the island to the other and shared the gospel message in each town they passed through.

##### Paphos

a major city on Cyprus island where the proconsul lived

##### they found

Here "found" means they came upon him without looking for him. Alternate translation: "they met" or "they came upon"

##### a certain magician

"a particular person who practiced witchcraft" or "a person who practiced supernatural magic arts"

##### whose name was Bar-Jesus

"Bar-Jesus" means "Son of Jesus." There is no relation between this man and Jesus Christ. "Jesus" was a common name at that time.

#### Acts 13:7

##### General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Sergius Paulus, the proconsul.

##### associated with

"was often with" or "was often in the company of"

##### proconsul

This was a governor in charge of a Roman province. Alternate translation: "governor"

##### who was an intelligent man

This is background information about Sergius Paulus.

##### This man summoned

The phrase "this man" refers to Sergius Paulus.

##### he sought to hear the word of God

"he wanted to hear the word of God"

#### Acts 13:8

##### General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to Paul, Silas, and John Mark, and "he" refers to Elymas.

##### Elymas "the magician"

This was Bar Jesus, who was also called "the magician"

##### that is how his name is translated

"that was what he was called in Greek"

##### opposed them; he tried to turn

"resisted them by trying to turn" or "attempted to stop them by trying to turn"

##### tried to turn the proconsul away from the faith

Here "to turn ... away from" is a metaphor for convincing someone to not do something. Alternate translation: "attempted to persuade the governor not to believe the gospel message"

#### Acts 13:9

##### General Information:

The word "him" refers to the magician Elymas, who is also called Bar Jesus ([Acts 13:6-8](./06.md)).

##### Connecting Statement:

While on the island of Paphos, Paul begins to talk to Elymas.

##### Saul, who is also called Paul

"Saul" was his Jewish name, and "Paul" was his Roman name. Since he was speaking to a Roman official, he used his Roman name. Alternate translation: "Saul, who now called himself Paul"

##### stared at him intensely

"looked at him intensely"

#### Acts 13:10

##### You son of the devil

Paul is saying the man is acting like the devil. Alternate translation: "You are like the devil" or "You act like the devil"

##### you are full of all kinds of deceit and wickedness

"you are always intent in causing others to believe what is not true using falsehood and are always doing what is wrong"

##### wickedness

The word in this context means laziness and lack of diligence in following God's law.

##### You are an enemy of every kind of righteousness

Paul is grouping Elymas with the devil. Just as the devil is an enemy of God and is against righteousness, so also was Elymas.

##### You will never stop twisting the straight paths of the Lord, will you?

Paul uses this question to rebuke Elymas for opposing God. Alternate translation: "You are always saying that the truth about the Lord God is false!"

##### the straight paths of the Lord

Here "straight paths" refer to the ways that are true. Alternate translation: "the true ways of the Lord"

#### Acts 13:11

##### General Information:

The words "you," "he," and "him" refer to Elymas the magician.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes speaking to Elymas.

##### the hand of the Lord is upon you

Here "hand' represents the power of God and "upon you" implies punishment. Alternate translation: "The Lord will punish you"

##### you will become blind

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will make you blind"

##### You will not see the sun

Elymas will be so completely blind that he not even be able to see the sun. Alternate translation: "You will not even see the sun"

##### for a while

"for a period of time" or "until the time appointed by God"

##### there fell on Elymas a mist and darkness

"the eyes of Elymas became blurry and then dark" or "Elymas started seeing unclearly and then he could not see anything"

##### he started going around

"Elymas wandered around" or "Elymas started feeling around and"

#### Acts 13:12

##### General Information:

Both instances of "he" refer to the proconsul.

##### the proconsul

A proconsul was a governor in charge of a Roman province. Alternate translation: "the governor"

##### he believed

"he believed in Jesus"

##### he was astonished at the teaching about the Lord

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the teaching about the Lord amazed him"

#### Acts 13:13

##### General Information:

Verse 13 gives background information about this part of the story. "Paul and his friends" were Barnabas and John Mark

##### Connecting Statement:

This is a new part of the story about Paul in Antioch in Pisidia.

##### Now

This marks the beginning of a new part of the story.

##### set sail from Paphos

"traveled by sailboat from Paphos"

##### came to Perga in Pamphylia

"arrived in Perga, which is in Pamphylia"

##### But John left them

"But John Mark left Paul and Barnabas"

#### Acts 13:14

##### General Information:

Verse 14 continues to give background information about this part of the story. The word "they" refers to Paul and his friends Barnabas and John Mark

##### Antioch of Pisidia

"the city of Antioch in the district of Pisidia." This is different from the city of Antioch that Paul and Barnabas left at the beginning of the chapter.

#### Acts 13:15

##### General Information:

The word "them" refers to Paul and his friends Barnabas and John Mark.

##### After the reading of the law and the prophets

The "law and the prophets" refer to parts of the Jewish scriptures which were read. Alternate translation: "After someone read from the books of the law and the writings of the prophets"

##### sent them a message, saying

"told someone to say to them" or "asked someone to say to them"

##### Brothers

The term "brothers" is here used by the people in the synagogue to refer to Paul and Barnabas as fellow Jews.

##### if you have any message of encouragement

"if you want to say anything to encourage us"

##### encouragement

or "exhortation"

##### say it

"please speak it" or "please tell it to us"

#### Acts 13:16

##### General Information:

The words "he" and "his" refer to Paul. The word "you" is plural.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul begins his speech to those in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch. He begins by talking about things that happened in Israel's history.

##### motioned with his hand

This could refer to moving his hands as a signal that he was ready to speak. Alternate translation: "moved his hands to show that he was about to speak"

##### you who fear God

This refers to Gentiles who had converted to Judaism. "you who are not Israelites but who worship God"

##### God, listen

"God, listen to me" or "God, listen to what I am about to say"

#### Acts 13:17

##### General Information:

The word "our" includes the speaker and the hears and so is plural. The words "they" and "them" refer to "the people." The word "he" refers to God.

##### The God of this people Israel

"The God the people of Israel worship"

##### our fathers

"our ancestors"

##### exalted the people

"caused the people to become very numerous"

##### with an uplifted arm

This refers to God's mighty power. Alternate translation: "with great power"

##### out of it

"out from the land of Egypt"

#### Acts 13:18

##### he put up with them

"God tolerated the people of Israel." This means "he tolerated them." Some versions have have a different word that means "he took care of them." Alternate translation: "God endured their disobedience" or "God took care of them"

#### Acts 13:19

##### General Information:

Here both instances of "he" refer to God. The word "our" refers to Paul and his audience.

##### nations

Here the word "nations" refers to different people groups and not to lands with geographical boundaries.

#### Acts 13:20

##### General Information:

The word "them" refers to the people of Israel.

##### took place over 450 years

"took more than 450 years to accomplish"

##### until Samuel the prophet

"until the time of the prophet Samuel"

#### Acts 13:21

king for forty years

"their king for forty years" or "king, and he reigned over them for forty years"

#### Acts 13:22

##### General Information:

The quotation here is from Old Testament.

##### removed him from the kingship

This expression means God caused Saul to stop being king. Alternate translation: "rejected Saul from being king"

##### he raised up David to be their king

"God chose David to be their king"

##### their king

"the king of Israel" or "the king over the Israelites"

##### It was about David that God testified, saying,

"God gave this testimony about David:"

##### I have found David ... to be

"I have observed that David ... is"

##### a man after my heart

This expression means "a man who wants what I want."

#### Acts 13:23

##### From this man's descendants

"From David's descendants." This is placed at the beginning of the sentence to emphasize that the savior had to be one of David's descendants (Acts 13:22).

##### has brought to Israel

This refers to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "gave to the people of Israel"

##### as he promised to do

"just as God promised he would do"

#### Acts 13:24

##### a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel

You can translate the word "repentance" as the verb "repent." Alternate translation: "that all the people of Israel who wanted to repent of their sin needed to have him baptize them"

#### Acts 13:25

##### Who do you think I am?

John asked this question to compel the people to think about who he was. Alternate translation: "Think about who I am."

##### I am not the one

John was referring to the Messiah, whom they were expecting to come. Alternate translation: "I am not the Messiah"

##### But listen

This emphasizes the importance of what he will say next.

##### one is coming after me

This also refers to the Messiah. Alternate translation: "The Messiah will soon come"

##### the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie

"I am not worthy even to untie his sandals." The Messiah is so much greater than John that he did not even feel worthy do the lowest job for him.

#### Acts 13:26

##### General Information:

Here the word "us" includes Paul and his entire audience in the synagogue.

##### Brothers, children of the offspring of Abraham, and those among you who fear God

Possible meanings are 1) this is a list with three items, and Paul is addressing three groups of people together, or 2) the phrases "children of the offspring of Abraham" and "those among you who fear God" refer to the two groups of people whom Paul addresses as "brothers."

##### those among you who fear God

These words refer specifically to Gentiles who worshiped in the synagogue and obeyed much of the law of Moses but had not been circumcised.

##### the message about this salvation has been sent

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has sent the message about this salvation"

##### about this salvation

The word "salvation" can be translated with the verb "save." Alternate translation: "that God will save people"

#### Acts 13:27

##### General Information:

The word "they" and "their" refers to the Jews who lived in Jerusalem.

##### did not recognize him

"did not realize that this man Jesus was the one whom God had sent to save them"

##### the voices of the prophets

Here the word "voices" is a metonym for the message that the voices spoke. Alternate translation: "the writings of the prophets" or "the messages of the prophets"

##### that are read

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which someone reads"

#### Acts 13:28

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the Jewish people and their religious leaders in Jerusalem. The word him" here refers to Jesus.

##### they found no reason for the death penalty

It is implied that they found no legal reason for Jesus to be put to death. Alternate translation: "they found no legal reason for Jesus to be killed" or "they found no legal reason to kill Jesus"

#### Acts 13:29

##### When they had completed all the things that were written about him

"When they did to Jesus all the things that the prophets said would happen to him"

##### they took him down from the tree

It may be helpful to explicitly say Jesus died before this happened. Alternate translation: "they killed Jesus and then took him down from the cross after he died"

##### from the tree

"from the cross." This was another way people at that time referred to the cross.

#### Acts 13:30

##### But God raised him

"But" indicates a strong contrast between what the people did and what God did.

##### raised him from the dead

"raised him from among those who were dead." To be with "the dead" means to be dead. To raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "caused him to live again"

##### from the dead

From among all those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To raise someone from among them speaks of making that person alive again.

#### Acts 13:31

##### He was seen for many days by those who had come up with him ... Jerusalem

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The disciples who traveled with Jesus ... Jeruaslem saw him for many days"

##### many days

We know from other writings that this period was 40 days. Translate "many days" with a term that would be appropriate for that length of time.

##### are now his witnesses to the people

"are now testifying to the people about Jesus" or "are now telling the people about Jesus"

#### Acts 13:32

##### So

This word marks an event that happened because of previous event. In this case, the previous event is God's raising Jesus from the dead.

##### our fathers

"our ancestors." Paul is still speaking to the Jews and Gentile converts in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia. These were the physical ancestors of the Jews, and the spiritual ancestors of the converts.

#### Acts 13:33

##### God has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus

You may need to rearrange the parts of this sentence, which begins in verse 32. "God has fulfilled for us, their children, the promise that he made to our fathers, by raising up Jesus"

##### for us, their children

"for us, who are the children of our ancestors." Paul is still speaking to the Jews and Gentile converts in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia. These ancestors were the physical ancestors of the Jews and the spiritual ancestors of the converts.

##### by raising up Jesus

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "by making Jesus alive again"

##### As it is written in the second Psalm

"This is what was written in the second Psalm"

##### the second Psalm

"Psalm 2"

##### Son ... Father

These are important titles that describe the relationship between Jesus and God.

#### Acts 13:34

##### General Information:

The quotation is from the prophet Isaiah.

##### As to his raising him from the dead, never to return to decay, he has spoken in this way:

"God has spoken in this way that he raised him up from the dead never to return to decay" "God used these words to say that he raised him up from the dead, and so he would never die again"

##### the dead

All those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

##### never to return to decay

"and he will never die again"

##### he has spoken in this way

God has said using these words

##### sure blessings

"certain blessings"

#### Acts 13:35

##### This is why he also says in another Psalm

Paul's audience would have understood that this Psalm refers to the Messiah. Alternate translation: "In another Psalm of David, he also says about the Messiah"

##### he also says

"David also says." David is the author of Psalm 16, from which this quotation is taken.

##### You will not allow your Holy One to see decay

The phrase "see decay" is a metonym for "decay." Alternate translation: "You will not allow the body of your Holy One to rot"

##### You will not allow

David is speaking to God here.

#### Acts 13:36

##### in his own generation

"during his lifetime"

##### served the purpose of God

"did what God wanted him to do" or "did what pleased God"

##### he fell asleep

This was a polite way to refer to death. Alternate translation: "he died"

##### was laid with his fathers

"was buried with his ancestors who had died"

##### his body experienced decay

The phrase "his body experienced decay" is a less direct way of saying "his body decayed" or "his body rotted."

#### Acts 13:37

##### he whom God raised up experienced

"Jesus, whom God raised up, experienced"

##### God raised up

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "God caused to live again"

##### experienced no decay

The phrase "experienced no decay" is a way to say "his body did not decay." Alternate translation: "did not rot"

#### Acts 13:38

##### let it be known to you

"know this" or "this is important for you to know"

##### brothers

Paul uses this term because they are his fellow Jews and followers of Judaism. They are not Christian believers at this point. Alternate translation: "my fellow Israelites and other friends"

##### that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that we proclaim to you that your sins can be forgiven through Jesus"

##### forgiveness of sins

The abstract noun "forgiveness" can be translated with the verb "to forgive." Alternate translation: "that God can forgive your sins"

#### Acts 13:39

##### But by this man God makes righteous everyone who believes

"But God makes righteous everyone who believes in this man"

##### by this man

Here "this man" refers to Jesus Christ.

#### Acts 13:40

##### be careful

It is implied that the thing they should be careful about is Paul's message. Alternate translation: "give close attention to the things I have said"

##### that the thing the prophets spoke about

"so that what the prophets spoke about"

#### Acts 13:41

##### General Information:

In his message to the people in the synagogue, Paul quotes the prophet Habakkuk. Here the word "I" refers to God.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes his speech in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch, which he began in Acts 13:16.

##### you despisers

"you who feel contempt" or "you who ridicule"

##### be astonished

"be amazed" or "be shocked"

##### then perish

"then die"

##### am doing a work

"am doing something" or "am doing a great deed"

##### in your days

"during your lifetime"

##### days, a work that

"days. I am doing something that"

##### even if someone announces it to you

"even if someone tells you about it"

#### Acts 13:42

##### As Paul and Barnabas left

"When Paul and Barnabas were leaving"

##### begged them that they might

"begged them to"

##### these same words

Here "words" refers to the message that Paul had spoken. Alternate translation: "this same message"

#### Acts 13:43

##### When the synagogue meeting ended

Possible meanings are 1) this restates "As Paul and Barnabas left" in verse 42 or 2) Paul and Barnabas left the meeting before it ended and this occurs later.

##### proselytes

These were non-Jewish people who converted to Judaism.

##### who were speaking to them and persuading them

"and Paul and Barnabas were speaking to those people and persuading them"

##### to continue in the grace of God

It is implied that they believed Paul's message that Jesus was the Messiah. Alternate translation: "to continue to trust that God kindly forgives people's sins because of what Jesus did"

#### Acts 13:44

##### almost the whole city was

The "city" represents the people in the city. This phrase is used to show the great response to the Lord's word. Alternate translation: "almost all the people of the city were"

##### to hear the word of the Lord

It is implied that Paul and Barnabas were the ones who spoke the word of the Lord. Alternate translation: "to hear Paul and Barnabas speak about the Lord Jesus"

#### Acts 13:45

##### General Information:

Here the word "him" refers to Paul.

##### the Jews

Here "Jews" represents Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

##### were filled with envy

Here envy is spoken of as if it were something that could fill up a person. Alternate translation: "became very envious"

##### spoke against

"contradicted" or "opposed"

##### the things that were said by Paul

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things that Paul said"

#### Acts 13:46

##### General Information:

Both instances of the word "you" and the word "yourselves" refer to the Jews to whom Paul is speaking and so are plural. The word "we" refers to Paul and Barnabas but not the crowd that was present.

##### It was necessary

This implies that God had commanded this be done. Alternate translation: "God commanded"

##### that the word of God should first be spoken to you

This can be stated in active form. "Word of God" here is a synecdoche for "message from God." Alternate translation: "that we speak the message from God to you first" or "that we speak the word of God to you first"

##### Seeing you push it away from yourselves

Their rejection of the word of God is spoken of as if it were something they pushed away. Alternate translation: "Since you reject the word of God"

##### consider yourselves unworthy of eternal life

"have shown that you are not worthy of eternal life" or "act as though you are not worthy of eternal life"

##### we will turn to the Gentiles

"we will go to the Gentiles." Paul and Barnabas were implying that they would preach to the Gentiles. Alternate translation: "we will leave you and start preaching to the Gentiles"

#### Acts 13:47

##### General Information:

The word "us" refers to Paul and Barnabas but not the crowd that was present, so it is exclusive.

##### commanded us ... 'I have appointed you as a light ... you should bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth.'

Both instances of "you" here are singular, but when Paul said, "... the Lord commanded us," Paul was applying those singular words to both himself and Barnabas. The words in the quotation were originally spoken by God through Isaiah the prophet to God's servant. By quoting Isaiah's prophecy, Paul was saying that he and Barnabas were doing what God commanded his servant to do. Paul was not saying that God had spoken directly to him.

##### as a light

Here the truth about Jesus that Paul was preaching is spoken of as if it were a light that allowed people to see.

##### bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth

The abstract word "salvation" can be translated with the verb "to save." The phrase "uttermost parts" refers to everywhere. Alternate translation: "tell people everywhere in the world that I want to save them"

#### Acts 13:48

##### glorified the word of the Lord

Here "word" refers to the message about Jesus that they had believed. Alternate translation: "glorified God for the message about the Lord Jesus" or "glorified the Lord for his word"

##### As many as were appointed to eternal life

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "As many as God appointed to eternal life" or "All the people whom God had chosen to receive eternal life"

#### Acts 13:49

##### The word of the Lord was spread out through the whole region

Here "word" refers to the message about Jesus. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Those who believed spread the word of the Lord through the whole region" or "Those who believed went everywhere in the region and told others about the message of Jesus"

#### Acts 13:50

##### the Jews

This probably refers to the leaders of the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

##### incited ... women ... and ... men

This means that they spoke to the women and men and caused them to be angry and act violently. Alternate translation: "stirred up ... women ... and ... men"

##### the devout women of high standing

The word "devout" means that these women feared God. The phrase "of high standing" means that people respected these women.

##### the leading men

"the most important men"

##### They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas

The word "they" here probably refers to the devout women and the leading men. They listened to the Jews and then convinced the rest of the people in the city to persecute the apostles and throw them out.

##### threw them out of their region

"made Paul and Barnabas leave their land"

##### region

Here this word refers to the area that the people of the city considered their own, not to land within an official government border.

#### Acts 13:51

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Paul and Barnabas.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul and Barnabas end their time in Antioch of Pisidia and go to Iconium.

##### shook off the dust from their feet against them

This was a symbolic act to indicate to the unbelieving people that God had rejected them and would punish them.

#### Acts 13:52

##### the disciples

This probably refers to the new believers in the Antioch of Pisidia that Paul and Silas just left.

## Chapter 14

# Acts 14 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### "The message of his grace"

The message of Jesus is the message that God will show grace to those who believe in Jesus. (See: grace and believe)

#### Zeus and Hermes

The Gentiles in the Roman Empire worshiped many different false gods who do not really exist. Paul and Barnabas told them to believe in the "living God." (See: falsegod)

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### "We must enter into the kingdom of God through many sufferings."

Jesus told his followers before he died that everyone who followed him would suffer persecution. Paul is saying the same thing using different words.

## Links:

* [Acts 14:1](../../act/14/01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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”(κακόω/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”(παρατίθημι/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 14:1

##### General Information:

The story of Paul and Barnabas in Iconium continues.

##### It came about in Iconium that

Possible meanings here are 1) "It happened in Iconium that" or 2) "In Iconium, as usual,"

##### spoke in such a way

"spoke so powerfully." It may be helpful to state that they spoke the message about Jesus. Alternate translation: "spoke the message about Jesus so powerfully"

#### Acts 14:2

##### the Jews who were disobedient

This refers to the portion of the Jews who did not believe the message about Jesus.

##### stirred up the minds of the Gentiles

Causing the Gentiles to become angry is spoken of as if calm waters were disturbed.

##### the minds of the Gentiles

Here the word "minds" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "the Gentiles"

##### the brothers

Here "brothers" refers to Paul and Barnabas and the new believers.

#### Acts 14:3

##### General Information:

Here the words "he," "his," and "He" refer to the Lord.

##### So they stayed there

"Nevertheless they stayed there." Paul and Barnabas stayed in Iconium to help the many people who had believed in Acts 14:1. "So" could be omitted if it adds confusion to the text.

##### gave evidence about the message of his grace

"demonstrated that the message about his grace was true"

##### about the message of his grace

"about the message of the Lord's grace"

##### by granting signs and wonders to be done by the hands of Paul and Barnabas

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "by enabling Paul and Barnabas to perform signs and wonders"

##### by the hands of Paul and Barnabas

Here "hands" refers to the will and effort of these two men as guided by the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "by the ministry of Paul and Barnabas"

#### Acts 14:4

##### the people of the city were divided

"the people of the city disagreed with each other"

##### sided with the Jews

"supported the Jews" or "agreed with the Jews." The first group mentioned did not agree with the message about grace.

##### with the apostles

The second group mentioned agreed with the message about grace. It may be helpful to restate the verb. Alternate translation: "sided with the apostles"

##### the apostles

Luke refers to Paul and Barnabas. Here "apostle" might be used in the general sense of "ones sent out."

#### Acts 14:5

##### made an attempt to mistreat them

Here the words "made an attempt" implies that they were not able to mistreat Paul and Barnabas before Paul and Barnabas left the city.

##### to mistreat them and to stone

"to beat Paul and Barnabas and to kill them by throwing stones at them"

#### Acts 14:6

##### Lycaonia

A district in Asia Minor

##### Lystra

A city in Asia Minor south of Iconium and north of Derbe

##### Derbe

A city in Asia Minor south of Iconium and Lystra

#### Acts 14:7

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Paul and Barnabas.

##### where they continued to proclaim the gospel

"where Paul and Barnabas continued to proclaim the good news"

#### Acts 14:8

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul and Barnabas are now in Lystra.

##### a certain man sat

This introduces a new person in the story.

##### powerless in his feet

"unable to move his legs" or "unable to walk on his feet"

##### a cripple from his mother's womb

"having been born as a cripple"

##### cripple

person who cannot walk

#### Acts 14:9

##### General Information:

The words "him" and "he" refer to the crippled man.

##### Paul fixed his eyes on him

"Paul looked straight at him"

##### had faith to be made well

The abstract noun "faith" can be translated with the verb "believe." Alternate translation: "believed that Jesus could heal him" or "believed that Jesus could make him well"

#### Acts 14:10

##### he said to him

"Paul said to the crippled man"

##### jumped up

"leaped in the air." This implies that his legs were completely healed.

#### Acts 14:11

##### what Paul had done

This refers to Paul's healing the crippled man.

##### they raised their voice

To raise the voice is to speak loudly. Alternate translation: "they spoke loudly"

##### in the dialect of Lycaonia

"in their own Lycaonian language." The people of Lystra spoke Lycaonian and also Greek.

##### The gods have become like men and come down to us

These people believed that the gods needed to change their appearance in order to look like men. A large number of people believed Paul and Barnabas were their pagan gods who had come down from heaven. Alternate translation: "The gods have come down from heaven to us in the form of men"

#### Acts 14:12

##### Zeus

The people of Iconium probably considered Zeus to be the king over all the other pagan gods.

##### Hermes

The people of Iconium probably considered Hermes to be the pagan god who brought messages to people from Zeus and the other gods.

#### Acts 14:13

##### The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought

It may be helpful to include additional information about the priest. Alternate translation: "There was a temple just outside the city where the people worshiped Zeus. When the priest who served in the temple heard what Paul and Barnabas had done, he brought"

##### oxen and wreaths

The oxen were to be sacrificed. The wreaths were either to crown Paul and Barnabas, or put on the oxen for sacrifice.

##### to the gates

The gates of the cities were often used as a meeting place for the people of the city.

##### wanted to offer sacrifice

"wanted to offer sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas as the gods Zeus and Hermes"

#### Acts 14:14

##### the apostles, Barnabas and Paul

Luke is here probably using "apostle" in the general sense of "one sent out."

##### they tore their clothing

This was a symbolic action to show that they were deeply distressed and upset that the crowd wanted to sacrifice to them.

#### Acts 14:15

##### Men, why are you doing these things?

Barnabas and Paul are rebuking the people for trying to sacrifice to them. Alternate translation: "Men, you must not do these things!"

##### doing these things

"worshiping us"

##### We also are human beings, with the same nature as you

By this statement, Barnabas and Paul are saying that they are not gods. Alternate translation: "We are just human beings like you. We are not gods"

##### with the same nature as you

"like you in every way"

##### telling you good news that you should turn

"telling you good news: you can turn" or "giving you good advice to turn." That is, the good news is that they can and should turn.

##### turn from these useless things to the living God

Here "turn from ... to" is a metaphor meaning to stop doing one thing and start doing something else. Alternate translation: "stop worshiping these false gods that cannot help you, and instead begin to worship the living God"

##### the living God

"the God who truly exists" or "the God who lives"

#### Acts 14:16

##### In the past ages

"In previous times" or "Until now"

##### to walk in their own ways

Walking in a way, or walking on a path, is a metaphor for living one's life. Alternate translation: "to live their lives the way they wanted to" or "to do whatever they wanted to do"

#### Acts 14:17

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul and Barnabas continue speaking to the crowd outside the city of Lystra (Acts 14:8).

##### he did not leave himself without witness

This could also be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "God has certainly left a witness" or "God has indeed testified"

##### in that

"as shown by the fact that"

##### filling your hearts with food and gladness

Here "your hearts" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "giving you enough to eat and things about which to be happy"

#### Acts 14:18

##### Paul and Barnabas barely kept the multitudes from sacrificing to them

Paul and Barnabas stopped the multitude from sacrificing to them, but it was difficult to do so.

##### barely kept

"had difficulty preventing"

#### Acts 14:19

##### General Information:

Here the words "he" and "him" refer to Paul.

##### persuaded the crowds

It my be helpful to explicitly state what they persuaded the crowd to do. Alternate translation: "persuaded the people not to believe Paul and Barnabas, and to turn against them"

##### the crowds

This may not be the same group as the "multitude" in the previous verse. Some time had passed, and this might be a different group that gathered together.

##### thinking that he was dead

"because they thought that he was already dead"

#### Acts 14:20

##### the disciples

These were new believers in the city of Lystra.

##### entered the city

"Paul re-entered Lystra with the believers"

##### he went to Derbe with Barnabas

"Paul and Barnabas went to the city of Derbe"

#### Acts 14:21

##### General Information:

Here both instances of "they" refer to Paul and Barnabas.

##### that city

"Derbe" (Acts 14:20)

#### Acts 14:22

##### General Information:

Here the words "they" refer to Paul and Barnabas, and the word "We" includes Paul, Barnabas, and the disciples. The word "them" refers to the disciples.

##### They kept strengthening the souls of the disciples

Here "souls" refers to the disciples. This emphasizes their inner thoughts and beliefs. Alternate translation: "Paul and Barnabas urged the believers to continue to believe the message about Jesus" or "Paul and Barnabas urged the believers to continue to grow strong in their relationship with Jesus

##### encouraging them to continue in the faith

"encouraging the believers to keep trusting in Jesus"

##### saying, "We must enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations."

Some version translate this as an indirect quote, "saying that we must enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations." The word "we" here includes Luke and the readers.

##### We must enter

Paul includes his hearers, so the word "we" is inclusive.

#### Acts 14:23

##### they had appointed for them

"Paul and Barnabas had appointed for the believers"

##### they entrusted them ... they had believed

Possible meanings are 1) "Paul and Barnabas entrusted the elders they had appointed ... the elders had believed" or 2) "Paul and Barnabas entrusted the elders they had appointed and the other disciples ... the elders and other disciples had believed"

#### Acts 14:24

##### General Information:

The word "they" refers to Paul and Barnabas.

#### Acts 14:25

##### General Information:

Both instances of "they" refer to Paul and Barnabas.

##### had spoken the word

"Word" here is a metonym for "message of God." Alternate translation: "had spoken the message of God"

##### went down to Attalia

The phrase "went down" is used here because Attalia is lower in elevation than Perga.

#### Acts 14:26

##### where they had been committed to the grace of God

This can be stated in the active form. Alternate translation: "where believers and leaders in Antioch had committed Paul and Barnabas to the grace of God" or "where the people of Antioch prayed that God would care for and protect Paul and Barnabas"

#### Acts 14:27

##### General Information:

Here the words "they," "them," and "They" refer to Paul and Barnabas. The word "he" refers to God.

##### gathered the church together

"called the local believers to meet together"

##### he had opened a door of faith for the Gentiles

God's enabling the Gentiles to believe is spoken of as if he had opened a door that had prevented them from entering into faith. Alternate translation: "God had made it possible for the Gentiles to believe"

#### Acts 14:28

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

## Chapter 15

# Acts 15 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 15:16-17.

The meeting that Luke describes in this chapter is commonly called the "Jerusalem Council." This was a time when many church leaders got together to decide if believers needed to obey the whole law of Moses.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Brothers

In this chapter Luke begins to use the word "brothers" to refer to fellow Christians instead of fellow Jews.

#### Obeying the law of Moses

Some believers wanted the Gentiles to be circumcised because God had told Abraham and Moses that everyone who wanted to belong to him had to be circumcised and that this was "an everlasting covenant." But Paul and Barnabas had seen God give uncircumcised Gentiles the gift of the Holy Spirit, so they did not want the Gentiles to be circumcised. Both groups went to Jerusalem to have the church leaders decide what they should do.

#### "Abstain from things sacrificed to idols, blood, things strangled, and from sexual immorality"

It is possible that the church leaders decided on these laws so that Jews and Gentiles could not only live together but eat the same foods together.

## Links:

* [Acts 15:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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).

Chrisitans were persecuted (see: Acts 1014:19; 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 chrsitian 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 Chrisitans 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 (Prophesy) ; 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 Chrisitians 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 15:1

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul and Barnabas are still in Antioch when there is a dispute about the Gentiles and circumcision.

##### Some men

"Some men." You can make explicit that these men were Jews who believed in Christ.

##### came down from Judea

The phrase "came down" is used here because Judea is higher in elevation than Antioch.

##### taught the brothers

Here "brothers" stands for believers in Christ. It is implied that they were in Antioch. Alternate translation: "taught the believers at Antioch" or "were teaching the believers at Antioch"

##### Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Unless someone circumcises you according to the custom of Moses, God cannot save you" or "God will not save you from your sins unless you receive circumcision according to the law of Moses"

#### Acts 15:2

##### This brought ... into a sharp dispute and debate with them

The abstract nouns "sharp dispute" and "debate" can be stated as verbs and where the men came from can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "... had confronted and debated with the men from Judea"

##### go up to Jerusalem

Jerusalem was higher than almost any other place in Israel, so it was normal for Israelites to speak of going up to Jerusalem.

##### this question

"this issue"

#### Acts 15:3

##### General Information:

Both instances of "They" here refer to Paul, Barnabas, and certain others (Acts 15:2).

##### They therefore, being sent by the church

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Therefore the community of believers sent them from Antioch to Jerusalem"

##### passed through ... announced

The words "passed through" and "announced" indicate they spent some time in different places sharing in detail what God was doing.

##### announced the conversion of the Gentiles

The abstract noun "conversion" means the Gentiles were rejecting their false gods and believing in God. Alternate translation: "announced to the community of believers in those places that Gentiles were believing in God"

##### They brought great joy to all the brothers

Their message causing the brothers to be joyful is spoken of as if "joy" were an object that they brought to the brothers. Alternate translation: "What they said caused their fellow believers to rejoice"

##### the brothers

Here "brothers" refers to fellow believers.

#### Acts 15:4

##### General Information:

All instances of "they" and "them" here refer to Paul, Barnabas, and certain others (Acts 15:2).

##### they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the apostles, the elders, and the rest of the community of believers welcomed them"

##### with them

"through them"

#### Acts 15:5

##### General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to non-Jewish believers who were not circumcised and did not keep the Old Testament laws of God.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul and Barnabas are now in Jerusalem to meet with the apostles and elders there.

##### But certain men

Here Luke contrasts those who believe that salvation is only in Jesus to others who believe salvation is by Jesus but also believe that circumcision is required for salvation.

##### to keep the law of Moses

"to obey the law of Moses"

#### Acts 15:6

##### to consider this matter

The church leaders decided to discuss whether or not Gentiles needed to be circumcised and obey the law of Moses in order for God to save them from their sins.

#### Acts 15:7

##### General Information:

The word "them" refers to apostles and elders

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter begins to speak to the apostles and elders who met to discuss whether Gentiles had to receive circumcision and keep the law ([Acts 15:5-6](./05.md)).

##### Brothers

Peter is addressing all of the believers who are present.

##### by my mouth

Here "mouth" refers to Peter. Alternate translation: "from me" or "by me"

##### the Gentiles should hear

"the Gentiles would hear"

##### the word of the gospel

Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "the message about Jesus"

#### Acts 15:8

##### General Information:

The word "them" refers to the Gentiles, and both instances of "you" are plural.

##### who knows the heart

Here "heart" refers to the "minds" or "inner beings." Alternate translation: "who knows the people's minds" or "who knows what people think"

##### has testified to them

"has testified to the Gentiles"

##### giving them the Holy Spirit

"causing the Holy Spirit to come upon them"

#### Acts 15:9

##### General Information:

The word "he" refers to God, the word "us" refers to the speaker and the hearers, and the word "them" refers to the Gentiles.

##### made no distinction

God did not treat Jewish believers differently from Gentile believers.

##### having cleansed their hearts by faith

God's forgiving the Gentile believers' sins is spoken of as though he cleaned their hearts. Here "heart" stands for the person's inner being. Alternate translation: "forgiving their sins because they believe in Jesus"

#### Acts 15:10

##### General Information:

Peter includes his audience by his use of "our" and "we."

##### Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

##### why do you test God, that you should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

Peter uses a question with a word picture to tell the Jewish believers they should not require the non-Jewish believers to perform circumcision to be saved. Alternate translation: "Do not test God by putting a burden on the non-Jewish believers which we Jews were not able to bear!"

##### our fathers

This refers to their Jewish ancestors.

#### Acts 15:11

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes speaking to the apostles and elders.

##### But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they were

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But we believe the Lord Jesus will save us by his grace, just as he saved the non-Jewish believers"

#### Acts 15:12

##### General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to Paul and Barnabas.

##### All the multitude

"Everyone" or "The whole group" (Acts 15:6)

##### God had worked

"God had done" or "God had caused"

#### Acts 15:13

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:12).

##### Connecting Statement:

James begins to speak to the apostles and elders (Acts 15:6).

##### Brothers, listen

"Fellow believers, listen." James was probably speaking only to men.

#### Acts 15:14

##### in order to take from them a people

"so that he might choose from among them a people"

##### for his name

"for God's name." Here "name" refers to God. Alternate translation: "for himself"

#### Acts 15:15

##### Connecting Statement:

James quotes the prophet Amos from the Old Testament.

##### The words of the prophets agree

Here "words" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "What the prophets said agrees" or "The prophets agree"

##### agree with this

"confirm this truth"

##### as it is written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as they wrote" or "as the prophet Amos wrote long ago"

#### Acts 15:16

##### General Information:

Here "I" refers to God, who spoke through the words of his prophet.

##### I will build again the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down ... its ruins again

This speaks of God's again choosing one of David's descendants to rule over his people as though he were setting up a tent again after it fell down.

##### tabernacle

Here the word "tabernacle," a dwelling place, stands for David's family. The same word is used for the tent that Yahweh told Moses to construct.

#### Acts 15:17

##### the remnant of men may seek the Lord

This speaks about people wanting to obey God and learn more about him as if they were literally looking for him.

##### remnant of men

Here "men" includes males and females. Alternate translation: "remnant of people"

##### may seek the Lord

God is speaking about himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "may seek me, the Lord"

##### including all the Gentiles called by my name

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "including all the Gentiles who belong to me"

##### my name

Here "my name" stands for God.

#### Acts 15:18

##### that have been known

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that people have known"

#### Acts 15:19

##### General Information:

Here "we" includes James, the apostles, and the elders.

##### we should not trouble those of the Gentiles

You can make explicit in what way James does not want to trouble the Gentiles. Alternate translation: "we should not require the Gentiles to become circumcised and obey the laws of Moses"

##### who turn to God

A person who starts obeying God is spoken of as if the person is physically turning towards God.

#### Acts 15:20

##### they must keep away from the pollution of idols ... sexual immorality ... strangled ... blood

Sexual immorality, strangling animals, and consuming blood were often part of ceremonies to worship idols and false gods.

##### pollution of idols

This possibly refers to eating the meat of an animal that someone has sacrificed to an idol or to anything to do with idol worship.

##### from the meat of strangled animals, and from blood

God did not allow Jews to eat meat that still had the blood in it. Also, even earlier in Moses's writings in Genesis, God had forbidden the drinking of blood. Therefore, they could not eat an animal that someone strangled because the blood was not properly drained from the body of the animal.

#### Acts 15:21

##### Connecting Statement:

James finishes speaking to the apostles and elders. (See: Acts 15:2 and [Acts 15:13](./13.md))

##### Moses has been proclaimed in every city ... and he is preached in the synagogues every Sabbath

James is implying that Gentiles know how important these rules are because Jews preach them in every city where there is a synagogue. It also implies the Gentiles can go to the teachers from the synagogues to learn more about these rules.

##### Moses has been proclaimed ... he is preached

Here "Moses" represents the law of Moses, and so does "he." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The law of Moses has been proclaimed ... the law is read" or "Jews have taught the law of Moses ... they read the law"

##### in every city

The word "every" here is a generalization. Alternate translation: "in many cities"

#### Acts 15:22

##### General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to Judas and Silas.

##### Judas called Barsabbas

This is the name of a man. "Barsabbas" is a second name that people called him.

##### leaders of the brothers

The word "brothers" here refers to the people there who believed in Jesus. Alternate translation: "leaders of the believers" or "leaders of the church"

#### Acts 15:23

##### They wrote this with their hands

One or more of the apostles and elders wrote the letter and gave it to Judas and Silas so Judas and Silas could give it to the Gentile brothers.

##### From the apostles and elders, your brothers, to the Gentile brothers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings!

This is the introduction of the letter. Your language may have a way of introducing the author of the letter and to whom it is written. Alternate translation: "This letter is from your brothers, the apostles and elders. We are writing to you Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. Greetings to you" or "To our Gentile brothers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. Greetings from the apostles and elders, your brothers"

##### your brothers ... the Gentile brothers

Here the word "brothers" refers to fellow believers. By using these words, the apostles and elders assure the Gentile believers that they accept them as fellow believers.

##### Cilicia

This is the name of a province on the coast in Asia Minor north of the Island of Cyprus.

#### Acts 15:24

##### General Information:

Here all instances of "we" and "us" refer to the writers but not the readers

##### that certain men

"that some men"

##### with no orders from us

"even though we gave no orders for them to go"

##### disturbed you with words that upset your souls

Here "souls" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "taught things that have troubled you"

#### Acts 15:25

##### General Information:

Here the words "us" and "our" refer to the writers but not the readers

##### who have come to one mind

"who are now agree completely"

##### one mind

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

##### to choose men

The men they sent were Judas, who was called Barsabbas, and Silas (Acts 15:22).

#### Acts 15:26

##### men who have risked their lives

These words refer to Barnabas and Paul, not to Judas and Silas.

##### for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

Here "name" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "because they believe in our Lord Jesus Christ" or "because they serve our Lord Jesus Christ"

#### Acts 15:27

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to the writers of the letter [Acts 15:22]

##### who will report to you the same things in their own words

This phrase emphasizes that Judas and Silas will say the same things that the apostles and elders had written. Alternate translation: "who themselves will tell you the same things about which we have written"

#### Acts 15:28

##### General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the writers of the letter [Acts 15:22]

##### to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things

This speaks about laws that people need to obey as if they were objects that people carry on their shoulders.

#### Acts 15:29

##### Connecting Statement:

This concludes the letter from the Jerusalem church to the Gentile believers in Antioch.

##### from things sacrificed to idols

This means they are not allowed to eat the meat of an animal that someone sacrifices to an idol.

##### blood

This refers to drinking blood or eating meat from which the blood has not been drained.

##### things strangled

A strangled animal was killed but its blood was not drained.

##### Farewell

This announces the end of the letter. Alternate translation: "Goodbye"

#### Acts 15:30

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas leave for Antioch.

##### So they, when they were dismissed, came down to Antioch

The word "they" refers to Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas. Alternate translation: "So when the four men were dismissed, they came down to Antioch"

##### when they were dismissed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when the apostles and elders dismissed the four men" or "when the believers in Jerusalem sent them"

##### came down to Antioch

The phrase "came down" is used here because Antioch is lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

#### Acts 15:31

##### they rejoiced

"the believers in Antioch rejoiced"

##### because of the encouragement

The abstract noun "encouragement" can be expressed with the verb "encourage." Alternate translation: "because what the apostles and elders wrote encouraged them"

#### Acts 15:32

##### also prophets

Prophets were teachers authorized by God to speak for him. Alternate translation: "because they were prophets" or "who were also prophets"

##### the brothers

"the fellow believers"

##### strengthened them

Judas and Silas' helping them to depend even more on Jesus is spoken of as if they were making them physically stronger.

#### Acts 15:33

##### Connecting Statement:

Judas and Silas return to Jerusalem while Paul and Barnabas remain in Antioch.

##### After they had spent some time there

This speaks about time as if it were a commodity that a person could spend. The word "they" refers to Judas and Silas. Alternate translation: "After they stayed there for a while"

##### they were sent away in peace from the brothers

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the brothers sent Judas and Silas back in peace"

##### the brothers

This refers to the believers in Antioch.

##### to those who had sent them

"to the believers in Jerusalem who sent Judas and Silas" (Acts 15:22)

#### Acts 15:34

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 15:35

##### the word of the Lord

Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "the message about the Lord"

#### Acts 15:36

##### Let us return now

"I suggest we now return"

##### visit the brothers

"care for the brothers" or "offer to help the believers"

##### the word of the Lord

Here "word" stands for the message. Alternate translation: "the message about the Lord"

##### see how they are

"learn how they are doing." They want to learn about the current condition of the brothers and how they are holding on to God's truth.

#### Acts 15:37

##### to also take with them John, who was called Mark

"to take John, who was also called Mark"

#### Acts 15:38

##### Paul thought it was not good to take Mark

The words "not good" are used to say the opposite of good. Alternate translation: "Paul thought that taking Mark would be bad"

##### Pamphylia

This was a province in Asia Minor. See how you translated this in Acts 2:10.

##### did not go further with them in the work

"did not continue to work with them then" or "did not continue to serve with them"

#### Acts 15:39

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Barnabas and Paul.

##### Then there arose a sharp disagreement

The abstract noun "disagreement" can be stated as the verb "disagree." Alternate translation: "They strongly disagreed with each other"

#### Acts 15:40

##### after he was entrusted by the brothers to the grace of the Lord

To entrust to someone means to place the care and responsibility for someone or something to another person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "after the believers in Antioch entrusted Paul to the grace of the Lord" or "after the believers in Antioch prayed for the Lord to take care of Paul and show kindness to him"

#### Acts 15:41

##### he went

The previous sentence implies that Silas was with Paul. Alternate translation: "they went" or "Paul and Silas went" or "Paul took Silas and went"

##### went through Syria and Cilicia

These are provinces or areas in Asia Minor, near the island of Cyprus.

##### strengthening the churches

Encouraging the believers in the churches is spoken of as though Paul and Silas were making the believers physically stronger. The word "churches" refers to the groups of believers in Syria and Cilicia. Alternate translation: "encouraging the believers in the churches" or "helping the community of believers to depend even more in Jesus"

## Chapter 16

# Acts 16 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Timothy's circumcision

Paul circumcised Timothy because they were telling the message of Jesus to Jews and Gentiles. Paul wanted the Jews to know that he respected the law of Moses even though the church leaders in Jerusalem had decided that Christians did not need to be circumcised.

#### The woman who had a spirit of divination

Most people want very much to know the future, but the law of Moses said that speaking with the spirits of dead people to learn about the future is a sin. This woman seems to have been able to tell the future very well. She was a slave, and her masters made much money from her work. Paul wanted her to stop sinning, so he told the spirit to leave her. Luke does not say that she began to follow Jesus or tell us anything more about her.

## Links:

* [Acts 16:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 16:1

##### Connecting Statement:

This continues the missionary journeys of Paul with Silas. Timothy is introduced into the story and joins Paul and Silas. Verses 1 and 2 give background information about Timothy.

##### Paul also came

Here "came" can be translated as "went."

##### Derbe

This is the name of a city in Asia Minor. See how you translated it in Acts 14:6.

##### behold

The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the narrative. Your language may have a way of doing this.

##### who was a believer

The words "in Christ" are understood. Alternate translation: "who was a believer in Christ" or "who believed in Christ"

#### Acts 16:2

##### He was well spoken of by the brothers

This can be stated in active from. Alternate translation: "The brothers spoke well of him" or "Timothy had a good reputation among the brothers" or "The brothers said good things about him"

##### by the brothers

Here "brothers" refers to believers. Alternate translation: "by the believers"

#### Acts 16:3

##### wanted him ... took him ... circumcised him ... his father

"wanted Timothy ... took Timothy ... circumcised Timothy ... Timothy's father"

##### with him ... he took

"with Paul ... Paul took"

##### circumcised him

It is possible that Paul himself circumcised Timothy, but it is more likely that he had someone else circumcise Timothy.

##### because of the Jews that were in those places

"because of the Jews living in the areas where Paul and Timothy would be traveling"

##### for they all knew that his father was a Greek

Since Greek men did not have their sons circumcised, the Jews would have known Timothy was not circumcised, and they would have rejected Paul and Timothy before hearing their message about Christ.

#### Acts 16:4

##### General Information:

The word "they" here refers to Paul, Silas (Acts 15:40), and Timothy ([Acts 16:3](./03.md)).

##### the decrees to obey

"the decrees for the church members to obey" or "teh decrees for the believers to obey"

##### that were decided on by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the apostles and elders in Jerusalem had decided on"

#### Acts 16:5

##### the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the believers became stronger in their faith, and there were more and more people becoming believers every day"

##### the churches were strengthened in the faith

This speaks of helping someone to believe more confidently as if it were making them physically stronger.

#### Acts 16:6

##### Phrygia

This is a region in Asia. See how you translated this name in Acts 2:10.

##### they had been forbidden by the Holy Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit had forbidden them" or "the Holy Spirit did not permit them"

##### the word

Here "word" stands for "message." Alternate translation: "the message about Christ"

#### Acts 16:7

##### When they came

Here "came" can be translated as "went" or "arrived."

##### Mysia ... Bithynia

These are two more regions in Asia.

##### the Spirit of Jesus

"the Holy Spirit"

#### Acts 16:8

##### they came down to the city of Troas

The phrase "came down" is used here because Troas is lower in elevation than Mysia.

##### they came down

Here "came" can be translated as "went."

#### Acts 16:9

##### A vision appeared to Paul

"Paul saw a vision from God" or "Paul had a vision from God"

##### begging him

Or "inviting him."

##### Come over into Macedonia

The phrase "Come over" is used because Macedonia is across the sea from Troas.

#### Acts 16:10

##### we sought to go to Macedonia ... God had called us

Here the words "we" and "us" refer to Paul and his companions, including Luke, the author of Acts.

##### we sought to go to Macedonia

"we looked for a way to go to Macedonia" or "we prepared to go to Macedonia"

#### Acts 16:11

##### Samothrace ... Neapolis

These are coastal cities near Phillipi in Macedonia.

##### we came to Neapolis

Here "came to" can be translated as "went to" or "arrived at."

#### Acts 16:12

##### a Roman colony

This is a city outside of Italy where many people who came from Rome lived. The people there had the same rights and freedoms as people who lived in cities in Italy. They could govern themselves and they did not have to pay taxes.

#### Acts 16:13

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul and his companions are now in Philippi on their missionary trip. The story of Lydia begins here. This short story happens during Paul's travels.

#### Acts 16:14

##### A certain woman named Lydia

Here "A certain woman" introduces a new person in the story. Alternate translation: "There was a woman named Lydia"

##### a seller of purple

Here "cloth" is understood. Alternate translation: "a merchant who sold purple cloth"

##### Thyatira

This is the name of a city.

##### worshiped God

A worshiper of God is a Gentile who gives praise to God and follows him, but does not obey all of the Jewish laws.

##### The Lord opened her heart to pay attention

For the Lord to cause someone to pay attention and believe a message is spoken of as if he were opening a person's heart. Alternate translation: "The Lord caused her to listen well and to believe"

##### opened her heart

Here "heart" stands for a person's mind. Also, the author speaks about the "heart" or "mind" as if it were a box that a person could open so it is ready for someone to fill it.

##### what was said by Paul

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what Paul said"

#### Acts 16:15

##### Connecting Statement:

The story of Lydia ends here.

##### When she and her house were baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When they baptized Lydia and members of her household"

##### her house

Here "house" represents the people who live in her house. Alternate translation: "the members of her household" or "her family and household servants"

#### Acts 16:16

##### General Information:

Background information is given here to explain that this young fortune teller brought much financial gain to her masters by guessing people's futures.

##### Connecting Statement:

This begins the first event in another short story during Paul's travels; it is about a young fortune teller.

##### It came about that

This phrase marks the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

##### a certain slave girl ... encountered

The phrase "a certain" introduces a new person to the story. Alternate translation: "there was a slave girl ... who encountered"

##### a spirit of divination

An evil spirit spoke to her often about the immediate future of people.

#### Acts 16:17

##### the way of salvation

How a person can be saved is spoken of here as if it were a way or path that a person walks on. Alternate translation: "how God can save you"

#### Acts 16:18

##### But Paul, being greatly annoyed by her, turned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But she greatly annoyed Paul, so he turned around"

##### in the name of Jesus Christ

Here "name" stands for speaking with the authority or as the representative of Jesus Christ.

##### it came out at that same hour

"the spirit came out immediately"

#### Acts 16:19

##### her masters

"the owners of the slave girl"

##### their hope of profit was now gone

Here the word "hope" is the reason for which a person can expect that what he desires will happen. Now that the spirit was gone, the girl's masters could not expect to earn money from the spirit's telling people things. Alternate translation: "their opportunity to make money was now gone" or "they could no longer expect to make money"

##### their hope of profit was now gone

It can be stated clearly why they no longer expected to make money. Alternate translation: "she could no longer earn money for them by telling fortunes"

##### into the marketplace

"into the public square." This is a public place of business, where buying and selling of goods, cattle, or services takes place.

##### before the authorities

"into the presence of the authorities" or "so that the authorities could judge them"

#### Acts 16:20

##### When they had brought them to the magistrates

"When they had brought them to the judges"

##### magistrates

rulers, judges

##### These men are causing trouble in our city

Here the word "our" refers to the people of the city and includes the magistrates who ruled it.

#### Acts 16:21

##### to accept or practice

"to believe or to obey" or "to accept or to do"

#### Acts 16:22

##### General Information:

Here the words "their" and "them" refer to Paul and Silas.

##### commanded them to be beaten with rods

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "commanded the soldiers to beat them with rods"

#### Acts 16:23

##### they had ... upon them, they threw them ... guard them

"the magistrates had ... upon Paul and Silas, the magistrates threw Paul and Silas ... keep Paul and Silas"

##### had laid many blows upon them

"had hit them many times with rods"

##### commanded the jailer to guard them securely

"told the jailer to make sure they did not get out"

##### jailer

a person responsible for all the people held in the jail or prison

#### Acts 16:24

##### he got this command

"he heard this command"

##### fastened their feet in the stocks

"securely locked their feet in the stocks"

##### stocks

a piece of wood with holes for preventing a person's feet from moving

#### Acts 16:25

##### General Information:

The word "them" refers to Paul and Silas.

##### Connecting Statement:

This continues Paul and Silas' time in Philippi in prison and tells what happens to their jailer.

#### Acts 16:26

##### earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "earthquake which shook the foundations of the prison"

##### the foundations of the prison

When the foundations shook, this caused the entire prison to shake.

##### all the doors were opened

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "all the doors opened"

##### everyone's chains were unfastened

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "everyone's chains came loose"

#### Acts 16:27

##### The jailer was awakened from sleep

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The jailer woke up"

##### was about to kill himself

"was ready to kill himself." The jailer preferred to commit suicide rather than suffer the consequences of letting the prisoners escape.

#### Acts 16:28

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Paul, Silas, and all of the other prisoners but excludes the jailer.

#### Acts 16:29

##### called for lights

The reason why the jailer needed light can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "called for someone to bring light so he could see who was still in the prison"

##### for lights

The word "lights" stands for something that makes light. Alternate translation: "for torches" or "for lamps"

##### rushed in

"quickly entered the jail"

##### fell down before Paul and Silas

The jailer humbled himself by bowing down at the feet of Paul and Silas.

#### Acts 16:30

##### brought them out

"led them outside the jail"

##### what must I do to be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what must I do for God to save me from my sins"

#### Acts 16:31

##### you will be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will save you" or "God will save you from your sins"

##### your house

Here "house" stands for the people who live in the house. Alternate translation: "all the members of your household" or "your family"

#### Acts 16:32

##### General Information:

The word "They" refers to Paul and Silas (Acts 16:25), and the word "him" refers to the jailer.

##### They spoke the word of the Lord to him

Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "They told him the message about the Lord Jesus"

#### Acts 16:33

##### General Information:

The words "them" and "their" refer to Paul and Silas (Acts 16:25), and the words "he" and "his" refer to the jailer.

##### he and those in his entire house were baptized immediately

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Paul and Silas immediately baptized the jailer and all the members of his household"

#### Acts 16:34

##### General Information:

All instances of "he" and "his" refer to the jailer.

#### Acts 16:35

##### General Information:

This is the last event in the story of Paul and Silas in Philippi (Acts 16:12).

##### Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke tells the last event in the story that started in Acts 16:16.

##### sent word to the guards

Here "word" stands for "message" or "command." Alternate translation: "sent a message to the guards" or "sent a command to the guards"

##### sent word

Here "sent" means the magistrates told someone to go tell the guards their message.

##### Let those men go

"Release those men" or "Allow those men to leave"

#### Acts 16:36

##### come out

"come outside of the jail"

#### Acts 16:37

##### General Information:

The word "they" refers to the magistrates. All instances of "we" and "us" refer only to Paul and Silas and so are exclusive.

##### said to them

Probably Paul is speaking to the jailer, but he intends for the jailer to tell the magistrates what he says. Alternate translation: "said to the jailer"

##### They have publicly beaten us

Here "They" refers to the magistrates who commanded their soldiers to beat them. Alternate translation: "The magistrates ordered their soldiers to beat us in public"

##### without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens—and they threw us into prison

"men who are Roman citizens, and they had their soldiers put us in jail though they had not proven in court that we were guilty"

##### Do they now want to send us away secretly? No!

Paul uses a question to emphasize that he will not allow the magistrates to send them out the city in secret after they had mistreated Paul and Silas. Alternate translation: "I will certainly not let them send us out of the city in secret!"

##### Let them come themselves

Here "themselves" is used for emphasis.

#### Acts 16:38

##### when they heard that Paul and Silas were Romans, they were afraid

To be a Roman meant to be a legal citizen of the Empire. Citizenship provided freedom from torture and the right to a fair trial. The city leaders were afraid that more important Roman authorities might learn how the city leaders had mistreated Paul and Silas.

##### they heard ... they were afraid

"the magistrates heard ... the magistrates were afraid"

#### Acts 16:39

##### General Information:

All instances of "them" refer to Paul and Silas.

#### Acts 16:40

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Paul and Silas. The word "them" refers to the believers in Philippi.

##### Connecting Statement:

This is the end of Paul and Silas' time in Philippi.

##### came to the house

Here "came" can be translated as "went."

##### the house of Lydia

"the home of Lydia"

##### saw the brothers

Here "brothers" refers to believers, whether male or female. Alternate translation: "saw the believers"

## Chapter 17

# Acts 17 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Misunderstandings about the Messiah

The Jews expected the Christ or Messiah to be a powerful king because the Old Testament says so many times. But it also says many times that the Messiah would suffer, and that was what Paul was telling the Jews. (See: christ)

#### The religion of Athens

Paul said that the Athenians were "religious," but they did not worship the true God. They worshiped many different false gods. In the past they had conquered other peoples and begun to worship the gods of the people they had conquered. (See: falsegod)

In this chapter Luke describes for the first time how Paul told the message of Christ to people who knew nothing of the Old Testament.

## Links:

* [Acts 17:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 (Prophesy)

#### 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”(δεισιδαίμων/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”(ὥρισεν/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 17:1

##### General Information:

Both instances of "they" refers to Paul and Silas (Acts 16:40).

##### Connecting Statement:

This continues the story of Paul, Silas, and Timothy's missionary trip. They arrive in Thessalonica, apparently without Luke, since he says "they" and not "we."

##### Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke, the author, starts to tell a new part of the story.

##### passed through

"traveled through"

##### cities of Amphipolis and Apollonia

These are coastal cities in Macedonia.

##### they came to the city

Here "came to" can be translated as "went to" or "arrived at." Alternate translation: "they went to the city" or "they arrived at the city"

#### Acts 17:2

##### went to them ... reasoned with them

"went to the Jews ... reasoned with the Jews"

##### as his custom was

"as his habit was" or "as his common practice was." Paul usually went to the synagogue on the Sabbath when Jews would be present.

##### for three Sabbath days

"on each Sabbath day for three weeks"

##### reasoned with them from the scriptures

"gave them reasons to believe from the scriptures" or "debated with them about the scriptures" or "discussed the scriptures with them." Paul explained what the scriptures mean in order to prove to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah.

#### Acts 17:3

##### General Information:

Here the word "He" refers to Paul (Acts 17:2).

##### He was opening the scriptures

Possible meanings are 1) to explain the scriptures in a way that people can understand is spoken of as if Paul were opening something so people can see what is inside of it) or 2) Paul was literally opening a book or scroll and reading from it.

##### it was necessary

"it was part of God's plan"

##### to rise again

"to come back to life"

##### from the dead

From among all those who have died. The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

#### Acts 17:4

##### the Jews were persuaded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Jews believed" or "the Jews understood"

##### joined Paul

"became associated with Paul"

##### devout Greeks

This refers to Greeks who worshiped God but had not converted to Judaism through circumcision.

##### not a few of the leading women

This is an understatement to emphasize that many leading women joined them. Alternate translation: "many leading women"

#### Acts 17:5

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the unbelieving Jews and wicked men from the marketplace.

##### being moved with jealousy

The feeling of jealousy is spoken of as if jealousy were actually moving the person. Alternate translation: "feeling very jealous" or "feeling very angry"

##### with jealousy

It can be stated explicitly that these Jews were jealous because some of the Jews and Greeks believed Paul's message.

##### took certain wicked men

Here "took" does not mean the Jews took these people by force. It means the Jews persuaded these wicked men to help them.

##### certain wicked men

"some evil men." The word "men" here refers specifically to males.

##### from the marketplace

"from the public square." This is a public place of business, where buying and selling of goods, cattle, or services take place.

##### set the city in an uproar

Here "the city" stands for the people in the city. Alternate translation: "caused the people of the city to be in an uproar" or "caused the people of the city to riot"

##### Assaulting the house

"Violently attacking the house." This probably means the people were throwing rocks at the house and trying to break down the door of the house.

##### Jason

This is the name of a man.

##### they were seeking to bring Paul ... out

The word "seeking" here means that the people wanted to bring Paul out and were trying to bring him out.

##### out to the people

Possible meanings or "people" are 1) a governmental or legal group of citizens gathered to make a decision or 2) a mob.

#### Acts 17:6

##### certain other brothers

Here "brothers" refers to believers. Alternate translation: "some other believers"

##### before the officials

"into the presence of the officials"

##### These men who have

The Jewish leaders were speaking, and the phrase "These men" refers to Paul and Silas.

##### turned the world upside down

This phrase is another way of saying Paul and Silas were causing trouble everywhere they went. The Jewish leaders were exaggerating the influence Paul and Silas were having with their teaching. Alternate translation: "caused trouble everywhere in the world" or "caused trouble everywhere they have gone"

#### Acts 17:7

##### Jason has welcomed

This phrase signals that Jason was in agreement with the apostles' troubling message.

#### Acts 17:8

##### They troubled the crowd

"They caused the people in the city to be afraid"

#### Acts 17:9

##### the rest

The words "the rest" refers to other believers that the Jews brought before the officials.

##### they took security ... they let them go

"the officials took security ... they let Jason and the other believers go"

##### took security

Jason and the others gave the money to the officials to show that they would not cause any more trouble. This was not a fine or a punishment, so they might have expected the officials to give the money back later.

#### Acts 17:10

##### General Information:

Paul and Silas travel on to the town of Berea.

##### the brothers

The word "brothers" here refers to men and women believers. Alternate translation: "the believers"

#### Acts 17:11

##### Now

The word "now" is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke tells background information about the people in Berea and how they were willing to listen to Paul and examine what he said.

##### more noble

These "well-born" people were willing to think more objectively about new ideas than other people. Alternate translation: "more open minded" or "more willing to listen"

##### received the word

Here "word" refers to a teaching. Alternate translation: "listened to the teaching"

##### with all readiness of mind

These Bereans were prepared to examine earnestly Paul's teachings about the scripture.

##### examining the scriptures daily

"carefully reading and evaluating the scriptures every day"

##### these things were so

"the things Paul said were true"

#### Acts 17:12

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 17:13

##### General Information:

Athens was south of Berea. Both were on the coast of Macedonia. Athens was one of the most important cities in Greece.

##### went there and stirred up

This speaks about their agitating people as though it were a person stirring a liquid and causing the things at the bottom of the liquid to rise to the surface. Alternate translation: "went there and agitated" or "went there and disturbed"

##### troubled the crowds

"worried the crowds" or "caused dread and fear among the people"

#### Acts 17:14

##### brothers

The word "brothers" here refers to men and women believers. Alternate translation: "believers"

##### to go to the sea

"to go to the coast." From here Paul would probably sail to another city.

#### Acts 17:15

##### who were leading Paul

"who were accompanying Paul" or "who were going along with Paul"

##### they received from him instructions for Silas and Timothy

"he told them to instruct Silas and Timothy." This can also be stated as a direct quotation as in the UDB.

#### Acts 17:16

##### General Information:

This is another part of the story of Paul and Silas' travels. Paul is now in Athens where he is waiting for Silas and Timothy to join him.

##### Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke starts to tell a new part of the story.

##### his spirit was provoked within him as he saw the city full of idols

Here "spirit" stands for Paul himself. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he became upset because he saw that there were idols everywhere in the city" or "seeing the idols everywhere in the city upset him"

#### Acts 17:17

##### he reasoned

"he debated" or "he discussed." This means that his listeners also spoke and asked him questions. He was not the only speaker.

##### others who worshiped God

This refers to Gentiles who gave praise to God and followed him but did not obey all of the Jewish laws.

##### in the marketplace

"in the public square." This is a public place of business, where buying and selling of goods, cattle, or services take place.

#### Acts 17:18

##### General Information:

Here the words "him," "He, "and "he" refer to Paul.

##### Epicurean and Stoic philosophers

Philosophers are people who think about the world and try to understand how people should live. The Epicureans and the Stoics were two groups of philosophers. They believed that a god or gods existed, but they did not trust in or obey any god. Alternate translation: "thinkers called Epicureans and Stoics"

##### encountered him

"happened upon him"

##### Some said

"Some of the philosophers said"

##### What is this babbler

The word "babbler" was used to refer to birds picking up seeds as food. It refers negatively to a person who only knows a little bit of information. The philosophers said Paul had bits of information which were not worth listening to. Alternate translation: "What is this uneducated person"

##### Others said

"Other philosophers said"

##### He seems to be one who calls people to follow

"He seems to be a proclaimer" or "He seems to be on a mission to add people to his philosophy"

##### strange gods

This is not in the sense of "odd," but in the sense of "foreign," that is, gods that Greeks and Romans do not worship or know about.

#### Acts 17:19

##### They took ... brought him

This does not mean they arrested Paul. The philosophers invited Paul to speak formally to their leaders.

##### to the Areopagus

The "Areopagus" was the place where the leaders met. Alternate translation: "to the leaders that met on the Areopagus"

##### the Areopagus, saying

Here the leaders on the Areopagus are speaking. This can stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "the Areopagus. The leaders said to Paul"

##### Areopagus

This is a prominent rock outcropping or hill in Athens upon which the supreme court of Athens may have met.

#### Acts 17:20

##### For you bring some strange things to our ears

Paul's teachings about Jesus and the resurrection are spoken of as an object that a person can bring to another person. Here "ears" refers to what they hear. Alternate translation: "For you are teaching some things that we have never heard before"

#### Acts 17:21

##### Now all the Athenians and the strangers living there

The word "all" is a generalization referring to many. Alternate translation: "Now many of the Athenians and the strangers living there"

##### all the Athenians

"Athenians" are people from Athens, a city near the coast below Macedonia

##### the strangers

"the foreigners"

##### spent their time in nothing but either telling or listening

Here "time" is spoken of as if it were an object that a person could spend. Alternate translation: "used their time doing nothing but either telling or listening" or "were always doing nothing but telling or listening"

##### spent their time in nothing but either telling or listening

The phrase "spent their time in nothing" is an exaggeration. Alternate translation: "did not do much but tell or listen" or "spent much of their time telling or listening"

##### telling or listening about something new

"discussing new philosophical ideas" or "talking about what was new to them"

#### Acts 17:22

##### General Information:

Paul begins his speech to the philosophers on the Areopagus.

##### very religious in every way

Paul is referring to the Athenians' public display of honoring the gods through prayers, building altars, and offering sacrifices.

#### Acts 17:23

##### as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship

"as I walked among the objects of your worship and observed them" or "as I walked around in the city, I observed the objects of your worship"

##### To an Unknown God

Possible meanings are 1) "to a certain unknown god" or 2) "to a god not known." This was a specific writing or inscription on that altar.

