

Acts of Apostle

Chapter 1

1-O Theophilus it was I who made the first¹ report² concerning all the things, which Jesus began both to do and to teach.

2- Until the day He was taken up³, having given commandments by⁴ the Holy Spirit to the apostles⁵ whom He had chosen.

¹ The Greek adjective 'protos' (first, chief), sometimes is used in the same sense as 'proteros,' 'former'; (Acts 7:12; 12:10; Matthew 21:28; John 1:15; Revelation 20:5; 21:1). In keeping with a desire to translate as accurately as possible the choice was made to maintain the primary meaning of 'protos'.

² The first report or former treatise that is referred to here is the Gospel of Luke, Luke 1:3. Luke begins with the birth of Jesus and ends with His ascension into heaven. Luke wrote of His miracles of His obedience, His compliance to the ceremonial law, His submission to baptism, His baptism in the Holy Spirit, His holy life and of His conformity to the law, His sufferings and death whereby he purchased all mankind's complete redemption from sin and brought in everlasting righteousness. Jesus Christ the humble Servant and Lamb of God who shunned popularity (Matthew 16:20; 17:9) and only desired to reveal the Father will now be hidden as it were in the lives of His disciples. The book of Acts establishes the proof of the power of the Holy Spirit producing the works of Christ Jesus in the life of the believer. The works that His disciples began to do are the same ones that Luke had observed and reported of Jesus Christ Himself. There is little doubt that one of Luke's chief aims was to prove that Jesus was still at work. The book of Acts provides the proof that those who believe on Jesus would function with the same power and authority that He had (John 14:12). The book of Acts demonstrates that the ministry of Jesus had not ended. Herein are the proofs that the Holy Spirit was sent and that His glory was poured out upon men along with all of His gifts and power. These are the things, which Jesus began to do and to teach and Luke establishes that they had not ended with His ascension but were still on going in the lives of His servants.

³ The verb 'anelemphte,' 'taken up' is the same verb used of Elijah being taken up into heaven in the Septuagint (2 Kings 2:11). This ascension took place 40 days after the resurrection of Jesus. It may be that Jesus remained on the earth for this period of time before going up into heaven (Luke 24:50-53). However, Jesus said to Mary immediately after the resurrection, "Touch me not, for I am not ascended to my Father" (John 20:17). Yet a week later he invited Thomas to touch his hands and his side (John 20:27). This may be understood by considering that Jesus was instructing Mary not to prevent or delaying Him from things that He needed to do before ascending to the Father thus insuring her that He would not remain on the earth but would soon depart unto the Father.

⁴ Those things, which Jesus did He did through complete submission to the Holy Spirit who empowered Him with the divine ability to do the works. Everything that Jesus did and said He attributed to the Father who was doing the work. Jesus came not to do His own will but the will of the Father who had sent Him. He never said anything unless He heard the Father say it. The Father showed Him what works He was suppose to do and He did them in total submission and obedience. The commands that Jesus gave to the disciples hinged upon their being empowered with the same divine power that He had received (Acts 10:38). His commandments to them demanded that they have the same obedience and submission that He had. Before Jesus began His ministry it was necessary for Him to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. It was therefore essential that those who would represent Him be endowed with the same power. The commandments that Jesus gave to His apostles focused on their responsibility to represent Him and to advance the Kingdom of God after His departure. He said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that does not believe shall be damned. And, "these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." (Mark 16:15-18). "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. You shall go therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them

3- To whom also he presented himself alive by many convincing proofs, after He had suffered, being seen by them for forty days⁶ and speaking concerning the Kingdom of God⁷.

4- And after being assembled with them He order them not to depart from Jerusalem but to wait for the promise of the Father⁸ which you heard from me.

5- For John indeed baptized with water but you shall be baptized⁹ with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.

6- So therefore having come together they asked Him saying, "Lord will you at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?"

7- But He said to them it is not for you to know the times and seasons, which the Father has placed in His own authority.

8- But you will receive power¹⁰ when the Holy Spirit comes upon¹¹ you and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea¹² and Samaria and unto the farthest reaches of the earth¹³.

to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:18-20). In summation Luke writes and overview of the commandments that Jesus gave underscoring their need to "wait" until they were empowered with the same divine ability, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but wait in the city of Jerusalem, until you are endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:46-49).

⁵ Luke is referring to those whom Jesus had chosen to be apostles (Luke 6:13). Luke uses the word apostles 6 times in the Gospel of Luke and 28 times in Acts whereas Matthew, Mark and John only use it once. The title apostolos is derived from the Greek 'apostellein' which, means 'send'. It is used only once in the Septuagint and translates the Hebrew 'saluach,' 'sent'.

⁶ Paul refers to this period of time in 1 Corinthians 15:5-7 and in Acts 13:31.

⁷ Jesus continually presented the message of the Kingdom of God throughout the period of His earthly ministry. Jesus spoke of the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven 87 times. The first thing that Jesus said about the Kingdom of God was that it had to have first place in our lives if we wanted to be blessed, "seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all of these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). Jesus testified that His power over all of the works of the devil was proof that the Kingdom of God had come (Matthew 12:28; Luke 8:1; Luke 9:11; 11:20). He also commanded the apostles and the seventy others whom he sent to demonstrate the authority of the Kingdom of God. They did so by exercising dominion and authority over every oppressing power of darkness that had afflicted man with devils, sickness, disease and even death (Luke 9:2; 10:9). Paul makes known to us that we have been translated from the kingdom of the world into the Kingdom of the Dear Son (Colossians 1:13; 2 Timothy 1:10; Hebrews 2:14). We may understand the Kingdom of God as the realm of the Spirit, the place from which the Lord Jesus Christ reigns supreme and the will and blessings of God are fully realized.

⁸ The promise of the Father was not revealed when it was mentioned in Luke 24:49 but it is now made known to be the baptism in the Holy Spirit, which, endues the recipient with power from God.

⁹ The element that John baptized in was water but the one that Jesus will baptize in is the Holy Spirit. The verb baptizein can mean, wash, soak, dunk, plunge (into water). In this case we may understand from the description of Jesus baptism in the Holy Spirit that the Spirit came upon Him and remained. Also, He told the disciples that the Holy Spirit would be with them and in them and that the Holy Spirit would flow out of them as rivers of living water.

¹⁰ The disciples had their focus on the kingdom being restored to Israel and were still unaware of what was actually taking place. Little did they realize what an important role they would play in the plan of God for the ages. Certainly, Christ would come to reign on the earth but that reign would begin through the evangelizing of the nations by the church. A new nation had been born and a new age about to be inaugurated by the Father (Matthew 21:43; Luke 24:49; Acts 2:1-4, 33; John

7:39). The Holy Spirit was about to be poured out upon all flesh, which would begin at Jerusalem. The power and authority supplied by the Holy Spirit would empower the disciples to be witnesses of the resurrection and of rule and reign of Christ Jesus. They too would be seated together with Him in heavenly places far above all principalities and powers (Ephesians 2:6). They would begin the great evangelizing of the nations that would not stop until “this gospel of the kingdom” is preached in every nation of the earth (Matthew 24:14).

Today the light to the nations shines and the call of God sounds forth by the same glorious power of the Holy Spirit. Christ Jesus the head of the church sits upon His throne and pours out His anointing of the Holy Ghost and power upon the head of all who will receive His ministry (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16). It is through this glory and power that we are equipped to fully represent the King of Kings (Isaiah 42:6; 49:6; Luke 2:32; Acts 13:47; 26:3; Matthew 5:14). It is not through the wisdom and ability of men that this light of revelation shines but through the ‘dunamin,’ (power) of the Holy Ghost. For anyone to even dare think that they can represent Christ Jesus without being clothed in the Holy Ghost and fire is both naïve and religious stubbornness. To think that we can stand in Christ stead and beseech the world to be reconciled to God without being clothed in the ministry of Jesus is total error (2 Corinthians 5:20-21; 1 Corinthians 2:4; 2 Thessalonians 1:5). Christ Jesus reigns today and we stand proclaiming peace to all in His name. We command the mountains to be removed, the valleys to be filled, the deserts to bloom like the Garden of Eden and every prisoner- go free (Acts 26:18; Isaiah 32:15; Luke 4:18).

¹¹ The verb ‘eperchesthai’ is only used in association of the coming of the Holy Spirit in one other place and that is in Luke 1:35, “The Holy Spirit shall come upon you and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you...”.

¹² Judea refers to the southern part of Palestine. Samaria is the area south of Galilee from the Plain of Esdraelon/Jezereel south to the northern border of Judea.

¹³ The ministry of Jesus was only observed in the nation of Israel. It was the plan of God that those redeemed by the blood of Jesus and baptized in the Holy Spirit would take His ministry to the ends of the earth. This same phrase is found in the Septuagint in Isaiah 49:6. “hoes eschates tes ges” from its Hebrew equivalent “ad qetzeh ha aretz” (unto the ends of the earth), “I will also give you for a light to the Gentiles, that you may be my salvation unto the end of the earth.”

There should be three ongoing strategies involved in our ministry responsibilities. As those who represent Jesus and the Kingdom of God on earth there must be a local ministry a national ministry and a foreign field ministry. The local ministry should in large part be fulfilled through the local church. The local churches are the pillars of the Kingdom of God in the earth. Without the local church there is no substantial witness and presence of the Kingdom of God and the ministry of Jesus in our communities. The local church is to be the light and center of the ongoing work of Jesus in the earth. It is in the local church that we are all able to participate in much of that which is described in the New Testament (Matthew 28:20; Ephesians 1:23; 1 Corinthians 12, 14). The responsibility to participate in building the local church and to function in the gifts and callings of God cannot be overstated. Not everyone is called to be an Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor or Teacher but everyone is called to be a witness and qualified to be one when they are baptized with the Holy Spirit. Even on the foreign field one of the most essential things to build and establish are the local churches otherwise there is no lasting effect of the ministry of Jesus in that region. Anytime we go to a region of the world that has a strong local church the things that God allows us to do always have both a bigger immediate as well as a lasting impact.

Both the national and international ministries are a little more difficult for each person to understand exactly how they are to participate. The national ministry would be likened unto the ministry of Jesus going throughout Judea, which would be the whole of the nation of Israel. In order to accomplish this ministry we must do as Jesus did and go to the towns and villages and preach the good news of the Kingdom and heal every sickness and disease (Matthew 9:35). One thing is for certain every person can participate in part by financially supporting those who are anointed and sent by God (Philippians 4:17; 3 John 6-9; 2 Corinthians 8:4; 9:5).

- 9- And having said these things as they were looking on Him, He was taken up and a cloud¹⁴ received Him up out of their sight.
- 10- And as they were gazing into heaven as He was going behold also two men appeared to them in bright clothing.
- 11- And they said, “Men of Galilee why do you stand looking into the heavens this same Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven shall certainly come¹⁵ in the same way as you watched¹⁶ Him go into heaven.
- 12- Then they returned into Jerusalem from the hill called Olivet¹⁷ which is near Jerusalem being the distance of a Sabbaths journey¹⁸.
- 13- And when they had entered they went up to the upper chamber where both Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot and Jude of James were staying.
- 14- All of these were devoted intensely to one mind in prayer and supplication with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus and with His brethren¹⁹.
- 15- And in those days Peter having stood up in the midst of the disciples said, the number of names together being about 120,
- 16- “Men, brethren it was necessary that this scriptures be fulfilled which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas who became guide to those who took Jesus.
- 17- For he was numbered with us and obtained the lot in this ministry.

¹⁴ Both Paul and John reveal that Jesus will return with the clouds just as they watched Him leave “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen” (1 Thessalonians 4:17; Revelation 1:7). The end of the church age closes with the end of the address to the churches in the third chapter of Revelation. Jesus then returns again but this time with His saints who will ride as an army to fight against the armies of the antichrist at the end of Gods final plea with Israel as a nation (Revelations 9:14). The noun ‘nephele’ refers to God’s cloud which is used extensively in the Old Testament in conjunction with God’s presence and glory (Exodus 16:10; 19:19; 24:15-18; Ezekiel 10:3-4; Psalms 18:11; Daniel 7:13); also in the New Testament Luke 9:34-35; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Revelation 1:7; 11:12.

¹⁵ The verb ‘eleusetai’ means ‘will come’. The adverb ‘houtos’ may simply be translated ‘so’ but it may also be translated ‘so certainly’. The time may be unknown but the return is certain.

¹⁶ The Greek ‘theomai’ denotes careful observation. The announcement given by these two angels about the ‘parousia’ or coming of Jesus should be given special attention. Perhaps the posture of watching or carefully observing His return is as important as how He will return. Paul reveals that Jesus will appear to them who look for Him in Hebrews 9:28; Philippians 3:20; Titus 2:13. We also know that Jesus emphasized the importance of our watching for his return, “Remember then what you have received and heard and keep it and repent. However, if you do not watch I will come like a thief and you will not know at what hour I will come upon you,” (Revelation 3:3; Matthew 24:42; 25:13; Mark 13:33-37; Luke 21:36). Let us all say even so come Lord Jesus (Revelation 22:20).

¹⁷ If this were to be translated literally it would read, “the called the Olive Grove”. This coincides with Luke 24:50, “Then Jesus lead them out as far as Bethany. Zechariah describe this as the place that YHWH will come to do battle against the nations at the end of the Great Tribulation of Revelations (Zechariah 14:4).

¹⁸ The distance of a Sabbath days journey is regulated by Exodus 16:29 and Numbers 35:5 to be 2000 cubits. Weather this was actually on the Sabbath day or Luke was just interested in suddenly conveying that the disciples were observing certain aspects of the Mosaic law is unclear.

¹⁹ The Greek ‘adelphos’ leaves little doubt that blood brothers are meant. Jesus was the adelphos of James, Joses, Judas and Simon (Mark 6:3)

18- This one indeed therefore obtained a field out of the wages of unrighteousness and having fallen headfirst burst in the midst and all his inward parts gushed out.
 19- And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem so that the field was called in their own language Aceldama²⁰; that is a field of blood.
 20- For it was written in the book of Psalms, “ Let his habitation become desolate and let no one dwell in it²¹ and let another one take his position of Oversight²².”
 21- It is necessary therefore that from those men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us,
 22- from the beginning of the Baptism of John until the day in which He was taken up from us one of these should become a witness²³ with us of His resurrection.”
 23- And two stood up, Joseph called Barsabas who was surnamed Justus and Matthias.
 24- And praying they said, You Lord knower of the hearts of everyone choose from one of these two.
 25- To take the place of the ministry and apostleship from which Judas fell away to go to his own place.
 26- And they gave their lots and the lot²⁴ fell on Matthias and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Acts 2

1- And in the day that Pentecost²⁵ was fulfilled²⁶ everyone had one passion²⁷ before Him.

²⁰ Ecclesiastical tradition places Akeldama south of Ge Hinnom which is south of Zion. The traditional site is near the Greek Orthodox monastery of St. Onuphrius.

²¹ Luke changes the quote from Psalms 69:26 by replacing “their” to “his” and “in their tents: to “on it” making it more specific to Judas.

²² The use of ‘episkope,’ which may be translated ‘office of a bishop’ or ‘bishopruck’ in reference to the apostles further defines their role. The word may be viewed as referring to one who examines or inspects. This quote is from Psalms 69:26 and from Psalms 109:8 (LXX 68:26; it appears to have been derived from the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) or another close Greek OT text. The later part of this verse “let another take his position of Oversight” is verbatim of Psalms 109:8 in the Septuagint

²³ Peter felt it was essential to place two requirements on the candidates to take Judas’ place. The individual must be a man and he would have had to been present from the time Jesus was baptized by John until Jesus ascended into heaven. Peter may have felt it was essential to replace Judas in this fashion because of the two previously mentioned Psalms. It does not appear that they felt any need to repeat this and maintain 12 Apostles in the church community at Jerusalem for we know of no similar attempt when James was killed.

²⁴ The Greek word ‘klepos,’ (lot) is used also of the ‘appointment’ of Judas by the Lord Jesus in verse 17. The concept of casting lots for Divine direction finds its origin in the Urim and Thummin, which God gave to the Priesthood (Leviticus 8:8). Just how it worked is not clear but it is certain that it was more than just a yes or no answer from God (Judges 1:1-2; 18:20; 1 Samuel 10:22; 2 Samuel 2:1; 5:23-24). Klepos is first found in Genesis 48:6 and refers to an inheritance. It is also found in Leviticus 16:8 with respect to identifying the scapegoat and the goat to be sacrificed. There is Jewish traditions, which says that there was a vessel called a “Kalphi”, in which were two lots the one had written on it “for Yehoah” and the other “for the scapegoat. The Priest would shake the vessel and then removed the lots one in each hand. He then placed a hand on each goat and thus identified which goat belonged to Yehoah.

²⁵ Pentecost is the Festival of Weeks, or of the Firstfruits. The festival of firstfruits is known as ‘Shavuot’ in the Hebrew tradition. There were three special holy days of great significance in which all Israel was commanded to appear before the Lord in Jerusalem: Passover, Pentecost, and

2- And suddenly there came out of heaven the sound²⁸ of a violent wind²⁹ and filled the whole house where they were seated.

Tabernacles. 'Pentecost' is a Greek word meaning "the fiftieth part of something." Greek-speaking Jews used this word to refer to the harvest festival ('Hag Shavuot' or "Feast of Weeks"). Pentecost takes place on the fiftieth day, counting from the Passover. It is also the feast of Firstfruits (Leviticus 23:15-16; Numbers 28:26). The day of Pentecost is called the Feast of Weeks (Exodus 23:16; 34:22; Deuteronomy 16:9-10, 16; 2 Chronicles 8:13), the Assembly, and 'Shimcha Torah' (The Joy of the Law).

These two days are of great significance to all of us: for Jesus our Savior was crucified on Passover as our Passover Lamb, and on the day of Pentecost (Shavuot) the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the church (1 Corinthians 5:7; John 19:31). The significance of the blood of the Passover Lamb was first revealed on the day that God delivered Israel from the slavery of Egypt. Just as the blood had marked their lives and became the means of their deliverance from slavery, the blood of Jesus has delivered all those who will believe - from sin and death.

The first Pentecost, highlighted with Israel in the wilderness, was also marked with great significance. The Lord God Almighty appeared in the midst of the fire-cloud of glory, and spoke audibly from mount Sinai in the ears of all Israel (Exodus 19:16-19). The law, with its typology and examples, was a schoolmaster to bring us to the day that the glory of God would be seen once again tabernacling in the lives of men (Colossians 2:17; Hebrews 8:5, 10:1; Galatians 3:23-25). So when the day of Pentecost was fully come, after Jesus had ascended to the throne of glory, the fire of God came and rested upon those cleansed and sanctified by His blood (John 7:37-39; Acts 2:33). The glory of heaven broke forth, and the voice of God was heard coming out of the bellies of those who had been redeemed. It was on this day the church was born in the fires of the Holy Ghost. Instead of man bringing their firstfruits to God, God brought His firstfruits to man (Romans 8:23; Exodus 34:22; Numbers 28:26; Deuteronomy 26:10). Now because of the grace of God we can live in Pentecost everyday. We can live in the baptism of the fire of the Holy Ghost, and be filled continually with His glory (Ephesians 5:18-19; John 7:38-39; Matthew 3:11).

²⁶ A literal translation of this phrase would be "in the coming of the fiftieth day to full number". The idea of the day of Pentecost coming to full number implies that the meaning of Pentecost was now being fulfilled through this event of the Holy Spirit being poured out on the believer. The Latin and Syriac Vulgate versions read, "when the days of Pentecost were fulfilled". However, this is not to imply that there was more than one day of Pentecost but that this event fulfilled Pentecost. On the first Pentecost when God appeared in the cloud of fire and spoke to the people from Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:16). When Pentecost was fully come or now fulfilled the voice of God would be heard coming from those redeemed by the blood of Jesus and baptized in the Holy Ghost. The first-fruits of our inheritance was given to everyone that would believe- the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:23).

²⁷ The Greek word 'homothumadon', translated passion, is a compound of two words meaning to "rush along" and "in unison". This compound word literally means with the 'same passion' or 'same fierceness'. "The image is almost musical; a number of notes are sounded which, while different, harmonize in pitch and tone. As the instruments of a great concert under the direction of a concert master, so the Holy Spirit blends together the lives of members of the church of Christ" (James Strong). The intensity of this word serves to communicate both the commitment and excitement that united them as they waited for the Promise of the Father. Of the 12 times that this word is found in the New Testament 11 of them are in the book of Acts. This word helps to communicate the dedication that those in the church had for one another. In their passion of love and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ they were one. Through this scripture God has shown to us the model of what He expects if we are to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and Fire in our meetings.

²⁸ Pentecost was the day that the church was born. When the First Covenant was inaugurated and ratified Mount Sinai was clothed in the fire of God's presence and the sound 'echei' of the shofar grew louder and louder (Exodus 19:16). When the church was born on the day of Pentecost the sound 'echos' of a violent wind was heard. The heavenly noise and the fire of God accompanied the inauguration of the church even as it did the inauguration of the law. On the first Pentecost the nation of Israel was empowered with the grace to be the expression of God's kingdom on the earth

3- And there appeared tongues like fire³⁰ and it parted³¹ and set down upon each one³² of them.

4- And they were all filled³³ with the Holy Spirit³⁴ and began to speak³⁵ other languages³⁶ as the Spirit spoke forth from them.

(Exodus 19:5-6; 29:45-46; Deuteronomy 14:2; Leviticus 26:11). On the day the church was born that mantle was passed to those who were washed in the blood of the Lamb and filled with the Spirit of God (Matthew 21:43; 1 Peter 2:9).

The sound of this heavenly noise and the fire of God was the expression that God had come to dwell in the midst of His church. The power and authority of Jesus Christ was poured out upon each member of His church that they might be witnesses of His resurrection and of His dominion over all things (Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-22; Acts 1:8; 2:33; Luke 24:49). This manifest glory of God's presence in the midst of the church was to be present as long as the church exist (1 Corinthians 12:7-11, 28-30; Acts 2:16-18, 38-39). The church is the body of Christ the manifest glory of the rising and exalted Savior Jesus Christ in the earth today. The church is the fullness of God that is to be as a city set upon a hill to give light to all of the world (Ephesians 1:23). Paul describing the glory of the church as it relates to the first Pentecost describes it as an ongoing manifestation of God's glory and power when he says we have now "come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12: 22-24).

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³⁰ Fire has always been associated with God's divine presence. The covenant was confirmed to Abraham as the fire passed through the middle of the sacrifice that Abraham had made (Genesis 15:17). When Moses first encountered God he encountered the fire of God; and it was from that fire that His voice was heard (Exodus 3:2-3). The fire-cloud of God came and appeared between Israel and Egypt the day that they were delivered from slavery. It was from the fire-cloud that the face of God appeared: a cloud that was for protection, shelter, and guidance. God Almighty filled Mount Sinai with His shekinah glory, and the mountain appeared to be altogether on fire with His majesty (Exodus 19:16-20). Our God is a consuming fire, and He is the God who answers by fire - who is clothed with light as with a garment (Deuteronomy 4:24; Hebrews 12:29; Ezekiel 1:4; Psalm 18:12-14; 104:2,4; 1 Kings 19:11-12).

Because Jesus paid the price for every man when He died at Calvary, His majesty and glory was poured forth upon all who would receive. The fire of God came like a mighty rushing wind with tongues of fire, and rested upon His disciples so that the whole world might know that Jesus was exalted and glorified. The Holy Spirit and fire have come to fill the hearts and mouths of all who will receive, so that God's voice might be heard throughout the earth.

³¹ The Greek word 'diamerizomenai' from the verb 'diameritzo' means to divide or distribute into parts as in Matthew 27:35 "They parted his garments". Its first occurrence in the Septuagint is in Genesis 10:25 "...the name of one was Peleg for in his days was the earth divided." Its first occurrence in the New Testament is in Matthew 27:35. Evidently, all who were gathered in the room saw one collective fire and then the fire began to be distributed among them and as this happen they all spoke the same thing in the Spirit as the Holy Spirit gave them the inspiration. The unseen distributor of this fire was God the Holy Spirit.

³² During the first Pentecost if anything touched the mountain where God's fire and glory had set down they had to be killed (Exodus 19:13). Now because of the cleansing and redeeming blood of Jesus Christ the fire and glory of God comes to rest on each of the 120 present in the upper room.

³³ One of the central themes of Jesus' ministry was that He was the one who would baptize in the Holy Spirit. This part of the ministry of Jesus did not begin until after He was raised from the dead and exalted as the King of Kings and redeemer of all mankind (John 7:38-39; Acts 2:33). Although the Holy Spirit came upon men in the Old Testament, the idea of being baptized in the Spirit is not found there. The Spirit of the Lord was given to selected ones in the Old Testament so that they might reveal heavenly things and execute God's will (Exodus 28:3; 31:3; 35:31). God filled certain ones of Israel with the Spirit of wisdom in order

to make Aaron's clothing. God filled Bezalel with the Spirit of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding in all manner of workmanship - so that he could fashion all of the unique furniture and features of the tabernacle. Seventy men in Israel were given the Spirit in order to prophesy and speak on behalf of God alongside of Moses (Numbers 11:25). The Holy Spirit came upon the judges of Israel to give them supernatural abilities to defeat the enemies of Israel (Judges 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6,19; 15:14). The Spirit of the Lord came upon the kings of Israel beginning with Saul (1 Samuel 10:6; 16:13).

Being filled with the Spirit is the way of life for the New Testament believer (Luke 1: 67; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9; Ephesians 5:18). Although John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit in his mother's womb, Jesus was the first one to be "full of the Holy Spirit" (Luke 4:1). The uniqueness of the way in which Jesus was "full of the Holy Spirit" is expressed not only by the fact that He received the Spirit without measure, but that John saw the Spirit come upon Him and remain (John 1:33). Jesus came in the Messianic anointing described in (Isaiah 61:1); "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." The anointing that Jesus received as a result of being full of the Holy Spirit and power resulted in the greatest miracles ever displayed (Acts 10:38). Jesus then gave the same anointing of the baptism of the Holy Spirit to His church (John 1:16; 14:12; 17:21-23; 20:21; Luke 24:49; Acts 5:32).

The fullness of the anointing of Jesus has now been poured out as the promise of the Father upon all who will believe. We have been empowered with the same anointing of the Holy Spirit so that we might represent Jesus (Ephesians 4:13; John 1:16; Matthew 20:22-23; Luke 24:49; Romans 15:19; Hebrews 2:4; Mark 16:17; 1 Corinthians 12:7). The Father desires that we walk in the fullness of the anointing of His Son so that we might be witnesses of His life and resurrection (Galatians 4:5-7; Romans 8:17,29). We have received the anointing that comes by being filled with the Spirit without measure - so that we might beseech the world in Christ's stead and be able ministers of the New Covenant.

³⁴ Luke does not use the definite article here with 'pneumatou hagiou,' Holy Spirit. Therefore the correct translation is "a Holy Spirit". Recognizing that the person "The Holy Spirit" would not actually enter into anyone's body it is understandable that the Holy Spirit the person fills the recipient with His Holy Spirit. Also, recalling what the prophet Ezekiel said, "A new heart also will I give you, and **a new spirit** will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put **my spirit** within you," (Ezekiel 36:26-27a) we further understand that the person the Holy Spirit who would be properly identified with the definite article did not enter the 120 but "a Holy Spirit" from Him was given to them.

³⁵ This time instead of God speaking out of the midst of the fire from the mountain He declares His covenant from the mouth of man. From that moment until this very hour the rivers of living water have been pouring forth from the bellies of those who have received the Holy Spirit (John 7:38-39). The verb 'apophthengesthai' means to "speak out or declare boldly". The same boldness is also heard in Peter when he begins to minister in his own native dialect (Acts 2:14; 4:8).

³⁶ Isaiah the prophet declared by the Spirit of God that this supernatural expression of the Holy Spirit would take place, "For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith you may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing..." (Isaiah 28: 11-12). We can be certain that the prophet was prophesying about this event because Paul makes this very clear to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 14:21-22). Jesus also declared that this empowerment would take place and referred to it as rivers of living water and the Promise of the Father (Luke 24:49). John the Baptist prophesied of this day when he declared there is one who is coming that will Baptize you in the Holy Spirit and Fire (Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5; 19:4). The gift of tongues or the language of the Spirit was the sign that the Baptism in the Holy Spirit had occurred and that the rivers of living water were flowing. The sign of being endowed with power from on high by the expression of the language of the Spirit continued beyond the day of Pentecost (1 Corinthians 12:10,28; 14:18; Acts 10:44-46; 19:6). Also, in that the gift of tongues is defined as praying in the Spirit in 1 Corinthians 14:2,14,15,16 we must recognize that the scriptures such as Romans 8:26-27, Ephesians 6:18 and Jude 20, refers to praying in tongues. The gift of tongues is more than just a gift, it is the gift of the New Covenant. It is the gift of the New Covenant because it was the chief manifestation of the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit, which inaugurated the birth of the church. It is the New Covenant gift because all of the other gifts of the Spirit were manifested in the Old Testament. It is the gift of the New Covenant because it was the proof that Jesus had ascended up on high and was exalted to the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:33). Jesus also promised this power from on

- 5- Now there were sojourning in Jerusalem devote³⁷ men, Jews from every nation under the heaven³⁸.
- 6- And it came to pass that at this noise³⁹ the multitude came together and were confounded because each one heard them speaking⁴⁰ in his own dialect.
- 7- But they stood and wondered saying are not all of these speaking Galileans.
- 8- How then do each of us hear in our own dialect in which we were born.
- 9- Parthians, Medes, Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia Judea and also Cappadocia, of Pontus, and Asia.
- 10- Phrygia, Pamphylia of Egypt and the regions of Libya about Cyrene and visitors of Rome.
- 11- Jews and proselytes Greeks and Arabs we hear them speak in our own tongues the mighty works of God⁴¹.
- 12- They were all amazed and perplexed saying one to another what does this mean?
- 13- But others mocked saying these are all filled with new wine⁴².
- 14- But Peter standing with the eleven lifted up his voice and spoke to them, “Men of Judea and all you inhabitants of Jerusalem be this known unto you and give heed unto my words.
- 15- For these are not drunk as you suppose, for it is the third hour⁴³ of the day.
- 16- But this is that spoken through the prophet Joel⁴⁴.

high along with the sign of Baptism in the Spirit to all believers when He said, "These signs shall follow them that believe... they shall speak with new tongues." (Mark 16:17). This power of the Holy Spirit empowers the believer to be a witness and produces the rivers of living water that Jesus invites all mankind to enjoy (Acts 1:8; John 7:38-39). The power of the Holy Spirit is given to the church for as long as witnesses of the resurrection are needed.

³⁷ The Greek word 'enlabeis' literally means caution or reverent. The term implies that these men were cautious about being obedient to the commandments of God and careful not to offend Him in anyway.

³⁸ It is reported that when Titus attacked Jerusalem, which was also at a time that the Feast of Passover was taking place, there were about three million people in the city.

³⁹ It appears that this supernatural event of the noise from the violent wind and the sound of the Holy Spirit utterance out of the 120 as they spoke could be heard throughout the streets of Jerusalem. The effect may have been similar to the first Pentecost wherein the sound grew louder and louder. As a result a great multitude of people gather together to witness this event, which could be heard in the individual dialects of all that were gathered in Jerusalem. This event is clearly a miraculous one and opens the door to a range of equally supernatural possibilities.

⁴⁰ Evidentially, from this description the whole company of 120 people, were all speaking in other tongues at the same time. When the multitude heard this noise of tongues each person perceived what was being said in their on native language.

⁴¹ God allowed all of those dwelling in Jerusalem to hear what the Spirit was saying about the mighty acts of God. When a man speaks with the tongues of the Spirit he does not speak to men but unto God (1 Corinthians 14:2).

⁴² The Greek word used here is 'gleukos', "sweet new wine". The Hebrew word for wine is 'yayin' and is translated by the Greek Septuagint 'gleukos'. That drunkenness is the consequence of drinking 'yayin' is clear from Gen 9:24; 1 Sam 25:36-37). The time of Pentecost is just before the harvest of the grapes. Therefore, this new wine was at least a year old and furthermore was fermented and intoxicating. Traditional concepts of new wine being limited to fresh grape juice is incorrect in view of this passage for clearly these onlookers considered the disciples to be drunk (verse 15).

⁴³ The third hour of the day corresponds to about 9:00 a.m. The Jews divided the day into 12 equal parts from sunrise to sunset. The third hour of the day was the time of worship and sacrifice.

17- And it shall be in the last days says God, “ I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams.

18- And upon my male and female servants I will pour out my Spirit in those day and they shall prophesy.

19- And I will give wonders in the heavens above and signs upon the earth below blood and fire and a cloud of smoke.

20- The sun shall turn to darkness and the moon to blood before the great day of the Lord comes.

21- And it shall be that all that call upon **the name** of the Lord shall be saved.

22- Men of Israel listen to these words: Jesus of Nazareth a man accredited⁴⁵ by God to you through miracles⁴⁶ and wonders and signs, which God did through Him in your midst as you yourselves know.

⁴⁴ This passage, as it appears in Acts 2:16-21, is not an exact quote of what is written in either the Septuagint (LXX) or the Hebrew Bible (BHS). However, the differences are only minor; and may be understood in light of the Holy Spirit speaking expressly, through Peter, of its New Covenant application. The following is a quote from both the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint: " And it will happen after this that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your elders will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. And also upon the slaves and upon the maidservants in those days I will pour out My Spirit. I will give wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall turn to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the great and awesome day of YHWH. And it will be that anyone who calls on the name of YHWH will be saved...." (Joel 3:1-5 LXX/BHS, or Joel 2:28-32 KJV).