#### Acts 17:24

##### the world

In the most general sense, the "world" refers to the heavens and the earth and everything in them.

##### since he is Lord

"because he is the Lord." Here "he" is referring to the unknown god mentioned in Acts 17:23 that Paul is explaining is the Lord God.

##### of heaven and earth

The words "heaven" and "earth" are used together to mean all beings and things in heaven and earth.

##### built with hands

Here "hands" stands for people. Alternate translation: "built by the hands of people" or "that people built"

#### Acts 17:25

##### Neither is he served by men's hands

Here "served" has the sense of a doctor treating a patient to make the patient well again. Alternate translation: "Neither do men's hands take care of him"

##### by men's hands

Here "hands" stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: "by humans"

##### since he himself

"because he himself." The word "himself" is added for emphasis.

#### Acts 17:26

##### General Information:

Here the word "he" refer to God, the creator, and both instances of "their" refer to every nation of people living on the surface of the earth.

##### one man

This means Adam, the first person God created. This can be stated to include Eve. It was through Adam and Eve that God made all other people. Alternate translation: "one couple"

##### having determined their appointed seasons and the boundaries of their living areas

This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "and he determined when and where they would live"

#### Acts 17:27

##### General Information:

All instances of "they" and "their" refer to the people who live on earth, all instances of "him" and "he" refer to God, and the word "us" includes the speaker, the hearers, and the people who live on earth.

##### so that they should search for God and perhaps they may feel their way toward him and find him

Here "search for God" represents desiring to know him, and "feel their way toward him and find him" represents praying and having a relationship with him. Alternate translation: "so that they should want to know God and perhaps pray to him and become one of his people"

##### Yet he is not far from each one of us

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Yet he is very near to every one of us"

#### Acts 17:28

##### General Information:

Here the words "him" and "his" refer to God

##### For in him

"Because of him"

#### Acts 17:29

##### General Information:

Both instances of "we" include the speaker, the hearers, and other people.

##### are God's offspring

Because God created everyone, all people are spoken of as if they were God's literal children.

##### the qualities of deity are like

Here "deity" refers to God's nature or attributes. Alternate translation: "God is like"

##### images created by the art and imagination of man

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which a man then uses his skill to make it into something that he has designed" or "images that people make by using their art and imagination"

#### Acts 17:30

##### General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to God.

##### Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true"

##### God overlooked the times of ignorance

"God decided not to punish people during the time of ignorance"

##### times of ignorance

This refers to the time before God fully revealed himself through Jesus Christ and before people truly knew how to obey God.

##### all men

This means all people, whether male or female. Alternate translation: "all people"

#### Acts 17:31

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes his speech to the philosophers in the Areopagus, which he began in Acts 17:22.

##### when he will judge the world in righteousness by the man he has appointed

"when the man he has chosen will judge the world in righteousness"

##### he will judge the world

Here "world" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "he will judge all people"

##### in righteousness

"justly" or "fairly"

##### God has given proof of this man

"God has demonstrated his choice of this man"

##### from the dead

From among all those who have died. The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

#### Acts 17:32

##### General Information:

Here the word "We" refers to the men of Athens but not to Paul, so this is exclusive. Though some of them probably did want to hear Paul again, they may only have been being polite.

##### Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Paul in Athens.

##### Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke changes from Paul's teachings to the reaction of the people of Athens.

##### the men of Athens

These are the people who were present at the Areopagus and were listening to Paul.

##### some mocked Paul

"some ridiculed Paul" or "some laughed at Paul." These did not believe it was possible for someone to die and then return to life.

#### Acts 17:33

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 17:34

##### Dionysius the Areopagite

Dionysius is a man's name. Areopagite implies that Dionysius was one of the judges at the council of Areopagus.

##### Damaris

This is the name of a woman.

## Chapter 18

# Acts 18 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### The baptism of John

Some Jews who lived far away from Jerusalem and Judea had heard of John the Baptist and followed his teachings. They had not yet heard about Jesus. One of these Jews was Apollos. He followed John the Baptist, but he did not know that the Messiah had come. John had baptized people to show that they were sorry for their sins, but this baptism was different from Christian baptism. (See: faithful and christ and repent)

## Links:

* [Acts 18:1](../../act/18/01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 News 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 18:1

##### Connecting Statement:

This is another part of the story of Paul's travels as he goes to Corinth.

##### After these things

"After these events took place in Athens"

##### Athens

Athens was one of the most important cities in Greece. See how you translated this in Acts 17:15.

#### Acts 18:2

##### General Information:

The writer begins to give background information about Aquila and Priscilla.

##### There he met

Possible meanings are that 1) Paul happened to find by chance or 2) Paul intentionally found.

##### a Jew named Aquila

Here the phrase "a certain" indicates this is introducing new person in the story.

##### a native of Pontus

Pontus was a province on the southern coast of the Black Sea.

##### had recently come

This is probably sometime in the past year.

##### Italy

This is the name of land. Rome is the capital city of Italy.

##### Claudius had commanded

Claudius was the current Roman emperor. See how you translated this in Acts 11:28.

#### Acts 18:3

##### General Information:

The writer finishes giving background information about Aquila and Priscilla.

##### he worked at the same trade

"he did the same kind of work that they did"

#### Acts 18:4

##### So Paul reasoned

"So Paul debated" or "So Paul discussed." He gave reasons. This means that rather than just preaching, Paul talked and interacted with the people.

##### trying to persuade both Jews and Greeks

Possible meanings are 1) "and he caused both Jews and Greeks to believe" or 2) "and he kept trying to persuade the Jews and the Greeks."

#### Acts 18:5

##### General Information:

Silas and Timothy rejoin Paul.

#### Acts 18:6

##### shook out his garment

This is a symbolic action to indicate that Paul will no longer try to teach the Jews there about Jesus. He is leaving them to God's judgment.

##### May your blood be upon your own heads

Here "blood" stands for the guilt of their actions. Here "heads" refers to the whole person. Paul tells the Jews they are solely responsible for the judgment they will face for their stubbornness if they refuse to repent. Alternate translation: "You alone bear the responsibility for your punishment for sin"

##### I am clean

The word "clean" here is a metaphor for Paul being innocent of wrong against either the people or God. Alternate translation: "I am innocent" or "God will not punish me when he punishes you"

#### Acts 18:7

##### he left ... His house

"Paul left ... Titius' Justus's house"

##### Titius Justus

This is the name of a man.

##### worshiped God

A worshiper of God is a Gentile who gives praise to God and follows him but does not necessarily obey all of the Jewish laws.

#### Acts 18:8

##### Crispus

This is the name of a man.

##### leader of the synagogue

a layperson who sponsored and administered the synagogue, not necessarily the teacher

##### all his household

Here "his household" refers to the people who lived together in his house. Alternate translation: "the people who lived with him in his house"

##### his household

Crispus's household

##### were baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "received baptism"

#### Acts 18:9

##### Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent

The Lord is giving one command in two different ways to emphasize that Paul should certainly continue preaching. Alternate translation: "You must not be afraid; instead, you should continue to speak and not become silent"

##### speak and do not be silent

The Lord gives the same command in two different ways to strongly command Paul to speak. Alternate translation: "you must certainly continue to speak"

##### do not be silent

It can be stated explicitly what the Lord wants Paul to speak. Alternate translation: "do not stop speaking about the gospel"

#### Acts 18:10

##### I have many people in this city

"there are many people in this city who have put their faith in me" or "many people in this city will put their faith in me"

#### Acts 18:11

##### Paul lived there ... teaching the word of God among them

This is a concluding statement for this part of the story. "Word of God" here is a synecdoche for the entire scriptures. Alternate translation: "Paul lived there ... teaching the scriptures among them"

#### Acts 18:12

##### General Information:

Achaia was the Roman province in which Corinth was located. Corinth was the largest city in southern Greece and the capital of the province.

##### Connecting Statement:

The unbelieving Jews bring Paul to the judgment seat before Gallio.

##### Gallio

This is the name of a man.

##### the Jews

This stands for the Jewish leaders that did not believe in Jesus.

##### rose up

This phrase means that the Jews began to act, not that they rose into the air or rose to stand from a sitting position. If your language has a different idiom for beginning to act, you may use it here.

##### with one mind

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

##### brought him before the judgment seat

The Jews took Paul by force to bring Paul before the court. Here "judgment seat" refers to the place where Gallio sat when he made legal decisions in court. Alternate translation: "took him so that the governor could judge him at the judgment seat"

#### Acts 18:13

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 18:14

##### Gallio said

Gallio was the Roman governor of the Province.

#### Acts 18:15

##### your own law

Here "law" can refer to either the law of Moses or the Jewish customs of Paul's time. Gallio is simply telling the Jews that they are to do what they think right and that he is not interested in being the judge.

##### I do not wish to be a judge of these matters

"I refuse to make a judgment about these matters"

#### Acts 18:16

##### Gallio made them leave the judgment seat

"Gallio dismissed the Jews from the judgment seat." Here "judgment seat" refers to the place where Gallio sits to make legal decisions in court. Alternate translation: "Gallio made them leave his presence in the court" or "Gallio made them leave the court"

#### Acts 18:17

##### General Information:

It is not clear what events this verse describes. The Jews had been accusing Paul, but it appears that they ended up beating Sosthenes and not Paul.

##### So they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the judgment seat

Possible meanings are 1) the Gentiles beat Sosthenes in the court in front of the judgment seat because he was the Jewish leader or 2) Sosthenes was a believer in Christ, so even though he was "the ruler of the synagogue," the Jews beat him in front of the court.

##### they all seized

This may be an exaggeration to emphasize the strong feelings the people had. Alternate translation: "many people seized" or "many of them grabbed"

##### Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue

Sosthenes was "the ruler of the synagogue" at Corinth.

##### beat him

"repeatedly hit him" or "repeatedly punched him."

#### Acts 18:18

##### General Information:

Here both instances of "he" refer to Paul.

##### left the brothers

The word "brothers" refers to men and women believers. Alternate translation: "left the fellow believers"

##### sailed for Syria with Priscilla and Aquila

Paul got on a ship that sailed for Syria. Priscilla and Aquila went with him.

##### Cenchreae

This was a town near Corinth in Greece. It was on the coast, and Paul probably got on the ship there.

##### he had his hair cut off

This is a symbolic action that indicates that he had done something he had vowed to do. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he had someone cut off the hair on his head"

#### Acts 18:19

##### Connecting Statement:

This continues Paul's missionary journey as Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila leave Corinth. This seems to indicate that Silas and Timothy remain, since it says "he" here and not "they." The word "they" refers to Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila.

##### reasoned with the Jews

"gave the Jews reasons to believe" or "debated with the Jews about the scriptures" or "discussed the scriptures with the Jews." Paul explained what the scriptures mean in order to prove to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. See how you translated "reasoned with" in [Acts 17:2]

#### Acts 18:20

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the Jews in Ephesus.

#### Acts 18:21

##### General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to the Jews in Ephesus. The word "you" is plural.

##### taking his leave of them

"saying good-bye to them"

#### Acts 18:22

##### General Information:

Phrygia is a province in Asia which is now modern day Turkey. See how you translated this in Acts 2:10.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul continues his missionary journey.

##### landed at Caesarea

"arrived at Caesarea." The word "landed" is used to show that he arrived by ship.

##### he went up

He traveled to the city of Jerusalem. The phrase "went up" is used here because Jerusalem is higher in elevation than Caesarea.

##### greeted the Jerusalem church

Here "church" refers to the believers in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "greeted the members of the church of Jerusalem"

##### then went down

The phrase "went down" is used here because Antioch is lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

#### Acts 18:23

##### Paul departed

"Paul went away" or "Paul left"

##### After having spent some time there

This speaks about "time" as if it were a commodity that a person could spend. Alternate translation: After staying there for a while"

#### Acts 18:24

##### General Information:

Apollos is introduced to the story. Verses 24 and 25 give background information about him.

##### Connecting Statement:

Luke tells what happens in Ephesus with Priscilla and Aquila.

##### Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story.

##### a certain Jew named Apollos

The phrase "a certain" indicates that Luke is introducing a new person in the story.

##### an Alexandrian by birth

"a man who was born in the city of Alexandria." This was a city in Egypt on the north coast of Africa.

##### eloquent in speech

"a good speaker"

##### mighty in the scriptures

"he knew the scriptures thoroughly." He understood the Old Testament writings well.

#### Acts 18:25

##### Apollos had been instructed in the teachings of the Lord

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Other believers had taught Apollos how the Lord Jesus wanted people to live"

##### Being fervent in spirit

Here "spirit" refers to the entire person of Apollos. Alternate translation: "Being very enthusiastic"

##### the baptism of John

"the baptism that John performed." John's baptism was with water, but Jesus's baptism is with the Holy Spirit.

#### Acts 18:26

##### the way of God

How God wants people to live is spoken of as if it were a road that a person travels.

##### more accurately

"correctly" or "more fully"

#### Acts 18:27

##### General Information:

Here the he words "he" and "him" refer to Apollos ([Acts 18:24](./24.md)).

##### to pass over into Achaia

"to go to the region of Achaia." The phrase "pass over" is used here because Apollos had to cross the Aegean Sea to get to Achaia from Ephesus.

##### Achaia

Achaia was a Roman Province in the southern section of Greece. See how you translated this in Acts 18:12.

##### brothers

The word "brothers" here refers to men and women believers. You can make explicit that these are believers in Ephesus. Alternate translation: "fellow believers in Ephesus"

##### wrote to the disciples

"wrote a letter to the Christians in Achaia"

##### those who believed by grace

"those who had believed in salvation by grace" or "those who by God's grace believed in Jesus"

#### Acts 18:28

##### Apollos powerfully refuted the Jews in public debate

"In public debate Apollos powerfully showed that the Jews were wrong"

##### showing by the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ

"as he showed them by the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ"

## Chapter 19

# Acts 19 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Baptism

John baptized people to show that they were sorry for their sins. Jesus's followers baptized people who wanted to follow Jesus.

#### Temple of Diana

The temple of Diana was an important place in the city of Ephesus. Many people came to Ephesus to see this temple, and they bought statues of the goddess Diana while they were there. The people who sold statues of Diana were afraid that if people did not believe Diana was a real goddess, they would stop giving the sellers money for statues.

## Links:

* [Acts 19:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 Chrsitians. 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 19:1

##### General Information:

The "upper country" was an area of Asia which today is part of modern-day Turkey to the north of Ephesus. Paul must have traveled by land around the top of the Aegean Sea in order to come to Ephesus (also in Turkey today), which is directly east of Corinth by sea.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul travels to Ephesus.

##### It came about that

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

##### passed through

"traveled through"

#### Acts 19:2

##### receive the Holy Spirit

This means to have the Holy Spirit come upon them.

##### we did not even hear about the Holy Spirit

"we have not even heard about the Holy Spirit"

#### Acts 19:3

##### General Information:

The word "They" refers to the disciples ([Acts 19:1](./01.md)). The word "you" is plural.

##### Into what then were you baptized?

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "What kind of baptism did you receive?"

##### Into John's baptism

You can translate this as a complete sentence. Alternate translation: "We were baptized into John's baptism" or "We received the kind of baptism about which John taught"

#### Acts 19:4

##### the baptism of repentance

You can translate the abstract noun "repentance" as the verb "repent." Alternate translation: "the baptism that people requested when they wanted to repent"

##### the one who would come

Here "the one" refers to Jesus.

##### come after him

This means to come after John the Baptist in time and not following after him physically.

#### Acts 19:5

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul continues staying in Ephesus.

##### When the people

Here "people" refers to the disciples in Ephesus who were talking with Paul (Acts 19:1),

##### they were baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they received baptism"

##### in the name of the Lord Jesus

Here "name" refers to Jesus's power and authority. Alternate translation: "as believers in the Lord Jesus"

#### Acts 19:6

##### General Information:

All instances of "them" and "they" refer to "the people" ([Acts 19:5](./05.md))

##### laid his hands on them

"placed his hands on them." He probably placed his hands on their shoulders or heads. Alternate translation: "placed his hands on their heads as he prayed"

##### they spoke in tongues and prophesied

Unlike in Acts 2:3-4, there are no details of who understood their messages.

#### Acts 19:7

##### General Information:

All instances of "them" and "they" refer to "the people" ([Acts 19:5](./05.md))

##### In all they were about twelve men

This tells how many men were baptized.

##### twelve men

"12 men"

#### Acts 19:8

##### Paul went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months

"Paul regularly attended the synagogue meetings for three months and spoke there boldly"

##### reasoning and persuading them

Probable meanings are 1) the words "reasoning" and "persuading" are a hendiadys that means "arguing persuasively" or 2) the words describe two separate activities, "giving them reasons to believe" and "convincing them"

##### about the kingdom of God

Here "kingdom" stands for God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "about God's rule as king" or "about how God would show himself as king"

#### Acts 19:9

##### some Jews were hardened and disobedient

People who were stubbornly refusing to believe are spoken of as though they were becoming hard and unable to move. Alternate translation: "some Jews were stubborn and did not believe" or "some Jews stubbornly refused to accept and obey the message"

##### to speak evil of the Way before the crowd

What Christ wants people to believe is spoken of as though it were a road that a person travels. The phrase, "the Way," seems to have been a title for Christianity at the time. Alternate translation: "to speak evil about Christianity to the crowd" or "to speak to the crowd evil things about those who follow Christ and who obey his teaching about God" (See: and Acts 9:2)

##### to speak evil of

"to speak bad things about"

##### in the lecture hall of Tyrannus

"in the large room where Tyrannus had taught people"

##### Tyrannus

This is the name of a man.

#### Acts 19:10

##### all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord

Here "all" is a generalization that means very many people throughout Asia heard the gospel.

##### the word of the Lord

Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "the message about the Lord"

#### Acts 19:11

##### God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul

Here "hands" stands for Paul's whole person. Alternate translation: "God was causing Paul to do extraordinary miracles" or "God was doing extraordinary miracles through Paul"

#### Acts 19:12

##### General Information:

Here the words "them" and "their" refer to those who were sick.

##### even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick and

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when they took to sick people even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched Paul"

##### even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him

Possible meanings are 1) these were cloth items that Paul had touched or 2) these were cloth items that Paul had worn or used.

##### handkerchiefs

cloths worn around the head

##### aprons

clothing worn on the front of the body to protect the clothes of people

##### the sick

This refers to sick people. Alternate translation: "sick people" or "those who were sick"

##### their illnesses left them

"those who were sick became healthy"

#### Acts 19:13

##### General Information:

This is the beginning of another event that happened while Paul was in Ephesus. It is about Jewish exorcists.

##### exorcists

people who send evil spirits away from people or places

##### the name of the Lord Jesus

Here "name" refers to Jesus's power and authority.

##### By the Jesus whom Paul proclaims

"Jesus" was a common name at the time, so these exorcists wanted people to know of whom they spoke.

##### By the Jesus

This stands for the power and authority of Jesus. Alternate translation: "by the authority of Jesus" or "by the power of Jesus"

#### Acts 19:14

##### Sceva

This is the name of a man.

#### Acts 19:15

##### Jesus I know, and Paul I know

"I know Jesus and Paul" or "I know Jesus, and I know Paul"

##### but who are you?

The spirit asked this question to emphasize that the exorcists had no authority over evil spirits. Alternate translation: "but I do not know you!" or "but you have no authority over me!"

#### Acts 19:16

##### The evil spirit in the man leaped

This means that the evil spirit caused the man whom it was controlling to leap on the exorcists.

##### exorcists

This refers to people who send evil spirits from people or places. See how you translated this in Acts 19:13.

##### they fled ... naked

The exorcists fled with their clothes ripped off them.

#### Acts 19:17

##### the name of the Lord Jesus was honored

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they honored the name of the Lord Jesus" or "they considered the name of the Lord Jesus to be great"

##### the name

This stands for the power and authority of Jesus.

#### Acts 19:18

##### Connecting Statement:

This ends the story about the Jewish exorcists.

#### Acts 19:19

##### brought their books

"collected their books." The word "books" refers to scrolls on which magical incantations and formulas were written.

##### in the sight of everyone

"in front of everyone"

##### the value of them

"the value of the books" or "the value of the scrolls"

##### fifty thousand

"50,000"

##### pieces of silver

A "piece of silver" was the approximate daily wage for a common laborer.

#### Acts 19:20

##### So the word of the Lord spread very widely in powerful ways

"So because of these powerful deeds, more and more people heard the message about the Lord Jesus"

#### Acts 19:21

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul talks about going Jerusalem but does not leave Ephesus yet.

##### Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke starts to tell a new part of the story.

##### these things were completed

"Paul completed the work that God had for him to do in Ephesus"

##### Paul decided in the Spirit

Possible meanings are 1) Paul decided with the help of the Holy Spirit or 2) Paul decided within his own spirit, which means he made up his mind.

##### Achaia

Achaia was the Roman province in which Corinth was located. It was the largest city in southern Greece and the capital of the province. See how you translated this in Acts 18:12.

##### I must also see Rome

"I must also travel to Rome"

#### Acts 19:22

##### Erastus

This is the name of a man.

##### But he himself stayed in Asia for a while

It is made explicit in the next few verses that Paul remains in Ephesus.

##### he himself

This is repeated for emphasis.

#### Acts 19:23

##### Connecting Statement:

Luke tells about a riot that broke out while Paul was in Ephesus.

##### there was no small disturbance in Ephesus concerning the Way

This is a summary opening statement.

##### there was no small disturbance

"the people became very upset" See how you translated this in Acts 12:18

##### the Way

This was a term used to refer to Christianity. See how you translated this title in Acts 9:1.

#### Acts 19:24

##### General Information:

The writer introduces Demetrius to the story and gives background information about him. Ephesus had a large temple dedicated to the goddess Artemis, sometimes translated as "Diana." She was a false goddess of fertility.

##### A certain silversmith named Demetrius

The use of the words "a certain" introduces a new person in the story.

##### silversmith

a craftsman who works with silver metal to make statues and jewelry

##### named Demetrius

This is the name of a man. Demetrius was a silversmith in Ephesus who was against Paul and the local church.

##### brought in much business for the craftsmen

"enabled those who made the idols to make much money"

##### shrines of Artemis

These were probably carved or molten images of the temple of Artemis or of the part of the temple in which the statue of Artemis stood.

#### Acts 19:25

##### the workmen of that occupation

An occupation is a profession or job. Alternate translation: "others who did that kind of work"

#### Acts 19:26

##### Connecting Statement:

Demetrius continues to speak to the craftsmen.

##### You see and hear that

"You have come to know and understand that"

##### persuaded and turned away many people

Paul's stopping people from worshiping idols is spoken of as though Paul were turning the people in a different direction. Alternate translation: "persuaded many people and caused them to stop worshiping the local gods"

##### He is saying that gods made by hands are not gods

Here the word "hands" can refer to the whole person. Alternate translation: "He is saying that the idols that people make are not real gods"

#### Acts 19:27

##### that our trade will be discredited

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that what Paul is saying will discredit our trade" or "that people will think that our trade is false"

##### our trade

This refers to their business of making and selling idols.

##### the temple of the great goddess Artemis might be regarded as worthless

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will think that the temple of the great goddess Artemis is worthless" or "people will think there is no benefit in going to the temple to worship the great goddess Artemis"

##### her greatness would be brought to nothing

"Her greatness" is a metonym for her reputation of being great. Being "brought to nothing" is a metaphor for becoming nothing or no longer existing. Alternate translation: "People would no longer recognize how great she is" or "She will lose her reputation of being great"

##### whom all Asia and the world worship

This was an exaggeration to show how popular the goddess Artemis was. Here the words "Asia" and "the world" refer to the people in the province of Asia and the known world. Alternate translation: "whom many people in Asia and in other parts of the world worship"

#### Acts 19:28

##### General Information:

Here "they" refers to the craftsmen who made the idols ([Acts 19:24-25](./24.md)).

##### they were filled with anger

This speaks of the craftsmen as though they were containers. Here "anger" is spoken of as if it were the contents that fill a container. Alternate translation: "they became very angry"

##### cried out

"shouted aloud" or "shouted loudly"

#### Acts 19:29

##### The whole city was filled with confusion

Here "city" refers to the people. The city is spoken of as if it were a container. And, "confusion" is spoken of as if it were the contents that filled the container. Alternate translation: "Then people all over the city became upset and started shouting"

##### the people rushed with one mind

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

##### into the theater

The Ephesus theater was used for public meetings and for entertainment such as plays and music. It was an outdoor semi-circular area with bench seats that could hold thousands of people.

##### Paul's travel companions

The men who had been with Paul.

##### Gaius and Aristarchus

These are names of men. Gaius and Aristarchus came from Macedonia but were working with Paul in Ephesus at this time.

#### Acts 19:30

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 19:31

##### officials of the province of Asia

Ephesus was in the Roman Empire's province of Asia.

##### enter the theater

The Ephesus theater was used for public meetings and for entertainment such as plays and music. It was an outdoor semi-circular area with bench seats that could hold thousands of people. See how you translated "theater" in Acts 19:29.

#### Acts 19:32

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 19:33

##### Alexander

This is the name of a man.

##### motioned with his hand

You can make explicit that Alexander was showing the crowd that he wanted them to be quiet. Alternate translation: "gestured to the crowd to be quiet"

##### to give a defense

It is not clear whom or what Alexander wanted to defend. If your language requires this information, it might be best to use a general phrase like "to explain what was going on."

#### Acts 19:34

##### with one voice

The shouting together of the people at the same time is spoken of as though they were speaking with one voice. Alternate translation: "in unison" or "together"

#### Acts 19:35

##### Connecting Statement:

The clerk of Ephesus speaks to quiet the crowd.

##### the town clerk

This refers to the town "writer" or "secretary."

##### what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper ... heaven?

The clerk asked this question to assure the crowd they were right and to comfort them. Alternate translation: "every man knows that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper ... heaven."

##### who does not know

The town clerk uses "not" to emphasize that all of the people knew this.

##### temple keeper

The Ephesian people maintained and guarded the temple of Artemis.

##### the image which fell down from heaven

Within the temple of Artemis was an image of the goddess. It had been fashioned from a meteorite which fell from the sky. People thought that this rock had come directly from Zeus, the ruler of the Greek gods (idols).

#### Acts 19:36

##### General Information:

The word "you" is plural.

##### Seeing then that these things are undeniable

"Since you know these things"

##### do nothing rash

"do not do anything before you have had time to think about it"

##### rash

without careful thought

#### Acts 19:37

##### General Information:

The word "you" is plural.

##### these men

The words "these men" refer to Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions (Acts 19:29).

#### Acts 19:38

##### Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true." The town clerk had said in Acts 19:37 that Gaius and Aristarchus were not robbers or blasphemers.

##### have an accusation against anyone

The word "accusation" can be stated as the verb "accuse." Alternate translation: "want to accuse someone"

##### proconsuls

the Roman governor's representatives who made legal decisions in court

##### Let them accuse one another

This does not mean Demetrius and those with him will accuse each other. It means this is a place where people in general can speak their accusation. Alternate translation: "There people can accuse one another"

#### Acts 19:39

##### Connecting Statement:

The town clerk finishes speaking to the crowd.

##### But if you are seeking anything more

"But if you want to ask about anything more" or "But if you have something to discuss about other matters"

##### it should be resolved in the regular assembly

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "let us settle it in the regular assembly"

##### the regular assembly

This refers to a regular public gathering of citizens over which the county clerk presided.

#### Acts 19:40

##### For we are in danger of being accused of rioting today

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "in danger of the Roman authorities accusing us of starting this riot today"

## Chapter 20

# Acts 20 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

In this chapter Luke describes Paul's last visits to believers in the provinces of Macedonia and Asia before he went to Jerusalem.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Race

Paul spoke of living for Jesus as if he were running in a race. By this he meant that he needed to keep working hard even when things were difficult and he wanted to quit. (See: and discipline)

#### "Compelled by the Spirit"

Paul thought that the Holy Spirit wanted him to go to Jerusalem even if Paul did not want to go there. The same Holy Spirit told other people that when Paul arrived in Jerusalem, people would try to harm him.

## Links:

* [Acts 20:1](../../act/20/01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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; Thessalonia; 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”(ποιμαίνω/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 (Prophesy) ; Holy Spirit; Vision); Worship; Fasting; Grace

See Map: Caearea ; 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 20:1

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul leaves Ephesus and continues his travels.

##### After the uproar

"After the riot" or "Following the riot"

##### he said farewell

"he said goodbye"

#### Acts 20:2

##### had spoken many words of encouragement to them

"had greatly encouraged the believers" or "had said many things to encourage the believers"

#### Acts 20:3

##### After he had spent three months there

"After he had stayed there three months." This speaks about time as if it were something a person could spend.

##### a plot was formed against him by the Jews

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Jews formed a plot against him" or "the Jews formed a secret plan to harm him"

##### by the Jews

This means only some of the Jews. Alternate translation: "by some of the Jews"

##### as he was about to sail for Syria

"as he was ready to sail for Syria"

#### Acts 20:4

##### Accompanying him

"Traveling with him." Here the word "him" refers to Paul (Acts 20:1).

##### Sopater ... Pyrrhus ... Secundus ... Tychicus ... Trophimus

These are names of men.

##### Berea ... Derbe

These are names of places.

##### Aristarchus ... Gaius

These are names of men. See how you translated these names in Acts 19:29.

#### Acts 20:5

##### these men had gone before us

"these men had traveled ahead of us"

##### before us ... for us

Here "us" refers to the writer and Paul and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

##### Troas

This is the name of a place.

#### Acts 20:6

##### General Information:

All instances of "we" refer to the writer and Paul and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

##### the days of unleavened bread

This refers to the Jewish religious feast time during the Passover season. See how you translated this in Acts 12:3.

#### Acts 20:7

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to the writer, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader. (See: and [Acts 20:4-6](./04.md))

##### Connecting Statement:

Luke tells about Paul's preaching in Troas and about what happened to Eutychus.

##### the next day

"when the sun came up again." If the writer was using the Jewish system of determining days, Paul was planning to travel after sunrise on "the first day of the week." If the writer was using the Greek system, Paul was planning to travel on the second day of the week.

##### to break bread

Bread was part of their meals. Possible meanings are 1) this refers simply to eating a meal together. Alternate translation: "to eat a meal" or 2) this refers to the meal they would eat together in order to remember Christ's death and resurrection. Alternate translation: "to eat the Lord's Supper"

##### he prolonged his message

"he continued to speak"

#### Acts 20:8

##### upper room

This may have been on the third floor of the house.

#### Acts 20:9

##### In the window

This was an opening in the wall with a ledge that was wide enough on which a person could sit.

##### Eutychus

This is the name of a man.

##### who fell into a deep sleep

This speaks about sleep as if it were a deep hole into which a person could fall. Alternate translation: "who slept soundly" or "who became more and more tired until finally he was sleeping soundly"

##### third story and was picked up dead

When they went down to check his condition, they saw he was dead. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "third story; and when they went to pick him up, they found that he was dead"

##### third story

This means two floors above the ground floor. If your culture does not count the ground floor, you may state this as the "second story."

#### Acts 20:10

##### on him ... embraced him ... he is alive

Here "him" and "he" refers to the young man, Eutychus.

##### he said

Here "he" refers to Paul.

#### Acts 20:11

##### General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Paul.

##### Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Paul's preaching at Troas and about Eutychus.

##### broke bread

Bread was a common food during meals. Here "broke bread" probably means that they shared a meal with more kinds of food than just bread.

##### he left

"he went away"

#### Acts 20:12

##### the boy

This refers to Eutychus (Acts 20:9). Possible meanings are 1) he was a young man over 14 years old or 2) he was a boy between 9 and 14 years old or 3) the word "boy" implies that he was a servant or a slave.

#### Acts 20:13

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to the writer and those traveling with him, but not to the reader.

##### Connecting Statement:

The writer Luke, Paul, and his other companions continue their travels; however, Paul goes separately for part of the trip.

##### We ourselves went

The word "ourselves" adds emphasis and separates Luke and his traveling companions from Paul, who did not travel by boat.

##### sailed away to Assos

Assos is a town located directly below present day Behram in Turkey on the coast of the Aegean sea.

##### he himself desired

Here "he himself" refers to Paul. "Himself" is used to emphasize that this is what Paul wanted.

##### to go by land

"to travel on land"

#### Acts 20:14

##### he met ... took him

Here "he" and "him" refer to Paul.

##### met us ... we took

Here the words "we" and "us" refer to the writer and those traveling with him, but not to the reader.

##### went to Mitylene

Mitylene is a town located in present day Mitilini in Turkey on the coast of the Aegean sea.

#### Acts 20:15

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Paul, the writer, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

##### opposite the island

"near the island" or "across from the island"

##### the island of Chios

Chios is an island off the coast of modern day Turkey in the Aegean Sea.

##### we touched at the island of Samos

"we arrived at the island of Samos"

##### island of Samos

Samos is an island south of Chios in the Aegean Sea off the coast of modern day Turkey.

##### the city of Miletus

Miletus was a port city in western Asia Minor near the mouth of the Meander River.

#### Acts 20:16

##### For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus

Paul sailed south past the port city of Ephesus, further south in order to land at Miletus.

##### so that he would not spend any time

This speaks about "time" as if it were a commodity that a person could spend or use up. Alternate translation: "so that he would not have to remain for a time" or "so that he would not have a delay"

#### Acts 20:17

##### General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Paul.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul calls the elders of the church of Ephesus and begins to speak to them.

##### Miletus

Miletus was a port city in western Asia Minor near the mouth of the Meander River. See how you translated this in [Acts 20:15]

#### Acts 20:18

##### You yourselves

Here "yourselves" is used for emphasis.

##### I set foot in Asia

Here "foot" stands for the entire person. Alternate translation: "I entered Asia"

##### how I always spent my time with you

This speaks about time as if it were something that a person could spend. Alternate translation: "how I always conducted myself when I was with you"

#### Acts 20:19

##### lowliness of mind

This speaks about something humble as if it were low to the ground. The word "mind" stands for a person's inner attitude. Alternate translation: "humility" or "humbleness"

##### with tears

Here "tears" stands for feeling sad and crying. Alternate translation: "with crying as I served the Lord"

##### in trials that happened to me

"Trials" is an abstract noun. The meaning can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "while God was testing me"

##### of the Jews

This does not mean every Jew. This lets us know who plotted. Alternate translation: "of some of the Jews"

#### Acts 20:20

##### You know how I did not keep back from declaring to you

"You know how I was never silent, but I always declared to you"

##### from house to house

"I also taught when I was in your homes"

#### Acts 20:21

##### about repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus

The abstract nouns "repentance" and "faith" can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "that they need to repent before God and believe in our Lord Jesus Christ"

##### our Lord Jesus

The word "our" refers to Paul and the elders to whom he is speaking.

#### Acts 20:22

##### General Information:

Here the word "I" refers to Paul.

##### compelled by the Spirit

They can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because the Spirit compels me to go there"

##### not knowing what will happen to me there

"and I do not know what will happen to me there"

#### Acts 20:23

##### chains and afflictions await me

Here "chains" refers to Paul's being arrested and put in prison. Alternate translation: "people will put me in prison and cause me to suffer"

#### Acts 20:24

##### if only I may finish the race and complete the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus

This speaks about Paul's "race" and "ministry" as if they are objects that Jesus gives and Paul receives. Here "race" and "ministry" mean basically the same thing. Paul repeats this for emphasis. Alternate translation: "so that I may complete the work that the Lord Jesus has commanded me to do"

##### finish the race

Paul speaks about completing the work that Jesus has commanded him to do as if he were running a race.

##### to testify to the gospel of the grace of God

"to tell people the good news about God's grace." This is the ministry that Paul received from Jesus.

#### Acts 20:25

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to talk to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17).

##### Now look, I know

"Now, pay careful attention, because I know"

##### I know that you all

"I know that all of you"

##### among whom I went about proclaiming the kingdom

Here "kingdom" stands for God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "to whom I preached the message about God's reign as king" or "to whom I preached about how God will show himself as king"

##### will see my face no more

The word "face" here represents Paul's physical body. Alternate translation: "will not see me anymore on this earth"

#### Acts 20:26

##### I am innocent of the blood of any man

Here "blood" stands for a person's death, which, in this case, is not physical death but spiritual death when God declares a person guilty of sin. Paul had told them God's truth. Alternate translation: "I am not responsible for anyone whom God judges guilty of sin because they did not trust in Jesus"

##### any man

Here this means any person whether male or female. Alternate translation: "any person"

#### Acts 20:27

##### For I did not hold back from declaring to you

"For I did not keep silent and not tell you." This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "For I certainly declared to you"

#### Acts 20:28

##### Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true," referring to all that Paul has said so far in his speech about his leaving them.

##### the flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you overseers. Be careful to shepherd the church of God

Believers are likened to a "flock" of sheep here. Church leaders are entrusted by God with the care of the community of believers just as a shepherd would care for his flock of sheep and protect them from wolves. Alternate translation: "the group of believers the Holy spirit has entrusted to you. Be sure to take care of the church of God"

##### the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood

The shedding of the blood of Christ here is likened to a payment to God for our sins. Alternate translation: "the people Christ saved from their sins by shedding his blood on the cross"

##### his own blood

Here "blood" stands for Christ's death.

#### Acts 20:29

##### vicious wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock

This is a picture of people who teach false doctrine and who harm the community of believers as though they were wolves that eat the sheep of the flock. Alternate translation: "many enemies will come among you and try to harm the community of believers"

#### Acts 20:30

##### to draw away the disciples after them

A false teacher convincing believers to start believing his false teaching is spoken of as if he were leading sheep away from the flock to follow him. Alternate translation: "in order to convince people who are disciples of Christ to become his disciples instead"

#### Acts 20:31

##### be on guard. Remember

"be on guard and remember" or "be on guard as you remember"

##### be on guard

"be awake and alert" or "watch out." Christian leaders being alert about anyone that may harm the community of believers is spoken of as if they were guards in an army watching out for the enemy army.

##### Remember that

"Continue to remember that" or "Do not forget that"

##### for three years I never stopped warning ... night and day

Paul taught them over the space of three years, but not necessarily every day for three years.

##### I never stopped warning ... you

This does not mean that the only words he spoke were words of warning. Rather, Paul is using hyperbole to remind them that he had told them often that evil men would try to deceive them. Alternate translation: "I warned ... you as often as I could"

##### with tears

Here "tears" refers to Paul's crying because of the strong emotion of concern he felt while he was warning the people.

#### Acts 20:32

##### I commit you to God and to the word of his grace

Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "I ask God to take care of you and to help you to keep believing the message I spoke to you about his grace"

##### which is able to build you up

A person's faith becoming stronger is spoken of as if the person were a wall and someone were building him higher and stronger. Alternate translation: "which is able to make become stronger and stronger in your faith"

##### to give you the inheritance

This speaks about the "word of his grace" as if the word itself would give the inheritance to believers. Alternate translation: "God will give you the inheritance"

##### the inheritance

The blessings that God gives believers are spoken of as if they were money or property that a child inherits from his father.

#### Acts 20:33

##### I coveted no man's silver

"I did not desire someone's silver" or "I did not want for myself anyone's silver"

##### man's silver, gold, or clothing

Clothing was considered a treasure; the more you had, the richer you were.

#### Acts 20:34

##### You yourselves

The word "yourselves" is used here to add emphasis.

##### these hands served my own needs

The word "hands" here represents the entire person. Alternate translation: "I worked to earn money and pay for my own expenses"

#### Acts 20:35

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes speaking to the elders of the church of Ephesus; he began to speak them in Acts 20:18.

##### you should help the weak by laboring

"you should work so as to have money to help people who cannot earn it for themselves"

##### the weak

You can state this nominal adjective as an adjective. Alternate translation: "weak persons" or "those who are weak"

##### weak

"sick"

##### the words of the Lord Jesus

Here "words" refers to what Jesus has said.

##### It is more blessed to give than to receive

This means a person receives the favor of God and experiences more joy when he gives to other people rather than always receiving from other people.

#### Acts 20:36

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul ends his time with the elders of the church of Ephesus by praying with them.

##### he knelt down and prayed

It was a common custom to kneel down while praying. It was a sign of humility before God.

#### Acts 20:37

##### embraced Paul

"hugged him closely" or "put their arms around him"

##### kissed him

Kissing someone on the cheek is an expression of brotherly or friendly love in the Middle East.

#### Acts 20:38

##### they would never see his face again

The word "face" here represents Paul's physical body. Alternate translation: "they would not see him anymore on this earth"

## Chapter 21

# Acts 21 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Acts 21:1-19 describes Paul's journey to Jerusalem. After he arrived in Jerusalem, the believers there told him that the Jews wanted to harm him and what he should do so they would not harm him (verses 20-26). Even though Paul did what the believers told him to do, the Jews tried to kill him. The Romans rescued him and gave him a chance to speak to the Jews.

The last verse of the chapter ends with an incomplete sentence. Most translations leave the sentence incomplete, as the ULB does.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### "They are all determined to keep the law"

The Jews in Jerusalem were following the law of Moses. Even those who were following Jesus still kept the law. Both groups thought that Paul had been telling Jews in Greece not to keep the law. But it was only the Gentiles to whom Paul was saying that.

#### Nazarite vow

The vow that Paul and his three friends made was probably a Nazarite vow, because they shaved their heads ([Acts 21:23](../../act/21/23.md)).

#### Gentiles in the temple

The Jews accused Paul of bringing a Gentile man into a part of the temple into which God only allowed Jews to go. They thought that God wanted them to punish Paul by killing him. (See: holy)

#### Roman citizenship

The Romans thought that they needed to treat only Roman citizens justly. They could do as they desired with people who were not Roman citizens, but they had to obey the law with other Romans. Some people were born Roman citizens, and others gave money to the Roman government so they could become Roman citizens.

## Links:

* [Acts 21:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 (Prophesy)

#### 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 (Prophesy) ; 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 (Prophesy) ; 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 (Prophesy) ; 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 Gentiles 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 Aramiac. 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 21:1

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Luke, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

##### Connecting Statement:

The writer Luke, Paul, and his companions continue their travels.

##### we took a straight course to the city of Cos

"we went straight to the city of Cos" or "we went directly to the city of Cos"

##### city of Cos

Cos is a Greek island off the coast of modern day Turkey in the South Aegean Sea region.

##### city of Rhodes

Rhodes is a Greek island off the coast of modern day Turkey in the South Aegean Sea region south of Cos and northeast of Crete.

##### city of Patara

Patara is a city on the southwest coast of modern day Turkey south of the Aegean Sea in the Mediterranean Sea.

#### Acts 21:2

##### When we found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia

Here "a ship crossing over" stands for the crew that would sail the ship. Alternate translation: "When we found a ship with a crew sailing over to Phoenicia"

##### a ship crossing over

Here "crossing" does not mean it was presently crossing but that it would be crossing to Phoenicia soon. Alternate translation: "a ship that would be going across the water" or "a ship that would be going"

#### Acts 21:3

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Luke, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

##### Cyprus, leaving it on the left side of the boat

The left is the "port" side of a boat. Here this means they sailed south of Cyprus. Alternate translation: "Cyprus, sailing south of it"

##### where the ship was to unload its cargo

Here "ship" stands for the crew that was sailing the ship. Alternate translation: "the crew would unload the cargo from the ship"

#### Acts 21:4

##### Through the Spirit they kept urging Paul not to go to Jerusalem

"The Spirit caused them to urge Paul again and again not to go to Jerusalem." The Spirit may have revealed to them that Paul would suffer in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "Because the Spirit had told them that Paul would suffer in Jerusalem, they urged him again and again not to go there"

#### Acts 21:5

##### General Information:

Here the word "They" refers to the believers from Tyre.

##### When our days there were over

"When the seven days were over" or "When it was time to leave"

##### knelt down on the beach, prayed

It was a common custom to kneel down while praying. This was a sign of humility before God.

#### Acts 21:6

##### said farewell to each other

"said goodbye to one another"

#### Acts 21:7

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Luke, Paul and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

##### we arrived at Ptolemais

Ptolemais was a city south of Tyre, Lebanon. Ptolemais is modern day Acre, Israel.

##### the brothers

"fellow believers"

#### Acts 21:8

##### Connecting Statement:

This begins Paul's time in Caesarea.

##### one of the seven

The "seven" refers to the men chosen to distribute food and aid to the widows in Acts 6:5.

##### evangelist

a person who tells people good news

#### Acts 21:9

##### this man

"Philip" from verse 8.

##### Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke tells background information about Philip and his daughters.

##### four virgin daughters who prophesied

"four virgin daughters who regularly received and passed along messages from God"

#### Acts 21:10

##### General Information:

Here the words "we" and "us" refers to Luke, Paul, and those with them, but not to the reader.

##### a certain prophet named Agabus

This introduces a new person in the story.

##### named Agabus

Agabus was a man from Judea.

#### Acts 21:11

##### Connecting Statement:

This tells about a prophecy made about Paul in Caesarea by the prophet Agabus.

##### took Paul's belt

"removed Paul's belt from Paul's waist"

##### Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews in Jerusalem will tie up ... of the Gentiles.'

This is a quotation within a quotation. The inner quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "The Holy Spirit says that this will be how the Jews in Jerusalem will tie up ... of the Gentiles."

##### the Jews

This does not mean all the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders" or "some of the Jews"

##### hand him over

"deliver him"

##### into the hands of the Gentiles

The word "hands" here represents control. Alternate translation: "into the legal custody of the Gentiles" or "to the Gentiles"

##### the Gentiles

This stands for the authorities among the Gentiles. Alternate translation: "the Gentile authorities"

#### Acts 21:12

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Luke and the other believers but does not include the reader.

#### Acts 21:13

##### What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart?

Paul asks this question to show the believers they should stop trying to persuade him. Alternate translation: "Stop what you are doing. Your weeping is breaking my heart."

##### breaking my heart

This is a metaphor for making someone sad or discouraging them. Here "heart" stands for a person's emotions. Alternate translation: "discouraging me" or "making me very sad"

##### not only to be tied up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "not only for them to tie me up"

##### for the name of the Lord Jesus

Here "name" refers to the person of Jesus. Alternate translation: "for the sake of the Lord Jesus" or "because I believe in the Lord Jesus"

#### Acts 21:14

##### Paul would not be persuaded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Paul would not allow us to to persuade him" or "we were unable to persuade Paul"

##### persuaded

You may need to make explicit what they could not persuade Paul not to do. Alternate translation: "persuaded not to go up to Jerusalem"

##### May the will of the Lord be done

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "May everything happen as the Lord has planned it"

#### Acts 21:15

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Luke, Paul, and those traveling with them, and not to the reader.

##### Connecting Statement:

This ends Paul's time in Caesarea.

#### Acts 21:16

##### They brought with them a man

"Among them was a man"

##### Mnason, a man from Cyprus

Mnason was a man from the island of Cyprus.

##### an early disciple

This means Mnason was one of the first to believe in Jesus.

#### Acts 21:17

##### General Information:

Here the words "we" and "us" refer to Luke, Paul, and those traveling with them, and not to the reader.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul and his companions arrive in Jerusalem.

##### the brothers welcomed us

Here "brothers" refers to the believers in Jerusalem, whether male or female. Alternate translation: "the fellow believers welcomed us"

#### Acts 21:18

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 21:19

##### General Information:

Here the words "he" and "his" refer to Paul. The word "them" refers to the elders.

##### he reported one by one

"he gave a detailed account of all"

#### Acts 21:20

##### Connecting Statement:

The elders in Jerusalem begin their response to Paul.

##### they heard ... they glorified ... they said to him

Here the word "they" refers to James and the elders. The word "him" refers to Paul.

##### brother

Here "brother" means "fellow believer."

##### They are

The word "they" refers to Jewish believers who wanted all believing Jews to keep the Jewish laws and customs.

##### the law

this phrase here refers to the law of Moses

#### Acts 21:21

##### They have been told

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People have told the Jewish believers"

##### to abandon Moses

Here "Moses" stands for the law of Moses. Alternate translation: "to stop obeying the laws that Moses gave us"

##### not to walk according to the traditional ways

A person who obeys the traditions and customs is spoken of as if he were walking on a path. Alternate translation: "not to obey the old customs" or "not to practice the old customs"

##### the traditional ways

"the usual Jewish customs"

#### Acts 21:22

##### we do

Here the word "we" refers to James and the elders

##### They will

The word "They" refers to the Jewish believers in Jerusalem who wanted to teach Jewish believers that they could still follow the laws of Moses ([Acts 21:20-21](./20.md)).

##### you have come

The word "you" refers to Paul.

#### Acts 21:23

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to James and the elders

##### four men who made a vow

"four men who made a promise to God." This was the kind of vow where a person would not drink alcohol or cut his hair until the end of a set period of time.

#### Acts 21:24

##### Connecting Statement:

James and the elders continue speaking to Paul.

##### Take these men and purify yourself with them

They had to make themselves ritually pure so they could worship in the temple.

##### pay their expenses for them

"pay for what they will need." The expenses would go toward buying a male and female lamb, a ram, and grain and drink offerings.

##### they may shave their heads

This was a sign that the person had completed what they promised God they would do.

##### the things they have been told about you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things that people are saying about you"

#### Acts 21:25

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to James and the elders.

##### Connecting Statement:

James and the elders in Jerusalem finish their request to Paul (Acts 21:18).

##### they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from what is strangled

All of these are rules about what they can eat. They are forbidden to eat meat of animals sacrificed to an idol, meat with blood still in it, and meat from a strangled animal because it would still have blood in the meat. See how you translated similar phrases in [Acts 15:20]

##### they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they stay away from the meat of an animal that someone sacrificed to an idol"

##### from what is strangled

This can be stated in active form. You can also state explicitly the assumed information about strangled animals. Alternate translation: "from animals that a person has strangled" or "from animals that a person killed for food but did not drain its blood"

#### Acts 21:26

##### took the men

These are the 4 men who made a vow.

##### he purified himself along with them

Before entering the temple area the Jews were required to be ceremonially or ritually clean. This cleansing had to do with Jews having contact with Gentiles.

##### went into the temple

They did not go into the temple itself where only the high priest was allowed to enter. They entered the temple courtyard. Alternate translation: "went into the temple courtyard"

##### the days of purification

This is a separate purification process from the purification process which they were required to fulfill in order to enter the temple area.

##### the offering would be presented

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they presented the animals for an offering"

#### Acts 21:27

##### Connecting Statement:

This begins the story of Paul's arrest.

##### the seven days

These are the seven days for purification.

##### in the temple

Paul was not in the temple itself. He was in the temple courtyard. Alternate translation: "in the temple courtyard"

##### stirred up the whole crowd

People who incited a crowd to become very angry at Paul are spoken of as if they stirred up the crowd's emotions. Alternate translation: "caused a large number of people to be very angry at Paul"

##### laid hands on him

Here "laid hands on" means to "seized" or to "grabbed." See how you translated "laid hands on" in [Acts 5:18]

#### Acts 21:28

##### the people, the law, and this place

"the people of Israel, the law of Moses, and the temple"

##### Besides, he has also brought Greeks into the temple

Only Jewish males were allowed in certain areas of the courtyard of the Jerusalem temple.

#### Acts 21:29

##### General Information:

Verse 29 gives background information about the Jews from Asia.

##### For they had previously ... into the temple

This is background information. Luke is explaining why the Jews from Asia thought Paul brought a Greek into the temple.

##### Trophimus

This was a Greek man that they accused Paul of having brought into the inner temple area that was only for Jews. See how you translated his name in Acts 20:4.

#### Acts 21:30

##### All the city was excited

The word "All" here is an exaggeration for emphasis. The word "city" represents the people in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "Many people in the city became angry at Paul"

##### laid hold of Paul

"seized Paul" or "grabbed Paul"

##### the doors were immediately shut

They shut the doors so that there would not be rioting in the temple area. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "some of the Jews immediately shut the temple doors" or "the temple guards immediately shut the doors"

#### Acts 21:31

##### news came up to the chief captain of the company of soldiers

Here "news" refers to the messenger who went to speak the news. Alternate translation: "someone gave news to the chief captain of the cohort"

##### news came up to the chief captain

The phrase "came up to" is used because the chief captain was in a fortress connected to the temple that was higher in elevation than the temple courtyard.

##### the chief captain

This is a Roman military leader of about 1,000 soldiers.

##### the company of soldiers

A company is a group of about 1,000 soldiers.

##### all Jerusalem was in an uproar

The word "Jerusalem" here represents the people of Jerusalem. The word "all" is an exaggeration to show a large crowd was upset. Alternate translation: "all the people in Jerusalem were in an uproar" or "the large crowd in Jerusalem was in an uproar" (See: and )

#### Acts 21:32

##### General Information:

The first word "he" refers to the chief captain of the guard mentioned in Acts 21:31.

##### ran down

From the fortress, there are stairs going down into the court.

#### Acts 21:33

##### laid hold of Paul

"took hold of Paul" or "arrested Paul"

##### commanded him to be bound

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "commanded his soldiers to bind him"

##### with two chains

This means they bound Paul to two Roman soldiers, one on each side of him.

##### he asked who he was and what he had done.

This can be stated as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "he asked, 'Who is this man? What has he done?'"

##### he asked who he was

The chief captain is speaking to the crowd, not to Paul.

#### Acts 21:34

##### and others another

The words "were shouting" are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "and others were shouting another" or "and others in the crowd were shouting something else"

##### he ordered that Paul be brought

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he ordered his soldiers to bring Paul"

##### into the fortress

This fortress was connected to the outer temple court.

#### Acts 21:35

##### When he came to the steps, he was carried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When Paul came to the steps of the fortress, the soldiers carried him"

#### Acts 21:36

##### Away with him

The crowd is using somewhat milder and less exact language to ask for Paul's death. Alternate translation: "Put him to death" or "Kill him"

#### Acts 21:37

##### As Paul was about to be brought

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "As the soldiers were ready to bring Paul"

##### the fortress

This fortress was connected to the outer temple court. See how you translated this in Acts 21:34.

##### The captain said, "Do you know Greek?

The chief captain uses this questions to express surprise that Paul is not who he thought he was. Alternate translation: "So you know Greek." or "I didn't know you knew Greek."

##### know Greek

know how to speak and understand the Greek language

#### Acts 21:38

##### Are you not then the Egyptian ... wilderness?

The chief captain uses this question and the question "Do you speak Greek?"

##### Are you not then the Egyptian

Shortly before Paul's visit, an unnamed man from Egypt had launched a revolt against Rome in Jerusalem. Later he escaped into the wilderness and the commander wonders if Paul might be the same man.

##### started a rebellion

This word "rebellion" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "caused people to rebel against the Roman government"

##### the four thousand men

"the 4,000 terrorists"

##### Assassins

This refers to a group of Jewish rebels who killed Romans and anyone who supported the Roman government.

#### Acts 21:39

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul is correcting the chief captain's wrong idea about who Paul is.

##### Tarsus in Cilicia

Cilicia was a Roman province across the Mediterranean Sea from Egypt, and Tarsus was a large, well-known city.

##### I am a citizen of no unimportant city

Paul uses the double negative in the phrase "no unimportant city" to emphasize that the chief captain should have known that Tarsus was an important city. Alternate translation: "I am a citizen of an important city"

##### I beg you

Or "I plead with you."

##### allow me

"please allow me" or please permit me"

#### Acts 21:40

##### the captain had given him permission

The word "permission" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "the captain permitted Paul to speak" or "the captain allowed Paul to speak"

##### Paul stood on the steps

The word "steps" here refers to the steps on the stairway to the fortress.

##### motioned with the hand to the people

It can be stated explicitly why Paul motioned with the hand. Alternate translation: "motioned with his hand for the people to be quiet"

##### When there was a deep silence

"When the people were completely silent"

## Chapter 22

# Acts 22 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

This is the second account of Paul's conversion in the book of Acts. Because this is such an important event in the early church, there are three accounts of Paul's conversion. (See: Acts 9 and Acts 26)

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### "In the Hebrew language"

Most Jews at this time spoke Aramaic and Greek. Most of the people who spoke Hebrew were educated Jewish scholars. This is why the people paid attention when Paul started speaking in Hebrew.

#### "The Way"

No one knows for sure who first started calling believers "followers of the Way." This is probably what the believers called themselves, because the Bible often speaks of a person living his life as if that person were walking on a path or "way." If this is true, the believers were "following the way of the Lord" by living in a way that pleased God.

#### Roman citizenship

The Romans thought that they needed to treat only Roman citizens justly. They could do as they desired with people who were not Roman citizens, but they had to obey the law with other Romans. Some people were born Roman citizens, and others gave money to the Roman government so they could become Roman citizens. The "chief captain" could have been punished for treating a Roman citizen the same way he would treat a non-citizen.

## Links:

* [Acts 22:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 Gamalier 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 Chrisitans (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 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 22:1

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul speaks to the Jewish crowd in Jerusalem.

##### Brothers and fathers

This is a polite way of addressing men who are Paul's age as well as the older men in the audience.

##### I will now make to you

"I will now explain to you" or "I will now present to you"

#### Acts 22:2

##### the Hebrew language

The Hebrew language was the language of the Jews.

#### Acts 22:3

##### but educated in this city at the feet of Gamaliel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but I was a student of Gamaliel here in Jerusalem"

##### at the feet of Gamaliel

Here "feet" stands for the place where a student would sit while learning from a teacher. Alternate translation: "by Gamaliel"

##### Gamaliel

Gamaliel was one of the most prominent teachers of the Jewish law. See how you translated this name in Acts 5:34.

##### I was instructed according to the strict ways of the law of our fathers

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "He instructed me how to carefully obey every law of our forefathers" or "The instruction I received followed the exact details of the law of our forefathers"

##### law of our fathers

"law of our ancestors." This refers to the law that God gave to the people of Israel through Moses.

##### I am zealous for God

"I am completely dedicated to obeying God" or "I am passionate about my service to God"

##### just as all of you are today

"in the same way all of you are today." Paul compares himself with the crowd.

#### Acts 22:4

##### I persecuted this Way to the death

Here "this Way" represents the people who belonged to the group called "the Way." The word "death" can be translated with the verb "kill." Alternate translation: "I persecuted the people who belonged to this Way and I looked for ways to kill them"

##### this Way

This was a term used to refer to Christianity. See how you translated "the Way" in Acts 9:2.

##### binding up and delivering to prison both men and women

"tying up both men and women and taking them to prison"

#### Acts 22:5

##### I received letters from them

"The high priests and elders gave me letters"

##### for the brothers in Damascus

Here "brothers" refers to "fellow Jews."

##### to bring them back in bonds to Jerusalem

"to bind those of the Way with chains and bring them back to Jerusalem"

##### to be punished

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that they would receive punishment" or "so that the Jewish authorities could punish them"

#### Acts 22:6

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul describes his encounter with Jesus.

##### It happened that

This phrase is used here to mark where the action starts. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

#### Acts 22:7

##### heard a voice say to me

Here "voice" stands for the person speaking. Alternate translation: "I heard someone say to me"

#### Acts 22:8

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 22:9

##### they did not understand the voice of him who spoke to me

Here "voice" stands for the person speaking. Alternate translation: "they did not understand what the one who spoke to me was saying"

#### Acts 22:10

##### There you will be told

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "There someone will tell you" or "There you will learn"

#### Acts 22:11

##### I could not see because of that light's brightness

"I was left blind because of that light's brightness"

##### being led by the hands of those who were with me, I came into Damascus

Here "hands" stands for those leading Paul. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those with me guided me into Damascus"

#### Acts 22:12

##### Ananias

Though this is not the same Ananias who died earlier in [Acts 5:3]

##### devout man according to the law

Ananias was very serious about following God's law.

##### law and well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there

This can be stated in active form in a new sentence. Alternate translation: "law. All the Jews who lived there spoke well of him"

#### Acts 22:13

##### General Information:

The words "He" and "him" refer to Ananias.

##### Brother Saul

Here "Brother" is a polite way to address someone. Alternate translation: "My friend Saul"

##### receive your sight

The word "sight" can be translated with the verb "see." Alternate translation: "see again"

##### In that very hour

This was a customary way of saying something happened immediately. Alternate translation: "At that instant" or "Instantly" or "Immediately"

#### Acts 22:14

##### General Information:

The word "he" refers to Ananias (Acts 22:12).

##### his will

"what God is planning and will cause to happen"

##### to hear the voice coming from his own mouth

Both "voice" and "mouth" refer to the one speaking. Alternate translation: "to hear him speak directly to you"

#### Acts 22:15

##### to all men

Here "men" means all people whether male or female. Alternate translation: "to all people"

#### Acts 22:16

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes telling what had happened to him in Damascus. He quotes what Ananias said to him. This is still part of his speech to the crowd in Jerusalem.

##### Now

Here "now" does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

##### why are you waiting?

This question was asked to exhort Paul to be baptized. Alternate translation: "do not wait!" or "do not delay!"

##### be baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "let me baptize you" or "receive baptism"

##### wash away your sins

As washing one's body removes dirt, calling on the name of Jesus for forgiveness cleanses one's inner being from sin. Alternate translation: "ask forgiveness for your sins"

##### calling on his name

Here "name" refers to the Lord. Alternate translation: "calling on the Lord" or "trusting in the Lord"

#### Acts 22:17

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul begins to tell the crowd about his vision of Jesus.

##### a trance came on me

This metaphor means that Paul went into the trance without expecting it or desiring it. See how you translated similar words in [Acts 10:10]

#### Acts 22:18

##### I saw him say to me

"I saw Jesus as he said to me"

##### they will not accept your testimony about me

"those who live in Jerusalem will not believe what you tell them about me"

#### Acts 22:19

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the non-believing Jews in Jerusalem.

##### they themselves know

The word "themselves" is used for emphasis.

##### in every synagogue

Paul went to synagogues to find Jews who believed in Jesus.

#### Acts 22:20

##### the blood of Stephen your witness was spilled

Here "blood" stands for Stephen's life. To spill blood means to kill. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they killed Stephen, who testified about you"

#### Acts 22:21

##### Connecting Statement:

This ends what Paul was able to say to the crowd of Jewish people by the fortress.

#### Acts 22:22

##### General Information:

Here the words "him" and "he" refer to Paul.

##### until that statement

"until Paul said that"

##### Away with such a fellow from the earth

The phrase "from the earth" adds emphasis to "Away with such a fellow." Alternate translation: "Kill him"

#### Acts 22:23

##### As they were

"While they were." The phrase "As they were" is used to mark two events that are happening at the same time.

##### throwing off their cloaks, and throwing dust into the air

These actions show that the Jews there are outraged because they feel Paul has spoken against God.

#### Acts 22:24

##### chief captain

This is a Roman military leader of about 1,000 soldiers. See how you translated this in Acts 21:31.

##### commanded Paul to be brought

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "ordered his soldiers to bring Paul"

##### the fortress

This fortress was connected to the outer temple court. See how you translated this in Acts 21:34.

##### He ordered that he should be questioned with scourging

The commander wants soldiers to torture Paul by whipping him to ensure he tells the truth. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "He ordered his soldiers to whip Paul to force him to tell the truth"

##### He ordered that he

The first "he" refers to chief captain. The second "he" refers to Paul.

##### that he himself

The word "himself" is used for emphasis.

#### Acts 22:25

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the soldiers.

##### the thongs

These were strips of leather or animal hide.

##### Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and who has not been put on trial?

Paul uses this question to make the centurion check the validity of having his soldiers whip Paul. Alternate translation: "It is not lawful for you to whip a man who is a Roman and who was not given his legal right to a trial!"

#### Acts 22:26

##### What are you about to do?

This question is used to urge the commander to reconsider his plan to whip Paul. Alternate translation: "You should not do this!"

#### Acts 22:27

##### General Information:

Here the word "him" refers to Paul.

##### The chief captain came

Here "came" can be translated as "went."

#### Acts 22:28

##### It was only with a large amount of money

"It was only after I paid a lot of money to the Roman authorities." The captain makes this statement because he knows how hard it is to become a Roman citizen, and he suspects Paul is not telling truth.

##### I acquired citizenship

"I got citizenship." The word "citizenship" is an abstract noun. Alternate translation: "I became a citizen"

##### I was born a Roman citizen

If a man was a Roman citizen, then his children become Roman citizens automatically when they were born.

#### Acts 22:29

##### the men who were going to question

"the men who planned to question" or "the men who were preparing to question"

#### Acts 22:30

##### General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to the chief captain.

##### So he untied his bonds

Possibly the "chief captain" stands for the chief captain's soldiers. Alternate translation: "So the chief captain ordered his soldiers to untie Paul's bonds"

##### he brought Paul down

There was a stairway going down from the fortress to the temple courts.

## Chapter 23

# Acts 23 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted material in 23:5.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Resurrection of the dead

The Pharisees believed that after people died, they would become alive again and God would either reward them or punish them. The Sadducees believed that once people died, they stayed dead and would never become alive again. (See: raise and reward)

#### "Called a curse"

Some Jews promised God that they would not eat or drink until they killed Paul, and they asked God to punish them if they did not do what they had promised to do.

#### Roman citizenship

The Romans thought that they needed to treat only Roman citizens justly. They could do as they desired with people who were not Roman citizens, but they had to obey the law with other Romans. Some people were born Roman citizens, and others gave money to the Roman government so they could become Roman citizens. The "chief captain" could have been punished for treating a Roman citizen the same way he would treat a non-citizen.

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### Whitewashed

This is a metaphor in scripture describing someone who appears to be good or clean or righteous when that person is evil or unclean or unrighteous.

## Links:

* [Acts 23:1](../../act/23/01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 (Hypocirte)

#### 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 23:1

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul stands before the chief priests and the council members (Acts 22:30).

##### Brothers

Here this means "Fellow Jews."

##### I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day

"I know that even to this day I have done what God has wanted me to do"

#### Acts 23:2

##### Ananias

This is the name of a man. Although he has the same name, the Ananias here is neither the Ananias mentioned in [Acts 5:1]

#### Acts 23:3

##### whitewashed wall

This refers to a wall that was painted white to make it look clean. Paul told Ananias that just as a wall can be painted to look clean so Ananias appeared to look morally clean, but he was really full of evil intent. Alternate translation: "white-painted wall" or "wall painted white"

##### Are you sitting to judge ... against the law?

Paul uses a question to point out Ananias' hypocrisy. Some modern translations read this as a statement, "You are sitting to judge ... against the law." Alternate translation: "You are wrong to sit there to judge ... against the law."