Peter makes a few initial changes by the Holy Spirit: he changes "after this" to "in the last days;" and he adds "says God." Both of these changes result in a clearer picture of the prophecy - by establishing that this is an event for the last days; and that this was said by God, and not merely by a prophet named Joel. Also "your servants" is changed to "my servants;" removing the limitation of servants just to the nation of Israel, and opening the door to all of God's servants in every nation. Finally, "they shall prophesy" is added, underscoring that the effect of the outpouring of the Spirit will be the same for the servants as for the masters. Now this broadened scope of servants would include all men everywhere who are the servants of God, such as the Samaritans and the house of Cornelius (Acts 8:5-25; Acts 10:1-48). Now, regardless of who you are - Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female - all may freely come and receive of an unlimited anointing of the Holy Ghost (Galatians 3:28). This is the age of the Messiah and of His kingdom; and those of His church are the first to enjoy the splendor and glory of His reign!

⁴⁵ A similar statement is made in Hebrews 2:4 concerning the signs and wonders of those who heard Jesus, "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" The concept is very similar in both cases in that God is proving to all onlookers that He is the one at work by the display of the supernatural. The Textus Receptus used the Alexandrian text reading of 'apodedeigmenon', which means 'displayed, attested, accredited' instead of the MS D reading of 'dedokimasmenon' meaning 'approved'.

⁴⁶ God's divine testimony or accreditation of the ministry of Jesus comes by way of the mighty deeds or miracles called 'dynamis' or 'dunamis', which He did. This is the same power that the disciples were promised in Acts 1:8. This power to do mighty deeds was given so that those who are in bondage to sin, sickness and poverty might go free. The power to do mighty deeds has been made available to everyone who will believe. The promise was first made to the general audience that John the Baptist addressed when he first spoke of the ministry of Jesus and proclaimed that Jesus would be the one that would baptize in the Holy Spirit and Fire (Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; Acts 19:4). Jesus said these mighty deeds would follow those who believe as signs (Mark 16:17). These are the same mighty deeds manifested in Stevens life in Acts 6:8, in Philips ministry in Acts 8:13 and also in Paul's ministry in Acts 19:11. Today all one has

23- He who was given over through the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God you by the lawless hands did nail him up⁴⁷ and put to death.

24- Whom God raised up loosing the pangs of death⁴⁸ because it was not possible for its power⁴⁹ to hold Him.

25- David also said⁵⁰ concerning Him, "I always saw the Lord⁵¹ before me, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

to do is believe and they will receive the authority to be sons of God. The promise of being endued with the Holy Spirit and power is just as fresh and certain today as it was when Jesus said "If any man is thirsty let him come to me and drink. He that believes on me as the scriptures have said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37). The voice of God can still be heard right now saying "nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matthew 17:20). In the Old Testament 'dunameis' is translated from Hebrew words such as 'tsava', 'armies'; 'chayil', 'man of valour, valiant'; 'chazaq', 'mighty'; 'gevurah', 'mighty deeds'.

⁴⁷ The Greek word that is used here is 'prospegnumi' which means 'to fasten' the word for crucify is 'stauroo' which is used 48 times in the New Testament.

⁴⁸ The same phrase "pangs of death" is found in the Septuagint in 2 Samuel 22:6 "odines thanatou" which is translated from the Hebrew "chevle sheol" which could mean bonds, regions, robes, sorrows or labor pains of Sheol". Polycarp who seemed to have been quoting this passage wrote "whom God raised up, having released the pangs of Hades".

⁴⁹ The power of death that seized Adam was not powerful enough to hold Jesus. In fact, through His death He abolished death (2 Timothy 1:10). As the power of death entered into the world by Adam even so by Jesus Christ came the resurrection from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:21; Romans 5:12-21). Jesus, through His death stripped principalities and powers and proved their defeat (Colossians 2:15). He effectively destroyed the devil by destroying his power to dominate man with sin and death (Hebrew 2:14; Romans 5:14, 17, 21; 8:2). The final outcome of the resurrection is that Jesus the son of David and the Son of God who is the Alpha and Omega and forever the Eternal King possesses the keys of hell and death (Revelation 1:18). Everyone who will have faith in His name He gives resurrection life and power to (Romans 6:5; 1 Corinthians 15:21). The power that is in the resurrection of Jesus is power over eternal death (Revelation 20:6).

⁵⁰ Peter quotes Psalms 16:8-11 which is an equivalent rendering to the Hebrew original. A modern exegetical method would not allow for the freedom of this kind of application of Psalms 16 to the life of Jesus. However, those in the early church were free to flow in the revelation of the Holy Spirit and not find themselves confined to the rules of men. Peter makes it very clear that these passages of scripture could not apply to anyone but Jesus.

⁵¹ Peter revealed that David was not speaking of himself but of Jesus Christ the Messiah (Psalms 16:8). We learn that Jesus found strength and stability by always seeing YHWH (the Father) before Him. Jesus never did anything unless He saw the Father do it and He never said anything unless He heard the Father say it (John 5:19, 20; 8:28; John 10:38). Seeing the Father before Him may have only been a conscious awareness of His presence yet at the same time Jesus may have interacted with the Father face to face. We do know that the Father spoke to Jesus with an audible voice on several occasions (Matthew 17:5; John 12:28). We can also be certain that the depth of the communication went deeper than what could be seen with the eye and heard with the ear (John 12:30). What Jesus revealed to us was that the Father was dwelling in Him and it was through this indwelling that the mighty works were done through His life (John 10:38; 14:10). Through Jesus Christ we have been given the same kind of relationship with the Father. We have been baptized with the same baptism and given the same glory that the Father gave Jesus (Matthew 20:22-23; 3:11; John 1:16; John 17:22). Both the Lord Jesus and the Father dwell in us by the Spirit that He has given to us (John 14:23; 1 John 3:24). By the leadership of the Holy Spirit we are empowered to see Him and to know exactly what the Father would have us to do (John 16:12-13; 14:21; Romans 8:14). As we become aware of how mindful Father is of us and how He is constantly watching over us a whole new dimension of accountability begins to take hold of us (Psalms 121:3; Matthew 10:30; Luke 12:7; Psalms 115:12). Too many times we have looked around to see who might be watching before we made the decision to do something that we should not do. Unfortunately, we did not have the eyes to see that the Father was watching. In times of urgent need we have wondered where God was but when we were being tempted to engage in something unholy we failed to give thought to His mindfulness of our situation. We

26- Therefore, did my heart rejoice and my tongue⁵² rejoiced greatly; moreover also my flesh shall rest in expectation⁵³:

27- Because You will not leave my soul in Hades⁵⁴, neither will you allow your Faithful⁵⁵ One to see corruption.

must become aware of the fact that the eyes of the Lord behold us (Psalms 11:4). His mindfulness and interest in us causes Him to look at our lives very closely to see if there are any of the sons of men that desire to know him (Psalms 14:2). The Almighty is searching for someone that He might show himself strong on their behalf. God looks at us from His throne in His Holy Temple (Psalms 11:4; Hebrews 1:8-9). If we will respond to Him in love and obedience He will perfect everything that concerns us and empower us to be mighty (Daniel 11:32; John 14:12; Psalms 18:32; 138:8; Ephesians 4:13; Colossians 1:28). God desires to show himself strong for those whose hearts are perfect (2 Chronicles 16:9). What other people think about us is much to important to us. We adjust our behavior to correspond to the expectation of those who we hope to win favor from. Yet, somehow we fail to realize that this is a snare. Our concern should be first towards what Father thinks of us. We need to have a conscious awareness of His presence in our lives. It should be our desire to win His favor more than the favor of men. If we will be honest and transparent before God the Holy Spirit will cause us to become more concerned about what He thinks rather than what men think. Jesus said that if we seek the honor of men then we are unable to believe (John 5:44). On the other hand if we live only for the honor and glory of God then faith will begin to work at a greater level in our lives and there will be no unrighteousness in us (John 7:18). Unfortunately, it is common for us to continue to practice wrong things so long as we think no one knows. Then as soon as someone discovers what we have done we feel bad and run for the mercy of God as Joab did when he had to face the consequences of his evil deeds (1 Kings 2:28). Even David was able to deceive himself and act like he had done nothing wrong until the prophet Nathan came and made his sin public (2 Samuel 12:7). Of course God is always there to love us and forgive us but at some point we need to understand that when we sin it is against the Lord and Him alone (Psalms 51:4) We must allow the Holy Spirit to give us the wisdom and revelation that Father is always before us and on our right hand to help us (Ephesians 1:17; Psalms 84:11). As we yield to that which the Holy Spirit is teaching us we will become more aware of His indwelling presence (Ephesians 3:18; John 17:22; 14:20). Father is willing to make the relationship that we have with Him more real to us than any other relationship that we have. This is eternal life that we may know him (John 17:3; 1 John 4:16; 5:20).

⁵² In the Hebrew Text of the Old Testament the word used for 'tongue' is 'kavod' which means 'glory'. Yet, in the Septuagint 'kavod' is translated by the word 'glossa', which means 'tongue'. Peter's declaration leads us to believe that the usage of tongue for glory purposefully brings to the front the utterance of the Spirit that was poured out through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Certainly, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire is the manifestation of the glory of God and therefore the divine utterances are a manifestation of the glory of God. In fact, the manifestation of tongues is a proclamation of the glory and true riches of God that we have received from Him. This may also reveal that those who translated the Septuagint understood that divine utterance is the result of the glory of God being poured out upon both the Messiah and His people.

⁵³ The Greek 'ep elpidi' is translated 'in expectation' or 'in hope'. It is translated from the Hebrew 'betach', which means confidence or security, "also my flesh shall rest in confidence".

⁵⁴ In the Septuagint hades usually translates the Hebrew word sheol. The word hades is found 11 times in the New Testament (AV). Sheol is found first in Genesis 37:35 "And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the **grave** (sheol) unto my son mourning. Thus his father (Jacob) wept for him". Sheol is the most common word used in the Old Testament to refer to the place of the dead. The soul of Jesus went down into Sheol or hades (vs 31). Jesus also located sheol as being in the heart of the earth and likened it to Jonah in the belly of the great fish (Matthew 12:40; Jonah 2). Sheol (hades) is referred to in both the Old and New Testament as a place that the dead "go down to" (for example: Numbers 16:30; Job 7:9; Isaiah 57:9; Jonah 2:6; Matthew 11:23; Luke 10:15). We may also connect the concept of Paradise to Hades because Jesus told the thief on the cross that he would be with Him in Paradise on the very day of their death (Luke 23:43). The Greek word 'paradeisos' is first found in Genesis 2:8 referring to the garden that God made for Adam and his wife to dwell in. Peter causes us to know that Jesus also went down by the Spirit into a place that he refers to as

28- You have made known to me the ways of life; You shall make me full of joy with your presence.

29- Men and brethren⁵⁶ let me speak confidently to you concerning the patriarch David for also he is dead and is buried and his sepulcher is with us even until this day.

30- Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath that from the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;

31- Foreseeing this he spoke concerning the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in Hades, neither would his flesh see corruption.

32- This Jesus has God raised up, of which we are all witnesses⁵⁷.

33- Therefore God exalted⁵⁸ Him to his right hand, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath poured forth this, which ye now see and hear.

'prison,' a place that appears to be different than the Paradise, where He preached to those who were disobedient prior to Noah's day (1 Peter 3:19).

⁵⁵ The Hebrew adjective used is 'chaside' which means 'loyal or faithful' the Greek word is 'hosion' and means 'pious or saint'.

⁵⁶ This is a first case example of an Apostle referring to non-Christian Jews as brethren (adelphoi).

⁵⁷ Jesus told His disciples that they should wait to receive the power that would be given after that the Holy Spirit had come upon them which effectively would qualify them to be His witnesses (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). Now that they have been endued with the power of the Holy Spirit Peter boldly proclaims that they are the witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus.

⁵⁸ Jesus told a general audience at the Feast of Tabernacles that rivers of living water would flow out of their lives if they would receive the gift of God that He had to give. However, the gift of God (or the promise the Father) would only be available after Jesus paid for the sin of men, destroyed Satan's stronghold, and then was raised up from the dead by the power of the Holy Ghost. After having spoiled principalities and powers, He would then be exalted to the right hand of the Father and give His redeemed the executive power to administer His government through the preaching of the gospel (John 7:37-39; Luke 24:49; Ephesians 1:19-20; Colossians 2:15; Isaiah 9:7).

After Jesus had completely defeated Satan and destroyed his claim and authority over men, He was exalted to the highest place of authority: the Father's right hand. The absolute reign of Satan was over, and proof had been provided that the reign of Jesus Christ had begun (John 12:31; 16:11; Hebrews 2:14; 2 Timothy 1:10). Through the baptism in the Holy Ghost, the church was given the power to execute the authority and ministry of Jesus on the earth, which is the proof of His resurrection (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; Mark 16:20). The saints were given all power over all of the works of Satan: to cast out devils, cure those oppressed with sickness and disease, and to have all authority over sin and iniquity and every work of darkness (1 John 3:7-8; 4:4; 5:18; Luke 10:19; Mark 16:17-18; Ephesians 6:10-18; John 14:12).

Many today want to end the message of the gospel with Jesus' death on the cross. But when Peter preached, he not only declared the resurrection - but also the proof that Jesus was exalted to the highest place of authority over every power (Acts 2:34; 5:31; 7:55-56; Mark 16:19; Romans 8:34; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3,13; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Peter 3:22). The proof of His resurrection and his authority over all things was found solely in the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. All who were around that day could both hear and see this proof as the tongues of fire proceeded from the lips of the redeemed. The sign of the Holy Ghost was manifested by tongues, and by the ecstatic state of those who had received power from on High (Acts 2:3-4,15; Acts 10:45-46; 11:15-16). It was a witness to all of those who knew the scripture that the Messiah had come, and the work of His Kingdom had begun (Joel 2:28-29; Isaiah 32:15; 44:3; Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26-27; 37:14).

The ministry of the exalted King of Kings has not changed; He is still the great Baptizer who continues to pour out the Holy Ghost upon all those who will believe. Unless we are baptized in His power and authority which are given by the Holy Ghost, we can neither be His witnesses nor the representatives of His kingdom (Luke 3:16; Acts 2:38-39; Romans 14:17; Matthew 12:28). When Paul preached the gospel, he did so by the power of the Holy Ghost - with mighty signs and wonders (Romans 15:19). Christ's disciples today must understand that nothing has changed; the

34- For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he himself said, “The Lord said unto my Lord⁵⁹, Sit on my right hand,

35- Until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

36- Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain, that God has made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified⁶⁰, both Lord and Christ⁶¹.

37- Now when they heard this, they were cut⁶² to their heart, and said unto Peter and to the other apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

38- Then Peter said unto them, Repent⁶³ and be baptized each of you **in the name of Jesus Christ⁶⁴** for the releasing⁶⁵ of sins, and **you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit⁶⁶**.

will of God is still the same. It is the Holy Ghost who is to be in charge of our lives to lead us and to guide us (John 14:26; 15:26; Romans 8:14,16). He is the One who is to preside over the church meetings, and the only One with the ability to reveal the person of Jesus Christ (John 16:13-15; 1 Corinthians 12:7,11; Acts 5:3,32; 13:4; 15:28; 16:6; 20:28; Romans 14:17; 15:16; 1 Thessalonians 1:5).

⁵⁹ This is quoted from Psalms 110:1/LXX 109:1, which in the Hebrew says “YHWH la adoni” or “YHWH to my Lord”. The Greek language however makes no distinction between the name of God in the Old Testament and “the Lord” that David refers to. The Greek language in both the Septuagint and the New Testament text says “O kurios to kurio mou”, “the Lord to my Lord”. Yet the Lord to whom YHWH was addressing was also David’s Lord and shown here to be referring to Jesus Christ (Matthew 22:43-45). This application of Jesus Christ to David’s adoni makes a clear distinction between Jesus Christ and YHWH (Yahweh) for Jesus Christ has been exalted to the right hand of YHWH who by application then is the Father God.

⁶⁰ Unlike verse 23 the proper Greek word for crucified is used here ‘stauroo’. Peter emphasizes to those that were listening that they were the ones responsible for crucifying the long awaited Messiah who was also proving to be the Lord by Peter’s preaching.

⁶¹ Jesus is both the ‘Kurios’ (Lord) spoken of by David and the ‘Christos’ (Messiah) foretold by the prophets.

⁶² The power of Holy Spirit preaching has this effect, “for the word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, even penetrating to the dividing of the soul and the spirit of both joints and marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). Also, the same effect of tongues and its interpretation is felt by the unbeliever who hears these words, which make known, “the secrets of his heart” (1 Corinthians 14:25).

⁶³ The Greek verb ‘metanoein’ means to ‘change ones mind’. The meaning of this word denotes that the change of mind would result in the change of ones life. The message of the Kingdom of God is to repent. It is found the first time in the New Testament in Matthew 3:2 and occurs a total of 34 times from Matthew to Revelation. The ability to repent is granted to us by the grace of God which has granted repentance to us as was granted to the house of Cornelius (Acts 11:18). Jesus also preached this message saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent, and believe the gospel.” (Mark 1:15)

⁶⁴ Jesus had commissioned the disciples to baptize in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). Peter was not disregarding the instruction of his Lord in this sermon rather He is emphasizing in whose name they must believe and in whose authority their lives would be changed. In fact, it may be argued that it was not only water baptism that was being referred to but also baptism into the body of Christ and baptism into the Holy Spirit and fire (Acts 1:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:5; Colossians 2:12; Matthew 3:11; Acts 11:16; Hebrews 6:2). Certainly, remission and cleansing from sin comes only by the blood of Jesus and yet it is connected to baptism in this address. Therefore, the extent of what Peter was ministering reaches beyond just the baptism in water and certainly includes baptism into Jesus and into the Holy Spirit all of which water baptism symbolizes (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12; Mark 16:16). As John baptized in water unto repentance, repentance is now granted in the name of Jesus and the remission of sin by His blood (Matthew 26:28; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 9:22; Acts 10:43). Paul was very careful to make certain that everyone understood that salvation only came by the blood of Jesus insomuch that he rarely baptized anyone (1 Corinthians 1:17). The message of being

39- For the promise⁶⁷ is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are far off, as many as the Lord our God calls to Himself.

40- And with many other words he earnestly testified and exhorted saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation.

41- Therefore those that gladly welcomed his word were baptized: and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

42- And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

43- And fear came upon every soul⁶⁸: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

44- And all that believed were together⁶⁹, and had all things common;

45- And they sold their possessions and goods, and divided them to everyone, according as anyone had need.

46- And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread in their houses they partook of food with gladness and simplicity of heart,

47- Praising God and having favor with all the people⁷⁰. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved⁷¹.

baptized in water was of the highest importance in the early church. As Philip communicated the gospel to the eunuch, the eunuch was brought to the question of water baptism (Acts 8:36). The need for water baptism and its important role in the early church is emphasized by the disciples of Jesus baptizing, the Samaritans being baptized, those at Lydia, also of both Crispus, Cornelius and their households and of the disciples at Ephesus (John 3:22; 4:1-2; Acts 8:12; 9:18; 10:47; 16:15; 18:8; 19:5). In what name should we be baptized then? According to scripture we should be baptized in the name of Jesus as the only begotten Son of God and in the name of the Father and in the name of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; Acts 8:16; 10:48; 19:5).

⁶⁵ The Greek word 'aphesis' comes from the word 'aphiemi' which means 'sent away'. It also translates the Hebrew words 'shalach' and 'deror' in the Septuagint as in Isaiah 61:1 which mean 'sent away' and 'released' respectively. The Greek word 'aphesis' appears 50 times in the Septuagint. It translated the Hebrew word 'Jubile' in Numbers 36:4 and 'release' in Deuteronomy 15:2 which describes YHWH' release of debts at the end of every seven years. One of the highlight scriptures where 'shalach' is found in relations to the subject of this verse is in Leviticus 16 which describes the sending away of Israel's sins by the goat that was sent to Azazel. Aphesis may also be found in the dictionary and is defined as the loss or removal of an unstressed vowel at the beginning of a word for example "round" for "around".

⁶⁶ The gift of the Holy Spirit that is extended to Peter's audience is the same gift that they had received. The same gift is highlighted when the gospel was preached by Peter at the house of Cornelius, "And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God." (Acts 10:46-47).

⁶⁷ The promise that Peter refers to is both the promise of the Father spoken of by Jesus in Luke 24:49 and the promise that God made by the prophet Joel referred to in verse 23. A promise that was not limited to those at Jerusalem or to that generation but to those still far off for as long as God will call out to mankind a promise that extends unto the end of the world (Matthew 28:20).

⁶⁸ All those at Jerusalem who heard Peter and the others speak in tongues and prophesy along with other signs and wonders must have realized that Jesus Christ was indeed the Messiah and that they had done a great evil. Certainly, in view of the disciples doing the same works that Jesus did and even greater works Jerusalem was filled with the same miracles that occupied the ministry of Jesus.

⁶⁹ This does not refer to a location for certainly there was no house that could hold them all. Rather they were together in unity there were no denominations there was only one church and one group of Christians to belong to.

⁷⁰ The miraculous power and demonstration of the Spirit had won the masses at Jerusalem over to a respect and admiration for the church that was at Jerusalem. It must have been an awesome site to witness the revival that was going on in Jerusalem. Everyday this growing number of people would

Acts 3

- 1- Peter and John were going up⁷² together into the temple at the ninth hour⁷³ of prayer.
- 2- And a man who being lame from his mothers belly⁷⁴ was carried whom they placed daily at the gate of the temple called Beautiful to ask alms from those who were going into the temple.
- 3- Who seeing Peter and John being about to enter into the temple asked to receive alms.
- 4- And Peter gazing upon him with John said, “Look on us”.
- 5- And he gave attention to them expecting to receive something from them.
- 6- But Peter said, “Silver and gold are not at my disposal⁷⁵ but what I have this I will give to you **in the name** of Jesus Christ the Nazarean rise up and walk⁷⁶.”
- 7- And taking him by the right hand he raised him up and instantly his feet and ankle bones were strengthened.
- 8- And leaping up he stood and walked and entered with them into the temple walking and leaping and praising God.
- 9- And all the people saw him walking and praising God.
- 10- For they knew him that it was he who for alms was sitting at the Beautiful gate of the temple and they were filled with amazement and extreme astonishment⁷⁷ at that which had happened to him.
- 11- And as the lame man who was healed tightly held Peter and John all the people ran together unto them utterly amazed into the porch called Solomon’s.

assemble themselves at the Temple and the ministry and communication of the Spirit of God would flow as rivers of living water into the streets of Jerusalem.

⁷¹ The phrase is ‘tous sozomenous’, which translates “those being saved”. The passive sense of this phrase is established from its usage in the Septuagint in scriptures such as Isaiah 37:32; 45:50.

⁷² The verb ‘anabainon’ which means ‘going up’ was used because the Temple was situated on a high place in Jerusalem (Josephus, Ant. 12.4.2, 164).

⁷³ The ninth hour of prayer is equivalent to our 3:00 p.m. This time is associated with the “Olah Tamid” which is the daily ascent offering or whole burnt offering. This offering was made regularly in the morning and in the even. The Tamid means that which is done regularly or perpetually, (Numbers 28:3; Leviticus 6:6). It was called the ascent offering because its fire ascended to God in heaven and was inhaled by Him as a sweet smelling aroma that was well pleasing. The early church kept this time as a set apart or sacred time to offer up the sacrifice of praise.

⁷⁴ The Greek ‘koilia’ is used in the sense of womb instead of belly as the organ of digestion. Koilia is used to refer to the womb in the Septuagint as well, (Deut 28:4, 11; Job 1:21; 38:8; Isa 49:1; Jer 1:5; Ps 21:10/AV 22:11). It is used by Jesus in John 7:38 to describe where the rivers of the Holy Spirit would flow out of man.

⁷⁵ The Greek verb ‘huparcho’ may be translated, ‘be present, be at ones disposal, among you, at hand, be ready’. It is first used in Genesis 12:5 and is translated from the Hebrew ‘rachash’ which means acquire, gather, accumulate possessions. Both the noun and the verb of ‘rachash’ occur together in this verse and is translated by the Authorized Version “ and of all their substance that they had gathered”. The first occurrence of ‘huparcho’ in the New Testament is in Matthew 19:21, “go sell your property (what you have)”.

⁷⁶ This is similar to what Jesus said to the man sick of the palsy in Matthew 9:5, Mark 2:9, Luke 5:23.

⁷⁷ The Greek word ‘ecstasis’ is found seven times in the New Testament four of which are in Acts. Its first occurrence in the Old Testament is in Genesis 2:21. It is from this word that we derive the word ecstasy. However, this word may also be understood to mean bewilderment, distraction, confusion, astonishment or terror, this word denotes extreme astonishment. The first occurrence of this word in the New Testament is found in Mark 5:42, “And immediately the damsel got up, and walked; for she was twelve years of age. And they were astonished with a great astonishment.”

12- Now, Peter beholding it responded to the people, Men! Israelites why do you marvel at this? Why do you stare at us as if our own power⁷⁸ or piety⁷⁹ had made this man to walk.

13- The God⁸⁰ of our fathers Abraham and Isaac and Jacob has glorified⁸¹ His Servant Jesus, Him whom you handed over⁸² and denied in the presence of Pilate⁸³ when he had decided to release Him.

14- But you have denied the Holy and Righteous One and begged⁸⁴ that a man, a murder be given over to you.

15- And you have killed the Author⁸⁵ of Life, whom God raised up from among the dead of which we are witnesses.

16- And the faith upon⁸⁶ **His name** has made this one strong whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Him gave to him this perfect health before you all.

⁷⁸ The dunamis (power) that they had received in chapter 2 was not their own power but rather the power of the Holy Spirit. It was very important to God that this distinction be made by Peter so that the people would not be confused as to who was doing the miracle.

⁷⁹ The Greek word 'eusebeia' is commonly translated 'piety', regarding correct religious beliefs and practices. It is found 15 times in the New Testament and first occurs in this verse; it is used 9 times in Paul's letters to Timothy. It is most commonly translated godliness in the Authorized Version; as piety towards God implies godliness. In the Old Testament it is first found in the Septuagint in Proverbs 1:7. The meaning that is given in Isaiah 11:1 reflects the meaning that is applied to 'eusebeia' in Proverbs and that is the fear or reverence for God. In Isaiah 11:1 'eusebeia' translated the Hebrew 'yerah' which, means 'fear, reverence, a state of piety and respect.'

⁸⁰ Peter makes it very clear that this is the God of Israel who has intervened on behalf of His Servant Jesus. This same statement can be found word for word in the Septuagint in Exodus 3:6 and 3:15.

⁸¹ The Greek 'doxazo' means to 'esteem glorious'. Although, it cannot be said with certainty that this refers to the miracle rather than the resurrection the application leans more toward this miracle. Through the event of the lame man being healed God has exalted the honor and name of His Servant Jesus. It is certain that it is this application that will be highlighted in verse 16. In view of Peter's emphasis on the fact that this miracle was not by their power it stands to reason that the glorification of Jesus by this miracle describes not only the source of the power but the purpose of the power.

⁸² The Greek verb 'paradidomi' is the word most commonly used of Judas' betrayal of Jesus.

⁸³ Pontius Pilate was appointed by Sejanus and governed Judea from A.D. 26 to 36 (Ebib; Paris: Gabalda, 1981). Luke refers to three attempts that Pilate made to release Jesus, Luke 23:4, 14-15, 22.

⁸⁴ The Greek word 'aiteo' means to demand, plead or beg'. It first occurs in the Septuagint in Exodus 3:22, "But every woman shall borrow of her neighbor..." And the first occurrence in the New Testament is in Matthew 5:42, "Give to him who ask of you..."

⁸⁵ The Greek noun 'archegos' means 'pathfinder, pioneer, originator, author, leader, founder.' The same word is used in Hebrews 2:10 and is translated captain by the Authorized Version, "captain of their salvation".

⁸⁶ The Greek preposition 'epi' is translated most often 'on' or 'upon,' and although it is awkward it is accurate. The next phrase uses yet another preposition 'dia', which is most commonly translated 'through', 'on account of' or 'because of'. The healing power of God is manifested by "the faith upon His name" and "the faith that is through the name of Jesus". Jesus made it known that all power was given unto Him in heaven and in earth, Therefore, He commanded that when we preach or minister we are to do it in His name. The name of Jesus communicates faith and by the name of Jesus the miracle power of faith is released. Jesus said, "These signs shall follow them that believe, in my name," devils will be cast out, the believer will "speak with new tongues," they will "lay hands on the sick and they will recover" (Mark 16:17; Luke 24:47). Jesus is still at work today because He is the unchanging Savior who is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He is the unchanging Savior whose government is forever increasing. When Paul cast out devils or ministered healing he used the name of Jesus just as Peter and John used the name of Jesus. The sons of Sceva failed when they used the name of Jesus because they had no authority to use His name. They could not speak of Jesus as their Lord but only Jesus who Paul preached. As a result, the evil

- 17- And now brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance as also your rulers⁸⁷ .
- 18- But in this way what God announced beforehand by the mouth of all His prophets⁸⁸ that the Christ should suffer He has fulfilled⁸⁹ .
- 19- Repent therefore and turn back that your sins may be wiped out⁹⁰ so that times of refreshing⁹¹ may come from the presence of the Lord.
- 20- And He shall send⁹² Jesus Christ who before was proclaimed to you.
- 21- Whom heaven must certainly receive until the times of restoration⁹³ of all things which God spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets since the earliest time⁹⁴ .

spirit did not have to listen to them but rather attacked and hurt them (Acts 19:13). "But as many as would receive Him, who having faith in His name, to them he gave authority to be the sons of God" (John 1:12).

⁸⁷ The Greek word 'archon' refers to the leaders and rulers of Israel. It is the same word found in 1 Corinthians 2:8 that some have miss applied to the Devil and his angels. However, it is clearly the rulers of Israel who did this in ignorance for otherwise "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory".

⁸⁸ The declaration of the sufferings of Christ is first indicated by His prophet Moses in Genesis chapter 3:15 "He will crush your head but you will bite His heel". Then again when Abraham was commanded to offer his only begotten son on an Altar to God (Genesis 22). The sufferings of the Messiah are witnessed from the Passover lamb to the Day of Atonement. Some of the more specific prophecies that were mentioned earlier in chapter 2 in Peter's address to the people in Jerusalem are found in the Psalms.

⁸⁹ Certainly, God will prevent the evil intentions of man in order to protect His children. When He does allow the evil plans of men to be fulfilled He uses it to bring about His ultimate purpose of good. When Joseph's brothers were about to kill him God prevented them from murdering him. God could have also prevented Joseph from being sold into slavery but He allowed it and through the suffering of Joseph at the hands of evil man God spared the masses from a devastating famine (Genesis 37:21; 45:5).

⁹⁰ This is the first time that the Greek verb 'exaleipho' is used in the New Testament. It means wipe away, blot out, wipe out or erase. It is used a total of five times in the NT and Colossians 2:14 and Revelation 3:5 underscore the finality of the meaning of this word. As God has wipe out the ordinances and as he will wipe out or blot out a name from the book of life He will wipe out our sins if we repent.

⁹¹ The Greek word 'anapsuxis' is used only once in the New Testament and once in the Septuagint. The word is understood to convey the meaning of refreshing, relaxation, breathing space or recovery. It appears in Exodus 8:11 in the Septuagint and refers to the break or breathing space that was given after the plague of the frogs.

⁹² Peter is referring to the definite return of Jesus the Messiah to rule and reign over all the earth.

⁹³ The kingdom of God will come with power and great glory. Jesus will descend with a shout and with the voice of an archangel and the shofar of God (1 Thessalonians 4:16). At His coming the dead in Christ shall rise first, and we who are alive and remain shall be caught up in the air (1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians. 4:16-17). There will at that time be great tribulation, as God makes one final plea for the children of Israel to repent and accept His salvation (Romans 11:15,25-26; Daniel 9:24; Revelation 4:1-19:6). At the end of the seven years of tribulation, the Lord Jesus will come with all of His saints to destroy wickedness and cast Satan into the bottomless pit (Jude 1:14-15; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; Matthew 16:27; 25:31; Revelation 20:1-3). At this time a new age will begin: it will be the age of the reign of Christ Jesus. It will be the time of the restoration of all things, and the refreshing of His presence. The culture of the Kingdom of God and the beauty of the reign of Christ will come to the earth in all His fullness. There will be no more war, the lion will lay down by the lamb, the snake will lose it's poison - and all the nations of the earth will live under the rule of Christ Jesus and His saints.

Although Jesus broke the power of sin and destroyed the power of death 2000 years ago, today all creation groans and is in travail: waiting for that time of the resurrection of the saints and the reign of Christ on earth (Hebrews 2:14; 2 Timothy 1:10; Romans 8:21-23). The reign of Christ Jesus began when He ascended up on High and was seated at the right hand of the Father; but He sits there until all of His enemies are made His footstool (Psalm 110:1; Matthew 22:44; Acts 2:35; Hebrews 1:13; 10:13). The chief enemy is Death - which came into the world of men, and operates in the lives of men through sin. The last enemy Death will be destroyed when the last rebel is cast out of the kingdom, and Satan and all those who have refused the ways of God will be cast into the lake of fire (1 Corinthians 15:24-26; Revelation 2:27; 19:15; 20:14; 21:4; Psalm 2:8-9; Isaiah 25:8; Hosea 13:14).

Certainly, we must include the church and its role in the restoration of all things. The church is to shine as the very being of Christ Jesus in all of His fullness in the earth right now (Ephesians 1:22-23; Matthew

22- For certainly, Moses said to the fathers, The Lord God will raise up to you a Prophet like me from among your brethren; you shall listen to Him in all things whatsoever he may tell you.⁹⁵

23- And it shall be every soul which shall not listen to that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed⁹⁶ from among the people.⁹⁷

24- And certainly all of the prophets from Samuel and those who came after as many as spoke announced these days.

25- You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God appointed to our fathers saying to Abraham, And in your seed shall all the families⁹⁸ of the earth be blessed⁹⁹.

5:14; Philippians 2:15; 1 Corinthians 12:27). Above all things, we are to be the witnesses of His resurrection and reign during this time period. To exclude this part of the restoration of all things would lift this scripture entirely out of its context. We have been ordained by God to demonstrate His kingdom, walk in sonship authority, and execute His will upon the earth in such a way that all men can see the living Christ Jesus (Galatians 4:1-7; John 1:12; 17:21-23; 20:21; Mark 16:17; Matthew 12:28). The same gospel that Jesus preached must be preached in all of the nations of the earth before the end (Matthew 24:14; James 5:7). Those works which Jesus did and greater works must be revealed through the household of faith (John 14:12). The position of asking the Father whatever we want, and then the witness and fruit of His response - must be seen in all the earth as the witness of the relationship between the Father and the redeemed, given to us by Jesus Christ (John 15:16). Unfortunately today we have more talk than witness; but all of these things can change in a day!

Be certain that God's nostrils are flared with anger against wickedness and sin (Colossians 3:6; Ephesians 5:6; Romans 2:5; Revelation 6:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-8; Psalm 7:11; 110:5; Isaiah 13:9; Zephaniah 1:15). His body trembles with anger and anticipation to rid His creation of every ungodly and demonic thing. There is an opportunity for all men to escape the wrath of God that is to come. It is not merely a confession that you believe that Jesus Christ is the Savior; rather it is the belief in Christ Jesus that produces the miracle of a new creation. It is the miracle power that is in His name that causes anyone to be born of the Spirit and made a child of God (Galatians 6:15; Ephesians 4:24; John 3:3; Romans 8:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17). The time is short, and deception has taken a stronger hold upon the minds of both the world and the church. It is time to cry out to God and bow yourself unto the rulership of His word and His will!

⁹⁴ The Greek noun 'apokatastasis' (restoration) has been the source of some wild speculation. It is from this verse that Origen built his theory of Apokatastasis, a doctrine about the restoration of everything to a purely spiritual state, which included the restoration of the devil himself. Of course this is heresy in that it contradicts a host of scripture on the subject, the doctrine of eternal judgment being only one example (Hebrews 6:2). The Greek 'apokatastasis' means to change to a previous good state or to restore something. Josephus used it of the restoration of the Jews under Cyrus after the Babylonian Captivity (Ant. 11.3.8). A good example of the use of this word is found in Mark 3:5 "he stretched out his hand and was restored". The Greek word 'aion' may be translated, very long time, eternity, earliest times, since the beginning, ever, world, evermore, age, universe.

⁹⁵ When one compares the Majority Text to Deuteronomy 18:15 in the Septuagint this passage is an exact replica.

⁹⁶ The Greek verb 'exolethreuo' is found one time in the New Testament. However, it is found about 220 times in the Septuagint. It is first found in Genesis 17:14 where it is translated from the Hebrew word 'karat' which is the most sever curse. It means to be 'cut off' which refers both to this life and the life to come.

⁹⁷ In Peter's address he jumps from Deuteronomy 18:15, to a statement very similar to 18:19 and brings additional revelation by the Holy Spirit as to exactly what the Lord will 'require' of the person who refuses to listen to what that Prophet says. We now discover that God will destroy that person. God will ruthlessly cut that one off from his people just as the one who refuses to fast on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 23:29).

⁹⁸ In Genesis chapter 22:18 and 26:4 the Hebrew word for nations is used, 'gowy' instead of families. The Septuagint uses the word 'ethnos', for nations. However, Peter now personalizes it even more by using the word for families or lineage. Perhaps the Holy Spirit said this in order to draw a closer family relationship of the nations that are converted to the seed or spermati of Abraham.

26- To you first God has raised up His Child¹⁰⁰ Jesus; He has sent Him, blessing you by turning each of you back from your iniquity.

Chapter 4

- 1- Now, as they were speaking to the people the priest and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees¹⁰¹ came upon them,
- 2- being distressed that they taught the people and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.
- 3- And they laid hands on them and put them in hold until the next day; for it was already evening.
- 4- But many of those who had heard the word¹⁰² believed and the number of the men came to 5000.
- 5- And it came to pass on the next day the rulers and the elders and the scribes were gathered together in Jerusalem
- 6- also Annas the high priest, Caiaphas¹⁰³, John and Alexander and as many as were of a high priestly family.
- 7- And standing them in the their midst inquired, In what power or in what name did you do this.
- 8- Then Peter, Holy Spirit filled said to them, Rulers of the people and elders.
- 9- If we this day are examined as to a good work in which an infirmed man has been cured.
- 10- Be it known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that **in the name** of Jesus Christ the Nazarean¹⁰⁴ whom you crucified whom God raised from the dead by Him this one appears before you whole¹⁰⁵.
- 11- This is the stone¹⁰⁶ that has been rejected by you the builders which has become head of the corner¹⁰⁷.

⁹⁹ As Paul also said in Galatians 3:16, Jesus is the seed that God promised Abraham in Genesis 22:18

¹⁰⁰ There are seven titles given to Jesus by Peter in this sermon: pais, 'child,' hagios, 'holy one,' dikaios, 'righteous one,' archegos tes zoes, 'author of life,' prophetes, 'prophet,' Christos, 'Messiah' and sperma Abraam, 'seed of Abraham'. The Greek word 'pais' will be used twice in chapter 4, once in verse 27 and then again in verse 30, many translate 'pais' servant but it seems far more appropriate to stay with the primary meaning of 'pais' and not impose the many of 'doulos', which is the word for servant and is used in Acts 4:29.

¹⁰¹ The Sadducees considered themselves the descendants of Zadok who was named priest during the time of Solomon. They came into existence during the time of Maccabe and were considerably Hellenized. They did not seem to have any following among the people. They opposed Jesus and were those who denied the resurrection, they believed that the soul died with their body.

¹⁰² The Greek phrase used here is 'ho logos' which means 'the word'. The word that has power to bring forth life when it is received into the heart and that will not return void. The word that is as a seed that the disciples were to go forth and sow which would be an incorruptible seed in those who believed bringing to pass a new birth.

¹⁰³ In that Annas had been high priest prior to Caiaphas he was shown the respect as well as position in the responsibilities of the high priest something that we also observe the night that Jesus was handed over to the authorities. After Jesus was arrested he was taken to Annas's house first and then Caiaphas (John 18:13). Caiaphas was the high priest from A.D. 18 to 36 being appointed by Valerius Gratus.

¹⁰⁴ Peter revealed that the power to heal the crippled man was in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarean a fact that he has already stated twice, Acts 3:6,16.

¹⁰⁵ The verb that Peter uses is 'sotzo', which can be used of physical or spiritual salvation. In this case he was saved from his disease that had crippled him.

12- And there is absolutely no salvation¹⁰⁸ by any other means, for there is not another name¹⁰⁹ given under heaven unto men by which we must be saved¹¹⁰.

13- But observing the boldness¹¹¹ of Peter and John and having detected that they were illiterate and uneducated they marveled recognizing¹¹² that they had been with Jesus.

14- And beholding the man standing with them who had been healed they had nothing to say¹¹³ in reply.

¹⁰⁶ The corner stone was used to join two walls of a building together. It was used to bear the stress and weight of such as connection. God was rebuilding Israel but those in the leadership whose hands should have served God in the construction of this new house rejected the stone that God had given them.

¹⁰⁷ Peter speaking by the Holy Spirit quotes Psalms 118:22/LXX-117:22 in view of its fulfillment in Jesus who is the corner stone. This quote is identical to the way that it appears in the MT (Hebrew Bible) with one exception "you the" builders is included. The Holy Spirit identified those leaders as the ones who were personally responsible for the rejection of the corner stone (Mark 12:10; 1 Peter 2:4-7). We may conclude that the changes that exist between the quote as it appears here and in the MT and the Septuagint is due to the fulfillment and personal application in that generation.

¹⁰⁸ The Greek word 'soteria' is the corresponding noun to 'sotzo' (save, heal) and may be translated either 'salvation or deliverance'. It was used for the first time in Exodus 14:13 when God was about to part the Red Sea so that the children of Israel could escape from the power of Pharaoh. The meaning of 'soteria' is deliverance from evil, whether political, physical, moral or cataclysmic and subsequently coming into a state of wholeness. The Greek word 'soteria' translates the Hebrew word 'Yeshuah' or 'Yasha' a total of 138 times from which the name of Jesus is derived 'Yehoshua' which means Yehoah's (Yahweh) salvation.

¹⁰⁹ The name of Jesus is the highest authority that is given in heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-22). The name of Jesus is more powerful than any other thing, and at the declaration of His name everything must obey and change (Philippians 2:9-10). All powers and authorities in nature, in the realm of men, demon spirits - yes, everything in heaven and in earth are subject to that name - and must obey what Jesus says, and what is said by and through His name. Jesus came to strip Satan of His power and deliver men from the pains of death (Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8; John 12:31; 16:11). He came to make all things new, beginning with the hearts of men.

There is no other means of salvation but by the name of Jesus (Acts 2:21; 4:12; Romans 10:13). It does not matter whether a person is a Jew or Gentile, a religious person or not; God demands that each person be changed and made a new creation (Galatians 6:15; 2 Corinthians 5:17; John 3:3; Romans 6:6; Colossians 2:11). When a person calls on the name of Jesus, through faith in His name they will be delivered from every evil thing and brought into the family of God, and given the blessings and protection of His household. At the mention of His name all heaven is mobilized to execute the will of God. The Holy Spirit, who has come to reveal Him and make Him known, creates the miracle when His name is spoken. This is the greatest miracle that men could ever imagine: a miracle that makes us heirs of God and co-inheritors with Christ Jesus (Romans 8:17; Galatians 4:7; John 1:12). The miracle of salvation recreates a man in the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:24). Just as God reached down and shaped Adam in His image and likeness, the miracle of salvation forms a new spirit and a new heart after the image of God. The person who once was dominated by the power of Satan is brought into God's family and is given the divine nature, being made one with God (Ephesians 2:2-3; 2 Peter 1:4; John 17:21-23). This all takes place by the authority and power found only that in that Name - the name of Jesus Christ!

¹¹⁰ Peter used the Greek verb 'sotzo' again this time applying it to each man's need to be made whole instead of the cripple man's need to be healed. It is by the same power of the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarean which healed the cripple man that anyone who will believe can be made whole spiritually. A similar connection is made when Jesus healed the man sick with the palsy proving that the same power that heals forgives sin (Matthew 9:2-8).

¹¹¹ The 'parrhesia', 'boldness' is Holy Spirit inspired eloquence and confidence. Peter and the others prayed in Acts 4:29 asking God to grant 'parrhesia' to them so that they could speak the word. As a result they were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word with boldness (Acts 4:31).

¹¹² There is a profound difference in the response of these religious leaders to Peter's sermon from the general public. Although, Peter had preached in a much harsher tone to the masses of Jerusalem about 5000 of them responded to the Holy Spirit. As the Holy Spirit spoke through Peter the religious leaders who recognize that Peter and John have been with Jesus only harden the heart more against God's salvation.

15- And having commanded them to go outside the Sanhedrin¹¹⁴ they conferred with one another

16- saying, What shall we do to these men? For it is certain that a known sign has come to pass through them manifested to all those living in Jerusalem and we are unable to deny it.

17- So that it¹¹⁵ spread no further among the people let us threaten them with a threat no longer to speak in this name to any man.

18- And having called them they charged them not to speak or teach **in the name of Jesus**.

19- But Peter and John responding to them said, Whether it is right before God to listen to you rather than God you judge.

20- For we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.

21- But they have further threatened them let them go finding no way as to how they might punish them on account of the people because all were glorifying God on account of what happened.

22- For the man was more than forty years old on whom this sign of healing had taken place.

23- And being released they came to their own and reported everything to them that the high priest and the elders said.

24- And having heard they lifted up their voices with one accord to God and said, O Master¹¹⁶ you are the God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that are in them.

25- Who by the mouth of your servant David¹¹⁷ said, Why did the nation rage and the people plot¹¹⁸ folly.

26- The kings of the earth stood up and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ.

27- Who indeed were gathered together against your holy child¹¹⁹ Jesus whom you anointed both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and people of Israel

28- to do whatever your hand and counsel predetermined to happen.

¹¹³ What Peter has said by the Holy Spirit has had enough effect to amaze the Sanhedrim but it is the living proof of the cured crippled man that leaves them unable to argue with their message.

¹¹⁴ The Greek word synedrion means 'conference, session, meeting'. The Sanhedrin was the official council of 70 men plus the presiding president.

¹¹⁵ The power of the name of Jesus was spreading rapidly because of the signs or miracles of the Holy Spirit. The probability is that this happened very soon after the sign of Pentecost where 3000 were saved and now 5000 more have been converted. Certainly, the name and power of the resurrected Jesus was the talk of Jerusalem.

¹¹⁶ Master, 'despotes' was probably a common address for God. The Septuagint translates 'Adonai', 'despotes'. This same word is also used as an address to God in Luke 2:29.

¹¹⁷ Once again it is confirmed that this was not just something that David said but that God said through David. This verse is quoted exactly as it appears in the Hebrew Bible (MT) and the Septuagint in Psalms 2:1-2.

¹¹⁸ The same Hebrew word 'haga' which is found in Psalms 2:1 is translated 'meditate' in Psalms 1:2, "...and in His law they meditate day and night". The Greek word that is used in both Psalms 2:1 and here in Acts also means mediate or imagine. However, it may be appropriate to translate the whole phrase "emelethsan keva" as "plot folly" in this context instead of "meditate vanity".

¹¹⁹ The Greek word is 'pais' which may be translated child, servant, son, young man. It is one of the synonyms of 'paidion', which refers exclusively to a little child whereas 'pais' may be used of a child of any age. One very important thing that is emphasized by this address is that the early church talked directly to the Father when they prayed. Jesus directed His disciples to do this on the night that he was betrayed, (John 16:23-27).

29- And now Lord look upon their threats and give too your servants all boldness to speak your word.

30- By stretching out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through **the name of your holy child Jesus**¹²⁰.

31- And they having prayed¹²¹ the place was shaken¹²² in which they were assembled and they were all Holy Spirit filled and spoke the word of God¹²³ with boldness.

¹²⁰ Although we have been given power and authority to do the works of Jesus, it is still by the sovereign power of the Father that signs and wonders take place. Father stretches out His hand and touches humanity on behalf of His people who ask in the name of Jesus, who both preach and pray in His mighty name (John 14:13; 15:16; 16:23,26-27). Just because we have been honored by God to receive these special gifts of grace to function in signs, wonders, and miracles does not mean that we are to think that we can operate them on our own at our own pleasure. These gifts are the manifestation of the Holy Spirit operating in and through our lives, and He gives them according to His own will (1 Corinthians 12:7,11). Jesus did not operate independently of the Father and the Holy Spirit, so how could anyone think that they can operate in the giftings of God on their own? There is a relationship that we can have that would allow us to come under the inspirations of God, and move and function by His direction. The Holy Spirit supplies to us the gift of faith to move in miracles and gifts of healing as we yield to Him. God causes us to hear faith, so that we might work miracles by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:28; Galatians 3:5).

There is yet another hindering misconception in the minds of many, who fail to go to their knees and to their Bibles to hear the will of the Father. We need to understand that it is the will of the Father that these signs, wonders, and miracles take place - so that there may be proof of the resurrection and the name of Jesus may be glorified among all nations (John 16:13-15; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:5,8; 2:33; 3:16). The Father is devoted to the name of Jesus being exalted, and the Holy Spirit has come so that we may function in the power of the Kingdom for this purpose. If we fail to believe and move with expectation that these things will happen, we will discover ourselves in a prison of doubt and despond. Miracles and signs and wonders confirm the Good News; and when we go, He also goes with us confirming His word (Mark 16:20; Acts 8:5-7,12; 19:8,11-12). When we stretch out our hands upon the sick and tormented, Father stretches forth His hand upon them too. The Father has sent us in the authority of the Kingdom to heal and to save in Jesus name: this is the gospel - The Good News! (John 20:21; Mark 16:16-18). Because the disciples were not willing to back down from the will of God, but cried out for more, the place was shaken and they were all filled again to function in all those things which the Father demands!

¹²¹ Jesus told his disciples on the night before His death "in that day you shall ask nothing of me" rather they would make their request to the Father in His name (John 16:23,26; 15:16). This is an example of their obedience to the instructions of Jesus. Their prayer was very focused on their desire to see the name of Jesus glorified. The disciples had been threatened by the rulers of Israel to no longer speak in the name of Jesus. So in order to deal with this problem the disciples asked God in effect to increase the magnitude of the miracles. The reason they were in trouble in the first place was because a man who was born crippled was healed. Yet still they were crying out to God that He would do even more miracles by His Holy Child Jesus. The prayer was immediately answered and they were filled once again with the Holy Spirit. An awesome picture of how things work in the Kingdom of God is developed in this event. The disciples who are God's representatives on earth ask the Father, whose purpose it is to glorify His Son Jesus, to perform miracles and as a result the miracle power fills them once again by God the Holy Spirit. If we are to speak the word with boldness and effectiveness then we too must have the same kind of commitment, the same kind of prayer and the same kind of empowerment (Ephesians 6:19-20).

¹²² In Exodus 19:18 Sinai shook at the presence of the Lord, "All of Mount Sinai was smoking because YHWH had descended upon it in the fire; its smoke ascended like the smoke of the furnace and the entire mountain shook exceedingly." Both the people of Israel and the mountain shook at the presence of the Lord (Exodus 19:16,18).

¹²³ The disciples were dependent upon the Holy Spirit to speak the word of God. The phrase "the word of God" may be associated with the Old Testament phrase "the word of the Lord" which is first spoken of in Genesis 15:1. It is used of the prophets and of the special anointing given to them to declare by the Spirit what was in the mind of God (Jeremiah 1:2). With regards to the dependency that the Old Testament prophets had to the authority of the word of the Lord is summed up by the statement of Balaam to Balak, "And Balaam relied and he said unto the servants of Balak, If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God to do more or less" (Numbers 22:18).

32- Now the multitude of those that believed were of one heart and soul and no one said of anything which he possessed that it was his own but everything they had was communal.

33- And with great power the Apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and great grace was upon all of them;

34- neither was anyone among them impoverished¹²⁴ for as many as were owners of estates or houses sold them and brought the value of the sell

35- and laid it at the Apostles feet and distribution was made to each according as anyone had need¹²⁵.

36- And Joses who was surnamed Barnabas¹²⁶ by the Apostle, which is being interpreted son of consolation, a Levite, a Cypriot by birth

37- had an available field sold it brought the money and laid it at the Apostles feet.

Chapter 5

1- But a man who was named Ananias¹²⁷ with Sapphira¹²⁸ his wife sold a possession

2- and he misappropriated some of the price, his wife also being aware of it, and having brought a portion of it laid it at the Apostles feet¹²⁹.

¹²⁴ This may be viewed as the ideal state that is mentioned in Deuteronomy 15:4.

¹²⁵ The early church saw it as their responsibility to labor for the church and support the work of the ministry. Examples of this kind of commitment is also observed among the Christians of Macedonia and the community of believers addressed in the third epistle of John who, “worked for the brethren and the strangers” and were commanded to do it faithfully (3 John 5; 2 Corinthians 8:4,5).

¹²⁶ The name Barnabas according to scripture means son of consolation or encouragement. The name of Barnabas is an example of the weakness in modern linguistics to confirm the meaning of the name. The Best modern scholarship can do is to either assume that it is a scribal error for ‘Barsabbas’ or son of Nabu, which was a Babylonian god.

¹²⁷ Ananias is a common Hebrew name Chananyah which means “God is merciful”.

¹²⁸ Sapphira is from the Aramaic ‘sappira’ and means ‘good or beautiful’.

¹²⁹ How important are your vows to God? We may fail to realize that when we vow something to God, it becomes something consecrated (Genesis 28:22; Genesis 31:13; Genesis 35:1; Leviticus 23:38; Deuteronomy 12:6,11; Psalm 22:25; Psalm 50:14). When something becomes consecrated to God, then it is holy; and must only be used for the purposes of God in worship upon the altar in His house, or for advancing the Kingdom of God by entering into the treasury of His house (Joshua 6:19,24; Malachi 3:10; Mark 12:43; Exodus 35:29; 1 Chronicles 29:3; 2 Chronicles 31:6; 1 Samuel 1:11). Achan soon discovered the reverence that men must have for the consecrated things of God (Joshua 6:19). He thought that he could reach out and take something of the spoils that he found in battle (all of us are very skilled at making things seem right, even though they are wrong). The effects of Achan's transgression brought an eternal judgment upon his own life, and the lives of all his family, and all their possessions (Joshua 7:20-26).

When we come to the event of Ananias and his wife, then we discover that God has not changed the way that He deals with those who trespass against those things that are consecrated to the service of God. In the case of Ananias and Sapphira, the land was theirs and the money was theirs; but they consecrated it all to God, and it then became His. We are all witnesses to how God feels when someone makes something His, and then takes it back and lies about it. It was the activity of Satan that filled their hearts with deceit about the offering, and it is the same work of darkness that fills men's hearts with deceit about the offerings today.

Be very clear - if you consecrate something to God, it is not to go to your nearest poor relative, nor to your favorite project. It goes to the church, and to those who like the Apostles use it only and specifically for the things of the ministry (1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 8:1-24; 2 Corinthians 9:1-15). Those who trespass against the offering of God and use it to make themselves fat are no different than Hophni and Phinehas (1 Samuel 2:16,25; 1 Samuel 2:29,31).

- 3- But Peter said, Ananias why did Satan fill¹³⁰ your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit¹³¹ and to have misappropriated from the price of the estate?
- 4- While it was your dwelling did it not remain yours? And having sold it was it not in your own authority. Why did you establish¹³² this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God!
- 5- Now Ananias hearing these words falling down died¹³³ and great fear came upon all those who heard these things.
- 6- And the younger ones arose and wrapped him up and having carried him out buried him.
- 7- And it came to pass after about three hours his woman also came in not knowing what had happened.
- 8- And Peter responded to her, Tell me if you sold the estate for so much? And she said Yes, for so much.
- 9- And Peter said why did you agree together to tempt the Lord's Spirit behold the feet of those who buried your husband are at the door and they shall carry you out.
- 10- And she immediately fell down at his feet and died.
- 11- And great fear came upon the whole assembly and upon all who heard these things.
- 12- And by the hands of the Apostles many signs and wonders took place among the people and they were all with one mind in Solomon's porch¹³⁴.
- 13- And none of the rest had the courage to join them but the people magnified them.
- 14- And more believers were added to the Lord; multitudes of both men and women.
- 15- Insomuch that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and cots that at least at the coming of Peter his shadow¹³⁵ might overshadow some of them.
- 16- And also the multitude came together from the cities around Jerusalem to bring those sick and tormented by unclean spirits who were all healed.
- 17- And the high priest having raised up and all those with him which is the sect of the Sadducees were filled with anger.
- 18- And laid their hands on the Apostles and put them in a public jail.

¹³⁰ The Greek verb 'epleeroosen' is the same verb used in Acts 4:31 for being filled with the Holy Spirit. Satan has filled the heart of Ananias to lie to the Holy Spirit. Satan is the father of lies and the adversary of God and man (John 8:44).

¹³¹ Jesus anointed men with the Holy Spirit and set them in the church as His representatives. Therefore, it is not man that people are interacting with in the church when they bring an offering to God rather they are interacting directly with God in their offering and service. Although, Ananias and Sapphira told Peter that they were going to donate the full price of the land to the church they had actually made the pledge to God. When they lied to Peter, a mere man who would have never know apart from divine assistance that they were telling a lie, they were actually talking directly to the Holy Spirit who knows the heart of every man.

¹³² Ananias is equally responsible for this deed being in his heart. He allowed himself to be drawn away of his own strong desire and after the sin was conceived it was further established by the power of Satan who dominates the realm of sin and death (James 1:13-15).

¹³³ This is not the first time that someone died because they brought an offering that was profaned before God. Nadab and Abihu made the mistake of bringing and offering that was profaned and they died because of it (Leviticus 10). Also, Achan trespassed by taking some of those things, which were consecrated to God and died (Joshua 7). Ananias and Sapphira were both bringing an offering to the Lord in a profane way because of the lie that they told and also were stealing that, which had been consecrated to God.

¹³⁴ This meeting place of the early church was located on the east side of the temple complex that was built by Herod. It overlooked the Kidron Valley and would have been a public meeting place for anyone to gather to discuss scripture.

¹³⁵ The power of the ministry of Peter such that his shadow transmitted the anointing to heal and the handkerchiefs taken from Paul's body may be viewed as greater works than those which Jesus did as He had promised would happen (Acts 19:12; John 14:12).

19- But an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the prison during the night and having brought them out said

20- Go and standing in the temple speak to the people all the words of this life.

21- And having heard they entered into the temple at dawn and were teaching. Now the high priest having come and those with him they called together the Sanhedrin and all the senate of the sons of Israel and sent to the prison to have them brought.

22- But the officers having come did not find them in the prison; and having returned reported

23- saying, Indeed we found the prison shut with all security and the keepers standing outside before the doors but having opened we found no one inside.

24- and when they heard these words both the priest and the captain of the temple and the high priest were perplexed¹³⁶ concerning them what this might be.

25- But a certain one having come reported to them saying, behold the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple teaching the people.

26- Then the captain having gone with the officers brought them with no violence that they might not be stoned for they feared the people.

27- And having brought them they set them in the Sanhedrin and the high priest asked them

28- saying, did we not charge you by a charge not to teach in this name? And behold you have filled Jerusalem with you teaching and have purposed to bring this mans blood upon us.

29- But Peter and the Apostles answering said, It is necessary to obey God rather than man.

30- The God of our Fathers raised up Jesus whom you killed having hanged on a tree.

31- Him has God exalted by his right hand as a Prince and Savior to give repentance to Israel and sending away¹³⁷ of sins.

32- And we are His witnesses of these things¹³⁸ and also the Holy Spirit which God gave to those who obey Him.

33- Now having heard this they were cut to the heart and took counsel to put them to death.

34- But a certain one of the Sanhedrin having risen up a Pharisee Gamaliel by name a teacher of the law honored by all of the people, commanded to put the Apostles out for short while.

35- And said to them men, Israelites take heed to yourselves concerning what you are about to do to these men.

36- For before these days Theudas rose up declaring himself to be somebody to whom were joined a number of men about 400 who was put to death and all as many as were persuaded of him were dispersed and it came to nothing.

¹³⁶ The hardness of their heart is much like that of Pharaoh for although the supernatural power of God is revealed to them yet they become all the more insistent against the Apostles.

¹³⁷ The Greek word 'aphesis' comes from the word 'aphiemi' which means 'sent away'. It also translates the Hebrew words 'shalach' and 'deror' in the Septuagint as in Isaiah 61:1 which mean 'sent away' and 'released' respectively. The Greek word 'aphesis' appears 50 times in the Septuagint. It translated the Hebrew word 'Jubile' in Numbers 36:4 and 'release' in Deuteronomy 15:2 which describes YHWH' release of debts at the end of every seven years. One of the highlight scriptures where 'shalach' is found in relations to the subject of this verse is in Leviticus 16 which describes the sending away of Israel's sins by the goat that was sent to Azazel.

¹³⁸ The Greek word 'rhema' is used here and could be translated 'word', referent to the gospel message of resurrection, exaltation, repentance and remission of sins in the name of Jesus.

37- After this Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and lead away the people after him and that one was destroyed and whoever had confidence in him scattered.

38- And now I say to you stay away from these men, leave them alone because if this counsel or work is of man it will be overthrown.

39- But if it is from God you cannot overthrow it without also finding yourselves fighting against God.

40- And they called the Apostles and beat them and charged them not to speak **in the name of Jesus** and they were released.

41- Then they departed from their presence of the counsel rejoicing that they were counted worthy to be dishonored for the name.

42- And daily in the temple and in every house did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus Christ.

Chapter 6

1- And in those days the disciples grew in numbers it came to pass that the Greeks murmured¹³⁹ against the Hebrew because their widows were overlooked in the daily service

2- And the twelve called the multitude of disciples together saying, It is not right that we should leave the Word of God to minister¹⁴⁰ to tables.

3- Now brethren search out from among you seven men of good reputation¹⁴¹ full of the Holy Spirit¹⁴² and wisdom who we shall appoint over this need.

4- And we will give ourselves continually to prayer¹⁴³ and the ministry of the Word.

¹³⁹ The same word used for the murmurings of Israel for food in the wilderness when they asked for quail.

¹⁴⁰ Although ministry to the daily needs of widows is important it cannot be allowed to distract those who are called to the ministry of the Word. There is no ministry in the church that is superficial for God requires that those who are involved in caring for widows on His behalf have a good reputation and be full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom.

¹⁴¹ The Greek word is 'martyroumenoi' which is from 'martureo', which primarily means witness.

¹⁴² In order to be God's witness you have to be baptized with the Holy Spirit and endued with power from on high. There is only one example of what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit and endued with power and that is in Acts 2:4. The Greek adjectives 'pleres' is first used here in acts and means 'lacking nothing'. The verb from which this adjective is derived is 'pletho' which is used in Acts 2:4, "And they were all filled with a Holy Spirit and began to speak other languages as the Spirit spoke forth from them".

¹⁴³ There are two types of prayer identified in the New Testament, praying in the Spirit and praying with the understanding. In Acts chapter 2 when the disciples were speaking in the language of the Spirit they were speaking in the Spirit with no regards to man for they were caught away in the Spirit. All those present were miraculously able to understand what was being spoken but those endued with power were not necessarily able to understand. In fact, they were speaking unto God, not by their sense of reasoning or understanding but under the direct control of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; Romans 8:26). The Holy Spirit both miraculously spoke through the disciples and interpreted to all those who heard. When Peter addressed the crowd with the words that he understood he informed them that this was that which God promised through the prophet Joel and that it was in fact the Spirit of prophesy that should be poured out (this was revelation knowledge by the Spirit). Paul further revealed the nature of this kind of prophesy and prayer in 1 Corinthians 14. Paul who was an expert in the language of the Spirit boasting that he spoke in the language more than all of the Corinthians made it very clear that anyone speaking in the language of the Spirit spoke unto God and not unto men (14:2,18). He further established a very clear definition of praying in the Spirit and made a distinction from praying with words that could be understood by both the speaker and the hearer. The defining verses are verse 14 and 15, "If I pray in tongues (language of the Spirit) my spirit prays but my understanding is unfruitful. What shall it be then? I will pray with the Spirit (pray in tongues)

- 5- And the word was pleasing in the sight of all the multitude and they chose Stephen a man full of faith¹⁴⁴ and the Holy Spirit and Philip and Prochorus and Nicanor and Timon and Pharnenas and Nicolas a proselyte from Antioch.
- 6- Who stood before the apostles and they laid their hands¹⁴⁵ on them and prayed.
- 7- And the Word of God grew and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly. A great number of the priest obeyed the faith¹⁴⁶.
- 8- And Stephen full of faith and power did great signs and wonders¹⁴⁷ among the people.

and I will pray with the understanding also.” Praying in the Spirit is excellent prayer or “giving thanks” but no one else is touched by the inspiration of the words of that prayer. The prayer of the understanding should not be less than the inspiration of the Spirit for Paul said in verse 5 and 6 that effectively the results of tongues should produce revelation, knowledge, prophecy or doctrine that everyone could understand exactly what the Holy Spirit wanted them to do. After all the Holy Spirit has come to lead us and guide us into all truth so in order to follow Him we must be allowed to understand His direction.

¹⁴⁴ Stephen was not only a man that is full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom but he was full of faith. The Greek phrase "pleres pistis" (full of faith) is only found two times in the New Testament and in both instances it is used of Stephen in this chapter (6:5,8). Stephen serves as an example to us of how much faith God has made available to us. God has made all of the fullness of Jesus available to whosoever ask (John 1:16; Ephesians 3:19; 4:13; Romans 15:29; John 14:12). The faith that comes by Jesus Christ and functions in our lives by the Holy Spirit is so full of power that a very small amount will empower a person with the ability to move mountains into the sea and makes nothing impossible (Matthew 17:20; Luke 17:6; Mark 11:22-23; 1 Corinthians 13:2; Matthew 21:21) . The power of faith is revealed in Hebrews 11:2 as the operation of God at work when He framed the ages by His spoken word. When Jesus ministered healing He revealed that it was by their faith that they were made whole (Matthew 9:22, 29; Mark 5:34; 10:52; Luke 7:50; 17:19) The result of Stephen being full of faith and power was that the Holy Spirit worked great signs and wonders through his life. Stephen’s story was an account of an ordinary man that was willing to believe all that God had promised. He was not an apostle nor was he called a presbyter but simply a man who had taken a hold of the power of God that is made available to everyone who will believe. God who is no respecter of persons, Who is gracious to all desires to do for you what He did for Stephen.