##### order me to be struck

This can be stated in active form. You can use the same word for "strike" as you did in the phrase "God will strike you." Alternate translation: "command people to strike me"

#### Acts 23:4

##### Is this how you insult God's high priest?

The men use this question to scold Paul for what he has said in [Acts 23:3]

#### Acts 23:5

##### For it is written

Paul is about to quote what Moses wrote in the law. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For Moses wrote in the law"

#### Acts 23:6

##### Brothers

Here "Brothers" means "Fellow Jews"

##### a son of Pharisees

Here "son" means he is the literal son of a Pharisee and also the descendant of Pharisees. Alternate translation: "and my father and forefathers were Pharisees"

##### I have the hope of the resurrection of the dead

Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." The abstract noun "resurrection" can be expressed with the verb phrase "become alive again." Alternate translation: "I confidently expect the resurrection of the dead" or "I trust that the dead will become alive again"

##### the dead

The phrase "the dead" can be expressed as "those who have died."

##### I am being judged

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you are judging me"

#### Acts 23:7

##### the crowd was divided

"the people in the crowd strongly disagreed with one another"

#### Acts 23:8

##### For the Sadducees ... but the Pharisees

This is background information about the Sadducees and Pharisees.

#### Acts 23:9

##### So a large uproar occurred

"So they began shouting loudly at one another." The word "so" marks an event that happened because of something else that happened previously. In this case, the previous event is Paul's stating his belief in the resurrection.

##### What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?

The Pharisees use this question to suggest that Paul may have gotten his teaching from an angel or a spirit. They may be rebuking the Sadducees for not believing that spirits and angels exist and can speak to people. Alternate translation: "Maybe a spirit or an angel has spoken with him!"

#### Acts 23:10

##### When there arose a great argument

The words "a great argument" can be re-stated as "argue violently." Alternate translation: "When they began to argue violently"

##### chief captain

This is a Roman military leader of about 1,000 soldiers. See how you translated this in Acts 21:31.

##### Paul would be torn to pieces by them

This can be stated in active form. The phrase "be torn to pieces" might be an exaggeration of how the people might harm Paul. Alternate translation: "they might tear Paul to pieces" or "they would cause Paul great physical harm"

##### take him by force

"use physical force to take him away"

##### into the fortress

This fortress was connected to the outer temple court. See how you translated this in Acts 21:34.

#### Acts 23:11

##### The following night

This means the night after the day Paul went before the council. Alternate translation: "That night"

##### testify in Rome

The words "about me" are understood. Alternate translation: "testify about me in Rome"

#### Acts 23:12

##### Connecting Statement:

While Paul is in the prison at the fortress, the disbelieving religious Jews vow to kill him.

##### formed a conspiracy

"organized a group with a shared purpose." The purpose for organizing this group was to kill Paul.

##### put themselves under an oath

The noun "oath" is an abstract noun that refers to a promise that the men made to God to kill Paul. It can also be made explicit what would happen to the men if they did not do what they had promised to do. Alternate translation: "asked God to curse them if they did not do what they promised"

#### Acts 23:13

##### forty men

"40 men"

##### who formed this conspiracy

"who made this plan" or "who planned to kill Paul"

#### Acts 23:14

##### General Information:

Here the word "They" refers to the forty Jews in Acts 23:13.

##### We have sworn a great oath to eat nothing until we have killed Paul

"We have sworn to eat nothing until we have killed Paul. We asked God to curse us if we do not do what we promised to do"

#### Acts 23:15

##### General Information:

Here "you" is plural and refers to the chief priests and elders. Both "us" and "we" refer to the forty Jews who planned to kill Paul.

##### Now, therefore

"Because what we have just said is true" or "Because we have put ourselves under this curse"

##### Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

##### bring him down to you

"bring Paul from the fortress to meet with you"

##### as if you would decide his case more precisely

"as though you want to learn more about what Paul has done"

#### Acts 23:16

##### Paul's sister's son

"the son of Paul's sister" or "Paul's nephew"

##### they were lying in wait

"they were ready to ambush Paul" or "they were waiting to kill Paul"

##### the fortress

This fortress was connected to the outer temple court. See how you translated this in Acts 21:34.

#### Acts 23:17

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 23:18

##### Paul the prisoner called me to him

"Paul the prisoner asked me to come talk with him"

##### this young man

Since the chief captain calls him a young man, this suggests Paul's nephew may have been 12 to 15 years old.

#### Acts 23:19

##### chief captain took him by the hand

Since the chief captain took the young man by the hand and calls him a young man (verse 18), this suggests Paul's nephew may have been 12 to 15 years old.

#### Acts 23:20

##### The Jews have agreed

This does not mean all Jews, but all of the group that was there. Alternate translation: "Some of the Jews have agreed"

##### to bring down Paul

"to bring Paul down from the fortress"

##### they were going to ask more precisely about his case

"they wanted to learn more about what Paul has done"

#### Acts 23:21

##### forty men

"40 men"

##### lying in wait for him

"ready to ambush Paul" or "ready to kill Paul"

##### They have put themselves under oath neither to eat nor to drink until they have killed him

"They have sworn to eat and drink nothing until they have killed Paul. And they asked God to curse them if they do not do what they promised to do"

##### for your approval

"for you to agree to do what they have asked you to do"

#### Acts 23:22

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 23:23

##### he called to him

"he called to himself." Both "he" and "him" refer to the chief captain.

##### two of the centurions

"2 of the centurions"

##### seventy horsemen

"70 horsemen"

##### two hundred spearmen

"200 soldiers that are armed with spears"

##### third hour of the night

This was about 9:00 p.m. at night.

#### Acts 23:24

##### Felix the governor

Felix, who resided at Caesarea, was the roman governor of the area.

#### Acts 23:25

##### General Information:

Here "he" refers to the chief captain.

#### Acts 23:26

##### General Information:

Claudius Lysias was the name of the chief captain. Governor Felix was the Roman governor over the whole region.

##### Claudius Lysias to the most excellent Governor Felix, greetings

This is a formal introduction to the letter. The chief captain begins by referring to himself. You can translate it in the first person. The words "am writing" are understood. Alternate translation: "I, Claudius Lysias, am writing to you, the most excellent Governor Felix, and I greet you"

##### to the most excellent Governor Felix

"to Governor Felix, you who deserve the greatest honors"

#### Acts 23:27

##### This man was arrested by the Jews

Here "Jews" means "some of the Jews." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Some of the Jews arrested this man"

##### was about to be killed by them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they were ready to kill him"

##### I came upon them with soldiers

"I with my soldiers arrived at the place where Paul and these Jews were"

#### Acts 23:28

##### General Information:

Here the word "I" refers to Claudius Lysias, the chief captain. The word "they" refers to the Jews who accused Paul. The word "him" refers to Paul.

#### Acts 23:29

##### that he was being accused about questions concerning

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that they were accusing him of questions about"

##### but that there was no accusation against him that deserved death or imprisonment

The abstract nouns "accusation," "death," and "imprisonment" can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "but nobody accused him of anything that should cause Roman authorities to kill him or to send him to prison"

#### Acts 23:30

##### Connecting Statement:

The chief captain ends his letter to Governor Felix.

##### Then it was reported to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Then someone told me" or "Then I learned"

##### sent him to you

Here "you" refers to Governor Felix.

#### Acts 23:31

##### Connecting Statement:

This ends Paul's time under arrest in Jerusalem and begins his time of arrest in Caesarea with Governor Felix.

##### So the soldiers obeyed their orders

The word "so" marks an event that happened because of something else that happened previously. In this case, the previous event is the chief captain's commanding the soldiers to escort Paul.

##### They took Paul and brought him by night

Here "brought" can be translated as "took." Alternate translation: "They got Paul and took him at night"

##### Antipatris

Antipatris was a city built by Herod in honor of his father, Antipater. It stood at a site located today in central Israel.

#### Acts 23:32

##### to go with him

Here "him" refers to Paul.

#### Acts 23:33

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 23:34

##### he asked what province Paul was from. When he learned that he was from Cilicia

This can be stated with direct quotations. Alternate translation: "he asked Paul, 'What province are you from?' Paul said, 'I am from Cilicia.' When the governor learned this"

##### When he learned that he

"When the governor learned that Paul"

#### Acts 23:35

##### he said

"the governor said"

##### I will hear you fully

"I will listen to all you have to say"

##### he commanded him to be kept

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he commanded soldiers to keep him" or "commanded soldiers to restrain him"

## Chapter 24

# Acts 24 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Paul told the governor that he had not done what the Jews were accusing him of doing and that the governor should not punish him for what he did do.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Respect

Both the Jewish leaders ([Acts 24:2-4](./02.md)) and Paul ([Acts 24:10](../../act/24/10.md)) began their speeches with words that show respect to the governor.

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### Governmental leaders

The words "governor," "commander," and "centurion" may be difficult to translate into some languages.

## Links:

* [Acts 24:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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: JJudge (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 Chrisitans (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 24:1

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul is on trial in Caesarea. Tertullus presents Governor Felix with the charges against Paul.

##### After five days

"Five days after the Roman soldiers took Paul to Caesarea"

##### Ananias

This is the name of a man. He is not the same Ananias as in [Acts 5:1]

##### an orator

"a lawyer." Tertullus was an expert in Roman law who was there to accuse Paul in court.

##### Tertullus

This is the name of a man.

##### went there

"went to Caesarea where Paul was"

##### before the governor

"in the presence of the governor, who was judge in the court"

##### brought charges against Paul

"began to argue the case before the governor that Paul had broken the law."

#### Acts 24:2

##### Because of you

Here the word "you" refers to Felix, the governor.

##### we have great peace

Here "we" refers to the citizens under Felix. Alternate translation: "we, the people that you govern, have great peace"

##### and your foresight brings good reform to our nation

"and your planning has greatly improved our nation"

#### Acts 24:3

##### so with all thankfulness we welcome everything that you do

The word "thankfulness" is an abstract noun. It can be stated as an adjective or verb. Alternate translation: "so we are very thankful and we welcome everything that you do" or "so we thank you very much and welcome everything that you do"

##### most excellent Felix

"Governor Felix, who deserves greatest honor." Felix was the roman governor over the whole region. See how you translated a similar phrase in Acts 23:25.

#### Acts 24:4

##### So that I detain you no more

Possible meanings are 1) "so that I will not take up too much of your time" or 2) "so that I will not tire you"

##### in your kindness to hear us briefly

"to be kind and listen to the short speech I am giving to state these men's case"

#### Acts 24:5

##### General Information:

The word "we" refers to Ananias, certain elders, and Tertullus.

##### this man to be a pest

Here "pest" is a metaphor for a person who causes trouble. Alternate translation: "this man to be a trouble maker"

##### all the Jews throughout the world

The word "all" here is probably an exaggeration used to strengthen their accusation against Paul.

##### He is a leader of the Nazarene sect

The phrase "Nazarene sect" is another name for the Christians. Alternate translation: "He also leads the entire group whom people call the followers of the Nazarene"

##### sect

This is a smaller group of people within a larger group group. Tertullus considers the Christians to be a small group within Judaism.

#### Acts 24:6

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 24:7

##### General Information:

Here the word "you" is singular and refers to Governor Felix.

#### Acts 24:8

##### Connecting Statement:

Tertullus finishes presenting the charges against Paul before Governor Felix.

##### to learn about all the things of which we are accusing him

"to learn whether or not these charges that we bring against him are true" or "to learn whether or not he is guilty of the things we accuse him of"

#### Acts 24:9

##### The Jews

This refers to the Jewish leaders who were there at Paul's trial.

#### Acts 24:10

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul responds to Governor Felix about the charges brought against him.

##### the governor motioned

"the governor gestured"

##### a judge to this nation

Here "nation" refers to the people of the Jewish nation. Alternate translation: "a judge for the people of the Jewish nation"

##### explain myself

"explain my situation"

#### Acts 24:11

##### twelve days since

"12 days since"

#### Acts 24:12

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the Jews who were accusing Paul.

##### I did not stir up a crowd

"Stir up" here is a metaphor for agitating people into unrest, just as stirring a liquid agitates it. Alternate translation: "I did not cause a crowd to riot"

#### Acts 24:13

##### the accusations

"the blames for wrongdoings" or "the charges for crimes"

#### Acts 24:14

##### I confess this to you

"I acknowledge this to you"

##### that according to the Way

The phrase "the Way" was a title used for Christianity during Paul's time.

##### a sect

This is a smaller group of people within a larger group. Christianity was originally considered to be a small group within Judaism. See how you translated "sect" in Acts 24:5.

##### the law

Paul is referring to the law of Moses.

#### Acts 24:15

##### I have a hope in God, which these men also have, that there will be a resurrection

Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." Alternate translation: "Just as these men, I trust in God that there will be a resurrection"

##### these men

the Jews who are accusing Paul in court

##### that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked

The abstract noun "resurrection" can be stated with the verb "resurrect." Alternate translation: "that God will resurrect all who have died, both the righteous and the unrighteous"

##### the righteous and the wicked

These nominal adjectives refer to righteous people and wicked people. Alternate translation: "righteous people and wicked people" or "those who have done what is right and those who have done what is evil"

#### Acts 24:16

##### I always strive

"I always work hard" or "I do my best"

##### to have a blameless conscience

Here "conscience" refers to a person's inner morality that chooses between right and wrong. Alternate translation: "to be blameless" or "to always do what is right"

##### before God

"in the presence of God"

#### Acts 24:17

##### Now

This word marks a shift in Paul's argument. Here he explains the situation in Jerusalem when some of the Jews arrested him.

##### after many years

"after many years away from Jerusalem"

##### I came to give alms to my nation and present sacrifices

Here "I came" can be translated as "I went." Alternate translation: "I went to help my people by bringing them money as a gift; I also went to present sacrifices"

#### Acts 24:18

##### in a purification ceremony in the temple

"in the temple after I had finished a ceremony to purify myself"

##### in the temple, not with a crowd or an uproar

This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "in the temple. I had not gathered a crowd nor was I trying to start a riot"

#### Acts 24:19

##### These men

"The Jews from Asia"

##### if they have anything

"if they have anything to say"

#### Acts 24:20

##### these same men

This refers to the members of the council who were present in Jerusalem at Paul's trial.

##### should say what wrong they found in me

"should say the wrong thing I did that they were able to prove"

#### Acts 24:21

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes responding to Governor Felix about the charges brought against him.

##### It is concerning the resurrection of the dead

The abstract noun "resurrection" can be stated as "God brings back to life." Alternate translation: "It is because I believe that God will bring back to life those who have died"

##### I am on trial before you today

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you are judging me today"

#### Acts 24:22

##### General Information:

Felix is the Roman governor of the area who resides at Caesarea. See how you translated this name in [Acts 23:24]

##### the Way

This is a title for Christianity. See how you translated this in Acts 9:2.

##### When Lysias the commander comes down

"when Lysias the commander comes down" or "at the time Lysias the commander comes down"

##### Lysias

This is the name of the chief captain. See how you translated this name in Acts 23:26.

##### comes down from Jerusalem

Jerusalem was higher than Caesarea so it was normal to speak of coming down from Jerusalem.

##### I will decide your case

"I will make a decision concerning these accusations against you" or "I will judge whether you are guilty"

#### Acts 24:23

##### to have some freedom

"to have some freedom not otherwise granted to prisoners"

#### Acts 24:24

##### After some days

"After several days"

##### Drusilla his wife

Drusilla is a woman's name.

#### Acts 24:25

##### Felix became frightened

Felix may have felt conviction of his sins.

##### for now

"for the present time"

#### Acts 24:26

##### he hoped that Paul would give money to him

Here the word "hope" means think that what one desires might happen. Sometimes prisoners gave money to government officials so that the officials would free them from prison early, and Felix hoped that Paul would do that. Alternate translation: "he thought that Paul might give money to him"

##### so he often sent for him and spoke with him

"so Felix often sent for Paul and spoke with Paul"

#### Acts 24:27

##### Porcius Festus

This was the Roman Governor who replaced Felix.

##### wanted to gain favor with the Jews

Here "the Jews" refers to the Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "wanted the Jewish leaders to like him"

##### he left Paul bound

"he left Paul in prison"

## Chapter 25

# Acts 25 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Favor

This word is used in two different ways in this chapter. When the Jewish leaders asked Festus for a favor, they were asking him to do something special for them on that day. They wanted him to do for them something that he would not usually do. When Festus "wanted to gain the favor of the Jews," he wanted them to like him and be willing to obey him in the months and years to come. (See: favor)

#### Roman citizenship

The Romans thought that they needed to treat only Roman citizens justly. They could do as they desired with people who were not Roman citizens, but they had to obey the law with other Romans. Some people were born Roman citizens, and others gave money to the Roman government so they could become Roman citizens. Roman officials could have been punished for treating a Roman citizen the same way they would treat a non-citizen.

## Links:

* [Acts 25:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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”(δεισιδαιμονία/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 25:1

##### General Information:

Festus becomes the governor of Caesarea. See how you translated this name in Acts 24:27.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to be a prisoner in Caesarea.

##### Now

This word marks the beginning of a new event in the story.

##### Festus entered the province

Possible meanings are 1) Festus arrived in the area to begin his rule or 2) Festus simply arrived in the area.

##### he went from Caesarea up to Jerusalem

The phrase "went up" is used here because Jerusalem is higher in elevation than Caesarea.

#### Acts 25:2

##### The chief priests and the prominent Jews brought their charges against Paul

This speaks about accusations as if they were an object that a person could bring to someone else. Alternate translation: "The chief priests and the important Jews accused Paul to Festus"

#### Acts 25:3

##### to summon him to Jerusalem

Some versions translate this as "to have him summoned to Jerusalem." The word "him" refers to Paul. The Jews wanted Festus to have his soldiers take Paul to Jerusalem.

##### for they were preparing an ambush to kill him along the way

They were going to hide along the road and kill Paul as he was passing by, but Festus was not aware of this part of their plan.

#### Acts 25:4

##### Festus answered that Paul was being held in custody at Caesarea, and that he himself was going there soon.

This can be stated as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "But Festus said, 'Paul is being held in custody in Caesarea, and I myself will soon return there.'"

#### Acts 25:5

##### General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to Festus and the Romans traveling with him, but not to his audience.

##### "Therefore, those who can," he said, "should go there with us

The phrase "he said" can be moved to the beginning of the sentence. Alternate translation: "Then he said, 'Therefore, those who are able to go to Caesarea should go there with us"

##### If there is something wrong with the man

"If Paul has done something wrong"

##### you should accuse him

"you should accuse him of violating laws" or "you should bring charges against him"

#### Acts 25:6

##### down to Caesarea

Jerusalem is higher geographically than Caesarea. It was common to speak of coming down from Jerusalem.

##### sat on the judgment seat

Here "judgment seat" refers to Festus' ruling as judge over Paul's trial. Alternate translation: "sat upon the seat where he acted as judge" or "sat down as judge"

##### Paul to be brought to him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "his soldiers bring Paul to him"

#### Acts 25:7

##### When he arrived

"When Paul came and stood before Festus"

##### they brought many serious charges

Charging a person with a crime is spoken of as if it were an object that a person could bring to court. Alternate translation: "they spoke against Paul many serious things"

#### Acts 25:8

##### against the temple

Paul says he did not break any rules about who could enter the Jerusalem temple. Alternate translation: "against the entry rules of the temple"

#### Acts 25:9

##### wanted to gain the favor of the Jews

Here "the Jews" means the Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "wanted to please the Jewish leaders"

##### to go up to Jerusalem

Jerusalem was higher geographically than Caesarea. It was common to speak of going up to Jerusalem.

##### and to be judged by me about these things there

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "where I will judge you with regard to these charges"

#### Acts 25:10

##### I stand before the judgment seat of Caesar where I must be judged

The "judgment seat" refers to Caesar's authority to judge Paul. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I ask to go before Caesar, so he can judge me"

#### Acts 25:11

##### Though if I have done wrong ... I do not refuse to die

Paul does not believe that he has done wrong, but he shows that he will submit to the law and will not refuse to be punished if he really has done wrong.

##### if I have done what is worthy of death

"if I have done some wrong that deserves the death penalty"

##### if their accusations are nothing

"if the charges against me are not true"

##### no one can hand me over to them

Possible meanings are 1) Festus does not have the legal authority to hand Paul over to these false accusers or 2) the governor should not give in to the request of the Jews.

##### I appeal to Caesar

"I ask to go before Caesar so he can judge me"

#### Acts 25:12

##### with the council

This is not the Sanhedrin that is referred to as "council" throughout Acts. This is a political council in the Roman government. Alternate translation: "with his own government advisors"

#### Acts 25:13

##### General Information:

King Agrippa and Bernice are new people in the story. Though he ruled over only a few territories, King Agrippa was the current reigning king in Palestine. Bernice was Agrippa's sister.

##### Now

This word marks the beginning of a new event in the story.

##### to pay an official visit to Festus

"to visit Festus concerning official matters"

#### Acts 25:14

##### After they

"After King Agrippa and Bernice"

##### A certain man was left behind here by Felix as a prisoner

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When Felix left office, he left a man in prison here"

##### Felix

Felix was the Roman governor of the area and resided in Caesarea. See how you translated this name in Acts 23:24.

#### Acts 25:15

##### brought charges against this man to me

This is a metaphor that means to accuse someone in court. Alternate translation: "spoke to me against this man"

##### they asked for a sentence of condemnation against him

The abstract nouns "sentence" and "condemnation" can be expressed as verbs. The phrase "a sentence of condemnation" implies that they were requesting that Paul be executed. Alternate translation: "they asked me to sentence him to death" or "they asked me to condemn him to death"

#### Acts 25:16

##### to hand over anyone

Here "hand over" represents sending someone to people who will punish or kill him. Alternate translation: "let someone punish anyone" or "to condemn anyone to death"

##### before the accused had faced his accusers

Here "faced his accusers" is an idiom that means to meet with the people who accuse him. Alternate translation: "before the person whom others have accused of a crime had met directly with those who accused him"

#### Acts 25:17

##### Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true." Festus has just said that an accused man should be able to face his accusers and make his defense.

##### when they came together here

"when the Jewish leaders came to meet with me here"

##### I sat in the judgment seat

Here "judgment seat" refers to Festus ruling over Paul's trial as judge. Alternate translation: "I sat upon the seat to act as judge" or "I sat down as judge"

##### I ordered the man to be brought in

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I ordered the soldiers to bring Paul before me"

#### Acts 25:18

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 25:19

##### their own religion

Here "religion" means the belief system people have toward life and the supernatural.

#### Acts 25:20

##### to stand trial there about these charges

To "stand trial" is an idiom meaning to speak to a judge so the judge can decide if a person is right or wrong. Alternate translation: "to go to trial about these charges" or "for a judge to decide if these charges against him are true or not"

#### Acts 25:21

##### Connecting Statement:

Festus finishes explaining Paul's case to King Agrippa.

##### But when Paul appealed to be kept in custody while awaiting the decision of the emperor

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But when Paul insisted that he stay under Roman guard until the time when the emperor could decide his case"

##### I ordered him to be held in custody

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I ordered the soldiers to keep him in custody" or "I told the soldiers to guard him"

#### Acts 25:22

##### "Tomorrow," Festus said, "you will hear him."

The phrase "Festus said" can be moved to the beginning of the sentence. Alternate translation: "Festus said, 'I will arrange for you to listen to Paul tomorrow.'"

#### Acts 25:23

##### General Information:

Though he ruled over only a few territories, Agrippa was the current reigning king in Palestine. Bernice was his sister. See how you translated these names in Acts 25:13.

##### with much ceremony

"with a great ceremony to honor them"

##### the hall

This was a large room where people gathered for ceremonies, trials, and other events.

##### Paul was brought to them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the soldiers brought Paul to appear before them"

#### Acts 25:24

##### Connecting Statement:

Festus again gives information about Paul's case to King Agrippa.

##### all the multitude of Jews

The word "all" is an exaggeration used to emphasize that a great number of Jews wanted Paul to die. Alternate translation: "a great number of the Jews" or "many of the Jewish leaders"

##### they shouted to me

"they spoke very strongly to me"

##### he should no longer live

This statement is made in the negative to emphasize the positive equivalent. Alternate translation: "he should die immediately"

#### Acts 25:25

##### because he appealed to the emperor

"because he said that he wanted the emperor to judge him"

##### the emperor

The emperor was the ruler of the Roman empire. He ruled over many countries and provinces.

#### Acts 25:26

##### to write to my lord

Festus used the word "lord" to refer to the emperor. Alternate translation: "to write to the emperor"

##### I have brought him to you, especially to you, King Agrippa

Here the first "you" is plural and refers to all the men to whom Festus is speaking. The second "you" is singular and refers to King Agrippa. Alternate translation: "I have brought Paul to all of you, but especially to you, King Agrippa"

##### so that I might have something more to write

"so that I will have something else to write" or "so that I will know what I should write"

#### Acts 25:27

##### it seems unreasonable for me to send a prisoner and to not also state

The negative words "unreasonable" and "to not ... state" can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "it seems reasonable to me to send a prisoner and to also state"

##### the charges against him

Possible meanings are 1) the accusations that the Jewish leaders have brought against him or 2) the charges under Roman law that apply to Paul's case.

## Chapter 26

# Acts 26 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

This is the third account of Paul's conversion in the book of Acts. Because this is such an important event in the early church, there are three accounts of Paul's conversion. (See: Acts 9 and Acts 22)

Paul told the King Agrippa why he had done what he had done and that the governor should not punish him for that.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: righteous)

## Links:

* [Acts 26:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 (Prophesy) ; 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 26:1

##### Connecting Statement:

Festus has brought Paul before King Agrippa.

##### Agrippa

Agrippa was the current reigning king in Palestine, though he ruled over only a few territories. See how you translated this name in Acts 25:13.

##### stretched out his hand

"held out his hand" or "gestured with his hand"

##### made his defense

The abstract noun "defense" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "began to defend himself against those who were accusing him"

#### Acts 26:2

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul gives his defense to King Agrippa.

##### I consider myself happy

Paul was happy because he considered his appearance before Agrippa to be an opportunity to speak about the gospel.

##### to make my case

This phrase means to describe one's situation, so that those in court can discuss and make a decision about it. Alternate translation: "to defend myself"

##### against all the accusations of the Jews

The abstract noun "accusations" can be stated as the verb "accuse." Alternate translation: "against all the Jews who are accusing me"

##### the Jews

This does not mean all the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

#### Acts 26:3

##### questions

You can make explicit what kinds of questions this means. Alternate translation: "questions about religious matters"

#### Acts 26:4

##### all the Jews

This is a generalization. Possible meanings are 1) Jews in general who knew about Paul. Alternate translation: "the Jews" or 2) Pharisees who knew Paul. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

##### in my own nation

Possible meanings are 1) among his own people, not necessarily in the geographical land of Israel or 2) in the land of Israel.

#### Acts 26:5

##### the strictest party of our religion

"a group within Judaism that lives by very strict rules"

#### Acts 26:6

##### Now

This word marks a shift from Paul discussing his past to talking about himself in the present.

##### I stand here to be judged

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am here, where they are putting me on trial"

##### because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers

Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "trust" or "confidently wait." Alternate translation: "because I trust in the promise made by God to our fathers

##### because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers

Hope in a promise is the expectation that the promise will be fulfilled. Alternate translation "because of my hope that God will do what he promised our forefathers he would do" or "because I confidently wait for God to do what he promised our forefather he would do"

#### Acts 26:7

##### this promise that our twelve tribes hope to receive

This speaks about a promise being fulfilled as if it were an object that is received. Alternate translation: "the promise that our twelve tribes confidently wait for God to fulfill"

##### our twelve tribes

The phrase "our twelve tribes" stands for the people in those tribes. Alternate translation: "our fellow Jews in the twelve tribes"

##### worship God earnestly night and day

The extremes "night" and "day" are used together to mean consistently mean Alternate translation: "continually worship God earnestly"

##### king

Paul is addressing King Agrippa by his title, not by his name. Your language may require that you add another word or part of a word, as in older English "O King," or that you add the king's name, as in "King Agrippa," or that you use another expression such as "Your Majesty."

##### that the Jews

This does not mean all the Jews. Alternate translation: "that the leaders of the Jews"

#### Acts 26:8

##### General Information:

Here "you" is plural and refers to the people who were listening to Paul.

##### Why should any of you judge it to be incredible that God raises the dead?

Paul uses a question to challenge the Jews there. They believe that God can raise the dead, but they do not believe that God brought Jesus back to life. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not judge it to be unbelievable that God raises the dead" Or "You should not say that it is impossible to believe that God raises the dead."

##### raises the dead

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "makes dead people come alive again"

#### Acts 26:9

##### Now indeed

Paul uses this phrase to mark another shift in his defense. He is now beginning to describe how he formerly persecuted Jesus's people.

##### against the name of Jesus

The word "name" here stands for the teaching about the person. Alternate translation: "to stop people from teaching about Jesus"

#### Acts 26:10

##### when they were killed, I cast my vote against them

The phrase "were killed" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I voted in agreement with the other Jewish leaders to condemn believers to die"

#### Acts 26:11

##### I punished them many times

Possible meanings are 1) Paul punished some believers many times or 2) Paul punished many different believers.

#### Acts 26:12

##### Connecting Statement:

While talking to King Agrippa, Paul tells about when the Lord spoke with him.

##### While I was doing this

Paul uses this phrase to mark another shift in his defense. He is now telling about when he saw Jesus and became his disciple.

##### While

This word is used to mark two events that are happening at the same time. In this case, Paul went to Damascus during the time when he persecuted Christians.

##### with authority and orders

Paul had letters from the Jewish leaders granting him authority to persecute the Jewish believers.

#### Acts 26:13

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 26:14

##### I heard a voice speaking to me that said

Here "voice" stands for the person speaking. Alternate translation: "I heard someone speaking to me who said"

##### Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?

This is a rhetorical question. The speaker is alerting Saul to what Saul is doing to him, and implying that Saul should not do that. Alternate translation: "Saul, Saul, you are persecuting me." or "Saul, Saul, stop persecuting me."

##### It is hard for you to kick a goad

For Paul to resist Jesus and to persecute believers is spoken of as if he were an ox kicking at the sharp stick that a person uses to prod

#### Acts 26:15

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving his defense to King Agrippa, quoting his conversation with the Lord.

#### Acts 26:16

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving his defense to King Agrippa, quoting his conversation with the Lord.

#### Acts 26:17

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving his defense to King Agrippa, quoting his conversation with the Lord.

#### Acts 26:18

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving his defense to King Agrippa, quoting his conversation with the Lord.

##### to open their eyes

Paul helping people to understand the truth is spoken of as if he were helping them to open their physical eyes. Alternate translation: "to make them able to understand the truth"

##### to turn them from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God

Paul convincing people to stop obeying Satan and doing evil things and to start obeying God and doing good things is spoken of as if Paul were taking them out of a dark place where Satan controlled them and into a place where there was light and God controlled them. Alternate translation: "to help them stop doing what is evil, stop obeying Satan, and start trusting and obeying God"

##### they may receive from God the forgiveness of sins

The abstract noun "forgiveness" can be stated as the verb "forgive." Alternate translation: "God may forgive their sins and they may receive"

##### the inheritance that I give

The abstract noun "inheritance" may be stated as the verb "inherit." Alternate translation: "they may inherit that which I give"

##### the inheritance

The blessings that Jesus gives to those who believe in him are spoken of as if they were an inheritance that children receive from their father.

##### sanctified by faith in me

Jesus choosing some people to belong to him is spoken of as if he literally set them apart from other people.

##### by faith in me

"because they believe in me." Here Paul finishes quoting the Lord.

#### Acts 26:19

##### Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true." Paul had just explained what the Lord had commanded him in his vision.

##### I did not disobey

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "I obeyed"

##### the heavenly vision

This refers to what the person in the vision told Paul. Alternate translation: "what the person from heaven told me in the vision"

#### Acts 26:20

##### turn to God

To start trusting God is spoken of as if a person turns to start walking toward God. Alternate translation: "trust in God"

##### doing deeds worthy of repentance

The abstract noun "repentance" can be stated as the verb "repented." Alternate translation: "and start doing good deeds to show they truly have repented"

#### Acts 26:21

##### the Jews

This does not mean all of the Jews. Alternate translation: "some Jews"

#### Acts 26:22

##### to both small and great about nothing

Here "small" and "great" refer to people who are unimportant and important, respectively, and are used together to mean "all people." Alternate translation: "to all people, whether unimportant or important, about nothing"

##### about nothing more than what

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "about the exact thing that"

##### what the prophets

Paul is referring to the collective writings of the Old Testament prophets.

#### Acts 26:23

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes giving his defense to King Agrippa.

##### that Christ must suffer

You can make explicit that Christ must also die. Alternate translation: "that Christ must suffer and die"

##### from the dead

The phrase "the dead" refers to the spirits of people who have died. To rise from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

##### he would proclaim light

"he would proclaim the message about the light." To tell people about how God saves people is spoken of as if a person were speaking about the light. Alternate translation: "he would proclaim the message about how God saves people"

#### Acts 26:24

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul and King Agrippa continue to talk together.

##### you are insane

"you are speaking nonsense" or "you are crazy"

##### your great learning makes you insane

"you have learned so much that you are now crazy"

#### Acts 26:25

##### I am not insane ... but

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "I am sane ... and" or "I am able to think well ... and"

##### most excellent Festus

"Festus, who deserves highest honors"

#### Acts 26:26

##### For the king ... to him ... from him

Paul is still speaking to King Agrippa, but he is referring to him in the third person. Alternate translation: "For you ... to you ... from you"

##### I am persuaded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am sure"

##### that none of this is hidden from him

This can be stated in active and positive form. Alternate translation: "that he is aware of this" or "that you are aware of this"

##### has not been done in a corner

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "has not happened in a corner"

##### in a corner

This means doing something in secret as if a person went and did something in the corner of a room where no one can see him. Alternate translation: "in a dark place" or "in secret"

#### Acts 26:27

##### Do you believe the prophets, King Agrippa?

Paul asks this question to remind Agrippa that Agrippa already believes what the prophets said about Jesus. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "You already believe what the Jewish prophets said, King Agrippa."

#### Acts 26:28

##### In a short time would you persuade me and make me a Christian?

Agrippa asks this question to show Paul that he cannot convince Agrippa so easily without more proof. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "Surely you do not think you can convince me so easily to believe in Jesus!"

#### Acts 26:29

##### but without these prison chains

Here "prison chains" stands for being a prisoner. Alternate translation: "but, of course, I do not want you to be a prisoner, as I am"

#### Acts 26:30

##### General Information:

Bernice was the sister of King Agrippa (Acts 25:13).

##### Connecting Statement:

This ends Paul's time before King Agrippa.

##### Then the king stood up, and the governor

"Then King Agrippa stood up, and Governor Festus"

#### Acts 26:31

##### the hall

This was a large room for ceremonies, trials, and other events.

##### This man does nothing worthy of death or of bonds

The abstract noun "death" can be stated as the verb "die." Here "bonds" stands for being in prison. Alternate translation: "This man does not deserve to die or to be in prison"

#### Acts 26:32

##### This man could have been freed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This man could have gone free" or "I could have freed this man"

## Chapter 27

# Acts 27 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Sailing

People who lived near the sea traveled by boat powered by the wind. During some months of the year, the wind would blow in the wrong direction or so hard that sailing was impossible.

#### Trust

Paul trusted God to bring him safely to land. He told the sailers and soldiers to trust that God would also keep them alive. (See: trust)

#### Paul breaks bread

Luke uses almost the same words here to describe Paul taking bread, thanking God, breaking it, and eating it that he used to describe the last supper Jesus ate with his disciples. However, your translation should not make your reader think that Paul was leading a religious celebration here.

## Links:

* [Acts 27:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 27:1

##### General Information:

Adramyttium was a city possibly located on the west coast of modern-day Turkey. The word "we" includes the author of Acts, Paul, and the others traveling with Paul, but not the reader.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul, as a prisoner, begins his journey to Rome.

##### When it was decided

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When the king and the governor decided"

##### sail for Italy

Italy is the name of the province Rome was in. See how you translated "Italy" in Acts 18:2.

##### they committed Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Augustan company of soldiers.

"they put a centurion named Julius, of the Imperial Regiment, in charge of Paul and some other prisoners"

##### they committed

Possible meanings are that 1) "they" refers to the governor and the king or 2) "they" refers to other Roman officials.

##### a centurion named Julius

Julius is a man's name.

##### the Augustan company of soldiers

Some versions translate the word Augustan as "Imperial" or "emperor's."

##### company of soldiers

This was a group of about 1,00 soldiers. See how you translated this in Acts 21:31.

#### Acts 27:2

##### We boarded a ship from Adramyttium which was about to sail along the coast of Asia

If your language requires a person to act here, you can add human actors: "We boarded a ship that people had brought from Adramyttium; they were about to sail it along."

##### a ship from Adramyttium

Possible meanings are 1) a ship that had come from Adramyttium or 2) a ship that was registered or licensed in Adramyttium.

##### about to sail

"soon going to sail" or "would depart soon"

##### went to sea

"began our journey on the sea"

##### Aristarchus

Aristarchus came from Macedonia but had been working with Paul in Ephesus. See how you translated his name in Acts 19:29.

#### Acts 27:3

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to the writer, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

##### Julius treated Paul kindly

"Julius treated Paul with a friendly concern." See how you translated "Julius" in Acts 27:1.

##### go to his friends to receive their care

The abstract noun "care" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "go to his friends so they could care for him" or "go to his friends so they could help him with whatever he needed"

#### Acts 27:4

##### we went to sea and sailed

"we started sailing and went"

##### sailed under the lee of Cyprus, close to the island

"the lee of Cyprus" is the side of that island that blocks the strong wind, so sailing vessels are not forced off their course.

#### Acts 27:5

##### Pamphylia

This was a province in Asia Minor. See how you translated this in Acts 2:10.

##### we landed at Myra, a city of Lycia

You can make explicit that they got off of the ship in Myra. Alternate translation: "came to Myra, a city of Lycia, where we got off the ship"

##### a city of Lycia

Lycia was a Roman province, located on the southwestern coast of modern-day Turkey.

#### Acts 27:6

##### found a ship from Alexandria that was going to sail to Italy

It is implied that a crew would sail the ship to Italy. Alternate translation: "found a ship that a crew had sailed from Alexandria and was about to sail to Italy"

##### Alexandria

This is the name of a city.

#### Acts 27:7

##### When we had sailed slowly ... finally arrived with difficulty

You can make explicit that the reason they were sailing slowly and with difficulty was because the wind was blowing against them.

##### near Cnidus

This is an ancient settlement located in modern-day Turkey.

##### the wind no longer allowed us to go that way

"we could no longer go that way because of the strong wind"

##### we sailed along the sheltered side of Crete

"we sailed along the side of Crete where there was less wind"

##### opposite Salmone

This is a coastal city in Crete.

#### Acts 27:8

##### We sailed along the coast with difficulty

You can make explicit that even though the winds were not as strong as before, they were still strong enough to make sailing difficult.

##### Fair Havens

This was a port near Lasea, located on the south coast of Crete.

##### near the city of Lasea

This is a coastal city in Crete.

#### Acts 27:9

##### We had now taken much time

Because of the direction the wind was blowing, the journey from Caesarea to Fair Havens had taken more time than planned.

##### We had now taken

The writer includes himself, Paul, and those who were traveling with them, but not the reader.

##### the time of the Jewish fast also had passed, and it had now become dangerous to sail

This fast took place on the Day of Atonement, which was usually either in the last part of September or the first part of October according to Western calendars. After this time, there was a higher risk of seasonal storms.

#### Acts 27:10

##### I see that the voyage we are about to take will be with injury and much loss

"if we travel now, we will suffer much injury and loss"

##### with injury

If your language has a word for "injury" that results from wrongdoing, you may want to use it here.

##### we are about to take ... our lives

Paul includes himself and his hearers, so this is inclusive.

##### loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives

Here "loss" means destruction when referring to things and death when referring to people.

##### not only of the cargo and the ship

Cargo is something that a person transports from one place to another by boat. Alternate translation: "not only the ship and the goods on the ship"

#### Acts 27:11

##### that were spoken by Paul

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that Paul said"

#### Acts 27:12

##### harbor was not easy to spend the winter in

You can make explicit why it was not easy to stay in the harbor. Alternate translation: "harbor did not sufficiently protect docked ships during winter storms"

##### harbor

a place near land that is usually safe for ships

##### city of Phoenix

Phoenix was a port city on the south coast of Crete.

##### to spend the winter there

This speaks about the season of winter as if it were a commodity that someone can spend. Alternate translation: "to stay there for the cold season"

##### facing both southwest and northwest

Here "faces northwest and southwest" means the opening of the harbor was toward those directions. Alternate translation: "it opened to the northwest and southwest"

##### southwest and northwest

These directions are based on what one sees as one faces the setting sun. Northwest is a little to the right of the setting sun, and southwest is a little to the left of the setting sun.

#### Acts 27:13

##### weighed anchor

Here "weighed" means "pulled out of the water." An anchor is a heavy object attached to a rope that is secured to the boat. The anchor is tossed into the water and sinks to the bottom of the sea to keep the ship from drifting about.

#### Acts 27:14

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul and those traveling on the boat encounter a fierce storm.

##### after a short time

"after a little while"

##### a wind of hurricane force

"a very strong, dangerous wind"

##### called the northeaster

"called 'a strong wind from the northeast.'" The word for "the northeaster" in the original language is "Euroclydon." You can transliterate this word for your language.

##### began to beat down from the island

"came in from the island of Crete, and it blew strongly against our ship"

#### Acts 27:15

##### When the ship was caught by the storm and could no longer head into the wind

"When the wind blew so strongly against the front of the ship that we could not sail against it"

##### we had to give way to the storm and were driven along by the wind

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we stopped trying to sail forward, and we let the wind push us whichever way it blew"

#### Acts 27:16

##### We sailed along the lee of a small island

"We sailed on the side of the island where the wind was not so strong"

##### a small island called Cauda

This island was located on the south coast of Crete.

##### lifeboat

This was a smaller boat towed behind or secured onto a ship, used to take people and goods across water too shallow for the ship and also to escape from the ship if it sank. At this point the lifeboat was in the water being towed by the ship.

#### Acts 27:17

##### they had hoisted the lifeboat up

"they had lifted up the lifeboat" or "they had pulled the lifeboat aboard the ship"

##### they used its ropes to bind the hull of the ship

The "hull" is the body of the ship. They tied ropes around it so that the ship would not come apart during the storm.

##### sandbars of Syrtis

Sandbars are very shallow areas in the sea where ships can get stuck in the sand. Syrtis is located on the coast of Libya, northern Africa.

##### they lowered the sea anchor

A sea anchor is something that is towed in the water behind a ship to slow the ship down and make it more stable. It may be a large cloth or a stiff board. Alternate translation: "they let the floating anchor down into the water"

##### were driven along

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "had to go in whatever direction the wind blew us"

#### Acts 27:18

##### We took such a violent battering by the storm

"The wind blew us so roughly back and forth that all of us were badly battered and bruised by the storm"

##### they began throwing the cargo overboard

The word "they" refers to the sailors. This is done to lighten the weight of the ship in an effort to prevent the ship from sinking.

##### cargo

Cargo is something that a person transports from one place to another by boat. See how you translated this in Acts 27:10. Alternate translation: "goods on the ship"

#### Acts 27:19

##### the sailors threw overboard the ship's equipment with their own hands

Here "equipment" refers to the sailors' equipment needed to sail the ship: tackle, hoists, beams of wood, block and tackle, ropes, lines, sails, and the like. This indicates how desperate the situation was.

#### Acts 27:20

##### When the sun and stars did not shine on us for many days

They could not see the sun and stars because of the dark storm clouds. Sailors needed to see the sun and stars in order to know where they were and what direction they were headed.

##### the great storm still beat upon us

"the terrible storm still blew us roughly back and forth"

##### any more hope that we should be saved was abandoned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "everyone abandoned hope that we would be saved"

##### any more hope that we should be saved was abandoned

Here the word "hope" is a person's thought that what he desires might happen. Here the men on the boat had no reason to believe that they would be rescued, so they quit hoping. Alternate translation: "we quit thinking that we might be saved"

##### be saved

"be rescued." Since there is no mention of the people praying for God to save them, this might simply have the sense of "survive."

#### Acts 27:21

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul speaks to the sailors on the ship.

##### When they had gone long without food

Here "they" refers to the sailors. It is implied that Luke, Paul, and those with them had not eaten either. Alternate translation: "When we had gone a long time without food"

##### among the sailors

"among the men"

##### so as to get this injury and loss

"and as a result suffer this harm and loss"

#### Acts 27:22

##### there will be no loss of life among you, but only the loss of the ship

Paul is speaking to the sailors. It is implied that Paul also means that he and those with him will not die either. Alternate translation: "none of us will die: the storm will destroy only the ship"

#### Acts 27:23

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 27:24

##### You must stand before Caesar

The phrase "stand before Caesar" refers to Paul's going to court and letting Caesar judge him. Alternate translation: "You must stand before Caesar so he can judge you"

##### has given to you all those who are sailing with you

"has decided to allow all those who are sailing with you to live"

#### Acts 27:25

##### just as it was told to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "just as the angel told me"

#### Acts 27:26

##### we must run aground upon some island

"we must steer our boat so that it wrecks on some island"

#### Acts 27:27

##### Connecting Statement:

The fierce storm continues.

##### When the fourteenth night had come

The ordinal number "fourteenth" can be translated as "fourteen" or "14." Alternate translation: "After 14 days since the storm started, that night"

##### as we were driven this way and that

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as the wind blew us back and forth"

##### the Adriatic Sea

This is the sea between Italy and Greece.

#### Acts 27:28

##### They took soundings

"They measured the depth of the sea water." They measured the depth of water by dropping a line with a weight tied to the end of it into the water.

##### found twenty fathoms

"found 20 fathoms." A "fathom" is a unit of measurement for measuring the depth of water. One fathom is about two meters. Alternate translation: "found 40 meters"

##### found fifteen fathoms

"found 15 fathoms." A "fathom" is a unit of measurement for measuring the depth of water. One fathom is about two meters. Alternate translation: "found 30 meters"

#### Acts 27:29

##### anchors

An anchor is a heavy object attached to a rope that is secured to the boat. The anchor is tossed into the water and sinks to the bottom of the sea, keeping the ship from drifting about. See how you translated this in Acts 27:13.

##### from the stern

"from the back of the ship"

#### Acts 27:30

##### the lifeboat

This was a smaller boat towed behind or secured onto a ship, used to take people and goods across water too shallow for the ship and also to escape from the ship if it sank. See how you translated this in Acts 27:16.

##### from the bow

"from the front of the ship"

#### Acts 27:31

##### General Information:

Here the word "you" is plural and refers to the centurion and the Roman soldiers.

##### Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved

Paul meant that if those men left the ship, then no one on the ship would be saved. This can be stated positively, and the passive phrase "be saved" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "You can be saved only if these men stay in the ship" or "Only if these men stay in the ship will you survive"

#### Acts 27:32

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 27:33

##### When daylight was coming on

"When it was almost sunrise"

##### This day is the fourteenth day that

The ordinal number "fourteenth" can be stated as "fourteen." Alternate translation: "For 14 days"

#### Acts 27:34

##### not one of you will lose a single hair from his head

This was a customary way of saying no harm would come upon them. Alternate translation: "every one of you will survive this disaster unharmed"

#### Acts 27:35

##### broke the bread

"tore the bread" or "tore off a piece from the loaf of bread"

#### Acts 27:36

##### Then they were all encouraged

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This encouraged all of them"

#### Acts 27:37

##### We were 276 souls on the ship

"There were two hundred and seventy-six of us in the ship." This is background information.

##### souls

This is a metonym for the people themselves. Alternate translation: "people"

#### Acts 27:38

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 27:39

##### bay

a large area of water partly surrounded by land

##### did not recognize the land

"saw land but could not recognize it as any place they knew"

#### Acts 27:40

##### cut loose the anchors and left them

"cut the ropes and left the anchors behind"

##### rudders

large oars or pieces of wood at the back of the ship used for steering

##### the foresail

"the sail at the front of the ship." The sail was a large piece of cloth that caught the wind to move the ship.

##### they headed to the beach

"they steered the ship toward the beach"

#### Acts 27:41

##### a sandbar

an underwater pile of sand that made the water suddenly shallow

##### The bow

the front end of the ship

##### the stern

"the back end of the ship"

#### Acts 27:42

##### The soldiers' plan was

"The soldiers were planning"

#### Acts 27:43

##### so he stopped their plan

"so he stopped them from doing what they planned to do"

##### jump overboard

"jump off the ship into the water"

#### Acts 27:44

##### some on planks

"some on wooden boards"

## Chapter 28

# Acts 28 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

No one knows for sure why Luke ends his history without telling what happened to Paul after he had been in Rome for two years.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### "Letters" and "brothers"

The Jewish leaders were surprised that Paul wanted to speak with them, because they had received no letters from the high priest in Jerusalem telling them that Paul was coming.

When the Jewish leaders spoke of "brothers," they were referring to fellow Jews, not to Christians.

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### "He was a god"

The native people believed that Paul was a god, but they did not believe that he was the one true God. We do not know why Paul did not tell the native people that he was not a god.

## Links:

* [Acts 28:1 Notes](./01.md)

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### 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.

#### Acts 28:1

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Paul, the writer, and those who traveled with them, but not to the reader.

##### Connecting Statement:

After the shipwreck, people on the island of Malta helped Paul and everyone on the ship. They stay there for 3 months.

##### When we were brought safely through

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When we arrived safely"

##### we learned

Paul and Luke learned the name of the island. Alternate translation: "we learned from the people" or "we found out from the residents"

##### the island was called Malta

Malta is an island located south of the modern-day island of Sicily.

#### Acts 28:2

##### The native people

"The local people"

##### offered to us not just ordinary kindness

Being kind to someone is spoken of as if it were an object that someone offers. Alternate translation: "were not only very kind to us"

##### not just ordinary kindness

This phrase is used to emphasize the opposite of what is said. Alternate translation: "a great deal of kindness"

##### they lit a fire

"they put together twigs and branches and burned them"

##### welcomed us all

Possible meanings are 1) "welcomed all of the people from the ship" or 2) "welcomed Paul and all his companions."

#### Acts 28:3

##### a viper came out

"a poisonous snake came out of the bundle of sticks"

##### fastened onto his hand

"bit Paul's hand and did not let go"

#### Acts 28:4

##### This man certainly is a murderer

"For sure, this man is a murderer" or "This man is truly a murderer"

##### Justice

"Justice" was the name of a goddess that the people on the island worshiped. Alternate translation: "the goddess called Justice"

#### Acts 28:5

##### shook the animal into the fire

"shook his hand so that the snake fell from his hand into the fire"

##### suffered no harm

"Paul was not hurt at all"

#### Acts 28:6

##### waiting for him to swell up

They they that his body would swell because of the snake venom.

##### nothing was wrong with him

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "everything about him was as it should be"

##### they changed their minds

To think differently about a situation is spoken of as if a person is changing his mind. Alternate translation: "they thought again"

##### said that he was a god.

Perhaps the people believed that someone who lived after a poisonous snake bite was divine or a god. This can be stated as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "said, 'This man must be a god.'"

#### Acts 28:7

##### General Information:

Here the words "us" and we" refer to Paul, Luke, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

##### Now in a nearby place

"Now" is used to introduce a new person or event in the account.

##### chief man of the island

Possible meanings are 1) the main leader of the people or 2) someone who was the most important person on the island, perhaps because of his wealth.

#### Acts 28:8

##### It happened that the father of Publius ... fever and dysentery

This is background information about Publius' father that is important to understanding the story.

##### was lying afflicted

"was in bed, ill"

##### afflicted with a fever and dysentery

Dysentery is an infectious disease of the intestines.

##### placed his hands on him

"touched him with his hands"

#### Acts 28:9

##### were healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he healed them too"

#### Acts 28:10

##### honored us with many honors

Probably they honored Paul and those with him by giving them gifts.

#### Acts 28:11

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul's journey to Rome continues.

##### that had spent the winter at the island

"that the crew left at the island for the cold season"

##### a ship of Alexandria

Possible meanings are this refers to 1) a ship that came from Alexandria, or 2) a ship that was registered or licensed in Alexandria.

##### the twin gods

On the bow of the ship, there was a carving of the two idols called "the twin gods." Their names were Castor and Pollux.

#### Acts 28:12

##### city of Syracuse

Syracuse is a city on the southeast coast of the modern-day island of Sicily, just southwest of Italy.

#### Acts 28:13

##### city of Rhegium

This is the port city located at the southwestern tip of Italy.

##### a south wind sprang up

"the wind began to blow from the south"

##### city of Puteoli

Puteoli is located in modern-day Naples on the west coast of Italy.

#### Acts 28:14

##### There we found

"There we met"

##### brothers

These were followers of Jesus, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "fellow believers"

##### were invited

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they invited us"

##### In this way we came to Rome

Once Paul reached Puteoli, the rest of the journey to Rome was on land. Alternate translation: "And after we stayed seven days with them, we went to Rome"

#### Acts 28:15

##### General Information:

The Market of Appius was a popular market village about 60 kilometers south of the city of Rome on a road called the Appian Way. The Three Taverns was another village about 50 kilometers south of Rome.

##### after they heard about us

"after they heard we were coming"

##### he thanked God and took courage

Courage is spoken of as if it were an object that a person could take. Alternate translation: "this encouraged him, and he thanked God"

#### Acts 28:16

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to the writer, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul arrives in Rome as a prisoner but with the freedom to stay in his own place. He calls the local Jews together to explain what has happened to him.

##### When we entered Rome, Paul was allowed to

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "After we had arrived in Rome, the Roman authorities gave Paul permission to"

#### Acts 28:17

##### Then it came about that

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

##### the leaders among the Jews

These are the Jewish civil or religious leaders present in Rome.

##### Brothers

Here this means "Fellow Jews."

##### against the people

"against our people" or "against the Jews"

##### I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "some of the Jews arrested me in Jerusalem and placed me in the custody of the Roman authorities"

##### into the hands of the Romans

Here "hands" stands for power or control.

#### Acts 28:18

##### there was no reason for the death penalty in my case

"there was no reason for them to execute me" or "I had done nothing to cause them to kill me"

#### Acts 28:19

##### the Jews

This does not mean all of the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

##### spoke against their desire

"complained about what the Roman authorities wanted to do"

##### I was forced to appeal to Caesar

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I had to ask for Caesar to judge me"

##### although it is not as if I were bringing any accusation against my nation

The abstract noun "accusation" can be stated as the verb "accuse." Here "nation" stands for the people. Alternate translation: "but it was not because I wanted to accuse the people of my nation before Caesar"

#### Acts 28:20

##### the hope of Israel

Here the word "hope" is what a person desires to happen and is confident will happen. In this case it is what the people of Israel hope for. Alternate translation: "what Israel joyfully waits for" or "what the people of Israel confidently expect"

##### the hope of Israel

Paul did not state clearly what Israel hoped for. He may have been referring 1) to their hope that the Messiah would come or 2) to their hope that God would cause those who have died to live again.

##### Israel

Here "Israel" stands for the people. Alternate translation: "the people of Israel" or "the Jews"

##### that I am now wearing this chain

Here "wearing this chain" stands for being a prisoner. Alternate translation: "that I am a prisoner"

#### Acts 28:21

##### General Information:

Here the word "We" refers to the Jewish leaders in Rome.

##### Connecting Statement:

The Jewish leaders respond to Paul.

##### nor did any of the brothers

Here "brothers" stands for fellow Jews. Alternate translation: "nor did any of our fellow Jews"

#### Acts 28:22

##### General Information:

Here the words "we" and "us" refer to the Jewish leaders in Rome.

##### you think about this sect

A sect is a smaller group within a larger group. Here it refers to those who believe in Jesus. Alternate translation: "you think about this group to which you belong"

##### because it is known by us

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because we know"

##### it is spoken against everywhere

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "many Jews all over the Roman Empire are saying bad things about it"

#### Acts 28:23

##### General Information:

Here all instances of "they" and "them" refer to the Jewish leaders in Rome. All instances of "him," "his," and "He" refer to Paul (Acts 28:17).

##### had appointed a day for him

"had chosen a time for him to speak to them"

##### testified about the kingdom of God

Here "kingdom of God" stands for God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "told them about God's rule as king" or "told them how God would show himself as king"

##### from the prophets

Here "the prophets" refers to what they wrote. Alternate translation: "from what the prophets wrote"

#### Acts 28:24

##### Some were convinced about the things which were said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Paul was able to convince some of them"

#### Acts 28:25

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the Jewish leaders in Rome (Acts 28:17). The word "your" refers to the people to whom Paul had been speaking.

##### Connecting Statement:

As the Jewish leaders were ready to leave, Paul quoted the Old Testament scriptures that were appropriate for this time.

##### after Paul had spoken this one word

Here "word" stands for a message or statement. Alternate translation: "after Paul had said one more thing" or "after Paul had made this statement"

##### The Holy Spirit spoke well through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers.

This sentence contains quotations within quotations.

#### Acts 28:26

##### General Information:

Paul begins to quote the book that the prophet Isaiah wrote.

##### He said, 'Go to this people and say, "Hearing you will hear, but you will never understand; seeing, you will see, but you will never know.

This is the end of the sentence that begins with the words "The Holy Spirit spoke" in verse 25 and that contains quotations within quotations. You can translate one of the inner quotations as an indirect quotation, or you can translate two of the inner quotations as indirect quotations. Alternate translation: "The Spirit told Isaiah to go tell them that they will hear but will not understand and they will see but they will not know"

##### Hearing you will hear ... seeing, you will see

The words "hear" and "see" are repeated for emphasis. "You will listen carefully ... you will look intently"

##### but you will never understand ... but you will never know

Both of these phrases mean basically the same thing. They emphasize that the Jewish people will not understand God's plan.

#### Acts 28:27

##### General Information:

Translate Paul's quotation of Isaiah as a direct quotation or an indirect quotation according to how you translated it in [Acts 28:25-26](./25.md).

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes quoting Isaiah the prophet.

##### For the heart of this people has become dull

People who stubbornly refuse to understand what God is saying or doing are spoken of as if their heart is dull. Here "heart" is a metonym for the mind.

##### with their ears they hardly hear, and they have shut their eyes

People who stubbornly refuse to understand what God is saying or doing are spoken of as if they are unable to hear and are shutting their eyes so that they will not see.

##### understand with their heart

Here "heart" stands for the mind.

##### turn again

To start obeying God is spoken of as though the person were physically turning toward God.

##### I would heal them

This does not mean God would only heal them physically. He would also heal them spiritually by forgiving their sins.

#### Acts 28:28

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes speaking to the Jewish leaders in Rome.

##### this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles

God's message about how he saves people is spoken of as if it were an object that is sent. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God is sending his messengers to the Gentiles to tell them about how he will save them"

##### they will listen

"some of them will listen." This response of the Gentiles is in contrast to the way the Jews of that time responded.

#### Acts 28:29

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 28:30

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 28:31

##### Connecting Statement:

Luke ends the story of Paul in the book of Acts.

##### He was proclaiming the kingdom of God

Here "kingdom of God" refers to God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "He was preaching about God's rule as king" or "He was preaching about how God will show himself as king"

### Introduction to the Book of Acts

#### Who wrote this letter?

Luke wrote the book of Acts. He was a Gentile doctor from Antioch, He also wrote the gospel of Luke

See: Gentile; Gospel

See Map: Antioch

#### To whom did Luke write?

Luke wrote this book to Theophilus. This was the same man to whom he wrote the gospel of Luke to Theophilus. Theophilus can be translated as “friend of God.” Some scholars think that Theolophilis was a man who helped Luke. Perhaps he helped him to write this book by giving him money. Other scholars think Luke wrote to anyone who loves God. That is, he wrote to all Christians.

See: Gospel

#### What did Luke write about in Acts?

Luke wrote about church as more people believed in Jesus. He wrote about the days immediately after Jesus’ death and resurrection until the time when Paul arrived in Rome. Luke wrote about the great things the Holy Spirit did to help people to know about Jesus. He also wrote about how both the Jews and Gentiles believed in Jesus.

See: Church; Resurrect (Resurrection);Holy Spirit; Gentile

See Map: Rome

#### Why did Luke write this letter?

Luke wrote this letter so that people would know what happened to the Christians after Jesus died and was resurrected. He wanted people to know that both the Jews and the Gentiles could be Christians. He wanted all people to believe in Jesus.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection); Gentile

## Outline of the Book of Acts

1. The beginning of the church (1:1–2:41)
2. The early church in Jerusalem (2:42–6:7)
3. Increasing opposition to the gospel and persecution (6:8–7:60)
4. The persecution of the church and Philip's ministry (8:1–40)
5. Paul becomes an apostle (9:1–31)
6. The ministry of Peter and the first Gentile Christians (9:32–12:24)
7. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, Law of Moses, and the gathering of church leaders in Jerusalem (12:25–16:5)
8. The church growing and many people becoming Christians (16:6–19:20)
9. Paul travels to Jerusalem and becomes a prisoner in Rome (19:21–28:31)

See: Church; Gospel; Persecute (Persecution); Apostle; Gentile; Law of Moses

## Chapter 1

# Acts 1 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

This chapter records an event, commonly known as the "Ascension," when Jesus returned to heaven after he became alive again. He will not come back until he returns at his "second coming." (See: heaven and resurrection)

The UDB has set the words "Dear Theophilus" apart from the other words. This is because English speakers often start letters this way. You might want to start this book the way people start letters in your culture.

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the two quotes from Psalms in 1:20.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Baptize

The word "baptize" has two meanings in this chapter. It refers to the water baptism of John and to the baptism of the Holy Spirit ([Acts 1:5](../../act/01/05.md)). (See: baptize)

#### "He spoke about the kingdom of God"

Some scholars believe that when Jesus "spoke about the kingdom of God," he explained to the disciples why the kingdom of God did not come before he died. Others believe that the kingdom of God did begin while Jesus was alive and that here Jesus was explaining that it was beginning in a new form.

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### The twelve disciples

The following are the lists of the twelve disciples:

In Matthew:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James son of Zebedee, John son of Zebedee, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot.

In Mark:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James the son of Zebedee and John the son of Zebedee (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder), Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot.

In Luke:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon (who was called the Zealot), Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot.

Thaddaeus is probably the same person as Jude, the son of James.

#### Akeldama

This is a phrase in Hebrew or Aramaic. Luke used Greek letters so his readers would know how it sounded, and then he told what it means. You should probably spell it the way it sounds in your language and then explain the meaning.

## Links:

* [Acts 1:1 Notes](./01.md)
* [Acts intro](../front/intro.md)

**| >>**

### 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 twelves 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 (Prophesy) ; Church; Israel

#### Acts 1:1

##### The former account I wrote

The "former account" is the Gospel of Luke.

##### Theophilus

Luke wrote this book to a man named Theophilus. Some translations follow their own culture's way of addressing a letter and write "Dear Theophilus" at the beginning of the sentence. Theophilus means "friend of God"

#### Acts 1:2

##### until the day that he was taken up

This refers to Jesus's ascension into heaven. Alternate translation: "until the day on which God took him up to heaven" or "until the day that he ascended into heaven"

##### he had given commands through the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit had led Jesus to instruct his apostles on certain things.

#### Acts 1:3

##### After his suffering

This refers to Jesus's suffering and death on the cross.

##### he presented himself alive to them

Jesus appeared to his apostles and to many other disciples.

#### Acts 1:4

##### General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Jesus. Except where otherwise noted, the word "you" in the book of Acts is plural.

##### Connecting Statement:

This event happened during the 40 days that Jesus appeared to his followers after he had risen from the dead.

##### When he was meeting together with them

"When Jesus was meeting together with his apostles"

##### the promise of the Father, about which he said

This is a reference to the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit, whom the Father promised to send, about whom Jesus said"

#### Acts 1:5

##### John indeed baptized with water ... baptized with the Holy Spirit

Jesus contrasts how John baptized people in water with how God would baptize believers in the Holy Spirit.

##### John indeed baptized with water

"John indeed baptized people with water"

##### you will be baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will baptize you"

#### Acts 1:6

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the apostles.

##### is this the time you will restore the kingdom to Israel

"will you now make Israel a great kingdom again"

#### Acts 1:7

##### the times or the seasons

Possible meanings are 1) the words "times" and "seasons" refer to different kinds of time. Alternate translation: "the general period of time or the specific date" or 2) the two words are basically synonymous. Alternate translation: "the exact time"

#### Acts 1:8

##### you will receive power ... and you will be my witnesses

The apostles will receive power that will enable them to be witnesses for Jesus. Alternate translation: "God will empower you ... to be my witnesses"

##### to the ends of the earth

Possible meanings are 1) "all over the world" or 2) "to the places on earth that are farthest away"

#### Acts 1:9

##### as they were looking up

"as they watched." The apostles "were looking" at Jesus because Jesus rose into the sky. Alternate translation: "as they were looking up at the sky"

##### he was raised up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he rose up into the sky" or "God raised him up into the sky"

##### a cloud hid him from their eyes

"a cloud blocked their view so that they could no longer see him"

#### Acts 1:10

##### looking intensely to heaven

"staring at the sky" or "gazing at the sky"

#### Acts 1:11

##### of Galilee

"from Galilee"

##### will return in the same manner

Jesus ascended into the sky, through the clouds, and the clouds hid him [Acts 1:9](./09.md). He will return from the sky, through (or on) the clouds, and people will be able to see him.

#### Acts 1:12

##### Then they returned

"The apostles returned"

##### a Sabbath day's journey

This refers to the distance which, according to Rabbinical tradition, a person was allowed to walk on a Sabbath day. Alternate translation: "about one kilometer away"

#### Acts 1:13

##### When they arrived

"When they reached their destination." Verse 12 says they were returning to Jerusalem.

##### the upper chamber

"the room on the upper level of the house"

#### Acts 1:14

##### They all were devoted ... to prayer

They all spent much time ... praying

##### with one purpose

The phrase "with one purpose" translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

#### Acts 1:15

##### Connecting Statement:

This event happened during the time that Peter and the other believers were staying together in the upper room.

##### In those days

These words mark the beginning of a new part of the story. They refer to the period of time after Jesus ascended. On many days after Jesus ascended, the disciples met in the upper chamber. Alternate translation: "During that time"

##### 120 names

"one hundred and twenty names"

##### names

The word "names" is a metonym for the people whose names they were. Alternate translation: "people"

##### in the midst of the brothers

Here the word "brothers" refers to fellow believers and includes both men and women.

#### Acts 1:16

##### it was necessary that the scripture should be fulfilled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things that we read about in scripture had to take place"

##### by the mouth of David

The word "mouth" refers to the words that David wrote. Alternate translation: "through the words of David"

#### Acts 1:17

##### General Information:

Although Peter is addressing the entire group of people, here the word "us" refers only to the apostles.