¹⁴⁵ The doctrine of laying of hands for the impartation of spiritual gifts and divine power is observed in both the Old and New Testament. One of the more outstanding examples of this in the Old Testament was God’s command to Moses to lay his hands upon Joshua in order to impart the divine power and ability to lead the children of Israel (Numbers 27:18-23). The power of the Holy Spirit was imparted into the Samaritans when Peter and John laid their hands on them (Acts 8:17-18). Paul also laid his hands on the disciples in Ephesus so that they might receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:6).

¹⁴⁶ Obedient to the faith that was once delivered to the saints, as such it was the power and ability to do what God desired man to do. It was by this faith that men could be made new creatures and receive eternal life. It was by this faith that men could work righteousness and receive the miracle gift of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁴⁷ Steven was full of faith and the Holy Spirit he was also full of faith and power. Because Steven was full of faith and power he did great wonders and miracles. There are some Greek manuscripts, which read "full of grace." However, faith is simply a part of the package that we receive through grace (Romans 12:6; Galatians 5:22). Although, only Jesus was referred to as being full of grace in the New Testament we know that all of us have received His fullness of grace upon grace (John 1:14,16; John 17:22). The manifestation of the Spirit is revealed in each persons life based upon the measure of faith that they have received. Whatever the proportion of faith is then that will be the limit set upon the manifestation of the Spirit of God through us (Romans 12:6). Each one of us are called to pursue faith and to excel in faith so that faith may grow (1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22; 2 Corinthians 8:7; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 10:15; Luke 17:5). The opportunity is set before us to come into all faith or the fullness of faith (John 1:16; 1 Corinthians 13:2). Jesus called all men to the fullness of faith when He commanded us to "have God's faith" or it may be translated "have the faith of God" (Gr- echete pistin Theou), Mark 11:22. There is no question that Jesus was speaking of the faith that accomplishes the miraculous and makes known the power of God by what He said in the next two verses, "For truly I say to you, Whoever says to this mountain, Be taken up and be thrown into the sea, and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will happen, it will be to him, whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, All things, whatever you ask, praying, believe that you will receive, and it will be to you" (Mark 11:23-24; Matthew 21:21), Greens Literal

- 9- But some of those from the synagogue called Freedman¹⁴⁸, rose up also Cyrenians and Alexandrians and those from Cilicia and Asia Minor argued with Steven
- 10- And they had no ability to stand against the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.
- 11- Then they forced men to say that they had heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God¹⁴⁹.
- 12- They stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes and they came upon him seized him and led him to the Sanhedrin.
- 13- And false witnesses stood up saying this man has not ceased to speak words against this holy place and the law.
- 14- For we have heard him say that Jesus the Nazarene will destroy this place and change the customs Moses delivered to us.
- 15- And all those who sat in the Sanhedrin staring at him saw his face as if it were the face of an angel¹⁵⁰.

Chapter 7

- 1- And the high priest asked if this was so.
- 2- And he said, Men brothers and fathers listen. The God of Glory¹⁵¹ was seen by our father¹⁵² Abraham¹⁵³ being in Mesopotamia before he lived in Haran¹⁵⁴.
- 3- And said to him, Come out from your country and from your relatives and come here into the country that I will show you.
- 4- Then he came out from the country of the Chaldeans¹⁵⁵ and settled in Haran. And after that his father died he was made to move into this country where you now dwell.

Translation. We are called to live by faith and in faith. It is essential that you give yourself to the life of faith. It must be more than just a set of beliefs but faith that works and moves. The faith that we are called to is a living faith that makes known the love and power of God to all mankind.

¹⁴⁸ The Greek name 'libertini' it is the adjective developed from 'libertus', which means 'freedman' this was the designation for emancipated slaves.

¹⁴⁹ The more serious charge would have been blasphemy against God; according to Leviticus 24:11-16 it is punishable by death and required that the offender be stoned. Blasphemy against Moses would have come under the violation of Exodus 22:27.

¹⁵⁰ This would have been an example of yet another great wonder or sign for the implication is that Stevens face was illuminated with the glory of God.

¹⁵¹ The title "God of Glory" is only found one other place in the Bible, Psalms 29:3. Steven begins his sermon by taking the entire assembly back to a time before the Law while Abraham was still an uncircumcised Gentile. Steven is making it very clear to this assembly that he is a preacher of the One True God who is in control of all things.

¹⁵² Steven makes it very clear to the assembly that he is one of them by referring to Abraham as "our father".

¹⁵³ This helps to further clarify exactly how Abraham heard from the Lord in Genesis 12:1, He appeared to him and spoke to him while he was still in Mesopotamia (Genesis 11:26-27; 15:7, Nehemiah 9:7). If the time of Promise referred to in Galatians 3:17 began when Abraham was first called by God then Abraham may have lived in Haran for less than five years.

¹⁵⁴ Haran was in the territory of the Amorites. It was east of Canaan and northwest of Mesopotamia.

¹⁵⁵ Abraham was born in Ur, which was a town in southern Mesopotamia and southern Babylon (Genesis 11:28,31; Genesis 15:7; Nehemiah 9:7). Evidently, Abraham's father was involved in this call to some degree. It may be that he came with Abraham because he believed in the call on Abraham's life. Terah began to have sons at 70 years of age and he died in Haran at the age of 205 (Genesis 11:26,32). Abraham was 75 years old when he left Haran after his father's death. Therefore, Terah would have been 130 years old when Abraham was born (Genesis 12:4). We cannot be certain how old Abraham was when God first appeared to him in Ur but we do know that he was married to Sarai long enough for Sarai to be classified as barren a title given to those who have little to no hope of ever having children. Abraham may have been 70

- 5- But he did not give him his inheritance not even a foot of ground but he promised to give it to him to possess and to his seed after him for he himself had no child.
- 6- And God said this, That his seed was to dwell in land belonging to another and they would be slaves and ill-treated for four hundred¹⁵⁶ years.
- 7- And God said, Then I will judge the nation to which you will be a slave and after this they will come out to serve Me in this place.
- 8- And he gave him a covenant of circumcision and so he begat Isaac and circumcised him the eighth day and Isaac Jacob and Jacob the twelve patriarchs.
- 9- And the patriarchs being jealous¹⁵⁷ gave Joseph over to Egypt but God was with him.
- 10- And He delivered him from all his tribulation¹⁵⁸ and gave him grace and wisdom before Pharaoh the king of Egypt and appointed him leader over Egypt and his whole household.

years old, which would have made Terah 200 years old (see the next footnote for Abrahams age). It may be that Abraham needed to take care of his aged father and also his orphaned nephew Lot and this is why they left Ur with Abraham. We know that Abraham was very prompt in obeying God as exemplified by his speedy response to sacrifice Isaac in Genesis 22:3. It may be that God appeared to Abraham giving him the promise at 70 years of age at which time his sojourning began (Galatians 3:17; Hebrews 11:8; Exodus 12:40). The sojourning of Abraham and his descendents during the time of Promise would result in 430 years as testified by both Paul and Moses.

¹⁵⁶ Steven is referring to the statement made by God to Abraham in Genesis 15:13-14, “Know with certainty that for four hundred years your offspring shall be sojourners in a land not their own and also they will be slaves and they will oppress them”. Now we must do some math in order to understand how long they were in Egypt because there are two parts to this interval of time, which includes the sojourn of both Isaac and Jacob as well as the time of their enslavement in Egypt. The time period begins with Abrahams offspring so we must begin our calculation with Isaac who was 60 years old when Jacob was born (Genesis 25:26) and when Jacob went down to Egypt he said that the number of years of his sojourn were 130 years which would then account for 190 years. Therefore, the number of years that they were in Egypt would be 210. We may also derive a less accurate calculation but one that confirms this approach by calculating the lifetime of Kohath who went down into Egypt with his father Levi. Kohath lived 133 years (Exodus 6:18, Genesis 46:11) and his son Amram, the father of Moses lived 137 years (Exodus 6:20) and Moses was 80 years old when Israel left Egypt totaling 350 years. Now if you subtract the number of years that Kohath lived after Amram was born and that Amram lived after Moses was born then it would be significantly less than 350 years so clearly they were not slaves for 400 years in Egypt. Paul speaking to the Galatians helps us to clear up this discrepancy found in Exodus 12:40 which refers to the total time of sojourning as being 430 years. The 430 year time period begins when God made the promise to Abraham which was 30 years before Isaac was born (Galatians 3:17). Most scholars have attempted to set Genesis 15 as the beginning of the Promise. The only issue is attempting to justify the number of years between the time that God gave Abraham the promise and the birth of Isaac. When Abraham left Haran he was 75 years old according to Genesis 12:4. Yet in Genesis 21:5 we discover that Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac was born so at best there would have only been 425 years from the time of the promise made in Genesis 15 until the coming out of Egypt. Now keeping in mind that the promise was made to Abram in Genesis 12:2 so therefore we must conclude that the 30 years prior to the birth of Isaac would have had to begin prior to Abraham coming out of Haran. Therefore, the time of the promise must have begun 5 years prior to Abram’s leaving Haran and perhaps while Abram was still in Mesopotamia. It is very reasonable to believe that the time of Promise began when God first called Abraham in Mesopotamia.

¹⁵⁷ Joseph experienced the same sufferings of Christ being also rejected by his brethren and handed over to the Gentiles.

¹⁵⁸ Steven was comparing Jesus to Joseph in his address to the Sanhedrin. He draws out the comparison of how Joseph was rejected by his brethren even as Jesus was rejected by them. Just as Joseph was ultimately exalted to the highest position in the land Jesus also was exalted above all things. At times we too may suffer wrongfully but we may have the same assurance that our God will deliver us out of all our tribulations. The Greek word ‘thlipis’ (tribulation) refers to distress that is brought about by outward circumstances (trouble). However, God will always comes to our aid (parakaleo) in all our trouble, 2 Corinthians 1:4. And just as the trouble that came to Joseph brought about the act of God’s deliverance and

- 11- But a famine came upon the whole of Egypt and Canaan, and great tribulation. And our fathers could not find food.
- 12- But Jacob hearing that bread was in Egypt sent forth our fathers first.
- 13- And at the second, Joseph was made known to his brothers and Joseph race became known to Pharaoh.
- 14- And Joseph sending called Jacob his father and the relatives, 75 souls in all.
- 15- And Jacob went down into Egypt and died he and our fathers.
- 16- And they were transferred to Shechem¹⁵⁹ and were placed in the tomb the one Abraham bought for a price of silver beside¹⁶⁰ that of the sons of Hamor the Shechemite.
- 17- And as the time of the promise drew near which God swore to Abraham the people increased and multiplied in Egypt.
- 18- Until another king rose up who did not know Joseph.
- 19- This one dealt craftily with our race ill-treating our fathers and made their infants not to live by casting them out.
- 20- In that time Moses was born and was well pleasing¹⁶¹ to God; who was nursed three months in his fathers house.
- 21- And he was set forth and the daughter of Pharaoh took him up and nursed him for her own son.
- 22- And Moses was trained in all of the wisdom of Egypt and was powerful in his words and deeds.
- 23- And when a period of forty years was fulfilled it came up¹⁶² upon his heart to look on his brothers, the sons of Israel.

promotion the same promise is extended to us today in 2 Corinthians 4:17, “For our light trouble which is but for a moment is working for us a far more exceeding eternal load of glory”. To many of the Sanhedrin it appeared that the life of Jesus had ended in total defeat and abandonment. However, Steven knew that what looked like defeat resulted in Christ Jesus being exalted to the right hand of the Father.

¹⁵⁹ Jacob bought some land from the sons of Hamor at Shechem (Genesis 33:19) in which definitely Joseph was buried and according to this statement by Steven it is implied that all of Jacobs son were buried there as well (Joshua 24:32). However, Jacob was buried in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought from Ephron the Hitite (Genesis 50:13, 23:16-20). Although, Abraham did not buy the land at Shechem from the sons of Hamor Steven is referring both to where Jacob was buried and to the place his sons were buried. In fact, we may translation this verse as follows ...were laid in the sepulcher that Abraham bought for a sum of money besides that of the sons of Hamor. In which case both the site that Jacob was buried at, namely the sepulcher that Abraham bought, and the one that the sons of Jacob were buried at, which was bought from the sons of Hamor, are addressed. Additionally, Abraham built an altar when he entered into Shechem it is possible in keeping with the character of Abraham that he also bought land in Shechem (Genesis 12:6).

¹⁶⁰ The Greek word ‘para’ may be properly rendered ‘besides’.

¹⁶¹ The same Greek word ‘asteios’ is used in the Septuagint in Exodus 2:2 which may be translated ‘beautifully formed, well pleasing’. However, ‘to Theo’, ‘to God’ is an additional phrase found only here and not in Exodus 2:2. In the book of Hebrews chapter 11, verse 23, insight to the proper meaning of this word and phrase “asteios to Theo” is given. Because he was ‘asteios’ they hid him for three months at the threat of losing their own lives. We may conclude that this ‘asteios’, ‘well pleasing’ revealed to Moses’ parents that he was appointed by God for something great which resulted in their being able to have faith that God would do something great through him. Certainly, they had continued in the faith that God gave to Abraham that they would be delivered after being strangers in a land belonging to another and and ill treated for 420 years. They would have therefore been in expectation of God’s promise coming to pass. It may be that the ‘asteios’ was a sign to them that the time was near and God had chosen their child to be the instrument of their deliverance.

¹⁶² The Greek word ‘anebe’ many times translates the Hebrew word ‘alah’ which means to ‘go up, ascend, mount, grow. In fact the first time that this Greek word is used in the Septuagint it translated ‘alah’ in Genesis 2:6, “But there went up a mist...” The heart of man is viewed in both the Old and New Testament

24- And seeing one being wronged he retaliated and took vengeance for the oppressed, striking down¹⁶³ the Egyptian.

25- And he presumed that his brothers understood that God would grant them deliverance by his hand but they did not understand.

26- And on the following day he saw them fighting and he tried to reconciled them peacefully saying, men you are brothers. Why do you wrong each other?

27- But the one wronging his neighbor thrust him away saying who appointed you ruler and judge over us.

28- Do you wish to do away with me just as you did away with the Egyptian yesterday?

29- And Moses fled at these words. And he dwelt in the land of Median and fathered two sons.

30- And forty years being completed he saw in the wilderness of Mount Sinai the Angel of the Lord in a bush as a flame of fire.

31- And seeing this sight Moses marveled and as he came near to look there was the Lord's voice.

32- I am the God of your father the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God Jacob and Moses became terrified and dared not look.

33- And the Lord said to him release the sandal from your feet for the place on which you stand is holy ground.

34- I have surely seen the affliction of my people in Egypt and I have heard their groans and I have come down to deliver them and now come here I will send you into Egypt.

35- Then this Moses whom they denied saying who appointed you ruler and judge this one God has sent as ruler and deliverer through the hand of the Angel that appeared to him in the bush.

36- This one lead them out doing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt and in the Red Sea¹⁶⁴ and forty years in the wilderness.

37- This is the Moses that said to the sons of Israel, The Lord God shall raise up a prophet from your brothers just like me, you shall hear Him.

38- This is he who was in the church in the wilderness with the Angel that spoke with him in Mount Sinai and our fathers who received the living oracles to give you.

39- To whom our fathers did not wish to obey but thrust away and turned their hearts unto Egypt.

40- Saying to Aaron, make gods for us to go before us for this Moses which lead us from the land of Egypt we do not know what has happened to him.

41- And they made a calf in that day and led up a sacrifice to the idol and celebrated in the works of their hands.

42- But God turned and handed them over to serve the armies of heaven just as it is written of the prophets in the Bible.

as the place where man communicates with God and God communicates with man (Genesis 24:45, Exodus 25:2; 28:3,29; 31:6;35:21,29; De 4:28, 6:5; Ezekiel 36:26; Matthew 5:8; Romans 5:5; 2 Corinthians 3:3. The destiny of God was upon Moses' heart and it had mounted upon his heart to a point that he had to respond.

¹⁶³ Moses saw an Egyptian hitting a Hebrew and he slaughtered the Egyptian and buried him in the sand (Exodus 2:11-12).

¹⁶⁴ Many present day scholars continue to make the argument that the Hebrew phrase 'yam sup' should be translated Reed Sea yet, 2000 years ago Steven refers to the 'yam suph' as the Red Sea. The Septuagint, which would have been written about 2200 years ago also refer to the 'yam suph' as the Red Sea (Exodus 13:18).

43- And you raised up the tent of Moloch¹⁶⁵ and the star of your god Rephan¹⁶⁶ the images which you made to worship them. And I will remove you beyond Babylon.

44- And the Tabernacle of Witness¹⁶⁷ was with your fathers in the wilderness just as He who talked with Moses commanded to make it according to the pattern¹⁶⁸ which he had seen.

45- And our fathers having received it brought it in with Joshua¹⁶⁹ in taking hold of the nations whom God drove out from the face of our fathers until the days of David.

46- Who found grace before God and asked to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

47- And Solomon built him a house.

48- But the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet¹⁷⁰ says,

49- The heaven is My throne and the earth is a footstool for my feet what kind of house will you build Me says the Lord or what place for My rest?

50- Did not my hands make all these things?

51- You stiffnecked and uncircumcised of heart and ears you unceasingly oppose¹⁷¹ the Holy Spirit as your fathers also did.

52- Which of the prophets did you fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous whom now you have betrayed and murdered.

53- Who received the law by the direction of angels¹⁷² and did not keep it.

¹⁶⁵ Moloch or Molech is mentioned eight times in the Old Testament Leviticus 18:21; 20:2,3,4,5, 1 Kings 11:7, 2 Kings 23:10, Amos 5:26, Jeremiah 39:35. Molech was a god that the Canaanites burned their children in sacrifice to. The children of Israel were also carried away with this idolatry and choose the wicked ways of Molech over the Just and Holy God.

¹⁶⁶ In Amos 5:26 refers to this god, which is believed to be Kaiwan who is related to the planet Saturn. The prophet Amos referring to Israel's 40 years in the wilderness points out that they brought with them the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of their god 'kiyyun' (believed to be Kaiwan) which both the Septuagint and Acts translates 'Rhaiphan' or 'Rephan'.

¹⁶⁷ The Greek phrase 'he skene tou martyriou' is used to translate the Hebrew 'ohel moed' in the Septuagint. The Hebrew 'ohel moed', literally means 'tent of meeting' referring to the tabernacle that God showed Moses to build in Mount Sinai. It was the place that God had promised Moses saying "It is there that I will meet with you" (Exodus 25:8).

¹⁶⁸ God had given Moses a heavenly pattern or blueprint. It was only a shadow of good things to come and as Paul quoted in Hebrews, 'make all things according to the pattern (Gr. tupos) shown to you in the mount' (Hebrews 8:5, Exodus 25:9,40).

¹⁶⁹ The name of Jesus or Joshua is found 278 times in the Old Testament translated in the Septuagint as 'Iesus' just as it is found in the New Testament referring to the Savior of the world. Literally its Hebrew counterpart, 'Yehosua' means 'YHWH's salvation'.

¹⁷⁰ The prophet is Isaiah and the quote is from Isaiah 66:1-2. However, Solomon also declared by the Spirit that "the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain you; how much less the house that I have built for you" (1 Kings 8:27; 2 Chronicles 6:18).

¹⁷¹ The Greek 'antipto' may be translated 'to fall against, strive against, resist or oppose'. This was also said by Isaiah "they rebelled and provoked His Holy Spirit therefore he was turned to be their enemy" (Isaiah 63:10).

¹⁷² The Ten Commandments were given to Moses by YHWH on Mount Sinai, (Exodus 24:12; 34:1). YHWH also personally spoke the Ten Commandments to the entire congregation of Israel (Exodus 19:9-11; 20:19, 22). In order to understand the proper meaning of this scripture we must understand that the law also extends beyond the first five books to include the prophets and the psalms as in John 10:34; 12:34; 15:25 and 1 Corinthians 14:21. In these passages of scripture Psalms 82:6; 89:36; 35:19 and Isaiah 28:11-12 respectively are quoted as being the law. The Greek word 'diatage' may be translated 'institution, ordinance, direction, degree or order'. This Greek word is only found in the New Testament in one other place, Romans 13:2. Certainly, angels were involved in the transmission of the Word of God as both this scripture Galatians 3:19 and Hebrews 2:2 suggest but it does not exclude the personal involvement of YHWH also in the transmission of His word.

- 54- And hearing these things they were cut to their heart and they bit on him with their teeth.
- 55- But being full of the Holy Spirit he gazed into heaven¹⁷³ he saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right of God.
- 56- And saying, I see the heavens open and the Son of Man standing at the right of God.
- 57- And screaming with a loud voice, they held their ears and with one mind rushed upon him.
- 58- And driving him out of the city they stoned him and the witnesses took off their garments and laid them at the feet of a young man called Saul.
- 59- And they stone Steven calling out and saying Lord Jesus receive my spirit.
- 60- And kneeling down he cried out with a loud voice Lord do not hold them accountable for this sin and saying this he fell asleep.

Chapter 8

- 1-And Saul was there approving of his execution. And in that day a great persecution came upon the church in Jerusalem¹⁷⁴ and everyone except the apostles were scattered throughout the areas of Judea and Samaria.
- 2- And devout men buried Steven and made a great expression of sorry over him.
- 3- And Saul raged¹⁷⁵ against the church entering houses dragging out men and women handing them over to imprisonment.
- 4- Then those who were scattered went about preaching the word¹⁷⁶.

¹⁷³ During the time of the tribulation men will also look up into heaven and see Jesus at the right hand of the Father (Revelation 6:14-16). When God spoke to Israel he spoke to them from out of heaven (Exodus 20:22). When God opened the eyes of Elisha's young assistant he was able to see the angels of God all around him. And when Jesus was baptized in the Jordan and the heavens were opened the voice of the Father could be heard (Luke 3:22).

¹⁷⁴ Jerusalem was the headquarters for the Church and the apostles would not be moved by threats of persecution.

¹⁷⁵ Saul appears to be the one leading the persecution against the church. Paul testified later to his zeal in this matter, "I persecuted the church of God violently" (Galatians 1:13) and "as to zeal a persecutor of the church" (Philippians 3:6).

¹⁷⁶ If we want to see the same results that the first century church experienced then we need to be committed to the same testimony. Jesus promised to confirm the word with miracles (Mark 16:20). If one is going to preach properly then it is the 'Ho Logos' or 'The Word' which must be preached. This phrase is found 134 times in the New Testament and is defined by what Jesus preached. When Jesus ministered He spoke "the word" (Mark 2:2; John 14:24). It was not His word but the word that the Father gave Him to speak (John 17:14; Luke 5:1; 11:28). His words were the living word that cannot pass away and stands as the judge of all mankind forever (John 5:24; 6:56; 12:48; Hebrews 4:12). His word is the source of eternal life and is the authority that produces all of the acts of deliverance (John 5:24; 8:51; 15:3; Matthew 8:8,16; Luke 4:36; 1 Peter 1:23). It was not subjective and applicable only to the crowd then present but a word that lives and abides forever (Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 1:2; 21:33; John 17:17). Jesus first defined the importance of His words when he said, everyone who hears his word and acts on them are like a wise man who builds his house upon a rock Matthew (7:24). The same eternal realm of the Spirit that Jesus spoke these words from is the same realm that functioned in the apostles to recall what was spoken (John 14:26; John 16:13; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 Thessalonians 2:13). Those who would relegate this to a human realm of memory and intellect have yet to view the realms of glory from which these words were spoken. The word is the testimony of Jesus Christ which God's people have been empowered by the Holy Spirit to deliver. Make no mistake "The Word" is defined as the message of Jesus Christ. It is this testimony that we are privileged to be instructed in by the books laid down in the New Testament of the Bible. Certainly, if God can work the miracle to incarnate the Word into human flesh then He can work the miracle to supply us

- 5- And Philip went down into a city of Samaria proclaiming the Christ¹⁷⁷ to them.
- 6- And the multitudes with one accord paid attention to what Philip said hearing and beholding the signs¹⁷⁸ which he did.
- 7- For indeed unclean spirits came out of many crying out with a loud voice and many paralyzed and lame were healed.
- 8- And there was great joy in that city.
- 9- And a man named Simon who had before been in the city practicing magic astonishing the people of Samaria saying he was someone great.
- 10- Who everyone paid attention to from the least to the greatest saying, this is the great power of God.
- 11- And they paid attention to him because he astounded them for a considerable time with his magic arts.
- 12- But when Philip preached about the Kingdom of God and **the name of Jesus Christ** they believed and were baptized both men and women.
- 13- And Simon also himself believed and was baptized and attended constantly to Philip being astonished beholding the signs and great power.
- 14- When the apostles heard in Jerusalem that the Samaritans received the word of God they sent Peter and John.
- 15- Who went down to pray that they might receive the Holy Spirit¹⁷⁹.

with the accurate testimony of the Word of life. The apostles had probably made provision for at least some part of the New Testament "word" to be available in written form by this time. To believe that the apostles were any less vigilant than to make the Word available in written form before the company of saints were scattered would be very naïve.

¹⁷⁷ Jesus had already planted the seeds of the gospel among the Samaritans (John 4:4-42; 17:11-19). It is certain that the Samaritans that had no dealings with the Jews were themselves in expectation of the Messiah coming (John 4:25).

¹⁷⁸ Philip who was appointed to wait on tables began to move with the same power that was seen in the ministry of Jesus, the Apostles and Steven (Hebrews 2:4; Romans 15:19; Acts 6:8; 1 Corinthians 12:7. The ministry of Philip produced the same effect that the ministry of Jesus produced it captured the attention of the multitudes with the signs and wonders. In fulfillment of the words of Jesus in Mark 16:17 "These signs shall follow them that believe", Philip as a believer was proclaiming Jesus the Christ and the signs of the gospel of the kingdom of God were manifested (Matthew 4:23; 9:35; 10:7-8; 12:28; Mark 1:34; 8:16; Luke 4:40; 9:2,11; 10:9; 11:20; John 14:12; John 15:16; 20:21)

¹⁷⁹ The definite article 'the' does not accompany "Holy Spirit" in this scripture therefore, the correct rendering would be "a Holy Spirit". The first time that the definite article does not occur with "Holy Spirit" in Stephen's Textus Receptus Greek New Testament is Matthew 3:11, "...he shall baptize you in a Holy Spirit and fire". The second time is in Mark 1:8 in the same context as Matthew 3:11. The third occurrence is in Luke 1:35, "a Holy Spirit shall come upon you and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you...". Then the fourth time that this is observed is in Luke 2:25 with respect to Simeon, "...waiting for the consolation of Israel and a Holy Spirit was upon him". Holy Spirit occurs 25 times without the definite article of which 7 are found in the book of Acts, Luke 3:16; Luke 11:13; **John 1:33**; John 7:39; John 20:20; Acts 1:5; Acts 8:15; 8:17,19; 10:38; 11:16; 19:2; Romans 9:1; 14:17; 15:16; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 12:3; 2 Corinthians 6:6; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; 1 Peter 1:12; Jude 20. The first time Holy Spirit is found with the definite article is in Matthew 28:19, "...baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." The second time is in Mark 3:29, "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit shall never be forgiven..." The third time is in Mark 13:11, "...for it is not you the speaks but the Holy Spirit." The fourth time is in Luke 3:22, "And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily shape like a dove upon him..." Holy Spirit is used with the definite article 26 more times, Mark 12:36; John 14:26; Acts 1:8, 16; 2:33, 38; 5:3; 7:51; 8:18; 9:31; 10:44, 45, 47; 11:15; 13:2; 15:8; 16:6; 19:6; 20:23,28; 21:11; 28:25; 2 Corinthians 13:13; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 3:7; 10:15. When the Holy Spirit as a person is being referred to we observe the definite article as in Acts 13:2, "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Separate for me Barnabas and Saul unto the work to which I have called them." When the person of the

16- For he was not yet fallen on any of them but they had only baptized into¹⁸⁰ the name of the Lord Jesus.

17- At that time they laid their hands¹⁸¹ upon them and they received the Holy Spirit¹⁸².

18- When Simon saw that through the laying on of hands of the apostles the Holy Spirit was given he offered them money.

19- Saying give me also this authority so that anyone whom I lay hands on shall receive the Holy Spirit.

20- But Peter said to him, May your silver perish with you because you considered that money could acquire the gift of God.

21- You have neither a part nor a share in this word for indeed your heart is not right¹⁸³ before God.

Holy Spirit is given He comes upon those who believe as in Acts 1:8 and 19:6. However, the result of the action of the Holy Spirit coming on the believer is that they are filled with a Holy Spirit and therefore when the indwelling activity of the Holy Spirit is referred to in scripture the definite article does not appear and the proper translation would be “a Holy Spirit”.

¹⁸⁰ The Greek phrase “eis to onoma” directly translated is “into the name” is found 10 times in the Textus Recptus, Matthew 28:19; John 1:12; 2:23; 3:18; Acts 8:16; 19:5; 1 Corinthians 1:13; Hebrews 6:10 and 1 John 5:13. The Greek word for ‘in’ is ‘en’ whereas the word for ‘into’ is ‘eis’.

¹⁸¹ This is the second time in the book of Acts that the gifts of the Spirit are imparted by the laying on of hands. Philip along with the other 6 who were chosen to wait on tables were given divine ability for this task by the apostles laying hands on them. These men were already full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom yet an impartation was given to them to represent the apostles in the daily distribution to the widow’s. These passages of scripture highlight the limitation of Philips anointing as well as the insight of the church at Jerusalem who knowing that the Samaritans had received the word and believed and were baptized also needed the gift of the Holy Spirit. The doctrine of Christ is that all who believe and are baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:16). Like Philip, Paul also understood this and so when he was asked by the jailer what he must do to be saved Paul simply said “call upon the name of the Lord and you will be saved and your house” (Acts 16:31). Therefore we may conclude that a person is born of the Spirit and made a new creature when they confess the Lord Jesus with their mouth and believe in their heart that He has risen from the dead (Romans 10:9). However, the gift of the Holy Spirit, which was received in Acts chapter 2 by the 120 is unique form being born of the Spirit as exemplified by these events in Samaria. In addition we may also view this event as essential to incorporating the new believers in Samaria into the church at Jerusalem and effectively bringing them into the identity of one body and church.

¹⁸² Of the three times that the phrase ‘lambano pneuma agion’ (received the Holy Spirit) is used in the New Testament two of them describe the fact that the recipients of the Holy Spirit received the language of the Spirit (Acts 10:47; 19:2,6). To conclude that the Samaritans were deprived of this same measure and blessing of the Holy Spirit is to step outside of revealed truth on the subject. The experience that the Samaritans had when they received the Holy Spirit was so impressive that Simon the Sorcerer was able to see the working of God’s power to the extent that he was willing to pay to have it for himself (8:18). To conclude that what the Samaritans received and what Simon saw was different than the event of Acts 2:4 is to ignore the evidence of God’s word. Similarly, the language of the Spirit is not expressly noted concerning Paul in Acts 9:17, yet we know for certain that he was not deprived of the full manifestation of the baptism of the Holy Spirit received by the disciples on the day of Pentecost (see footnote for Acts 9:17). Reception of the Holy Spirit became of such importance to the early church that Paul’s first question to the men of Ephesus was “have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed” (Acts 19:2). To the early church the reception of the Holy Spirit was one of the primary testimonies of being a believer, Acts 2:38; 4:31; 6:3, 5; 7:55; 8:15-16, 19; 9:17; 10:44; 11:15-16; 13:9; 19:2. To subjectively alter the precedence set for the gift of the Holy Spirit given in Acts 2:4 is a violation of scripture. The gift of the Holy Spirit was emphasized by Jesus and his apostles and should also be emphasized by us as well (Jesus- Matthew 3:11; 16:17; Acts 1:5,7,8; John 7:38, 39; Luke 24:49; John 14:16,17, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:13-15. Apostles and brethren- Acts 2:33, 38; 5:32; 6:3, 5; 7:55; 8:15-16; 9:17; 10:38, 44-45, 47; 11:15-16, 24; 13:4, 9; 15:8; 19:2, 6; Romans 5:5; 14:17; 15: 13, 16, 19; 1 Corinthians 2:4; 12:7-11;14; 2 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 3:2-5, 14; Ephesians 3:16; 5:18; 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; 4:8; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:2; Jude 20).

22- Repent then from this wickedness of yours and beg the Lord perhaps he will pardon the thought of your heart.
23- For indeed I perceive you are into the gall¹⁸⁴ of bitterness and shackles of iniquity.
24- And Simon replied saying, Pray on my behalf to the Lord that these things that you have said do not come upon me.
25- Then when they had borne witness¹⁸⁵ and spoken the Word of the Lord they returned to Jerusalem preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

Philip and The Ethiopian Eunuch

26- And an angel of the Lord spoke¹⁸⁶ unto Philip saying, arise and go down to the south on the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza which is desert.
27- And he got up and went and behold a man an Ethiopian eunuch, a ruler of Candice queen of Ethiopia who was over all of her treasure who had come to worship in Jerusalem.
28- Who was returning, seated on his chariot and he was reading the prophet Isaiah.
29- And the Spirit said to Philip go near and join that chariot.
30- And Philip running over heard him reading the prophet Isaiah and said, Do you understand what you are reading?
31- And he said how shall I have power unless someone guides me and he called Philip to come up and sit with him.
32- And the portion of scripture which he read was, He was lead like a sheep to the slaughter and as a lamb before his shearer is silent so he opened not His mouth.
33- In His humiliation His judgment was taken away who shall make known His generation for His life is taken away from the earth¹⁸⁷.
34- And the eunuch answering Philip said I petition you, Who is the prophet speaking about of himself or someone else?
35- And Philip opened his mouth and began from this scripture preaching¹⁸⁸ Jesus to Him.
36- And as they traveled down the road they came upon some water and the Eunuch said, Look, water what hinders me from being baptized?
37- And Philip said if you believe with all your heart you may. And he Answered and said I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸³ The Greek word used here is 'euthus' which means 'straight or right'. Although Simon had participated in accepting Jesus and water baptism along with everyone else he still was not saved because his heart was not right. Evidently, there was no true repentance and subsequent conversion for he was still a prisoner to bitterness and iniquity.

¹⁸⁴ Gall is a liver secretion that is stored in the gall bladder; it is a bitter yellowish liquid.

¹⁸⁵ The witness that Peter and John bore was only possible through the baptism of the Holy Spirit that they had received at Pentecost, "But you shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you and you shall be witnesses unto me..." and "...but tarry in Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high" (Acts 1:8; Luke 24:48).

¹⁸⁶ The apostles at Jerusalem had sent Peter and John to Samaria but an angel of the Lord sent Philip to the Eunuch.

¹⁸⁷ This passage of scripture is found in Isaiah 53:7-8 it is quoted exactly as it appears in the Septuagint.

¹⁸⁸ The Greek word is 'euangelizo' and may be translated 'preach, bring good news, show glad tidings. It is used also in the Septuagint with respect to the announcement of any kind of good news, "I have preached righteousness in the great congregation; behold, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord you know. I have not hid your righteousness within my heart; I have declared your faithfulness and your salvation. I have not concealed your lovingkindness and your truth from the great congregation." (Psalms 40:9-10).

38- And he commanded the chariot to stand still and both of them went down both into the water Philip and the Eunuch and he baptized him.

39- And when they came up from the water the Spirit of the Lord snatched¹⁹⁰ Philip away and the Eunuch saw him no more so he went on his way rejoicing.

40- However Philip found himself at Azotus¹⁹¹ and he went about preaching to all the cities until he reached Caesarea.

Chapter 9

1- But Saul¹⁹² still breathing out threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord approached the high priest.

2- Desiring from him letters to the synagogues in Damascus¹⁹³ that if he found any man or woman belonging to the Way¹⁹⁴ he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

3- And as he traveled he happened to draw near to Damascus and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.

¹⁸⁹ The Nestle Aland Greek New Testament, which has become the standard for New Testament scholar's does not include any part of this verse. However, the authenticity of this verse is attested to as far back as the second century by Irenaeus, (*Adversus haereses* 3.12.8).

¹⁹⁰ The book of Acts records a constant display of the extraordinary power of God in the church and the life of the believers. In this event in the ministry of Philip the word 'harpazo' is used which may be translated 'seize, catch away or snatch away'. This is the same word used in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 which speaks of the time when the Lord Jesus returns to meet His saints in the air, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught away together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air..." These events in the life of Philip communicate to us how that the ministers of the church lived by the direct influence and direction of the Holy Spirit. The same display of power that was in the life of Jesus when He and His disciples were translated should still be observed in the many different miraculous ways of Jesus ministry today (John 6:19-21; 14:12). When God's ministers are so under the control of the Holy Spirit that God translates them from one place to the other then there can be little question as to the reality of God. The church is suppose to have a reputation for great exploits and the demonstration of the power of God so that the world around us can fear and tremble at the awesome reality of God. It is essential that we as the saints of God return to such holy communion with God that we live more in the heavenly than in the earthly (Colossians 3:1-4; Ephesians 2:6; 3:10; Hebrews 11: 16; 6:4). The great exploits and power of God were demonstrated in many different ways in the lives of those in the Old Testament as well. Among other things Enoch Elijah and Ezekiel are examples of those who were translated by the Spirit of God (Hebrews 11:5; 2 Kings 2:11; Ezekiel 3:14). Evidently, it was somewhat common for Elijah to be translated by the Spirit to different locations and the nations around him trembled at the awesome power of His God that was displayed in His life (2 Kings 2:16; 1 Kings 18:12).

¹⁹¹ The Greek Azoton occurs 14 times in the Septuagint and stands for Ashdod. Ashdod is one of the five ancient towns of the Philistines it is about halfway between Gaza and Joppa.

¹⁹² It is Saul not the high priest who is the driving force behind the persecution of the church of the Lord Jesus. In Philippians 3:6, Paul describes this as his zeal for the Law of God which he accounted himself blameless in. Yet at the same time in 1 Corinthians 15:9 he felt that he was not worthy to be called an apostle because he persecuted the church of God.

¹⁹³ Damascus is first mentioned in Genesis 14:15. It was one of the great cities of Syria located near the foot of Mt. Hermon on the western edge of the Syrian Desert. It was noted for a sizeable number of Jewish residents. For Paul to have gotten there from Jerusalem he would have traveled the "Great North Road" which was an important trade route.

¹⁹⁴ The expression 'he hodus', 'The Way' refers to the early Christians that are found here and in Acts 19:9,23; 22:4; 24:14 and 22. The expression 'The Way' may be a reflection of Isaiah 30:3, "make ready the way of the Lord (Luke 3:4). The "way of the Lord", was interpreted by the Essenes to mean "the study of the Law". The expression "The Way" was used by the Essenes to designate a strict observance of the Law (1QS 9:17-18; CD 1:13; 1QS 4:22). This expression was either brought over by the converted Essenes or adopted independently as an expression of the Christian community.

- 4- And falling upon the ground he heard a voice saying unto him Saul, Saul¹⁹⁵ why persecute me?
- 5- And he said who are you Lord and He said I am Jesus¹⁹⁶ whom you persecute¹⁹⁷.
- 6- But arise and go into the city and you will be told what you must do.
- 7- And the men who were traveling with him stood speechless hearing the voice¹⁹⁸ but seeing nothing.
- 8- And Saul got up from the ground but when he opened his eyes he could not see and they lead him by the hand to bring him to Damascus.
- 9- And he was three days without sight and he neither ate nor drank.
- 10- And there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias and the Lord said to him in a vision¹⁹⁹, Ananias and he said here am I Lord.
- 11- And the Lord continued, arise and go on the street called straight and seek Saul of Tarsus in the house of Judas, he is there praying.
- 12- And he has seen, in a vision, a man named Ananias coming and laying his hand on him that he may see.
- 13- But Ananias replied, Lord I have heard from many concerning this man how he has done much evil to your saints in Jerusalem.
- 14- And he is here with authority from the high priest to arrest²⁰⁰ all that call upon your name.
- 15- But the Lord said to him, Go for this is my chosen²⁰¹ vessel to carry my name before nations and kings and the sons of Israel.

¹⁹⁵ When God calls a man it is unmistakable, He called Saul like he called Moses and Samuel (Exodus 3:4 and 1 Samuel 3:4).

¹⁹⁶ The fact that Jesus actually appeared to Paul is further substantiated in both 1 Corinthians 9:1 and 15:8. Jesus also appeared to Ananias to prepare him to minister to Saul. Jesus most certainly appeared to both of them even though the word 'vision' is not used in the appearance of Jesus to Saul. Of course the appearance of Jesus to Saul was more dramatic in the sense that Jesus was appearing to one who was fighting against Him rather than to one who was his servant, Ananias.

¹⁹⁷ In this statement Jesus fully identifies Himself with His church, whatever anyone is doing to His people and thus His church then they are doing it unto Him, "inasmuch as you have done it unto one of these the least of my brethren you have done it unto me" Matthew 25:40.

¹⁹⁸ Although the men traveling with Paul heard the voice they did not understand or hearken to what was being said. The Greek phrase used here is "akouontes men tes phones" literally, "hearing certainly the voice". However, in Acts 22:9 the phrase is different 'de phonen ouk ekousen' and the word utilizing the same root 'akouo' (hear) appears as an aorist active indicative and may be properly rendered 'understood' or 'hearken'. We may understand Acts 22:9 to reveal that either the men could hear the sound of the voice but were unable to distinguish what was being said or that they indeed heard the voice and understood it but were unwilling to hearken or listen to what was said. When Steven addressed the Sanhedrin in Acts 7:2 he used this same word; there was no doubt that everyone could hear him however would they listen to what was said. To conclude with others that Luke was not able to properly record the three testimonies of this event would be ridiculous. Certainly it was important to specify a unique detail of this event in Acts 22:9 that does not occur in the testimony of Acts 9:7 and 26:14. Perhaps some of those who were actually with Paul stood in the audience that day and Paul was underscoring the fact they heard but were unwilling to obey. Whatever the case may be there is sufficient reason to harmonize these accounts rather than to fall back into the position that a gross oversight was made in accounting for this event.

¹⁹⁹ The Greek word 'horama' which is translated 'vision' is something that can actually be seen. It is used with respect to what Moses saw, "And seeing this sight (horama) Moses marveled..." Acts 7:31.

²⁰⁰ The Greek word 'deo' means to 'bind or tie,' the connotation in this verse is to arrest. This is the same word used in scriptures such as Matthew 18:18, 'whatsoever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven'.

²⁰¹ God picks the right man for the job. The difficulty that Paul had to endure reaches beyond our imaginations but his faithfulness and commitment ever drove him forward as he ran a race to win a prize. There are many who fail to realize that it is God who is in charge. He is the one who makes the decisions

- 16- I Myself will show him how much he will have to endure²⁰² for My name.
- 17- And Ananias went and entered into the house and laid his hands upon him saying, brother Saul the Lord sent me, Jesus whom you saw on the road as you were coming, so that you may recover your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit²⁰³.
- 18- And immediately recovering his sight there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he arose and was baptized.
- 19- And being strengthening he took some food and Saul stayed with the disciples which were in Damascus.
- 20- And right away he preached Christ in the synagogues, that this is the Son²⁰⁴ of God.
- 21- But everyone that heard him was confused and said, Is not this the one who destroyed²⁰⁵ those who called upon this name in Jerusalem and came here in order to arrest them a bring them to the high priest.
- 22- But Saul increased in power and confounded those Jews who lived in Damascus proving that this is the Christ.
- 23- But when many days were fulfilled the Jews conspired to do away with him.

about what we are going do in His kingdom (1 Corinthians 7:17; John 3:27; 2 Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 1:11; Hebrews 2:4). Just as the Holy Spirit divides to everyman according to His will evenso God gives to everyone a measure of faith and divine abilities according to the grace supplied (Romans 12:3-7; 1 Corinthians 12:11; 15:10; Ephesians 3:7-8). Paul said that God counted him faithful putting him into the ministry (1 Timothy 1:12).

We should all give the double honor to those whom God has placed in the ministry and appointed as vessels to bear his name no matter what level they serve on (1 Timothy 5:7; Acts 20:28). We should all recognize that God is going to do it His way and if we are unwilling to cooperate we will be left out. He placed the ministry gifts in the church and it is there that all must go to receive that which Father has supplied (Ephesians 4:8-12; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Matthew 10:1; Mark 3:14). If we are unwilling to honor that which Father has honored then there is nothing to do but face the ugly reality of our pride and arrogance before it is eternally to late.

²⁰² The Greek word 'pascho' may be translated 'suffer, endure, undergo, be acted on' it includes everything that a person experiences whether good or bad.

²⁰³ The meaning of the expression "eplesthesan (pletho) pantes pneumatou agiou", "filled with the Holy Spirit" was established in Acts 2:4. It is used again here with respect to the experience Paul was given by the Holy Spirit. Being filled with the Holy Spirit is the same as being Baptized in the Holy Spirit; this fact was established in Acts 1:5 and 2:4. In Acts 1:5 the promise was made that those in the upper room would be baptized in the Holy Spirit. When they were baptized in the Holy Spirit it is said that they were, "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4). Although, there was no mention of tongues here even as there was no mention of tongues when the Samaritans received the Holy Spirit, we can be certain that such a manifestation took place. Should the Apostle that had been chosen by the Lord Jesus for such a great and monumental task receive any less than the full endowment of power from on High? We know that Paul boasted of speaking in the language of the Spirit more than all those at Corinth (1 Corinthians 14:18). We also know that one of the primary emphasize of Paul's ministry was the communication and impartation of the gift of the Holy Spirit to others as exemplified by his ministry to the disciples at Ephesus (Acts 19:2,6). Therefore, there is no reason to believe that the manifestation of tongues did not accompany Paul's Baptism in the Spirit. The event of receiving the Holy Spirit with the manifestation of the language of the Spirit (tongues) was established as an essential doctrine of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Baptism in the Holy Spirit was the ministry that John ascribed to Jesus (Matthew 3:11). The last command that Jesus gave to his disciples, before he ascended into heaven, was to wait for the Baptism of the Holy (Acts 1:4-5). As a result we see by Paul's interaction with the disciples at Ephesus that Baptism in the Holy Spirit was to Him as central to the gospel as believing that Jesus is the Christ.

²⁰⁴ The emphasize in the book of Acts is on Jesus being Lord, God and King in fact there is only one other place in Acts that refers to Jesus as the Son, Acts 13:33.

²⁰⁵ This is the same Greek word that Paul used to describe how he treated the church in Galatians 1:13, "I tried to destroy (portheo) the church of God."

24- But the plan against him became known to Saul and also that they closely watched the gate day and night so that they could do away with him.

25- And the disciples took him at night through the wall²⁰⁶ lowering him down in a basket.

26- And Saul arrived in Jerusalem attempting to join the disciples and they were all afraid not believing that he was a disciple.

27- But Barnabas taking charge brought him to the apostles²⁰⁷ and explained to them how that in the way he encountered the Lord and that He spoke to him and how in Damascus he spoke fearlessly **in the name** of Jesus.

28- And he was with them coming in and going out in Jerusalem and he spoke fearlessly **in the name** of the Lord Jesus²⁰⁸.

29- And he talked and also debated with the Hellenists²⁰⁹ and they kept trying to kill him.

30- When the brothers²¹⁰ learned of this they brought him to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus.

31- Then all of the church's²¹¹ had peace throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria being built up and moving in the fear of the Lord²¹² and in the encouragement²¹³ of the Holy Spirit multiplied.

²⁰⁶ Paul describes in 2 Corinthians 11:33 that he was let down in a basket through a window. We also learn in 2 Corinthians 11:32 that this was during the time of Aretas the king. This would have been the king Aretas IV who ruled from 9-8 B.C. to A.D. 40-41. In fact Paul's preaching had enraged the king, the governor and the Jewish people. At the latest this event would have taken place in A.D. 41 before the death of Aretas IV. According to Galatians 1:17, Paul left Damascus for a while and went into Arabia and then returned to Damascus before he went to Jerusalem. The total length of time that elapse between his conversion and going to Jerusalem was 3 years, Galatians 1:18. Therefore, at the latest this escape from Damascus took place in A.D. 38 about eight years after the death and resurrection of Jesus.

²⁰⁷ Evidently, he was brought to the company of apostles but only saw Peter and James the Lord's brother assuming that this was the same trip referred to in Galatians 1:17-19.

²⁰⁸ The decision was made to follow Stephen's Textus Receptus of 1550 as a result the verse break is different than that which appears in the Authorized Version.

²⁰⁹ The Hellenists refer to the Greek speaking Jews. There was something particular about the way that Paul preached that infuriated many. Paul met with the same reaction in Jerusalem that he had endured in Damascus.

²¹⁰ Evidently, Saul's ministry was invoking a response from the Hellenist in Jerusalem that the church was not engaging in. We know from Galatians that Paul would not tolerate any mixture of the law with the New Covenant (Galatians 2:11; 5:4).

²¹¹ Although there was one governing body of the church as depicted in Acts of which the apostles were the overseers there were many different local churches as expressed by the plural 'ekklesiai'.

²¹² The Old Testament teaches that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Psalms 111:10; Proverbs 9:10). The Psalmist taught that through the fear of the Lord we would learn to keep our tongue from evil and our lips from speaking guile. The fear of the Lord causes a person to depart from evil and pursue peace (Psalms 34:11-14). The fear of the Lord is the hating of evil, arrogance and pride (Proverbs 8:13). The expression, "the fear of the Lord" is only found one time in the New Testament but an equivalent expression "the fear of God" is found three times, 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:17. Peter, also quotes Psalms 34:12-14 in the context of inheriting a blessing. The most common characteristic of the fear of the Lord is the hating of evil and the loving of righteousness. It was Jesus who above all others model this consecration to life and the ways of the Father and was given this testimony, "You have loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God your God has anointed you with the oil of extreme joy above your fellows" (Hebrews 1:9; Psalms 45:6-7).

²¹³ The comfort or encouragement, 'paraklesis' of the Holy Spirit is only one of the many different things that the Holy Spirit does. He is called the 'Parakletos' in John 14:16. Parakletos is difficult to translate because it has such a wide area of meaning such as helper, encourager, comforter, mediator, advocate, intercessor etc. The most outstanding reality of the 'Parakletos' is that he was sent to take the place of Jesus

32- And it happened that Peter went everywhere and coming down to the saints dwelling at Lydda

33- and he found there a man whose name was Aeneas who for eight years lied upon a bed with paralyzes.

34- And Peter said to him Aeneas **Jesus the Christ heals you**²¹⁴ arise and make your bed and he rose up immediately.

35- And all the inhabitants of Lydda and Sharon who saw him²¹⁵ turned to the Lord.

36- And in Joppa²¹⁶ there was a disciple named Tabitha²¹⁷ which translated means Dorcas she was full of good works and almsgiving.

37- And it came to pass in those days that she becoming sick died and they washed her and laid her in an upper room.

38- And Joppa was near to Lydda the disciples hearing that Peter was there sent two men to call him to come without delay unto them.

39- And Peter rose up and accompanied them. When he had arrived they brought him into the upper room and all of the widows stood by him weeping and showing the coats and garments that Dorcas made while she was with them.

as another 'Parakletos'. Now instead of the Lord Jesus teaching the apostles and being their companion it was the Holy Spirit.

²¹⁴ Jesus made a promise to the disciples: "Behold, I am with you always, even until the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20). This was a reality to Peter as He stood before Aeneas, who was severely crippled from a disease. Peter was not relying on something that he could do, but on the actual presence of Jesus, who stood alongside of Him. Everywhere the disciples went, they discovered that the promise that Jesus made was true: Jesus was there with them confirming the gospel with miracles (Mark 16:20; Matthew 18:20).

What the disciples had was something far more than just a "gifting" - they had the actual presence of Jesus, who was still working miracles as he did when He was with them in the flesh. Peter made this truth known in no uncertain terms when a crippled man was healed in Jerusalem. He said: "The faith that is by Jesus has given him this perfect health" (Acts 3:16). Peter had been given power and authority by Jesus himself. He had also received power when he was baptized in the Holy Spirit; but it was only power to cooperate with the Holy Spirit, who came to glorify Jesus. It was not the authority of Peter, but the the presence of Jesus and the power of His name that was responsible for the miracles. Through these events, Peter revealed to us the kind of faith and relationship that must be placed in Jesus, if the miraculous glory of Jesus is going to be revealed. The kingdom God and the glorious authority of the church has nothing to do with anything other than the Holy Spirit working, for the sole purpose of glorifying and revealing the person of Jesus Christ (Acts 3:12-13; John 16:13-14; 1 Corinthians 12:7). The Holy Spirit baptized Peter so that he could have an extraordinary relationship with the unseen Jesus (John 14:18-19). Through this interaction with the unseen Jesus, signs and wonders were continuing to be done by Him as proof that Jesus had been raised up from the dead. The same Jesus, that all men had come to know by the acts of mercy and love, was still at work. As men were set free from their sin, sickness, and disease - proof was given that Jesus was alive and in their midst. Through the grace and activity of the Holy Spirit they were able to interact with the unseen Jesus; and as they did, signs and wonders took place because Jesus was there.

The message of the gospel is not about an apostle, or anyone else who had received a gift of healing or miracles; but it is about the resurrected Jesus who accompanied His disciples, and could be recognized by His presence and by the same miracles that He had always performed. Today, God has anointed us with the same Holy Spirit, so that we may both know and dwell in Jesus (1 John 2:27; John 15:5; 1 John 4:13). The Holy Spirit has come to reveal Jesus to us; and as we interact with Him, the exploits of the kingdom of God are manifested; as Jesus is revealed (John 16:13-16).

²¹⁵ The effect of preaching the way that Jesus commissioned the church to minister, with signs and wonders, results in the salvation of all those who encounter it. In this case everyone who saw the miracle turned to the Lord Jesus.

²¹⁶ Joppa is modern day Jaffa it was an ancient Philistine city on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea in Israel.

²¹⁷ The name Tabitha is an Aramaic name 'Tabyeta or Tebita' which means 'gazelle'. In the Greek language gazelle is 'Dorcas' and in Hebrew it is 'Tzibyah'.

40- And Peter sent all of them outside and he knelt down and prayed and turning to the body he said Tabitha arise²¹⁸ and she opened her eyes and saw Peter and set up.

41- And giving her hand lifted her up and he called the saints and the widows and presented her alive.

42- And it was known throughout all Joppa and many believed²¹⁹ upon the Lord.

43- And Peter happened to remain many days in Joppa with one Simon a Tanner.

Chapter 10

1- There was a man in Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion²²⁰ of the band called Italica.

2- Devout and God fearing²²¹ with his whole household who gave much alms to the people and prayed always to God.

3- He saw in an open vision around about the ninth hour of the day and angel of God coming to him and He said, Cornelius.

4- And he stared at him in fear and said, What is it Lord²²²? And he said, your prayer and your alms has ascended as a memorial²²³ before God.

²¹⁸ Peter ministered to Tabitha in a similar way that Jesus ministered to the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:41, Luke 8:54). Jesus removed everyone from the room except Peter James and John and the father and mother of the girl who were in faith for their daughter's recovery. The miracle power of God that flows from presence of God is shut down by the skepticism and suspicion of men.

²¹⁹ The reason for extraordinary miracles is so that men may encounter the reality of God. The message of the Gospel is one of power that produces healing for the body and deliverance for the soul. This Gospel of the Kingdom is the one that Jesus preached and the one that He commanded the church to demonstrate.

²²⁰ A centurion was a noncommissioned officer commanding a centuria, which was a division of 100 soldiers. Cornelius was the first gentile that is definitely named to have received the gospel. It seems that in Samaria or perhaps in Lydda and Joppa there would have been gentiles who would have responded to the gospel. However, due to the shock and overall accountability that Peter had to give with respect to these gentiles having received the gospel it appears that they were the first.

²²¹ The Greek word 'eusebes' means "devout, godly or pious. The Greek phrase "phoboumenos ton theon" "God fearing" would refer to those gentiles who believed in the God of Israel but did not practice Judaism. There is a great deal of additional evidence that these types of people existed during the first century in Israel. These non-Jewish people who worshiped God did not submit to circumcision but did agree to the ethical monotheism of the Jews and may have even attended their synagogue services. (see K. Lake, Proselytes and God Fearers," "The Sebomenoi in Josephus" and Joseph Fitzmyer, page 450 "Acts of the Apostles". There are also two such centurions mentioned in the Gospels one in Luke 7:2 in which the elders of the Jews came beseeching Jesus on his behalf and one in Matthew 8:5 who came to Jesus on his own. The centurion that Luke refers to was a man whom the Jews called worthy because he loved the nation of Israel and had built a synagogue for them (Luke 7:5).

²²² The centurion uses the same word that Paul used when He encountered Jesus near to Damascus it is the Greek word 'kurios' and may be understood as 'sir' rather than 'Lord'. Certainly, the centurion would not mean to refer to an angel as the Eternal God. Recalling that the equivalent phrase used in the Septuagint to translate YHWH is 'kurios', a word that was also used to express that Jesus Christ is the Eternal God.

²²³ These prayers and offerings of Cornelius were accepted by God as the ascent offering (whole burnt offering) and memorial portions of the Old Testament that were turned into smoke for a sweet smelling aroma to the Lord (Leviticus 2:2,9,16; 5:12; 6:15). Paul also likens the offering in which the saints sow into the ministry as an ascent offering that the Lord receives as a sweet smelling aroma because it is holy an acceptable to Him

- 5- And now send some men to Joppa²²⁴ and summon Simon who is called Peter.
- 6- He is staying with Simon the Tanner whose house is by the sea he will tell you what you should do.
- 7- And when the angel that spoke to Cornelius had departed he called two of his household servants and a devout servant who attended constantly to him.
- 8- And recounting everything to them sent them to Joppa.
- 9- And the next day as they traveled and came near the city at about the sixth hour Peter went up upon the housetop to pray.
- 10- And he became hungry and wanted to eat and while they made ready ecstasy²²⁵ came upon him.
- 11- And he saw the heavens open and a vessel which was like a great sheet coming down being lowered to the earth by its four corners.
- 12- On it was all of the four footed creatures of the earth and wild beast and creeping things and birds of the heavens.
- 13- And a voice said to him, Peter arise kill and eat.
- 14- But Peter said, this can't be Lord for I have not eaten anything common and unclean.
- 15- And the voice came again to him a second time, What God has cleansed you shall not call common²²⁶.
- 16- And this happened three times and suddenly the vessel was snatched up into heaven.

(Philippians 4:18). More important than anything else the giving of an offering is an act of worship a time where we pour out our love and affection for God. The response of God's favor towards those who offer such offerings is underscored here. Because of the prayers and offerings that Cornelius gave he was chosen to be the first among the gentiles to receive the riches of heaven, the gift of the Holy Spirit. With the message of the offering occurring over 813 times it is singled out as one of the most important subjects in the Bible. There were ten offerings highlighted by God in the New Testament: 1- The wise men who brought gifts to Jesus (Matthew 2:1-16). 2-The widow who gave all that she had (Mark 12:42). 3- The woman at Nain who worshipped with an alabaster box of oil (Luke 7:38) . 4- The woman at Bethany who poured expensive oil upon Jesus at Simon the Lepers house (Mark 14:3). 5-Mary who worshipped with costly ointment in Bethany just before the death of Jesus (John 12:3). 6- The offering given by Zacchaeus at his conversion (Luke 19:8). 7- The offering of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10). 8- The offerings of Cornelius. 9-The offerings of those of Macedonia (2 Corinthians 8-9). 10- The offering that God gave of His Son (John 3:16).

²²⁴ Joppa a town on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea was about 50 km south of Caesarea.

²²⁵ The Greek word 'ekstasis' first appears in Genesis 2:21 where it translates the Hebrew word 'tardemah'. In this first occurrence it is translated 'deep sleep' however, it is also used to translate the Hebrew word 'pachad', which means 'terror' in 1 Samuel 11:7. Saul had been anointed king and when he summoned the people of Israel with this anointing 'ekstasis' fell on them. When Daniel received a vision from the Lord a great 'ekstasis' (quaking) fell upon the men that were with him and they ran away (Daniel 10:7). The first occurrence of 'ekstasis' in the New Testament is in Mark 5:42. When Jesus healed Jarius' daughter they were all overwhelmed with a great 'ekstasis' or astonished with a great 'ekstasis'. It is used one final time in a very similar situation to that of Peter in Acts 22:17. As Paul was praying he was in 'ekstasis' or a trance and while in this state the Lord Jesus appeared to him.

²²⁶ The dietary laws that were laid down in Leviticus 11 through 12 were given to teach the Israelites how to distinguish between the holy and the profane and that which is common or unclean. The importance of strict compliance was underscored by the fact that these laws were given in light of the death of Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus chapter 10.

17- Now as Peter was thinking through what he had seen in the vision the men sent by Cornelius to find the house of Simon stood at the porch.

18- And they called out asking if Simon called Peter was staying there.

19- As Peter was still thinking about the vision the Spirit²²⁷ said to him behold three men are looking for you.

20- Get up now go down and travel with them do not hesitate because I have sent them.

21- And Peter going down to the men said, behold I am the one you are looking for what is the reason you have come?

22- And they answered, The centurion Cornelius a righteous²²⁸ and God fearing man to which all the Jewish nation will bear witness was instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house and to listen to your words.

23- Then he invited them in as guest and the next day he rose up and went with them and also the brethren²²⁹ which were from Joppa accompanied him.

24- And the next day he entered into Caesarea and Cornelius who was waiting for them called together his family and close friends.

25- And as Peter came in Cornelius went to meet him falling down at his feet to worship²³⁰.

26- But Peter pulled him up saying arise I also am a man.

27- And talking with him he went in and found many gathered together.

28- He said to them, you know how it is unlawful for a Jewish man to join or come unto another race however, God has shown me not to call a man²³¹ common or unclean.

29- And for this reason I have come at your request without objection let me ask then for what purpose have you sent for me.

30- And Cornelius proclaimed, four days ago at this very hour I was at the nine o'clock prayer in my house and behold a man was standing before me in bright clothing.

31- And said, Cornelius your prayer has been heard and your alms are a reminder before God.

32- Therefore send to Joppa and call for Simon who is called Peter he is a guest in Simon Tanners seaside house.

33- Then I immediately sent you and you have done well by coming now the we are all gather before God having come to hear all that the Lord has commanded you.

34- And Peter opened his mouth and said of a truth I realize that God is no respecter of persons.

35- But in every nation he who fears Him and practices²³² righteousness is acceptable²³³.

²²⁷ The vision may not have been clear to Peter but the direction of the Holy Spirit was which Peter obeyed immediately.

²²⁸ Cornelius is given a place among the many who are called righteous in the Bible. Able the son of Adam was the first righteous man (Matthew 23:35, 1 John 3:12). The Greek word for righteous is 'dikaios' and its Hebrew equivalent is 'tzaddeek'. The first occurrence of 'dikaios' in the Septuagint is found in Genesis 6:9, "Noah was a righteous and perfect man..." The same is also said of Job in the Septuagint that he was a "perfect and righteous man..." (Job 1:1) Both Joseph and Simeon are the first men in the New Testament that are called righteous men (Matthew 1:19; Luke 2:25).

²²⁹ We learn in Acts 11:12 that the number of these brethren that went with Peter were six.

²³⁰ The Greek verb that is used here is 'proskuneo' which can mean 'adore or worship.' Worship belongs only to God therefore when a person is allowed to adore or worship in this context in the Bible it is evidence that the one being so honored is God, (Luke 4:8; Rev 19:10). This Greek word first appears in Genesis 18:2 when Abraham bowed himself before his three guest who were going down to investigate Sodom and Gomorrah.

²³¹ God made known to Peter through the vision that neither food nor non-Jews that had been made clean by Him through the New Covenant were to be considered defiled.

36- The word that was sent to the sons of Israel announcing peace²³⁴ through Jesus Christ who is Lord of all.

37- You know that word that occurred throughout all Judea beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John preached.

38- How that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power who went about doing good and healing all who were under the power²³⁵ of the devil because God was with Him²³⁶.

²³² The Greek word 'ergazomai' may be translated, 'labor, work, practice, perform'. It first appears in the New Testament in Matthew 7:23, "...I never knew you depart from me you that work iniquity." The first occurrence in the Old Testament is in Genesis 2:5 where it translates the Hebrew word 'avod', "...and no man worked the ground".

²³³ The Greek word 'dekont' which means 'acceptable' is used often in the Old Testament sacrificial system. The acceptable offerings are those offerings, which a worshiper can worship God with. "If his offering is a whole burnt offering of the oxen it shall be a perfect male, which he shall bring to the door of the tent of meeting he shall come near for it is acceptable before YHWH" Leviticus 1:3. Through the transformation of life that was brought to us by the redemption that is in Jesus Christ God we are made holy and acceptable so that we may present our lives as an offering to God, which is "holy and acceptable" (Romans 12:1). Paul said that the Gentile were made acceptable to God because they were sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:16). In Proverbs God' say to do righteousness and judgment is more acceptable than sacrifice (Proverbs 21:3). All worshipers along with the Psalmist cry out to God and say, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in your sight oh Lord my strength and my redeemer (Psalms 19:14). When Jesus began His ministry He introduced the acceptable day of the Lord wherein God is calling all men to repent and turn back to the way of righteousness, purity and holiness for which we were created (Luke 4:19; Isaiah 61:2; Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 2:9) God has called us to live in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost to which Paul says that they who serve God in these things are acceptable to God and approved of men (Romans 14:17-18).

²³⁴ The Hebrew word 'shalom' is far more than just a Hebrew way of saying hello. The expression declares a state of plenty and wellbeing and includes security, empowerment and prosperity. When God's people walk in obedience to Him they enjoy his blessings their "peace is like a river, and their righteousness as the waves of the sea" (Isaiah 48:18). Peace speaks of the fellowship and communion that God's people enjoy with Him exemplified in the Peace offerings (Exodus 20:24; Leviticus 3). God both secures Gideon's life and empowered Him with the words "Peace to you" insomuch that Gideon built an altar and called it YHWH is the source of our peace (Judges 6:23-24). God's peace is a "covenant of peace" that cause the wild beast to leave, brings safety in the wilderness, makes His people and their dwelling a blessing, results in showers of blessings which causes the trees to produce fruit and the earth to produce a harvest, it breaks the yoke of slavery and oppression giving God's people the dominion over all other powers (Ezekiel 34: 25- 29; Leviticus 26:6; Numbers 25:12). The peace that God gives is part of His armor and one of the benefits of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 6:15; Gal 5:22). This peace comes to us through Jesus Christ who has removed the offence and disobedience and bestowed all the blessing of God upon us.

²³⁵ The Greek word that is used here is 'katadunasteeo' which is derived from 'kata' meaning 'according to' and 'dunastes' meaning 'mighty or potentate'. It may be translated 'to exercise power over', 'dominate', 'oppress' or 'exploit'.