##### Connecting Statement:

In verse 17 Peter continues his speech to the believers that he began in Acts 1:16.

#### Acts 1:18

##### General Information:

The author begins to tell the reader background information about how Judas died and what people called the field where he died. This is not part of Peter's speech.

##### Now this man

The words "this man" refers to Judas Iscariot.

##### the earnings he received for his wickedness

"the money that he earned from the evil thing that he did." The words "his wickedness" refer to Judas Iscariot's betraying Jesus to the people who killed him.

##### there he fell headfirst, and his body burst open, and all his intestines poured out

This suggests that Judas fell from a high place, rather than just falling down. The fall was severe enough to cause his body to burst open. Other passages of scripture mention that he hanged himself.

#### Acts 1:19

##### General Information:

The author finishes telling the reader background information about how Judas died and what people called the field where he died. This is not part of Peter's speech.

##### Field of Blood

When the people living in Jerusalem heard of the way in which Judas died, they renamed the field.

#### Acts 1:20

##### General Information:

Based on the situation with Judas that Peter just recounted, he recalls two Psalms of David that relate to the incident. The quote ends at the end of this verse.

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter continues his speech to the believers that he began in Acts 1:16.

##### For it is written in the Book of Psalms

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For David wrote in the Book of Psalms"

##### Let his field be made desolate, and do not let even one person live there

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words.

##### Let his field be made desolate

Possible meanings are 1) that the word "field" refers to the field where Judas died or 2) that the word "field" refers to Judas's dwelling place and is a metaphor for his family line.

##### be made desolate

"become empty"

#### Acts 1:21

##### General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the apostles and does not include the audience to whom Peter is speaking.

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes his speech to the believers that he began in Acts 1:16.

##### It is necessary, therefore

Based on the scriptures that he quoted and on what Judas had done, Peter tells the group what they must do.

##### the Lord Jesus went in and out among us

Going in and out among a group of people is a metaphor for openly being part of that group. Alternate translation: "the Lord Jesus lived among us"

#### Acts 1:22

##### beginning from the baptism of John ... become a witness with us of his resurrection

The qualification for the new apostle that began with the words "It is necessary ... that one of the men who accompanied us" in verse 21 ends here. The subject of the verb "become" is thus "one of the men." Here is a reduced form of the sentence: "It is necessary ... that one of the men who accompanied us ... beginning from the baptism of John ... must become a witness with us."

##### beginning from the baptism of John

The noun "baptism" can be translated as a verb. Possible meanings: 1) "beginning from when John baptized Jesus" or 2) "beginning from when John baptized people"

##### to the day that he was taken up from us

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "until the day when Jesus left us and rose up to heaven" or "until the day that God took him up from us"

##### become a witness with us of his resurrection

"must begin to testify with us about his resurrection"

#### Acts 1:23

##### They put forward two men

Here the word "They" refers to all of the believers who were present. Alternate translation: "They proposed two men who fulfilled the requirements that Peter listed"

##### Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus

This can be translated with an active form. Alternate translation: "Joseph, whom people also called Barsabbas and Justus"

#### Acts 1:24

##### They prayed and said

Here the word "They" refers to all of the believers, but it was probably one of the apostles who spoke these words. Alternate translation: "The believers prayed together and one of the apostles said"

##### You, Lord, know the hearts of all people

Here the word "hearts" refers to the thoughts and motives. Alternate translation: "You, Lord, know the thoughts and motives of everyone"

#### Acts 1:25

##### to take the place in this ministry and apostleship

Here the word "apostleship" defines what kind of "ministry" this is. Alternate translation: "to take Judas's place in this apostolic ministry" or "to take Judas's place in serving as an apostle"

##### from which Judas turned away

Here the expression "turned away" means that Judas stopped performing this ministry. Alternate translation: "which Judas stopped fulfilling"

##### to go to his own place

This phrase refers to Judas's death and likely to his judgment after death. Alternate translation: "to go where he belongs"

#### Acts 1:26

##### They cast lots for them

The apostles cast lots to decide between Joseph and Matthias.

##### the lot fell to Matthias

The lot indicated that Matthias was the one to replace Judas.

##### he was numbered with the eleven apostles

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the believers considered him to be an apostle with the other eleven"

## Chapter 2

# Acts 2 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 2:17-21, 25-28, and 34-35.

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted material in 2:31.

The events described in this chapter are commonly called "Pentecost." Many people believe that the church began to exist when the Holy Spirit came to live inside believers at Pentecost.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Tongues

The word "tongues" has two meanings in this chapter. Luke describes what came down from heaven (Acts 2:3](../../act/02/03.md)) as tongues that looked like fire. This is different from "a tongue of flame," which is a fire that looks like a tongue. Luke also uses the word "tongues" to describe the languages that the people spoke after the Holy Spirit filled them ([Acts 2:4).

#### Last days

No one knows for sure when the "last days" ([Acts 2:17](../../act/02/17.md)) began. Your translation should not say more than the ULB does about this. (See: lastday)

#### Baptize

The word "baptize" in this chapter refers to Christian baptism (Acts 2:38-41). Though the event described in [Acts 2:1-11](./01.md) is the baptism of the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised in [Acts 1:5](../../act/01/05.md), the word "baptize" here does not refer to that event. (See: baptize)

#### The prophecy of Joel

Many of the things that Joel said would happen did happen on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17-18), but some things Joel spoke of have not happened yet (Acts 2:19-20). (See: prophet)

#### Wonders and signs

These words refer to things that only God could do, things that showed that Jesus was who the disciples said he was.

## Links:

* [Acts 2:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 some back to earth.

See: Sign; Prophecy (Prophesy) ; 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 (Prophesy)

## 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 (Prophesy) ; 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:

1. 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.
2. By calling on the name of Jesus, the Jews accepted that forgiveness for sins was only possible by believing in Jesus.
3. 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”(σῴζω/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 2:1

##### General Information:

This is a new event; it is now the Day of Pentecost, 50 days after Passover. Here the word "they" refers to the apostles and the other 120 believers that Luke mentions in Acts 1:15.

#### Acts 2:2

##### Suddenly

This word explains that no one expected to hear the sound or to have it fill the house.

##### a sound like the rush of a violent wind came from heaven

Possible meanings are 1) "heaven" refers to the place where God lives. Alternate translation: "a sound came from heaven" or 2) "heaven" refers to the sky. Alternate translation: "a sound came from the sky"

##### the whole house

This may have been a house or a larger building.

#### Acts 2:3

##### There appeared to them tongues like fire

These might have been something that looked like tongues or like fire, not actual tongues or fire. Possible meanings are 1) tongues that looked like they were made of fire or 2) small flames of fire that looked like tongues. When fire burns in a small space, such as on a lamp, the flame can be shaped like a tongue.

##### that were distributed, and they sat upon each one of them

This means that the "tongues like fire" spread out so that there was one on each person.

#### Acts 2:4

##### They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The Holy Spirit filled all of those who were there and they"

##### speak in other tongues

They were speaking in languages that they did not already know.

##### as the Spirit gave them the ability

The Holy Spirit gave them the ability to speak; they were dependent on the Spirit to speak in different languages.

#### Acts 2:5

##### General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to the believers; the word "his" refers to each person in the multitude. Verse 5 gives background information about the large number of Jews who were living in Jerusalem, many of whom were present during this event.

##### godly men

Here "godly men" refers to people who were devout in their worship of God and tried to obey all of the Jewish laws.

##### every nation under heaven

"every nation in the world." The word "every" is an exaggeration that emphasizes that the people came from many different nations. Alternate translation: "many different nations"

#### Acts 2:6

##### When this sound was heard

This refers to the sound that was similar to a strong wind. Alternate translation: "When they heard this sound"

##### the multitude

"the large crowd of people"

#### Acts 2:7

##### They were amazed and marveled

These two words share similar meanings. Together they emphasize the intensity of amazement. Alternate translation: "They were greatly amazed"

##### Really, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?

The people ask this question to express their amazement. The question could be changed to an exclamation. Alternate translation: "All of these Galileans could not possibly know our languages!"

#### Acts 2:8

##### Why is it that we are hearing them, each in our own language in which we were born?

Possible meanings are 1) this is a rhetorical question that expresses how amazed they were or 2) this is a real question for which the people wanted an answer.

##### in our own language in which we were born

"in our own languages that we have learned from birth"

#### Acts 2:9

##### Parthians ... Medes ... Elamites

These are names of people groups.

##### Mesopotamia ... Judea ... Cappadocia ... Pontus ... Asia

These are names of large areas of land.

#### Acts 2:10

##### Phrygia ... Pamphylia ... Egypt ... Libya ... Cyrene

These are names of large areas of land.

#### Acts 2:11

##### Cretans ... Arabians

These are names of people groups.

##### proselytes

converts to the Jewish religion

#### Acts 2:12

##### amazed and perplexed

These two words share similar meanings. Together they emphasize that the people could not understand what was happening. Alternate translation: "surprised and confused"

#### Acts 2:13

##### They are full of new wine

Some people accuse the believers of having drunk too much wine. Alternate translation: "They are drunk"

##### new wine

This refers to wine that is in the process of fermentation.

#### Acts 2:14

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter begins his speech to the Jews who were there on the Day of Pentecost.

##### stood with the eleven

All the apostles stood up in support of Peter's statement.

##### raised his voice

This is an idiom for "spoke loudly."

##### declared to them

Made a formal, important speech to them. See how you translated "make declarations" in Acts 2:4.

##### let this be known to you

This means that Peter is about to explain the meaning of what the people had witnessed. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "know this" or "let me explain this to you"

##### pay attention to my words

Peter was referring to what he was saying. Alternate translation: "listen carefully to what I am saying"

#### Acts 2:15

##### it is only the third hour of the day

"It is only nine o'clock in the morning." Peter expected his audience to know that people do not get drunk that early in the day.

#### Acts 2:16

##### General Information:

Here Peter tells them a passage about which the prophet Joel wrote in the Old Testament that relates to what is happening with the languages in which the believers spoke. This is written in the form of poetry as well as being a quotation.

##### this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "this is what God told the prophet Joel to write" or "this is that which the prophet Joel spoke"

#### Acts 2:17

##### It will be

"This is what will happen" or "This is what I will do"

##### I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh

Here the words "pour out" mean to give generously and abundantly. Alternate translation: "I will give my Spirit abundantly to all flesh"

##### all flesh

This is a hyperbolic metonym that refers to all people by speaking of them as all living creatures, who have flesh. Alternate translation: "all people"

#### Acts 2:18

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter continues to quote the prophet Joel.

##### my servants and my female servants

"both my male and my female servants." These words emphasize that God will pour out his Spirit on all of his servants, both men and women.

##### I will pour out my Spirit

Here the words "pour out" mean to give generously and abundantly. See how you translated this in [Acts 2:17]

#### Acts 2:19

##### vapor of smoke

"thick smoke" or "clouds of smoke"

#### Acts 2:20

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes quoting the prophet Joel.

##### The sun will be turned to darkness

This means that the sun will appear to be dark instead of light. Alternate translation: "The sun will become dark"

##### the moon to blood

This means that the moon will appear to be red like blood. Alternate translation: "the moon will be turned to blood" or "the moon will appear to be red"

##### the great and remarkable day

The words "great" and "remarkable" share similar meanings and emphasize the intensity of greatness. Alternate translation: "the very great day"

##### remarkable

great and beautiful

#### Acts 2:21

##### everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Lord will save everyone who calls on him"

#### Acts 2:22

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter continues his speech to the Jews that he began in Acts 1:16.

##### hear these words

"listen to what I am about to say"

##### accredited to you by God with the mighty deeds and wonders and signs

This means that God proved that he had appointed Jesus for his mission, and proved who he was by his many miracles.

#### Acts 2:23

##### by God's predetermined plan and foreknowledge

The nouns "plan" and "foreknowledge" can be translated as verbs. This means that God planned out and knew beforehand what would happen to Jesus. Alternate translation: "because God planned out and knew beforehand everything that would happen"

##### This man was handed over

Possible meanings: 1) "you handed Jesus over into the hands of his enemies" or 2) "Judas betrayed Jesus to you."

##### you, by the hand of lawless men, put him to death by nailing him to a cross

Although "lawless men" actually crucified Jesus, Peter accuses the crowd of having killed him because they demanded his death.

##### by the hand of lawless men

Here "hand" refers to the actions of the lawless men. Alternate translation: "through the actions of lawless men" or "by what lawless men did"

##### lawless men

Possible meanings are 1) the unbelieving Jews who accused Jesus of crimes or 2) the Roman soldiers who performed the execution of Jesus.

#### Acts 2:24

##### But God raised him up

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "But God caused him to live again"

##### freeing him from the agonies of death

He speaks of the agonies of dying as if God were freeing Christ from ropes that were binding Jesus. Alternate translation: "ending the pains of death"

##### for him to be held by it

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for death to hold him"

##### for him to be held by it

Peter speaks of Christ remaining dead as if death were a person who held him captive. Alternate translation: "for him to remain dead"

#### Acts 2:25

##### General Information:

Here Peter quotes a passage that David wrote in a Psalm which relates to Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection. Since Peter says that David said these words about Jesus, the words "I" and "my" refer to Jesus and the words "Lord" and "he" refer to God.

##### For David says about him, 'I saw

The context makes it plain that this is an elliptical way of saying that David was speaking as if David were the Messiah. Alternate translation: "For David spoke these words as if he were the Christ: 'I saw"

##### before my face

"in front of me." Alternate translation: "in my presence" or "with me"

##### beside my right hand

To be at someone's "right hand" often means to be in a position to help and sustain. Alternate translation: "right beside me" or "with me to help me"

##### I should not be moved

Here the word "moved" means to be troubled. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will not be able to cause me trouble" or "nothing will trouble me"

#### Acts 2:26

##### my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced

People consider the "heart" the center of emotions and the "tongue" voices those emotions. Alternate translation: "I was glad and rejoiced"

##### my flesh will live in hope

Possible meanings of the phrase "my flesh" are 1) it indicates that the writer is a mortal who will die. Alternate translation: "even though I am only mortal, I will live in hope" or 2) it is a synecdoche for the writer's entire person. Alternate translation: "I will live in hope"

##### will live in hope

Here the word "hope" refers to a person's confidence that what he desires will happen. Since the speaker hoped that God would rescue him, "in hope" could be translated as "in confidence in God." The phrase "live in hope" can also be translated with the phrases "confidently expect," "confidently wait," or "trust." Alternate translation: "will live with confidence in God" or "will confidently wait for God to rescue me"

#### Acts 2:27

##### General Information:

Since Peter says that David said these words about Jesus, the words "my," "Holy One," and "me" refer to Jesus and the words "you" and "your" refer to God.

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes quoting David.

##### neither will you allow your Holy One to see decay

The Messiah, Jesus, refers to himself with the words "your Holy One." Alternate translation: "neither will you allow me, your Holy One, to see decay"

##### to see decay

Here the word "see" means to experience something. The word "decay" refers to the decomposition of his body after death. Alternate translation: "to decay"

#### Acts 2:28

##### the ways of life

"the ways that lead to life"

##### full of gladness with your face

Here the word "face" refers to the presence of God. Alternate translation: "very glad when I see you" or "very glad when I am in your presence"

##### gladness

joy, happiness

#### Acts 2:29

##### General Information:

The words "he" and "his" refer to David.

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter continues the speech to the Jews that surround him and the other believers in Jerusalem, which he began in Acts 1:16.

##### Brothers, it

"My fellow Jews, it"

##### it is proper for me to speak

Or "it is possible." He is able to speak because it is proper for him to do so.

##### he both died and was buried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he died and people buried him"

#### Acts 2:30

##### he would set one of the fruit of his loins on his throne

"God would set one of David's fruit upon David's throne." Alternate translation: "God would appoint one of David's fruit to be king in David's place"

##### one of the fruit of his loins

This is a metaphor for a child or other descendant. Alternate translation: "one of his children" or "one of his descendants"

#### Acts 2:31

##### he was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see decay

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Neither did God abandon him to Hades nor did his flesh see decay" or "God did not abandon him to Hades, and his flesh did not see decay"

##### did his flesh see decay

Here the word "see" means to experience something. The word "decay" refers to the decomposition of his body after death. See how you translated this in [Acts 2:27]

#### Acts 2:32

##### This Jesus—God raised him up

Peter talks again about Jesus. Alternate Translation: "It is this Jesus whom God raised up" or "God raised up this Jesus"

##### God raised him up

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "God caused him to live again"

#### Acts 2:33

##### having been exalted to the right hand of God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because God has exalted Jesus up to his right hand"

##### having been exalted to the right hand of God

"Right hand of God" here is an idiom that means that Christ will rule as God, with God’s authority. Alternate translation: "Christ is in the position of God"

##### he has poured out what

Here the words "poured out" mean that Jesus, who is God, made these events to happen. It is implicit that he did this by giving the Holy Spirit to the believers. Alternate translation: "he has caused to happen these things that"

##### has poured out

"has given generously and abundantly." See how you translated a similar phrase in Acts 2:17. Alternate translation: "given abundantly"

#### Acts 2:34

##### General Information:

Peter again quotes one of David's Psalms. David is not speaking of himself in this Psalm. "The Lord" and "my" refer to God; "my Lord" and "your" refer to Jesus the Messiah.

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes his speech to the Jews that he began in Acts 1:16.

##### Sit at my right hand

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "Sit in the place of honor beside me"

#### Acts 2:35

##### until I make your enemies the footstool for your feet

This means that God will completely defeat the Messiah's enemies and make them subject to him. Alternate translation: "until I make you victorious over all of your enemies"

#### Acts 2:36

##### all the house of Israel

This refers to the entire nation of Israel. Alternate translation: "every Israelite"

#### Acts 2:37

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the people in the crowd to whom Peter spoke.

##### Connecting Statement:

The Jews respond to Peter's speech and Peter answers them.

##### when they heard this

"when the people heard what Peter had said"

##### they were pierced in their hearts, and said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Peter's words pierced their hearts, and they said"

##### pierced in their hearts

This means that the people felt guilty and became very sad. Alternate translation: "deeply troubled"

#### Acts 2:38

##### be baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "allow us to baptize you"

##### in the name of Jesus Christ

"In the name of" here is a metonym for "by the authority of" Alternate translation: "by the authority of Jesus Christ"

#### Acts 2:39

##### all who are far off

This means either 1) "all people who live far away" or 2) "all people who are far from God."

#### Acts 2:40

##### he testified and exhorted them

"he seriously told them." Here the word "testified" and "begged" share similar meanings and emphasize that Peter urged them strongly to respond to what he was saying. Alternate translation: "he strongly urged them"

##### exhorted

or "pleaded with"

##### Be saved from this perverse generation

The implication is that God will punish "this perverse generation." Alternate translation: "Be saved from the punishment that these wicked people will suffer"

##### Be saved

Possible meanings are 1) Peter was urging people to let God save them. Alternate translation: "Let God save you," or 2) Peter was simply urging them in a general way to avoid being punished. Alternate translation: "Save yourselves" or "Flee" or "Escape"

#### Acts 2:41

##### Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story that happened on the Day of Pentecost.

##### they received his word

Here the word "received" means that they accepted what Peter said to be true. Alternate translation: "they believed what Peter said"

##### were baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people baptized them"

##### there were added in that day about three thousand souls

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "about three thousand souls joined the believers on that day"

##### about three thousand souls

Here the word "souls" refers to people. Alternate translation: "about 3,000 people"

#### Acts 2:42

##### Connecting Statement:

This section explains how the believers continued to live after the Day of Pentecost.

##### the breaking of bread

Bread was part of their meals. These words could refer to 1) any meals they might eat together. Alternate translation: "eating meals together" or 2) meals they would eat together in order to remember Christ's death and resurrection. Alternate translation: "eating the Lord's Supper together"

#### Acts 2:43

##### Fear came upon every soul

Here the word "Fear" refers to deep respect and awe for God. The word "soul" refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: "Each person felt a deep respect and awe for God"

##### many wonders and signs were done through the apostles

Possible meanings are 1) "the apostles performed many wonders and signs" or 2) "God performed many wonders and signs through the apostles"

##### wonders and signs

"miraculous deeds and supernatural events." See how you translated this in Acts 2:22.

#### Acts 2:44

##### All who believed were together

Possible meanings are 1) "All of them believed the same thing" or 2) "All who believed were together in the same place."

##### had all things in common

"shared their belongings with one another"

#### Acts 2:45

##### property and possessions

"land and things they owned"

##### distributed them to all

Here the word "them" refers to the profit that they made from selling their property and possessions. Alternate translation: "distributed the proceeds to all"

##### according to the needs anyone had

They distributed the proceeds that they earned from selling their property and possessions to any believer who had a need.

#### Acts 2:46

##### they devoted themselves with one purpose in the temple

You may need to supply the words that have been omitted in this ellipse. What they devoted themselves to doing is stated in verse 42. Alternate translation: "they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching with one purpose in the temple"

##### with one purpose

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

##### They also broke bread in homes

Bread was part of their meals. Alternate translation: "They also ate meals together in their homes"

#### Acts 2:47

##### praising God and having favor with all the people

"praising God. All the people approved of them"

##### those who were being saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those whom the Lord saved"

## Chapter 3

# Acts 3 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### The covenant God made with Abraham

This chapter explains that Jesus came to the Jews because God was fulfilling part of the covenant he had made with Abraham. Peter thought that the Jews were the ones who were truly guilty of killing Jesus, but he wanted them to understand that Jesus, by living and dying, had fulfilled God's promise to Abraham and that if they repented, God would forgive them.

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### "You delivered up"

The Romans were the ones who killed Jesus, but they killed him because the Jews captured him, brought him to the Romans, and told the Romans to kill him. For this reason Peter thought that they were the ones who were truly guilty of killing Jesus. But he tells them that they are also the first ones to whom God has sent Jesus's followers to invite them to repent ([Acts 3:26](../../act/03/26.md)). (See: repent)

## Links:

* [Acts 3:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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”(χωλός/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 531-12; 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 3:1

##### Connecting Statement:

One day Peter and John go to the temple.

##### into the temple

They did not go into the temple building where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation: "to the temple courtyard" or "into the temple area"

#### Acts 3:2

##### a man who was lame from his mother's womb was being carried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people were carrying a man who was lame from from his mother's womb"

##### from his mother's womb

"ever since he was born"

##### the temple gate called Beautiful

This was one of the gates in the high, strong wall that surrounded the temple. People sometimes gathered near the gate.

##### lame

unable to walk

#### Acts 3:3

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 3:4

##### Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said

Both Peter and John looked at the man, but only Peter spoke.

##### fastening his eyes upon him

Possible meanings are 1) "looking directly at him" or 2) "looking intently at him"

#### Acts 3:5

##### The lame man looked at them

Here the word "looked" means to pay attention to something. Alternate translation: "The lame man paid close attention to them"

#### Acts 3:6

##### Silver and gold I do not have

"I do not own any silver or gold"

##### Silver and gold

These words refer to money.

##### what I do have

It is understood that Peter has the ability to heal the man.

##### In the name of Jesus Christ

Here the word "name" refers to power and authority. Alternate translation: "With the authority of Jesus Christ"

#### Acts 3:7

##### Peter raised him up

"Peter caused him to stand"

#### Acts 3:8

##### he entered ... into the temple

He did not go inside the temple building where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation: "he entered ... the temple area" or "he entered ... into the temple courtyard"

#### Acts 3:9

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 3:10

##### noticed that it was the man

"realized that it was the man" or "recognized him as the man"

##### the Beautiful Gate

This was the name of one of the entrances to the temple area. See how you translated a similar phrase in Acts 3:2.

##### they were filled with wonder and amazement

Here the words "wonder" and "amazement" share similar meanings and emphasize the intensity of the people's amazement. Alternate translation: "they were extremely amazed"

#### Acts 3:11

##### General Information:

The phrase "in the porch that is called Solomon's" makes it clear that they were not inside the temple where only the priests were allowed to enter. Here the words "us" and "we" refer to Peter and John but not to the crowd to whom Peter is talking.

##### Connecting Statement:

After healing the man who could not walk, Peter talks to the people.

##### the porch that is called Solomon's

"Solomon's Porch." This was a covered walkway that consisted of rows of pillars that supported a roof, and which people named after king Solomon. It was in the temple courtyard.

##### greatly marveling

"extremely surprised"

#### Acts 3:12

##### When Peter saw this

Here the word "this" refers to the amazement of the people.

##### You Israelite men

"Fellow Israelites." Peter was addressing the crowd.

##### why do you marvel?

Peter asks this question to emphasize that they should not be surprised by what had happened. Alternate translation: "you should not be surprised."

##### Why do you fix your eyes on us, as if we made him walk by our own power or godliness?

Peter asks this question to emphasize that the people should not think that he and John had healed the man by their own abilities. This could be written as two statements. Alternate translation: "Do not fix your eyes on us. We did not make him walk by our own power or godliness."

##### fix your eyes on us

This means that they looked intently at them without stopping. Alternate translation: "stare at us" or "look at us"

#### Acts 3:13

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter continues his speech to the Jews that he began in Acts 3:12.

##### rejected before the face of Pilate

Here the phrase "before the face of" means "in the presence of." Alternate translation: "rejected in Pilate's presence"

##### when he had decided to release him

"when Pilate had decided to release Jesus"

#### Acts 3:14

##### for a murderer to be given to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for Pilate to release a murderer to you"

#### Acts 3:15

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" includes just Peter and John.

##### the Founder of life

This refers to Jesus. Possible meanings are 1) "the one who gives people eternal life" or 2) "the ruler of life" or 3) "the one who leads people to life"

#### Acts 3:16

##### On the basis of faith in his name

Possible meanings are 1) this is the reason the man was made strong. Alternate translation: "Because of faith in his name" or 2) this is how the man was made strong. Alternate translation: "By faith in his name"

##### On the basis of faith in his name

The word "his" refers to the Founder of life, Jesus. The abstract noun "faith" can be translated with the verb "believe." Possible meanings are 1) the lame man had faith in Jesus. Alternate translation: "Because he believed in Jesus name" or 2) Peter and John, and perhaps the lame man, had faith in Jesus. Alternate translation: "Because we believed in Jesus's name"

##### his name

The phrase "his name" is a metonym either for Jesus or for Jesus's power.

##### made this man ... strong

"made this man ... well"

##### The faith that is through Jesus

Possible meanings are 1) this is the faith that Jesus enables people to have. Alternate translation: "The faith that comes from Jesus" or 2) this is faith in Jesus.

#### Acts 3:17

##### Now

Here Peter shifts the audience's attention from the lame man and continues to talk to them directly.

##### you acted in ignorance

Possible meanings are 1) that the people did not know that Jesus was the Messiah or 2) that the people did not understand the significance of what they were doing.

#### Acts 3:18

##### God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets

When the prophets spoke, it was as though God himself was speaking because he told them what to say. Alternate translation: "God foretold by telling all of the prophets what to speak"

##### God foretold

"God spoke about ahead of time" or "God told about before they happened"

##### the mouth of all the prophets

Here the word "mouth" refers to the words that the prophets spoke and wrote down. Alternate translation: "the words of all the prophets"

#### Acts 3:19

##### and turn

"and turn to the Lord." Here "turn" is a metaphor for starting to obey the Lord. Alternate translation: "and start obeying the Lord"

##### so that your sins may be blotted out

Here "blotted out" is a metaphor for forgiving. Sins are spoken of as if they are written in a book and God erases them from the book when he forgives them. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that God will forgive you for sinning against him"

#### Acts 3:20

##### times of refreshing

Possible meanings are 1) "times when God will strengthen your spirits" or 2) "times when God will revive you"

##### from the presence of the Lord

Here the words "presence of the Lord" is a metonym for the Lord himself. Alternate translation: "from the Lord"

##### that he may send the Christ

"that he may again send the Christ." This refers to Christ's coming again.

##### who has been appointed for you

This may be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom he has appointed for you"

#### Acts 3:21

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter continues the speech that he began in Acts 3:12 to the Jews who stood in the temple area.

##### He is the One heaven must receive

"He is the One heaven must welcome." Peter speaks of heaven as if it were a person who welcomes Jesus into his home.

##### heaven must receive until

This means that it is necessary for Jesus to remain in heaven because that is what God has planned.

##### until the time of the restoration of all things

Possible meanings are 1) "until the time when God will restore all things" or 2) "until the time when God will fulfill everything that he foretold."

##### about which God spoke from ancient times by the mouth of his holy prophets

When the prophets spoke long ago, it was as if God himself was speaking because he told them what to say. Alternate translation: "about which things God spoke long ago by telling his holy prophets to speak about them"

##### the mouth of his holy prophets

Here the word "mouth" refers to the words that the prophets spoke and wrote down. Alternate translation: "the words of his holy prophets"

#### Acts 3:22

##### General Information:

Peter begins to quote something Moses told the Israelites before the Messiah came.

##### will raise up a prophet like me from among your brothers

"will cause one of your brothers to become a true prophet, and everyone will know about him"

##### your brothers

"your nation"

#### Acts 3:23

##### that prophet will be completely destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that prophet, God will completely destroy"

#### Acts 3:24

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes his speech to the Jews that he began in Acts 3:12.

##### Yes, and all the prophets

"In fact, all the prophets." Here the word "Yes" adds emphasis to what follows.

##### from Samuel and those who came after him

"beginning with Samuel and continuing with the prophets who lived after he did"

##### these days

"these times" or "the things that are happening now"

#### Acts 3:25

##### You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant

Here the word "sons" refers to heirs who will receive what the prophets and the covenant promised. Alternate translation: "You are the heirs of the prophets and heirs of the covenant"

##### In your seed

"Because of your offspring"

##### all the families of the earth will be blessed

Here the word "families" refers to people groups or nations. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will bless all the people groups in the world"

#### Acts 3:26

##### After God raised up his servant

"After God caused Jesus to become his servant and made him famous"

##### his servant

This refers to the Messiah, Jesus.

##### turning every one of you from your wickedness

Here "turning ... from" is a metaphor for causing someone stop doing something. Alternate translation: "causing every one of you to stop doing wicked things" or "causing every one of you to repent from your wickedness"

## Chapter 4

# Acts 4 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 4:25-26.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Unity

The first Christians wanted very much to be united. They wanted to believe the same things and share everything they owned and help those who needed help.

#### "Signs and wonders"

This phrase refers to things that only God can do. The Christians wanted God to do what only he can do so that people would believe that what they said about Jesus was true.

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### Cornerstone

The cornerstone was the first piece of stone that people put down when they were building a building. This is a metaphor for the most important part of something, the part on which everything depends. To say that Jesus is the cornerstone of the church is to say that nothing in the church is more important than Jesus and that everything about the church depends on Jesus. (See: and faith)

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### Name

"There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" ([Acts 4:12](../../act/04/12.md)). With these words Peter was saying that no other person who has ever been on the earth or will ever be on earth can save people.

## Links:

* [Acts 4:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 questioned 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]

Obeying 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 (Prophesy) ; 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 we “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 4:1

##### Connecting Statement:

The religious leaders arrest Peter and John after Peter's having healed the man who was born lame.

##### came upon them

"approached them" or "came to them"

#### Acts 4:2

##### They were deeply troubled

"They were very angry." The Sadducees, in particular, would have been angry about what Peter and John were saying because they did not believe in resurrection.

##### proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead

Peter and John were saying that God would raise people from the dead in the same way as he had raised Jesus from among the dead. Translate this in a way that allows "the resurrection" to refer to both Jesus's resurrection and the general resurrection of other people.

##### from the dead

From among all those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

#### Acts 4:3

##### They laid hands on them

"The priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees arrested Peter and John"

##### since it was now evening

It was common practice not to question people at night.

#### Acts 4:4

##### the number of the men who believed

This refers only to men and does not include how many women or children believed.

##### was about five thousand

"grew to about five thousand"

#### Acts 4:5

##### General Information:

Here the word "their" refers to the Jewish people as a whole.

##### Connecting Statement:

The rulers question Peter and John, who answer without fear.

##### It came about ... that

This phrase is used here to mark where the action starts. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

##### their rulers, elders, and scribes

This is a reference to the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling court, which consisted of these three groups of people.

#### Acts 4:6

##### John, and Alexander

These two men were members of the high priest's family. This is not the same John as the apostle.

#### Acts 4:7

##### By what power

"Who gave you power"

##### in what name

Here the word "name" refers to authority. Alternate translation: "by whose authority"

#### Acts 4:8

##### Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said

This can be stated in active form. See how you translated this in [Acts 2:4]

#### Acts 4:9

##### we are on trial today

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you are questioning us today"

##### by what means this man was healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "by what means we have made this man well"

#### Acts 4:10

##### let it be known to you all and to all the people of Israel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "May all of you and all of the people of Israel know this"

##### to you all and to all the people of Israel

"to you who are questioning us and to all the other people of Israel"

##### in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth

Here the word "name" refers to power and authority. Alternate translation: "by the power of Jesus Christ of Nazareth"

##### whom God raised from the dead

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "whom God caused to live again"

#### Acts 4:11

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter completes his speech to the Jewish religious rulers that he began in Acts 4:8.

##### Jesus Christ is the stone ... which has been made the cornerstone

Peter is quoting from the Psalms. This is a metaphor that means the religious leaders, like builders, rejected Jesus, but God will made him the most important in his kingdom, as a cornerstone in a building is important.

##### you builders rejected

"you builders thought was worth nothing"

#### Acts 4:12

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Peter as well as those to whom he is speaking.

##### There is no salvation in any other person

The noun "salvation" can be translated as a verb. This can be stated positively. Alternate translation: "He is the only person who is able to save"

##### no other name under heaven given among men

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "no other name under heaven that God has given among men"

##### no other name ... given among men by which

The phrase "name ... given among men" refers to the person of Jesus. Alternate translation: "no other person under heaven, who is given among men, by whom"

##### under heaven

This is a way of referring to everywhere in the world. Alternate translation: "in the world"

##### by which we must be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which can save us" or "who can save us"

#### Acts 4:13

##### General Information:

Here the second instance of "they" refers to Peter and John. All other occurrences of the word "they" in this section refer to the Jewish leaders.

##### the boldness of Peter and John

Here the abstract noun "boldness" refers to the way in which Peter and John responded to the Jewish leaders, and can be translated with an adverb or an adjective. Alternate translation: "how boldly Peter and John had spoken" or "how bold Peter and John were"

##### boldness

bravery, courage, lack of fear. A person with boldness is not afraid.

##### realized that they were ordinary, uneducated men

The Jewish leaders "realized" this because of the way Peter and John spoke.

##### and realized

"and understood"

##### ordinary, uneducated men

The words "ordinary" and "uneducated" share similar meanings. They emphasize that Peter and John had received no formal training in Jewish law.

#### Acts 4:14

##### the man who was healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the man whom Peter and John had healed"

##### nothing to say against this

"nothing to say against Peter and John's healing of the man." Here the word "this" refers to what Peter and John had done.

#### Acts 4:15

##### the apostles

This refers to Peter and John.

#### Acts 4:16

##### What should we do with these men?

The Jewish leaders ask this question out of frustration because they could not think of what to do with Peter and John. Alternate translation: "There is nothing that we can do with these men!"

##### For a remarkable sign has been done through them, and this is evident to everyone who lives in Jerusalem

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For God has done a remarkable sign through them, and everyone who lives in Jerusalem has seen it" or "For everyone who lives in Jerusalem knows that they have done a remarkable sign"

##### sign

The miracle of healing was a sign that Peter and John were obeying God, who did the healing.

##### everyone who lives in Jerusalem

This is a generalization. It may also be an exaggeration to show that the leaders think that this is a very big problem. Alternate translation: "many of the people who live in Jerusalem" or "people who live throughout Jerusalem"

#### Acts 4:17

##### in order that it spreads no further

Here the word "it" refers to any miracles or teaching Peter and John might continue to do. Alternate translation: "in order that news of this miracle spreads no further" or "in order that no more people hear about this miracle"

##### not to speak anymore to anyone in this name

Here the word "name" refers to the person of Jesus. Alternate translation: "not to speak anymore to anyone about this person, Jesus"

#### Acts 4:18

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 4:19

##### Whether it is proper in the sight of God

Here the phrase "in the sight of God" refers to God's opinion. Alternate translation: "Whether God thinks it is right"

#### Acts 4:20

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Peter and John but not to those whom they are addressing.

#### Acts 4:21

##### After further warning

The Jewish leaders again threatened to punish Peter and John.

##### They were unable to find any excuse to punish them

Although the Jewish leaders threatened Peter and John, they could not find a reason to punish them without causing the people to riot.

##### for what had been done

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for what Peter and John had done"

#### Acts 4:22

##### General Information:

This verse gives background information about the age of the lame man who was healed.

##### The man who had experienced this sign of healing

"The man whom Peter and John had miraculously healed"

##### this sign

The miracle of healing was a sign that Peter and John were obeying God, who did the healing.

#### Acts 4:23

##### came to their own people

The phrase "their own people" refers to the rest of the believers. Alternate translation: "went to the other believers"

#### Acts 4:24

##### General Information:

Speaking together, the people quote a Psalm of David from the Old Testament. Here the word "they" refers to the rest of the believers, but not to Peter and John.

##### they raised their voices with one purpose to God

To raise the voice is an idiom for speaking. "they began speaking with one purpose to God"

##### with one purpose

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

#### Acts 4:25

##### You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David

This means that the Holy Spirit caused David to speak or write down what God said.

##### through the mouth of your servant, our father David

Here the word "mouth" refers to the words that David spoke or wrote down. Alternate translation: "by the words of your servant, our father David"

##### our father David

Here the word "father" refers to an ancestor.

##### Why did the Gentile nations rage, and the peoples imagine useless things?

This is a rhetorical question that emphasizes the futility of opposing God. Alternate translation: "The Gentile nations should not have raged, and the peoples should not have imagined useless things."

##### the peoples imagine useless things

These "useless things" consist of plans to oppose God. Alternate translation: "the peoples imagine useless things against God"

##### peoples

people groups

#### Acts 4:26

##### Connecting Statement:

The believers complete their quotation from King David in the Psalms that they began in Acts 4:25.

##### The kings of the earth set themselves together, and the rulers gathered together against the Lord

These two lines mean basically the same thing. The two lines emphasize the combined effort of the earth's rulers to oppose God.

##### set themselves together ... gathered together

These two phrases mean that they joined their armies together to fight a battle. Alternate translation: "set their armies together ... gathered their troops together"

##### against the Lord, and against his Christ

Here the word "Lord" refers to God. In the Psalms, the word "Christ" refers to the Messiah or God's anointed one.

#### Acts 4:27

##### Connecting Statement:

The believers continue praying.

##### in this city

"this city" refers to Jerusalem.

##### your holy servant Jesus

"Jesus, who serves you faithfully"

#### Acts 4:28

##### to do all that your hand and your plan had decided

Here the word "hand" is used to mean God's power. Additionally, the phrase "your hand and your desire decided" shows God's power and plan. Alternate translation: "to do all that you in your power had decided and planned they would do"

#### Acts 4:29

##### look upon their warnings

Here the words "look upon" are a request for God to take notice of the way in which the Jewish leaders threatened the believers. Alternate translation: "notice how they threaten to punish us"

##### speak your word with all boldness

The word "word" here is a metonym for God's message. The abstract noun "boldness" can be translated as an adverb. Alternate translation: "speak your message boldly" or "be bold when we speak your message"

#### Acts 4:30

##### Connecting Statement:

The believers complete the prayer that they began in Acts 4:24.

##### Stretch out your hand to heal and to give

Here the word "hand" refers to God's power. This is a request for God to show how powerful he is. Alternate translation: "Show your power by healing people and by giving"

##### through the name of your holy servant Jesus

Here the word "name" refers to power and authority. Alternate translation: "through the power of your holy servant Jesus"

##### your holy servant Jesus

"Jesus, who serves you faithfully." See how you translated this in Acts 4:27.

#### Acts 4:31

##### the place ... was shaken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the place ... shook"

##### they were all filled with the Holy Spirit

This can be stated in active form. See how you translated this in Acts 2:4. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit had filled them all" or "God had filled them all with the Holy Spirit"

#### Acts 4:32

##### were of one heart and soul

Here the word "heart" refers to the thoughts and the word "soul" refers to the emotions. Together they refer to the total person. Alternate translation: "thought the same way and wanted the same things"

##### they had everything in common

"they shared their belongings with one another." See how you translated this in Acts 2:44.

#### Acts 4:33

##### great grace was upon them all

Possible meanings are: 1) that God was greatly blessing the believers or 2) that the people in Jerusalem held the believers in very high esteem.

#### Acts 4:34

##### all who owned title to lands or houses

The word "all" here is a generalization. Alternate translation: "Many people who owned title to lands or houses" or "People who owned title to lands or houses"

##### owned title to lands or houses

"owned land or houses"

##### the money from the things that were sold

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the money that they received from the things that they sold"

#### Acts 4:35

##### laid it at the apostles' feet

This means that they presented the money to the apostles. Alternate translation: "presented it to the apostles" or "gave it to the apostles"

##### it was distributed to each one according to their need

The noun "need" can be translated with a verb. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they distributed the money to each believer who needed it"

#### Acts 4:36

##### General Information:

Luke introduces Barnabas into the story.

##### Son of Encouragement

The apostles used this name to show that Joseph was a person who encouraged others. "Son of" is an idiom used to describe a person's behavior or character. Alternate translation: "Encourager" or "one who encourages"

#### Acts 4:37

##### laid it at the apostles' feet

This means that they presented to money to the apostles. See how you translated this in [Acts 4:35]

## Chapter 5

# Acts 5 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### "Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit"

No one knows for sure if Ananias and Sapphira were truly Christians when they decided to lie about the land that they sold (Acts 5:1-10), because Luke does not say. However, Peter knew that they lied to the believers, and he knew that they had listened to and obeyed Satan.

When they lied to the believers, they also lied to the Holy Spirit. This is because the Holy Spirit lives inside believers.

## Links:

* [Acts 5:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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]

Annanias 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 Annanias 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 Annanias lied to the apostles and to God. This was because Ananias gave and 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. Annanias and Sapphira tested the Holy Spirit when they lied to the apostles. When the 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”(ζῆλος/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 Gamiel, 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 kind 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 apostle 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 5:1

##### Connecting Statement:

Continuing the story of how the new Christians shared their belongings with other believers, Luke tells about two believers, Ananias and Sapphria.

##### Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story to tell a new part of the story.

#### Acts 5:2

##### his wife also knew it

"his wife also knew that he kept back part of the sale money"

##### laid it at the apostles' feet

This means that they presented to money to the apostles. See how you translated this in [Acts 4:35]

#### Acts 5:3

##### General Information:

If your language does not use rhetorical questions, you may reword these as statements.

##### why has Satan filled your heart to lie ... land?

Peter uses this question to rebuke Ananias. Alternate translation: "you should not have let Satan fill your heart to lie ... land."

##### Satan filled your heart

Here the word "heart" is a metonym for the will and emotions. The phrase "Satan filled your heart" is a metaphor. Possible meanings of the metaphor are 1) "Satan completely controlled you" or 2) "Satan convinced you"

##### to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the price

This implies that Ananias had told the apostles that he was giving the entire amount that he had received from selling his land.

#### Acts 5:4

##### While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own ... authority?

Peter uses this question to rebuke Ananias. Alternate translation: "While it remained unsold, it was your own ... authority."

##### While it remained unsold

"Before you sold it"

##### after it was sold, was it not under your authority?

Peter uses this question to rebuke Ananias. Alternate translation: "after it was sold, you had control over the money that you received."

##### after it was sold

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "after you sold it"

##### Why did you put it in your heart to do this?

Peter used this question to rebuke Ananias. Here the word "heart" refers to the will and emotions. Alternate translation: "You should not have thought of doing this thing." or "It is Satan who has put this activity in your heart."

#### Acts 5:5

##### fell down and breathed his last

Here "breathed his last" means "breathed his final breath" and is a polite way of saying that he died. Ananias fell down because he died; he did not die because he fell down. Alternate translation: "died and fell to the ground"

#### Acts 5:6

##### The young men arose

This means that they began to act. This does not necessarily mean that they had been sitting or that Peter and Ananias had been at the front of the room or a meeting hall. If your language has a phrase that speaks of people responding to something by beginning to act, you may use it.

#### Acts 5:7

##### his wife came in

"Ananias' wife came in" or "Sapphira came in"

##### what had happened

"that her husband had died"

#### Acts 5:8

##### for so much

"for this much money." This refers to the amount of money that Ananias had given to the apostles.

#### Acts 5:9

##### General Information:

Here the word "you" is plural and refers to both Ananias and Sapphira.

##### How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?

Peter asks this question to rebuke Sapphira. Alternate translation: "You should not have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord!"

##### you have agreed together

"the two of you have agreed together"

##### to test the Spirit of the Lord

Here the word "test" means to challenge or to prove. They were trying to see if they could get away with lying to God without receiving punishment.

##### Look, the feet of the men

The word "Look" is an idiom for "Pay attention!" Peter is probably telling Sapphira to pay attention to the sound of the men's footsteps, which indicate that they are about to enter the building, not to look at their feet. Here the phrase "the feet" can be either a synecdoche for the men whose feet they are or a metonym for the sound that they make. Alternate translation: "Pay attention! The men" or "Listen! The footsteps of the men"

##### they will carry

"the men will carry"

#### Acts 5:10

##### Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Ananias and Sapphira.

##### fell down at his feet

This means that when she died, she fell on the floor in front of Peter. This expression should not be confused with falling down at a person's feet as a sign of humility.

##### breathed her last

Here "breathed his last" means "breathed her final breath" and is a polite way of saying "she died." See how you translated a similar phrase in [Acts 5:5]

#### Acts 5:11

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 5:12

##### General Information:

It is not clear whether here the word "They" refers to the believers or only to the apostles.

##### Connecting Statement:

Luke continues to tell what happens in the early days of the church.

##### Many signs and wonders were taking place among the people through the hands of the apostles

"Many signs and wonders took place among the people through the hands of the apostles." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people"

##### signs and wonders

"supernatural events and miraculous deeds." See how you translated these terms in Acts 2:22

##### through the hands of the apostles

Here the word "hands" refers to the apostles. Alternate translation: "through the apostles"

##### all together

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose. The people were more than just in the same place at the same time.

##### Solomon's Porch

This was a covered walkway that consisted of rows of pillars that supported a roof, and which people named after king Solomon. See how you translated "the porch that is called Solomon's" in Acts 3:11.

#### Acts 5:13

##### General Information:

The words "them" and "they" refer to the apostles.

##### none of the rest

Possible meanings are 1) the apostles were in Solomon's Porch, but the rest of the believers were afraid to join them there, or 2) all the believers were in Solomon's Porch, and the word "none" is a hyperbole that means that most of the people who were not believers were afraid to join them.

##### they were held in high esteem by the people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people held the believers in high esteem"

#### Acts 5:14

##### more believers were being added to the Lord

This could be stated in active form. See how you translated "were added" in [Acts 2:41]

#### Acts 5:15

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the people who lived in Jerusalem.

##### his shadow might fall on some of them

It is implied that God would heal them if Peter's shadow touched them.

#### Acts 5:16

##### those afflicted with unclean spirits

"those whom unclean spirits had afflicted"

##### they were all healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God healed them all" or "the apostles healed them all"

#### Acts 5:17

##### Connecting Statement:

The religious leaders began to persecute the believers.

##### But

This begins a contrasting story. You may translate this in the way that your language introduces a contrasting narrative.

##### the high priest rose up

Here the phrase "rose up" means that the high priest decided to take action, not that he stood up from a seated position. Alternate translation: "the high priest took action"

##### they were filled with jealousy

The abstract noun "jealousy" can be translated as an adjective. This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they became very jealous"

#### Acts 5:18

##### laid hands on

This means they had the believers arrested. See how you translated this in [Acts 4:3]

#### Acts 5:19

##### General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to the apostles.

#### Acts 5:20

##### in the temple

This phrase here refers to the temple courtyard, not to the temple building, where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation: "in the temple courtyard"

##### all the words of this life

The word "words" here is a metonym for the message that the apostles had already proclaimed. Possible meanings are 1) "all this message of eternal life" or 2) "the whole message of this new way of living"

#### Acts 5:21

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the apostles.

##### into the temple

They went into the temple courtyard, not into the temple building, where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation: "into the temple courtyard"

##### about daybreak

"as it began to be light." Although the angel led them out of the jail during the night, the sun was rising by the time the apostles reached the temple courtyard.

##### sent to the prison to have the apostles brought

This implies someone went to the jail. Alternate translation: "sent someone to the jail to bring the apostles"

#### Acts 5:22

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 5:23

##### we found no one inside

Possible meanings are 1) they found no one inside the apostles' cell Alternate translation: "we did not find them inside" or 2) the apostles had been the only prisoners and now there were no prisoners at all in the jail.

#### Acts 5:24

##### General Information:

Here the word "you" is plural and refers to the captain of the temple and the chief priests.

##### they were much perplexed

"they were very puzzled" or "they were very confused"

##### concerning them

"concerning the words they had just heard" or "concerning these things"

##### as to what would come of it

"and what would happen as a result" or "what would happen next"

#### Acts 5:25

##### General Information:

Here the word "you" is plural and refers to the captain of the temple and the chief priests.

##### standing in the temple

They did not go into the part of the temple building where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation: "standing in the temple courtyard"

#### Acts 5:26

##### Connecting Statement:

The captain and the officers bring the apostles before the Jewish religious council.

##### brought them back

"brought the apostles back"

##### they feared the people, that they might be stoned

This can be expressed with an active form. Alternate translation: "they feared that the people might stone them"

#### Acts 5:27

##### they had brought them, they set them ... interrogated them

"the captain and officers had brought the apostles, the captain and the officers set the apostles ... interrogated the apostles"

##### interrogated

questioned to find out what was true

#### Acts 5:28

##### We ... us

The speakers were referring to themselves, but not to the apostles, so these words are exclusive.

##### you ... your

These words refer to the apostles and so are plural.

##### in this name

Here the word "name" refers to the person of Jesus. See how you translated this in [Acts 4:17]

##### you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching

Teaching many people in a city is spoken of as if they were filling the city with a teaching. Alternate translation: "you have taught many people in Jerusalem about him" or "you have taught about him throughout the Jerusalem"

##### desire to bring this man's blood upon us

Here the word "blood" is a metonym for death, and to bring someone's blood on people is a metaphor for saying that they are guilty of that person's death. Alternate translation: "desire to make us responsible for this man's death"

#### Acts 5:29

##### General Information:

Here the word "We" refers to the apostles, and not to the audience.

##### Peter and the apostles answered

Peter spoke on behalf of all of the apostles when he said the following words.

#### Acts 5:30

##### The God of our fathers raised up Jesus

Here "raised up" is an idiom. Alternate translation: "The God of our fathers caused Jesus to live again"

##### by hanging him on a tree

Here Peter uses the word "tree" to refer to the cross, which was made of wood. Alternate translation: "by hanging him on a cross"

#### Acts 5:31

##### God exalted him to his right hand

To be at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "God exalted him to the place of honor beside him"

##### give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins

The words "repentance" and "forgiveness" can be translated as verbs. Alternate translation: "give the people of Israel an opportunity to repent and have God forgive their sins"

##### Israel

The word "Israel" refers to the Jewish people.

#### Acts 5:32

##### those who obey him

"those who submit to God's authority"

#### Acts 5:33

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 5:34

##### Connecting Statement:

Gamaliel addresses the council members.

##### Gamaliel, a teacher of the law who was honored by all the people

Luke introduces Gamaliel and provides background information about him.

##### who was honored by all the people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom all the people honored"

##### to take the men outside

The words "the men" refers to the apostles.

#### Acts 5:35

##### pay close attention to

"think carefully about" or "be cautious about." Gamaliel was warning them not to do something that they would later regret.

#### Acts 5:36

##### Theudas rose up

Possible meanings are 1) "Theudas rebelled" or 2) "Theudas appeared."

##### claiming to be somebody

"claiming to be somebody important"

##### He was killed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People killed him"

##### all who had been obeying him were scattered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "all the people scattered who had been obeying him" or "all who had been obeying him went in different directions"

##### came to nothing

This means that they did not do what they had planned to do.

#### Acts 5:37

##### After this man

"After Theudas"

##### in the days of the census

"during the time of the census"

##### drew away some people after him

This means that he persuaded some people to rebel with him against the Roman government. Alternate translation: "caused many people to follow him" or "caused many people to join him in rebellion"

#### Acts 5:38

##### keep away from these men and let them alone

Gamaliel is telling the Jewish leaders not to punish the apostles any more and not to put them back in jail.

##### if this plan or work is of men

"if men have devised this plan or are doing this work"

##### it will be overthrown

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone will overthrow it"

#### Acts 5:39

##### Connecting Statement:

Gamaliel finishes addressing the council members.

##### if it is of God

Here the word "it" refers to "this plan or work." Alternate translation: "if God has devised this plan or commanded these men to do this work"

##### So they were persuaded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "So Gamaliel persuaded them"

#### Acts 5:40

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the council members and all instances of "them" refer to the apostles.

##### they called the apostles in and beat them

The council members would have ordered the temple guards to do these things.

##### to speak in the name of Jesus

Here "name" refers to the authority of Jesus. See how you translated a similar phrase in Acts 4:18. Alternate translation: "to speak anymore in the authority of Jesus"

#### Acts 5:41

##### General Information:

All instances of "they" refer to the apostles.

##### they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name

The apostles rejoiced because God had honored them by letting the Jewish leaders dishonor them. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God had counted them worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name"

##### for the Name

Here "the Name" refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "for Jesus"

#### Acts 5:42

##### General Information:

The word "they" refers to the apostles.

##### Thereafter every day

"After that day, every day." This phrase marks what the apostles did every day through the following days.

##### in the temple and from house to house

They did not go into the temple building where only the priests went. Alternate translation: "in the temple courtyard and in different people's houses"

## Chapter 6

# Acts 6 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### The distribution to the widows

The believers in Jerusalem gave help—probably money but possibly food—every day to women whose husbands had died. All of these widows had been raised as Jews, but some of them had lived in Judea and spoke Hebrew. Others had lived in Gentile areas and spoke Greek. Those who gave out the money or food gave it to the Hebrew-speaking widows but not to the Greek-speaking widows. To please God, the church leaders appointed Greek-speaking men to make sure the Greek-speaking widows received their share of help. One of these Greek-speaking men was Stephen.

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### "His face was like the face of an angel"

No one knows for sure what it was about Stephen's face that was like the face of an angel, because Luke does not tell us. It is best for the translation to say only what the ULB says about this.

## Links:

* [Acts 6:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 were 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”(παραθεωρέω/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 became obedient to the faith?

[6:7]

When the priests became “obedient”(ὑπακούω/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 Stepehen 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 (Prophesy) ; Prophecy (Prophesy) ;Atone (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 6:1

##### General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story. Luke gives important background information to understand the story.

##### Now in these days

Consider how new parts of a story are introduced in your language.

##### was multiplying

"was greatly increasing"

##### Grecian Jews ... Hebrews

These were both groups of Jews who had become believers. The writer assumes that the reader understands that these people were all believers because at this point all believers had grown up as Jews.

##### Grecian Jews

These were believers who had grown up as Jews or become converts living somewhere in the Roman Empire outside of Israel and speaking Greek. Their language and culture were somewhat different from those who had grown up in Israel.

##### the Hebrews

These were believers who had grown up as Jews or become converts in Israel speaking Hebrew or Aramaic.

##### widows

A widow is a woman who has not remarried since her husband died.

##### their widows were being overlooked

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Hebrew believers were overlooking the Grecian widows"

##### being overlooked

"being ignored" or "being forgotten." There were so many who needed help that some were missed.

##### daily distribution of help

The disciples were able to help the widows because believers were giving money to the apostles Acts 4:34-35. Possible meanings are 1) the disciples used the money to buy food, which they would give to the widows, or 2) the disciples gave the money directly to the widows.

#### Acts 6:2

##### General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the 12 apostles and not to their hearers, so it is exclusive.

##### The twelve

This refers to the eleven apostles plus Matthias, who was selected in Acts 1:26.

##### the multitude of the disciples

"all of the disciples" or "all the believers"

##### give up the word of God

This is an exaggeration in order to emphasize the importance of their task of teaching the word of God. Alternate translation: "stop preaching and teaching the word of God"

##### serve tables

This is a phrase meaning to serve food to the people.

#### Acts 6:3

##### General Information:

Here the word "you" refers to the believers and so is plural.

##### men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom

Possible meanings are 1) the men have three qualities—a good reputation, being full of the Spirit, and being full of wisdom or 2) the men have a reputation for two qualities—being full of the Spirit, and being full of wisdom .

##### men of good reputation

"men that people know are good" or "men whom people trust"

##### over this business

"to be responsible to do this task"

#### Acts 6:4

##### General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the 12 apostles and not to their hearers, so it is exclusive.

##### the ministry of the word

"the ministry of teaching and preaching the message"

#### Acts 6:5

##### Their speech pleased the whole multitude

"All the disciples liked their suggestion"

##### Stephen ... Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus

These are Greek names, so it seems that all of the men elected were from the Grecian Jewish group of believers.

##### proselyte

a Gentile who converted to the Jewish religion

#### Acts 6:6

##### placed their hands upon them

This represented giving a blessing and imparting responsibility and authority for the work to the seven.

#### Acts 6:7

##### General Information:

This verse gives an update on the church's growth.

##### the word of God continued to spread

The writer speaks of the growing number of people who believed the word as if the word of God itself were covering a larger area. Alternate translation: "the number of people who believed the word of God increased" or "the number of people who believed the message from God increased"

##### became obedient to the faith

"followed the teaching of the new belief"

##### the faith

Possible meanings are 1) the gospel message of trust in Jesus or 2) the teaching of the church or 3) the Christian teaching.

#### Acts 6:8

##### General Information:

The writer begins to give background information about Stephen and other people that is important to understanding the story.

##### Connecting Statement:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story.

##### Now Stephen

This introduces Stephen as the main character in this part of the story.

##### Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing

The words "grace" and "power" here refer to power from God. This could be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "God was giving Stephen power to do"

#### Acts 6:9

##### General Information:

The writer continues giving background information about Stephen and other people that is important to understanding the story.

##### there arose some people ... Asia. These people were debating with Stephen

The word "arose" is an idiom that represents beginning to act. These people did not begin to rise into the air, nor did they necessarily get up from a sitting position. Alternate translation: "some people ... Asia, began to debate against Stephen"

##### the synagogue of the Freedmen, of the Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia

Possible meanings are 1) the Cyrenians, the Alexandrians and those from Cilicia and Asia were all members of the synagogue of the Freedmen; 2) the Cyrenians and the Alexandrians were members of the synagogue of the Freedmen, but those from Cilicia and Asia were not; or 3) there were three separate groups of people: those from the synagogue, those from Cyrene and Alexandria, and those from Cilicia and Asia.

##### synagogue of the Freedmen

"Freedmen" were probably ex-slaves from these different locations. It is unclear if the other people listed were part of the synagogue or just participated in the debate with Stephen.

##### the Cyrenians and Alexandrians

"people from Cyrene and Alexandria." Cyrene and Alexandria were cities in Northern Africa. They were south of the Mediterranean Sea.

##### some from Cilicia and Asia

Cilicia was a city and Asia was a Roman province, both north of the Mediterranean Sea.

##### debating with Stephen

"arguing with Stephen"

#### Acts 6:10

##### Connecting Statement:

The writer finishes giving background information about Stephen and other people that is important to understanding the story.

##### not able to stand against

This phrase means they could not prove false what he said. Alternate translation: "could not argue against"

##### Spirit

this refers to the Holy Spirit

#### Acts 6:11

##### General Information:

Here the word "We" refers only to the men they persuaded to lie. The word "they" refers back to the people from the synagogue of the freemen

##### some men to say

They were given money to give false testimony. Alternate translation: "some men to lie and say"

##### blasphemous words against

"bad things about"

#### Acts 6:12

##### General Information:

The word "they" most likely refers back to the people from the synagogue of the Freedmen (Acts 6:9). They were responsible for the false witnesses and for inciting the council, the elders, the scribes, and the other people.

##### stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes

"caused the people, the elders, and the scribes to be very angry at Stephen"

##### seized him

"grabbed him and held him so he could not get away"

#### Acts 6:13

##### General Information:

The word "they" most likely refers back to the people from the synagogue of the Freedmen (Acts 6:9).

##### does not stop speaking

"continually speaks"

#### Acts 6:14

##### General Information:

The words "we" and "us" refer only to the speakers, not to the hearers, and so is exclusive.

##### handed down to us

The phrase "handed down" means "passed on." Alternate translation: "taught our ancestors"

#### Acts 6:15

##### fixed their eyes on him

This is an idiom that means they looked intently at him. Here "eyes" is a metonym for sight. Alternate translation: "looked intently at him" or "stared at him"

##### was like the face of an angel

This phrase compares his face to that of an angel but does not say specifically what they have in common.

## Chapter 7

# Acts 7 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 7:42-43 and 49-50.

It appears that 8:1 is part of the narrative of this chapter.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### "Stephen said"

Stephen told the history of Israel very briefly. He paid special attention to the times that the Israelites had rejected the people God had chosen to lead them. At the end of the story, he said that the Jewish leaders he was talking to had rejected Jesus just as the evil Israelites had always rejected the leaders God had appointed for them.

#### "Full of the Holy Spirit"

The Holy Spirit completely controlled Stephen so that he said only and all of what God wanted him to say.

#### Foreshadowing

When an author speaks of something that is not important at that time but will be important later in the story, this is called foreshadowing. Luke mentions Saul, also known as Paul, here, even though he is not an important person in this part of the story. This is because Paul is an important person in the rest of the Book of Acts.

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### Implied information

Stephen was talking to Jews who knew the law of Moses well, so he did not explain things that his hearers already knew. But you may need to explain some of these things so that your readers will be able to understand what Stephen was saying. For example, you may need to make explicit that when Joseph's brothers "sold him into Egypt"

#### Metonymy

Stephen spoke of Joseph ruling "over Egypt" and over all of Pharaoh's household. By this he meant that Joseph ruled over the people of Egypt and of the people and possessions in Pharaoh's household.

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### Background knowledge

The Jewish leaders to whom Stephen spoke already knew much about the events he was telling them about. They knew what Moses had written in the Book of Genesis. If the Book of Genesis has not been translated into your language, it may be difficult for your readers to understand what Stephen said.

## Links:

* [Acts 7:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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]

Stepehen 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 Pharoah. 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:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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).
4. 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 (προδόται /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 7:1

##### Connecting Statement:

The part of the story about Stephen, which began in Acts 6:8, continues. Stephen begins his response to the high priest and the council by talking about things that happened in Israel's history. Most of this history comes from Moses's writings.

#### Acts 7:2

##### General Information:

The word "our" includes both Steven, the Jewish council to whom he spoke, and the entire audience.

##### Brothers and fathers, listen to me

Stephen was being very respectful to the council in greeting them as extended family.

#### Acts 7:3

##### General Information:

The word "your" refers to Abraham and so is singular.

#### Acts 7:4

##### General Information:

In verse 4 the words "he," "his," and "him" refer to Abraham. In verse 5 the words "He" and "he" refer to God, but the word "him" refers to Abraham. Here the word "you" refers to the Jewish council and audience.

#### Acts 7:5

##### He gave none of it

"He did not give any of it"

##### enough to set a foot on

Possible meanings for this phrase are 1) enough ground to stand on or 2) enough ground to take a step. Alternate translation: "a very tiny piece of ground"

##### as a possession to him and to his descendants after him

"for Abraham to own and to give to his descendants"

#### Acts 7:6

##### God was speaking to him like this

It may be helpful to state that this occurred later than the statement in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "Later God told Abraham"

##### four hundred years

"400 years"

#### Acts 7:7

##### I will judge the nation

"nation" refers to the people in it. Alternate translation: "I will judge the people of the nation"

##### the nation that they serve

"the nation that they will serve"

#### Acts 7:8

##### gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision

The Jews would have understood that this covenant required Abraham to circumcise the males of his family. Alternate translation: "made a covenant with Abraham to circumcise the males of his family"

##### so Abraham became the father of Isaac

The story transitions to Abraham's descendants.

##### Jacob the father

"Jacob became the father." Stephen shortened this.

#### Acts 7:9

##### the patriarchs

"the founders of our tribes" or "our ancestors." A patriarch is a man who rules a family.

##### sold him into Egypt

The Jews knew their ancestors sold Joseph to be a slave in Egypt. Alternate translation: "sold him as a slave in Egypt"

##### was with him

This is an idiom for helping someone. Alternate translation: "helped him"

#### Acts 7:10

##### over Egypt

This refers to the people of Egypt. Alternate translation: "over all the people of Egypt"

##### all his household

This refers to all his possessions. Alternate translation: "everything he owned"

#### Acts 7:11

##### Now a famine and great tribulation came

"a famine came." The ground stopped producing food and this caused a terrible suffering.

##### our fathers

This refers Jacob and his sons, who were the ancestors of the Jewish people.

#### Acts 7:12

##### grain

Grain was the most common food at that time.

##### our fathers

Here this phrase refers to Joseph's older brothers, who were Jacob's sons.

#### Acts 7:13

##### On their second trip

"On their next trip"

##### made himself known

Joseph revealed to his brothers his identity as their brother.

##### Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Pharaoh learned that they were Joseph's family"

#### Acts 7:14

##### sent his brothers back

"sent his brothers back to Canaan" or "sent his brothers back home"

#### Acts 7:15

##### he died

Make sure it does not sound as though he died as soon as he arrived in Egypt. Alternate translation: "eventually Jacob died"

##### he and our fathers

"Jacob and his sons, who became our ancestors"

#### Acts 7:16

##### They were carried over ... and laid

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Jacob's descendants carried Jacob's body and his son's bodies over ... and buried them"

##### for a price in silver

"with money"

#### Acts 7:17

##### As the time of the promise ... the people grew and multiplied

In some languages it may be helpful to say that the people increased in number before saying that the time of the promise arrived.

##### time of the promise approached

It was close to the time that God would fulfill his promise to Abraham.

#### Acts 7:18

##### there arose another king

"another king began to rule"

##### over Egypt

"Egypt" refers to the people of Egypt. Alternate translation: "over the people of Egypt"

##### who did not know about Joseph

"Joseph" refers to the reputation of Joseph. Alternate translation: "who did not know that Joseph had helped Egypt"

#### Acts 7:19

##### General Information:

The word "our" includes Stephen and his audience.

#### Acts 7:20

##### At that time Moses was born

This introduces Moses into the story.

##### very beautiful before God

This phrase is an idiom that means Moses was very beautiful.