²³⁶ There are many people who have there various opinions about how the gospel is to be preached but no one can deny how Jesus preached the gospel (Matthew 4:23; 8:7; 9:35; 12:10, 28; Luke 4:11, 18; 5:17; 9:11; John 4:47). Jesus not only ministered to the needs to the people setting them free from whatever oppressed or afflicted them but also commanded His disciples to minister in the same way. The gospel is about bringing deliverance to those who are held in the prison of sin, sickness and disease. Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit to proclaim this deliverance and has anointed us with the same power of the Holy Spirit so that we may preach the same gospel (Acts 1:8; Luke 24:48-49; John 17:21; John 14:12; Mark 16:17-18). If Jesus and His apostles and disciples are going to be our model for how we are to preach then we must listen to the words of Paul when he said, "my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and power. That your faith not stand in the wisdom of man but in the power of God (1 Corinthians 2:4-5). When Jesus told His disciples to go into all of the world and preach the gospel they heard it with the same command that he had previously sent them out with. They were to cast out devils, heal the sick and the disease and set men free from whatever power

- 39- And we are witnesses of all that He did in the country of Judea and Jerusalem and they put Him to death hanging upon a tree.
- 40- This one God raised up on the third day and caused Him to be seen,
- 41- not to all the people but to witnesses chosen by God²³⁷ beforehand who ate and drank with Him after he arose from the dead.
- 42- And he commanded us to preach to the people and to bear witness that this is the one appointed by God to judge the living and the dead.
- 43- To Him all the prophets bear witness, that all who believes in Him receives the release²³⁸ of sins through His name.
- 44- While Peter was speaking these words the Holy Spirit fell²³⁹ upon all of them.
- 45- And those from the circumcised believers who accompanied Peter were bewildered that the gift of the Holy Spirit was also poured out upon the Gentiles.
- 46- Also hearing them speaking the language²⁴⁰ and extolling God. Then Peter spoke up,

of darkness oppressed them (Luke 9:1-2; 10:1,9,17, 19-20; John 14:12; Mark 3:15; 16:17-18; Matthew 10:1, 8; 16:19; Acts 4:30; 8:6; Romans 15:19; Hebrews 2:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:5). It is time that God's people no longer listen to men who would attempt to pervert the gospel because they lack the anointing and relationship with Jesus to preach the gospel as Jesus preached it and commanded His servants to preach. If the gospel is going to be preached then the Holy Spirit must be in charge and the power of God that drives out sin, sickness and disease must be revealed. Anything less is a manmade religion and cannot meet the classification of preaching the gospel as defined in the New Testament.

²³⁷ Jesus appeared to more than 500 brethren at one time (1 Corinthians 15:6). The other accounts of where he appeared and to whom He appeared are found in the Four Gospels. Mary Magdalene is the first to see Jesus near to the tomb in John 20:14; Mark 16:9. Jesus then appeared to two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13; Mark 16:12). After this Jesus appeared to 10 of the Apostles and then eight days later appeared to all 11 Apostles (Luke 24:36; John 20:19; Mark 16:14; John 20:26). Then Jesus appeared at the Sea of Galilee to seven of the Apostles and then in a mountain in Galilee (John 21:1; Matthew 28:16). The final time that Jesus appears to His disciples is in Bethany at the Mount of Olives (Luke 24:50; Acts 1:12).

²³⁸ The Greek word 'aphesis' comes from the word 'aphiemi' which means 'sent away'. It also translates the Hebrew words 'shalch' and 'deror' in the Septuagint as in Isaiah 61:1 which mean 'sent away' and 'released' respectively. The Greek word 'aphesis' appears 50 times in the Septuagint. It translated the Hebrew word 'Jubile' in Numbers 36:4 and 'release' in Deuteronomy 15:2 which describes YHWH' release of debts at the end of every seven years.

²³⁹ The Greek word 'epiipto' first occurs in Genesis 14:16 where it translates the Hebrew word 'nacha' which means to smite, "And he divided himself against them at night he and his servants and smote them..." Its first appearance in the New Testament is in Mark 3:10, "For he healed many so then they **pressed** upon him..."

²⁴⁰ This is the same baptism that was experienced by the 120 in Acts 2:4 about 9 to 10 years earlier in Jerusalem. The baptism of the Holy Spirit and Fire is the ministry of Jesus and the sign of the New Covenant. Although, this ministry of Jesus and activity of the Holy Spirit is not constantly being mentioned in Acts there is no doubt that as many as were coming into contact with the Apostles were being baptized in the Holy Spirit and Fire. About 10 years after this event in Acts 19 Paul reveals his approach to ministering to those he meets, "Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed". The gift of the Holy Spirit, which is the promise of the Father is the same no matter where it is referred to in the Bible. The promise of the Father in Luke 24:49 is that same as the Spirit of promise in Ephesians 1:13. The gift of the Holy Spirit in Acts 10:45 is the same as the gift of the Holy Spirit that fell upon the Samaritans in Acts 8:17-20. If a saint is praying in the Holy Spirit, which is defined as tongues in 1 Corinthians 14 then it is the same in Jude 20. Of all the disciplines of research it seems that only theologians ignore the model and work from an unknown to a known instead of working from a known model to an unknown variable. Just because certain details such as the manifestation of tongues are left out when the Samaritans or Paul receives the gift of the Holy Spirit it is wrong to conclude that they were absent. Certainly, Paul received the same gift that the 120 had received when he was filled with the Holy Spirit and this is why he was able to say to the Corinthians, "I thank my God that I speak in tongues more than you all" (1 Corinthians 14:18).

47- Can anyone refuse them water? Should not these be baptized who have also received the Holy Spirit just like us.

48- And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ then they asked him to stay for a day.

Chapter 11

1- Now the apostles and the brethren which were in Jerusalem heard that the Gentiles had also received the Word of God.

2- And when Peter went up to Jerusalem those of the circumcision criticized him.

3- Saying why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?

4- But Peter began to explain to them the sequence of events saying,

5- I was in the city of Joppa praying and in ecstasy I had a vision, a vessel came down from heaven, which was a large sheet let down by four corners from heaven and it came to me.

6- I looked into it closely and I saw four-footed creatures of the earth and wild beast and creeping things and birds of the heaven.

7- And I heard a voice saying to me arise Peter kill and eat.

8- But I said by no means Lord because everything common or unclean has never entered into my mouth²⁴¹.

9- And the voice replied a second time from heaven, What God has purified you shall not make common.

10- And this happened three times and was drawn back again into heaven.

11- And behold immediately three men stood at the house for me which were sent from Caesarea unto me.

12- And the Spirit told me go with them judging nothing and also with me were these six brethren and we entered into this mans house.

13- And he explained to us how he had seen as angel in his house which stood and said send to Joppa and find Simon who is called Peter.

14- Who shall speak to you words which will save you and all your house.

15- And as I began to speak the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us²⁴² at first.

16- Then I remembered the words of the Lord when he said, John²⁴³ certainly baptized you with water, but you shall be baptized in the Holy Ghost²⁴⁴.

²⁴¹ In Acts 10:14 Peter tells the Lord that he had “never eaten anything common or unclean” however, in this re-accounting of events he says “everything common or unclean has never entered into my mouth”. This is in effect the exact same thing this is not proof of a separate tradition but the liberty taken by Luke to properly record the statements of Peter. Additionally, it is proof that no one smoothed out the text over the centuries to remove what may be viewed as inconsistencies in the text.

²⁴² Peter includes everyone who had received the gospel, which were believers at that moment. To limit this description of the gift of the Holy Spirit only to those present at the first Pentecostal service about 10 years earlier would have excluded the majority of believers that were present at that time. Peter further emphasizes this point in verse 17. The Greek participle ‘pisteusasin’, which means ‘coming to faith’ modifies both them and us driving the point home that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been experienced by all who believed just as it was by the house of Cornelius.

²⁴³ The message of the baptism in the Holy Ghost was the first introductory message of Jesus Christ by John. Just before Jesus went away the ministry of the Holy Ghost was the focus of His message to His disciples. The message of the baptism in the Holy Spirit was the keynote address of Jesus longest monologue in the bible found in John 13 through 16. The Holy Spirit, which was poured out upon the church was the direct result of Jesus baptizing the believer in the Holy Spirit. This baptism was essential then and it is essential today if one is to be a witness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The baptism in the

17- If God then gave them the same gift even as us who also believe on the Lord Jesus Christ who was I to be able to hinder God²⁴⁵.

Holy Spirit is not restricted from any nation nether is it restricted from any generation for it is for all people in every generation, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are far off, as many as the Lord our God calls to Himself" (Acts 2:39; John 14:16). If Jesus is to be revealed to the lost and dying world it is only by the gift of the Holy Spirit that we can make Him known (John 14:9-21; 16:12-15). As long as God is calling men to repentance God is also willing to bless them with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

²⁴⁴ The witness of the Holy Spirit in the salvation of the Gentiles was paramount. Without the outpouring of the Holy Ghost and the evidence of speaking in the heavenly language, there would have been no way for there to be the certainty that the Gentiles were also granted the same gift of salvation that had been given to Israel. When the Holy Ghost was poured out, everyone who received on the day of Pentecost spoke with these heavenly tongues of fire. John identified the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as the ministry of Jesus; and wherever that outpouring took place, the same unique gift of prophecy also accompanied it (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; Acts 2:4; 10:44-47; 19:6; 1 Corinthians 14:2).

The ministry of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit are inseparable. Jesus began His ministry through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon His life, and He started His church by pouring out the Holy Spirit upon it. As much as Jesus is the Savior, He is also the Baptizer. His ministry as Baptizer did not begin until He ascended to the throne of God. Just before He was about to leave for the final time after His resurrection, Jesus reminded His disciples of what John had said about His ministry (Acts 1:5). Jesus told all of Jerusalem that the gift of God was available, but it was noted that the gift would not come upon them until after He was seated at the right of God and glorified (John 7:38-39; Acts 2:33). When Peter referred to the Gentiles receiving the Holy Ghost, it was in the context of that same baptismal ministry which they received on Pentecost - proving that the gift of God was available to all (Acts 10:45-46; 11:17; 15:8). Paul also made the same connection to the baptismal ministry of Jesus in his address to the disciples at Ephesus; and by and large left them without choice in the matter (Acts 19:4-6).

There are two primary gifts highlighted in the New Testament: the gift of salvation and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:15-17; 6:23; Ephesians 2:8; John 7:38-39; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:38; 8:20; 10:45; 11:17; 2 Timothy 1:6). The New Testament does not make an argument for them being divided between two different classes of Christians. Why would anyone, after giving their life to Jesus and receiving the transforming work of grace, refuse to receive the baptismal ministry of the one who saved them? How can anyone believe that the ministry of Jesus is different today than it was yesterday, or that the working of the Holy Spirit has changed? To dispute that the baptismal ministry of Jesus is accompanied by anything other than the gift of tongues, one must argue from the traditions and philosophy of men - because the scripture establishes its certainty. Paul, who was the chief defender of the gift and the one who spoke in tongues more than them all, did not in any way take away from this truth. Paul's rhetorical question on the gift of tongues in 1 Corinthians 12:30 may be applied in several ways, and clearly does not disqualify any and all believers from functioning in this gift. Besides, no one can make a doctrine out of one single verse of scripture, especially when its supposed application would be in direct contradiction to other witnesses.

The witness of the Holy Spirit in our life should be more important to us than the witness of men. The confirmation that God brings should be more important than the confirmation of a denomination. The baptism in the Holy Spirit should be more precious and sought after than the baptism in water. The house of Cornelius had this witness, confirmation, and baptism; which were the proofs that Peter used to convince the church at Jerusalem that God had also extended all grace to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews. Peter so integrates the baptism in the Holy Spirit with redemption that He applied it to the prophesy of Joel, with regards to what would be poured out upon all flesh - making the baptism in the Spirit and its prophetic witness something that belongs to everyone. Peter made the baptismal ministry of Jesus available to everyone when He coupled it with the call to salvation, saying: "Repent everyone of you, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

²⁴⁵ Peter identified the gift of God that comes to those who believe with the baptism of the Holy Spirit and Fire (Acts 8:20; 11:17). Jesus also associated the gift of God with the flowing forth of the Holy Spirit from those who would believe (John 4:10,14; 7:38-39). Now there may be many eyebrows raised over this statement; but what we must definitely conclude is that the proof that the Gentiles' were saved was verified by the same gift that the apostles received on the day of Pentecost. Those who were in the church at Jerusalem were convinced of the Gentile's conversion because the gift of God was expressed through their

18- And when they heard these things they grew silent and glorified God saying, also unto the Gentiles God has given repentance²⁴⁶ unto life²⁴⁷.

lives even as it was in their own thus revealing that the Gentiles had been granted repentance unto life. Now we can back up to those Jews in Samaria who had received the gospel when Philip went down and preached Jesus unto them. Those of the city of Samaria believed and were baptized in water, both men and women (Acts 8:12). However, it was not until Peter and John came down and prayed for them that they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-16). As to why they were not baptized in the Holy Spirit the moment they believed is unclear. Perhaps it was important that they be connected with the church at Jerusalem through the involvement of Peter and John. Yet one thing is clear: they were Baptized in the Holy Spirit; and those whose hearts were not right, like Simon, were revealed. And it was made clear by Peter that such a one had no part in the things of God (Acts 8:21-23).

The question has been asked by many: does one need to be baptized in the Holy Spirit to be saved? Yet such a question is absolutely foreign to the gospel. When John identified Jesus, He identified Him as the One who would not only save the people from their sins, but would Baptize them in the Holy Spirit and Fire. In fact, when we think of the ministry of John we think of his ministry of baptism, and as a result we call him "John the Baptist." Yet what we must also consider is that John gave the same kind of focus to the ministry of Jesus when he said, "I baptize you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and Fire" (Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16; John 1:33). Jesus also focused the disciples on the ministry of this baptism, telling them, "For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5). Jesus had at times also brought more details to the activities and works of the Holy Spirit, especially in John chapters 14 through 16; but it still all began with the Holy Spirit being poured out with this glorious heavenly utterance. One thing remains certain: we must all come to grips with the baptism in the Holy Spirit and Fire as the ministry of Jesus - and the evidence of that baptism being the utterance of a heavenly tongue (Acts 2:4; Acts 10:45-46; Acts 11:17; Acts 19:6; 1 Corinthians 14:2; 1 Corinthians 14:14-17; 1 Corinthians 14:21-22). It was the way that John the Baptist identified the ministry of the Messiah, and also remained a primary focus of the ministry of Paul. It was of the utmost importance for the church in the eyes of Jesus, and it was the first question on the lips of Paul when he met people interested in the Messiah (Acts 19:2; 1 Corinthians 12:7). The baptism in the Holy Spirit was always accompanied by the heavenly manifestation of the language of the Spirit; and associated by Jesus with the rivers of living water, and the enduing of power from on high (John 7:38-39; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8).

²⁴⁶ Repentance only works when the blood of Jesus is applied. Without the blood of Jesus a person can be sorry all day long for his wrongdoing, but it will accomplish him nothing. The deep desire to have a change of life and do what is good and pleasing in God's sight can neither remove the penalty of death nor change the nature of a man. Repentance is only granted through the death of Christ Jesus, who bore our sins away at Calvary. He is the One who tasted death for every man, who bore our sins in His own body on the tree. Only through His blood can His life now be supplied. Without the shedding of the blood of Jesus, man is still subject to the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2). The blood of the Old Testament offerings could offer a substitute until the Seed should come - the Lamb, the offering of which all those sacrifices testified. Now their value is lost forever, for the fullness of time has come; the offering was prepared and Christ Jesus was crucified. All the Old Testament offerings were only like a play pointing to the offering God Himself would make, which offerings have now all been done away with since His blood has now been given. Now when His blood is applied to a repentant heart, that repentance brings a change; and the power of the life of Christ is imparted. We have been liberated through from the curse of sin and death by the blood of our Passover Lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7; John 13:1; 19:4,14-15). The sins of all mankind have been sent away, and the testimony of that sin and its penalty of death have been removed from before the presence of God forever (Leviticus 16:5-22). We now have the commission and authority to command all men everywhere to repent and to turn to the Living God. The gift of repentance has been granted to us with all its rights and benefits, by the blood and through the name of Jesus (Luke 24:47; Acts 5:31).

Equally, God, who loves the whole world, has no opportunity to forgive anyone without the application of the blood of Jesus. Through Jesus Christ alone forgiveness of sins has been granted (Acts 13:38-39; 26:18). There may be many good people in the religions of the world who sincerely seek God's forgiveness, but their religions have no authority to grant forgiveness; for that power can only be found in the blood of the Lamb, Christ Jesus. The blood of Jesus must be applied if the stain of sin that pollutes the soul and spirit is to be removed. It does not matter whether one is a Jew or Gentile, without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. The only sacrifice that matters, the sacrifice that forever provided a cleansing from all sin

19- Now surely those who were scattered away from the tribulation²⁴⁸ that came because of Stephen spread out as far as Phoenicia²⁴⁹ and Cyprus and Antioch²⁵⁰ speaking the word to none but Jews only.

- is the blood of Jesus. If we refuse this redeeming sacrifice, if we do not take His blood and apply it to our lives, then we will die in our sins; and eternal death will be the consequence. If we take His blood and confess our sins, He is just and faithful to cleanse from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). Confession alone cannot do it, a sorrowful and contrite heart still comes up short; but when the blood of Jesus is applied, every sin and every one of its effects are forever removed.

²⁴⁷ Repentance is a gift that is granted to us by God. Repentance takes us from spiritual death to life, and from spiritual darkness to light (Ephesians 2:1; Ephesians 5:8; Colossians 2:13; 1 Peter 2:9). Repentance takes us beyond just being sorry; repentance results in a change. After Judas betrayed Jesus he was sorry (Gr-metamellomai), but his being sorry did not result in repentance (Matthew 27:3; 2 Corinthians 7:10). We are able to repent because God is willing to forgive us. He grants to us a forgiveness that totally erases all of the sin. In His love and mercy for us, He forgives us and frees us - from the sin, its judgment, and the guilt of wrongdoing (Hebrews 9:14; Acts 5:31; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 1:7; Revelation 1:5; Acts 26:18). God has gone to great expense to provide us with the blood of Jesus, so that every stain of sin and every power that would attempt to block our way to Him would be removed with one simple request from our heart (Romans 10:9-10, Romans 10:13; Acts 16:31; Matthew 26:28; Romans 3:25; Hebrews 10:19).

In the gift of repentance, God grants us the ability to have a complete change of mind (Gr- metanoian). The gift of repentance breaks the demonic stronghold, and removes the power of condemnation (Hebrews 9:14; Hebrews 10:22). The Holy Spirit gives us a knowledge of the truth, and fills our heart with a godly sorrow (2 Corinthians 7:10; 2 Timothy 2:25). Repentance is the power of change: we have a change of heart, a change of desires, and a change of life; because God makes all things new (2 Corinthians 5:17-18; Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 36:26; Acts 3:26; 1 Peter 1:22; Ephesians 4:23-24). Because of this change, this transformation, we feel differently about sin - it is not something we want; rather we begin to desire righteousness and purity for our lives. The deception of sin and darkness that once blinded us to the truth and reality of God is removed by this simple act of repentance (2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 13:14).

God, in His amazing love for us, also grants us the privilege of being forgiving as many times as is necessary, if we simply come to Him in repentance (Luke 17:3-4; Matthew 18:22,35; Matthew 6:15). His forgiveness is totally unlike the forgiveness of man; because He restores us to a relationship with Himself as though we had never done anything wrong. He erases our sins, and never again remembers them, so that there is no threat of repercussions in the future (Hebrews 8:12; Hebrews 10:17; Isaiah 43:25; Isaiah 44:22; Jeremiah 50:20; Micah 7:19; 1 John 1:9; Revelation 1:5).

The closest Old Testament Hebrew word that conveys the meaning of repentance is translated "turn or return" (Heb- shuv), as in Malachi 2:6 and Isaiah 6:9-10. It denotes the difference between the people of God and the people of the world, because the people of God have turned to God. Therefore, Israel is different from the people of Canaan, the way of the righteous from that of sinners, and the way of the Lord from the way of the evildoers. If Israel then deviated from the way in which God required His people to walk; they would need to return again, or repent (Amos 4:6-13; Hosea 5:15; Hosea 6:1-5; Jeremiah 3:12-14).

In Jeremiah, God reminds Israel of when they followed Him: "I remember the unfailing devotion of your youth, the love of your bridal days when you followed me in the wilderness, through a land unknown" (Jeremiah 2:2; Jeremiah 31:3). Then in Hosea, God pursues Israel to cause her to return unto Him so that He could restore her: "I will woo her. I will go with her into the wilderness and comfort her: there I will restore." (Hosea 2:14-15) Although the Hebrew word 'shuv' carries with it the New Testament meaning of repentance, it is translated in the Septuagint by the Greek word 'epistropho', which means "to turn or be converted." There are two passages of scripture in Acts that bring repentance ('metanoeo') and turn back ('epistropho') together: Acts 3:19 "Repent therefore and turn back, that your sins may be wiped out," and Acts 26:20 "Repent and turn to God, and prove their repentance by their deeds." Thus repentance results in one being converted and turning from their evil, to follow God in the ways of righteousness.

²⁴⁸ The Greek word 'thipsis' is the same word that was used to describe Israel's suffering and trouble in Egypt in Acts 7: 10,11.

²⁴⁹ Phoinike was a Mediterranean seacoast town belonging to the Roman province of Syria where Tyre and Sidon were located. Phoinike is related to the greek word 'phoinos' which means 'red-purple' the color of a

- 20- But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene who came to Antioch and spoke to the Greeks proclaiming to them the Lord Jesus.
- 21- And the hand of the Lord²⁵¹ was with them and many of them believed and turned²⁵² unto the Lord.
- 22- And the church in Jerusalem hearing the word in their ears about them sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch.
- 23- Who arriving and seeing the grace of God rejoiced and encouraged them that with purpose of heart they would cling²⁵³ unto the Lord.
- 24- For he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost and faith and a multitude of people were added unto the Lord.
- 25- Then Barnabas departed to Tarsus to look for Saul.
- 26- And having found him he brought him to Antioch and it happened that they were both brought together a whole year in the church and taught a multitude of people and the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.
- 27- In these days prophets²⁵⁴ came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.
- 28- And there rose up among them one named Agabus who through the Spirit showed clearly²⁵⁵ that a great famine was about to come on all the inhabitants, which happened under Claudius²⁵⁶.
- 29- And the disciples determined to send support²⁵⁷ to the brethren of Judea²⁵⁸ according as each one had prospered.
- 30- Which, also they did sending it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Paul.

Chapter 12

- 1- And about that time King Herod laid hands on some of the church to harm them.
- 2- And he put James the brother of John to the sword.

famous dye from Tyre called 'kinahhu' in Akkadian which is related to the Hebrew word 'kenaan' meaning 'Canaan'.

²⁵⁰ This Antioch was the capital of the Seleucid Empire founded in 300 B.C. It was about 480 km from Jerusalem and a place where many Jews lived as well as a sanctuary for the god Apollo.

²⁵¹ The expression 'the hand of the Lord' is found in Luke 1:66 in reference to the protection given to John the Baptist by YHWH.

²⁵² The Greek word 'epistropho' may also be translated 'converted' (see the footnote for verse 18 above).

²⁵³ This Greek word may also be translated 'tarry' or 'wait longer' or 'to abide'. The word used here is 'prosmeno' which is made up of the Greek 'pros' meaning 'to' and 'meno' which means 'abide'.

²⁵⁴ This is the first reference to prophet in the New Testament community besides Jesus. However, in Acts 13:1 Barnabas himself is referred to as a prophet. The prophets that are named are Agabus, Baranabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manae, Judas and Silas (Acts 15:32; 21:10). The office of the prophet in the New Testament are also mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:28-19; 14:29,32,37; Ephesians 2:20; 3:5 and 4:11.

²⁵⁵ The Greek word is 'semaino' a word that is first found in the New Testament in John 12:33 where it is translated 'signified' by the Authorized Version. It may mean to "give a sign", "make known" or foretell or warn as in Ezekiel 33:3.

²⁵⁶ Claudius' full name was Tiberius Claudius Nero Germanicus the Roman emperor who ruled between 41 and 54 A.D. A very bad famine is recorded to have happened in Judea in 46-48 A.D. by Josephus (Ant.20.2.5, 51; 20.5.2, 101).

²⁵⁷ The Greek word used here is 'diakonia' which is usually translated 'service' or 'ministry'. This same word is used in a similar context in 2 Corinthians 8:4; 9:1,12.

²⁵⁸ This passage clarifies where the great famine would take place, in Judea. The word of prophecy was not spoken to them in vain for they immediately responded to the word taken the necessary action to send finances to take care of the brethren in preparation for the famine.

- 3- And perceiving that it pleased the Jews he set out to take Peter too. Now this was in the days of Unleaven Bread²⁵⁹.
- 4- And he seized him putting him into prison handing him over to four squads soldiers to guard him intending at the Passover²⁶⁰ to bring him out to the people.
- 5- Peter was therefore kept in prison and the church prayed fervently to God for him.
- 6- And that very night before Herod was about to bring him forth Peter fell asleep between two soldiers bound by two chains and prison guards stood before the door of the prison.
- 7- And behold an angel of the Lord stood by him and a light shined in the cell and he tapped Peters side and woke him saying, Rise up quickly and the chains fell off of his hands.
- 8- And the angel said to him gird yourself and bind your sandals and he did so. And he said put on your mantle and follow me.
- 9- And he went out following him and he was uncertain that it was truly happening because of the angel but thought he was seeing a vision.
- 10- And he went by the first watch and the second and came to the iron gate leading into the city which opened automatically of itself and moving along through the street and suddenly the angel departed from him.
- 11- And Peter came to himself and said, Now I know for certain that the Lord sent His angel and delivered me from the hand of Herod and all of the expectation of the Jewish people.
- 12- And realizing this he went to the house of Mary the mother of John who is called Mark where a group was gathered together and prayed.
- 13- And he knocked at the door of the gate and a young girl named Rhoda came to answer it.
- 14- And recognizing the voice of Peter she did not open the gate because of her delight but ran in and reported that Peter stood at the gate.
- 15- But they said to her, You are crazy! But she insisted that it was so, then they said, It is his angel.
- 16- Now Peter continued to knock then opening and seeing him they were astonished.
- 17- But he motioned with his hand for them to be quite explaining to them how the Lord lead him out of the prison and he said tell this to James²⁶¹ and the brethren and he departed and went off to another place.

²⁵⁹ This refers to the Passover. Passover was celebrated on the 14th of Nisan and then 7 days of unleavened bread followed. The seven days of unleavened bread was referred to as the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

²⁶⁰ Something very unfortunate took place in the translation of scripture someone opted to translate the Greek word for Passover (pascha) with the English word Easter. Every Sunday had become a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus in that He arose from the dead on the first day of the week (Hebrew name for the first day of the week: yom reshon). However, the remembrance of Passover was still equally important as Christ Jesus was our Passover Lamb and the New Covenant was initiated on Passover (Matthew 26:2,17,18,19; Mark 1:12,14,16; Luke 22,1,7,8,11,13,15; John 13:1; 18:28,39; 19:14; 1 Corinthians 5:7). Polycarp, who was mentored by John the Apostle, fought to keep the Church at Rome from removing Passover as a celebrated feast day. Unfortunately, sometime in the 3rd century the church at Rome made an official change and integrated the celebration of Passover with the Sunday service thus creating a new holiday. Albeit most would agree that it is of special importance to recognize the anniversary of the first day of the week when Jesus arose from the dead. However, it was the position of Polycarp and the first and second century church, according to Irenaeus and Eusebius, to celebrate Passover, which then would include the time of the crucifixion as well as the resurrection (Quartodeciman controversy; Volume I of The Ante-Nicene Fathers (Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, editors; Polycrates Letter to Victor. As quoted by Eusebius. Church History. Book V, Chapter 24).

18- And when it was day there was not just a little confusion among the soldiers of what had happened to Peter.

19- When Herod inquired of him and he was not found he examined the guards and had them put to death. And he went down from Judea to Caesarea to spend some time.

20- Now Herod was furiously angry with Tyre and Sidon but they came to him with one passion and having won over Blastus the king's chamberline they begged for peace because their country was nourished by the king's country.

21- And on an appointed day Herod clothed with royal garments²⁶² also setting down upon his throne gave a public address to them.

22- And the people cried out it is god's voice and not man.

23- Then immediately the angel of the Lord struck him in that he did not give the glory to God and he was eaten by worms²⁶³ he breathed his last.

24- But the word of God grew and multiplied.

25- Now Paul and Barnabas returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their ministry bringing with them John who was called Mark.

Chapter 13

1- Now there were also in the church that was at Antioch some prophets and teachers: Barnabas and Simon also called Niger and Lucius of Cyrene and Manaen who had been raised with Herod the Tetrarch and Saul²⁶⁴.

2 And while they performed the service of the Lord and fasted the Holy Spirit²⁶⁵ said, "Set apart now Barnabas and Saul unto the work which I have called them".

²⁶¹ James the brother of Jesus had become the leader of the church at Jerusalem. There was no official title given to him but the apostles of the church addressed their concerns to him (Galatians 1:19; 2:9,12; Acts 15:13; 21:18). Josephus acknowledges knowing of James the brother of Jesus, which further testifies of his prominence in the church at that time (Ant. 20.9.1, 200). James the brother of Jesus simply refers to himself as the servant of God and the Lord Jesus in the epistle written by him (James 1:1).

²⁶² Josephus helps us to understand a bit more concerning the impact of Herod's royal garments. He tells of an event when Herod Agrippa dressed in his royal garments, which had been woven with silver entered the theater at dawn and in the early morning sunlight he was so spectacular and radiant that the people were overwhelmed with fear and awe of him.

²⁶³ Josephus says, "The king did not reprove them; nor did he reject their flattery as impious. A little later he looked up and saw an owl perched on a rope above his head; immediately he recognized it as a messenger of woe, just as it had once been a harbinger of weal. He then suffered a heart attack and was caught by a pain in his stomach that was intense in its onset, and he sensed it all over" (Ant. 19.8.2, 343). Herod is reported to have died after five days of intense suffering in A.D. 44.

²⁶⁴ At this point in scripture Saul who shall be called Paul is not considered an Apostle but a prophet or teacher.

²⁶⁵ Although Jesus is the head of the church it is the Holy Spirit who speaks on His behalf (Acts 15:28; 16:6; 20:28). The Holy Spirit was sent to lead and to guide both the Church and the individual. He is the one who is to instruct us in everything that we are to do (John 14:26). When men are called into the ministry it is by a special work of the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:4). Such men should be as distinctive to us as they are to God. We should view the ministry as having been separated from all that is ordinary in the church and endowed with a special divine grace to equip and lead us (Ephesians 4:11-16). The Holy Spirit is the one who teaches the church everything it is suppose to do. One of the primary ways that He speaks is through those who have been separated unto Him for this purpose (John 14:26). The position of authority that God endowed His ministers with to speak on His behalf made them the representatives of God to the church inasmuch that whatever was spoken by them was actually being spoken by the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3). God ordained that those things, which were spoken and ministered in His church was to be done expressly by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:23; 21:11; 1Corinthians 14:16; 1 Peter 4:11). When men refused to listen to the gospel they were in fact refusing to listen to the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51). It was the Holy Spirit who spoke

- 3-Then having fasted and prayed they laid their hands on them releasing them.
- 4- They then sent forth by the Holy Spirit went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus.
- 5- And arriving in Salamis they proclaimed the Word of God in the synagogue of the Jews and they also had John as an assistant.
- 6- And having gone through the whole island as far as Paphos they found a man who was a magician a Jewish false prophet named BarJesus.
- 7- Who was with the proconsul Sergius Paulus an intelligent man who invited Barnabas and Paul seeking to hear the Word of God.
- 8- But Elymas the Magician withstood them, for this is another way to interpret his name, seeking to pervert²⁶⁶ the proconsul from the faith.
- 9- But Saul, who is also Paul, full of the Holy Spirit staring into him
- 10- said, O full of deceit and all villainy child of the devil enemy of all righteousness will you never cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord.
- 11- And now behold the hand of the Lord is upon you and you shall be blind not seeing the sun for a season and instantly there fell upon him a mist and a darkness and he went groping about looking for someone to lead him by the hand.
- 12- When the proconsul saw what had happened he believed being amazed at the doctrine²⁶⁷ of the Lord.
- 13- Now, Paul and those around him put out to sea²⁶⁸ from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia and John departed from them returning to Jerusalem.
- 14- And they passed through Perga arriving in Antioch-Pisidia and they entered into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down.
- 15- And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent to them saying, Men, brethren if you have a word of exhortation²⁶⁹ for the people speak it.
- 16- And Paul stood up and gestured with his hands saying, Men Israelites and those who fear God, listen.
- 17- The God of this people Israel choose our fathers and exalted the people in their sojourn in the land of Egypt and with a high arm he brought them out of it.
- 18- And for a period of forty years he put up with them²⁷⁰ in the wilderness.
- 19- And he pulled down seven nations in the land of Canaan and distributed the land by lot²⁷¹ to them.

the word of God through the prophets of old such as Isaiah and it is the Holy Spirit that speaks through His servants today (Acts 28:25; 1 Thessalonians 2:14). If we are going to learn to walk in the realms of God's anointing and blessing then we must learn to walk in His love that produces servitude and submission to one another; and especially to the leadership that the Holy Spirit has called and demanded the church to view as separate and unique.

²⁶⁶ Evidently, through both the magicians demonic practices and his supposed influences and knowledge as both a prophet and a Jew he was twisting the truth. He was attempting to poison or corrupt the mind of Paulus so that he would not give his heart to the Word of God that Barnabas and Saul was preaching. The language suggests that Bar-Jesus was not attempting to lead him completely away from the truth in Christ Jesus but simply to twist the truth and make the way crooked (vs 10).

²⁶⁷ This is the third time in the book of Acts that judgment fell upon someone because of their wicked practice. The first two were Ananias and his wife Sapphira for lying to the Holy Spirit about their offering. This second judgment also came directly from the Holy Spirit against those who attempt to pervert the gospel of Jesus Christ.

²⁶⁸ Although, the Greek word 'anagein' is a technical nautical term "put out to sea" it is used concerning Jesus when he was led up of the Spirit into the desert Matthew 4:1.

²⁶⁹ The Greek word is 'paraklesis' from the root 'parakaleo' which means to "call to one's side".

²⁷⁰ In Deuteronomy 1:31 Moses says that God suffered them or carried them as a father does his son.

- 20- And after this for about four hundred and fifty years²⁷² he gave judges until the time of Samuel the prophet.
- 21- And after this they asked for a king and God gave them Saul son of Kish a man from the tribe of Benjamin for forty years.
- 22- And after removing him he raised up unto them David as king and testified saying, I found David of Jesse a man after my heart²⁷³ who will do all of My will²⁷⁴.
- 23- From this seed according to the promise to Israel God brought forth a Savior, Jesus.
- 24- John going before his face proclaiming his entrance baptizing all the people of Israel to repentance.
- 25- And as John fulfilled the course, he said, I am not who you think I am, but behold He comes after me whose foot sandal I am not worthy to take off.
- 26- Men, brethren sons of the race of Abraham and those among you who fear God to you the word of this salvation was sent.
- 27- For indeed those dwelling in Jerusalem and the their rulers²⁷⁵ being ignorant of this and the voice of the prophets which is read every Sabbath they fulfilled condemning.
- 28- And finding no reason of death they asked Pilate to do away with him.
- 29- And when they fulfilled all that had been written about Him they took Him down from the tree and placed in a tomb.
- 30- But God raised Him from the dead.
- 31- Who was seen many days by those coming up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem who are his witnesses to the people.
- 32- And we announce good news to you, the promise made to the fathers.
- 33- Because this God has fulfilled to us their children raising up Jesus as also written in the second Psalms, You are My Son today I have begotten You²⁷⁶.
- 34- And that He raised Him from the dead never again to return to corruption therefore He has said, I will give you the holy things of faithful David.²⁷⁷

²⁷¹ God work this miracle on behalf of Israel through Joshua who lead them into their inheritance and divided it by lot unto them (Deuteronomy 7:1; Joshua 23:44,11).

²⁷² This pretty much agrees with the number of years derived by Josephus, which would have been the popular belief during the time of Paul. Josephus describes the chronology as follows: beginning with the forth year of the reign of Solomon when he began to build the temple he counts 40 years in the wilderness, 17 years for Joshua, 40 years for Samuel and Saul, 40 years for David and 452 years for the judges for a total of 592 years. There is some confusion on just how we are to understand 1 Kings 6:1 which describes 480 years from the time of the Exodus until the forth year of the reign of Solomon. To further complicate things the Septuagint actually reads 440 years.

²⁷³ This witness of God is found in combining the statements of 1 Samuel 13:14 and Psalms 89:20.

²⁷⁴ Cyrus king of Persia is also said of God to be one who was raised up to “do all of his will” Isaiah 44:28. This phrase may also be translated “he shall perform all of my pleasure”.

²⁷⁵ The same Greek word ‘archon’ is used in 1 Corinthians 2:8 which declares “Which none of the rulers of this world knew: for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory”. Paul describes the rulers of the Jews as the rulers of the world of which also Pilate would be included.

²⁷⁶ The application of the Sonship of Jesus in this verse of scripture reminds us of 2 Samuel 7:13 where God calls the seed of David his son at his enthronement. We know that Jesus was also the only begotten Son of God at birth (Luke 1:32; John 3:16; 1:14; Romans 8:32; 1 John 4:9; Heb 1:16; Luke 2:14).

²⁷⁷ This quote is found in Isaiah 55:3, “I will cut an everlasting covenant for you of faithful David’s mercies (covenant love).” The last five Greek words used here in Acts 13:34 are identical to those found in the Septuagint, “ta hoshia David ta pista” (the holy things of David’s faithfulness). In the Hebrew Bible (MT) this same passage reads, “mercies (covenant love) of David’s faithfulness” (“chasdey david hanneemaneem”). Those who translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek understood the Hebrew word that many translate ‘mercy’ (chesed) to mean holy or sacred things. What we can understand from looking at all of these text is that the holy things of David was the covenant love that he had with God; a covenant love

- 35- So he also said by another, You will not give your Holy One²⁷⁸ to see corruption.
- 36- For David having truly served his own generation through the counsel of God fell asleep added to his fathers and saw corruption.
- 37- But He who God raised up did not see corruption.
- 38- Therefore be it known to you men, brethren that through preaching this One your sins are sent away²⁷⁹; and from all who were not able by the law of Moses to be shown righteous.
- 39- By this One everyone who believes are shown to be righteous.
- 40- Therefore beware lest what is said by the prophets comes upon you.
- 41- Behold you scoffers and wonder and perish because I work a work in your day a work that you would not believe if it were told you in detail²⁸⁰.
- 42- But the Jews having gone out of the synagogue the Gentiles begged that these words be spoke to them the next Sabbath.
- 43- And the synagogue being broken up many of the Jews and the devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas who speaking to them persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.
- 44- And the coming Sabbath nearly all of the town came together to hear the Lord of the Lord.
- 45- And the Jews seeing the multitudes were filled with jealousy and spoke against that spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.
- 46- But Paul and Barnabas boldly said, It was necessary to first speak to you the word of God but seeing that you rejected it and have judged yourselves unworthy of eternal life behold we turn unto the Gentiles.
- 47- For so has the Lord commanded us, I have set you a light of the Gentiles that you should be for salvation unto the end of the earth²⁸¹.
- 48- And the Gentiles hearing this rejoiced and glorified the word of the Lord and many as believed were appointed unto eternal life.
- 49- And the word of the Lord was carried through all of the land.

that was established by the mercies of God. The covenant love that God cut with David He also cut with Jesus His only begotten Son. This same lovingkindness and tender mercies has been extended to us today through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

²⁷⁸ The same Greek word is used here and in verse 34 is a unique Greek word for ‘holy things’ or ‘Holy One’. This Greek word ‘hosios’ is a word specifically for ‘piety, devout or pleasing to God’ it may also be translated holy, or righteous. In that it translates the Hebrew ‘chesed’ in both Psalms 55:3 and Psalms 16:10 it is most appropriately rendered holy things or Holy One. This quote is from Psalms 16:10 which may literally be rendered “you will not allow your covenant love to see corruption (pit/Hebrew-sachat)” (LXX 15:10; MT 16:10).

²⁷⁹ The Greek word ‘aphesis’ comes from the word ‘aphiemi’ which means ‘sent away’. It also translates the Hebrew words ‘salach’ and ‘deror’ in the Septuagint, which mean ‘sent away’ and ‘released’ respectively. The Greek word ‘aphesis’ appears 50 times in the Septuagint. It translated the Hebrew word ‘Jubile’ in Numbers 36:4 and ‘release’ in Deuteronomy 15:2 which describes YHWH’ release of debts at the end of every seven years.

²⁸⁰ This is a quote from Habakkuk 1:5 which in the MT (Hebrew Bible- Masoretic Text) includes the following words, “Behold among the nations and regard it...” When ones looks at the context from which this passage is derived it is addressing the Chaldeans “the nations” which sought to rule Judah in 608 and 598 B.C. Paul now uses the same words to warn Jews of Pisidian Antioch. Paul applies this work to the resurrection of Jesus.

²⁸¹ Paul quotes Isaiah 49:6 in such a way as to make it sound like the verse applies to himself and Barnabas. However, we may understand it in view of Paul fully embracing the identity of Christ, so that what was said of Christ he is obligated to do and fulfill as well.

50- But the Jews stirred up the devout and comely woman and the chief of the city and raised up a persecution against Paul ad Barnabas and cast them out of their district.

51- But they shaking off the dust of their feet²⁸² against them went to Iconium.

52- And the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit²⁸³ .

Chapter 14

1- And in Iconium it came to pass that they went together into the synagogue²⁸⁴ of the Jews and spoke in such a way that both a large number Jews and Greeks believed.

2- But the disobedient Jews stirred up and infected²⁸⁵ the souls of the Gentiles against the brethren.

3- So then they spent²⁸⁶ considerable time speaking boldly in the Lord who bore witness to His Word of Grace granting signs and wonders to be done²⁸⁷ through their hands.

²⁸² This would have been done in obedience to the command that the Lord Jesus gave in Matthew 10:14; Mark 6:11; Luke 9:5 see also Ne 5:13.

²⁸³ When the gospel was preached in the days of the apostles the fruit of the Holy Spirit was always presents being manifested in joy unspeakable (Acts 8:8; Romans 14:16; Galatians 5:22; John 15:11; 16:24; 1 John 1:4; 2 John 12; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; Acts 2:28; 1 Peter 1:8). The joy that the Holy Spirit desires to produce in our lives is an ecstatic joy an overwhelming pleasure of pure happiness produced by being in the presence of the Almighty God (Psalms 16:11; 36:8; 21:5-6).

²⁸⁴ The synagogue of the Jews was one of the primary focuses of Paul's ministry (Acts 9:20; 13:5,14; Acts 17:1,17; 18:26). It was also a focus of the evangelism of Jesus (Matthew 4:23; 9:35; Luke 4:16-22; John 18:20). The synagogue was in many ways the model for the assembly of the church as all of the leaders of the early church were Jewish. Although, Paul had as one of his primary roles to preach among the Gentiles he was also called to the children of Israel (Acts 9:15). It is believed that there were 365 synagogues in the late Second Temple period (Wilkinson 1976:76-77). It is easy to believe along with most scholars that the synagogue took the place of the Temple after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 587 B.C.E. The fact that the primary function of the synagogue was a place to worship, read scripture and seek God and its similarity to the function of the modern church is no coincidence. The meaning of synagogue is "house of assembly" which developed into "house of prayer". The synagogue can never fully capture the realm of the church as the body of Christ but as a model for how the church assembles it is unmistakable.

²⁸⁵ The Greek root 'kakoo' may be translated 'embittered', 'ill-effect'. It means in this context to poison the mind. These same evil spirits work today in the ranks of those who have become more captivated by their religious doctrines and ideologies than the voice of God. It may be that those who believe in God, just as these Jews, and practice church attendance have unwittingly done more harm to the advancement of the gospel than the unbelievers. These Jews were not necessarily mean hearted but like Paul had been they were so zealous for their beliefs they were blinded to the power and presence of God. The offender is not the one who comes with the message from heaven but the zealous defender of the faith that fights against the one with the message. The greatest tragedy of all is that the Gentiles (unbelievers) are trapped in between the struggle. Who will be held responsible? The one who came in the defensive spirit and human ability to correct the error.

²⁸⁶ The Greek word is 'diatribo' is a compound word that means 'through a path' or 'rubbing out'. It is translated 'spend time', which is one of its proper meanings. However, it is insightful to consider its alternative meanings in light of the effect of God's signs and wonders working in their midst. It may be said that these acts of God's power rubbed out the poisonous words, which had been put in the minds of the Gentiles.

²⁸⁷ The simple truth is that Jesus commanded that the gospel be preached with signs and wonders. Just as Philip's ministry in Samaria gave witness to the truth and accuracy of those things spoken by Jesus in Mark 16:17-20 even so Paul and Barnabas many years later were still demonstrating that Jesus confirmed His word with signs following. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was given for this very reason so that whosoever would believe could give witness to the resurrection of Jesus with power. Wherever this gospel of the Kingdom is preached there will be the same signs and wonders performed in the name of Jesus Christ.

- 4- But the multitude of the city was divided and part held with the Jews and part held with the apostles.
- 5- And when an assault was made by the Gentiles and also Jews together with their rulers to mistreat and stone them.
- 6- Who becoming aware fled to Lystra and Derbe cities of Lycaonia and those neighboring.
- 7- And there they preached.
- 8- And there sat a man in Lystra powerless in his feet lame from his mothers belly who had never walked.
- 9- The same heard Paul speak who gazed at him and observing that he had faith to be saved²⁸⁸.
- 10- Said with a loud voice stand up straight on your feet²⁸⁹ and he leaped up and walked.
- 11- And the people seeing what Paul had done lifted up their voices speaking Lycaonia, The gods made like men have come down to us.
- 12- And they called Barnabas Zeus and Paul Hermes seeing that he was the chief speaker.
- 13- And the priest of Zeus who were before the city brought a bull and reefs to the gates for the multitude desired to offer a sacrifice.
- 14- When the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard it they tore their garments and rushed into the crowd shouting.
- 15- And they said men, why do you do this? For we are men who have the same kind of feelings as you,²⁹⁰ preaching this that you should turn away from such folly unto the Living God who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that are in them.
- 16- Who in past generations left all the nations alone to walk in their own ways.
- 17- And yet He did not leave himself without a witness, doing good giving you rain from heaven and seasons of fruitfulness filling your hearts with food and gladness.
- 18- And with this utterance he barely restrained the crowd from offering a sacrifice to them.
- 19- And there came from Antioch and Iconium Jews and persuading the crowd and having stoned Paul they dragged from the city considering him dead.
- 20- But when his disciples gathered around²⁹¹ him he rose up and came into the city and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

²⁸⁸ The Greek word is 'sotzo' which is the primary word that describes salvation. Of the 110 times that it occurs in the Majority Text the Authorized Version translates it 'save' 93 times. What Paul saw was a realm of receptivity in this mans spirit and because he had faith to be saved then he also had faith to receive salvation. In fact the very word 'sotzo' means to save one from suffering disease, to make well, heal, restore to health, to preserve from danger, to rescue. When Jesus ministered to the man that was sick with the palsy he first forgave the man of his sin while all the time He was focused on seeing the man healed. One last point, this is the second time that faith is linked to cure in the book of Acts (3:16; 4:9-12). Those who desire to walk in a miracle ministry must be able to see in the realms of the spirit and cooperate with what the Holy Spirit is doing in order to see these kinds of results.

²⁸⁹ Paul ministered to people in need of healing just like Jesus did; he commanded them to be healed. Today the classical understanding of ministering healing to the sick is more of a prayer request to God in Jesus name than the commanding voice of one who has been given authority.

²⁹⁰ Paul and Barnabas knew that the work of Grace the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives was responsible for the crippled mans healing. They make the point that they are human like all other men with know special powers of their own. Rather it is God who made the heavens and the earth giving witness of Himself just as he did by sending them rain and providing food.

²⁹¹ When Paul's disciples gathered around him they more than likely began to pray for him for he certainly was unconscious if not dead. Obviously the men who stoned him wanted him dead and when they drug him out of the city they were convinced that they had done the job. Paul's courage and boldness is exemplified

- 21- Having evangelized that city and made many disciples²⁹² they returned to Lystra and into Iconium and into Antioch.
- 22- They strengthened²⁹³ the souls of the disciples encouraging²⁹⁴ them to abide in the faith and that through many tribulation we enter into the Kingdom of God.
- 23- And when they had appointed church presbyters they prayed with fasting setting them before the Lord into the faith they had²⁹⁵.
- 24- And passing through Pisidia they came into Pamphylia.
- 25- And when they had preached the word they came down into Attalia.
- 26- And from there they sailed to Antioch from where they had been given over to the Grace of God²⁹⁶ unto the work which they fulfilled.

in that as soon as he got up he boldly walked back into the city among the men who tried to kill him, he was truly fearless.

²⁹² The church was purchased by the blood of Jesus and baptized in the Holy Spirit to become the means by which the kingdom of God was to be advanced throughout the earth. This advancement takes place by going everywhere and preaching the gospel (Mark 16:20; Luke 9:6; Acts 17:30; 2 Thessalonians 3:1). It is accomplished through making disciples of all that will receive Jesus as their savior. Many are willing to pray prayers and make half hearted commitments but we must be insistent and persistent with them to take them pass an initial encounter and make sure that they are established as disciples, followers of Jesus. We are commanded to train them and teach them to observe all that Jesus commanded (Matthew 28:19). We must be willing to both reach the unreach and establish those that have responded to the message of salvation. Our children must be raised up to teach their children and those who have only known the ways of darkness taught the beauty of holiness and the ways of righteousness. Such a task demands that all participate in the work both inside the church and outside the church. We must realize that we cannot be His disciples unless we are willing to forsake everything and follow Jesus (Luke 14:33; Matthew 10:38).

²⁹³ This is one of the characteristics of Paul's ministry "strengthening the souls of the disciples". The Greek word that is translated 'strengthening' is a compound word 'epiteritzo', meaning upon (epi) establish (steritzo). The Greek word 'steritzo' comes from the word 'histemi' which means to stand. Therefore the ministry of Paul so established the souls of the disciples that they were able to stand against all of the persecution that they had to endure.

²⁹⁴ The Greek word 'parakaleo' means to 'encourage, exhort'. It is a compound word meaning beside (para) and call (kaleo) or call beside, implying giving aid and help. This is not the same word that is used 4 times in the gospel of John to describe the Holy Spirit and once in 1 John 2:1 to describe Jesus, which is 'parakletos'. The noun 'parakletos' is difficult to translate. The Greek noun is 'parakletos' is associated by some scholars with the verb 'paraklesis', which means 'consolation, comfort, exhortation'. However, 'paraklesis' is derived from the word found here in this verse 'parakaleo'. The Greek noun 'parakletos' is only found in the New Testament whereas the verb 'paraklesis' is found 12 times, not counting the books of the Apocrypha. Its first occurrence is in Psalms 93:19 where it translates the Hebrew root 'nacham', which also means to console or to comfort. This same Hebrew word translates 'parakaleo' which occurs 139 times in the Greek Septuagint and first occurs in Genesis 24:67.

²⁹⁵ This is comparable to the Paul's own ordination service in Acts 13. This includes the divine act of imparting spiritual gifts and ability. There are two ways to translate this final phrase in this verse, "setting them before the Lord into the faith they had", or "commended them to the Lord in whom they believed". The Greek phrase literally reads, "setting them before the Lord into their faith". Although there is no clear cut argument for whose faith is being referred to it stands more to reason that the ordination service would bring the elders into the gifting which Paul and Barnabas possessed. We know that it was Paul's practice to impart spiritual gifts as we read in both 2 Timothy 1:6 and Romans 1:11. Although, the laying on of hands is not mentioned in this verse it would be safe to assume that this happened for it was Paul's normal practice. So certainly the faith that the elders received at this ordination service was that which was present in Paul. This was not faith for salvation for they were already believers but faith to function in all the areas necessary to oversee a church and minister to the needs of the people.

²⁹⁶ This is in reference to Paul and Barnabas's ordination service that they had in Antioch. Paul accredited everything that he was in God and did to be by the Grace of God. It is this Grace of God that imparts divine ability to represent Him. It is the Grace of God that gives us the divine ability to please Him. In fact every dimension of salvation and our relationship with God can be accredited to the Grace of God.

27- And when they arrived they brought the church together they rehearsed all that God had done with them and how He opened the door of faith²⁹⁷ to the Gentiles.

28- And they spent a long time there with the disciples.

Chapter 15

1- And there came down from Jerusalem those teaching the brethren that unless they were circumcised²⁹⁸ after the Law of Moses they could not be saved.

2- But this caused dissension and no small controversy²⁹⁹ between Paul and Barnabas and them. And it was arranged that Paul and Barnabas and some of the others from them should go up to Jerusalem to the Apostles and elders³⁰⁰ concerning this issue.

3- Therefore those sent forth from the church went through Phoenicia and Samaria telling in detail the conversion of the Gentiles and caused great joy for all the brethren.

4- And arriving in Jerusalem were received by the church and the Apostles and the elders³⁰¹ and they related how much God had preformed³⁰² through them.

5- But some who had come to believe from the sect of the Pharisees rose up saying that it was necessary to circumcise them and order them to keep the law of Moses.

²⁹⁷ There is no one who comes to God apart from His direct active involvement. Father desires that all men be saved and sends forth ministers such as Paul and Barnabas to represent Him. Although, it is necessary for each individual to choose to receive God's grace, in the final analysis it is all the work of God that results in men coming into the Kingdom (John 6:44-45, 65; Ephesians 4:21; 1 Corinthians 12:3; Matthew 11:27; 16:17; John 14:26; 16:13-15)

²⁹⁸ Circumcision had been involved in every covenant that God had made with man since Abraham. Furthermore it seemed clear that it was suppose to be an everlasting covenant (Genesis 17:10-14). Therefore, it may have seemed logical to these brothers and even the Apostolic Council at Jerusalem that circumcision should also be included in the New Covenant.

²⁹⁹ The revelation that had been given to Paul completely abolished the need for any part of the Law to be included with the New Covenant. The idea that Paul would be the one most opposed to bringing any dimension of the Law along with the New Covenant was certainly a miracle. Paul being a Pharisee who had been instructed by one of the most venerated teachers, Gamaliel was absolutely certain that there was no longer any need for any dimension of the schoolmaster, the Law (Acts 22:3; 5:34; 23:6; 26:5; Galatians 3:24-25). In that the New Covenant resulted in the transformation of the nature Paul emphasized that through being born of the Spirit the heart was circumcised and thus the believer by nature fulfilled those things contained in the Law (Colossians 2:11; Romans 8:4). It was not the Law that would produce fellowship between God and man but the life that was in Christ Jesus, which had made them New Creatures (Romans 10:4; Gal 6:14; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Colossians 3:10). Paul was so violent about this one issue above all others that earlier he had to be sent away from Jerusalem because of the trouble that he was causing (Acts 12). It was also over a similar issue that Paul was compelled to publicly rebuke Peter (Galatians 2:11-17). In order to bring a resolve to this issue Paul went up to Jerusalem to meet with the company of the Apostles and elders mentioned in Galatians 2, which may have correlated with this event. Paul was determined to bring an end to this misunderstanding concerning the New Testament and would not give place to those who taught such things "no, not for an hour", (Galatians 2:5).

³⁰⁰ If this was the same event that is described in Galatians 2:1-10 then James, Cephas and John would have been part of this council whom Paul refers to as those who "seemed to be pillars". It is doubtful however that Paul would have referred to the Apostles Peter and John as those who "seemed to be pillars" (Galatians 2:9). That Cephas may be a different person from Peter may be suggested by the fact that Peter is called by his name, "Peter", in verse 7 and 11 of Galatians 2, whereas Cephas is referred to in verse 9 (Majority Text, Syriac/h, Majority of Old Latin text, Vulgate manuscripts, D, F, G). In that Cephas and John are grouped in the same category with James, all titles being absent, may be further proof that they were two known leaders of Paul's day who like James were elders in the church at Jerusalem.

³⁰¹ James was probably one of the 'presbuteros' in that he is not called an apostle. We may conclude that there were two governing bodies in the church at Jerusalem, Apostles and the presbyters or elders.

³⁰² One of the important facts of the New Testament is that God is the one who does the miracles but He does them through His servants (Acts 15:12).

- 6- And the Apostles and elders had come together to look into this issue.
- 7- And after a lot of controversy Peter stood up saying to them, Men, brethren you know that from the first day God choose among us that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.
- 8- And God who knows the hearts gave them witness giving them the Holy Spirit just like us.
- 9- And made no distinction between us and them, by faith purifying their hearts³⁰³.
- 10- Now then why tempt God to lay a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor us had strength to bear.
- 11- For we believe that we are saved³⁰⁴ through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in the same manner also.
- 12- But the whole crowd kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul who made known how many signs and wonders God preformed among the Gentiles through them.
- 13- And after they had kept silent James responded men and brethren listen to me.
- 14- Just as Simon had first made known that God visited the Gentiles to take from them a people for His name.
- 15- Also this harmonizes according to the word the prophets wrote:
- 16- After this I will return and rebuild the tent of David that has fallen and from its ruins I will rebuild and set it up again³⁰⁵.
- 17- That the rest of mankind may inquire of the Lord and upon all the nation that call out upon my name says the Lord who does all of this.
- 18- Known from everlasting³⁰⁶ are all the works of God.

³⁰³ It is through the power that is in the Name of Jesus that heart of man can be instantly changed from a vile and wicked heart to one that is pure and holy. Therefore, there is no need for a law when those who are saved do those things contained in the law by nature.

³⁰⁴ The first definition of 'saved' cited in Merriam- Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (Eleventh Edition) is, "delivered from sin." Peter reveals that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile and that if anyone is going to be saved it will be by the same Jesus, through the same faith. The Jews who had depended upon the Law for salvation were faced with the crisis of an instantaneous righteousness through the miracle of salvation instead of a righteous status maintained by strict observance of the Law. The transition that they were engaged in was that there was now no more need for the Law and that the Gentiles were being granted equal position with them in God. The salvation that is in Christ Jesus is so radically different from the Law because the dominance of sin is removed. And even more the redeemed are given a new spirit so that their spirit can be united with the Holy Spirit to both choose and do that which pleases God (1 Corinthians 6:17; John 3:6; John 14:20; 17:21-23). The revelation of the purity and righteousness that comes by the miracle of faith was also expressed by Paul when he declared that everyone who believes in Jesus Christ "are shown to be righteous" which is something that the Law of Moses was powerless to do (Acts 13:38-39; Galatians 3:21). The Law of Moses was weak in that it depended upon the ability of man who themselves were governed by a disobedient nature and dominated by sin (Romans 8:3; 7:5,15; Galatians 3:21; Hebrews 7:9). However, through the salvation that is in Christ Jesus everyone who believes has the righteousness of the Law fulfilled in them because they walk in the Spirit (Romans 8:4; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Peter 2:24).

³⁰⁵ This is quoted from Amos 9:11-12, the following is the Hebrew original, "In that day I shall raise up the tent of David that is fallen and I shall restore its breeches and I shall raise up its ruins and I shall build it as in the eternal (olam) days. That they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations, which have called upon My Name proclaims YHWH who does this.

³⁰⁶ The Greek word used here is 'aions', is properly rendered eternal or everlasting especially from its use in the Septuagint. It translates the Hebrew word for eternal which is 'olam' as in Isaiah 44:7. However, it may also be translated ancient or ancient times which would be more suited for the context of Isaiah 44:7. This would seem especially true for Amos 9:11 which uses both the Hebrew 'olam' and the Greek 'aions' to refer to the things being restored as they were in the time of David. This Greek word may also be understood to refer to the world or to a period of time or age in the New Testament as in Matthew 12:32

- 19- Therefore, I judge that we should not trouble those from the nations³⁰⁷ who are turning unto God.
- 20- Rather send this message to them that they abstain from pollutions of idols and fornication and that strangled and blood³⁰⁸.
- 21- For Moses from ancient³⁰⁹ generations has had them that preached him in every city being read in the synagogues every Sabbath.
- 22- Then the opinion of the apostles and the elders along with the whole church was to choose men from among them to send to Antioch along with Paul and Barnabas, Judas called Barsabbas and Silas leading men with the brethren.
- 23- By their hand they wrote this, “The apostles and the elders and brethren, To those at Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, brethren from out of the nations: Greeting.
- 24- Since we heard that some coming out from us have troubled you with words subverting your souls to whom we gave no commandment.
- 25- Having come into agreement³¹⁰ our opinion was to send chosen men for your sake with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,
- 26- men having given up³¹¹ their souls for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

where it first appears in the New Testament. When we review the scripture for this quote used by James we find ourselves piecing together scriptures from Isaiah. One of these scriptures would be Isaiah 44:7, “And who as I shall call and declare and order for I appointed the ancient (eternal/olam) people and the things that are coming and that shall come they shall declare to him.” Also, Isaiah 46:10, “Declaring the beginning from the end and from the ancient time (ancient/kedem) what has not been made saying, my counsel shall stand and I will do all my desire.” Finally, in Isaiah 45:21, “Tell them and bring them near and they shall seek advise together who has caused to hear this from the ancient time (ancient/kedem) who had declared it, not I YHWH and no God now besides me a Righteous God and a Savior none besides me.” It should be pointed out however that the Hebrew ‘kadem’ used in Isaiah 45:21 which would have the closest association to this verse in Acts was translated by the Greek word ‘arche’ which also denotes a period of time and is most commonly translated beginning as in John 1:1 or Genesis 1:1.

³⁰⁷ The Greek word ‘ethnos’ which actually means ‘nations’ is commonly translated ‘nations. However, because of its usage in the preceding prophetic verses used by James it was thought best to be consistent with the translation of ‘ethnos’ for the sake of clarity.

³⁰⁸ With the exception of fornication James was simply addressing dietary laws. We know that they are not addressing every point of Christian conduct but rather only those things contained in the Law. The question may be posed like this, “Are there any of the ordinances of the Law that Christians should keep?” Remembering that those who had come from Jerusalem were demanding that Gentile Christians be circumcised or they could not be saved. The concluding statement of James helps to further emphasize that this an issue only of the Law of Moses in the Christian community both when he comments that, Moses is read every Sabbath” and that they did not intend “to lay on you any burden beyond what was strictly necessary”. The pollution from idols is referring to meats that were offered to idols also called ‘eidolothyta, “things sacrificed to idols”, (Acts 15:29; 1Cor 8:1-13; 10:19-30;). Things that are strangled refers to meat that was not properly butchered or did not have the blood drained from them in the correct way because they died in the field’ and finally foods that were made from blood (Leviticus 17:10-14). These dietary prohibitions are found in Leviticus 17 which were also applied to the foreigner dwelling with them (Leviticus 17:10). James is addressing only things that were not clearly described as part of the New Covenant but should be observed. It may be that the use of ‘porneia’ (fornication) was intended to address improper sexual conduct and improper marriage such as described in Leviticus 18.

³⁰⁹ The Greek noun ‘archaios’ refers to that which has been from the beginning or the original something that happened long ago. In this case it would refer to the beginning of the Law of Moses. The first occurrence of this Greek noun is found in Matthew 5:21 where it refers to those things that were written in the Law in the beginning. In the Old Testament it is first used in Judges 5:21 to translate the Hebrew word ‘kadumim’ referring to antiquity or long ago.

³¹⁰ The Greek adverb ‘omothumadon’ which means ‘with one mind’ or ‘with one purpose’ was translated ‘agreement’.

- 27- Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas and they shall communicate the same thing by word.
- 28- The Holy Spirit's opinion and ours was not to lay upon you a greater weight except these necessary things.
- 29- Abstain from sacrifices to idols and blood and things strangles and fornication from, which carefully keeping yourselves you will do³¹² well, be well.
- 30- Therefore being released they came to Antioch and having brought together the multitude they handed over the Epistle.
- 31- And having read it they rejoiced over the encouragement.
- 32- Judas and also Silas themselves also being prophets exhorted the brethren through much speaking and strengthened³¹³ them.
- 33- And continuing for a time they were released with peace from the brothers to those who had sent them.
- 34- But Silas decided to stay.
- 35- But Paul and Barnabas wanted to spend time in Antioch teaching and preaching the word of the Lord among³¹⁴ many others also.
- 36- And after some days Paul said to Barnabas we should return now to look after those brethren in every city that we have proclaimed the word of the Lord.
- 37- And Barnabas desired to also take along John being called Mark.
- 38- But Paul felt that he would not be worthy to take along for he departed from them from Pamphylia and did not accompany them unto the work.
- 39- And there became a sharp disagreement³¹⁵ so that they departed from one another and Barnabas taking Mark sailed away into Cyprus.
- 40- And Paul having chosen for himself Silas went out being handed over to the grace of God by the brethren.
- 41- And he went through Syria and Cilicia strengthening the church.

Chapter 16

³¹¹ The Greek verb 'paradidomi' is translated betrayed about 40 times; it literally means 'handed over'. We may translate this Greek word 'hand over, entrust, commend or commit'. Literally these men had handed over their souls for the name of our Lord Jesus.

³¹² The Greek verb 'prasso' may be translated 'practice, do'. And even though 'prasso' denotes practice the usage here demonstrates that translating this word 'do' is also a must.

³¹³ Of the four times that this Greek word 'episteritzo' is found in the New Testament it occurs twice in this chapter (Acts 14:22; 15:32,41; 18:23). It may be translated strengthen or confirm and the usage suggest the encouragement that one man may give to another.

³¹⁴ Here we have an example of the impact that the translation of a preposition such as 'meta' can have on a verse of scripture. Most translators translate 'meta', which is in the genitive case in this example as 'with' yet it may equally be translated 'among'. The result is that Paul and Barnabas are either: "teaching and preaching with many others" or they are "teaching and preaching among many others". It does not stand to reason that Paul and Barnabas would feel the need to stay in Antioch if there were a multitude of preachers but if there was a multitude of people who needed ministry then there would be a need to stay. This is exemplified by the fact that Paul was compelled to preach where the people had never heard the name of Jesus (Romans 15:20-21).