##### was nourished

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "his parents nourished him" or "his parents cared for him"

#### Acts 7:21

##### When he was placed outside

Moses was "placed outside" because of Pharaoh's command. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When his parents placed him outside" or "When they abandoned him"

##### Pharaoh's daughter ... raised him as her own son

She did for him every good thing a mother would do for her own son. Use your language's normal word for what a mother does to make sure her son becomes a healthy adult.

##### adopted him

If your language has a word for an informal procedure, not a formal legal procedure, in which one family takes a child in and raises him, you may want to use that here. Pharaoh's daughter did do for Moses what any mother would do for her child, but this involved no formal legal procedure.

##### as her own son

"as if he were her own son"

#### Acts 7:22

##### Moses was educated

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The Egyptians educated Moses"

##### all the wisdom of the Egyptians

This is an exaggeration to emphasize that he was trained in the best schools in Egypt.

##### mighty in his words and works

"effective in his speech and actions" or "influential in what he said and did"

#### Acts 7:23

##### it came into his heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for "mind." The phrase "it came into his heart" is an idiom that means to decide something. Alternate translation: "it came into his mind" or "he decided"

##### visit his brothers, the descendants of Israel

This refers to his people, and not just to his family. Alternate translation: "see how his own people, the children of Israel, were doing"

#### Acts 7:24

##### Seeing an Israelite being mistreated ... the Egyptian

This can be stated in active form by rearranging the order. Alternate translation: "Seeing an Egyptian mistreating an Israelite, Moses defended and avenged the Israelite by striking the Egyptian who was oppressing him"

##### striking the Egyptian

Moses hit the Egyptian so hard that he died.

#### Acts 7:25

##### he thought

"he imagined"

##### by his hand, was giving them salvation

Here "hand" refers to the actions of Moses. Alternate translation: "was giving them salvation through what he, Moses, was doing"

##### was giving them salvation

The abstract noun "salvation" can be translated using the verb "save." Alternate translation: "was saving them" or "was rescuing them"

#### Acts 7:26

##### when they were fighting

Some translations make it clear that two men were fighting. Alternate translation: "when two men of Israel were fighting"

##### make peace between them

"make them stop fighting"

##### Men, you are brothers

Moses was addressing the Israelites who were fighting.

##### why are you wronging one another?

Moses asked this question to encourage them to stop fighting. Alternate translation: "you should not do wrong to each other!"

#### Acts 7:27

##### General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the Israelites but does not include Moses.

##### Who appointed you a ruler and a judge over us?

The man used this question to rebuke Moses. Alternate translation: "No one appointed you ruler or judge over us." or "You have no authority over us!"

#### Acts 7:28

##### Would you like to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?

The man used this question to warn Moses that he and probably others knew Moses had killed the Egyptian.

#### Acts 7:29

##### General Information:

Stephen's audience already knew that Moses had married a Midianite woman when he fled Egypt.

##### after hearing this

The implied information is that Moses understood that the Israelites knew that he had killed an Egyptian the day before (Acts 7:28).

#### Acts 7:30

##### When forty years were past

"After 40 years passed." This was the amount of time Moses had been in Midian. Alternate translation: "Forty years after Moses fled from Egypt"

##### an angel appeared

Stephen's audience knew that God spoke through the angel.

#### Acts 7:31

##### he marveled at the sight

Moses was surprised that the bush was not burning up in the fire. This was previously known by Stephen's audience. Alternate translation: "because the bush was not burning up"

##### as he approached to look at it

This may mean Moses initially drew close to the bush to investigate.

#### Acts 7:32

##### I am the God of your fathers

"I am the God whom your ancestors worshiped"

##### Moses trembled and did not dare to look

This may mean Moses drew back in fear when he heard the voice.

##### Moses trembled

Moses shook from fear. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: "Moses trembled with fear"

#### Acts 7:33

##### Take off the sandals

God told Moses this so he would honor God.

##### for the place where you are standing is holy ground

The implied information is that where God is present, the immediate area around God is considered holy or is made holy by God.

#### Acts 7:34

##### certainly seen

"seen for sure." The word "certainly" adds emphasis to "seen."

##### the oppression of my people

The abstract noun "oppression" can be translated using the verb "oppress." Alternate translation: "the way the Egyptians are oppressing my people"

##### my people

The word "my" emphasizes that these people belonged to God. Alternate translation: "the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob"

##### I have come down to rescue them

"will personally cause their release"

##### now come

"get ready." God uses an order here.

#### Acts 7:35

##### General Information:

Verses 35-38 contain a series of connected phrases referring to Moses. Each phrase begins with statements such as "This Moses" or "This same Moses" or "This is the man" or "It is the same Moses." If possible, use similar statements to emphasize Moses. After the Israelites left Egypt, they spent 40 years wandering around the wilderness before God led them into the land he had promised them.

##### This Moses whom they rejected

This refers back to the events recorded in Acts 7:27-28.

##### deliverer

"rescuer"

##### by the hand of the angel ... bush

The hand is a metonym for the action performed by the person. In this case, the angel had commanded Moses to return to Egypt. Stephen speaks as if the angel had a physical hand. You may need to make explicit what action the angel did. Alternate translation: "by the action of the angel" or "by having the angel ... bush command him to return to Egypt"

#### Acts 7:36

##### during forty years

Stephen's audience knew about the forty years the Israelites spent in the wilderness. Alternate translation: "during the 40 years that the Israelite people lived in the wilderness"

#### Acts 7:37

##### raise up a prophet

"cause a man to be a prophet"

##### from among your brothers

"from among your own people"

#### Acts 7:38

##### This is the man who was in the assembly

"This is the man Moses who was among the Israelites"

##### This is the man

The phrase "This is the man" throughout this passage refers to Moses.

##### who received living words to give to us

God was the one who gave those words. Alternate translation: "to whom God spoke living words to give to us"

##### living words

Possible meanings are 1) "a message that endures" or 2) "words that give life."

#### Acts 7:39

##### pushed him away from themselves

This metaphor emphasizes their rejection of Moses. Alternate translation: "they rejected him as their leader"

##### in their hearts they turned back

Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's thoughts. To do something in the heart means to desire do to something. Alternate translation: "they desired to turn back"

#### Acts 7:40

##### General Information:

The quotation in this verse is from the writings of Moses.

##### At that time

"When they decided to return to Egypt"

#### Acts 7:41

##### they made a calf

Stephen's audience knew the calf they made was a statue. Alternate translation: "they made a statue that looked like a calf"

##### a calf ... the idol ... the work of their hands

These phrases all refer to the same statue of the calf.

#### Acts 7:42

##### General Information:

Stephen's quotation here is from the prophet Amos.

##### God turned

"God turned away." This action expresses that God was not pleased with the people and no longer helped them. Alternate translation: "God stopped correcting them"

##### gave them up

"abandoned them"

##### the stars in the sky

Possible meanings for the original phrase are 1) the stars only or 2) the sun, moon, and stars.

##### the book of the prophets

This was apparently a collection of the writings of several of the Old Testament prophets into one scroll. It would also have included the writings of Amos.

##### Did you bring me offerings and sacrifices ... Israel?

God asked this question to show Israel they did not worship him with their sacrifices. Alternate translation: "You did not honor me when brought offerings and sacrifices ... Israel."

##### house of Israel

This refers to the whole nation of Israel. Alternate translation: "all you Israelites"

#### Acts 7:43

##### General Information:

The quotation from the prophet Amos continues here.

##### Connecting Statement:

Stephen continues his response to the high priest and the council which he began in Acts 7:2.

##### You accepted

It is implied that they took these idols with them as they traveled in the wilderness. Alternate translation: "you carried with you from place to place"

##### tabernacle of Molech

the tent that housed the false god Molech

##### the star of the god Rephan

the star that is identified with the false god Rephan

##### the images that you made

They made statues or images of the gods Molech and Rephan in order to worship them.

##### I will carry you away beyond Babylon

"I will remove you to places even farther than Babylon." This would be God's act of judgment.

#### Acts 7:44

##### the tabernacle of the testimony

The tent that housed the ark (a box) with the 10 commandments carved in stone inside it

#### Acts 7:45

##### our fathers, under Joshua, received the tabernacle and brought it with them

The phrase "under Joshua" means that their ancestors did these things in obedience to Joshua's direction. Alternate translation: "our fathers, in accordance with Joshua's instructions, received the tabernacle and brought it with them"

##### God took the land from the nations and drove them out before the face of our fathers

This sentence tells why the ancestors were able to take possession of the land. Alternate translation: "God forced the nations to leave the land before the face of our fathers"

##### God ... drove them out before the face of our fathers

Here "the face of our fathers" refers to the presence of their ancestors. Possible meanings are 1) "As our ancestors watched, God ... drove them out" or 2) "When our ancestors came, God ... drove them out"

##### the nations

This refers to the people who lived in the land before Israel. Alternate translation: "the people who previously lived here"

##### drove them out

"forced them to leave the land"

#### Acts 7:46

##### he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob

Here "house" is probably a metonym for the ark of the covenant. David wanted to build a place for the ark, which represented God's presence, so people could go there to worship God. Alternate translation: "he might build a place where people could worship the God of Jacob"

##### the house of Jacob

Many versions read, "the God of Jacob."

#### Acts 7:47

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 7:48

##### made with hands

The hand is a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "made by people"

#### Acts 7:49

##### General Information:

In verses 49 and 50, Stephen quotes from the prophet Isaiah. In the quotation, God is speaking about himself.

##### Heaven is my throne ... the earth is the footstool for my feet

The prophet is comparing the greatness of God's presence to how impossible it is for man to build a place for God to rest on earth since the whole earth is nothing but a place for God to rest his feet.

##### What kind of house can you build for me?

God asks this question to show how useless man's efforts are to take care of God. Alternate translation: "You can not build a house adequate enough for me!"

##### what is the place for my rest?

God asks this question to show man that he cannot provide God any rest. Alternate translation: "There is no place of rest good enough for me!"

#### Acts 7:50

##### General Information:

In verses 49 and 50, Stephen quotes from the prophet Isaiah. In the quotation, God is speaking about himself.

##### Did my hand not make all these things?

God asks this question to show that man did not create anything. Alternate translation: "My hand made all these things!"

#### Acts 7:51

##### Connecting Statement:

With a sharp rebuke, Stephen finishes his response to the high priest and the council, which he began in Acts 7:2.

##### You stiff-necked people

Stephen shifts from identifying with the Jewish leaders to rebuking them.

##### uncircumcised in heart and ears

The Jews regarded uncircumcised people as disobedient to God. Stephen uses "hearts and ears" to represent to the Jewish leaders who acted the way Gentiles act when they do not obey or listen to God. Alternate translation: "you refuse to obey and hear"

#### Acts 7:52

##### Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?

Stephen asked this question to show them that they learned nothing from the errors of their forefathers. Alternate translation: "Your forefathers persecuted every prophet!"

##### Righteous One

This refers to the Christ, the Messiah.

##### you have now become the betrayers and murderers of him also

"you have also betrayed and murdered him"

##### murderers of him

"murderers of the Righteous One" or "murderers of the Christ"

#### Acts 7:53

##### the law that angels had ordained

"the laws that God caused angels to give to our ancestors"

#### Acts 7:54

##### Connecting Statement:

The council reacts to Stephen's words.

##### Now when the council members heard these things

This is the turning point; the sermon ends and the council members react.

##### they were furious in their hearts

This means that they were extremely angry.

##### ground their teeth at Stephen

This action expressed their strong anger at Stephen or hatred of Stephen. Alternate translation: "they became so angry that they ground their teeth together" or "moved their teeth back and forth as they looked at Stephen"

#### Acts 7:55

##### looked up intently into heaven

"stared up into heaven." It appears that only Stephen saw this vision and not anyone else in the crowd.

##### saw the glory of God

People normally experienced the glory of God as a bright light. Alternate translation: "saw a bright light from God"

##### and he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God

To stand at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "and he saw Jesus standing in the place of honor and authority beside God"

#### Acts 7:56

##### Son of Man

Stephen refers to Jesus by the title "Son of Man."

#### Acts 7:57

##### covered their ears

"put their hands on their ears." They did this to show that they did not want to hear any more of what Stephen said.

##### with one purpose

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

#### Acts 7:58

##### They forced him out of the city

"They seized Stephen and forcefully took him out of the city"

##### outer clothing

These are cloaks or robes they would wear outside to stay warm, similar in function to a jacket or coat.

##### at the feet

"in front of." They were placed there so Saul could watch them.

##### a young man

Saul was probably around 30 years old at the time.

#### Acts 7:59

##### receive my spirit

"take my spirit." It may be helpful to add "please" to show that this was a request. Alternate translation: "please receive my spirit"

#### Acts 7:60

##### Connecting Statement:

This ends the story of Stephen.

##### He knelt down

This is an act of submission to God.

##### do not hold this sin against them

This can be stated in a positive way. Alternate translation: "forgive them for this sin"

##### fell asleep

Here to fall asleep is a euphemism for dying. Alternate translation: "died"

## Chapter 8

# Acts 8 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 8:32-33.

The first sentence of verse 1 ends the description of the events in chapter 7. Luke begins a new part of his history with the words "So there began."

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Receiving the Holy Spirit

In this chapter for the first time Luke speaks of people receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:15-19). The Holy Spirit had already enabled the believers to speak in tongues, to heal the sick, and to live as a community, and he had filled Stephen. But when the Jews started putting believers in prison, those believers who could leave Jerusalem did leave, and as they went, they told people about Jesus. When the people who heard about Jesus received the Holy Spirit, the church leaders knew that those people had truly become believers.

#### Proclaimed

This chapter more than any other in the Book of Acts speaks of the believers proclaiming the word, proclaiming the good news, and proclaiming that Jesus is the Christ. The word "proclaim" translates a Greek word that means to tell good news about something.

## Links:

* [Acts 8:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 Aramic 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; Atone (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 Spiritwas 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 (Prophesy) ; 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 leads 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: Atone (Atonement); Prophecy (Prophesy); 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 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 (Prophesy); 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 Phillp 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 8:1

##### General Information:

It may be helpful to your audience to move these parts of the story about Stephen together by using a verse bridge as the UDB does.

##### Connecting Statement:

The story shifts from Stephen to Saul in these verses.

##### So there began ... except the apostles

This part of verse 1 is background information about the persecution that began after Stephen's death. This explains why Saul was persecuting the believers in verse 3.

##### that day

This refers to the day that Stephen died (Acts 7:59-60).

##### the believers were all scattered

The word "all" is a generalization to express that a large number of the believers left Jerusalem because of the persecution.

##### except the apostles

This statement implies that the apostles remained in Jerusalem even though they also experienced this great persecution.

#### Acts 8:2

##### Devout men

"God-fearing men" or "Men who feared God"

##### made great lamentation over him

"greatly mourned his death"

#### Acts 8:3

##### house after house

"houses one by one"

##### drag off both men and women

"took away both men and women by force." Saul forcefully took Jewish believers out of their homes and put them into prison.

##### men and women

This refers to men and women who believed in Jesus.

#### Acts 8:4

##### who had been scattered

The cause for the scattering, the persecution, was stated previously. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "who had fled the great persecution"

##### the word

This is a metonym for "the message." You may need to make explicit that the message was about Jesus. Alternate translation: "the message about Jesus"

#### Acts 8:5

##### Connecting Statement:

This begins the story of Philip, whom the people had chosen as a deacon.

##### went down to the city of Samaria

The phrase "went down" is used here because Samaria is lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

##### the city of Samaria

Possible meanings are 1) Luke expected the readers to know which city he was writing about. Alternate translation: "the main city in Samaria" or 2) Luke did not expect his readers to know which city he was writing about. Alternate translation: "a city in Samaria"

##### proclaimed to them the Christ

The title "Christ" refers to Jesus, the Messiah. Alternate translation: "told them about Jesus Christ" or "told them about Jesus the Messiah"

#### Acts 8:6

##### Crowds of people

"Many people in the city of Samaria." The location was specified in Acts 8:5.

##### were giving close attention

The reason people paid attention was because of all the healing Philip did.

##### with one mind

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

#### Acts 8:7

##### who were possessed

"who had them" or "who were controlled by them"

#### Acts 8:8

##### So there was much joy in that city

The phrase "that city" refers to the people who were rejoicing. Alternate translation: "So the people of the city were rejoicing"

#### Acts 8:9

##### General Information:

Simon is introduced to the story of Philip. This verse gives the beginning of the background information about Simon and who he was among the Samaritans.

##### But there was a certain man ... named Simon

This is a way of introducing a new person into the story. Your language may use different wording to introduce a new person into the story.

##### the city

"the city in Samaria" (Acts 8:5)

#### Acts 8:10

##### General Information:

Simon is introduced to the story of Philip. This verse continues to give the beginning of the background information about Simon and who he was among the Samaritans.

##### All the Samaritans

The word "all" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "Many of the Samaritans" or "The Samaritans in the city"

##### from the least to the greatest

These two phrases refer to everyone from one extreme to the other. Alternate translation: "no matter how important they were"

##### This man is that power of God which is called Great

People were saying that Simon was the divine power known as "The Great Power."

##### that power of God which is called Great

Possible meanings are 1) the powerful representative of God or 2) God or 3) the most powerful man or 4) an angel. Since the term is unclear, it may be best to simply translate it as "the Great power of God."

#### Acts 8:11

##### General Information:

Simon is introduced to the story of Philip. This verse ends the background information about Simon and who he was among the Samaritans.

#### Acts 8:12

##### Connecting Statement:

Verses 12 and 13 give more information about Simon and some of the Samaritans coming to believe in Jesus.

##### they were baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Philip baptized them" or "Philip baptized the new believers"

#### Acts 8:13

##### Connecting Statement:

Verses 12 and 13 give more information about Simon and some of the Samaritans coming to believe in Jesus.

##### Simon himself believed

The word "himself" is here used to emphasize that Simon believed. Alternate translation: "Simon was also one of those who believed"

##### he was baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Philip baptized Simon"

#### Acts 8:14

##### Connecting Statement:

Luke continues the news of what was happening in Samaria.

##### Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard

This marks the beginning of a new part of the story of the Samaritans.

##### Samaria

This refers to the many people who had become believers throughout the district of Samaria.

##### had received

"had believed" or "had accepted"

#### Acts 8:15

##### When they had come down

"when Peter and John had come down"

##### come down

This phrase is used here because Samaria is lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

##### they prayed for them

"Peter and John prayed for the Samaritan believers"

##### that they might receive the Holy Spirit

"that the Samaritan believers might receive the Holy Spirit"

#### Acts 8:16

##### they had only been baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Philip had only baptized the Samaritan believers"

##### they had only been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus

Here "name" represents authority, and being baptized into his name represents being baptized in order to be under his authority. Alternate translation: "they had only been baptized to become disciples of the Lord Jesus"

#### Acts 8:17

##### Peter and John placed their hands on them

The word "them" refers to the Samaritan people who believed Stephen's message of the gospel.

##### placed their hands on them

This symbolic action shows that Peter and John wanted God to give the Holy Spirit to the believers.

#### Acts 8:18

##### the Holy Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the apostles gave the Holy Spirit by laying their hands on people"

#### Acts 8:19

##### that whoever I place my hands on might receive the Holy Spirit

"that I can give the Holy Spirit to anyone on whom I place my hands"

#### Acts 8:20

##### General Information:

Here the words him, your, you, and yours all refer to Simon.

##### May your silver perish along with you

"May you and your money be destroyed"

##### the gift of God

Here this refers to the ability of a person to give the Holy Spirit by laying his hands on someone.

#### Acts 8:21

##### You have no part or allotted portion in this matter

The words "part" and "allotted portion" mean the same thing and are used for emphasis. Alternate translation: "You may not participate in this work"

##### your heart is not right

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts or motives. Alternate translation: "you are not right in your heart" or "the motives of your mind are not right"

#### Acts 8:22

##### this wickedness

"these evil thoughts"

##### he might perhaps forgive

"he may be willing to forgive"

##### for the intention of your heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts. Alternate translation: "for what you intended to do" or "for what you were thinking of doing"

#### Acts 8:23

##### in the poison of bitterness

Here "in the poison of bitterness" is a metaphor for being very envious. It speaks of envy as if it tastes bitter and poisons the person who is envious. Alternate translation: "very envious"

##### in the bonds of unrighteousness

The phrase "bonds of unrighteousness" is spoken as if unrighteousness could make Simon a prisoner. It is metaphor that means Simon is not able to stop himself from sinning. Alternate translation: "because you continue sinning you are like a prisoner" or "sin has made you its prisoner"

#### Acts 8:24

##### General Information:

Here the word "you" refers to Peter and John.

##### so that nothing you have said may happen to me

This refers to Peter's rebuke about Simon's silver perishing along with him.

##### nothing you have said may happen to me

This can be stated another way. Alternate translation: "the things you have said may not happen to me"

#### Acts 8:25

##### Connecting Statement:

This is concludes the part of the story about Simon and the Samaritans.

##### testified

Peter and John told what they personally knew about Jesus to the Samaritans.

##### spoken the word of the Lord

Here "word" is a metonym for "message." Peter and John explained the message about Jesus to the Samaritans.

##### to many villages of the Samaritans

Here "villages" refers to the people in them. Alternate translation: "to the people in many Samaritan villages"

#### Acts 8:26

##### Connecting Statement:

This begins the part of the story about Philip and the man from Ethiopia.

##### Now

This marks a transition in the story.

##### Arise and go

These verbs work together to emphasize that he should get ready to start a long journey that will take some time. Alternate translation: "Get ready to travel"

##### goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza

The phrase "goes down" is used here because Jerusalem is higher in elevation than Gaza.

##### This road is in a desert

Most scholars believe Luke added this comment to describe the area through which Philip would travel.

#### Acts 8:27

##### General Information:

This verse gives background information about the man from Ethiopia.

##### Behold

The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.

##### eunuch

The emphasis of "eunuch" here is about the Ethiopian's being a high government official, not so much his physical state of being castrated.

##### Candace

This was a title for the queens of Ethiopia. It is similar to the way the word Pharaoh was used for the kings of Egypt.

##### He had come to Jerusalem to worship

This implies that he was a Gentile who believed in God and had come to worship at the Jewish temple. Alternate translation: "He had come to worship God at the temple in Jerusalem"

#### Acts 8:28

##### chariot

Possibly "wagon" or "carriage" is more fitting in this context. Chariots are normally mentioned as a vehicle for war, not as a vehicle for long-distance travel. Also, people stood to ride in chariots.

##### reading the prophet Isaiah

This is the Old Testament book Isaiah. Alternate translation: "reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah"

#### Acts 8:29

##### stay close to this chariot

Philip understood that this meant he was to stay close to the person riding in the chariot. Alternate translation: "accompany the man in this chariot"

#### Acts 8:30

##### reading Isaiah the prophet

This is the Old Testament book Isaiah. Alternate translation: "reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah"

##### Do you understand what you are reading?

The Ethiopian was intelligent and could read, but he lacked spiritual discernment. Alternate translation: "Do you understand the meaning of what you are reading?"

#### Acts 8:31

##### How can I, unless someone guides me?

This question was asked to state emphatically that he could not understand without help. Alternate translation: "I cannot understand unless someone guides me."

##### He invited Philip to ... sit with him

It is implied here that Philip agreed to travel down the road with him to explain the scriptures.

##### He invited

Possible meanings are that 1) he offered a sincere invitation or 2) he made a sincere request.

#### Acts 8:32

##### General Information:

This a passage from the book of Isaiah. Here the word "he" refers to the Messiah.

##### like a lamb before his shearer is silent

A shearer is a person who cuts the wool off the sheep so that it may be used.

#### Acts 8:33

##### General Information:

This verse continues quoting a passage from the book of Isaiah. Here the words "his" and "him" refer to the Messiah.

##### In his humiliation justice was taken away from him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "He was humiliated and they did not judge him fairly" or "He allowed himself to be humbled before his accusers and he suffered injustice"

##### Who can give a full account of his descendants?

This question was used to emphasize that he will not have descendants. Alternate translation: "No one will be able to speak about his descendants, for there will not be any."

##### his life was taken from the earth

This referred to his death. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "men killed him" or "men took his life from the earth"

#### Acts 8:34

##### I beg you

"Please tell me"

#### Acts 8:35

##### this scripture

This refers to Isaiah's writings in the Old Testament. Alternate translation: "the writings of Isaiah"

#### Acts 8:36

##### they went on the road

"they continued to travel along the road"

##### What prevents me from being baptized?

The eunuch uses this question as a way of asking Philip for permission to be baptized. Alternate translation: "Please allow me to be baptized."

#### Acts 8:37

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 8:38

##### commanded the chariot to stop

"told the driver of the chariot to stop"

#### Acts 8:39

##### Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Philip and the man from Ethiopia. The story of Philip ends at Caesarea.

##### the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away

The words "took Philip away" imply that the Spirit took forceful, physical action, perhaps a miracle that moved Philip in an instant. The angel probably did not just suggest or even command that Philip leave the eunuch and go elsewhere.

##### the eunuch saw him no more

"the eunuch did not see Philip again"

#### Acts 8:40

##### Philip appeared at Azotus

There was no indication of Philip's traveling between where he baptized the Ethiopian and Azotus. He just suddenly disappeared along the road to Gaza and reappeared at the town of Azotus.

##### that region

This refers to the area around the town of Azotus.

##### to all the cities

"to all the cities in that region"

## Chapter 9

# Acts 9 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### "The Way"

No one knows for sure who first started calling believers "followers of the Way." This is probably what the believers called themselves, because the Bible often speaks of a person living his life as if that person were walking on a path or "way." If this is true, the believers were "following the way of the Lord" by living in a way that pleased God.

#### "Letters for the synagogues in Damascus"

The "letters" Paul asked for were probably legal papers that permitted him to put Christians in prison. The synagogue leaders in Damascus would have obeyed the letter because it was written by the high priest. If the Romans had seen the letter, they also would have allowed Saul to persecute the Christians, because they permitted the Jews to do as they desired to people who broke their religious laws.

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### What Saul saw when he met Jesus

It is clear that Saul saw a light and that it was because of this light that he "fell upon the ground." Some people think that Saul knew that it was the Lord speaking to him without seeing a human form, because the Bible often speaks of God as being light and living in light. Other people think that later in his life he was able to say, "I have seen the Lord Jesus" because it was a human form that he saw here.

## Links:

* [Acts 9:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 Chrisitans (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 Saud 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 Godd; 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 Chrsitian.

#### 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 Aenaes?

[9:33, 9:34]

God completely healed Aenaes 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 Chrsitians there because of the miracle God did for Tabitha (see Acts 9:42).

#### Acts 9:1

##### General Information:

Verses 1-2 give background information telling us what Saul has been doing since the stoning of Stephen.

##### Connecting Statement:

The story shifts back to Saul and his salvation.

##### still speaking threats even of murder against the disciples

The noun "murder" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "still speaking threats, even to murder the disciples"

#### Acts 9:2

##### General Information:

Verses 1-2 give background information telling us what Saul has been doing since the stoning of Stephen. Here the word "him" refers to the high priest and "he" refers to Saul.

##### for the synagogues

This refers to the people in the synagogues. Alternate translation: "for the people in the synagogues" or "for the leaders in the synagogues"

##### if he found any

"when he found people" or "if he found people"

##### who belonged to the Way

"who followed the teachings of Jesus Christ"

##### the Way

This term appears to have been a title for Christianity at that time.

##### he might bring them bound to Jerusalem

"he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem." Paul's purpose can be made clear by adding "so that the Jewish leaders could judge and punish them"

#### Acts 9:3

##### Connecting Statement:

After the high priest gave Saul the letters, Saul left for Damascus.

##### As he was traveling

Saul left Jerusalem and now travels to Damascus.

##### it happened that

This is an expression that marks a change in the story to show something different is about to happen.

##### there shone all around him a light out of heaven

"a light from heaven shone all around him"

##### out of heaven

Possible meanings are 1) out of heaven, where God lives or 2) out of the sky. The first meaning is preferable. Use that meaning if your language has a separate word for it.

#### Acts 9:4

##### he fell upon the ground and heard

Possible meanings are that 1) "Saul threw himself to the ground and heard" or 2) "the light caused Saul to fall to the ground, and he heard" or 3) "Saul fell to the ground the way one who faints falls, and he heard"

##### why are you persecuting me?

This rhetorical question communicates a rebuke to Saul. Alternate translation: "You are persecuting me!" or "Stop persecuting me!"

#### Acts 9:5

##### General Information:

Every occurrence of the word "you" here is singular.

##### Who are you, Lord?

Saul was not acknowledging that Jesus is the Lord. He uses that title because he understood that he spoke to someone of supernatural power.

#### Acts 9:6

##### but rise, enter into the city

"get up and go into the city Damascus"

##### it will be told you

This can be stated in the active form. Alternate translation: "someone will tell you"

#### Acts 9:7

##### stood speechless, hearing the voice, but seeing no one

This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "stood speechless. They heard the voice, but they did not see anyone"

##### but seeing no one

"but they saw no one" or "but they did not see anyone." Apparently only Saul experienced the light.

#### Acts 9:8

##### when he opened his eyes

This implies that he had closed his eyes because the light was too bright.

##### he could see nothing

"he could not see anything." Saul was blind.

#### Acts 9:9

##### was without sight

"was blind" or "could not see anything"

##### he neither ate nor drank

It is not stated whether he chose not to eat or drink as a form of worship, or if he had no appetite because he was too distressed from his situation. It is preferable not to specify the reason.

#### Acts 9:10

##### General Information:

The story of Saul continues, and Luke introduces another man named Ananias. This is not the same Ananias who died earlier in Acts [Acts 5:3]

##### Now there was

This introduces Ananias as a new character.

##### He said

"Ananias said"

#### Acts 9:11

##### go to the street which is called Straight

"go to Straight Street"

##### house of Judas

This Judas was not the disciple who had betrayed Jesus. This Judas was owner of a house in Damascus where Saul was staying.

##### a man from Tarsus named Saul

"a man from the city of Tarsus named Saul" or "Saul of Tarsus"

#### Acts 9:12

##### laying his hands on him

This was a symbol of giving a spiritual blessing to Saul.

##### he might see again

"he might regain his ability to see"

#### Acts 9:13

##### your holy people in Jerusalem

Here "holy people" refers to Christians. Alternate translation: "the people in Jerusalem who believe in you"

#### Acts 9:14

##### authority ... to put in bonds everyone here

It is implied that the extent of the power and authority granted Saul was limited to the Jewish people at this point in time.

##### put in bonds

Putting someone in bonds is a metonym for arresting that person. Alternate translation: "arrest"

##### calls upon your name

Here "your name" refers to Jesus.

#### Acts 9:15

##### he is a chosen instrument of mine

"chosen instrument" refers to something that is set apart for service. Alternate translation: "I have chosen him to serve me"

##### to carry my name

This is an expression for identifying or speaking out for Jesus. Alternate translation: "in order that he might speak about me"

#### Acts 9:16

##### for the cause of my name

This is an expression meaning "for telling people about me."

#### Acts 9:17

##### General Information:

The word "you" here is singular and refers to Saul.

##### Connecting Statement:

Ananias goes to the house where Saul is staying. After Saul is healed, the story shifts from Ananias back to Saul.

##### So Ananias departed, and entered into the house

It may be helpful to state that Ananias went to the house before he entered into it. Alternate translation: "So Ananias went, and after he found the house where Saul was, he entered it"

##### Laying his hands on him

Ananias put his hands on Saul. This was a symbol of giving a blessing to Saul.

##### so that you might receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that you might see again and that the Holy Spirit might fill you"

#### Acts 9:18

##### something like scales fell

"something that appeared like fish scales fell"

##### he received his sight

"he was able to see again"

##### he arose and was baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he got up and Ananias baptized him"

#### Acts 9:19

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 9:20

##### General Information:

Here the first "he" refers to Saul. The second "he" refers to Jesus, the Son of God.

##### Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

#### Acts 9:21

##### General Information:

Here "him" and "He" refer to Saul.

##### All who heard him

The word "All" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "Those who heard him" or "Many who heard him"

##### Is not this the man who destroyed those in Jerusalem who called on this name?

This is a rhetorical and negative question that emphasizes that Saul was indeed the man who had persecuted the believers. Alternate translation: "This is the man who destroyed those in Jerusalem who called on this name Jesus!"

##### this name

Here "name" refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "the name of Jesus"

#### Acts 9:22

##### causing distress among the Jews

They were distressed in the sense that they could not find a way to refute Saul's arguments that Jesus was the Christ.

#### Acts 9:23

##### General Information:

The word "him" in this section refers to Saul.

##### the Jews

This refers to the leaders of the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

#### Acts 9:24

##### But their plan became known to Saul

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But someone told their plan to Saul" or "But Saul learned about their plan"

##### They watched the gates

This city had a wall surrounding it. People could normally only enter and exit the city through the gates.

#### Acts 9:25

##### his disciples

people who believed Saul's message about Jesus and were following his teaching

##### let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket

"used ropes to lower him in a large basket through an opening in the wall"

#### Acts 9:26

##### General Information:

Here the words "he" and "him" refer to Saul.

##### but they were all afraid of him

Here "they were all" is a generalization, but it is possible that it refers to every person. Alternate translation: "but they were afraid of him"

#### Acts 9:27

##### General Information:

Here "him" refers to Saul and "he" refers to Barnabas.

##### had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus

This is a way of saying he preached or taught the gospel message of Jesus Christ without fear. Alternate translation: "had openly preached the message about Jesus"

#### Acts 9:28

##### He was with them, going in and out around Jerusalem

Here the word "He" refers to Saul, and the word "them" probably refers to the apostles and other disciples in Jerusalem. This is an idiom meaning that Paul was able to associate freely with the believers in Jerusalem.

##### in the name of the Lord Jesus

Possible meanings are 1) this simply refers to the Lord Jesus and tells who Paul spoke about. Alternate translation: "about the Lord Jesus" or 2) "name" is a metonym for authority. Alternate translation: "under the authority of the Lord Jesus" or "with the authority that the Lord Jesus gave him"

#### Acts 9:29

##### debated with the Grecian Jews

Saul tried to reason with the Jews who spoke Greek.

#### Acts 9:30

##### the brothers

Here the words "the brothers" refer to the believers in Jerusalem.

##### brought him down to Caesarea

The phrase "brought him down" is used here because Caesarea is lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

##### sent him away to Tarsus

Caesarea was a seaport. They brothers probably sent Saul to Tarsus by ship.

#### Acts 9:31

##### General Information:

Verse 31 is a statement that gives an update on the church's growth.

##### the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria

This is the first use of the singular "church" to refer to more than one local congregation. Here it refers to all the believers in all the groups throughout Israel.

##### had peace

"lived peacefully." This means the persecution that started with the murder of Stephen was finished.

##### was built up

The agent was either God or the Holy Spirit. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God helped them grow" or "the Holy Spirit built them up"

##### walking in the fear of the Lord

"Walking" here is a metaphor for "living." Alternate translation: "living in obedience to the Lord" or "continuing to honor the Lord"

##### in the comfort of the Holy Spirit

"with the Holy Spirit strengthening and encouraging them"

#### Acts 9:32

##### Connecting Statement:

Here the story shifts from Saul to a new part of the story about Peter.

##### Now it came about

This phrase is used to mark a new part of the story.

##### throughout the whole region

This is an generalization for Peter's visiting the believers in many places in the region of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria.

##### he came down

The phrase "came down" is used here because Lydda is lower in elevation than the other places where he was traveling.

##### Lydda

Lydda is a city located about 18 kilometers southeast of Joppa. This city is called Lod in the Old Testament and in modern Israel.

#### Acts 9:33

##### There he found a certain man

Peter was not intentionally searching for a paralyzed person, but happened upon him. Alternate translation: "There Peter met a man"

##### a certain man named Aeneas

This introduces Aeneas as a new character in the story.

##### who had been in his bed ... was paralyzed

This is background information about Aeneas.

##### paralyzed

This means he was unable to walk. He probably was unable to move any part of his body below his waist.

#### Acts 9:34

##### make your bed

"roll up your mat"

#### Acts 9:35

##### everyone who lived in Lydda and in Sharon

This is a generalization referring to many of the people there. Alternate translation: "those who lived in Lydda and in Sharon" or "many people who lived in Lydda and Sharon"

##### in Lydda and in Sharon

The city of Lydda was located in the Plain of Sharon.

##### saw the man

It may be helpful to state that they saw that he was healed. Alternate translation: "saw the man whom Peter had healed"

##### and they turned to the Lord

Here "turned to the Lord" is a metaphor for starting to obey the Lord. Alternate translation: "and they repented of their sins and started obeying the Lord"

#### Acts 9:36

##### General Information:

Verses 36 and 37 give background information about the woman named Tabitha.

##### Connecting Statement:

Luke continues the story with a new event about Peter.

##### Now there was

This introduces a new part in the story.

##### Tabitha (which is translated "Dorcas"). This woman

Tabitha is her name in the Aramaic language, and Dorcas is her name in the Greek language. Both names mean "gazelle." Alternate translation: "Tabitha, which in the Greek language was Dorcas. This woman"

##### was full of good works and merciful deeds

"doing many good things and performed merciful deeds"

#### Acts 9:37

##### General Information:

Verses 36 and 37 give background information about the woman named Tabitha.

##### It came about in those days

This refers to the time when Peter was in Joppa. This can be stated. Alternate translation: "It came about while Peter was nearby"

##### washed her

This was washing to prepare for her burial.

##### they laid her in an upper room

This was a temporary display of the body during the funeral process.

#### Acts 9:38

##### they sent two men to him

"the disciples sent two men to Peter"

#### Acts 9:39

##### to the upper room

"to the upstairs room where Dorcas' body was lying"

##### all the widows

It is possible that all the widows of the town were there since it was not a large town.

##### widows

women whose husbands had died and therefore needed help

##### while she had been with them

"while she was still alive with the disciples"

#### Acts 9:40

##### put them all out of the room

"told them all to leave the room." Peter had everyone leave so he could be alone to pray for Tabitha.

#### Acts 9:41

##### gave her his hand and raised her up

Peter took hold of her hand and helped her to sit up in the bed and then stand up on the floor.

##### God's holy people and the widows

The widows were possibly also believers but are mentioned specifically because Tabitha was so important to them.

#### Acts 9:42

##### Connecting Statement:

The story of Tabitha ends in verse 42. Verse 43 tells us what happens to Peter after the story ends.

##### This matter became known throughout all Joppa

This refers to the miracle of Peter's raising Tabitha from the dead. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People throughout all Joppa heard about this matter"

##### believed on the Lord

"believed in the gospel of the Lord Jesus"

#### Acts 9:43

##### Connecting Statement:

The story of Tabitha ends in verse 42. Verse 43 tells us what happens to Peter after the story ends.

##### It happened that

"It came about that." This introduces the beginning of the next event in the story.

##### Simon, a tanner

"a man named Simon who made leather from animal skins"

## Chapter 10

# Acts 10 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Unclean

The Jews believed that they could become unclean in God's sight if they visited or ate food with a Gentile. This was because the Pharisees had made a law against it because they wanted to keep people from eating foods that the law of Moses said were unclean. The law of Moses did say that some foods were unclean, but it did not say that God's people could not visit or eat with Gentiles. (See: clean and lawofmoses)

#### Baptism and the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit "fell on" those who were listening to Peter. This showed the Jewish believers that Gentiles could receive the word of God and receive the Holy Spirit just as the Jewish believers had. After that, the Gentiles were baptized.

## Links:

* [Acts 10:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 good 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” (ἔκστασις/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 10:1

##### General Information:

The writer begins to give background information about Cornelius.

##### Connecting Statement:

This is the beginning of the part of the story about Cornelius.

##### Now there was a certain man

This was a way of introducing a new person to this part of the historical account.

##### in the city of Caesarea, Cornelius by name, a centurion of what was called the Italian Company of Soldiers

"from Caesarea whose name was Cornelius. He was an officer in charge of 60 soldiers from the Italian Company of Soldiers, in the Roman army"

#### Acts 10:2

##### General Information:

The writer finishes giving background information about Cornelius.

##### a devout man

a man who wanted to do what God expected of him

##### feared God

worshiped God with deep respect and awe

##### prayed to God constantly

The word "constantly" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "prayed to God often" or "he prayed to God regularly"

#### Acts 10:3

##### the ninth hour

"three o'clock in the afternoon." This was the normal afternoon prayer time for Jews.

##### he clearly saw

"Cornelius clearly saw"

#### Acts 10:4

##### Your prayers and your alms have gone up ... into God's presence

It is implied that his gifts and prayers had been accepted by God. Alternate translation: "God is pleased by your prayers and alms. They have gone up ... to him"

#### Acts 10:5

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 10:6

##### a tanner

a person who makes leather from animal skins

#### Acts 10:7

##### When the angel who spoke to him had left

"When Cornelius' vision of the angel had ended."

##### a devout soldier

a soldier who wanted to do what God expected of him. See how you translated "devout" in [Acts 10:2](./02.md).

#### Acts 10:8

##### told them all that had happened

Cornelius explained his vision to his two servants and to one of his soldiers.

##### sent them to Joppa

"sent two of his two servants and the one soldier to Joppa."

#### Acts 10:9

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Cornelius' two servants and the soldier under Cornelius' command (Acts 10:7).

##### Connecting Statement:

The story shifts away from Cornelius to tell us what God is doing with to Peter.

##### about the sixth hour

"around noon"

##### up upon the housetop

The roofs of the houses were flat, and people often did many different activities on them.

#### Acts 10:10

##### while the people were cooking some food

"before the people finished cooking the food"

##### a trance came on him

This metaphor means that Peter went into the trance without expecting it or desiring it. Alternate translation: "he went into a trance"

##### trance

Peter saw things in his mind, not with his physical eyes.

#### Acts 10:11

##### he saw the sky open

This was the beginning of Peter's vision. It can be a new sentence.

##### something like a large sheet ... four corners

The container holding the animals had the appearance of a large square piece of cloth.

##### let down by its four corners

"with its four corners suspended" or "with its four corners higher than the rest of it"

#### Acts 10:12

##### things that crawled on the earth

snakes and insects, as opposed to "four-footed animals"

#### Acts 10:13

##### a voice spoke to him

The person speaking is not specified. The "voice" was probably God, although it could possibly have been an angel from God.

#### Acts 10:14

##### Not so

"I will not do that"

##### I have never eaten anything that was defiled and unclean

It is implied that some of the "four-footed animals and things that crawled on the earth, and birds of the sky"

#### Acts 10:15

##### What God has made clean, you must not call defiled

This refers to the animals in the sheet.

##### What God has made clean

If God is the speaker, he is referring to himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "What I, God, have made clean"

#### Acts 10:16

##### This happened three times

Possible meanings are 1) Peter heard the words "What God has made clean, you must not call defiled" three times or 2) a total of three times the sheet came down from heaven and Peter heard and responded to the voice. It would be best to translate without adding information here.

#### Acts 10:17

##### Peter was very confused

This means that Peter was having difficulty understanding what the vision meant.

##### behold

The word "behold" here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows, in this case, the two men standing at the gate.

##### stood before the gate

"stood before the gate to the house." It is implied that this house had a wall with a gate one would use to enter the property.

##### after they had asked their way to the house

This happened before they arrived at the house. This could be stated earlier in the verse, as the UDB does.

#### Acts 10:18

##### They called out

Cornelius' men remained outside the gate while asking about Peter.

#### Acts 10:19

##### thinking about the vision

"wondering about the meaning of the vision"

##### the Spirit

"the Holy Spirit"

##### Behold, three

"Pay attention, because what I am about to say is both true and important: three"

##### three men are looking for you

Some ancient texts have a different number of men.

#### Acts 10:20

##### go down

"go down from the roof of the house"

##### Do not hesitate to go with them

It would be natural for Peter not to want to go with them, because they were strangers and they were Gentiles.

#### Acts 10:21

##### I am he whom you are seeking

"I am the man you are looking for"

#### Acts 10:22

##### General Information:

The word "They" here refer to the two servants and the soldier from Cornelius (Acts 10:7).

##### A centurion named Cornelius ... listen to a message from you

This can be divided into several sentences and stated in active form as the UDB does.

##### fears God

worships God with deep respect and awe

##### all the nation of the Jews

This number of people is exaggerated with the word "all" to emphasize how widely this was known among the Jews.

#### Acts 10:23

##### General Information:

The word "them" here refer to the two servants and the soldier from Cornelius (Acts 10:7).

##### So Peter invited them to come in and stay with him

The journey to Caesarea was too long for them to begin that afternoon.

##### stay with him

"be his guests"

##### some of the brothers from Joppa

This refers to believers who lived in Joppa.

#### Acts 10:24

##### On the following day

This was the next day after they left Joppa. The journey to Caesarea took longer than one day.

##### Cornelius was waiting for them

"Cornelius expected them"

#### Acts 10:25

##### when Peter entered

"when Peter entered the house"

##### fell down at his feet to worship him

"he knelt down and put his face close to Peter's feet." He did this to honor Peter.

##### fell down

He purposely did this to show that he was worshiping.

#### Acts 10:26

##### Stand up! I too am a man

Peter was rebuking Cornelius mildly for worshiping Peter. Alternate translation: "Do not worship me! I am only a man, as you are"

#### Acts 10:27

##### General Information:

The word "him" here refers to Cornelius, and "he" refers to Peter.

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter addresses the people who are gathered in Cornelius' house.

##### many people gathered together

"many Gentile people gathered together." It is implied that these people Cornelius had invited were Gentiles.

#### Acts 10:28

##### General Information:

Here the words "You" and "yourselves" include Cornelius as well as the Gentiles who were present and so are plural.

##### it is not lawful for a Jewish man

"it is forbidden for a Jewish man." This refers to the Jewish religious law.

##### a foreigner

people who are not Jews

#### Acts 10:29

##### General Information:

Here both instances of "you" include Cornelius as well as the Gentiles who were present and so are plural.

#### Acts 10:30

##### General Information:

In verses 31 and 32 Cornelius quotes what the angel had said to him when he appeared to him at the ninth hour. The words "you" and "your" are all singular. The word "we" here does not include Peter.

##### Connecting Statement:

Cornelius responds to Peter's question.

##### Four days ago

Cornelius is referring to the day before the third night before he is speaking to Peter. Biblical culture counts the current day, so the day before three nights ago is "four days ago." Current Western culture does not count the current day, so many Western translations read, "three days ago."

##### praying

Some ancient authorities say "fasting and praying" instead of simply "praying."

##### at the ninth hour

The normal afternoon time that the Jews pray to God.

#### Acts 10:31

##### your prayer has been heard by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has heard your prayer"

##### reminded God about you

"brought you to God's attention." This does not imply that God had forgotten.

#### Acts 10:32

##### call to you a man named Simon who is called Peter

"tell Simon who is also called Peter to come to you"

#### Acts 10:33

##### at once

"right away"

##### You are kind to have come

This expression is a polite way of thanking Peter for coming. Alternate translation: "I certainly thank you for coming"

##### we are all here

This refers to Cornelius and his family but not to Peter, so this is exclusive.

##### present in the sight of God

"present with God"

##### that you have been instructed by the Lord to say

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the Lord has told you to say"

#### Acts 10:34

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter begins speaking to everyone in the house of Cornelius.

##### opened his mouth

"began to speak"

##### Truly

This means that what he is about to say is especially important to know.

##### God is not partial

"God does not favor certain people"

#### Acts 10:35

##### anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him

"he accepts anyone who fears him and does what is right"

##### to him

to God

##### fears

worships with deep respect and awe

#### Acts 10:36

##### General Information:

All instances of "he" here refers to God.

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter continues to talk to Cornelius and his guests.

##### who is Lord of all

Here "all" means "all people."

#### Acts 10:37

##### throughout all Judea

The word "all" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "throughout Judea" or "in many places in Judea"

##### after the baptism that John announced

"after John preached to the people to repent and then baptized them"

#### Acts 10:38

##### the events ... and with power

This long sentence, which begins in verse 36, can be shortened into several sentences as in the UDB.

##### God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power

The Holy Spirit and God's power are spoken of as if they are something that can be poured out onto a person.

##### all who were oppressed by the devil

The word "all" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "those who were oppressed by the devil" or "many people who were oppressed by the devil"

##### God was with him

The idiom "was with him" means "was helping him."

#### Acts 10:39

##### General Information:

The word "We" refer to Peter and the apostles and believers who were with Jesus when he was on earth, not to his hearers. The word "him" here refers to Jesus.

##### in the country of the Jews

This refers mainly to Judea at that time.

##### hanging him on a tree

This is another expression that refers to crucifixion. Alternate translation: "nailing him to a wooden cross"

#### Acts 10:40

##### General Information:

Both instances of "him" refer to Jesus.

##### God raised him up

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "God caused him to live again"

##### the third day

"the third day after he died"

##### caused him to be seen

"permitted many people to see him after he was raised from the dead"

#### Acts 10:41

##### General Information:

The word "us" refers to Peter and the apostles and believers who were with Jesus when he was on earth, not to his hearers. The words "him" and "he" here refers to Jesus.

##### from the dead

From among all those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld.

#### Acts 10:42

##### General Information:

Here the word "us" includes Peter and believers. It excludes his audience.

##### that this is the one who has been chosen by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God chose this Jesus"

##### the living and the dead

This refers to people who are still living and people who have died. Alternate translation: "the people who are alive and the people who are dead"

#### Acts 10:43

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes his speech to everyone in the house of Cornelius, which he began in [Acts 10:34](./34.md).

##### About him all the prophets testify

"All the prophets testify about Jesus"

##### everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins

This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will forgive the sins of everyone who believes in Jesus because of what Jesus has done"

##### through his name

Here "his name" refers to the actions of Jesus. His name means God who saves. Alternate translation: "through what Jesus has done for them"

#### Acts 10:44

##### the Holy Spirit fell

Here the word "fell" indicates that the event happened suddenly. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit suddenly came"

##### all of those who were listening

Here "all" refers to all the Gentiles at the house who were listening to Peter.

#### Acts 10:45

##### the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out also

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God also poured out the Holy Spirit"

##### the gift of the Holy Spirit

That is, the Holy Spirit himself was the gift.

##### poured out

The Holy Spirit is spoken of as if he were something that could be poured out upon people. It implies a generous amount. Alternate translation: "generously given"

##### the gift

"the free gift"

##### also on the Gentiles

Here "also" refers to the fact that the Holy Spirit had already been given to the Jewish believers.

#### Acts 10:46

##### Gentiles speaking in tongues and exalting God

These were known spoken languages that caused the Jews to acknowledge that the Gentiles were indeed praising God.

##### speaking in tongues

Here "tongues" is a metonym for languages. Alternate translation: "speaking in other languages"

#### Acts 10:47

##### Can anyone keep water from these people so they should not be baptized, these people who have received ... we?

Peter uses this question to convince the Jewish Christians that the Gentile believers should be baptized. Alternate translation: "No one should keep water from these people! We should baptize them because they have received ... we!"

#### Acts 10:48

##### General Information:

The words "he" and "him" refer to Peter.

##### Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Cornelius.

##### he commanded them to be baptized

It is implied that the Jewish Christians were the ones who would baptize them. Alternate translation: "Peter commanded the Gentile believers to allow the Jewish Christians to baptize them" or "Peter commanded the Jewish Christians to baptize them"

##### be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ

Here "in the name of Jesus Christ" expresses that the reason for their baptism was that they believed in Jesus. Alternate translation: "be baptized as believers in Jesus Christ"

## Chapter 11

# Acts 11 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### "The Gentiles also had received the word of God"

Almost all of the first believers were Jewish. Luke writes in this chapter that many Gentiles started to believe in Jesus. They believed that the message about Jesus was true and so began to "receive the word of God." Some of the believers in Jerusalem did not believe that Gentiles could truly follow Jesus, so Peter went to them and told them what had happened to him and how he had seen the Gentiles receive the Word of God and receive the Holy Spirit.

## Links:

* [Acts 11:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 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 (Prophesy) ; 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 (Prophesy) ; 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 11:1

##### General Information:

This is the beginning of a new event in the story.

##### Now

This marks a new part of the story.

##### the brothers

The phrase "brothers" here refers to the believers in Judea.

##### who were in Judea

"who were in the province of Judea"

##### had received the word of God

This expression refers to the fact that the Gentiles believed the gospel message about Jesus. Alternate translation: "believed the message of God about Jesus"

#### Acts 11:2

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter arrives in Jerusalem and begins talking to the Jews there.

##### had come up to Jerusalem

Jerusalem was higher than almost any other place in Israel, so it was normal for Israelites to speak of coming up to Jerusalem and going down from it.

##### they who belonged to the circumcision group

This is a reference to some of the Jews who believed that every believer must be circumcised. Alternate translation: "some Jewish believers in Jerusalem who wanted all followers of Christ to be circumcised"

#### Acts 11:3

##### uncircumcised men

The phrase "uncircumcised men" refers to Gentiles.

##### ate with them

It was against Jewish tradition for Jews to eat with Gentiles.

#### Acts 11:4

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter responds to the Jews by telling them about his vision and about what had happened at Cornelius' house.

##### Peter started to explain

Peter did not criticize the Jewish believers but reacted in a friendly, explanatory manner.

##### in detail

"exactly what happened"

#### Acts 11:5

##### in a trance I saw

Peter saw something that was only in his mind. It was not physical. His mind was not working in its usual way. See how you translated similar words in Acts 10:10.

##### like a large sheet

The container holding the animals had the appearance of a large square piece of cloth. See how you translated this in Acts 10:11.

##### by its four corners

"with its four corners suspended" or "with its four corners higher than the rest of it." See how you translated this in Acts 10:11.

#### Acts 11:6

##### four-legged animals of earth

From Peter's response, it can be implied that the law of Moses commanded the Jews not to eat some of them. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Acts 10:12]

##### wild beasts

This probably refer to the animals people do not or cannot tame or control.

##### things that crawled

snakes and insects, as opposed to "four-footed animals." See how you translated this in Acts 10:12.

#### Acts 11:7

##### I heard a voice

The person speaking is not specified. The "voice" was probably God, although it could possibly have been an angel from God. See how you translated "a voice" in [Acts 10:13]

#### Acts 11:8

##### Not so

"I will not do that." See how you translated this in Acts 10:14.

##### nothing unholy or unclean has ever entered into my mouth

Apparently the animals in the sheet were animals which the Jewish law in the Old Testament forbade the Jews to eat. This can be said in a positive way. Alternate translation: "I have eaten only meat from holy and clean animals"

##### unclean

In the Old Testament Jewish law, a person became ritually "unclean" in various ways, such as eating certain forbidden animals.

#### Acts 11:9

##### What God has made clean, you must not call defiled

This refers to the animals in the sheet.

#### Acts 11:10

##### This happened three times

Possible meanings are 1) Peter heard the words "What God has made clean, you must not call defiled" three times or 2) a total of three times the sheet came down from heaven and Peter heard and responded to the voice. It would be best to translate without adding information here. See how you translated "This happened three times" in Acts 10:16.

#### Acts 11:11

##### General Information:

Here "we" refers to Peter and the believers in Joppa. It does not include his current audience in Jerusalem.

##### Behold

This word alerts us to the new people in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.

##### right away

"immediately" or "at that exact moment"

##### they had been sent

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone had sent them"

#### Acts 11:12

##### that I should make no distinction regarding them

"that I should not be concerned that they were Gentiles"

##### These six brothers went with me

"These six brothers went with me to Caesarea"

##### These six brothers

"These six Jewish believers"

##### into the man's house

This refers to the house of Cornelius.

#### Acts 11:13

##### Simon who is called Peter

"Simon who is also called Peter." See how you translated the same phrase in Acts 10:32.

#### Acts 11:14

##### all your household

This refers to all the people in the household. Alternate translation: "everyone who lives in your house"

#### Acts 11:15

##### General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to Peter, the other apostles, and all of the Jewish believers who had received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

##### As I began to speak to them, the Holy Spirit came on them

This implies that Peter had not finished speaking but had intended to say more.

##### the Holy Spirit came on them, just as on us in the beginning

Peter leaves out some things to keep the story short. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit came on the Gentile believers, just as he came on the Jewish believers at Pentecost"

##### in the beginning

Peter is referring to the day of Pentecost.

#### Acts 11:16

##### you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will baptize you with the Holy Spirit"

#### Acts 11:17

##### General Information:

The word "them" refers to Cornelius and his Gentile guests and household. The word "us" refers to the speaker and his hearers and so is inclusive.

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes his speech (which he began in Acts 11:4) to the Jews about his vision and about what had happened at the house of Cornelius.

##### Then if God gave to them ... who was I, that I could oppose God?

Peter uses this question to emphasize that he was only obeying God. Alternate translation: "Since God gave to them ... I decided that I could not oppose God!"

##### the same gift

Peter refers to the gift of the Holy Spirit.

#### Acts 11:18

##### General Information:

The word "they" refers to the Jewish believers to whom Peter spoke.

##### they said nothing in response

"they did not argue with Peter"

##### God has given repentance for life to the Gentiles also

"God has given repentance that leads to life to the Gentiles also." Here "life" refers to eternal life. The abstract nouns "repentance" and "life" can be translated as the verbs "repent" and "live." Alternate translation: "God has also given the Gentiles the ability to repent and then live eternally" or "God has allowed the Gentiles also to repent and live eternally"

#### Acts 11:19

##### Connecting Statement:

Luke tells about what happened to the believers who fled after the stoning of Stephen.

##### Now

This introduces the new part of the story.

##### those who had been scattered by the persecution that arose over Stephen spread

The Jews began persecuting Jesus's followers because Stephen had said and done things that the Jews did not like. Because of this persecution, many of Jesus's followers left Jerusalem and went to many different places.

##### spread

"went in many different directions"

##### who had been scattered by the persecution that arose over Stephen spread

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom the Jews had been persecuting because of Stephen, and so had left Jerusalem, spread"

##### the persecution that arose over Stephen

the persecution that happened because of what Stephen had said and done

##### only to Jews

The believers thought God's message was for the Jewish people, and not for the Gentiles.

#### Acts 11:20

##### spoke also to Greeks

These Greek-speaking people were Gentiles, not Jews. Alternate translation: "also spoke to Gentiles who spoke Greek"

#### Acts 11:21

##### The hand of the Lord was with them

God's hand signifies his powerful help. Alternate translation: "God was powerfully enabling those believers to preach effectively"

##### turned to the Lord

Here "turned to the Lord" is a metaphor for starting to obey the Lord. Alternate translation: "they repented of their sins and began to obey the Lord"

#### Acts 11:22

##### General Information:

The word "he" refers to Barnabas. The word "they" refers to the believers of the church at Jerusalem.

##### ears of the church

Here "ears" refers to the believers' hearing about the event. Alternate translation: "the believers in the church"

#### Acts 11:23

##### General Information:

The word "he" refers to Barnabas. The word "them" refers to the believers he met on his way to Antioch.

##### saw the grace of God

"saw how God acted kindly toward the believers"

##### he encouraged them

"he kept on encouraging them"

##### to remain with the Lord

"to remain faithful to the Lord" or "to continue to trust in the Lord"

##### with purpose of heart

Here the "heart" refers to a person's will and desire. Alternate translation: "with all their will" or "with complete commitment"

#### Acts 11:24

##### General Information:

The word "he" refers to Barnabas.

##### full of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit controlled Barnabas as he obeyed the Holy Spirit.

##### many people were added to the Lord

Here "added" means they came to believe the same thing as the others. Alternate translation: "many more people also believed in the Lord"

#### Acts 11:25

##### out to Tarsus

"out to the city of Tarsus"

#### Acts 11:26

##### General Information:

The word "he" refers to Barnabas and "him" to Saul.

##### When he found him

It probably took some time and effort for Barnabas to locate Saul.

##### It came about

This begins a new event in the story.

##### they gathered together with the church

"Barnabas and Saul gathered together with the church"

##### The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch

This implies that it was other people who called the believers Christians. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People in Antioch were the fist to call the disciples Christians"

#### Acts 11:27

##### General Information:

Here Luke tells background information about a prophecy in Antioch.

##### Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story-line.

##### came down from Jerusalem to Antioch

Jerusalem was higher in elevation than Antioch, so it was normal for Israelites to speak of going up to Jerusalem or going down from it.

#### Acts 11:28

##### Agabus by name

"whose name was Agabus"

##### indicated by the Spirit

"the Holy Spirit enabled him to prophesy"

##### a great famine would occur

"a great shortage of food would happen"

##### over all the world

This was a generalization referring to the part of the world that they were interested in. Alternate translation: "all over the inhabited world" or "throughout the Roman Empire"

##### in the days of Claudius

Luke's audience would know that Claudius was the emperor of Rome at that time. Alternate translation: "when Claudius was the Roman emperor"

#### Acts 11:29

##### So

This word means marks an event that happened because of something else that happened first. In this case, they sent money because of Agabus' prophesy or the famine.

##### as each one was able

The richer people sent more; the poorer people sent less.

##### the brothers in Judea

"the believers in Judea"

#### Acts 11:30

##### General Information:

The words "They" and "they" refer to the believers in the church in Antioch (Acts 11:27).

##### by the hand of Barnabas and Saul

The hand is a synecdoche for the action of the whole person. Alternate translation: "by having Barnabas and Saul take it to them"

## Chapter 12

# Acts 12 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Chapter 12 tells what happened to King Herod while Barnabas was bringing Saul back from Tarsus and they were delivering money from Antioch Jerusalem (11:25-30). He killed many of the leaders of the church, and he put Peter in prison. After God helped Peter escape the prison, Herod killed the prison guards, and then God killed Herod. In the last verse of the chapter, Luke tells how Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch.

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### Personification

The "word of God" is spoken of as if it were a living thing that could grow and become many.

## Links:

* [Acts 12:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 12:1

##### General Information:

This is background information about Herod's killing James.

##### Connecting Statement:

This begins the new persecution, first of James's death and then of Peter's imprisonment and then release.

##### Now

This begins a new part of the story.

##### about that time

This refers to the time of the famine.

##### laid hands on

This means Herod had the believers arrested. See how you translated this in [Acts 4:3]

##### some who belonged to the church

Only James and Peter are specified, which implies that these were leaders of the church in Jerusalem.

##### so that he might mistreat them

"in order to cause the believers to suffer"

#### Acts 12:2

##### He killed James ... with the sword

This tells the manner in which James was killed.

##### He killed James

Possible meanings are 1) Herod himself killed James or 2) Herod ordered someone to kill James. Alternate translation: "Herod gave the order and they killed James"

#### Acts 12:3

##### General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Herod (Acts 12:1).

##### After he saw that this pleased the Jews

"When Herod realized that putting James to death pleased the Jewish leaders"

##### pleased the Jews

"made the Jewish leaders happy"

##### That was

"Herod did this" or "This happened"

##### the days of unleavened bread

This refers to the Jewish religious feast time during the Passover season. Alternate translation: "the festival when the Jewish people ate bread without yeast"

#### Acts 12:4

##### four squads of soldiers

"four groups of soldiers." Each squad had four soldiers that guarded Peter, one group at a time. The groups divided the 24 hour day into four shifts. Each time two soldiers would have been at his side and the other two soldiers by the entrance.

##### he was intending to bring him to the people

"Herod planned to judge Peter in the presence of the people" or "Herod planned to judge Peter before the Jewish people"

#### Acts 12:5

##### So Peter was kept in the prison

This implies that the soldiers continually guarded Peter in prison. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "So the soldiers guarded Peter in the prison"

##### prayer was made earnestly to God for him by those in the church

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the group of believers in Jerusalem earnestly prayed to God for him"

##### earnestly

continuously and with dedication

#### Acts 12:6

##### On the night before Herod was going to bring him out for trial

That Herod planned to execute him can be clarified. Alternate translation: "The happened on the day before Herod was going to bring Peter out from prison to put him on trial and then to execute him"

##### bound with two chains

"tied with two chains" or "fastened with two chains." Each chain would have been attached to one of the two guards who stayed beside Peter.

##### were keeping watch over the prison

"were guarding the prison doors"

#### Acts 12:7

##### General Information:

The words "him" and "his" refer to Peter.

##### Behold

This word alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

##### by him

"next to him" or "beside him"

##### in the prison cell

"in the prison room"

##### He struck Peter

"The angel tapped Peter" or "The angel poked Peter." Peter was evidently sleeping deeply enough that this was required to wake him.

##### his chains fell off his hands

The angel caused the chains to fall from Peter without touching them.

#### Acts 12:8

##### Gird yourself and put on your sandals

Peter had probably loosened his belt and taken off his sandals so he could go to sleep. The angel was telling Peter to get ready to leave the cell.

##### Peter did so

"Peter did what the angel told him to do" or "Peter obeyed"

#### Acts 12:9

##### General Information:

Here the word "He" refers to Peter. The words "they" and "They" refer to Peter and the angel.

##### He did not know

"He did not understand"

##### what was done by the angel was real

This could be changed to active form. Alternate translation: "the actions of the angel were real" or "what the angel did truly happened"

#### Acts 12:10

##### After they had passed by the first guard and the second

It is implied that the soldiers were not able to see Peter and the angel as they walked by. Alternate translation: "The first and second guards did not see them as they passed by, and then"

##### had passed by

"had walked by"

##### and the second

The word "guard" is understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "and the second guard"

##### they came to the iron gate

"Peter and the angel arrived at the iron gate"

##### that led into the city

"that opened to the city" or "that went from the prison to the city"

##### it opened for them by itself

Here "by itself" means neither Peter nor the angel opened it. Alternate translation: "the gate swung open for them" or "the gate opened itself for them"

##### went down a street

"walked along a street"

##### left him right away

"left Peter suddenly" or "suddenly disappeared"

#### Acts 12:11

##### When Peter came to himself

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "When Peter became fully awake and alert" or "When Peter became aware that what had happened was real"

##### delivered me out of the hand of Herod

Here "the hand of Herod" refers to "Herod's hold" or "Herod's plans." Alternate translation: "brought me from the harm Herod had planned for me"

##### delivered me

"rescued me"

##### everything the Jewish people were expecting

Here "the people of the Jews" probably referred mainly to the Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "all that the Jewish leaders thought would happen to me"

#### Acts 12:12

##### realized this

He became aware that God had rescued him.

##### John, also called Mark

John was also called Mark. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "John, whom people also called Mark"

#### Acts 12:13

##### he knocked

"Peter knocked." Tapping on the door was a normal Jewish custom to let others know you wish to visit them. You may need to change this to fit your culture.

##### at the door of the gate

"at the outer door" or "at the door of the entrance from the street to the courtyard"

##### came to answer

"came to the gate to ask who was knocking"

#### Acts 12:14

##### General Information:

Here all instances of "she" refer to the servant girl Rhoda ([Acts 12:13](./13.md)).

##### out of joy

"because she was so joyful" or "being overly excited"

##### failed to open the gate

"did not open the gate" or "forgot to open the gate"

##### came running into the room

You may prefer to say "went running into the room in the house"

##### she reported

"she told them" or "she said"

#### Acts 12:15

##### General Information:

Here the words "she" and "her" both refer to the servant girl Rhoda ([Acts 10:13](./13.md)), and the words "they" and "They" refer to the people who were inside praying ([Acts 10:12](./12.md)).

##### You are insane

The people not only did not believe her, but rebuked her by saying she was crazy. Alternate translation: "You are crazy"

##### she insisted that it was so

"she insisted that what she said was true"

##### They said

"They answered"

##### It is his angel

"What you have seen is Peter's angel." Some Jews believed in guardian angels and may have thought that Peter's angel had come to them.

#### Acts 12:16

##### General Information:

Here both instances of "they" refer to the people in the house. The word "him" refers to Peter.

##### But Peter continued knocking

The word "continued" means that Peter kept knocking the entire time those inside were talking.

#### Acts 12:17

##### General Information:

Here both instances of "them" refer to the people who were inside praying (Acts 12:12).

##### Report these things

"Tell these things"

##### the brothers

"the other believers"

#### Acts 12:18

##### Now

This word is used to mark a break in the story-line. Time has passed; it is now the next day.

##### when it became day

"in the morning"

##### there was no small disturbance among the soldiers over what had happened to Peter

This phrase is used to emphasize what really happened. This could be said in a positive way. Alternate translation: "there was a great disturbance among the soldiers over what had happened to Peter"

##### there was no small disturbance among the soldiers over what had happened to Peter

The abstract noun "disturbance" can be expressed with the words "disturbed" or "upset." Alternate translation: "the soldiers were very disturbed about what had happened to Peter"

#### Acts 12:19

##### General Information:

The word "him" here refers to Peter, and both instances of "he" refers to Herod.

##### After Herod had searched for him and could not find him

"After Herod searched for Peter and could not find him"

##### After Herod had searched for him

Possible meanings are that 1) "Herod" here is a metonym for his soldiers, that is, when Herod heard Peter was missing, he sent other soldiers to search the prison, or 2) when Herod heard Peter was missing, he went himself to search the prison.

##### he questioned the guards and ordered them to be put to death

It was the normal punishment for the Roman government to kill the guards if their prisoner escaped.

##### Then Herod went down

The phrase "went down" is used here because Caesarea is lower in elevation than Judea.

#### Acts 12:20

##### Connecting Statement:

Luke continues with another event in Herod's life.

##### Now

This word is used here to mark the next event in the story.

##### very angry

This phrase translates a word that speaks of a person being so angry that he is ready to kill other people.

##### They went to him with one purpose

Here the word "They" is a generalization. It is unlikely that all the people of Tyre and Sidon went to Herod. Alternate translation: "Men representing the people of Tyre and Sidon went with one purpose to talk with Herod"

##### with one purpose

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

##### after persuading Blastus

"after these men persuaded Blastus"

##### Blastus

a man's name

##### the king's assistant

This phrase refers to a person who assists the king in his personal life, not necessarily his work as ruler.

##### they asked for peace

"these men requested peace"

##### their country received its food from the king's country

They probably purchased this food. Alternate translation: "the people of Tyre and Sidon bought all their food from the people that Herod ruled"

##### received its food

It is implied that Herod restricted this supply of food because he was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon.

#### Acts 12:21

##### On a set day

This was probably the day on which Herod agreed to meet with the representatives. Alternate translation: "On the day when Herod agreed to meet them"

##### royal clothing

expensive clothing that would demonstrate he was the king

##### sat on a throne

This was where Herod formally addressed people who came to see him.

#### Acts 12:22

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 12:23

##### Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Herod.

##### Immediately an angel

"Right away an angel" or "While the people were praising Herod, an angel"

##### struck him

"afflicted Herod" or "caused Herod to become very ill"

##### he did not give God the glory

Herod let those people worship him instead of telling them to worship God.

##### he was eaten by worms and died

Here "worms" refers to worms inside the body, probably intestinal worms. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "worms ate Herod's insides and he died"

#### Acts 12:24

##### the word of God increased and multiplied

The word of God is spoken of as if it were a living plant able to grow and reproduce. Alternate translation: "the message of God spread to more places and more people believed in him"

##### the word of God

"the message God sent about Jesus"

#### Acts 12:25

##### Connecting Statement:

This verse continues the history from [11:30]

##### completed their mission

This refers back to when they brought money from the believers at Antioch in [Acts 11:29-30]

##### they returned from Jerusalem

They went back to Antioch from Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch"

## Chapter 13

# Acts 13 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 13:33-35 and 13:41.

This chapter is where the second half of the Book of Acts begins. Luke writes more about Paul than about Peter. Luke also writes about the believers preaching to the Gentiles rather than to the Jews.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### A light for the Gentiles

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. The Jews considered all Gentiles as walking in darkness, but Paul and Barnabas spoke of telling the Gentiles about Jesus as if they were going to bring them physical light. (See: and righteous)

## Links:

* [Acts 13:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 (Prophesy); 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 Cyrus

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 (Prophesy)

#### 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; 69; 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”(ὁρίζω/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; Atone (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 13:1

##### General Information:

Verse 1 gives background information about the people in the church at Antioch.

##### Connecting Statement:

Luke begins to tell about the mission trips on which the church at Antioch send Barnabas and Saul.

##### Now in the church in Antioch

"At that time in the church at Antioch"

##### Simeon ... Niger ... Lucius ... Manaen

These are men's names.

##### foster brother of Herod the tetrarch

Manaen was probably Herod's playmate or close friend while they were growing up.

#### Acts 13:2

##### General Information:

The words "they" refers to the other three leaders ([Acts 13:1](./01.md)), not including Barnabas and Saul, and it could include other believers.

##### Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul

"Appoint Barnabas and Saul to serve me"

##### I have called them

The verb here means that God chose them to do this work.

#### Acts 13:3

##### General Information:

The words "they" and "their" refer to the other three leaders ([Acts 13:1](./01.md)), not including Barnabas and Saul, and they could include other believers.

##### laid their hands on these men

"laid their hands on these men whom God had set apart for his service." This act showed that the leaders agreed that the Holy Spirit had called Barnabas and Saul to do this work.

##### sent them off

"sent those men off" or "sent those men off to do the work the Holy Spirit told them to do"

#### Acts 13:4

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Barnabas and Saul.

##### So

This word marks an event that happened because of a previous event. In this case, the previous event is Barnabas and Saul being set apart by the Holy Spirit.

##### went down

The phrase "went down" is used here because Seleucia is lower in elevation than Antioch.

##### Seleucia

a city by the sea

#### Acts 13:5

##### General Information:

Here the words "They" and "their" refer to Barnabas and Saul.

##### city of Salamis

The city of Salamis was on Cyprus Island.

##### proclaimed the word of God

"Word of God" here is a synecdoche for "message of God." Alternate translation: "proclaimed the message of God"

##### synagogues of the Jews

Possible meanings are that 1) there were multiple Jewish synagogues in the city of Salamis where Barnabas and Saul preached or 2) Barnabas and Saul started at the synagogue at Salamis and continued to preach in all the synagogues they found while they traveled around the Island of Cyprus.

##### They also had John for an assistant

"John went with them and was helping them"

##### John

John Mark

##### assistant

"helper"

#### Acts 13:6

##### General Information:

Here both instances of "they" refers to Paul, Silas, and John Mark.

##### the whole island

They crossed from one side of the island to the other and shared the gospel message in each town they passed through.

##### Paphos

a major city on Cyprus island where the proconsul lived

##### they found

Here "found" means they came upon him without looking for him. Alternate translation: "they met" or "they came upon"

##### a certain magician

"a particular person who practiced witchcraft" or "a person who practiced supernatural magic arts"

##### whose name was Bar-Jesus

"Bar-Jesus" means "Son of Jesus." There is no relation between this man and Jesus Christ. "Jesus" was a common name at that time.

#### Acts 13:7

##### General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Sergius Paulus, the proconsul.

##### associated with

"was often with" or "was often in the company of"

##### proconsul

This was a governor in charge of a Roman province. Alternate translation: "governor"

##### who was an intelligent man

This is background information about Sergius Paulus.

##### This man summoned

The phrase "this man" refers to Sergius Paulus.

##### he sought to hear the word of God

"he wanted to hear the word of God"

#### Acts 13:8

##### General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to Paul, Silas, and John Mark, and "he" refers to Elymas.

##### Elymas "the magician"

This was Bar Jesus, who was also called "the magician"

##### that is how his name is translated

"that was what he was called in Greek"

##### opposed them; he tried to turn

"resisted them by trying to turn" or "attempted to stop them by trying to turn"

##### tried to turn the proconsul away from the faith

Here "to turn ... away from" is a metaphor for convincing someone to not do something. Alternate translation: "attempted to persuade the governor not to believe the gospel message"

#### Acts 13:9

##### General Information:

The word "him" refers to the magician Elymas, who is also called Bar Jesus ([Acts 13:6-8](./06.md)).

##### Connecting Statement:

While on the island of Paphos, Paul begins to talk to Elymas.

##### Saul, who is also called Paul

"Saul" was his Jewish name, and "Paul" was his Roman name. Since he was speaking to a Roman official, he used his Roman name. Alternate translation: "Saul, who now called himself Paul"

##### stared at him intensely

"looked at him intensely"

#### Acts 13:10

##### You son of the devil

Paul is saying the man is acting like the devil. Alternate translation: "You are like the devil" or "You act like the devil"

##### you are full of all kinds of deceit and wickedness

"you are always intent in causing others to believe what is not true using falsehood and are always doing what is wrong"

##### wickedness

The word in this context means laziness and lack of diligence in following God's law.

##### You are an enemy of every kind of righteousness

Paul is grouping Elymas with the devil. Just as the devil is an enemy of God and is against righteousness, so also was Elymas.

##### You will never stop twisting the straight paths of the Lord, will you?

Paul uses this question to rebuke Elymas for opposing God. Alternate translation: "You are always saying that the truth about the Lord God is false!"

##### the straight paths of the Lord

Here "straight paths" refer to the ways that are true. Alternate translation: "the true ways of the Lord"

#### Acts 13:11

##### General Information:

The words "you," "he," and "him" refer to Elymas the magician.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes speaking to Elymas.

##### the hand of the Lord is upon you

Here "hand' represents the power of God and "upon you" implies punishment. Alternate translation: "The Lord will punish you"

##### you will become blind

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will make you blind"

##### You will not see the sun

Elymas will be so completely blind that he not even be able to see the sun. Alternate translation: "You will not even see the sun"

##### for a while

"for a period of time" or "until the time appointed by God"

##### there fell on Elymas a mist and darkness

"the eyes of Elymas became blurry and then dark" or "Elymas started seeing unclearly and then he could not see anything"

##### he started going around

"Elymas wandered around" or "Elymas started feeling around and"

#### Acts 13:12

##### General Information:

Both instances of "he" refer to the proconsul.

##### the proconsul

A proconsul was a governor in charge of a Roman province. Alternate translation: "the governor"

##### he believed

"he believed in Jesus"

##### he was astonished at the teaching about the Lord

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the teaching about the Lord amazed him"

#### Acts 13:13

##### General Information:

Verse 13 gives background information about this part of the story. "Paul and his friends" were Barnabas and John Mark

##### Connecting Statement:

This is a new part of the story about Paul in Antioch in Pisidia.

##### Now

This marks the beginning of a new part of the story.

##### set sail from Paphos

"traveled by sailboat from Paphos"

##### came to Perga in Pamphylia

"arrived in Perga, which is in Pamphylia"

##### But John left them

"But John Mark left Paul and Barnabas"

#### Acts 13:14

##### General Information:

Verse 14 continues to give background information about this part of the story. The word "they" refers to Paul and his friends Barnabas and John Mark

##### Antioch of Pisidia

"the city of Antioch in the district of Pisidia." This is different from the city of Antioch that Paul and Barnabas left at the beginning of the chapter.

#### Acts 13:15

##### General Information:

The word "them" refers to Paul and his friends Barnabas and John Mark.

##### After the reading of the law and the prophets

The "law and the prophets" refer to parts of the Jewish scriptures which were read. Alternate translation: "After someone read from the books of the law and the writings of the prophets"

##### sent them a message, saying

"told someone to say to them" or "asked someone to say to them"

##### Brothers

The term "brothers" is here used by the people in the synagogue to refer to Paul and Barnabas as fellow Jews.

##### if you have any message of encouragement

"if you want to say anything to encourage us"

##### encouragement

or "exhortation"

##### say it

"please speak it" or "please tell it to us"

#### Acts 13:16

##### General Information:

The words "he" and "his" refer to Paul. The word "you" is plural.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul begins his speech to those in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch. He begins by talking about things that happened in Israel's history.

##### motioned with his hand

This could refer to moving his hands as a signal that he was ready to speak. Alternate translation: "moved his hands to show that he was about to speak"

##### you who fear God

This refers to Gentiles who had converted to Judaism. "you who are not Israelites but who worship God"

##### God, listen

"God, listen to me" or "God, listen to what I am about to say"

#### Acts 13:17

##### General Information:

The word "our" includes the speaker and the hears and so is plural. The words "they" and "them" refer to "the people." The word "he" refers to God.

##### The God of this people Israel

"The God the people of Israel worship"

##### our fathers

"our ancestors"

##### exalted the people

"caused the people to become very numerous"

##### with an uplifted arm

This refers to God's mighty power. Alternate translation: "with great power"

##### out of it

"out from the land of Egypt"

#### Acts 13:18

##### he put up with them

"God tolerated the people of Israel." This means "he tolerated them." Some versions have have a different word that means "he took care of them." Alternate translation: "God endured their disobedience" or "God took care of them"

#### Acts 13:19

##### General Information:

Here both instances of "he" refer to God. The word "our" refers to Paul and his audience.

##### nations

Here the word "nations" refers to different people groups and not to lands with geographical boundaries.

#### Acts 13:20

##### General Information:

The word "them" refers to the people of Israel.

##### took place over 450 years

"took more than 450 years to accomplish"

##### until Samuel the prophet

"until the time of the prophet Samuel"

#### Acts 13:21

king for forty years

"their king for forty years" or "king, and he reigned over them for forty years"

#### Acts 13:22

##### General Information:

The quotation here is from Old Testament.

##### removed him from the kingship

This expression means God caused Saul to stop being king. Alternate translation: "rejected Saul from being king"

##### he raised up David to be their king

"God chose David to be their king"

##### their king

"the king of Israel" or "the king over the Israelites"

##### It was about David that God testified, saying,

"God gave this testimony about David:"

##### I have found David ... to be

"I have observed that David ... is"

##### a man after my heart

This expression means "a man who wants what I want."

#### Acts 13:23

##### From this man's descendants

"From David's descendants." This is placed at the beginning of the sentence to emphasize that the savior had to be one of David's descendants (Acts 13:22).

##### has brought to Israel

This refers to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "gave to the people of Israel"

##### as he promised to do

"just as God promised he would do"

#### Acts 13:24

##### a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel

You can translate the word "repentance" as the verb "repent." Alternate translation: "that all the people of Israel who wanted to repent of their sin needed to have him baptize them"

#### Acts 13:25

##### Who do you think I am?

John asked this question to compel the people to think about who he was. Alternate translation: "Think about who I am."

##### I am not the one

John was referring to the Messiah, whom they were expecting to come. Alternate translation: "I am not the Messiah"

##### But listen

This emphasizes the importance of what he will say next.

##### one is coming after me

This also refers to the Messiah. Alternate translation: "The Messiah will soon come"

##### the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie

"I am not worthy even to untie his sandals." The Messiah is so much greater than John that he did not even feel worthy do the lowest job for him.

#### Acts 13:26

##### General Information:

Here the word "us" includes Paul and his entire audience in the synagogue.

##### Brothers, children of the offspring of Abraham, and those among you who fear God

Possible meanings are 1) this is a list with three items, and Paul is addressing three groups of people together, or 2) the phrases "children of the offspring of Abraham" and "those among you who fear God" refer to the two groups of people whom Paul addresses as "brothers."

##### those among you who fear God

These words refer specifically to Gentiles who worshiped in the synagogue and obeyed much of the law of Moses but had not been circumcised.

##### the message about this salvation has been sent

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has sent the message about this salvation"

##### about this salvation

The word "salvation" can be translated with the verb "save." Alternate translation: "that God will save people"

#### Acts 13:27

##### General Information:

The word "they" and "their" refers to the Jews who lived in Jerusalem.

##### did not recognize him

"did not realize that this man Jesus was the one whom God had sent to save them"

##### the voices of the prophets

Here the word "voices" is a metonym for the message that the voices spoke. Alternate translation: "the writings of the prophets" or "the messages of the prophets"

##### that are read

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which someone reads"

#### Acts 13:28

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the Jewish people and their religious leaders in Jerusalem. The word him" here refers to Jesus.

##### they found no reason for the death penalty

It is implied that they found no legal reason for Jesus to be put to death. Alternate translation: "they found no legal reason for Jesus to be killed" or "they found no legal reason to kill Jesus"

#### Acts 13:29

##### When they had completed all the things that were written about him

"When they did to Jesus all the things that the prophets said would happen to him"

##### they took him down from the tree

It may be helpful to explicitly say Jesus died before this happened. Alternate translation: "they killed Jesus and then took him down from the cross after he died"

##### from the tree

"from the cross." This was another way people at that time referred to the cross.

#### Acts 13:30

##### But God raised him

"But" indicates a strong contrast between what the people did and what God did.

##### raised him from the dead

"raised him from among those who were dead." To be with "the dead" means to be dead. To raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "caused him to live again"

##### from the dead

From among all those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To raise someone from among them speaks of making that person alive again.

#### Acts 13:31

##### He was seen for many days by those who had come up with him ... Jerusalem

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The disciples who traveled with Jesus ... Jeruaslem saw him for many days"

##### many days

We know from other writings that this period was 40 days. Translate "many days" with a term that would be appropriate for that length of time.

##### are now his witnesses to the people

"are now testifying to the people about Jesus" or "are now telling the people about Jesus"

#### Acts 13:32

##### So

This word marks an event that happened because of previous event. In this case, the previous event is God's raising Jesus from the dead.

##### our fathers

"our ancestors." Paul is still speaking to the Jews and Gentile converts in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia. These were the physical ancestors of the Jews, and the spiritual ancestors of the converts.

#### Acts 13:33

##### God has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus

You may need to rearrange the parts of this sentence, which begins in verse 32. "God has fulfilled for us, their children, the promise that he made to our fathers, by raising up Jesus"

##### for us, their children

"for us, who are the children of our ancestors." Paul is still speaking to the Jews and Gentile converts in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia. These ancestors were the physical ancestors of the Jews and the spiritual ancestors of the converts.

##### by raising up Jesus

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "by making Jesus alive again"

##### As it is written in the second Psalm

"This is what was written in the second Psalm"

##### the second Psalm

"Psalm 2"

##### Son ... Father

These are important titles that describe the relationship between Jesus and God.

#### Acts 13:34

##### General Information:

The quotation is from the prophet Isaiah.

##### As to his raising him from the dead, never to return to decay, he has spoken in this way:

"God has spoken in this way that he raised him up from the dead never to return to decay" "God used these words to say that he raised him up from the dead, and so he would never die again"

##### the dead

All those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

##### never to return to decay

"and he will never die again"

##### he has spoken in this way

God has said using these words

##### sure blessings

"certain blessings"

#### Acts 13:35

##### This is why he also says in another Psalm

Paul's audience would have understood that this Psalm refers to the Messiah. Alternate translation: "In another Psalm of David, he also says about the Messiah"

##### he also says

"David also says." David is the author of Psalm 16, from which this quotation is taken.

##### You will not allow your Holy One to see decay

The phrase "see decay" is a metonym for "decay." Alternate translation: "You will not allow the body of your Holy One to rot"

##### You will not allow

David is speaking to God here.

#### Acts 13:36

##### in his own generation

"during his lifetime"

##### served the purpose of God

"did what God wanted him to do" or "did what pleased God"

##### he fell asleep

This was a polite way to refer to death. Alternate translation: "he died"

##### was laid with his fathers

"was buried with his ancestors who had died"

##### his body experienced decay

The phrase "his body experienced decay" is a less direct way of saying "his body decayed" or "his body rotted."

#### Acts 13:37

##### he whom God raised up experienced

"Jesus, whom God raised up, experienced"

##### God raised up

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "God caused to live again"

##### experienced no decay

The phrase "experienced no decay" is a way to say "his body did not decay." Alternate translation: "did not rot"

#### Acts 13:38

##### let it be known to you

"know this" or "this is important for you to know"

##### brothers

Paul uses this term because they are his fellow Jews and followers of Judaism. They are not Christian believers at this point. Alternate translation: "my fellow Israelites and other friends"

##### that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that we proclaim to you that your sins can be forgiven through Jesus"

##### forgiveness of sins

The abstract noun "forgiveness" can be translated with the verb "to forgive." Alternate translation: "that God can forgive your sins"

#### Acts 13:39

##### But by this man God makes righteous everyone who believes

"But God makes righteous everyone who believes in this man"

##### by this man

Here "this man" refers to Jesus Christ.

#### Acts 13:40

##### be careful

It is implied that the thing they should be careful about is Paul's message. Alternate translation: "give close attention to the things I have said"

##### that the thing the prophets spoke about

"so that what the prophets spoke about"

#### Acts 13:41

##### General Information:

In his message to the people in the synagogue, Paul quotes the prophet Habakkuk. Here the word "I" refers to God.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes his speech in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch, which he began in Acts 13:16.

##### you despisers

"you who feel contempt" or "you who ridicule"

##### be astonished

"be amazed" or "be shocked"

##### then perish

"then die"

##### am doing a work

"am doing something" or "am doing a great deed"

##### in your days

"during your lifetime"

##### days, a work that

"days. I am doing something that"

##### even if someone announces it to you

"even if someone tells you about it"

#### Acts 13:42

##### As Paul and Barnabas left

"When Paul and Barnabas were leaving"

##### begged them that they might

"begged them to"

##### these same words

Here "words" refers to the message that Paul had spoken. Alternate translation: "this same message"

#### Acts 13:43

##### When the synagogue meeting ended

Possible meanings are 1) this restates "As Paul and Barnabas left" in verse 42 or 2) Paul and Barnabas left the meeting before it ended and this occurs later.

##### proselytes

These were non-Jewish people who converted to Judaism.

##### who were speaking to them and persuading them

"and Paul and Barnabas were speaking to those people and persuading them"

##### to continue in the grace of God

It is implied that they believed Paul's message that Jesus was the Messiah. Alternate translation: "to continue to trust that God kindly forgives people's sins because of what Jesus did"

#### Acts 13:44

##### almost the whole city was

The "city" represents the people in the city. This phrase is used to show the great response to the Lord's word. Alternate translation: "almost all the people of the city were"

##### to hear the word of the Lord

It is implied that Paul and Barnabas were the ones who spoke the word of the Lord. Alternate translation: "to hear Paul and Barnabas speak about the Lord Jesus"

#### Acts 13:45

##### General Information:

Here the word "him" refers to Paul.

##### the Jews

Here "Jews" represents Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

##### were filled with envy

Here envy is spoken of as if it were something that could fill up a person. Alternate translation: "became very envious"

##### spoke against

"contradicted" or "opposed"

##### the things that were said by Paul

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things that Paul said"

#### Acts 13:46

##### General Information:

Both instances of the word "you" and the word "yourselves" refer to the Jews to whom Paul is speaking and so are plural. The word "we" refers to Paul and Barnabas but not the crowd that was present.

##### It was necessary

This implies that God had commanded this be done. Alternate translation: "God commanded"

##### that the word of God should first be spoken to you

This can be stated in active form. "Word of God" here is a synecdoche for "message from God." Alternate translation: "that we speak the message from God to you first" or "that we speak the word of God to you first"

##### Seeing you push it away from yourselves

Their rejection of the word of God is spoken of as if it were something they pushed away. Alternate translation: "Since you reject the word of God"

##### consider yourselves unworthy of eternal life

"have shown that you are not worthy of eternal life" or "act as though you are not worthy of eternal life"

##### we will turn to the Gentiles

"we will go to the Gentiles." Paul and Barnabas were implying that they would preach to the Gentiles. Alternate translation: "we will leave you and start preaching to the Gentiles"

#### Acts 13:47

##### General Information:

The word "us" refers to Paul and Barnabas but not the crowd that was present, so it is exclusive.

##### commanded us ... 'I have appointed you as a light ... you should bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth.'

Both instances of "you" here are singular, but when Paul said, "... the Lord commanded us," Paul was applying those singular words to both himself and Barnabas. The words in the quotation were originally spoken by God through Isaiah the prophet to God's servant. By quoting Isaiah's prophecy, Paul was saying that he and Barnabas were doing what God commanded his servant to do. Paul was not saying that God had spoken directly to him.

##### as a light

Here the truth about Jesus that Paul was preaching is spoken of as if it were a light that allowed people to see.

##### bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth

The abstract word "salvation" can be translated with the verb "to save." The phrase "uttermost parts" refers to everywhere. Alternate translation: "tell people everywhere in the world that I want to save them"

#### Acts 13:48

##### glorified the word of the Lord

Here "word" refers to the message about Jesus that they had believed. Alternate translation: "glorified God for the message about the Lord Jesus" or "glorified the Lord for his word"

##### As many as were appointed to eternal life

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "As many as God appointed to eternal life" or "All the people whom God had chosen to receive eternal life"

#### Acts 13:49

##### The word of the Lord was spread out through the whole region

Here "word" refers to the message about Jesus. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Those who believed spread the word of the Lord through the whole region" or "Those who believed went everywhere in the region and told others about the message of Jesus"

#### Acts 13:50

##### the Jews

This probably refers to the leaders of the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

##### incited ... women ... and ... men

This means that they spoke to the women and men and caused them to be angry and act violently. Alternate translation: "stirred up ... women ... and ... men"

##### the devout women of high standing

The word "devout" means that these women feared God. The phrase "of high standing" means that people respected these women.

##### the leading men

"the most important men"

##### They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas

The word "they" here probably refers to the devout women and the leading men. They listened to the Jews and then convinced the rest of the people in the city to persecute the apostles and throw them out.

##### threw them out of their region

"made Paul and Barnabas leave their land"

##### region

Here this word refers to the area that the people of the city considered their own, not to land within an official government border.

#### Acts 13:51

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Paul and Barnabas.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul and Barnabas end their time in Antioch of Pisidia and go to Iconium.

##### shook off the dust from their feet against them

This was a symbolic act to indicate to the unbelieving people that God had rejected them and would punish them.

#### Acts 13:52

##### the disciples

This probably refers to the new believers in the Antioch of Pisidia that Paul and Silas just left.

## Chapter 14

# Acts 14 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### "The message of his grace"

The message of Jesus is the message that God will show grace to those who believe in Jesus. (See: grace and believe)

#### Zeus and Hermes

The Gentiles in the Roman Empire worshiped many different false gods who do not really exist. Paul and Barnabas told them to believe in the "living God." (See: falsegod)

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### "We must enter into the kingdom of God through many sufferings."

Jesus told his followers before he died that everyone who followed him would suffer persecution. Paul is saying the same thing using different words.

## Links:

* [Acts 14:1](../../act/14/01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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”(κακόω/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”(παρατίθημι/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 14:1

##### General Information:

The story of Paul and Barnabas in Iconium continues.

##### It came about in Iconium that

Possible meanings here are 1) "It happened in Iconium that" or 2) "In Iconium, as usual,"

##### spoke in such a way

"spoke so powerfully." It may be helpful to state that they spoke the message about Jesus. Alternate translation: "spoke the message about Jesus so powerfully"

#### Acts 14:2

##### the Jews who were disobedient

This refers to the portion of the Jews who did not believe the message about Jesus.

##### stirred up the minds of the Gentiles

Causing the Gentiles to become angry is spoken of as if calm waters were disturbed.

##### the minds of the Gentiles

Here the word "minds" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "the Gentiles"

##### the brothers

Here "brothers" refers to Paul and Barnabas and the new believers.

#### Acts 14:3

##### General Information:

Here the words "he," "his," and "He" refer to the Lord.

##### So they stayed there

"Nevertheless they stayed there." Paul and Barnabas stayed in Iconium to help the many people who had believed in Acts 14:1. "So" could be omitted if it adds confusion to the text.

##### gave evidence about the message of his grace

"demonstrated that the message about his grace was true"

##### about the message of his grace

"about the message of the Lord's grace"

##### by granting signs and wonders to be done by the hands of Paul and Barnabas

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "by enabling Paul and Barnabas to perform signs and wonders"

##### by the hands of Paul and Barnabas

Here "hands" refers to the will and effort of these two men as guided by the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "by the ministry of Paul and Barnabas"

#### Acts 14:4

##### the people of the city were divided

"the people of the city disagreed with each other"

##### sided with the Jews

"supported the Jews" or "agreed with the Jews." The first group mentioned did not agree with the message about grace.

##### with the apostles

The second group mentioned agreed with the message about grace. It may be helpful to restate the verb. Alternate translation: "sided with the apostles"

##### the apostles

Luke refers to Paul and Barnabas. Here "apostle" might be used in the general sense of "ones sent out."

#### Acts 14:5

##### made an attempt to mistreat them

Here the words "made an attempt" implies that they were not able to mistreat Paul and Barnabas before Paul and Barnabas left the city.

##### to mistreat them and to stone

"to beat Paul and Barnabas and to kill them by throwing stones at them"

#### Acts 14:6

##### Lycaonia

A district in Asia Minor

##### Lystra

A city in Asia Minor south of Iconium and north of Derbe

##### Derbe

A city in Asia Minor south of Iconium and Lystra

#### Acts 14:7

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Paul and Barnabas.

##### where they continued to proclaim the gospel

"where Paul and Barnabas continued to proclaim the good news"

#### Acts 14:8

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul and Barnabas are now in Lystra.

##### a certain man sat

This introduces a new person in the story.

##### powerless in his feet

"unable to move his legs" or "unable to walk on his feet"

##### a cripple from his mother's womb

"having been born as a cripple"

##### cripple

person who cannot walk

#### Acts 14:9

##### General Information:

The words "him" and "he" refer to the crippled man.

##### Paul fixed his eyes on him

"Paul looked straight at him"

##### had faith to be made well

The abstract noun "faith" can be translated with the verb "believe." Alternate translation: "believed that Jesus could heal him" or "believed that Jesus could make him well"

#### Acts 14:10

##### he said to him

"Paul said to the crippled man"

##### jumped up

"leaped in the air." This implies that his legs were completely healed.

#### Acts 14:11

##### what Paul had done

This refers to Paul's healing the crippled man.

##### they raised their voice

To raise the voice is to speak loudly. Alternate translation: "they spoke loudly"

##### in the dialect of Lycaonia

"in their own Lycaonian language." The people of Lystra spoke Lycaonian and also Greek.

##### The gods have become like men and come down to us

These people believed that the gods needed to change their appearance in order to look like men. A large number of people believed Paul and Barnabas were their pagan gods who had come down from heaven. Alternate translation: "The gods have come down from heaven to us in the form of men"

#### Acts 14:12

##### Zeus

The people of Iconium probably considered Zeus to be the king over all the other pagan gods.

##### Hermes

The people of Iconium probably considered Hermes to be the pagan god who brought messages to people from Zeus and the other gods.

#### Acts 14:13

##### The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought

It may be helpful to include additional information about the priest. Alternate translation: "There was a temple just outside the city where the people worshiped Zeus. When the priest who served in the temple heard what Paul and Barnabas had done, he brought"

##### oxen and wreaths

The oxen were to be sacrificed. The wreaths were either to crown Paul and Barnabas, or put on the oxen for sacrifice.

##### to the gates

The gates of the cities were often used as a meeting place for the people of the city.

##### wanted to offer sacrifice

"wanted to offer sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas as the gods Zeus and Hermes"

#### Acts 14:14

##### the apostles, Barnabas and Paul

Luke is here probably using "apostle" in the general sense of "one sent out."

##### they tore their clothing

This was a symbolic action to show that they were deeply distressed and upset that the crowd wanted to sacrifice to them.

#### Acts 14:15

##### Men, why are you doing these things?

Barnabas and Paul are rebuking the people for trying to sacrifice to them. Alternate translation: "Men, you must not do these things!"

##### doing these things

"worshiping us"

##### We also are human beings, with the same nature as you

By this statement, Barnabas and Paul are saying that they are not gods. Alternate translation: "We are just human beings like you. We are not gods"

##### with the same nature as you

"like you in every way"

##### telling you good news that you should turn

"telling you good news: you can turn" or "giving you good advice to turn." That is, the good news is that they can and should turn.

##### turn from these useless things to the living God

Here "turn from ... to" is a metaphor meaning to stop doing one thing and start doing something else. Alternate translation: "stop worshiping these false gods that cannot help you, and instead begin to worship the living God"

##### the living God

"the God who truly exists" or "the God who lives"

#### Acts 14:16

##### In the past ages

"In previous times" or "Until now"

##### to walk in their own ways

Walking in a way, or walking on a path, is a metaphor for living one's life. Alternate translation: "to live their lives the way they wanted to" or "to do whatever they wanted to do"

#### Acts 14:17

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul and Barnabas continue speaking to the crowd outside the city of Lystra (Acts 14:8).

##### he did not leave himself without witness

This could also be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "God has certainly left a witness" or "God has indeed testified"

##### in that

"as shown by the fact that"

##### filling your hearts with food and gladness

Here "your hearts" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "giving you enough to eat and things about which to be happy"

#### Acts 14:18

##### Paul and Barnabas barely kept the multitudes from sacrificing to them

Paul and Barnabas stopped the multitude from sacrificing to them, but it was difficult to do so.

##### barely kept

"had difficulty preventing"

#### Acts 14:19

##### General Information:

Here the words "he" and "him" refer to Paul.

##### persuaded the crowds

It my be helpful to explicitly state what they persuaded the crowd to do. Alternate translation: "persuaded the people not to believe Paul and Barnabas, and to turn against them"

##### the crowds

This may not be the same group as the "multitude" in the previous verse. Some time had passed, and this might be a different group that gathered together.

##### thinking that he was dead

"because they thought that he was already dead"

#### Acts 14:20

##### the disciples

These were new believers in the city of Lystra.

##### entered the city

"Paul re-entered Lystra with the believers"

##### he went to Derbe with Barnabas

"Paul and Barnabas went to the city of Derbe"

#### Acts 14:21

##### General Information:

Here both instances of "they" refer to Paul and Barnabas.

##### that city

"Derbe" (Acts 14:20)

#### Acts 14:22

##### General Information:

Here the words "they" refer to Paul and Barnabas, and the word "We" includes Paul, Barnabas, and the disciples. The word "them" refers to the disciples.

##### They kept strengthening the souls of the disciples

Here "souls" refers to the disciples. This emphasizes their inner thoughts and beliefs. Alternate translation: "Paul and Barnabas urged the believers to continue to believe the message about Jesus" or "Paul and Barnabas urged the believers to continue to grow strong in their relationship with Jesus

##### encouraging them to continue in the faith

"encouraging the believers to keep trusting in Jesus"

##### saying, "We must enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations."

Some version translate this as an indirect quote, "saying that we must enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations." The word "we" here includes Luke and the readers.

##### We must enter

Paul includes his hearers, so the word "we" is inclusive.

#### Acts 14:23

##### they had appointed for them

"Paul and Barnabas had appointed for the believers"

##### they entrusted them ... they had believed

Possible meanings are 1) "Paul and Barnabas entrusted the elders they had appointed ... the elders had believed" or 2) "Paul and Barnabas entrusted the elders they had appointed and the other disciples ... the elders and other disciples had believed"

#### Acts 14:24

##### General Information:

The word "they" refers to Paul and Barnabas.

#### Acts 14:25

##### General Information:

Both instances of "they" refer to Paul and Barnabas.

##### had spoken the word

"Word" here is a metonym for "message of God." Alternate translation: "had spoken the message of God"

##### went down to Attalia

The phrase "went down" is used here because Attalia is lower in elevation than Perga.

#### Acts 14:26

##### where they had been committed to the grace of God

This can be stated in the active form. Alternate translation: "where believers and leaders in Antioch had committed Paul and Barnabas to the grace of God" or "where the people of Antioch prayed that God would care for and protect Paul and Barnabas"

#### Acts 14:27

##### General Information:

Here the words "they," "them," and "They" refer to Paul and Barnabas. The word "he" refers to God.

##### gathered the church together

"called the local believers to meet together"

##### he had opened a door of faith for the Gentiles

God's enabling the Gentiles to believe is spoken of as if he had opened a door that had prevented them from entering into faith. Alternate translation: "God had made it possible for the Gentiles to believe"

#### Acts 14:28

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

## Chapter 15

# Acts 15 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 15:16-17.

The meeting that Luke describes in this chapter is commonly called the "Jerusalem Council." This was a time when many church leaders got together to decide if believers needed to obey the whole law of Moses.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Brothers

In this chapter Luke begins to use the word "brothers" to refer to fellow Christians instead of fellow Jews.

#### Obeying the law of Moses

Some believers wanted the Gentiles to be circumcised because God had told Abraham and Moses that everyone who wanted to belong to him had to be circumcised and that this was "an everlasting covenant." But Paul and Barnabas had seen God give uncircumcised Gentiles the gift of the Holy Spirit, so they did not want the Gentiles to be circumcised. Both groups went to Jerusalem to have the church leaders decide what they should do.

#### "Abstain from things sacrificed to idols, blood, things strangled, and from sexual immorality"

It is possible that the church leaders decided on these laws so that Jews and Gentiles could not only live together but eat the same foods together.

## Links:

* [Acts 15:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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).

Chrisitans were persecuted (see: Acts 1014:19; 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 chrsitian 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 Chrisitans 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 (Prophesy) ; 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 Chrisitians 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 15:1

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul and Barnabas are still in Antioch when there is a dispute about the Gentiles and circumcision.

##### Some men

"Some men." You can make explicit that these men were Jews who believed in Christ.

##### came down from Judea

The phrase "came down" is used here because Judea is higher in elevation than Antioch.

##### taught the brothers

Here "brothers" stands for believers in Christ. It is implied that they were in Antioch. Alternate translation: "taught the believers at Antioch" or "were teaching the believers at Antioch"

##### Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Unless someone circumcises you according to the custom of Moses, God cannot save you" or "God will not save you from your sins unless you receive circumcision according to the law of Moses"

#### Acts 15:2

##### This brought ... into a sharp dispute and debate with them

The abstract nouns "sharp dispute" and "debate" can be stated as verbs and where the men came from can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "... had confronted and debated with the men from Judea"

##### go up to Jerusalem

Jerusalem was higher than almost any other place in Israel, so it was normal for Israelites to speak of going up to Jerusalem.

##### this question

"this issue"

#### Acts 15:3

##### General Information:

Both instances of "They" here refer to Paul, Barnabas, and certain others (Acts 15:2).

##### They therefore, being sent by the church

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Therefore the community of believers sent them from Antioch to Jerusalem"

##### passed through ... announced

The words "passed through" and "announced" indicate they spent some time in different places sharing in detail what God was doing.

##### announced the conversion of the Gentiles

The abstract noun "conversion" means the Gentiles were rejecting their false gods and believing in God. Alternate translation: "announced to the community of believers in those places that Gentiles were believing in God"

##### They brought great joy to all the brothers

Their message causing the brothers to be joyful is spoken of as if "joy" were an object that they brought to the brothers. Alternate translation: "What they said caused their fellow believers to rejoice"

##### the brothers

Here "brothers" refers to fellow believers.

#### Acts 15:4

##### General Information:

All instances of "they" and "them" here refer to Paul, Barnabas, and certain others (Acts 15:2).

##### they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the apostles, the elders, and the rest of the community of believers welcomed them"

##### with them

"through them"

#### Acts 15:5

##### General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to non-Jewish believers who were not circumcised and did not keep the Old Testament laws of God.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul and Barnabas are now in Jerusalem to meet with the apostles and elders there.

##### But certain men

Here Luke contrasts those who believe that salvation is only in Jesus to others who believe salvation is by Jesus but also believe that circumcision is required for salvation.

##### to keep the law of Moses

"to obey the law of Moses"

#### Acts 15:6

##### to consider this matter

The church leaders decided to discuss whether or not Gentiles needed to be circumcised and obey the law of Moses in order for God to save them from their sins.

#### Acts 15:7

##### General Information:

The word "them" refers to apostles and elders

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter begins to speak to the apostles and elders who met to discuss whether Gentiles had to receive circumcision and keep the law ([Acts 15:5-6](./05.md)).

##### Brothers

Peter is addressing all of the believers who are present.

##### by my mouth

Here "mouth" refers to Peter. Alternate translation: "from me" or "by me"

##### the Gentiles should hear

"the Gentiles would hear"

##### the word of the gospel

Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "the message about Jesus"

#### Acts 15:8

##### General Information:

The word "them" refers to the Gentiles, and both instances of "you" are plural.

##### who knows the heart

Here "heart" refers to the "minds" or "inner beings." Alternate translation: "who knows the people's minds" or "who knows what people think"

##### has testified to them

"has testified to the Gentiles"

##### giving them the Holy Spirit

"causing the Holy Spirit to come upon them"

#### Acts 15:9

##### General Information:

The word "he" refers to God, the word "us" refers to the speaker and the hearers, and the word "them" refers to the Gentiles.

##### made no distinction

God did not treat Jewish believers differently from Gentile believers.

##### having cleansed their hearts by faith

God's forgiving the Gentile believers' sins is spoken of as though he cleaned their hearts. Here "heart" stands for the person's inner being. Alternate translation: "forgiving their sins because they believe in Jesus"

#### Acts 15:10

##### General Information:

Peter includes his audience by his use of "our" and "we."

##### Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

##### why do you test God, that you should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

Peter uses a question with a word picture to tell the Jewish believers they should not require the non-Jewish believers to perform circumcision to be saved. Alternate translation: "Do not test God by putting a burden on the non-Jewish believers which we Jews were not able to bear!"

##### our fathers

This refers to their Jewish ancestors.

#### Acts 15:11

##### Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes speaking to the apostles and elders.

##### But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they were

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But we believe the Lord Jesus will save us by his grace, just as he saved the non-Jewish believers"

#### Acts 15:12

##### General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to Paul and Barnabas.

##### All the multitude

"Everyone" or "The whole group" (Acts 15:6)

##### God had worked

"God had done" or "God had caused"

#### Acts 15:13

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:12).

##### Connecting Statement:

James begins to speak to the apostles and elders (Acts 15:6).

##### Brothers, listen

"Fellow believers, listen." James was probably speaking only to men.

#### Acts 15:14

##### in order to take from them a people

"so that he might choose from among them a people"

##### for his name

"for God's name." Here "name" refers to God. Alternate translation: "for himself"

#### Acts 15:15

##### Connecting Statement:

James quotes the prophet Amos from the Old Testament.

##### The words of the prophets agree

Here "words" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "What the prophets said agrees" or "The prophets agree"

##### agree with this

"confirm this truth"

##### as it is written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as they wrote" or "as the prophet Amos wrote long ago"

#### Acts 15:16

##### General Information:

Here "I" refers to God, who spoke through the words of his prophet.

##### I will build again the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down ... its ruins again

This speaks of God's again choosing one of David's descendants to rule over his people as though he were setting up a tent again after it fell down.

##### tabernacle

Here the word "tabernacle," a dwelling place, stands for David's family. The same word is used for the tent that Yahweh told Moses to construct.

#### Acts 15:17

##### the remnant of men may seek the Lord

This speaks about people wanting to obey God and learn more about him as if they were literally looking for him.

##### remnant of men

Here "men" includes males and females. Alternate translation: "remnant of people"

##### may seek the Lord

God is speaking about himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "may seek me, the Lord"

##### including all the Gentiles called by my name

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "including all the Gentiles who belong to me"

##### my name

Here "my name" stands for God.

#### Acts 15:18

##### that have been known

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that people have known"

#### Acts 15:19

##### General Information:

Here "we" includes James, the apostles, and the elders.

##### we should not trouble those of the Gentiles

You can make explicit in what way James does not want to trouble the Gentiles. Alternate translation: "we should not require the Gentiles to become circumcised and obey the laws of Moses"

##### who turn to God

A person who starts obeying God is spoken of as if the person is physically turning towards God.

#### Acts 15:20

##### they must keep away from the pollution of idols ... sexual immorality ... strangled ... blood

Sexual immorality, strangling animals, and consuming blood were often part of ceremonies to worship idols and false gods.

##### pollution of idols

This possibly refers to eating the meat of an animal that someone has sacrificed to an idol or to anything to do with idol worship.

##### from the meat of strangled animals, and from blood

God did not allow Jews to eat meat that still had the blood in it. Also, even earlier in Moses's writings in Genesis, God had forbidden the drinking of blood. Therefore, they could not eat an animal that someone strangled because the blood was not properly drained from the body of the animal.

#### Acts 15:21

##### Connecting Statement:

James finishes speaking to the apostles and elders. (See: Acts 15:2 and [Acts 15:13](./13.md))

##### Moses has been proclaimed in every city ... and he is preached in the synagogues every Sabbath

James is implying that Gentiles know how important these rules are because Jews preach them in every city where there is a synagogue. It also implies the Gentiles can go to the teachers from the synagogues to learn more about these rules.

##### Moses has been proclaimed ... he is preached

Here "Moses" represents the law of Moses, and so does "he." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The law of Moses has been proclaimed ... the law is read" or "Jews have taught the law of Moses ... they read the law"

##### in every city

The word "every" here is a generalization. Alternate translation: "in many cities"

#### Acts 15:22

##### General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to Judas and Silas.

##### Judas called Barsabbas

This is the name of a man. "Barsabbas" is a second name that people called him.

##### leaders of the brothers

The word "brothers" here refers to the people there who believed in Jesus. Alternate translation: "leaders of the believers" or "leaders of the church"

#### Acts 15:23

##### They wrote this with their hands

One or more of the apostles and elders wrote the letter and gave it to Judas and Silas so Judas and Silas could give it to the Gentile brothers.

##### From the apostles and elders, your brothers, to the Gentile brothers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings!

This is the introduction of the letter. Your language may have a way of introducing the author of the letter and to whom it is written. Alternate translation: "This letter is from your brothers, the apostles and elders. We are writing to you Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. Greetings to you" or "To our Gentile brothers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. Greetings from the apostles and elders, your brothers"

##### your brothers ... the Gentile brothers

Here the word "brothers" refers to fellow believers. By using these words, the apostles and elders assure the Gentile believers that they accept them as fellow believers.

##### Cilicia

This is the name of a province on the coast in Asia Minor north of the Island of Cyprus.

#### Acts 15:24

##### General Information:

Here all instances of "we" and "us" refer to the writers but not the readers

##### that certain men

"that some men"

##### with no orders from us

"even though we gave no orders for them to go"

##### disturbed you with words that upset your souls

Here "souls" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "taught things that have troubled you"

#### Acts 15:25

##### General Information:

Here the words "us" and "our" refer to the writers but not the readers

##### who have come to one mind

"who are now agree completely"

##### one mind

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

##### to choose men

The men they sent were Judas, who was called Barsabbas, and Silas (Acts 15:22).

#### Acts 15:26

##### men who have risked their lives

These words refer to Barnabas and Paul, not to Judas and Silas.

##### for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

Here "name" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "because they believe in our Lord Jesus Christ" or "because they serve our Lord Jesus Christ"

#### Acts 15:27

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to the writers of the letter [Acts 15:22]

##### who will report to you the same things in their own words

This phrase emphasizes that Judas and Silas will say the same things that the apostles and elders had written. Alternate translation: "who themselves will tell you the same things about which we have written"

#### Acts 15:28

##### General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the writers of the letter [Acts 15:22]

##### to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things

This speaks about laws that people need to obey as if they were objects that people carry on their shoulders.

#### Acts 15:29

##### Connecting Statement:

This concludes the letter from the Jerusalem church to the Gentile believers in Antioch.

##### from things sacrificed to idols

This means they are not allowed to eat the meat of an animal that someone sacrifices to an idol.

##### blood

This refers to drinking blood or eating meat from which the blood has not been drained.

##### things strangled

A strangled animal was killed but its blood was not drained.

##### Farewell

This announces the end of the letter. Alternate translation: "Goodbye"

#### Acts 15:30

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas leave for Antioch.

##### So they, when they were dismissed, came down to Antioch

The word "they" refers to Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas. Alternate translation: "So when the four men were dismissed, they came down to Antioch"

##### when they were dismissed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when the apostles and elders dismissed the four men" or "when the believers in Jerusalem sent them"

##### came down to Antioch

The phrase "came down" is used here because Antioch is lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

#### Acts 15:31

##### they rejoiced

"the believers in Antioch rejoiced"

##### because of the encouragement

The abstract noun "encouragement" can be expressed with the verb "encourage." Alternate translation: "because what the apostles and elders wrote encouraged them"

#### Acts 15:32

##### also prophets

Prophets were teachers authorized by God to speak for him. Alternate translation: "because they were prophets" or "who were also prophets"

##### the brothers

"the fellow believers"

##### strengthened them

Judas and Silas' helping them to depend even more on Jesus is spoken of as if they were making them physically stronger.

#### Acts 15:33

##### Connecting Statement:

Judas and Silas return to Jerusalem while Paul and Barnabas remain in Antioch.

##### After they had spent some time there

This speaks about time as if it were a commodity that a person could spend. The word "they" refers to Judas and Silas. Alternate translation: "After they stayed there for a while"

##### they were sent away in peace from the brothers

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the brothers sent Judas and Silas back in peace"

##### the brothers

This refers to the believers in Antioch.

##### to those who had sent them

"to the believers in Jerusalem who sent Judas and Silas" (Acts 15:22)

#### Acts 15:34

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 15:35

##### the word of the Lord

Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "the message about the Lord"

#### Acts 15:36

##### Let us return now

"I suggest we now return"

##### visit the brothers

"care for the brothers" or "offer to help the believers"

##### the word of the Lord

Here "word" stands for the message. Alternate translation: "the message about the Lord"

##### see how they are

"learn how they are doing." They want to learn about the current condition of the brothers and how they are holding on to God's truth.

#### Acts 15:37

##### to also take with them John, who was called Mark

"to take John, who was also called Mark"

#### Acts 15:38

##### Paul thought it was not good to take Mark

The words "not good" are used to say the opposite of good. Alternate translation: "Paul thought that taking Mark would be bad"

##### Pamphylia

This was a province in Asia Minor. See how you translated this in Acts 2:10.

##### did not go further with them in the work

"did not continue to work with them then" or "did not continue to serve with them"

#### Acts 15:39

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Barnabas and Paul.

##### Then there arose a sharp disagreement

The abstract noun "disagreement" can be stated as the verb "disagree." Alternate translation: "They strongly disagreed with each other"

#### Acts 15:40

##### after he was entrusted by the brothers to the grace of the Lord

To entrust to someone means to place the care and responsibility for someone or something to another person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "after the believers in Antioch entrusted Paul to the grace of the Lord" or "after the believers in Antioch prayed for the Lord to take care of Paul and show kindness to him"

#### Acts 15:41

##### he went

The previous sentence implies that Silas was with Paul. Alternate translation: "they went" or "Paul and Silas went" or "Paul took Silas and went"

##### went through Syria and Cilicia

These are provinces or areas in Asia Minor, near the island of Cyprus.

##### strengthening the churches

Encouraging the believers in the churches is spoken of as though Paul and Silas were making the believers physically stronger. The word "churches" refers to the groups of believers in Syria and Cilicia. Alternate translation: "encouraging the believers in the churches" or "helping the community of believers to depend even more in Jesus"

## Chapter 16

# Acts 16 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Timothy's circumcision

Paul circumcised Timothy because they were telling the message of Jesus to Jews and Gentiles. Paul wanted the Jews to know that he respected the law of Moses even though the church leaders in Jerusalem had decided that Christians did not need to be circumcised.

#### The woman who had a spirit of divination

Most people want very much to know the future, but the law of Moses said that speaking with the spirits of dead people to learn about the future is a sin. This woman seems to have been able to tell the future very well. She was a slave, and her masters made much money from her work. Paul wanted her to stop sinning, so he told the spirit to leave her. Luke does not say that she began to follow Jesus or tell us anything more about her.

## Links:

* [Acts 16:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 16:1

##### Connecting Statement:

This continues the missionary journeys of Paul with Silas. Timothy is introduced into the story and joins Paul and Silas. Verses 1 and 2 give background information about Timothy.

##### Paul also came

Here "came" can be translated as "went."

##### Derbe

This is the name of a city in Asia Minor. See how you translated it in Acts 14:6.

##### behold

The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the narrative. Your language may have a way of doing this.

##### who was a believer

The words "in Christ" are understood. Alternate translation: "who was a believer in Christ" or "who believed in Christ"

#### Acts 16:2

##### He was well spoken of by the brothers

This can be stated in active from. Alternate translation: "The brothers spoke well of him" or "Timothy had a good reputation among the brothers" or "The brothers said good things about him"

##### by the brothers

Here "brothers" refers to believers. Alternate translation: "by the believers"

#### Acts 16:3

##### wanted him ... took him ... circumcised him ... his father

"wanted Timothy ... took Timothy ... circumcised Timothy ... Timothy's father"

##### with him ... he took

"with Paul ... Paul took"

##### circumcised him

It is possible that Paul himself circumcised Timothy, but it is more likely that he had someone else circumcise Timothy.

##### because of the Jews that were in those places

"because of the Jews living in the areas where Paul and Timothy would be traveling"

##### for they all knew that his father was a Greek

Since Greek men did not have their sons circumcised, the Jews would have known Timothy was not circumcised, and they would have rejected Paul and Timothy before hearing their message about Christ.

#### Acts 16:4

##### General Information:

The word "they" here refers to Paul, Silas (Acts 15:40), and Timothy ([Acts 16:3](./03.md)).

##### the decrees to obey

"the decrees for the church members to obey" or "teh decrees for the believers to obey"

##### that were decided on by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the apostles and elders in Jerusalem had decided on"

#### Acts 16:5

##### the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the believers became stronger in their faith, and there were more and more people becoming believers every day"

##### the churches were strengthened in the faith

This speaks of helping someone to believe more confidently as if it were making them physically stronger.

#### Acts 16:6

##### Phrygia

This is a region in Asia. See how you translated this name in Acts 2:10.

##### they had been forbidden by the Holy Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit had forbidden them" or "the Holy Spirit did not permit them"

##### the word

Here "word" stands for "message." Alternate translation: "the message about Christ"

#### Acts 16:7

##### When they came

Here "came" can be translated as "went" or "arrived."

##### Mysia ... Bithynia

These are two more regions in Asia.

##### the Spirit of Jesus

"the Holy Spirit"

#### Acts 16:8

##### they came down to the city of Troas

The phrase "came down" is used here because Troas is lower in elevation than Mysia.

##### they came down

Here "came" can be translated as "went."

#### Acts 16:9

##### A vision appeared to Paul

"Paul saw a vision from God" or "Paul had a vision from God"

##### begging him

Or "inviting him."

##### Come over into Macedonia

The phrase "Come over" is used because Macedonia is across the sea from Troas.

#### Acts 16:10

##### we sought to go to Macedonia ... God had called us

Here the words "we" and "us" refer to Paul and his companions, including Luke, the author of Acts.

##### we sought to go to Macedonia

"we looked for a way to go to Macedonia" or "we prepared to go to Macedonia"

#### Acts 16:11

##### Samothrace ... Neapolis

These are coastal cities near Phillipi in Macedonia.

##### we came to Neapolis

Here "came to" can be translated as "went to" or "arrived at."

#### Acts 16:12

##### a Roman colony

This is a city outside of Italy where many people who came from Rome lived. The people there had the same rights and freedoms as people who lived in cities in Italy. They could govern themselves and they did not have to pay taxes.

#### Acts 16:13

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul and his companions are now in Philippi on their missionary trip. The story of Lydia begins here. This short story happens during Paul's travels.

#### Acts 16:14

##### A certain woman named Lydia

Here "A certain woman" introduces a new person in the story. Alternate translation: "There was a woman named Lydia"

##### a seller of purple

Here "cloth" is understood. Alternate translation: "a merchant who sold purple cloth"

##### Thyatira

This is the name of a city.

##### worshiped God

A worshiper of God is a Gentile who gives praise to God and follows him, but does not obey all of the Jewish laws.

##### The Lord opened her heart to pay attention

For the Lord to cause someone to pay attention and believe a message is spoken of as if he were opening a person's heart. Alternate translation: "The Lord caused her to listen well and to believe"

##### opened her heart

Here "heart" stands for a person's mind. Also, the author speaks about the "heart" or "mind" as if it were a box that a person could open so it is ready for someone to fill it.

##### what was said by Paul

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what Paul said"

#### Acts 16:15

##### Connecting Statement:

The story of Lydia ends here.

##### When she and her house were baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When they baptized Lydia and members of her household"

##### her house

Here "house" represents the people who live in her house. Alternate translation: "the members of her household" or "her family and household servants"

#### Acts 16:16

##### General Information:

Background information is given here to explain that this young fortune teller brought much financial gain to her masters by guessing people's futures.

##### Connecting Statement:

This begins the first event in another short story during Paul's travels; it is about a young fortune teller.

##### It came about that

This phrase marks the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

##### a certain slave girl ... encountered

The phrase "a certain" introduces a new person to the story. Alternate translation: "there was a slave girl ... who encountered"

##### a spirit of divination

An evil spirit spoke to her often about the immediate future of people.

#### Acts 16:17

##### the way of salvation

How a person can be saved is spoken of here as if it were a way or path that a person walks on. Alternate translation: "how God can save you"

#### Acts 16:18

##### But Paul, being greatly annoyed by her, turned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But she greatly annoyed Paul, so he turned around"

##### in the name of Jesus Christ

Here "name" stands for speaking with the authority or as the representative of Jesus Christ.

##### it came out at that same hour

"the spirit came out immediately"

#### Acts 16:19

##### her masters

"the owners of the slave girl"

##### their hope of profit was now gone

Here the word "hope" is the reason for which a person can expect that what he desires will happen. Now that the spirit was gone, the girl's masters could not expect to earn money from the spirit's telling people things. Alternate translation: "their opportunity to make money was now gone" or "they could no longer expect to make money"

##### their hope of profit was now gone

It can be stated clearly why they no longer expected to make money. Alternate translation: "she could no longer earn money for them by telling fortunes"

##### into the marketplace

"into the public square." This is a public place of business, where buying and selling of goods, cattle, or services takes place.

##### before the authorities

"into the presence of the authorities" or "so that the authorities could judge them"

#### Acts 16:20

##### When they had brought them to the magistrates

"When they had brought them to the judges"

##### magistrates

rulers, judges

##### These men are causing trouble in our city

Here the word "our" refers to the people of the city and includes the magistrates who ruled it.

#### Acts 16:21

##### to accept or practice

"to believe or to obey" or "to accept or to do"

#### Acts 16:22

##### General Information:

Here the words "their" and "them" refer to Paul and Silas.

##### commanded them to be beaten with rods

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "commanded the soldiers to beat them with rods"

#### Acts 16:23

##### they had ... upon them, they threw them ... guard them

"the magistrates had ... upon Paul and Silas, the magistrates threw Paul and Silas ... keep Paul and Silas"

##### had laid many blows upon them

"had hit them many times with rods"

##### commanded the jailer to guard them securely

"told the jailer to make sure they did not get out"

##### jailer

a person responsible for all the people held in the jail or prison

#### Acts 16:24

##### he got this command

"he heard this command"

##### fastened their feet in the stocks

"securely locked their feet in the stocks"

##### stocks

a piece of wood with holes for preventing a person's feet from moving

#### Acts 16:25

##### General Information:

The word "them" refers to Paul and Silas.

##### Connecting Statement:

This continues Paul and Silas' time in Philippi in prison and tells what happens to their jailer.

#### Acts 16:26

##### earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "earthquake which shook the foundations of the prison"

##### the foundations of the prison

When the foundations shook, this caused the entire prison to shake.

##### all the doors were opened

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "all the doors opened"

##### everyone's chains were unfastened

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "everyone's chains came loose"

#### Acts 16:27

##### The jailer was awakened from sleep

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The jailer woke up"

##### was about to kill himself

"was ready to kill himself." The jailer preferred to commit suicide rather than suffer the consequences of letting the prisoners escape.

#### Acts 16:28

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Paul, Silas, and all of the other prisoners but excludes the jailer.

#### Acts 16:29

##### called for lights

The reason why the jailer needed light can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "called for someone to bring light so he could see who was still in the prison"

##### for lights

The word "lights" stands for something that makes light. Alternate translation: "for torches" or "for lamps"

##### rushed in

"quickly entered the jail"

##### fell down before Paul and Silas

The jailer humbled himself by bowing down at the feet of Paul and Silas.

#### Acts 16:30

##### brought them out

"led them outside the jail"

##### what must I do to be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what must I do for God to save me from my sins"

#### Acts 16:31

##### you will be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will save you" or "God will save you from your sins"

##### your house

Here "house" stands for the people who live in the house. Alternate translation: "all the members of your household" or "your family"

#### Acts 16:32

##### General Information:

The word "They" refers to Paul and Silas (Acts 16:25), and the word "him" refers to the jailer.

##### They spoke the word of the Lord to him

Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "They told him the message about the Lord Jesus"

#### Acts 16:33

##### General Information:

The words "them" and "their" refer to Paul and Silas (Acts 16:25), and the words "he" and "his" refer to the jailer.

##### he and those in his entire house were baptized immediately

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Paul and Silas immediately baptized the jailer and all the members of his household"

#### Acts 16:34

##### General Information:

All instances of "he" and "his" refer to the jailer.

#### Acts 16:35

##### General Information:

This is the last event in the story of Paul and Silas in Philippi (Acts 16:12).

##### Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke tells the last event in the story that started in Acts 16:16.

##### sent word to the guards

Here "word" stands for "message" or "command." Alternate translation: "sent a message to the guards" or "sent a command to the guards"

##### sent word

Here "sent" means the magistrates told someone to go tell the guards their message.

##### Let those men go

"Release those men" or "Allow those men to leave"

#### Acts 16:36

##### come out

"come outside of the jail"

#### Acts 16:37

##### General Information:

The word "they" refers to the magistrates. All instances of "we" and "us" refer only to Paul and Silas and so are exclusive.

##### said to them

Probably Paul is speaking to the jailer, but he intends for the jailer to tell the magistrates what he says. Alternate translation: "said to the jailer"

##### They have publicly beaten us

Here "They" refers to the magistrates who commanded their soldiers to beat them. Alternate translation: "The magistrates ordered their soldiers to beat us in public"

##### without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens—and they threw us into prison

"men who are Roman citizens, and they had their soldiers put us in jail though they had not proven in court that we were guilty"

##### Do they now want to send us away secretly? No!

Paul uses a question to emphasize that he will not allow the magistrates to send them out the city in secret after they had mistreated Paul and Silas. Alternate translation: "I will certainly not let them send us out of the city in secret!"

##### Let them come themselves

Here "themselves" is used for emphasis.

#### Acts 16:38

##### when they heard that Paul and Silas were Romans, they were afraid

To be a Roman meant to be a legal citizen of the Empire. Citizenship provided freedom from torture and the right to a fair trial. The city leaders were afraid that more important Roman authorities might learn how the city leaders had mistreated Paul and Silas.

##### they heard ... they were afraid

"the magistrates heard ... the magistrates were afraid"

#### Acts 16:39

##### General Information:

All instances of "them" refer to Paul and Silas.

#### Acts 16:40

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Paul and Silas. The word "them" refers to the believers in Philippi.

##### Connecting Statement:

This is the end of Paul and Silas' time in Philippi.

##### came to the house

Here "came" can be translated as "went."

##### the house of Lydia

"the home of Lydia"

##### saw the brothers

Here "brothers" refers to believers, whether male or female. Alternate translation: "saw the believers"

## Chapter 17

# Acts 17 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Misunderstandings about the Messiah

The Jews expected the Christ or Messiah to be a powerful king because the Old Testament says so many times. But it also says many times that the Messiah would suffer, and that was what Paul was telling the Jews. (See: christ)

#### The religion of Athens

Paul said that the Athenians were "religious," but they did not worship the true God. They worshiped many different false gods. In the past they had conquered other peoples and begun to worship the gods of the people they had conquered. (See: falsegod)

In this chapter Luke describes for the first time how Paul told the message of Christ to people who knew nothing of the Old Testament.

## Links:

* [Acts 17:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 (Prophesy)

#### 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”(δεισιδαίμων/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”(ὥρισεν/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 17:1

##### General Information:

Both instances of "they" refers to Paul and Silas (Acts 16:40).

##### Connecting Statement:

This continues the story of Paul, Silas, and Timothy's missionary trip. They arrive in Thessalonica, apparently without Luke, since he says "they" and not "we."

##### Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke, the author, starts to tell a new part of the story.

##### passed through

"traveled through"

##### cities of Amphipolis and Apollonia

These are coastal cities in Macedonia.

##### they came to the city

Here "came to" can be translated as "went to" or "arrived at." Alternate translation: "they went to the city" or "they arrived at the city"

#### Acts 17:2

##### went to them ... reasoned with them

"went to the Jews ... reasoned with the Jews"

##### as his custom was

"as his habit was" or "as his common practice was." Paul usually went to the synagogue on the Sabbath when Jews would be present.

##### for three Sabbath days

"on each Sabbath day for three weeks"

##### reasoned with them from the scriptures

"gave them reasons to believe from the scriptures" or "debated with them about the scriptures" or "discussed the scriptures with them." Paul explained what the scriptures mean in order to prove to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah.

#### Acts 17:3

##### General Information:

Here the word "He" refers to Paul (Acts 17:2).

##### He was opening the scriptures

Possible meanings are 1) to explain the scriptures in a way that people can understand is spoken of as if Paul were opening something so people can see what is inside of it) or 2) Paul was literally opening a book or scroll and reading from it.

##### it was necessary

"it was part of God's plan"

##### to rise again

"to come back to life"

##### from the dead

From among all those who have died. The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

#### Acts 17:4

##### the Jews were persuaded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Jews believed" or "the Jews understood"

##### joined Paul

"became associated with Paul"

##### devout Greeks

This refers to Greeks who worshiped God but had not converted to Judaism through circumcision.

##### not a few of the leading women

This is an understatement to emphasize that many leading women joined them. Alternate translation: "many leading women"

#### Acts 17:5

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the unbelieving Jews and wicked men from the marketplace.

##### being moved with jealousy

The feeling of jealousy is spoken of as if jealousy were actually moving the person. Alternate translation: "feeling very jealous" or "feeling very angry"

##### with jealousy

It can be stated explicitly that these Jews were jealous because some of the Jews and Greeks believed Paul's message.

##### took certain wicked men

Here "took" does not mean the Jews took these people by force. It means the Jews persuaded these wicked men to help them.

##### certain wicked men

"some evil men." The word "men" here refers specifically to males.

##### from the marketplace

"from the public square." This is a public place of business, where buying and selling of goods, cattle, or services take place.

##### set the city in an uproar

Here "the city" stands for the people in the city. Alternate translation: "caused the people of the city to be in an uproar" or "caused the people of the city to riot"

##### Assaulting the house

"Violently attacking the house." This probably means the people were throwing rocks at the house and trying to break down the door of the house.

##### Jason

This is the name of a man.

##### they were seeking to bring Paul ... out

The word "seeking" here means that the people wanted to bring Paul out and were trying to bring him out.

##### out to the people

Possible meanings or "people" are 1) a governmental or legal group of citizens gathered to make a decision or 2) a mob.

#### Acts 17:6

##### certain other brothers

Here "brothers" refers to believers. Alternate translation: "some other believers"

##### before the officials

"into the presence of the officials"

##### These men who have

The Jewish leaders were speaking, and the phrase "These men" refers to Paul and Silas.

##### turned the world upside down

This phrase is another way of saying Paul and Silas were causing trouble everywhere they went. The Jewish leaders were exaggerating the influence Paul and Silas were having with their teaching. Alternate translation: "caused trouble everywhere in the world" or "caused trouble everywhere they have gone"

#### Acts 17:7

##### Jason has welcomed

This phrase signals that Jason was in agreement with the apostles' troubling message.

#### Acts 17:8

##### They troubled the crowd

"They caused the people in the city to be afraid"

#### Acts 17:9

##### the rest

The words "the rest" refers to other believers that the Jews brought before the officials.

##### they took security ... they let them go

"the officials took security ... they let Jason and the other believers go"

##### took security

Jason and the others gave the money to the officials to show that they would not cause any more trouble. This was not a fine or a punishment, so they might have expected the officials to give the money back later.

#### Acts 17:10

##### General Information:

Paul and Silas travel on to the town of Berea.

##### the brothers

The word "brothers" here refers to men and women believers. Alternate translation: "the believers"

#### Acts 17:11

##### Now

The word "now" is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke tells background information about the people in Berea and how they were willing to listen to Paul and examine what he said.

##### more noble

These "well-born" people were willing to think more objectively about new ideas than other people. Alternate translation: "more open minded" or "more willing to listen"

##### received the word

Here "word" refers to a teaching. Alternate translation: "listened to the teaching"

##### with all readiness of mind

These Bereans were prepared to examine earnestly Paul's teachings about the scripture.

##### examining the scriptures daily

"carefully reading and evaluating the scriptures every day"

##### these things were so

"the things Paul said were true"

#### Acts 17:12

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 17:13

##### General Information:

Athens was south of Berea. Both were on the coast of Macedonia. Athens was one of the most important cities in Greece.

##### went there and stirred up

This speaks about their agitating people as though it were a person stirring a liquid and causing the things at the bottom of the liquid to rise to the surface. Alternate translation: "went there and agitated" or "went there and disturbed"

##### troubled the crowds

"worried the crowds" or "caused dread and fear among the people"

#### Acts 17:14

##### brothers

The word "brothers" here refers to men and women believers. Alternate translation: "believers"

##### to go to the sea

"to go to the coast." From here Paul would probably sail to another city.

#### Acts 17:15

##### who were leading Paul

"who were accompanying Paul" or "who were going along with Paul"

##### they received from him instructions for Silas and Timothy

"he told them to instruct Silas and Timothy." This can also be stated as a direct quotation as in the UDB.

#### Acts 17:16

##### General Information:

This is another part of the story of Paul and Silas' travels. Paul is now in Athens where he is waiting for Silas and Timothy to join him.

##### Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke starts to tell a new part of the story.

##### his spirit was provoked within him as he saw the city full of idols

Here "spirit" stands for Paul himself. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he became upset because he saw that there were idols everywhere in the city" or "seeing the idols everywhere in the city upset him"

#### Acts 17:17

##### he reasoned

"he debated" or "he discussed." This means that his listeners also spoke and asked him questions. He was not the only speaker.

##### others who worshiped God

This refers to Gentiles who gave praise to God and followed him but did not obey all of the Jewish laws.

##### in the marketplace

"in the public square." This is a public place of business, where buying and selling of goods, cattle, or services take place.

#### Acts 17:18

##### General Information:

Here the words "him," "He, "and "he" refer to Paul.

##### Epicurean and Stoic philosophers

Philosophers are people who think about the world and try to understand how people should live. The Epicureans and the Stoics were two groups of philosophers. They believed that a god or gods existed, but they did not trust in or obey any god. Alternate translation: "thinkers called Epicureans and Stoics"

##### encountered him

"happened upon him"

##### Some said

"Some of the philosophers said"

##### What is this babbler

The word "babbler" was used to refer to birds picking up seeds as food. It refers negatively to a person who only knows a little bit of information. The philosophers said Paul had bits of information which were not worth listening to. Alternate translation: "What is this uneducated person"

##### Others said

"Other philosophers said"

##### He seems to be one who calls people to follow

"He seems to be a proclaimer" or "He seems to be on a mission to add people to his philosophy"

##### strange gods

This is not in the sense of "odd," but in the sense of "foreign," that is, gods that Greeks and Romans do not worship or know about.

#### Acts 17:19

##### They took ... brought him

This does not mean they arrested Paul. The philosophers invited Paul to speak formally to their leaders.

##### to the Areopagus

The "Areopagus" was the place where the leaders met. Alternate translation: "to the leaders that met on the Areopagus"

##### the Areopagus, saying

Here the leaders on the Areopagus are speaking. This can stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "the Areopagus. The leaders said to Paul"

##### Areopagus

This is a prominent rock outcropping or hill in Athens upon which the supreme court of Athens may have met.

#### Acts 17:20

##### For you bring some strange things to our ears

Paul's teachings about Jesus and the resurrection are spoken of as an object that a person can bring to another person. Here "ears" refers to what they hear. Alternate translation: "For you are teaching some things that we have never heard before"

#### Acts 17:21

##### Now all the Athenians and the strangers living there

The word "all" is a generalization referring to many. Alternate translation: "Now many of the Athenians and the strangers living there"

##### all the Athenians

"Athenians" are people from Athens, a city near the coast below Macedonia

##### the strangers

"the foreigners"

##### spent their time in nothing but either telling or listening

Here "time" is spoken of as if it were an object that a person could spend. Alternate translation: "used their time doing nothing but either telling or listening" or "were always doing nothing but telling or listening"

##### spent their time in nothing but either telling or listening

The phrase "spent their time in nothing" is an exaggeration. Alternate translation: "did not do much but tell or listen" or "spent much of their time telling or listening"

##### telling or listening about something new

"discussing new philosophical ideas" or "talking about what was new to them"

#### Acts 17:22

##### General Information:

Paul begins his speech to the philosophers on the Areopagus.

##### very religious in every way

Paul is referring to the Athenians' public display of honoring the gods through prayers, building altars, and offering sacrifices.

#### Acts 17:23

##### as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship

"as I walked among the objects of your worship and observed them" or "as I walked around in the city, I observed the objects of your worship"

##### To an Unknown God

Possible meanings are 1) "to a certain unknown god" or 2) "to a god not known." This was a specific writing or inscription on that altar.

#### Acts 17:24

##### the world

In the most general sense, the "world" refers to the heavens and the earth and everything in them.

##### since he is Lord

"because he is the Lord." Here "he" is referring to the unknown god mentioned in Acts 17:23 that Paul is explaining is the Lord God.

##### of heaven and earth

The words "heaven" and "earth" are used together to mean all beings and things in heaven and earth.

##### built with hands

Here "hands" stands for people. Alternate translation: "built by the hands of people" or "that people built"

#### Acts 17:25

##### Neither is he served by men's hands

Here "served" has the sense of a doctor treating a patient to make the patient well again. Alternate translation: "Neither do men's hands take care of him"

##### by men's hands

Here "hands" stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: "by humans"

##### since he himself

"because he himself." The word "himself" is added for emphasis.

#### Acts 17:26

##### General Information:

Here the word "he" refer to God, the creator, and both instances of "their" refer to every nation of people living on the surface of the earth.

##### one man

This means Adam, the first person God created. This can be stated to include Eve. It was through Adam and Eve that God made all other people. Alternate translation: "one couple"

##### having determined their appointed seasons and the boundaries of their living areas

This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "and he determined when and where they would live"

#### Acts 17:27

##### General Information:

All instances of "they" and "their" refer to the people who live on earth, all instances of "him" and "he" refer to God, and the word "us" includes the speaker, the hearers, and the people who live on earth.

##### so that they should search for God and perhaps they may feel their way toward him and find him

Here "search for God" represents desiring to know him, and "feel their way toward him and find him" represents praying and having a relationship with him. Alternate translation: "so that they should want to know God and perhaps pray to him and become one of his people"

##### Yet he is not far from each one of us

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Yet he is very near to every one of us"

#### Acts 17:28

##### General Information:

Here the words "him" and "his" refer to God

##### For in him

"Because of him"

#### Acts 17:29

##### General Information:

Both instances of "we" include the speaker, the hearers, and other people.

##### are God's offspring

Because God created everyone, all people are spoken of as if they were God's literal children.

##### the qualities of deity are like

Here "deity" refers to God's nature or attributes. Alternate translation: "God is like"

##### images created by the art and imagination of man

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which a man then uses his skill to make it into something that he has designed" or "images that people make by using their art and imagination"

#### Acts 17:30

##### General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to God.

##### Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true"

##### God overlooked the times of ignorance

"God decided not to punish people during the time of ignorance"

##### times of ignorance

This refers to the time before God fully revealed himself through Jesus Christ and before people truly knew how to obey God.

##### all men

This means all people, whether male or female. Alternate translation: "all people"

#### Acts 17:31

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes his speech to the philosophers in the Areopagus, which he began in Acts 17:22.

##### when he will judge the world in righteousness by the man he has appointed

"when the man he has chosen will judge the world in righteousness"

##### he will judge the world

Here "world" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "he will judge all people"

##### in righteousness

"justly" or "fairly"

##### God has given proof of this man

"God has demonstrated his choice of this man"

##### from the dead

From among all those who have died. The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

#### Acts 17:32

##### General Information:

Here the word "We" refers to the men of Athens but not to Paul, so this is exclusive. Though some of them probably did want to hear Paul again, they may only have been being polite.

##### Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Paul in Athens.

##### Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke changes from Paul's teachings to the reaction of the people of Athens.

##### the men of Athens

These are the people who were present at the Areopagus and were listening to Paul.

##### some mocked Paul

"some ridiculed Paul" or "some laughed at Paul." These did not believe it was possible for someone to die and then return to life.

#### Acts 17:33

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 17:34

##### Dionysius the Areopagite

Dionysius is a man's name. Areopagite implies that Dionysius was one of the judges at the council of Areopagus.

##### Damaris

This is the name of a woman.

## Chapter 18

# Acts 18 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### The baptism of John

Some Jews who lived far away from Jerusalem and Judea had heard of John the Baptist and followed his teachings. They had not yet heard about Jesus. One of these Jews was Apollos. He followed John the Baptist, but he did not know that the Messiah had come. John had baptized people to show that they were sorry for their sins, but this baptism was different from Christian baptism. (See: faithful and christ and repent)

## Links:

* [Acts 18:1](../../act/18/01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 News 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 18:1

##### Connecting Statement:

This is another part of the story of Paul's travels as he goes to Corinth.

##### After these things

"After these events took place in Athens"

##### Athens

Athens was one of the most important cities in Greece. See how you translated this in Acts 17:15.

#### Acts 18:2

##### General Information:

The writer begins to give background information about Aquila and Priscilla.

##### There he met

Possible meanings are that 1) Paul happened to find by chance or 2) Paul intentionally found.

##### a Jew named Aquila

Here the phrase "a certain" indicates this is introducing new person in the story.

##### a native of Pontus

Pontus was a province on the southern coast of the Black Sea.

##### had recently come

This is probably sometime in the past year.

##### Italy

This is the name of land. Rome is the capital city of Italy.

##### Claudius had commanded

Claudius was the current Roman emperor. See how you translated this in Acts 11:28.

#### Acts 18:3

##### General Information:

The writer finishes giving background information about Aquila and Priscilla.

##### he worked at the same trade

"he did the same kind of work that they did"

#### Acts 18:4

##### So Paul reasoned

"So Paul debated" or "So Paul discussed." He gave reasons. This means that rather than just preaching, Paul talked and interacted with the people.

##### trying to persuade both Jews and Greeks

Possible meanings are 1) "and he caused both Jews and Greeks to believe" or 2) "and he kept trying to persuade the Jews and the Greeks."

#### Acts 18:5

##### General Information:

Silas and Timothy rejoin Paul.

#### Acts 18:6

##### shook out his garment

This is a symbolic action to indicate that Paul will no longer try to teach the Jews there about Jesus. He is leaving them to God's judgment.

##### May your blood be upon your own heads

Here "blood" stands for the guilt of their actions. Here "heads" refers to the whole person. Paul tells the Jews they are solely responsible for the judgment they will face for their stubbornness if they refuse to repent. Alternate translation: "You alone bear the responsibility for your punishment for sin"

##### I am clean

The word "clean" here is a metaphor for Paul being innocent of wrong against either the people or God. Alternate translation: "I am innocent" or "God will not punish me when he punishes you"

#### Acts 18:7

##### he left ... His house

"Paul left ... Titius' Justus's house"

##### Titius Justus

This is the name of a man.

##### worshiped God

A worshiper of God is a Gentile who gives praise to God and follows him but does not necessarily obey all of the Jewish laws.

#### Acts 18:8

##### Crispus

This is the name of a man.

##### leader of the synagogue

a layperson who sponsored and administered the synagogue, not necessarily the teacher

##### all his household

Here "his household" refers to the people who lived together in his house. Alternate translation: "the people who lived with him in his house"

##### his household

Crispus's household

##### were baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "received baptism"

#### Acts 18:9

##### Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent

The Lord is giving one command in two different ways to emphasize that Paul should certainly continue preaching. Alternate translation: "You must not be afraid; instead, you should continue to speak and not become silent"

##### speak and do not be silent

The Lord gives the same command in two different ways to strongly command Paul to speak. Alternate translation: "you must certainly continue to speak"

##### do not be silent

It can be stated explicitly what the Lord wants Paul to speak. Alternate translation: "do not stop speaking about the gospel"

#### Acts 18:10

##### I have many people in this city

"there are many people in this city who have put their faith in me" or "many people in this city will put their faith in me"

#### Acts 18:11

##### Paul lived there ... teaching the word of God among them

This is a concluding statement for this part of the story. "Word of God" here is a synecdoche for the entire scriptures. Alternate translation: "Paul lived there ... teaching the scriptures among them"

#### Acts 18:12

##### General Information:

Achaia was the Roman province in which Corinth was located. Corinth was the largest city in southern Greece and the capital of the province.

##### Connecting Statement:

The unbelieving Jews bring Paul to the judgment seat before Gallio.

##### Gallio

This is the name of a man.

##### the Jews

This stands for the Jewish leaders that did not believe in Jesus.

##### rose up

This phrase means that the Jews began to act, not that they rose into the air or rose to stand from a sitting position. If your language has a different idiom for beginning to act, you may use it here.

##### with one mind

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

##### brought him before the judgment seat

The Jews took Paul by force to bring Paul before the court. Here "judgment seat" refers to the place where Gallio sat when he made legal decisions in court. Alternate translation: "took him so that the governor could judge him at the judgment seat"

#### Acts 18:13

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 18:14

##### Gallio said

Gallio was the Roman governor of the Province.

#### Acts 18:15

##### your own law

Here "law" can refer to either the law of Moses or the Jewish customs of Paul's time. Gallio is simply telling the Jews that they are to do what they think right and that he is not interested in being the judge.

##### I do not wish to be a judge of these matters

"I refuse to make a judgment about these matters"

#### Acts 18:16

##### Gallio made them leave the judgment seat

"Gallio dismissed the Jews from the judgment seat." Here "judgment seat" refers to the place where Gallio sits to make legal decisions in court. Alternate translation: "Gallio made them leave his presence in the court" or "Gallio made them leave the court"

#### Acts 18:17

##### General Information:

It is not clear what events this verse describes. The Jews had been accusing Paul, but it appears that they ended up beating Sosthenes and not Paul.

##### So they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the judgment seat

Possible meanings are 1) the Gentiles beat Sosthenes in the court in front of the judgment seat because he was the Jewish leader or 2) Sosthenes was a believer in Christ, so even though he was "the ruler of the synagogue," the Jews beat him in front of the court.

##### they all seized

This may be an exaggeration to emphasize the strong feelings the people had. Alternate translation: "many people seized" or "many of them grabbed"

##### Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue

Sosthenes was "the ruler of the synagogue" at Corinth.

##### beat him

"repeatedly hit him" or "repeatedly punched him."

#### Acts 18:18

##### General Information:

Here both instances of "he" refer to Paul.

##### left the brothers

The word "brothers" refers to men and women believers. Alternate translation: "left the fellow believers"

##### sailed for Syria with Priscilla and Aquila

Paul got on a ship that sailed for Syria. Priscilla and Aquila went with him.

##### Cenchreae

This was a town near Corinth in Greece. It was on the coast, and Paul probably got on the ship there.

##### he had his hair cut off

This is a symbolic action that indicates that he had done something he had vowed to do. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he had someone cut off the hair on his head"

#### Acts 18:19

##### Connecting Statement:

This continues Paul's missionary journey as Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila leave Corinth. This seems to indicate that Silas and Timothy remain, since it says "he" here and not "they." The word "they" refers to Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila.

##### reasoned with the Jews

"gave the Jews reasons to believe" or "debated with the Jews about the scriptures" or "discussed the scriptures with the Jews." Paul explained what the scriptures mean in order to prove to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. See how you translated "reasoned with" in [Acts 17:2]

#### Acts 18:20

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the Jews in Ephesus.

#### Acts 18:21

##### General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to the Jews in Ephesus. The word "you" is plural.

##### taking his leave of them

"saying good-bye to them"

#### Acts 18:22

##### General Information:

Phrygia is a province in Asia which is now modern day Turkey. See how you translated this in Acts 2:10.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul continues his missionary journey.

##### landed at Caesarea

"arrived at Caesarea." The word "landed" is used to show that he arrived by ship.

##### he went up

He traveled to the city of Jerusalem. The phrase "went up" is used here because Jerusalem is higher in elevation than Caesarea.

##### greeted the Jerusalem church

Here "church" refers to the believers in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "greeted the members of the church of Jerusalem"

##### then went down

The phrase "went down" is used here because Antioch is lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

#### Acts 18:23

##### Paul departed

"Paul went away" or "Paul left"

##### After having spent some time there

This speaks about "time" as if it were a commodity that a person could spend. Alternate translation: After staying there for a while"

#### Acts 18:24

##### General Information:

Apollos is introduced to the story. Verses 24 and 25 give background information about him.

##### Connecting Statement:

Luke tells what happens in Ephesus with Priscilla and Aquila.

##### Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story.

##### a certain Jew named Apollos

The phrase "a certain" indicates that Luke is introducing a new person in the story.

##### an Alexandrian by birth

"a man who was born in the city of Alexandria." This was a city in Egypt on the north coast of Africa.

##### eloquent in speech

"a good speaker"

##### mighty in the scriptures

"he knew the scriptures thoroughly." He understood the Old Testament writings well.

#### Acts 18:25

##### Apollos had been instructed in the teachings of the Lord

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Other believers had taught Apollos how the Lord Jesus wanted people to live"

##### Being fervent in spirit

Here "spirit" refers to the entire person of Apollos. Alternate translation: "Being very enthusiastic"

##### the baptism of John

"the baptism that John performed." John's baptism was with water, but Jesus's baptism is with the Holy Spirit.

#### Acts 18:26

##### the way of God

How God wants people to live is spoken of as if it were a road that a person travels.

##### more accurately

"correctly" or "more fully"

#### Acts 18:27

##### General Information:

Here the he words "he" and "him" refer to Apollos ([Acts 18:24](./24.md)).

##### to pass over into Achaia

"to go to the region of Achaia." The phrase "pass over" is used here because Apollos had to cross the Aegean Sea to get to Achaia from Ephesus.

##### Achaia

Achaia was a Roman Province in the southern section of Greece. See how you translated this in Acts 18:12.

##### brothers

The word "brothers" here refers to men and women believers. You can make explicit that these are believers in Ephesus. Alternate translation: "fellow believers in Ephesus"

##### wrote to the disciples

"wrote a letter to the Christians in Achaia"

##### those who believed by grace

"those who had believed in salvation by grace" or "those who by God's grace believed in Jesus"

#### Acts 18:28

##### Apollos powerfully refuted the Jews in public debate

"In public debate Apollos powerfully showed that the Jews were wrong"

##### showing by the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ

"as he showed them by the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ"

## Chapter 19

# Acts 19 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Baptism

John baptized people to show that they were sorry for their sins. Jesus's followers baptized people who wanted to follow Jesus.

#### Temple of Diana

The temple of Diana was an important place in the city of Ephesus. Many people came to Ephesus to see this temple, and they bought statues of the goddess Diana while they were there. The people who sold statues of Diana were afraid that if people did not believe Diana was a real goddess, they would stop giving the sellers money for statues.

## Links:

* [Acts 19:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 Chrsitians. 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 19:1

##### General Information:

The "upper country" was an area of Asia which today is part of modern-day Turkey to the north of Ephesus. Paul must have traveled by land around the top of the Aegean Sea in order to come to Ephesus (also in Turkey today), which is directly east of Corinth by sea.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul travels to Ephesus.

##### It came about that

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

##### passed through

"traveled through"

#### Acts 19:2

##### receive the Holy Spirit

This means to have the Holy Spirit come upon them.

##### we did not even hear about the Holy Spirit

"we have not even heard about the Holy Spirit"

#### Acts 19:3

##### General Information:

The word "They" refers to the disciples ([Acts 19:1](./01.md)). The word "you" is plural.

##### Into what then were you baptized?

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "What kind of baptism did you receive?"

##### Into John's baptism

You can translate this as a complete sentence. Alternate translation: "We were baptized into John's baptism" or "We received the kind of baptism about which John taught"

#### Acts 19:4

##### the baptism of repentance

You can translate the abstract noun "repentance" as the verb "repent." Alternate translation: "the baptism that people requested when they wanted to repent"

##### the one who would come

Here "the one" refers to Jesus.

##### come after him

This means to come after John the Baptist in time and not following after him physically.

#### Acts 19:5

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul continues staying in Ephesus.

##### When the people

Here "people" refers to the disciples in Ephesus who were talking with Paul (Acts 19:1),

##### they were baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they received baptism"

##### in the name of the Lord Jesus

Here "name" refers to Jesus's power and authority. Alternate translation: "as believers in the Lord Jesus"

#### Acts 19:6

##### General Information:

All instances of "them" and "they" refer to "the people" ([Acts 19:5](./05.md))

##### laid his hands on them

"placed his hands on them." He probably placed his hands on their shoulders or heads. Alternate translation: "placed his hands on their heads as he prayed"

##### they spoke in tongues and prophesied

Unlike in Acts 2:3-4, there are no details of who understood their messages.

#### Acts 19:7

##### General Information:

All instances of "them" and "they" refer to "the people" ([Acts 19:5](./05.md))

##### In all they were about twelve men

This tells how many men were baptized.

##### twelve men

"12 men"

#### Acts 19:8

##### Paul went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months

"Paul regularly attended the synagogue meetings for three months and spoke there boldly"

##### reasoning and persuading them

Probable meanings are 1) the words "reasoning" and "persuading" are a hendiadys that means "arguing persuasively" or 2) the words describe two separate activities, "giving them reasons to believe" and "convincing them"

##### about the kingdom of God

Here "kingdom" stands for God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "about God's rule as king" or "about how God would show himself as king"

#### Acts 19:9

##### some Jews were hardened and disobedient

People who were stubbornly refusing to believe are spoken of as though they were becoming hard and unable to move. Alternate translation: "some Jews were stubborn and did not believe" or "some Jews stubbornly refused to accept and obey the message"

##### to speak evil of the Way before the crowd

What Christ wants people to believe is spoken of as though it were a road that a person travels. The phrase, "the Way," seems to have been a title for Christianity at the time. Alternate translation: "to speak evil about Christianity to the crowd" or "to speak to the crowd evil things about those who follow Christ and who obey his teaching about God" (See: and Acts 9:2)

##### to speak evil of

"to speak bad things about"

##### in the lecture hall of Tyrannus

"in the large room where Tyrannus had taught people"

##### Tyrannus

This is the name of a man.

#### Acts 19:10

##### all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord

Here "all" is a generalization that means very many people throughout Asia heard the gospel.

##### the word of the Lord

Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "the message about the Lord"

#### Acts 19:11

##### God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul

Here "hands" stands for Paul's whole person. Alternate translation: "God was causing Paul to do extraordinary miracles" or "God was doing extraordinary miracles through Paul"

#### Acts 19:12

##### General Information:

Here the words "them" and "their" refer to those who were sick.

##### even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick and

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when they took to sick people even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched Paul"

##### even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him

Possible meanings are 1) these were cloth items that Paul had touched or 2) these were cloth items that Paul had worn or used.

##### handkerchiefs

cloths worn around the head

##### aprons

clothing worn on the front of the body to protect the clothes of people

##### the sick

This refers to sick people. Alternate translation: "sick people" or "those who were sick"

##### their illnesses left them

"those who were sick became healthy"

#### Acts 19:13

##### General Information:

This is the beginning of another event that happened while Paul was in Ephesus. It is about Jewish exorcists.

##### exorcists

people who send evil spirits away from people or places

##### the name of the Lord Jesus

Here "name" refers to Jesus's power and authority.

##### By the Jesus whom Paul proclaims

"Jesus" was a common name at the time, so these exorcists wanted people to know of whom they spoke.

##### By the Jesus

This stands for the power and authority of Jesus. Alternate translation: "by the authority of Jesus" or "by the power of Jesus"

#### Acts 19:14

##### Sceva

This is the name of a man.

#### Acts 19:15

##### Jesus I know, and Paul I know

"I know Jesus and Paul" or "I know Jesus, and I know Paul"

##### but who are you?

The spirit asked this question to emphasize that the exorcists had no authority over evil spirits. Alternate translation: "but I do not know you!" or "but you have no authority over me!"

#### Acts 19:16

##### The evil spirit in the man leaped

This means that the evil spirit caused the man whom it was controlling to leap on the exorcists.

##### exorcists

This refers to people who send evil spirits from people or places. See how you translated this in Acts 19:13.

##### they fled ... naked

The exorcists fled with their clothes ripped off them.

#### Acts 19:17

##### the name of the Lord Jesus was honored

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they honored the name of the Lord Jesus" or "they considered the name of the Lord Jesus to be great"

##### the name

This stands for the power and authority of Jesus.

#### Acts 19:18

##### Connecting Statement:

This ends the story about the Jewish exorcists.

#### Acts 19:19

##### brought their books

"collected their books." The word "books" refers to scrolls on which magical incantations and formulas were written.

##### in the sight of everyone

"in front of everyone"

##### the value of them

"the value of the books" or "the value of the scrolls"

##### fifty thousand

"50,000"

##### pieces of silver

A "piece of silver" was the approximate daily wage for a common laborer.

#### Acts 19:20

##### So the word of the Lord spread very widely in powerful ways

"So because of these powerful deeds, more and more people heard the message about the Lord Jesus"

#### Acts 19:21

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul talks about going Jerusalem but does not leave Ephesus yet.

##### Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke starts to tell a new part of the story.

##### these things were completed

"Paul completed the work that God had for him to do in Ephesus"

##### Paul decided in the Spirit

Possible meanings are 1) Paul decided with the help of the Holy Spirit or 2) Paul decided within his own spirit, which means he made up his mind.

##### Achaia

Achaia was the Roman province in which Corinth was located. It was the largest city in southern Greece and the capital of the province. See how you translated this in Acts 18:12.

##### I must also see Rome

"I must also travel to Rome"

#### Acts 19:22

##### Erastus

This is the name of a man.

##### But he himself stayed in Asia for a while

It is made explicit in the next few verses that Paul remains in Ephesus.

##### he himself

This is repeated for emphasis.

#### Acts 19:23

##### Connecting Statement:

Luke tells about a riot that broke out while Paul was in Ephesus.

##### there was no small disturbance in Ephesus concerning the Way

This is a summary opening statement.

##### there was no small disturbance

"the people became very upset" See how you translated this in Acts 12:18

##### the Way

This was a term used to refer to Christianity. See how you translated this title in Acts 9:1.

#### Acts 19:24

##### General Information:

The writer introduces Demetrius to the story and gives background information about him. Ephesus had a large temple dedicated to the goddess Artemis, sometimes translated as "Diana." She was a false goddess of fertility.

##### A certain silversmith named Demetrius

The use of the words "a certain" introduces a new person in the story.

##### silversmith

a craftsman who works with silver metal to make statues and jewelry

##### named Demetrius

This is the name of a man. Demetrius was a silversmith in Ephesus who was against Paul and the local church.

##### brought in much business for the craftsmen

"enabled those who made the idols to make much money"

##### shrines of Artemis

These were probably carved or molten images of the temple of Artemis or of the part of the temple in which the statue of Artemis stood.

#### Acts 19:25

##### the workmen of that occupation

An occupation is a profession or job. Alternate translation: "others who did that kind of work"

#### Acts 19:26

##### Connecting Statement:

Demetrius continues to speak to the craftsmen.

##### You see and hear that

"You have come to know and understand that"

##### persuaded and turned away many people

Paul's stopping people from worshiping idols is spoken of as though Paul were turning the people in a different direction. Alternate translation: "persuaded many people and caused them to stop worshiping the local gods"

##### He is saying that gods made by hands are not gods

Here the word "hands" can refer to the whole person. Alternate translation: "He is saying that the idols that people make are not real gods"

#### Acts 19:27

##### that our trade will be discredited

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that what Paul is saying will discredit our trade" or "that people will think that our trade is false"

##### our trade

This refers to their business of making and selling idols.

##### the temple of the great goddess Artemis might be regarded as worthless

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will think that the temple of the great goddess Artemis is worthless" or "people will think there is no benefit in going to the temple to worship the great goddess Artemis"

##### her greatness would be brought to nothing

"Her greatness" is a metonym for her reputation of being great. Being "brought to nothing" is a metaphor for becoming nothing or no longer existing. Alternate translation: "People would no longer recognize how great she is" or "She will lose her reputation of being great"

##### whom all Asia and the world worship

This was an exaggeration to show how popular the goddess Artemis was. Here the words "Asia" and "the world" refer to the people in the province of Asia and the known world. Alternate translation: "whom many people in Asia and in other parts of the world worship"

#### Acts 19:28

##### General Information:

Here "they" refers to the craftsmen who made the idols ([Acts 19:24-25](./24.md)).

##### they were filled with anger

This speaks of the craftsmen as though they were containers. Here "anger" is spoken of as if it were the contents that fill a container. Alternate translation: "they became very angry"

##### cried out

"shouted aloud" or "shouted loudly"

#### Acts 19:29

##### The whole city was filled with confusion

Here "city" refers to the people. The city is spoken of as if it were a container. And, "confusion" is spoken of as if it were the contents that filled the container. Alternate translation: "Then people all over the city became upset and started shouting"

##### the people rushed with one mind

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

##### into the theater

The Ephesus theater was used for public meetings and for entertainment such as plays and music. It was an outdoor semi-circular area with bench seats that could hold thousands of people.

##### Paul's travel companions

The men who had been with Paul.

##### Gaius and Aristarchus

These are names of men. Gaius and Aristarchus came from Macedonia but were working with Paul in Ephesus at this time.

#### Acts 19:30

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 19:31

##### officials of the province of Asia

Ephesus was in the Roman Empire's province of Asia.

##### enter the theater

The Ephesus theater was used for public meetings and for entertainment such as plays and music. It was an outdoor semi-circular area with bench seats that could hold thousands of people. See how you translated "theater" in Acts 19:29.

#### Acts 19:32

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 19:33

##### Alexander

This is the name of a man.

##### motioned with his hand

You can make explicit that Alexander was showing the crowd that he wanted them to be quiet. Alternate translation: "gestured to the crowd to be quiet"

##### to give a defense

It is not clear whom or what Alexander wanted to defend. If your language requires this information, it might be best to use a general phrase like "to explain what was going on."

#### Acts 19:34

##### with one voice

The shouting together of the people at the same time is spoken of as though they were speaking with one voice. Alternate translation: "in unison" or "together"

#### Acts 19:35

##### Connecting Statement:

The clerk of Ephesus speaks to quiet the crowd.

##### the town clerk

This refers to the town "writer" or "secretary."

##### what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper ... heaven?

The clerk asked this question to assure the crowd they were right and to comfort them. Alternate translation: "every man knows that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper ... heaven."

##### who does not know

The town clerk uses "not" to emphasize that all of the people knew this.

##### temple keeper

The Ephesian people maintained and guarded the temple of Artemis.

##### the image which fell down from heaven

Within the temple of Artemis was an image of the goddess. It had been fashioned from a meteorite which fell from the sky. People thought that this rock had come directly from Zeus, the ruler of the Greek gods (idols).

#### Acts 19:36

##### General Information:

The word "you" is plural.

##### Seeing then that these things are undeniable

"Since you know these things"

##### do nothing rash

"do not do anything before you have had time to think about it"

##### rash

without careful thought

#### Acts 19:37

##### General Information:

The word "you" is plural.

##### these men

The words "these men" refer to Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions (Acts 19:29).

#### Acts 19:38

##### Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true." The town clerk had said in Acts 19:37 that Gaius and Aristarchus were not robbers or blasphemers.

##### have an accusation against anyone

The word "accusation" can be stated as the verb "accuse." Alternate translation: "want to accuse someone"

##### proconsuls

the Roman governor's representatives who made legal decisions in court

##### Let them accuse one another

This does not mean Demetrius and those with him will accuse each other. It means this is a place where people in general can speak their accusation. Alternate translation: "There people can accuse one another"

#### Acts 19:39

##### Connecting Statement:

The town clerk finishes speaking to the crowd.

##### But if you are seeking anything more

"But if you want to ask about anything more" or "But if you have something to discuss about other matters"

##### it should be resolved in the regular assembly

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "let us settle it in the regular assembly"

##### the regular assembly

This refers to a regular public gathering of citizens over which the county clerk presided.

#### Acts 19:40

##### For we are in danger of being accused of rioting today

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "in danger of the Roman authorities accusing us of starting this riot today"

## Chapter 20

# Acts 20 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

In this chapter Luke describes Paul's last visits to believers in the provinces of Macedonia and Asia before he went to Jerusalem.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Race

Paul spoke of living for Jesus as if he were running in a race. By this he meant that he needed to keep working hard even when things were difficult and he wanted to quit. (See: and discipline)

#### "Compelled by the Spirit"

Paul thought that the Holy Spirit wanted him to go to Jerusalem even if Paul did not want to go there. The same Holy Spirit told other people that when Paul arrived in Jerusalem, people would try to harm him.

## Links:

* [Acts 20:1](../../act/20/01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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; Thessalonia; 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”(ποιμαίνω/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 (Prophesy) ; Holy Spirit; Vision); Worship; Fasting; Grace

See Map: Caearea ; 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 20:1

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul leaves Ephesus and continues his travels.

##### After the uproar

"After the riot" or "Following the riot"

##### he said farewell

"he said goodbye"

#### Acts 20:2

##### had spoken many words of encouragement to them

"had greatly encouraged the believers" or "had said many things to encourage the believers"

#### Acts 20:3

##### After he had spent three months there

"After he had stayed there three months." This speaks about time as if it were something a person could spend.

##### a plot was formed against him by the Jews

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Jews formed a plot against him" or "the Jews formed a secret plan to harm him"

##### by the Jews

This means only some of the Jews. Alternate translation: "by some of the Jews"

##### as he was about to sail for Syria

"as he was ready to sail for Syria"

#### Acts 20:4

##### Accompanying him

"Traveling with him." Here the word "him" refers to Paul (Acts 20:1).

##### Sopater ... Pyrrhus ... Secundus ... Tychicus ... Trophimus

These are names of men.

##### Berea ... Derbe

These are names of places.

##### Aristarchus ... Gaius

These are names of men. See how you translated these names in Acts 19:29.

#### Acts 20:5

##### these men had gone before us

"these men had traveled ahead of us"

##### before us ... for us

Here "us" refers to the writer and Paul and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

##### Troas

This is the name of a place.

#### Acts 20:6

##### General Information:

All instances of "we" refer to the writer and Paul and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

##### the days of unleavened bread

This refers to the Jewish religious feast time during the Passover season. See how you translated this in Acts 12:3.

#### Acts 20:7

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to the writer, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader. (See: and [Acts 20:4-6](./04.md))

##### Connecting Statement:

Luke tells about Paul's preaching in Troas and about what happened to Eutychus.

##### the next day

"when the sun came up again." If the writer was using the Jewish system of determining days, Paul was planning to travel after sunrise on "the first day of the week." If the writer was using the Greek system, Paul was planning to travel on the second day of the week.

##### to break bread

Bread was part of their meals. Possible meanings are 1) this refers simply to eating a meal together. Alternate translation: "to eat a meal" or 2) this refers to the meal they would eat together in order to remember Christ's death and resurrection. Alternate translation: "to eat the Lord's Supper"

##### he prolonged his message

"he continued to speak"

#### Acts 20:8

##### upper room

This may have been on the third floor of the house.

#### Acts 20:9

##### In the window

This was an opening in the wall with a ledge that was wide enough on which a person could sit.

##### Eutychus

This is the name of a man.

##### who fell into a deep sleep

This speaks about sleep as if it were a deep hole into which a person could fall. Alternate translation: "who slept soundly" or "who became more and more tired until finally he was sleeping soundly"

##### third story and was picked up dead

When they went down to check his condition, they saw he was dead. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "third story; and when they went to pick him up, they found that he was dead"

##### third story

This means two floors above the ground floor. If your culture does not count the ground floor, you may state this as the "second story."

#### Acts 20:10

##### on him ... embraced him ... he is alive

Here "him" and "he" refers to the young man, Eutychus.

##### he said

Here "he" refers to Paul.

#### Acts 20:11

##### General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Paul.

##### Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Paul's preaching at Troas and about Eutychus.

##### broke bread

Bread was a common food during meals. Here "broke bread" probably means that they shared a meal with more kinds of food than just bread.

##### he left

"he went away"

#### Acts 20:12

##### the boy

This refers to Eutychus (Acts 20:9). Possible meanings are 1) he was a young man over 14 years old or 2) he was a boy between 9 and 14 years old or 3) the word "boy" implies that he was a servant or a slave.

#### Acts 20:13

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to the writer and those traveling with him, but not to the reader.

##### Connecting Statement:

The writer Luke, Paul, and his other companions continue their travels; however, Paul goes separately for part of the trip.

##### We ourselves went

The word "ourselves" adds emphasis and separates Luke and his traveling companions from Paul, who did not travel by boat.

##### sailed away to Assos

Assos is a town located directly below present day Behram in Turkey on the coast of the Aegean sea.

##### he himself desired

Here "he himself" refers to Paul. "Himself" is used to emphasize that this is what Paul wanted.

##### to go by land

"to travel on land"

#### Acts 20:14

##### he met ... took him

Here "he" and "him" refer to Paul.

##### met us ... we took

Here the words "we" and "us" refer to the writer and those traveling with him, but not to the reader.

##### went to Mitylene

Mitylene is a town located in present day Mitilini in Turkey on the coast of the Aegean sea.

#### Acts 20:15

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Paul, the writer, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

##### opposite the island

"near the island" or "across from the island"

##### the island of Chios

Chios is an island off the coast of modern day Turkey in the Aegean Sea.

##### we touched at the island of Samos

"we arrived at the island of Samos"

##### island of Samos

Samos is an island south of Chios in the Aegean Sea off the coast of modern day Turkey.

##### the city of Miletus

Miletus was a port city in western Asia Minor near the mouth of the Meander River.

#### Acts 20:16

##### For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus

Paul sailed south past the port city of Ephesus, further south in order to land at Miletus.

##### so that he would not spend any time

This speaks about "time" as if it were a commodity that a person could spend or use up. Alternate translation: "so that he would not have to remain for a time" or "so that he would not have a delay"

#### Acts 20:17

##### General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Paul.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul calls the elders of the church of Ephesus and begins to speak to them.

##### Miletus

Miletus was a port city in western Asia Minor near the mouth of the Meander River. See how you translated this in [Acts 20:15]

#### Acts 20:18

##### You yourselves

Here "yourselves" is used for emphasis.

##### I set foot in Asia

Here "foot" stands for the entire person. Alternate translation: "I entered Asia"

##### how I always spent my time with you

This speaks about time as if it were something that a person could spend. Alternate translation: "how I always conducted myself when I was with you"

#### Acts 20:19

##### lowliness of mind

This speaks about something humble as if it were low to the ground. The word "mind" stands for a person's inner attitude. Alternate translation: "humility" or "humbleness"

##### with tears

Here "tears" stands for feeling sad and crying. Alternate translation: "with crying as I served the Lord"

##### in trials that happened to me

"Trials" is an abstract noun. The meaning can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "while God was testing me"

##### of the Jews

This does not mean every Jew. This lets us know who plotted. Alternate translation: "of some of the Jews"

#### Acts 20:20

##### You know how I did not keep back from declaring to you

"You know how I was never silent, but I always declared to you"

##### from house to house

"I also taught when I was in your homes"

#### Acts 20:21

##### about repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus

The abstract nouns "repentance" and "faith" can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "that they need to repent before God and believe in our Lord Jesus Christ"

##### our Lord Jesus

The word "our" refers to Paul and the elders to whom he is speaking.

#### Acts 20:22

##### General Information:

Here the word "I" refers to Paul.

##### compelled by the Spirit

They can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because the Spirit compels me to go there"

##### not knowing what will happen to me there

"and I do not know what will happen to me there"

#### Acts 20:23

##### chains and afflictions await me

Here "chains" refers to Paul's being arrested and put in prison. Alternate translation: "people will put me in prison and cause me to suffer"

#### Acts 20:24

##### if only I may finish the race and complete the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus

This speaks about Paul's "race" and "ministry" as if they are objects that Jesus gives and Paul receives. Here "race" and "ministry" mean basically the same thing. Paul repeats this for emphasis. Alternate translation: "so that I may complete the work that the Lord Jesus has commanded me to do"

##### finish the race

Paul speaks about completing the work that Jesus has commanded him to do as if he were running a race.

##### to testify to the gospel of the grace of God

"to tell people the good news about God's grace." This is the ministry that Paul received from Jesus.

#### Acts 20:25

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to talk to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17).

##### Now look, I know

"Now, pay careful attention, because I know"

##### I know that you all

"I know that all of you"

##### among whom I went about proclaiming the kingdom

Here "kingdom" stands for God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "to whom I preached the message about God's reign as king" or "to whom I preached about how God will show himself as king"

##### will see my face no more

The word "face" here represents Paul's physical body. Alternate translation: "will not see me anymore on this earth"

#### Acts 20:26

##### I am innocent of the blood of any man

Here "blood" stands for a person's death, which, in this case, is not physical death but spiritual death when God declares a person guilty of sin. Paul had told them God's truth. Alternate translation: "I am not responsible for anyone whom God judges guilty of sin because they did not trust in Jesus"

##### any man

Here this means any person whether male or female. Alternate translation: "any person"

#### Acts 20:27

##### For I did not hold back from declaring to you

"For I did not keep silent and not tell you." This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "For I certainly declared to you"

#### Acts 20:28

##### Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true," referring to all that Paul has said so far in his speech about his leaving them.

##### the flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you overseers. Be careful to shepherd the church of God

Believers are likened to a "flock" of sheep here. Church leaders are entrusted by God with the care of the community of believers just as a shepherd would care for his flock of sheep and protect them from wolves. Alternate translation: "the group of believers the Holy spirit has entrusted to you. Be sure to take care of the church of God"

##### the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood

The shedding of the blood of Christ here is likened to a payment to God for our sins. Alternate translation: "the people Christ saved from their sins by shedding his blood on the cross"

##### his own blood

Here "blood" stands for Christ's death.

#### Acts 20:29

##### vicious wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock

This is a picture of people who teach false doctrine and who harm the community of believers as though they were wolves that eat the sheep of the flock. Alternate translation: "many enemies will come among you and try to harm the community of believers"

#### Acts 20:30

##### to draw away the disciples after them

A false teacher convincing believers to start believing his false teaching is spoken of as if he were leading sheep away from the flock to follow him. Alternate translation: "in order to convince people who are disciples of Christ to become his disciples instead"

#### Acts 20:31

##### be on guard. Remember

"be on guard and remember" or "be on guard as you remember"

##### be on guard

"be awake and alert" or "watch out." Christian leaders being alert about anyone that may harm the community of believers is spoken of as if they were guards in an army watching out for the enemy army.

##### Remember that

"Continue to remember that" or "Do not forget that"

##### for three years I never stopped warning ... night and day

Paul taught them over the space of three years, but not necessarily every day for three years.

##### I never stopped warning ... you

This does not mean that the only words he spoke were words of warning. Rather, Paul is using hyperbole to remind them that he had told them often that evil men would try to deceive them. Alternate translation: "I warned ... you as often as I could"

##### with tears

Here "tears" refers to Paul's crying because of the strong emotion of concern he felt while he was warning the people.

#### Acts 20:32

##### I commit you to God and to the word of his grace

Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "I ask God to take care of you and to help you to keep believing the message I spoke to you about his grace"

##### which is able to build you up

A person's faith becoming stronger is spoken of as if the person were a wall and someone were building him higher and stronger. Alternate translation: "which is able to make become stronger and stronger in your faith"

##### to give you the inheritance

This speaks about the "word of his grace" as if the word itself would give the inheritance to believers. Alternate translation: "God will give you the inheritance"

##### the inheritance

The blessings that God gives believers are spoken of as if they were money or property that a child inherits from his father.

#### Acts 20:33

##### I coveted no man's silver

"I did not desire someone's silver" or "I did not want for myself anyone's silver"

##### man's silver, gold, or clothing

Clothing was considered a treasure; the more you had, the richer you were.

#### Acts 20:34

##### You yourselves

The word "yourselves" is used here to add emphasis.

##### these hands served my own needs

The word "hands" here represents the entire person. Alternate translation: "I worked to earn money and pay for my own expenses"

#### Acts 20:35

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes speaking to the elders of the church of Ephesus; he began to speak them in Acts 20:18.

##### you should help the weak by laboring

"you should work so as to have money to help people who cannot earn it for themselves"

##### the weak

You can state this nominal adjective as an adjective. Alternate translation: "weak persons" or "those who are weak"

##### weak

"sick"

##### the words of the Lord Jesus

Here "words" refers to what Jesus has said.

##### It is more blessed to give than to receive

This means a person receives the favor of God and experiences more joy when he gives to other people rather than always receiving from other people.

#### Acts 20:36

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul ends his time with the elders of the church of Ephesus by praying with them.

##### he knelt down and prayed

It was a common custom to kneel down while praying. It was a sign of humility before God.

#### Acts 20:37

##### embraced Paul

"hugged him closely" or "put their arms around him"

##### kissed him

Kissing someone on the cheek is an expression of brotherly or friendly love in the Middle East.

#### Acts 20:38

##### they would never see his face again

The word "face" here represents Paul's physical body. Alternate translation: "they would not see him anymore on this earth"

## Chapter 21

# Acts 21 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Acts 21:1-19 describes Paul's journey to Jerusalem. After he arrived in Jerusalem, the believers there told him that the Jews wanted to harm him and what he should do so they would not harm him (verses 20-26). Even though Paul did what the believers told him to do, the Jews tried to kill him. The Romans rescued him and gave him a chance to speak to the Jews.

The last verse of the chapter ends with an incomplete sentence. Most translations leave the sentence incomplete, as the ULB does.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### "They are all determined to keep the law"

The Jews in Jerusalem were following the law of Moses. Even those who were following Jesus still kept the law. Both groups thought that Paul had been telling Jews in Greece not to keep the law. But it was only the Gentiles to whom Paul was saying that.

#### Nazarite vow

The vow that Paul and his three friends made was probably a Nazarite vow, because they shaved their heads ([Acts 21:23](../../act/21/23.md)).

#### Gentiles in the temple

The Jews accused Paul of bringing a Gentile man into a part of the temple into which God only allowed Jews to go. They thought that God wanted them to punish Paul by killing him. (See: holy)

#### Roman citizenship

The Romans thought that they needed to treat only Roman citizens justly. They could do as they desired with people who were not Roman citizens, but they had to obey the law with other Romans. Some people were born Roman citizens, and others gave money to the Roman government so they could become Roman citizens.

## Links:

* [Acts 21:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 (Prophesy)

#### 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 (Prophesy) ; 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 (Prophesy) ; 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 (Prophesy) ; 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 Gentiles 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 Aramiac. 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 21:1

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Luke, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

##### Connecting Statement:

The writer Luke, Paul, and his companions continue their travels.

##### we took a straight course to the city of Cos

"we went straight to the city of Cos" or "we went directly to the city of Cos"

##### city of Cos

Cos is a Greek island off the coast of modern day Turkey in the South Aegean Sea region.

##### city of Rhodes

Rhodes is a Greek island off the coast of modern day Turkey in the South Aegean Sea region south of Cos and northeast of Crete.

##### city of Patara

Patara is a city on the southwest coast of modern day Turkey south of the Aegean Sea in the Mediterranean Sea.

#### Acts 21:2

##### When we found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia

Here "a ship crossing over" stands for the crew that would sail the ship. Alternate translation: "When we found a ship with a crew sailing over to Phoenicia"

##### a ship crossing over

Here "crossing" does not mean it was presently crossing but that it would be crossing to Phoenicia soon. Alternate translation: "a ship that would be going across the water" or "a ship that would be going"

#### Acts 21:3

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Luke, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

##### Cyprus, leaving it on the left side of the boat

The left is the "port" side of a boat. Here this means they sailed south of Cyprus. Alternate translation: "Cyprus, sailing south of it"

##### where the ship was to unload its cargo

Here "ship" stands for the crew that was sailing the ship. Alternate translation: "the crew would unload the cargo from the ship"

#### Acts 21:4

##### Through the Spirit they kept urging Paul not to go to Jerusalem

"The Spirit caused them to urge Paul again and again not to go to Jerusalem." The Spirit may have revealed to them that Paul would suffer in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "Because the Spirit had told them that Paul would suffer in Jerusalem, they urged him again and again not to go there"

#### Acts 21:5

##### General Information:

Here the word "They" refers to the believers from Tyre.

##### When our days there were over

"When the seven days were over" or "When it was time to leave"

##### knelt down on the beach, prayed

It was a common custom to kneel down while praying. This was a sign of humility before God.

#### Acts 21:6

##### said farewell to each other

"said goodbye to one another"

#### Acts 21:7

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Luke, Paul and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

##### we arrived at Ptolemais

Ptolemais was a city south of Tyre, Lebanon. Ptolemais is modern day Acre, Israel.

##### the brothers

"fellow believers"

#### Acts 21:8

##### Connecting Statement:

This begins Paul's time in Caesarea.

##### one of the seven

The "seven" refers to the men chosen to distribute food and aid to the widows in Acts 6:5.

##### evangelist

a person who tells people good news

#### Acts 21:9

##### this man

"Philip" from verse 8.

##### Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke tells background information about Philip and his daughters.

##### four virgin daughters who prophesied

"four virgin daughters who regularly received and passed along messages from God"

#### Acts 21:10

##### General Information:

Here the words "we" and "us" refers to Luke, Paul, and those with them, but not to the reader.

##### a certain prophet named Agabus

This introduces a new person in the story.

##### named Agabus

Agabus was a man from Judea.

#### Acts 21:11

##### Connecting Statement:

This tells about a prophecy made about Paul in Caesarea by the prophet Agabus.

##### took Paul's belt

"removed Paul's belt from Paul's waist"

##### Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews in Jerusalem will tie up ... of the Gentiles.'

This is a quotation within a quotation. The inner quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "The Holy Spirit says that this will be how the Jews in Jerusalem will tie up ... of the Gentiles."

##### the Jews

This does not mean all the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders" or "some of the Jews"

##### hand him over

"deliver him"

##### into the hands of the Gentiles

The word "hands" here represents control. Alternate translation: "into the legal custody of the Gentiles" or "to the Gentiles"

##### the Gentiles

This stands for the authorities among the Gentiles. Alternate translation: "the Gentile authorities"

#### Acts 21:12

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Luke and the other believers but does not include the reader.

#### Acts 21:13

##### What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart?

Paul asks this question to show the believers they should stop trying to persuade him. Alternate translation: "Stop what you are doing. Your weeping is breaking my heart."

##### breaking my heart

This is a metaphor for making someone sad or discouraging them. Here "heart" stands for a person's emotions. Alternate translation: "discouraging me" or "making me very sad"

##### not only to be tied up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "not only for them to tie me up"

##### for the name of the Lord Jesus

Here "name" refers to the person of Jesus. Alternate translation: "for the sake of the Lord Jesus" or "because I believe in the Lord Jesus"

#### Acts 21:14

##### Paul would not be persuaded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Paul would not allow us to to persuade him" or "we were unable to persuade Paul"

##### persuaded

You may need to make explicit what they could not persuade Paul not to do. Alternate translation: "persuaded not to go up to Jerusalem"

##### May the will of the Lord be done

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "May everything happen as the Lord has planned it"

#### Acts 21:15

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Luke, Paul, and those traveling with them, and not to the reader.

##### Connecting Statement:

This ends Paul's time in Caesarea.

#### Acts 21:16

##### They brought with them a man

"Among them was a man"

##### Mnason, a man from Cyprus

Mnason was a man from the island of Cyprus.

##### an early disciple

This means Mnason was one of the first to believe in Jesus.

#### Acts 21:17

##### General Information:

Here the words "we" and "us" refer to Luke, Paul, and those traveling with them, and not to the reader.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul and his companions arrive in Jerusalem.

##### the brothers welcomed us

Here "brothers" refers to the believers in Jerusalem, whether male or female. Alternate translation: "the fellow believers welcomed us"

#### Acts 21:18

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 21:19

##### General Information:

Here the words "he" and "his" refer to Paul. The word "them" refers to the elders.

##### he reported one by one

"he gave a detailed account of all"

#### Acts 21:20

##### Connecting Statement:

The elders in Jerusalem begin their response to Paul.

##### they heard ... they glorified ... they said to him

Here the word "they" refers to James and the elders. The word "him" refers to Paul.

##### brother

Here "brother" means "fellow believer."

##### They are

The word "they" refers to Jewish believers who wanted all believing Jews to keep the Jewish laws and customs.

##### the law

this phrase here refers to the law of Moses

#### Acts 21:21

##### They have been told

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People have told the Jewish believers"

##### to abandon Moses

Here "Moses" stands for the law of Moses. Alternate translation: "to stop obeying the laws that Moses gave us"

##### not to walk according to the traditional ways

A person who obeys the traditions and customs is spoken of as if he were walking on a path. Alternate translation: "not to obey the old customs" or "not to practice the old customs"

##### the traditional ways

"the usual Jewish customs"

#### Acts 21:22

##### we do

Here the word "we" refers to James and the elders

##### They will

The word "They" refers to the Jewish believers in Jerusalem who wanted to teach Jewish believers that they could still follow the laws of Moses ([Acts 21:20-21](./20.md)).

##### you have come

The word "you" refers to Paul.

#### Acts 21:23

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to James and the elders

##### four men who made a vow

"four men who made a promise to God." This was the kind of vow where a person would not drink alcohol or cut his hair until the end of a set period of time.

#### Acts 21:24

##### Connecting Statement:

James and the elders continue speaking to Paul.

##### Take these men and purify yourself with them

They had to make themselves ritually pure so they could worship in the temple.

##### pay their expenses for them

"pay for what they will need." The expenses would go toward buying a male and female lamb, a ram, and grain and drink offerings.

##### they may shave their heads

This was a sign that the person had completed what they promised God they would do.

##### the things they have been told about you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things that people are saying about you"

#### Acts 21:25

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to James and the elders.

##### Connecting Statement:

James and the elders in Jerusalem finish their request to Paul (Acts 21:18).

##### they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from what is strangled

All of these are rules about what they can eat. They are forbidden to eat meat of animals sacrificed to an idol, meat with blood still in it, and meat from a strangled animal because it would still have blood in the meat. See how you translated similar phrases in [Acts 15:20]

##### they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they stay away from the meat of an animal that someone sacrificed to an idol"

##### from what is strangled

This can be stated in active form. You can also state explicitly the assumed information about strangled animals. Alternate translation: "from animals that a person has strangled" or "from animals that a person killed for food but did not drain its blood"

#### Acts 21:26

##### took the men

These are the 4 men who made a vow.

##### he purified himself along with them

Before entering the temple area the Jews were required to be ceremonially or ritually clean. This cleansing had to do with Jews having contact with Gentiles.

##### went into the temple

They did not go into the temple itself where only the high priest was allowed to enter. They entered the temple courtyard. Alternate translation: "went into the temple courtyard"

##### the days of purification

This is a separate purification process from the purification process which they were required to fulfill in order to enter the temple area.

##### the offering would be presented

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they presented the animals for an offering"

#### Acts 21:27

##### Connecting Statement:

This begins the story of Paul's arrest.

##### the seven days

These are the seven days for purification.

##### in the temple

Paul was not in the temple itself. He was in the temple courtyard. Alternate translation: "in the temple courtyard"

##### stirred up the whole crowd

People who incited a crowd to become very angry at Paul are spoken of as if they stirred up the crowd's emotions. Alternate translation: "caused a large number of people to be very angry at Paul"

##### laid hands on him

Here "laid hands on" means to "seized" or to "grabbed." See how you translated "laid hands on" in [Acts 5:18]

#### Acts 21:28

##### the people, the law, and this place

"the people of Israel, the law of Moses, and the temple"

##### Besides, he has also brought Greeks into the temple

Only Jewish males were allowed in certain areas of the courtyard of the Jerusalem temple.

#### Acts 21:29

##### General Information:

Verse 29 gives background information about the Jews from Asia.

##### For they had previously ... into the temple

This is background information. Luke is explaining why the Jews from Asia thought Paul brought a Greek into the temple.

##### Trophimus

This was a Greek man that they accused Paul of having brought into the inner temple area that was only for Jews. See how you translated his name in Acts 20:4.

#### Acts 21:30

##### All the city was excited

The word "All" here is an exaggeration for emphasis. The word "city" represents the people in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "Many people in the city became angry at Paul"

##### laid hold of Paul

"seized Paul" or "grabbed Paul"

##### the doors were immediately shut

They shut the doors so that there would not be rioting in the temple area. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "some of the Jews immediately shut the temple doors" or "the temple guards immediately shut the doors"

#### Acts 21:31

##### news came up to the chief captain of the company of soldiers

Here "news" refers to the messenger who went to speak the news. Alternate translation: "someone gave news to the chief captain of the cohort"

##### news came up to the chief captain

The phrase "came up to" is used because the chief captain was in a fortress connected to the temple that was higher in elevation than the temple courtyard.

##### the chief captain

This is a Roman military leader of about 1,000 soldiers.

##### the company of soldiers

A company is a group of about 1,000 soldiers.

##### all Jerusalem was in an uproar

The word "Jerusalem" here represents the people of Jerusalem. The word "all" is an exaggeration to show a large crowd was upset. Alternate translation: "all the people in Jerusalem were in an uproar" or "the large crowd in Jerusalem was in an uproar" (See: and )

#### Acts 21:32

##### General Information:

The first word "he" refers to the chief captain of the guard mentioned in Acts 21:31.

##### ran down

From the fortress, there are stairs going down into the court.

#### Acts 21:33

##### laid hold of Paul

"took hold of Paul" or "arrested Paul"

##### commanded him to be bound

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "commanded his soldiers to bind him"

##### with two chains

This means they bound Paul to two Roman soldiers, one on each side of him.

##### he asked who he was and what he had done.

This can be stated as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "he asked, 'Who is this man? What has he done?'"

##### he asked who he was

The chief captain is speaking to the crowd, not to Paul.

#### Acts 21:34

##### and others another

The words "were shouting" are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "and others were shouting another" or "and others in the crowd were shouting something else"

##### he ordered that Paul be brought

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he ordered his soldiers to bring Paul"

##### into the fortress

This fortress was connected to the outer temple court.

#### Acts 21:35

##### When he came to the steps, he was carried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When Paul came to the steps of the fortress, the soldiers carried him"

#### Acts 21:36

##### Away with him

The crowd is using somewhat milder and less exact language to ask for Paul's death. Alternate translation: "Put him to death" or "Kill him"

#### Acts 21:37

##### As Paul was about to be brought

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "As the soldiers were ready to bring Paul"

##### the fortress

This fortress was connected to the outer temple court. See how you translated this in Acts 21:34.

##### The captain said, "Do you know Greek?

The chief captain uses this questions to express surprise that Paul is not who he thought he was. Alternate translation: "So you know Greek." or "I didn't know you knew Greek."

##### know Greek

know how to speak and understand the Greek language

#### Acts 21:38

##### Are you not then the Egyptian ... wilderness?

The chief captain uses this question and the question "Do you speak Greek?"

##### Are you not then the Egyptian

Shortly before Paul's visit, an unnamed man from Egypt had launched a revolt against Rome in Jerusalem. Later he escaped into the wilderness and the commander wonders if Paul might be the same man.

##### started a rebellion

This word "rebellion" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "caused people to rebel against the Roman government"

##### the four thousand men

"the 4,000 terrorists"

##### Assassins

This refers to a group of Jewish rebels who killed Romans and anyone who supported the Roman government.

#### Acts 21:39

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul is correcting the chief captain's wrong idea about who Paul is.

##### Tarsus in Cilicia

Cilicia was a Roman province across the Mediterranean Sea from Egypt, and Tarsus was a large, well-known city.

##### I am a citizen of no unimportant city

Paul uses the double negative in the phrase "no unimportant city" to emphasize that the chief captain should have known that Tarsus was an important city. Alternate translation: "I am a citizen of an important city"

##### I beg you

Or "I plead with you."

##### allow me

"please allow me" or please permit me"

#### Acts 21:40

##### the captain had given him permission

The word "permission" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "the captain permitted Paul to speak" or "the captain allowed Paul to speak"

##### Paul stood on the steps

The word "steps" here refers to the steps on the stairway to the fortress.

##### motioned with the hand to the people

It can be stated explicitly why Paul motioned with the hand. Alternate translation: "motioned with his hand for the people to be quiet"

##### When there was a deep silence

"When the people were completely silent"

## Chapter 22

# Acts 22 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

This is the second account of Paul's conversion in the book of Acts. Because this is such an important event in the early church, there are three accounts of Paul's conversion. (See: Acts 9 and Acts 26)

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### "In the Hebrew language"

Most Jews at this time spoke Aramaic and Greek. Most of the people who spoke Hebrew were educated Jewish scholars. This is why the people paid attention when Paul started speaking in Hebrew.

#### "The Way"

No one knows for sure who first started calling believers "followers of the Way." This is probably what the believers called themselves, because the Bible often speaks of a person living his life as if that person were walking on a path or "way." If this is true, the believers were "following the way of the Lord" by living in a way that pleased God.

#### Roman citizenship

The Romans thought that they needed to treat only Roman citizens justly. They could do as they desired with people who were not Roman citizens, but they had to obey the law with other Romans. Some people were born Roman citizens, and others gave money to the Roman government so they could become Roman citizens. The "chief captain" could have been punished for treating a Roman citizen the same way he would treat a non-citizen.

## Links:

* [Acts 22:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 Gamalier 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 Chrisitans (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 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 22:1

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul speaks to the Jewish crowd in Jerusalem.

##### Brothers and fathers

This is a polite way of addressing men who are Paul's age as well as the older men in the audience.

##### I will now make to you

"I will now explain to you" or "I will now present to you"

#### Acts 22:2

##### the Hebrew language

The Hebrew language was the language of the Jews.

#### Acts 22:3

##### but educated in this city at the feet of Gamaliel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but I was a student of Gamaliel here in Jerusalem"

##### at the feet of Gamaliel

Here "feet" stands for the place where a student would sit while learning from a teacher. Alternate translation: "by Gamaliel"

##### Gamaliel

Gamaliel was one of the most prominent teachers of the Jewish law. See how you translated this name in Acts 5:34.

##### I was instructed according to the strict ways of the law of our fathers

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "He instructed me how to carefully obey every law of our forefathers" or "The instruction I received followed the exact details of the law of our forefathers"

##### law of our fathers

"law of our ancestors." This refers to the law that God gave to the people of Israel through Moses.

##### I am zealous for God

"I am completely dedicated to obeying God" or "I am passionate about my service to God"

##### just as all of you are today

"in the same way all of you are today." Paul compares himself with the crowd.

#### Acts 22:4

##### I persecuted this Way to the death

Here "this Way" represents the people who belonged to the group called "the Way." The word "death" can be translated with the verb "kill." Alternate translation: "I persecuted the people who belonged to this Way and I looked for ways to kill them"

##### this Way

This was a term used to refer to Christianity. See how you translated "the Way" in Acts 9:2.

##### binding up and delivering to prison both men and women

"tying up both men and women and taking them to prison"

#### Acts 22:5

##### I received letters from them

"The high priests and elders gave me letters"

##### for the brothers in Damascus

Here "brothers" refers to "fellow Jews."

##### to bring them back in bonds to Jerusalem

"to bind those of the Way with chains and bring them back to Jerusalem"

##### to be punished

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that they would receive punishment" or "so that the Jewish authorities could punish them"

#### Acts 22:6

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul describes his encounter with Jesus.

##### It happened that

This phrase is used here to mark where the action starts. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

#### Acts 22:7

##### heard a voice say to me

Here "voice" stands for the person speaking. Alternate translation: "I heard someone say to me"

#### Acts 22:8

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 22:9

##### they did not understand the voice of him who spoke to me

Here "voice" stands for the person speaking. Alternate translation: "they did not understand what the one who spoke to me was saying"

#### Acts 22:10

##### There you will be told

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "There someone will tell you" or "There you will learn"

#### Acts 22:11

##### I could not see because of that light's brightness

"I was left blind because of that light's brightness"

##### being led by the hands of those who were with me, I came into Damascus

Here "hands" stands for those leading Paul. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those with me guided me into Damascus"

#### Acts 22:12

##### Ananias

Though this is not the same Ananias who died earlier in [Acts 5:3]

##### devout man according to the law

Ananias was very serious about following God's law.

##### law and well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there

This can be stated in active form in a new sentence. Alternate translation: "law. All the Jews who lived there spoke well of him"

#### Acts 22:13

##### General Information:

The words "He" and "him" refer to Ananias.

##### Brother Saul

Here "Brother" is a polite way to address someone. Alternate translation: "My friend Saul"

##### receive your sight

The word "sight" can be translated with the verb "see." Alternate translation: "see again"

##### In that very hour

This was a customary way of saying something happened immediately. Alternate translation: "At that instant" or "Instantly" or "Immediately"

#### Acts 22:14

##### General Information:

The word "he" refers to Ananias (Acts 22:12).

##### his will

"what God is planning and will cause to happen"

##### to hear the voice coming from his own mouth

Both "voice" and "mouth" refer to the one speaking. Alternate translation: "to hear him speak directly to you"

#### Acts 22:15

##### to all men

Here "men" means all people whether male or female. Alternate translation: "to all people"

#### Acts 22:16

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes telling what had happened to him in Damascus. He quotes what Ananias said to him. This is still part of his speech to the crowd in Jerusalem.

##### Now

Here "now" does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

##### why are you waiting?

This question was asked to exhort Paul to be baptized. Alternate translation: "do not wait!" or "do not delay!"

##### be baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "let me baptize you" or "receive baptism"

##### wash away your sins

As washing one's body removes dirt, calling on the name of Jesus for forgiveness cleanses one's inner being from sin. Alternate translation: "ask forgiveness for your sins"

##### calling on his name

Here "name" refers to the Lord. Alternate translation: "calling on the Lord" or "trusting in the Lord"

#### Acts 22:17

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul begins to tell the crowd about his vision of Jesus.

##### a trance came on me

This metaphor means that Paul went into the trance without expecting it or desiring it. See how you translated similar words in [Acts 10:10]

#### Acts 22:18

##### I saw him say to me

"I saw Jesus as he said to me"

##### they will not accept your testimony about me

"those who live in Jerusalem will not believe what you tell them about me"

#### Acts 22:19

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the non-believing Jews in Jerusalem.

##### they themselves know

The word "themselves" is used for emphasis.

##### in every synagogue

Paul went to synagogues to find Jews who believed in Jesus.

#### Acts 22:20

##### the blood of Stephen your witness was spilled

Here "blood" stands for Stephen's life. To spill blood means to kill. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they killed Stephen, who testified about you"

#### Acts 22:21

##### Connecting Statement:

This ends what Paul was able to say to the crowd of Jewish people by the fortress.

#### Acts 22:22

##### General Information:

Here the words "him" and "he" refer to Paul.

##### until that statement

"until Paul said that"

##### Away with such a fellow from the earth

The phrase "from the earth" adds emphasis to "Away with such a fellow." Alternate translation: "Kill him"

#### Acts 22:23

##### As they were

"While they were." The phrase "As they were" is used to mark two events that are happening at the same time.

##### throwing off their cloaks, and throwing dust into the air

These actions show that the Jews there are outraged because they feel Paul has spoken against God.

#### Acts 22:24

##### chief captain

This is a Roman military leader of about 1,000 soldiers. See how you translated this in Acts 21:31.

##### commanded Paul to be brought

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "ordered his soldiers to bring Paul"

##### the fortress

This fortress was connected to the outer temple court. See how you translated this in Acts 21:34.

##### He ordered that he should be questioned with scourging

The commander wants soldiers to torture Paul by whipping him to ensure he tells the truth. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "He ordered his soldiers to whip Paul to force him to tell the truth"

##### He ordered that he

The first "he" refers to chief captain. The second "he" refers to Paul.

##### that he himself

The word "himself" is used for emphasis.

#### Acts 22:25

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the soldiers.

##### the thongs

These were strips of leather or animal hide.

##### Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and who has not been put on trial?

Paul uses this question to make the centurion check the validity of having his soldiers whip Paul. Alternate translation: "It is not lawful for you to whip a man who is a Roman and who was not given his legal right to a trial!"

#### Acts 22:26

##### What are you about to do?

This question is used to urge the commander to reconsider his plan to whip Paul. Alternate translation: "You should not do this!"

#### Acts 22:27

##### General Information:

Here the word "him" refers to Paul.

##### The chief captain came

Here "came" can be translated as "went."

#### Acts 22:28

##### It was only with a large amount of money

"It was only after I paid a lot of money to the Roman authorities." The captain makes this statement because he knows how hard it is to become a Roman citizen, and he suspects Paul is not telling truth.

##### I acquired citizenship

"I got citizenship." The word "citizenship" is an abstract noun. Alternate translation: "I became a citizen"

##### I was born a Roman citizen

If a man was a Roman citizen, then his children become Roman citizens automatically when they were born.

#### Acts 22:29

##### the men who were going to question

"the men who planned to question" or "the men who were preparing to question"

#### Acts 22:30

##### General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to the chief captain.

##### So he untied his bonds

Possibly the "chief captain" stands for the chief captain's soldiers. Alternate translation: "So the chief captain ordered his soldiers to untie Paul's bonds"

##### he brought Paul down

There was a stairway going down from the fortress to the temple courts.

## Chapter 23

# Acts 23 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted material in 23:5.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Resurrection of the dead

The Pharisees believed that after people died, they would become alive again and God would either reward them or punish them. The Sadducees believed that once people died, they stayed dead and would never become alive again. (See: raise and reward)

#### "Called a curse"

Some Jews promised God that they would not eat or drink until they killed Paul, and they asked God to punish them if they did not do what they had promised to do.

#### Roman citizenship

The Romans thought that they needed to treat only Roman citizens justly. They could do as they desired with people who were not Roman citizens, but they had to obey the law with other Romans. Some people were born Roman citizens, and others gave money to the Roman government so they could become Roman citizens. The "chief captain" could have been punished for treating a Roman citizen the same way he would treat a non-citizen.

### Important figures of speech in this chapter

#### Whitewashed

This is a metaphor in scripture describing someone who appears to be good or clean or righteous when that person is evil or unclean or unrighteous.

## Links:

* [Acts 23:1](../../act/23/01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 (Hypocirte)

#### 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 23:1

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul stands before the chief priests and the council members (Acts 22:30).

##### Brothers

Here this means "Fellow Jews."

##### I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day

"I know that even to this day I have done what God has wanted me to do"

#### Acts 23:2

##### Ananias

This is the name of a man. Although he has the same name, the Ananias here is neither the Ananias mentioned in [Acts 5:1]

#### Acts 23:3

##### whitewashed wall

This refers to a wall that was painted white to make it look clean. Paul told Ananias that just as a wall can be painted to look clean so Ananias appeared to look morally clean, but he was really full of evil intent. Alternate translation: "white-painted wall" or "wall painted white"

##### Are you sitting to judge ... against the law?

Paul uses a question to point out Ananias' hypocrisy. Some modern translations read this as a statement, "You are sitting to judge ... against the law." Alternate translation: "You are wrong to sit there to judge ... against the law."

##### order me to be struck

This can be stated in active form. You can use the same word for "strike" as you did in the phrase "God will strike you." Alternate translation: "command people to strike me"

#### Acts 23:4

##### Is this how you insult God's high priest?

The men use this question to scold Paul for what he has said in [Acts 23:3]

#### Acts 23:5

##### For it is written

Paul is about to quote what Moses wrote in the law. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For Moses wrote in the law"

#### Acts 23:6

##### Brothers

Here "Brothers" means "Fellow Jews"

##### a son of Pharisees

Here "son" means he is the literal son of a Pharisee and also the descendant of Pharisees. Alternate translation: "and my father and forefathers were Pharisees"

##### I have the hope of the resurrection of the dead

Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." The abstract noun "resurrection" can be expressed with the verb phrase "become alive again." Alternate translation: "I confidently expect the resurrection of the dead" or "I trust that the dead will become alive again"

##### the dead

The phrase "the dead" can be expressed as "those who have died."

##### I am being judged

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you are judging me"

#### Acts 23:7

##### the crowd was divided

"the people in the crowd strongly disagreed with one another"

#### Acts 23:8

##### For the Sadducees ... but the Pharisees

This is background information about the Sadducees and Pharisees.

#### Acts 23:9

##### So a large uproar occurred

"So they began shouting loudly at one another." The word "so" marks an event that happened because of something else that happened previously. In this case, the previous event is Paul's stating his belief in the resurrection.

##### What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?

The Pharisees use this question to suggest that Paul may have gotten his teaching from an angel or a spirit. They may be rebuking the Sadducees for not believing that spirits and angels exist and can speak to people. Alternate translation: "Maybe a spirit or an angel has spoken with him!"

#### Acts 23:10

##### When there arose a great argument

The words "a great argument" can be re-stated as "argue violently." Alternate translation: "When they began to argue violently"

##### chief captain

This is a Roman military leader of about 1,000 soldiers. See how you translated this in Acts 21:31.

##### Paul would be torn to pieces by them

This can be stated in active form. The phrase "be torn to pieces" might be an exaggeration of how the people might harm Paul. Alternate translation: "they might tear Paul to pieces" or "they would cause Paul great physical harm"

##### take him by force

"use physical force to take him away"

##### into the fortress

This fortress was connected to the outer temple court. See how you translated this in Acts 21:34.

#### Acts 23:11

##### The following night

This means the night after the day Paul went before the council. Alternate translation: "That night"

##### testify in Rome

The words "about me" are understood. Alternate translation: "testify about me in Rome"

#### Acts 23:12

##### Connecting Statement:

While Paul is in the prison at the fortress, the disbelieving religious Jews vow to kill him.

##### formed a conspiracy

"organized a group with a shared purpose." The purpose for organizing this group was to kill Paul.

##### put themselves under an oath

The noun "oath" is an abstract noun that refers to a promise that the men made to God to kill Paul. It can also be made explicit what would happen to the men if they did not do what they had promised to do. Alternate translation: "asked God to curse them if they did not do what they promised"

#### Acts 23:13

##### forty men

"40 men"

##### who formed this conspiracy

"who made this plan" or "who planned to kill Paul"

#### Acts 23:14

##### General Information:

Here the word "They" refers to the forty Jews in Acts 23:13.

##### We have sworn a great oath to eat nothing until we have killed Paul

"We have sworn to eat nothing until we have killed Paul. We asked God to curse us if we do not do what we promised to do"

#### Acts 23:15

##### General Information:

Here "you" is plural and refers to the chief priests and elders. Both "us" and "we" refer to the forty Jews who planned to kill Paul.

##### Now, therefore

"Because what we have just said is true" or "Because we have put ourselves under this curse"

##### Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

##### bring him down to you

"bring Paul from the fortress to meet with you"

##### as if you would decide his case more precisely

"as though you want to learn more about what Paul has done"

#### Acts 23:16

##### Paul's sister's son

"the son of Paul's sister" or "Paul's nephew"

##### they were lying in wait

"they were ready to ambush Paul" or "they were waiting to kill Paul"

##### the fortress

This fortress was connected to the outer temple court. See how you translated this in Acts 21:34.

#### Acts 23:17

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 23:18

##### Paul the prisoner called me to him

"Paul the prisoner asked me to come talk with him"

##### this young man

Since the chief captain calls him a young man, this suggests Paul's nephew may have been 12 to 15 years old.

#### Acts 23:19

##### chief captain took him by the hand

Since the chief captain took the young man by the hand and calls him a young man (verse 18), this suggests Paul's nephew may have been 12 to 15 years old.

#### Acts 23:20

##### The Jews have agreed

This does not mean all Jews, but all of the group that was there. Alternate translation: "Some of the Jews have agreed"

##### to bring down Paul

"to bring Paul down from the fortress"

##### they were going to ask more precisely about his case

"they wanted to learn more about what Paul has done"

#### Acts 23:21

##### forty men

"40 men"

##### lying in wait for him

"ready to ambush Paul" or "ready to kill Paul"

##### They have put themselves under oath neither to eat nor to drink until they have killed him

"They have sworn to eat and drink nothing until they have killed Paul. And they asked God to curse them if they do not do what they promised to do"

##### for your approval

"for you to agree to do what they have asked you to do"

#### Acts 23:22

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 23:23

##### he called to him

"he called to himself." Both "he" and "him" refer to the chief captain.

##### two of the centurions

"2 of the centurions"

##### seventy horsemen

"70 horsemen"

##### two hundred spearmen

"200 soldiers that are armed with spears"

##### third hour of the night

This was about 9:00 p.m. at night.

#### Acts 23:24

##### Felix the governor

Felix, who resided at Caesarea, was the roman governor of the area.

#### Acts 23:25

##### General Information:

Here "he" refers to the chief captain.

#### Acts 23:26

##### General Information:

Claudius Lysias was the name of the chief captain. Governor Felix was the Roman governor over the whole region.

##### Claudius Lysias to the most excellent Governor Felix, greetings

This is a formal introduction to the letter. The chief captain begins by referring to himself. You can translate it in the first person. The words "am writing" are understood. Alternate translation: "I, Claudius Lysias, am writing to you, the most excellent Governor Felix, and I greet you"

##### to the most excellent Governor Felix

"to Governor Felix, you who deserve the greatest honors"

#### Acts 23:27

##### This man was arrested by the Jews

Here "Jews" means "some of the Jews." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Some of the Jews arrested this man"

##### was about to be killed by them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they were ready to kill him"

##### I came upon them with soldiers

"I with my soldiers arrived at the place where Paul and these Jews were"

#### Acts 23:28

##### General Information:

Here the word "I" refers to Claudius Lysias, the chief captain. The word "they" refers to the Jews who accused Paul. The word "him" refers to Paul.

#### Acts 23:29

##### that he was being accused about questions concerning

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that they were accusing him of questions about"

##### but that there was no accusation against him that deserved death or imprisonment

The abstract nouns "accusation," "death," and "imprisonment" can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "but nobody accused him of anything that should cause Roman authorities to kill him or to send him to prison"

#### Acts 23:30

##### Connecting Statement:

The chief captain ends his letter to Governor Felix.

##### Then it was reported to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Then someone told me" or "Then I learned"

##### sent him to you

Here "you" refers to Governor Felix.

#### Acts 23:31

##### Connecting Statement:

This ends Paul's time under arrest in Jerusalem and begins his time of arrest in Caesarea with Governor Felix.

##### So the soldiers obeyed their orders

The word "so" marks an event that happened because of something else that happened previously. In this case, the previous event is the chief captain's commanding the soldiers to escort Paul.

##### They took Paul and brought him by night

Here "brought" can be translated as "took." Alternate translation: "They got Paul and took him at night"

##### Antipatris

Antipatris was a city built by Herod in honor of his father, Antipater. It stood at a site located today in central Israel.

#### Acts 23:32

##### to go with him

Here "him" refers to Paul.

#### Acts 23:33

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 23:34

##### he asked what province Paul was from. When he learned that he was from Cilicia

This can be stated with direct quotations. Alternate translation: "he asked Paul, 'What province are you from?' Paul said, 'I am from Cilicia.' When the governor learned this"

##### When he learned that he

"When the governor learned that Paul"

#### Acts 23:35

##### he said

"the governor said"

##### I will hear you fully

"I will listen to all you have to say"

##### he commanded him to be kept

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he commanded soldiers to keep him" or "commanded soldiers to restrain him"

## Chapter 24

# Acts 24 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

Paul told the governor that he had not done what the Jews were accusing him of doing and that the governor should not punish him for what he did do.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Respect

Both the Jewish leaders ([Acts 24:2-4](./02.md)) and Paul ([Acts 24:10](../../act/24/10.md)) began their speeches with words that show respect to the governor.

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### Governmental leaders

The words "governor," "commander," and "centurion" may be difficult to translate into some languages.

## Links:

* [Acts 24:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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: JJudge (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 Chrisitans (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 24:1

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul is on trial in Caesarea. Tertullus presents Governor Felix with the charges against Paul.

##### After five days

"Five days after the Roman soldiers took Paul to Caesarea"

##### Ananias

This is the name of a man. He is not the same Ananias as in [Acts 5:1]

##### an orator

"a lawyer." Tertullus was an expert in Roman law who was there to accuse Paul in court.

##### Tertullus

This is the name of a man.

##### went there

"went to Caesarea where Paul was"

##### before the governor

"in the presence of the governor, who was judge in the court"

##### brought charges against Paul

"began to argue the case before the governor that Paul had broken the law."

#### Acts 24:2

##### Because of you

Here the word "you" refers to Felix, the governor.

##### we have great peace

Here "we" refers to the citizens under Felix. Alternate translation: "we, the people that you govern, have great peace"

##### and your foresight brings good reform to our nation

"and your planning has greatly improved our nation"

#### Acts 24:3

##### so with all thankfulness we welcome everything that you do

The word "thankfulness" is an abstract noun. It can be stated as an adjective or verb. Alternate translation: "so we are very thankful and we welcome everything that you do" or "so we thank you very much and welcome everything that you do"

##### most excellent Felix

"Governor Felix, who deserves greatest honor." Felix was the roman governor over the whole region. See how you translated a similar phrase in Acts 23:25.

#### Acts 24:4

##### So that I detain you no more

Possible meanings are 1) "so that I will not take up too much of your time" or 2) "so that I will not tire you"

##### in your kindness to hear us briefly

"to be kind and listen to the short speech I am giving to state these men's case"

#### Acts 24:5

##### General Information:

The word "we" refers to Ananias, certain elders, and Tertullus.

##### this man to be a pest

Here "pest" is a metaphor for a person who causes trouble. Alternate translation: "this man to be a trouble maker"

##### all the Jews throughout the world

The word "all" here is probably an exaggeration used to strengthen their accusation against Paul.

##### He is a leader of the Nazarene sect

The phrase "Nazarene sect" is another name for the Christians. Alternate translation: "He also leads the entire group whom people call the followers of the Nazarene"

##### sect

This is a smaller group of people within a larger group group. Tertullus considers the Christians to be a small group within Judaism.

#### Acts 24:6

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 24:7

##### General Information:

Here the word "you" is singular and refers to Governor Felix.

#### Acts 24:8

##### Connecting Statement:

Tertullus finishes presenting the charges against Paul before Governor Felix.

##### to learn about all the things of which we are accusing him

"to learn whether or not these charges that we bring against him are true" or "to learn whether or not he is guilty of the things we accuse him of"

#### Acts 24:9

##### The Jews

This refers to the Jewish leaders who were there at Paul's trial.

#### Acts 24:10

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul responds to Governor Felix about the charges brought against him.

##### the governor motioned

"the governor gestured"

##### a judge to this nation

Here "nation" refers to the people of the Jewish nation. Alternate translation: "a judge for the people of the Jewish nation"

##### explain myself

"explain my situation"

#### Acts 24:11

##### twelve days since

"12 days since"

#### Acts 24:12

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the Jews who were accusing Paul.

##### I did not stir up a crowd

"Stir up" here is a metaphor for agitating people into unrest, just as stirring a liquid agitates it. Alternate translation: "I did not cause a crowd to riot"

#### Acts 24:13

##### the accusations

"the blames for wrongdoings" or "the charges for crimes"

#### Acts 24:14

##### I confess this to you

"I acknowledge this to you"

##### that according to the Way

The phrase "the Way" was a title used for Christianity during Paul's time.

##### a sect

This is a smaller group of people within a larger group. Christianity was originally considered to be a small group within Judaism. See how you translated "sect" in Acts 24:5.

##### the law

Paul is referring to the law of Moses.

#### Acts 24:15

##### I have a hope in God, which these men also have, that there will be a resurrection

Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." Alternate translation: "Just as these men, I trust in God that there will be a resurrection"

##### these men

the Jews who are accusing Paul in court

##### that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked

The abstract noun "resurrection" can be stated with the verb "resurrect." Alternate translation: "that God will resurrect all who have died, both the righteous and the unrighteous"

##### the righteous and the wicked

These nominal adjectives refer to righteous people and wicked people. Alternate translation: "righteous people and wicked people" or "those who have done what is right and those who have done what is evil"

#### Acts 24:16

##### I always strive

"I always work hard" or "I do my best"

##### to have a blameless conscience

Here "conscience" refers to a person's inner morality that chooses between right and wrong. Alternate translation: "to be blameless" or "to always do what is right"

##### before God

"in the presence of God"

#### Acts 24:17

##### Now

This word marks a shift in Paul's argument. Here he explains the situation in Jerusalem when some of the Jews arrested him.

##### after many years

"after many years away from Jerusalem"

##### I came to give alms to my nation and present sacrifices

Here "I came" can be translated as "I went." Alternate translation: "I went to help my people by bringing them money as a gift; I also went to present sacrifices"

#### Acts 24:18

##### in a purification ceremony in the temple

"in the temple after I had finished a ceremony to purify myself"

##### in the temple, not with a crowd or an uproar

This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "in the temple. I had not gathered a crowd nor was I trying to start a riot"

#### Acts 24:19

##### These men

"The Jews from Asia"

##### if they have anything

"if they have anything to say"

#### Acts 24:20

##### these same men

This refers to the members of the council who were present in Jerusalem at Paul's trial.

##### should say what wrong they found in me

"should say the wrong thing I did that they were able to prove"

#### Acts 24:21

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes responding to Governor Felix about the charges brought against him.

##### It is concerning the resurrection of the dead

The abstract noun "resurrection" can be stated as "God brings back to life." Alternate translation: "It is because I believe that God will bring back to life those who have died"

##### I am on trial before you today

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you are judging me today"

#### Acts 24:22

##### General Information:

Felix is the Roman governor of the area who resides at Caesarea. See how you translated this name in [Acts 23:24]

##### the Way

This is a title for Christianity. See how you translated this in Acts 9:2.

##### When Lysias the commander comes down

"when Lysias the commander comes down" or "at the time Lysias the commander comes down"

##### Lysias

This is the name of the chief captain. See how you translated this name in Acts 23:26.

##### comes down from Jerusalem

Jerusalem was higher than Caesarea so it was normal to speak of coming down from Jerusalem.

##### I will decide your case

"I will make a decision concerning these accusations against you" or "I will judge whether you are guilty"

#### Acts 24:23

##### to have some freedom

"to have some freedom not otherwise granted to prisoners"

#### Acts 24:24

##### After some days

"After several days"

##### Drusilla his wife

Drusilla is a woman's name.

#### Acts 24:25

##### Felix became frightened

Felix may have felt conviction of his sins.

##### for now

"for the present time"

#### Acts 24:26

##### he hoped that Paul would give money to him

Here the word "hope" means think that what one desires might happen. Sometimes prisoners gave money to government officials so that the officials would free them from prison early, and Felix hoped that Paul would do that. Alternate translation: "he thought that Paul might give money to him"

##### so he often sent for him and spoke with him

"so Felix often sent for Paul and spoke with Paul"

#### Acts 24:27

##### Porcius Festus

This was the Roman Governor who replaced Felix.

##### wanted to gain favor with the Jews

Here "the Jews" refers to the Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "wanted the Jewish leaders to like him"

##### he left Paul bound

"he left Paul in prison"

## Chapter 25

# Acts 25 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Favor

This word is used in two different ways in this chapter. When the Jewish leaders asked Festus for a favor, they were asking him to do something special for them on that day. They wanted him to do for them something that he would not usually do. When Festus "wanted to gain the favor of the Jews," he wanted them to like him and be willing to obey him in the months and years to come. (See: favor)

#### Roman citizenship

The Romans thought that they needed to treat only Roman citizens justly. They could do as they desired with people who were not Roman citizens, but they had to obey the law with other Romans. Some people were born Roman citizens, and others gave money to the Roman government so they could become Roman citizens. Roman officials could have been punished for treating a Roman citizen the same way they would treat a non-citizen.

## Links:

* [Acts 25:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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”(δεισιδαιμονία/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 25:1

##### General Information:

Festus becomes the governor of Caesarea. See how you translated this name in Acts 24:27.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to be a prisoner in Caesarea.

##### Now

This word marks the beginning of a new event in the story.

##### Festus entered the province

Possible meanings are 1) Festus arrived in the area to begin his rule or 2) Festus simply arrived in the area.

##### he went from Caesarea up to Jerusalem

The phrase "went up" is used here because Jerusalem is higher in elevation than Caesarea.

#### Acts 25:2

##### The chief priests and the prominent Jews brought their charges against Paul

This speaks about accusations as if they were an object that a person could bring to someone else. Alternate translation: "The chief priests and the important Jews accused Paul to Festus"

#### Acts 25:3

##### to summon him to Jerusalem

Some versions translate this as "to have him summoned to Jerusalem." The word "him" refers to Paul. The Jews wanted Festus to have his soldiers take Paul to Jerusalem.

##### for they were preparing an ambush to kill him along the way

They were going to hide along the road and kill Paul as he was passing by, but Festus was not aware of this part of their plan.

#### Acts 25:4

##### Festus answered that Paul was being held in custody at Caesarea, and that he himself was going there soon.

This can be stated as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "But Festus said, 'Paul is being held in custody in Caesarea, and I myself will soon return there.'"

#### Acts 25:5

##### General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to Festus and the Romans traveling with him, but not to his audience.

##### "Therefore, those who can," he said, "should go there with us

The phrase "he said" can be moved to the beginning of the sentence. Alternate translation: "Then he said, 'Therefore, those who are able to go to Caesarea should go there with us"

##### If there is something wrong with the man

"If Paul has done something wrong"

##### you should accuse him

"you should accuse him of violating laws" or "you should bring charges against him"

#### Acts 25:6

##### down to Caesarea

Jerusalem is higher geographically than Caesarea. It was common to speak of coming down from Jerusalem.

##### sat on the judgment seat

Here "judgment seat" refers to Festus' ruling as judge over Paul's trial. Alternate translation: "sat upon the seat where he acted as judge" or "sat down as judge"

##### Paul to be brought to him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "his soldiers bring Paul to him"

#### Acts 25:7

##### When he arrived

"When Paul came and stood before Festus"

##### they brought many serious charges

Charging a person with a crime is spoken of as if it were an object that a person could bring to court. Alternate translation: "they spoke against Paul many serious things"

#### Acts 25:8

##### against the temple

Paul says he did not break any rules about who could enter the Jerusalem temple. Alternate translation: "against the entry rules of the temple"

#### Acts 25:9

##### wanted to gain the favor of the Jews

Here "the Jews" means the Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "wanted to please the Jewish leaders"

##### to go up to Jerusalem

Jerusalem was higher geographically than Caesarea. It was common to speak of going up to Jerusalem.

##### and to be judged by me about these things there

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "where I will judge you with regard to these charges"

#### Acts 25:10

##### I stand before the judgment seat of Caesar where I must be judged

The "judgment seat" refers to Caesar's authority to judge Paul. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I ask to go before Caesar, so he can judge me"

#### Acts 25:11

##### Though if I have done wrong ... I do not refuse to die

Paul does not believe that he has done wrong, but he shows that he will submit to the law and will not refuse to be punished if he really has done wrong.

##### if I have done what is worthy of death

"if I have done some wrong that deserves the death penalty"

##### if their accusations are nothing

"if the charges against me are not true"

##### no one can hand me over to them

Possible meanings are 1) Festus does not have the legal authority to hand Paul over to these false accusers or 2) the governor should not give in to the request of the Jews.

##### I appeal to Caesar

"I ask to go before Caesar so he can judge me"

#### Acts 25:12

##### with the council

This is not the Sanhedrin that is referred to as "council" throughout Acts. This is a political council in the Roman government. Alternate translation: "with his own government advisors"

#### Acts 25:13

##### General Information:

King Agrippa and Bernice are new people in the story. Though he ruled over only a few territories, King Agrippa was the current reigning king in Palestine. Bernice was Agrippa's sister.

##### Now

This word marks the beginning of a new event in the story.

##### to pay an official visit to Festus

"to visit Festus concerning official matters"

#### Acts 25:14

##### After they

"After King Agrippa and Bernice"

##### A certain man was left behind here by Felix as a prisoner

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When Felix left office, he left a man in prison here"

##### Felix

Felix was the Roman governor of the area and resided in Caesarea. See how you translated this name in Acts 23:24.

#### Acts 25:15

##### brought charges against this man to me

This is a metaphor that means to accuse someone in court. Alternate translation: "spoke to me against this man"

##### they asked for a sentence of condemnation against him

The abstract nouns "sentence" and "condemnation" can be expressed as verbs. The phrase "a sentence of condemnation" implies that they were requesting that Paul be executed. Alternate translation: "they asked me to sentence him to death" or "they asked me to condemn him to death"

#### Acts 25:16

##### to hand over anyone

Here "hand over" represents sending someone to people who will punish or kill him. Alternate translation: "let someone punish anyone" or "to condemn anyone to death"

##### before the accused had faced his accusers

Here "faced his accusers" is an idiom that means to meet with the people who accuse him. Alternate translation: "before the person whom others have accused of a crime had met directly with those who accused him"

#### Acts 25:17

##### Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true." Festus has just said that an accused man should be able to face his accusers and make his defense.

##### when they came together here

"when the Jewish leaders came to meet with me here"

##### I sat in the judgment seat

Here "judgment seat" refers to Festus ruling over Paul's trial as judge. Alternate translation: "I sat upon the seat to act as judge" or "I sat down as judge"

##### I ordered the man to be brought in

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I ordered the soldiers to bring Paul before me"

#### Acts 25:18

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 25:19

##### their own religion

Here "religion" means the belief system people have toward life and the supernatural.

#### Acts 25:20

##### to stand trial there about these charges

To "stand trial" is an idiom meaning to speak to a judge so the judge can decide if a person is right or wrong. Alternate translation: "to go to trial about these charges" or "for a judge to decide if these charges against him are true or not"

#### Acts 25:21

##### Connecting Statement:

Festus finishes explaining Paul's case to King Agrippa.

##### But when Paul appealed to be kept in custody while awaiting the decision of the emperor

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But when Paul insisted that he stay under Roman guard until the time when the emperor could decide his case"

##### I ordered him to be held in custody

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I ordered the soldiers to keep him in custody" or "I told the soldiers to guard him"

#### Acts 25:22

##### "Tomorrow," Festus said, "you will hear him."

The phrase "Festus said" can be moved to the beginning of the sentence. Alternate translation: "Festus said, 'I will arrange for you to listen to Paul tomorrow.'"

#### Acts 25:23

##### General Information:

Though he ruled over only a few territories, Agrippa was the current reigning king in Palestine. Bernice was his sister. See how you translated these names in Acts 25:13.

##### with much ceremony

"with a great ceremony to honor them"

##### the hall

This was a large room where people gathered for ceremonies, trials, and other events.

##### Paul was brought to them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the soldiers brought Paul to appear before them"

#### Acts 25:24

##### Connecting Statement:

Festus again gives information about Paul's case to King Agrippa.

##### all the multitude of Jews

The word "all" is an exaggeration used to emphasize that a great number of Jews wanted Paul to die. Alternate translation: "a great number of the Jews" or "many of the Jewish leaders"

##### they shouted to me

"they spoke very strongly to me"

##### he should no longer live

This statement is made in the negative to emphasize the positive equivalent. Alternate translation: "he should die immediately"

#### Acts 25:25

##### because he appealed to the emperor

"because he said that he wanted the emperor to judge him"

##### the emperor

The emperor was the ruler of the Roman empire. He ruled over many countries and provinces.

#### Acts 25:26

##### to write to my lord

Festus used the word "lord" to refer to the emperor. Alternate translation: "to write to the emperor"

##### I have brought him to you, especially to you, King Agrippa

Here the first "you" is plural and refers to all the men to whom Festus is speaking. The second "you" is singular and refers to King Agrippa. Alternate translation: "I have brought Paul to all of you, but especially to you, King Agrippa"

##### so that I might have something more to write

"so that I will have something else to write" or "so that I will know what I should write"

#### Acts 25:27

##### it seems unreasonable for me to send a prisoner and to not also state

The negative words "unreasonable" and "to not ... state" can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "it seems reasonable to me to send a prisoner and to also state"

##### the charges against him

Possible meanings are 1) the accusations that the Jewish leaders have brought against him or 2) the charges under Roman law that apply to Paul's case.

## Chapter 26

# Acts 26 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

This is the third account of Paul's conversion in the book of Acts. Because this is such an important event in the early church, there are three accounts of Paul's conversion. (See: Acts 9 and Acts 22)

Paul told the King Agrippa why he had done what he had done and that the governor should not punish him for that.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: righteous)

## Links:

* [Acts 26:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 (Prophesy) ; 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 26:1

##### Connecting Statement:

Festus has brought Paul before King Agrippa.

##### Agrippa

Agrippa was the current reigning king in Palestine, though he ruled over only a few territories. See how you translated this name in Acts 25:13.

##### stretched out his hand

"held out his hand" or "gestured with his hand"

##### made his defense

The abstract noun "defense" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "began to defend himself against those who were accusing him"

#### Acts 26:2

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul gives his defense to King Agrippa.

##### I consider myself happy

Paul was happy because he considered his appearance before Agrippa to be an opportunity to speak about the gospel.

##### to make my case

This phrase means to describe one's situation, so that those in court can discuss and make a decision about it. Alternate translation: "to defend myself"

##### against all the accusations of the Jews

The abstract noun "accusations" can be stated as the verb "accuse." Alternate translation: "against all the Jews who are accusing me"

##### the Jews

This does not mean all the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

#### Acts 26:3

##### questions

You can make explicit what kinds of questions this means. Alternate translation: "questions about religious matters"

#### Acts 26:4

##### all the Jews

This is a generalization. Possible meanings are 1) Jews in general who knew about Paul. Alternate translation: "the Jews" or 2) Pharisees who knew Paul. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

##### in my own nation

Possible meanings are 1) among his own people, not necessarily in the geographical land of Israel or 2) in the land of Israel.

#### Acts 26:5

##### the strictest party of our religion

"a group within Judaism that lives by very strict rules"

#### Acts 26:6

##### Now

This word marks a shift from Paul discussing his past to talking about himself in the present.

##### I stand here to be judged

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am here, where they are putting me on trial"

##### because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers

Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "trust" or "confidently wait." Alternate translation: "because I trust in the promise made by God to our fathers

##### because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers

Hope in a promise is the expectation that the promise will be fulfilled. Alternate translation "because of my hope that God will do what he promised our forefathers he would do" or "because I confidently wait for God to do what he promised our forefather he would do"

#### Acts 26:7

##### this promise that our twelve tribes hope to receive

This speaks about a promise being fulfilled as if it were an object that is received. Alternate translation: "the promise that our twelve tribes confidently wait for God to fulfill"

##### our twelve tribes

The phrase "our twelve tribes" stands for the people in those tribes. Alternate translation: "our fellow Jews in the twelve tribes"

##### worship God earnestly night and day

The extremes "night" and "day" are used together to mean consistently mean Alternate translation: "continually worship God earnestly"

##### king

Paul is addressing King Agrippa by his title, not by his name. Your language may require that you add another word or part of a word, as in older English "O King," or that you add the king's name, as in "King Agrippa," or that you use another expression such as "Your Majesty."

##### that the Jews

This does not mean all the Jews. Alternate translation: "that the leaders of the Jews"

#### Acts 26:8

##### General Information:

Here "you" is plural and refers to the people who were listening to Paul.

##### Why should any of you judge it to be incredible that God raises the dead?

Paul uses a question to challenge the Jews there. They believe that God can raise the dead, but they do not believe that God brought Jesus back to life. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not judge it to be unbelievable that God raises the dead" Or "You should not say that it is impossible to believe that God raises the dead."

##### raises the dead

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "makes dead people come alive again"

#### Acts 26:9

##### Now indeed

Paul uses this phrase to mark another shift in his defense. He is now beginning to describe how he formerly persecuted Jesus's people.

##### against the name of Jesus

The word "name" here stands for the teaching about the person. Alternate translation: "to stop people from teaching about Jesus"

#### Acts 26:10

##### when they were killed, I cast my vote against them

The phrase "were killed" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I voted in agreement with the other Jewish leaders to condemn believers to die"

#### Acts 26:11

##### I punished them many times

Possible meanings are 1) Paul punished some believers many times or 2) Paul punished many different believers.

#### Acts 26:12

##### Connecting Statement:

While talking to King Agrippa, Paul tells about when the Lord spoke with him.

##### While I was doing this

Paul uses this phrase to mark another shift in his defense. He is now telling about when he saw Jesus and became his disciple.

##### While

This word is used to mark two events that are happening at the same time. In this case, Paul went to Damascus during the time when he persecuted Christians.

##### with authority and orders

Paul had letters from the Jewish leaders granting him authority to persecute the Jewish believers.

#### Acts 26:13

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 26:14

##### I heard a voice speaking to me that said

Here "voice" stands for the person speaking. Alternate translation: "I heard someone speaking to me who said"

##### Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?

This is a rhetorical question. The speaker is alerting Saul to what Saul is doing to him, and implying that Saul should not do that. Alternate translation: "Saul, Saul, you are persecuting me." or "Saul, Saul, stop persecuting me."

##### It is hard for you to kick a goad

For Paul to resist Jesus and to persecute believers is spoken of as if he were an ox kicking at the sharp stick that a person uses to prod

#### Acts 26:15

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving his defense to King Agrippa, quoting his conversation with the Lord.

#### Acts 26:16

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving his defense to King Agrippa, quoting his conversation with the Lord.

#### Acts 26:17

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving his defense to King Agrippa, quoting his conversation with the Lord.

#### Acts 26:18

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving his defense to King Agrippa, quoting his conversation with the Lord.

##### to open their eyes

Paul helping people to understand the truth is spoken of as if he were helping them to open their physical eyes. Alternate translation: "to make them able to understand the truth"

##### to turn them from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God

Paul convincing people to stop obeying Satan and doing evil things and to start obeying God and doing good things is spoken of as if Paul were taking them out of a dark place where Satan controlled them and into a place where there was light and God controlled them. Alternate translation: "to help them stop doing what is evil, stop obeying Satan, and start trusting and obeying God"

##### they may receive from God the forgiveness of sins

The abstract noun "forgiveness" can be stated as the verb "forgive." Alternate translation: "God may forgive their sins and they may receive"

##### the inheritance that I give

The abstract noun "inheritance" may be stated as the verb "inherit." Alternate translation: "they may inherit that which I give"

##### the inheritance

The blessings that Jesus gives to those who believe in him are spoken of as if they were an inheritance that children receive from their father.

##### sanctified by faith in me

Jesus choosing some people to belong to him is spoken of as if he literally set them apart from other people.

##### by faith in me

"because they believe in me." Here Paul finishes quoting the Lord.

#### Acts 26:19

##### Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true." Paul had just explained what the Lord had commanded him in his vision.

##### I did not disobey

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "I obeyed"

##### the heavenly vision

This refers to what the person in the vision told Paul. Alternate translation: "what the person from heaven told me in the vision"

#### Acts 26:20

##### turn to God

To start trusting God is spoken of as if a person turns to start walking toward God. Alternate translation: "trust in God"

##### doing deeds worthy of repentance

The abstract noun "repentance" can be stated as the verb "repented." Alternate translation: "and start doing good deeds to show they truly have repented"

#### Acts 26:21

##### the Jews

This does not mean all of the Jews. Alternate translation: "some Jews"

#### Acts 26:22

##### to both small and great about nothing

Here "small" and "great" refer to people who are unimportant and important, respectively, and are used together to mean "all people." Alternate translation: "to all people, whether unimportant or important, about nothing"

##### about nothing more than what

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "about the exact thing that"

##### what the prophets

Paul is referring to the collective writings of the Old Testament prophets.

#### Acts 26:23

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes giving his defense to King Agrippa.

##### that Christ must suffer

You can make explicit that Christ must also die. Alternate translation: "that Christ must suffer and die"

##### from the dead

The phrase "the dead" refers to the spirits of people who have died. To rise from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

##### he would proclaim light

"he would proclaim the message about the light." To tell people about how God saves people is spoken of as if a person were speaking about the light. Alternate translation: "he would proclaim the message about how God saves people"

#### Acts 26:24

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul and King Agrippa continue to talk together.

##### you are insane

"you are speaking nonsense" or "you are crazy"

##### your great learning makes you insane

"you have learned so much that you are now crazy"

#### Acts 26:25

##### I am not insane ... but

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "I am sane ... and" or "I am able to think well ... and"

##### most excellent Festus

"Festus, who deserves highest honors"

#### Acts 26:26

##### For the king ... to him ... from him

Paul is still speaking to King Agrippa, but he is referring to him in the third person. Alternate translation: "For you ... to you ... from you"

##### I am persuaded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am sure"

##### that none of this is hidden from him

This can be stated in active and positive form. Alternate translation: "that he is aware of this" or "that you are aware of this"

##### has not been done in a corner

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "has not happened in a corner"

##### in a corner

This means doing something in secret as if a person went and did something in the corner of a room where no one can see him. Alternate translation: "in a dark place" or "in secret"

#### Acts 26:27

##### Do you believe the prophets, King Agrippa?

Paul asks this question to remind Agrippa that Agrippa already believes what the prophets said about Jesus. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "You already believe what the Jewish prophets said, King Agrippa."

#### Acts 26:28

##### In a short time would you persuade me and make me a Christian?

Agrippa asks this question to show Paul that he cannot convince Agrippa so easily without more proof. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "Surely you do not think you can convince me so easily to believe in Jesus!"

#### Acts 26:29

##### but without these prison chains

Here "prison chains" stands for being a prisoner. Alternate translation: "but, of course, I do not want you to be a prisoner, as I am"

#### Acts 26:30

##### General Information:

Bernice was the sister of King Agrippa (Acts 25:13).

##### Connecting Statement:

This ends Paul's time before King Agrippa.

##### Then the king stood up, and the governor

"Then King Agrippa stood up, and Governor Festus"

#### Acts 26:31

##### the hall

This was a large room for ceremonies, trials, and other events.

##### This man does nothing worthy of death or of bonds

The abstract noun "death" can be stated as the verb "die." Here "bonds" stands for being in prison. Alternate translation: "This man does not deserve to die or to be in prison"

#### Acts 26:32

##### This man could have been freed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This man could have gone free" or "I could have freed this man"

## Chapter 27

# Acts 27 General Notes

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### Sailing

People who lived near the sea traveled by boat powered by the wind. During some months of the year, the wind would blow in the wrong direction or so hard that sailing was impossible.

#### Trust

Paul trusted God to bring him safely to land. He told the sailers and soldiers to trust that God would also keep them alive. (See: trust)

#### Paul breaks bread

Luke uses almost the same words here to describe Paul taking bread, thanking God, breaking it, and eating it that he used to describe the last supper Jesus ate with his disciples. However, your translation should not make your reader think that Paul was leading a religious celebration here.

## Links:

* [Acts 27:1 Notes](./01.md)

**<< | >>**

### 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 27:1

##### General Information:

Adramyttium was a city possibly located on the west coast of modern-day Turkey. The word "we" includes the author of Acts, Paul, and the others traveling with Paul, but not the reader.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul, as a prisoner, begins his journey to Rome.

##### When it was decided

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When the king and the governor decided"

##### sail for Italy

Italy is the name of the province Rome was in. See how you translated "Italy" in Acts 18:2.

##### they committed Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Augustan company of soldiers.

"they put a centurion named Julius, of the Imperial Regiment, in charge of Paul and some other prisoners"

##### they committed

Possible meanings are that 1) "they" refers to the governor and the king or 2) "they" refers to other Roman officials.

##### a centurion named Julius

Julius is a man's name.

##### the Augustan company of soldiers

Some versions translate the word Augustan as "Imperial" or "emperor's."

##### company of soldiers

This was a group of about 1,00 soldiers. See how you translated this in Acts 21:31.

#### Acts 27:2

##### We boarded a ship from Adramyttium which was about to sail along the coast of Asia

If your language requires a person to act here, you can add human actors: "We boarded a ship that people had brought from Adramyttium; they were about to sail it along."

##### a ship from Adramyttium

Possible meanings are 1) a ship that had come from Adramyttium or 2) a ship that was registered or licensed in Adramyttium.

##### about to sail

"soon going to sail" or "would depart soon"

##### went to sea

"began our journey on the sea"

##### Aristarchus

Aristarchus came from Macedonia but had been working with Paul in Ephesus. See how you translated his name in Acts 19:29.

#### Acts 27:3

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to the writer, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

##### Julius treated Paul kindly

"Julius treated Paul with a friendly concern." See how you translated "Julius" in Acts 27:1.

##### go to his friends to receive their care

The abstract noun "care" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "go to his friends so they could care for him" or "go to his friends so they could help him with whatever he needed"

#### Acts 27:4

##### we went to sea and sailed

"we started sailing and went"

##### sailed under the lee of Cyprus, close to the island

"the lee of Cyprus" is the side of that island that blocks the strong wind, so sailing vessels are not forced off their course.

#### Acts 27:5

##### Pamphylia

This was a province in Asia Minor. See how you translated this in Acts 2:10.

##### we landed at Myra, a city of Lycia

You can make explicit that they got off of the ship in Myra. Alternate translation: "came to Myra, a city of Lycia, where we got off the ship"

##### a city of Lycia

Lycia was a Roman province, located on the southwestern coast of modern-day Turkey.

#### Acts 27:6

##### found a ship from Alexandria that was going to sail to Italy

It is implied that a crew would sail the ship to Italy. Alternate translation: "found a ship that a crew had sailed from Alexandria and was about to sail to Italy"

##### Alexandria

This is the name of a city.

#### Acts 27:7

##### When we had sailed slowly ... finally arrived with difficulty

You can make explicit that the reason they were sailing slowly and with difficulty was because the wind was blowing against them.

##### near Cnidus

This is an ancient settlement located in modern-day Turkey.

##### the wind no longer allowed us to go that way

"we could no longer go that way because of the strong wind"

##### we sailed along the sheltered side of Crete

"we sailed along the side of Crete where there was less wind"

##### opposite Salmone

This is a coastal city in Crete.

#### Acts 27:8

##### We sailed along the coast with difficulty

You can make explicit that even though the winds were not as strong as before, they were still strong enough to make sailing difficult.

##### Fair Havens

This was a port near Lasea, located on the south coast of Crete.

##### near the city of Lasea

This is a coastal city in Crete.

#### Acts 27:9

##### We had now taken much time

Because of the direction the wind was blowing, the journey from Caesarea to Fair Havens had taken more time than planned.

##### We had now taken

The writer includes himself, Paul, and those who were traveling with them, but not the reader.

##### the time of the Jewish fast also had passed, and it had now become dangerous to sail

This fast took place on the Day of Atonement, which was usually either in the last part of September or the first part of October according to Western calendars. After this time, there was a higher risk of seasonal storms.

#### Acts 27:10

##### I see that the voyage we are about to take will be with injury and much loss

"if we travel now, we will suffer much injury and loss"

##### with injury

If your language has a word for "injury" that results from wrongdoing, you may want to use it here.

##### we are about to take ... our lives

Paul includes himself and his hearers, so this is inclusive.

##### loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives

Here "loss" means destruction when referring to things and death when referring to people.

##### not only of the cargo and the ship

Cargo is something that a person transports from one place to another by boat. Alternate translation: "not only the ship and the goods on the ship"

#### Acts 27:11

##### that were spoken by Paul

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that Paul said"

#### Acts 27:12

##### harbor was not easy to spend the winter in

You can make explicit why it was not easy to stay in the harbor. Alternate translation: "harbor did not sufficiently protect docked ships during winter storms"

##### harbor

a place near land that is usually safe for ships

##### city of Phoenix

Phoenix was a port city on the south coast of Crete.

##### to spend the winter there

This speaks about the season of winter as if it were a commodity that someone can spend. Alternate translation: "to stay there for the cold season"

##### facing both southwest and northwest

Here "faces northwest and southwest" means the opening of the harbor was toward those directions. Alternate translation: "it opened to the northwest and southwest"

##### southwest and northwest

These directions are based on what one sees as one faces the setting sun. Northwest is a little to the right of the setting sun, and southwest is a little to the left of the setting sun.

#### Acts 27:13

##### weighed anchor

Here "weighed" means "pulled out of the water." An anchor is a heavy object attached to a rope that is secured to the boat. The anchor is tossed into the water and sinks to the bottom of the sea to keep the ship from drifting about.

#### Acts 27:14

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul and those traveling on the boat encounter a fierce storm.

##### after a short time

"after a little while"

##### a wind of hurricane force

"a very strong, dangerous wind"

##### called the northeaster

"called 'a strong wind from the northeast.'" The word for "the northeaster" in the original language is "Euroclydon." You can transliterate this word for your language.

##### began to beat down from the island

"came in from the island of Crete, and it blew strongly against our ship"

#### Acts 27:15

##### When the ship was caught by the storm and could no longer head into the wind

"When the wind blew so strongly against the front of the ship that we could not sail against it"

##### we had to give way to the storm and were driven along by the wind

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we stopped trying to sail forward, and we let the wind push us whichever way it blew"

#### Acts 27:16

##### We sailed along the lee of a small island

"We sailed on the side of the island where the wind was not so strong"

##### a small island called Cauda

This island was located on the south coast of Crete.

##### lifeboat

This was a smaller boat towed behind or secured onto a ship, used to take people and goods across water too shallow for the ship and also to escape from the ship if it sank. At this point the lifeboat was in the water being towed by the ship.

#### Acts 27:17

##### they had hoisted the lifeboat up

"they had lifted up the lifeboat" or "they had pulled the lifeboat aboard the ship"

##### they used its ropes to bind the hull of the ship

The "hull" is the body of the ship. They tied ropes around it so that the ship would not come apart during the storm.

##### sandbars of Syrtis

Sandbars are very shallow areas in the sea where ships can get stuck in the sand. Syrtis is located on the coast of Libya, northern Africa.

##### they lowered the sea anchor

A sea anchor is something that is towed in the water behind a ship to slow the ship down and make it more stable. It may be a large cloth or a stiff board. Alternate translation: "they let the floating anchor down into the water"

##### were driven along

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "had to go in whatever direction the wind blew us"

#### Acts 27:18

##### We took such a violent battering by the storm

"The wind blew us so roughly back and forth that all of us were badly battered and bruised by the storm"

##### they began throwing the cargo overboard

The word "they" refers to the sailors. This is done to lighten the weight of the ship in an effort to prevent the ship from sinking.

##### cargo

Cargo is something that a person transports from one place to another by boat. See how you translated this in Acts 27:10. Alternate translation: "goods on the ship"

#### Acts 27:19

##### the sailors threw overboard the ship's equipment with their own hands

Here "equipment" refers to the sailors' equipment needed to sail the ship: tackle, hoists, beams of wood, block and tackle, ropes, lines, sails, and the like. This indicates how desperate the situation was.

#### Acts 27:20

##### When the sun and stars did not shine on us for many days

They could not see the sun and stars because of the dark storm clouds. Sailors needed to see the sun and stars in order to know where they were and what direction they were headed.

##### the great storm still beat upon us

"the terrible storm still blew us roughly back and forth"

##### any more hope that we should be saved was abandoned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "everyone abandoned hope that we would be saved"

##### any more hope that we should be saved was abandoned

Here the word "hope" is a person's thought that what he desires might happen. Here the men on the boat had no reason to believe that they would be rescued, so they quit hoping. Alternate translation: "we quit thinking that we might be saved"

##### be saved

"be rescued." Since there is no mention of the people praying for God to save them, this might simply have the sense of "survive."

#### Acts 27:21

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul speaks to the sailors on the ship.

##### When they had gone long without food

Here "they" refers to the sailors. It is implied that Luke, Paul, and those with them had not eaten either. Alternate translation: "When we had gone a long time without food"

##### among the sailors

"among the men"

##### so as to get this injury and loss

"and as a result suffer this harm and loss"

#### Acts 27:22

##### there will be no loss of life among you, but only the loss of the ship

Paul is speaking to the sailors. It is implied that Paul also means that he and those with him will not die either. Alternate translation: "none of us will die: the storm will destroy only the ship"

#### Acts 27:23

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 27:24

##### You must stand before Caesar

The phrase "stand before Caesar" refers to Paul's going to court and letting Caesar judge him. Alternate translation: "You must stand before Caesar so he can judge you"

##### has given to you all those who are sailing with you

"has decided to allow all those who are sailing with you to live"

#### Acts 27:25

##### just as it was told to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "just as the angel told me"

#### Acts 27:26

##### we must run aground upon some island

"we must steer our boat so that it wrecks on some island"

#### Acts 27:27

##### Connecting Statement:

The fierce storm continues.

##### When the fourteenth night had come

The ordinal number "fourteenth" can be translated as "fourteen" or "14." Alternate translation: "After 14 days since the storm started, that night"

##### as we were driven this way and that

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as the wind blew us back and forth"

##### the Adriatic Sea

This is the sea between Italy and Greece.

#### Acts 27:28

##### They took soundings

"They measured the depth of the sea water." They measured the depth of water by dropping a line with a weight tied to the end of it into the water.

##### found twenty fathoms

"found 20 fathoms." A "fathom" is a unit of measurement for measuring the depth of water. One fathom is about two meters. Alternate translation: "found 40 meters"

##### found fifteen fathoms

"found 15 fathoms." A "fathom" is a unit of measurement for measuring the depth of water. One fathom is about two meters. Alternate translation: "found 30 meters"

#### Acts 27:29

##### anchors

An anchor is a heavy object attached to a rope that is secured to the boat. The anchor is tossed into the water and sinks to the bottom of the sea, keeping the ship from drifting about. See how you translated this in Acts 27:13.

##### from the stern

"from the back of the ship"

#### Acts 27:30

##### the lifeboat

This was a smaller boat towed behind or secured onto a ship, used to take people and goods across water too shallow for the ship and also to escape from the ship if it sank. See how you translated this in Acts 27:16.

##### from the bow

"from the front of the ship"

#### Acts 27:31

##### General Information:

Here the word "you" is plural and refers to the centurion and the Roman soldiers.

##### Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved

Paul meant that if those men left the ship, then no one on the ship would be saved. This can be stated positively, and the passive phrase "be saved" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "You can be saved only if these men stay in the ship" or "Only if these men stay in the ship will you survive"

#### Acts 27:32

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 27:33

##### When daylight was coming on

"When it was almost sunrise"

##### This day is the fourteenth day that

The ordinal number "fourteenth" can be stated as "fourteen." Alternate translation: "For 14 days"

#### Acts 27:34

##### not one of you will lose a single hair from his head

This was a customary way of saying no harm would come upon them. Alternate translation: "every one of you will survive this disaster unharmed"

#### Acts 27:35

##### broke the bread

"tore the bread" or "tore off a piece from the loaf of bread"

#### Acts 27:36

##### Then they were all encouraged

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This encouraged all of them"

#### Acts 27:37

##### We were 276 souls on the ship

"There were two hundred and seventy-six of us in the ship." This is background information.

##### souls

This is a metonym for the people themselves. Alternate translation: "people"

#### Acts 27:38

##### General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

#### Acts 27:39

##### bay

a large area of water partly surrounded by land

##### did not recognize the land

"saw land but could not recognize it as any place they knew"

#### Acts 27:40

##### cut loose the anchors and left them

"cut the ropes and left the anchors behind"

##### rudders

large oars or pieces of wood at the back of the ship used for steering

##### the foresail

"the sail at the front of the ship." The sail was a large piece of cloth that caught the wind to move the ship.

##### they headed to the beach

"they steered the ship toward the beach"

#### Acts 27:41

##### a sandbar

an underwater pile of sand that made the water suddenly shallow

##### The bow

the front end of the ship

##### the stern

"the back end of the ship"

#### Acts 27:42

##### The soldiers' plan was

"The soldiers were planning"

#### Acts 27:43

##### so he stopped their plan

"so he stopped them from doing what they planned to do"

##### jump overboard

"jump off the ship into the water"

#### Acts 27:44

##### some on planks

"some on wooden boards"

## Chapter 28

# Acts 28 General Notes

### Structure and formatting

No one knows for sure why Luke ends his history without telling what happened to Paul after he had been in Rome for two years.

### Special concepts in this chapter

#### "Letters" and "brothers"

The Jewish leaders were surprised that Paul wanted to speak with them, because they had received no letters from the high priest in Jerusalem telling them that Paul was coming.

When the Jewish leaders spoke of "brothers," they were referring to fellow Jews, not to Christians.

### Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

#### "He was a god"

The native people believed that Paul was a god, but they did not believe that he was the one true God. We do not know why Paul did not tell the native people that he was not a god.

## Links:

* [Acts 28:1 Notes](./01.md)

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### 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.

#### Acts 28:1

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Paul, the writer, and those who traveled with them, but not to the reader.

##### Connecting Statement:

After the shipwreck, people on the island of Malta helped Paul and everyone on the ship. They stay there for 3 months.

##### When we were brought safely through

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When we arrived safely"

##### we learned

Paul and Luke learned the name of the island. Alternate translation: "we learned from the people" or "we found out from the residents"

##### the island was called Malta

Malta is an island located south of the modern-day island of Sicily.

#### Acts 28:2

##### The native people

"The local people"

##### offered to us not just ordinary kindness

Being kind to someone is spoken of as if it were an object that someone offers. Alternate translation: "were not only very kind to us"

##### not just ordinary kindness

This phrase is used to emphasize the opposite of what is said. Alternate translation: "a great deal of kindness"

##### they lit a fire

"they put together twigs and branches and burned them"

##### welcomed us all

Possible meanings are 1) "welcomed all of the people from the ship" or 2) "welcomed Paul and all his companions."

#### Acts 28:3

##### a viper came out

"a poisonous snake came out of the bundle of sticks"

##### fastened onto his hand

"bit Paul's hand and did not let go"

#### Acts 28:4

##### This man certainly is a murderer

"For sure, this man is a murderer" or "This man is truly a murderer"

##### Justice

"Justice" was the name of a goddess that the people on the island worshiped. Alternate translation: "the goddess called Justice"

#### Acts 28:5

##### shook the animal into the fire

"shook his hand so that the snake fell from his hand into the fire"

##### suffered no harm

"Paul was not hurt at all"

#### Acts 28:6

##### waiting for him to swell up

They they that his body would swell because of the snake venom.

##### nothing was wrong with him

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "everything about him was as it should be"

##### they changed their minds

To think differently about a situation is spoken of as if a person is changing his mind. Alternate translation: "they thought again"

##### said that he was a god.

Perhaps the people believed that someone who lived after a poisonous snake bite was divine or a god. This can be stated as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "said, 'This man must be a god.'"

#### Acts 28:7

##### General Information:

Here the words "us" and we" refer to Paul, Luke, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

##### Now in a nearby place

"Now" is used to introduce a new person or event in the account.

##### chief man of the island

Possible meanings are 1) the main leader of the people or 2) someone who was the most important person on the island, perhaps because of his wealth.

#### Acts 28:8

##### It happened that the father of Publius ... fever and dysentery

This is background information about Publius' father that is important to understanding the story.

##### was lying afflicted

"was in bed, ill"

##### afflicted with a fever and dysentery

Dysentery is an infectious disease of the intestines.

##### placed his hands on him

"touched him with his hands"

#### Acts 28:9

##### were healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he healed them too"

#### Acts 28:10

##### honored us with many honors

Probably they honored Paul and those with him by giving them gifts.

#### Acts 28:11

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul's journey to Rome continues.

##### that had spent the winter at the island

"that the crew left at the island for the cold season"

##### a ship of Alexandria

Possible meanings are this refers to 1) a ship that came from Alexandria, or 2) a ship that was registered or licensed in Alexandria.

##### the twin gods

On the bow of the ship, there was a carving of the two idols called "the twin gods." Their names were Castor and Pollux.

#### Acts 28:12

##### city of Syracuse

Syracuse is a city on the southeast coast of the modern-day island of Sicily, just southwest of Italy.

#### Acts 28:13

##### city of Rhegium

This is the port city located at the southwestern tip of Italy.

##### a south wind sprang up

"the wind began to blow from the south"

##### city of Puteoli

Puteoli is located in modern-day Naples on the west coast of Italy.

#### Acts 28:14

##### There we found

"There we met"

##### brothers

These were followers of Jesus, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "fellow believers"

##### were invited

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they invited us"

##### In this way we came to Rome

Once Paul reached Puteoli, the rest of the journey to Rome was on land. Alternate translation: "And after we stayed seven days with them, we went to Rome"

#### Acts 28:15

##### General Information:

The Market of Appius was a popular market village about 60 kilometers south of the city of Rome on a road called the Appian Way. The Three Taverns was another village about 50 kilometers south of Rome.

##### after they heard about us

"after they heard we were coming"

##### he thanked God and took courage

Courage is spoken of as if it were an object that a person could take. Alternate translation: "this encouraged him, and he thanked God"

#### Acts 28:16

##### General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to the writer, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul arrives in Rome as a prisoner but with the freedom to stay in his own place. He calls the local Jews together to explain what has happened to him.

##### When we entered Rome, Paul was allowed to

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "After we had arrived in Rome, the Roman authorities gave Paul permission to"

#### Acts 28:17

##### Then it came about that

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

##### the leaders among the Jews

These are the Jewish civil or religious leaders present in Rome.

##### Brothers

Here this means "Fellow Jews."

##### against the people

"against our people" or "against the Jews"

##### I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "some of the Jews arrested me in Jerusalem and placed me in the custody of the Roman authorities"

##### into the hands of the Romans

Here "hands" stands for power or control.

#### Acts 28:18

##### there was no reason for the death penalty in my case

"there was no reason for them to execute me" or "I had done nothing to cause them to kill me"

#### Acts 28:19

##### the Jews

This does not mean all of the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

##### spoke against their desire

"complained about what the Roman authorities wanted to do"

##### I was forced to appeal to Caesar

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I had to ask for Caesar to judge me"

##### although it is not as if I were bringing any accusation against my nation

The abstract noun "accusation" can be stated as the verb "accuse." Here "nation" stands for the people. Alternate translation: "but it was not because I wanted to accuse the people of my nation before Caesar"

#### Acts 28:20

##### the hope of Israel

Here the word "hope" is what a person desires to happen and is confident will happen. In this case it is what the people of Israel hope for. Alternate translation: "what Israel joyfully waits for" or "what the people of Israel confidently expect"

##### the hope of Israel

Paul did not state clearly what Israel hoped for. He may have been referring 1) to their hope that the Messiah would come or 2) to their hope that God would cause those who have died to live again.

##### Israel

Here "Israel" stands for the people. Alternate translation: "the people of Israel" or "the Jews"

##### that I am now wearing this chain

Here "wearing this chain" stands for being a prisoner. Alternate translation: "that I am a prisoner"

#### Acts 28:21

##### General Information:

Here the word "We" refers to the Jewish leaders in Rome.

##### Connecting Statement:

The Jewish leaders respond to Paul.

##### nor did any of the brothers

Here "brothers" stands for fellow Jews. Alternate translation: "nor did any of our fellow Jews"

#### Acts 28:22

##### General Information:

Here the words "we" and "us" refer to the Jewish leaders in Rome.

##### you think about this sect

A sect is a smaller group within a larger group. Here it refers to those who believe in Jesus. Alternate translation: "you think about this group to which you belong"

##### because it is known by us

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because we know"

##### it is spoken against everywhere

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "many Jews all over the Roman Empire are saying bad things about it"

#### Acts 28:23

##### General Information:

Here all instances of "they" and "them" refer to the Jewish leaders in Rome. All instances of "him," "his," and "He" refer to Paul (Acts 28:17).

##### had appointed a day for him

"had chosen a time for him to speak to them"

##### testified about the kingdom of God

Here "kingdom of God" stands for God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "told them about God's rule as king" or "told them how God would show himself as king"

##### from the prophets

Here "the prophets" refers to what they wrote. Alternate translation: "from what the prophets wrote"

#### Acts 28:24

##### Some were convinced about the things which were said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Paul was able to convince some of them"

#### Acts 28:25

##### General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the Jewish leaders in Rome (Acts 28:17). The word "your" refers to the people to whom Paul had been speaking.

##### Connecting Statement:

As the Jewish leaders were ready to leave, Paul quoted the Old Testament scriptures that were appropriate for this time.

##### after Paul had spoken this one word

Here "word" stands for a message or statement. Alternate translation: "after Paul had said one more thing" or "after Paul had made this statement"

##### The Holy Spirit spoke well through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers.

This sentence contains quotations within quotations.

#### Acts 28:26

##### General Information:

Paul begins to quote the book that the prophet Isaiah wrote.

##### He said, 'Go to this people and say, "Hearing you will hear, but you will never understand; seeing, you will see, but you will never know.

This is the end of the sentence that begins with the words "The Holy Spirit spoke" in verse 25 and that contains quotations within quotations. You can translate one of the inner quotations as an indirect quotation, or you can translate two of the inner quotations as indirect quotations. Alternate translation: "The Spirit told Isaiah to go tell them that they will hear but will not understand and they will see but they will not know"

##### Hearing you will hear ... seeing, you will see

The words "hear" and "see" are repeated for emphasis. "You will listen carefully ... you will look intently"

##### but you will never understand ... but you will never know

Both of these phrases mean basically the same thing. They emphasize that the Jewish people will not understand God's plan.

#### Acts 28:27

##### General Information:

Translate Paul's quotation of Isaiah as a direct quotation or an indirect quotation according to how you translated it in [Acts 28:25-26](./25.md).

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes quoting Isaiah the prophet.

##### For the heart of this people has become dull

People who stubbornly refuse to understand what God is saying or doing are spoken of as if their heart is dull. Here "heart" is a metonym for the mind.

##### with their ears they hardly hear, and they have shut their eyes

People who stubbornly refuse to understand what God is saying or doing are spoken of as if they are unable to hear and are shutting their eyes so that they will not see.

##### understand with their heart

Here "heart" stands for the mind.

##### turn again

To start obeying God is spoken of as though the person were physically turning toward God.

##### I would heal them

This does not mean God would only heal them physically. He would also heal them spiritually by forgiving their sins.

#### Acts 28:28

##### Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes speaking to the Jewish leaders in Rome.

##### this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles

God's message about how he saves people is spoken of as if it were an object that is sent. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God is sending his messengers to the Gentiles to tell them about how he will save them"

##### they will listen

"some of them will listen." This response of the Gentiles is in contrast to the way the Jews of that time responded.

#### Acts 28:29

##### General Information:

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#### Acts 28:30

##### General Information:

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#### Acts 28:31

##### Connecting Statement:

Luke ends the story of Paul in the book of Acts.

##### He was proclaiming the kingdom of God

Here "kingdom of God" refers to God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "He was preaching about God's rule as king" or "He was preaching about how God will show himself as king"