³¹⁵ There is reason to be cautious not to make this sharp disagreement any more than a certainty in manner of opinion between two people. To conclude that this was strife or something that was divisive is not necessarily the case. Obviously, Paul warned that for anyone to be involved in strife and division was to be carnal walking as men and James took it to the point of being involved in every wicked work (1 Corinthians 3:3; James 3:16). In fact 'paroxusmos' has a very positive connotation in Hebrews 10:24 where it may be translated 'provoke, incitement, or encouragement', unto encourage for love and good works

- 1 And he arrived in Derbe and Lystra and behold a disciple which was there named Timothy a son of a believing Jewish woman³¹⁶ but of a Greek father.
- 2- The brethren in Lystra and Iconium testified in support of him.
- 3- This one Paul desiring to take with him took him circumcised³¹⁷ him because of those Jews which were in that place all of them also knowing that his father was a Greek.
- 4- As they traveled through the cities they handed over the degrees to them to keep that had been decided upon by the apostles and the elders in Jerusalem.
- 5- Therefore the churches were strengthened³¹⁸ in the faith and their number increased day by day.
- 6- And they went through Phrygia and the country of the Galatians being hindered by the Holy Spirit³¹⁹ to speak the word in Asia.
- 7- But coming near Mysia³²⁰ they were attempting to travel through Bithynia but the Spirit would not allow them.
- 8- And passing by Mysia they went down into Troas.
- 9- And Paul saw through a vision of the night a man of Macedonia which was also standing and calling him and said come over into Macedonia and help us.
- 10- And so then seeing the vision we³²¹ immediately sought to go into Macedonia concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.
- 11- And being lead up from Troas we ran a straight course to Samothrace and afterward we came into Neapolis.
- 12- And from there into Philippi which is a colony, the first city of that part of Macedonia and we spent a few days in this city.
- 13- And the day of the Sabbath we came outside the gate beside a river where prayer was practiced³²² and sitting down we talked with the women who came together.

³¹⁶ Paul tells us that Timothy knew the Holy Scriptures from his youth because of the faith that was in his mother Eunice and in his grandmother Lois (2 Timothy 3:15; 1:5). Timothy's skill in the word of God may be in part why Paul chose to take him as his assistant.

³¹⁷ Paul chose to make Timothy his assistant. It was therefore necessary for Timothy to be circumcised in order for Paul to take him into the company of Jews who otherwise would have no interaction with an uncircumcised gentile. Even though Paul was ardently opposed to circumcision with respect to salvation he was not opposed to circumcision in and of itself. If it had been an issue of salvation then Paul's reaction would have been the same as in the previous chapter and also in Galatians (Acts 15:1-2; Galatians 5:1-6; 2:3-5). The reason that Titus was not circumcised was because the Jews had made it a point of contention as to whether or not Titus was saved.

³¹⁸ The Greek word 'estereounto' is used three times in the New Testament (Acts 3:7,16; 16:5). A.T. Robertson says that it is derived from an old verb 'stereooo' which means to make firm and solid like the muscles. With clarification of an absolute separation between the Law and the New Covenant the churches were empowered to be more effective in reaching the lost. They were more effective not because they had a better argument against Judaizing Christians but because they were functioning in the truth of the Gospel which empowered them to fulfill the task of reaching the lost. This is further testimony to the fact that, "you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

³¹⁹ Surely the success and the power of those in the first century church were due to their submission to divine authority. Paul who had received abundance of revelation and in fact in many ways was ahead of all the other ministries that were around him deferred to the judgments of the leadership in Jerusalem. His walk with God was exemplified by humility and servitude as a true follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. As a result he had a relationship with the Holy Spirit that afforded him specific direction about what he was suppose to do and when he was to do it. Furthermore, this is again clear evidence that God the Holy Spirit had come to lead the disciples and was in charge of the affairs of the church (Acts 5:32; 13:2,4; 15:28).

³²⁰ This is believed to be in northwest Asia Minor, northwest of Phrygia.

³²¹ Evidently Luke joins the apostolic team at this point, which would have consisted of Paul, Silas, Timothy and now Luke.

14- And a certain woman named Lydia a seller of purple fabrics of a city of Thyatira, a God fearer³²³ listened whose heart the Lord opened up completely³²⁴ to attend to what was spoken by Paul.

15- And when she was baptized and her house she appealed saying, If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord come, stay in my house and she compelled us.

16- And it happened as we were going to prayer a certain young girl having a spirit of Python³²⁵ meet us whose diving work supplied much for her masters.

17- Following after Paul and us she cried out saying these men are the servants of the Most High God they are proclaiming to us a way of salvation³²⁶.

18- And this was done over many days but Paul being aggravated³²⁷ and turning to the spirit said I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her and it left her that hour.

19- But her masters seeing that their expectation of work had gone out from her took hold of Paul and Silas and dragged them into the assembly before the rulers³²⁸.

20- And lead them to the governor saying these men being Jews³²⁹ have stirred up our city.

³²² There must have been no synagogue in the city of Philippi and so the Sabbath day meeting was held by the river.

³²³ The Greek word 'sebomai' may be translated 'worshipper' or 'God fearer'. Apparently this word is derived from a Classical Greek word 'sebo', which means to feel awe, fear, shame or respect.

³²⁴ The Greek word used here is a double compound word of 'dia, ana, oigo' which means 'to open up wide'. The Greek verb anoigo means open and the preposition 'dia' may be translated 'through'. This is the same word that is used of Jesus opening the eyes of the disciples on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:45). This may also be further understood by Paul's prayer for those at Ephesus "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened..." which was dependent on Father granting the spirit of wisdom and revelation to them (Ephesians 1: 17-18).

³²⁵ The Greek phrase found here is "pneuma puthonos", which translates as the genitive "spirit of Python". A.T. Robertson writes. "Python was the name given to the serpent that kept guard at Delphi, slain by Apollo, who was called 'Puthios Apollo' and the prophetess at Delphi was termed Pythia." Another reference to Apollo may be found in the New Testament in Revelation 9:11, which is translated 'Apollyon or destroyer. As early as the fifth century B.C. the Greeks had derived the name of Apollo from the same root they derived Apollyon. The manuscript (syr^{ph}) reads Apollo instead of Apollyon. Although Apollyon is the correct reading the verb 'apollymi' is linked to both nouns. Additionally, the locust was one of the symbols that represented Apollo.

³²⁶ Satan devised a clever plan to ride on the success of Paul's Holy Spirit ministry by acknowledging that what Paul presented was "a way of salvation" not "the way of salvation". In this clever scheme the way of idolatry and divination could be placed equal, and in even in association with what Paul was preaching and doing.

³²⁷ The Greek word 'diaponetheis' may be translated 'worked up, offended, grieved, annoyed, indignant'. The Classical Greek word from which this is derived is 'diaponeo' which means 'to toil, be vexed'. The choice was made to use a synonym that fits the sense of what is intended by grieved or irritated, aggravated. Paul who operated in the fullness of the Gospel was under the continual control of the Holy Spirit. He allowed the evil spirit in this woman to operate until his spirit became aggravated by the situation. When he spoke he spoke by the authority of the Holy Spirit for as Jesus said, "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God..." (Matthew 12:27;

³²⁸ The Greek word 'archontas' is the common word for governors or magistrates. There is no reason to believe that it is intended to apply to anyone or anything in the spiritual realm as many would attempt to make of 1 Corinthians 2:8.

³²⁹ It is believed that this event took place around 49 or 50 A.D. At that time Claudius had expelled Jews from Rome furthering the atmosphere of prejudice and contempt for Jews. In Philippi they made know distinction between Jews and Christians and the mob was easily inspired to riot against Jews even though a notable display of power was manifested in the casting out of the evil spirit.

21- And they proclaim customs which are not lawful for us to receive neither do being Romans.

22- And the multitude and the governor rose up together tearing off their garments³³⁰ commanded them to be beat with rods.

23- And they laid many strips upon them ordering them thrown into prison the prison guard securing their watch.

24- Who receiving such a charge threw them into the inner prison³³¹ and locked their feet into the stocks.

25- And at midnight Paul and Silas praying sang to God and the prisoners listen to them.

26- And suddenly there was a great earthquake which shook the foundation of the prison and instantly opened all the doors and all the chains were loosed.

27- And the prison guard having become awake and knowing that the doors had been opened the guard drew his sword and was about to make an end of himself thinking that the prisoners had fled away.

28- And Paul called out with a great voice saying, do yourself no harm we are all here.

29- And asking for light he rushed in beholding Paul and Silas and becoming terrified he fell down.

30- And he lead them outside saying what must I do to be saved?

31- And they said, Believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved³³² and your house.

32- And they told him the word of the Lord with all those in his house.

33- And taking them in that same hour of the night washed the strips and baptized him and all of those at once.

³³⁰ In 1 Thessalonians 2:2, Paul said that they were shamefully mistreated by this act of having their cloths torn off of their bodies and then beat.

³³¹ The inner prisons of the ancient torture chambers would not allow any light or air in except that which entered when the door was opened. Placing their feet into stocks was only to make them more miserable.

³³² The Greek word 'sotzo' is translated 'saved'. It is used to express our rescue from sin and death in the New Testament. The redemption that is in Christ Jesus has brought 'sotzo' to our spirit, soul and body. This word not only refers to being delivered from the sinful nature but also preserved and protected against future assaults by Satan. It is a word that is used to describe healing of the body from sickness and disease as much as deliverance of the spirit and soul from sin and death (Mark 5:23; 10:52; Luke 8:36,48,50; James 5:15; Galatians 2:20). Although the word appears 364 times in the Old Testament it is first observed in the New Testament in Matthew 1:21, "And she shall bring forth a son, and you shall call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." The Lord Jesus has not only promised to save us by simply asking Him to do so He has also promised to protect and keep us (Jude 24; 1 Peter 1:5; John 10:28;17:11,12,15; Romans 8:38-39; Philippians 1:6). You may truly rest safely when Christ Jesus has saved you for He is the good shepherd who has laid down His life for His sheep. He is the one who will keep that which we have committed unto Him (2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 12:2; Romans 15:13; Ephesians 1:13; Philippians 3:21; Hebrews 2:18; 7:25). He is still the good shepherd today who is watching over His sheep to protect and defend them against every evil thing. He is the one that will never leave you nor forsake you. He will always uphold you and will perfect everything that concerns you. It is Jesus who forever lives to make intercession for us as the one who authored and finished our salvation. All of these past and present activities of Jesus are included in the meaning of 'sotzo'. Peter revealed the same thing to Cornelius' house by saying, " all who believe in his name shall receive the release of sins" (Acts 10:43). When the crowd of Jews asked what they must do in Acts 2:37, Peter said " Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the releasing of sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Being saved includes your sins being released your body being healed and the gift of the Holy Spirit being made available. Father has made salvation so easy to obtain. There is nothing complicate about being born of the Spirit all one must do is call and God will answer. It is just as easy to be healed and forgiven as it is to be saved all one must do is ask in faith.

34- And he lead them into the house set a table before them and rejoiced with his house believing God.
 35- And daylight having come the governor sent the floggers saying release those men.
 36- And the prison keeper reported these words to Paul, the governors have sent for you to be released, now then go out leave in peace.
 37- But Paul said to them, they whipped us publicly being uncondemned Roman men and they threw us into prison and now do they drive us out secretly? No! But rather let them come themselves and lead us out³³³.
 38- And the floggers reported these words to the governors and they were frightened when they heard that they were Romans.
 39- And they came and begged them³³⁴ and asked them to leave escorting them out of the city.
 40- And leaving the prison they came to Lydia and seeing the brethren they comforted them and left.

Acts 17

1- And traveling through Amphipolis and Apollonia they came to Thessalonica where there was a synagogue of the Jews.
 2- And according to Paul's custom³³⁵ he went to them and preached the word to them for three Sabbath's.
 3- And opening up³³⁶ and setting before the necessity for Christ to suffer and be raised up from death and that this was the Christ, this Jesus who I proclaim to you.

³³³ This would be a public statement by the governors that they had wronged Paul and Silas.

³³⁴ This Greek verb 'parakaleo' from which the noun 'parakletos' of John 14:24 is derived is used four times in this chapter (Acts 16:9,15,39 and 40). It has been translated helped, compelled, begged and comforted in this chapter. The context of these passages of scripture allows us to more fully appreciate the many usages of this word. In fact, JP Green, Sr. translates 'parekalesan' (the third person, plural, aorist, active indicative of parakaleo) as 'begged' in verse 39.

³³⁵ The idea that meeting in a church building took place as an evolution of Christian practices is simply not true. It was Paul's custom to meet in the synagogue's, which of course would be equivalent to the church meeting today (Acts 9:20; 13:5, 14; 14:1; 16:13; 17:10,17; 18:4,19; 19:8; 28:17, 23). When Jesus was not preaching to the masses He was also found ministering in the synagogues (Matthew 12:9; 13:54; Mark 1:21; 3:1; 6:2; Luke 4:16; John 6:59). The church today is a pattern of what the Holy Spirit established in the first century. The local church is an essential and vital part of both the witness of Jesus Christ in communities as well as the place of nurturing and training those who come to Him (Mathew 28:19-20; Hebrews 13:17). The church is the place that God ordained for his saints to assemble (Hebrews 10:25). The church is where the baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire empowered the believers (Acts 2:1-4). The church is the place where God placed the gift of apostles, prophets, evangelist, pastors and teachers (Ephesians 4:11-12; Acts 13:3; 1 Timothy 5:17). The local church is the place where all of the gifts of the Spirit are in full operation (1 Corinthians 12:28; 14:12, 24-26). The church is the body of Christ where Jesus is revealed and the fullness of God is manifested (Ephesians 1:22-23). It is to the church that the Epistles of Paul are addressed. It is in the midst of the church that Jesus now stands (Revelation 1:12-20). It is the church, which Jesus purchased with His own blood and it is the church, which is armed with the authority that the gates of hell cannot prevail against (Acts 20:28; Matthew 16:18).

³³⁶ The Greek word 'dianoigon' means to explain or unfold. In its usage here it refers to explain what was concealed or obscure in the scriptures. Keeping in mind that the only available and credible scripture to the Jews at this time was the Torah or the Old Testament. This same word was used concerning that which Jesus did for the disciples in Luke 24:45, "Then he opened their understanding so that they might understand the scriptures". The essential need of mankind's redemption is first set forth in Genesis 3, which sets forth that all humanity came under the eternal penalty of death because of Adam's transgression

- 4- And some of them were persuaded and joined themselves to Paul and Silas and a great many of the worshipping Greeks and some of the principle woman not a few.
- 5- But the disobedient Jews becoming jealous also took in addition some agitators who were wicked men and gathered a crowd causing a city uprising and setting out for the house of Jason sought to bring them into the mob.
- 6- But not finding them they drug Jason and some of the brethren to the ruler of the city crying out that those turning the inhabited world upside down have also come here.
- 7- Who Jason had received as guest and these all act contrary to the degrees of Caesar saying there is another King, Jesus.
- 8- And hearing these things they stirred up the multitude and the rulers of the city.
- 9- And taking a bond from Jason and the others they set them free.
- 10- But at night the brethren quickly sent both Paul and Silas away to Berea who having arrived went into the Synagogue of the Jews.
- 11- And these were more noble³³⁷ than those in Thessalonica who received the word with all eagerness daily examining the scriptures³³⁸ if this thing be so.
- 12- Then indeed many of them believed and of the honorable Greek woman and men, not a few.
- 13- But when the Jews from Thessalonica came to know that the word of God was also proclaimed by Paul in Berea they came there harassing and troubling the crowd.
- 14- And immediately then the brethren sent Paul away to go as to the sea and Silas and Timothy remained there.
- 15- And those accompanying Paul brought him to Athens and having received orders for Silas and Timothy that they should come quickly to him, they departed.
- 16- But as Paul was waiting for them in Athens his spirit was provoked³³⁹ in him beholding the city, which was full of idols.
- 17- He therefore preached to the Jews in the synagogue³⁴⁰ and those worshiping and those being present in the market place every day.
- 18- And some of the Epicureans and Stoics philosophers meet with him and some said what new idea does this one desire to communicate and seems to be preacher of good news of a foreign demon³⁴¹ this Jesus and the resurrection.
- 19- And they took hold of him bringing him to the hill of Aries saying we desire to know what new doctrine this is by which you speak.

(Romans 5:12-21). Every sacrifice and offering, every festival and Sabbath of the Old Testament was a declaration of the coming redeemer who would deliver man from the power of death.

³³⁷ The Greek word 'eugenes' literally means 'noble race'. However, here it refers to the genuine nature of the Jews at Berea. They did not react out of stubborn blindness of heart when they heard Paul minister but instead opened up their Bibles and began to search out the scriptures to determine if what Paul said was true. The measure for truth has to often been the subjectivity of individual opinion instead to the objective facts of the Word of God.

³³⁸ The scripture that would have been examined by those at Berea would have been what we refer to as the Old Testament.

³³⁹ Paul was constantly lead by the inspirations of the Holy Spirit who was in direct communication with his spirit (1 Corinthians 6:17; Romans 8:14,16). When Paul was grieved he cast out the devil from a young woman at Philippi, when pressed in the spirit he testified to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 16:18; 17:16; 18:5).

³⁴⁰ Paul's ministry was to the Jews first (Romans 1:16; Matthew 10:5-6)

³⁴¹ The Greek word 'daimonion' is translated 'demon' 59 times by the Authorized Version of the 60 times that it occurs. Although, it may be understood to refer to gods in this passage it was thought best to be consistent with the exact meaning of this word. In 1 Corinthians 10:20, Paul is very clear as to how he feels about these gods he says they "they are demons (diamoniois) and not God (theo)".

20- For you have brought some surprising ideas to our ears we therefore desire to know whose will this is.

21- And all the Athenians and strangers living there spent there time in nothing other than to tell or hear something new.

22- And Paul standing in the middle of the hill of Aries³⁴² said, men, Athenians I see you all as very religious³⁴³.

23- For passing through and looking up at the objects of your worship I also found an altar, on which was written, “Unknown God” whom then you ignorantly worship this One I proclaim to you.

24- The God who made the world and everything in it, this One being Lord of heaven and earth dwells not in temples made by hands.

25- Nor served by mans hands for He has need of nothing, He gave everything life and breath and all things.

26- And He made from one blood³⁴⁴ every nation of men, to dwell upon the face of the whole earth setting appointed seasons and the boundaries of their dwellings.

27- To seek the Lord, even though not being far from each one of us, they might feel after and find Him.

28- For in Him we live and move and exist as also some of the poets³⁴⁵ among you have said, “Indeed we are His offspring”.

29- Being then offspring of God we should not consider³⁴⁶ gold or silver or stone impressions crafted and thought up of men to be the resemblance of the divine.

30- Therefore God disregarding the time of your ignorance now commands all men everywhere, Repent!

31- Because He has set a day in which He is going to judge the inhabitants in righteousness by a Man whom He has appointed³⁴⁷, having provided everyone with faith³⁴⁸ by His resurrection from death.

³⁴² This Greek meeting place is also known of as Mars Hill or the hill of Ares, which is the Greek god of war.

³⁴³ The Greek word ‘deisidaimon’ may be translated ‘religion’ or ‘superstition’. It is a compound word of deos (fearful) daimon (devil) or “fearful of demons”. According to “A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian Literature” by Walter Bauer, its meaning in this passage is “religion”. The only other words for religion in the New Testament are, ‘threskos’ and its derivative ‘threskeia’ both which may be translated “worshipper” or ‘God fearing’ neither of which are found in the canon of the Old Testament.

³⁴⁴ The modern scholars see no need to include “One Blood” in the scripture. Of course they will say they choose the simplified reading, which they have subjectively determined to be the one that is authentic. But at the same time they will violate their own rule at their subjective convenience. The fact is God made every human being on the face of the earth from one blood, Adam; this is too primitive of an idea to be maintained by the intellectual.

³⁴⁵ This quote may be found in a third century astronomical poem of the Stoic, Aratus (Phaenomena 5).

³⁴⁶ By Paul’s usage of “the offspring of God” in the context to the images of idol he was probably referring to the fact that man was created in the image and likeness of God. And therefore, God’s likeness would not be that of the stars and other objects of nature but that of man. Through this Paul would attempt to persuade them to understand their existence in reference to Genesis 1: 27, and consequentially cause them to come to the knowledge of the One True God.

³⁴⁷ There are three very important facts that are established here in this verse: 1- There is an appointed time for judgment. 2- Everyone will be judged by God’s standard of righteousness. 3- Jesus is the Man that has been appointed by God to be the judge. This judgment refers to the judgment seat of Christ and also the Great White Throne judgment. The Judgment Seat of Christ will take place before the one thousand year reign of Christ and at that time all of God’s saints will be judge. Paul states emphatically that we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account for the deeds done in our body whether they are

- 32- But when they heard the resurrection of the dead they mocked and said we will hear more later from you about this.
- 33- Thus Paul came out from their midst.
- 34- But some of the men believing joined him in who were Dionysius and Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

Chapter 18

- 1- After these things departing from Athens he came to Corinth³⁴⁹.
- 2- And finding a Jew named Aquila and Priscilla his wife of Pontus, his family recently coming from Italy because Claudius³⁵⁰ had arranged that all Jews were to depart from Rome, came to them.
- 3- And because he was of the same trade he remained with them and worked making tents being of the same craft.
- 4- And he preached in the synagogue on every Sabbath persuading both Jews and Gentiles.
- 5- But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia Paul was pressed by the Spirit to testify of Christ Jesus to those Jews.
- 6- But they set themselves against him and blasphemed. Shaking off his garments he said, Your blood upon your heads³⁵¹ I am clean; from now on I will go to the Gentiles³⁵².

good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 2:16; 2 Timothy 4:1). Jesus said that all judgment had been given to Him in heaven and in earth. The judgment is not based on individual circumstance but on the word that Jesus has already spoken and so graciously delivered into our hands today so that we can understand our responsibilities before God (John 12:48). Jesus also gave us an understanding of God's expectation for our life when He demanded that we overcome as He overcame. In fact, in His address to the seven churches of Revelation chapters 2 and 3 He makes the standard or righteousness very clear. God's expectation is that we walk in His righteousness and purity otherwise our names will be blotted out of the lambs book of life. The manner of Jesus life and conduct is the standard of righteousness and we are to follow in His example (1 Peter 2: 21-24). John said, "Let know one deceive you he that does righteousness is righteous even as He (Jesus) is righteous (1 John 3:7; 2:29). God's judgment is not subjective He has plainly made known His will to all men and has provided us with the ability to fulfill His will. We should all take heed to the warning that Jesus gave when He said, "Not everyone that says Lord, Lord will enter in but they that do the will of my Father". There can be no doubt concerning the will of the Father for He has made it painfully clear (Matthew 7:21-27; 1 John 2:15-17).

³⁴⁸ The noun for faith, 'pistin' is used here. It is the grace of God that has provided to every man a measure of faith (Romans 12:3). The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men teaching us to deny ungodliness (Titus 2:12). Jesus said, "If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). Father has left no one out, He has poured out His love upon the whole world. There is no man that has not been taught of God in some measure. We should be convinced that when we tell men of Jesus that we are declaring to them things that they have already been prepared to hear by the Holy Spirit. There is no doubt that Father has provided faith for all through the resurrection of Jesus Christ but all men have not responded to the working of the Spirit of Grace and as a result all men are not possessors of faith, "for all men do not have faith" (2 Thessalonians 3:2).

³⁴⁹ It is here in this very important city of the ancient world that Paul would establish a Christian community to which he would later direct the writing to two Epistles, 1st and 2nd Corinthians.

³⁵⁰ The Emperor Claudius expelled Jews from Rome in 49 AD.

³⁵¹ Ezekiel made it very clear that if someone was commissioned by God to announce the message of God and did not that they would be responsible for the blood of all of those they were sent to (Ezekiel 33:4). Paul views the words of Ezekiel to be relevant both to himself and to those whom he was sent.

³⁵² Paul, was not saying that he would unwilling to minister to the Jews anymore. Rather he was speaking of no longer wasting his time with those particular Jews that he was addressing here. Both Paul and Barnabas

7- And departing from there he came to a house of one named Titus Justice a worshiper of God whose house was joined to the synagogue.

8- And Crispus³⁵³ the ruler of the synagogue believed the Lord together with his whole house and many of the Corinthians hearing believed and were baptized³⁵⁴.

9- And the Lord said in the night through a vision to Paul, Fear not but speak and be not silent

10- because I am with you and no one shall take hold of you to hurt you because I have many people in this city³⁵⁵.

11- And he remained a year and six months³⁵⁶ teaching unto them the word of God.

12- And Gallio³⁵⁷ was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one passion rose up against Paul and lead him to the tribunal.

13- Saying, that this one persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.

14- And Paul being about to open his mouth Gallio said to the Jews, if indeed then it was some wrong or some bad crime Oh Jews according to reason I would listen to you.

15- But if it is a question about a word and names and law that concerns you then you see to it, I will not be a judge of these things.

16- And he drove them from the tribunal.

17- And all the Greeks took hold of Sosthenus the ruler of the synagogue they beat him before the tribunal and not one of these things matter to Gallio.

18- And Paul having remained for many more days took leave of the brothers sailing to Syria, also Priscilla and Aquilla went along with him, having shaved the head³⁵⁸ in Cenchrea because he had a vow.

19- And coming down into Ephesus he left them there while he went into the synagogue³⁵⁹ to preach to the Jews.

20- And they asked him to stay for a longer time but he refused.

21- Rather taking leave of them and saying, I must by all means keep the feast³⁶⁰ at Jerusalem, God willing I will return to you and he sailed from Ephesus.

had to take the same position with those Jews in Antioch (Acts 13:46). It will be noticed that Paul will be preaching in the synagogue for three months when he returns to Ephesus in the next chapter (Acts 19:8). The ongoing commitment that Paul had to the Jews is further emphasized by his determination to go to Jerusalem and risk his life (Acts 20: 21-23; 21:13). Finally, Paul is seen in the final chapter of Acts reaching to the conversion of his brethren the Jews (Acts 28:17-29).

³⁵³ Crispus is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1:14 as one of the few people that Paul ever Baptized.

³⁵⁴ We do not know how many responded to the Holy Spirit at this time but we do know that the only ones that Paul baptized were Crispus, Gaius and the household of Stephanas (1 Corinthians 1:14-16).

³⁵⁵ In that Paul is pioneering this work in Corinth the Lord Jesus is probably referring to those whose hearts will turn to Him through Paul's ministry.

³⁵⁶ Based upon the time that Gallio was the proconsul of Achaia Paul would have arrived here at the beginning of 51A.D. and stayed to the later part of 52 A.D.

³⁵⁷ "Lucius Junius Gallio is mentioned as a friend of the emperor Claudius and as the proconsul of Achaia in a Greek inscription that records the text of a letter sent by Claudius to the people of Delphi about a depopulation problem." The letter was discovered in 1905 and another fragment in 1910 by E. Bourguet. The letter proves that Gallio was proconsul of Achaia during the twelfth regnal year of Claudius. The twelfth regnal year of Claudius began on January 25 A.D. 52. It is believed that based upon the letter fragments of Bourguet that Gallio was proconsul between January 25 and August 1 A.D. 52 (Acts of the Apostles, Joseph Fitzmyer- Anchor Bible page 622).

³⁵⁸ Paul behaves himself as a model Jew. In Numbers chapter 6 the procedure to such a vow is described (Numbers 6:2-21).

³⁵⁹ Paul's practice of preaching in the synagogue's is referred to now for the 6th time in the book of Acts (Acts 13:14; 14:1; 17:1-2; 17:10; 18:4).

22- And coming down to Caesarea having gone up he greeted the church and went down to Antioch.

23- And spending some time he successively went out through the land of Galatia and Phrygia confirming all the disciples.

24- And a certain Jew named Apollos born in Alexandria³⁶¹ an elegant man came to Ephesus being skillful³⁶² in the scriptures.

25- This one was instructed in the way of the Lord and being fervent in the spirit he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus understanding only the Baptism of John.

26- And this one began to speak boldly in the synagogue and Priscilla and Aquilla heard him and took him and explained the way of God more perfectly.

27- And being desirous to depart to Achaia they wrote the brethren urging the disciples to welcome him who having arrived was of much help to the believers through the grace.

28- For he vigorously proved the Jews wrong publicly proving through the scriptures Jesus to be the Christ.³⁶³

Acts 19

1 And it came to pass in that Apollos was in Corinth Paul passing through the upper portion came down into Ephesus and found some disciples.

2 And he said to them, if believing did you receive³⁶⁴ the Holy Spirit? And they said to him we have not so much as heard that there is a Holy Spirit.

³⁶⁰ Paul is probably referring to Passover however, it could also be either Pentecost or the Feast of Tabernacles.

³⁶¹ Alexandria Egypt was one of the five most important cities of the first century along with Rome, Syria, Antioch and Corinth.

³⁶² The Greek word 'dunatos' shares the same root word as 'dunamis' (power), which is 'dunamai'. The unique usage of this derivative of 'dunamai' refers to someone who is skillful or who is well prepared or prominent. One may simply understand this word to refer to Apollos being well versed in the Old Testament scripture. This word is used 32 times in the New Testament and is first observed in Matthew 19:26. "...with God all things are possible". Its first usage in the book of Acts is found in 2:24 where it is again translated 'possible'. It appears that Apollos had experienced the new birth but only understood the baptism of John and like the disciples of Acts 19, knew nothing about the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

³⁶³ The only scriptures that Apollos would have had to convince the Jews that Jesus was the Christ would have been the Old Testament scriptures.

³⁶⁴ The New Testament doctrine of Baptism in the Holy Spirit was very important to Paul and the Church in general. In fact reception of the Holy Spirit was the proof that a person was a true believer. Additionally, one of the very important features of this passage is that it helps us to establish that "Baptism in the Holy Spirit", "receiving the Holy Spirit" and "being filled with the Holy Spirit are all equivalent (Acts 19:2-6). Baptism in the Holy Spirit was first used in terms of being "received" by the believer in John 7:39 when Jesus said, "But this he spoke of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive". In Acts 9:17 when Peter and John laid hands on the Samaritans they said, "receive the Holy Spirit". The Samaritans had all ready received Jesus and had been baptized in water therefore, Peter and John were instructing the Samaritans to participate with the same distinct activity of the Holy Spirit that Paul was asking the disciples at Ephesus about. There are also several other expression that are established as equivalent to the meaning of Baptism in the Holy Spirit by their association with Acts chapter 2: 1- Endued with power from on high (Luke 24:49); 2- Promise of the Father (Acts 1:4; Luke 24:49);, 3- Filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; 4:31); 4- Holy Spirit comes upon you (Acts 1:8); 5- Gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; Acts 11:17). Joseph A. Fitzmyer professor at The Catholic University of America writes concerning this verse "Reception of the Spirit was the sign of genuine Christianity; see 2:38; 4:31; 6:3, 5; 7:55; 8:15-16, 19; 9:17; 10:44; 11:15-16; 13:9" The Anchor Bible, Acts of the Apostles, page 643. Finally, in Galatians, Paul uses another expression, "promise of the Spirit", which he had also used in Ephesians 1:13. The only possible reference

- 3 And he said, What were you baptized unto then. And they said, unto the Baptism of John.
- 4- But Paul said, John baptized with a baptism of repentance telling the people about the One coming after him³⁶⁵ so that they may believe in Him, that is Jesus.
- 5- And hearing this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
- 6- And Paul laying his hands on them the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied³⁶⁶.
- 7- And there were about twelve men in all.
- 8- And he went into the synagogue³⁶⁷ speaking boldly for three months exhorting and persuading them concerning the kingdom of God³⁶⁸.
- 9- And as some were hardened and disobeyed speaking evil of the way before the multitudes he departed from them setting apart the disciples and exhorted daily in the school of Tyrannus.
- 10- And this he continued for yet two years³⁶⁹ so that all of the inhabitants of Asia heard the word of the Lord both Jews and Greeks.

to the “promise of the Spirit” would have been “the promise of the Father” which had previously been established as synonymous with the Baptism of the Holy Spirit in Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4 and Acts 2:33.
³⁶⁵ Paul turns their attention to the message that John preached concerning Jesus being the one who baptizes in the Holy Ghost and fire (Luke 3:16). This is the second time that this ministry of Jesus is mentioned in the book of Acts (Acts 1:4-5). This dimension of the ministry of Jesus began after He ascended up on high and was glorified (John 7:39; Acts 2:33). This ministry still belongs to Jesus today.

³⁶⁶ When the Holy Spirit comes upon a person to empower them there is the manifestation of prophecy. This is not new to the New Testament for when the Spirit that was given to Moses came upon the seventy to empower them to help him in judging the people they all prophesied (Numbers 11:25). When the Spirit of Yahoah came upon Saul to empower him to be king over Israel he also prophesied (1 Sam 10:6,10). The prophet Joel made it very clear that one of the sign of the Spirit being poured out would be prophecy (Joel 2:28). The only part of this gift that is unique to the New Testament is tongues, the language of the Spirit. It was through Prophecy that the word of God came to be written down in the Bible (2 Peter 1:19-21). However, Prophecy may be extended to include the divine empowerment to utter the things of the Spirit. On the day of Pentecost what was heard was the worship and praise that was being given by the Holy Spirit as they made known the “wonderful works of God” (Acts 2:11). Paul, also extends prophecy to the expression of the revelation gifts that make known the secretes of the heart (1 Corinthians 14:24-25).

³⁶⁷ This is the 19th time that reference is made to ministering in the Synagogues in the book of Acts (Acts 6:9; 9:2,20; 13:5,14,15,42; 14:1; 15:21; 17:1,10,17; 18:4,7,8,17,19,26)

³⁶⁸ The ministry of Jesus was to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God (Luke 4:43; Mark 1:14; Matthew 9:35; 12:28). When He sent out His disciples they were also commanded to go preach the gospel of the Kingdom (Luke 9:2; 10:9; Matthew 10:7). Then we see Philip one that was chosen by the Apostles to take care of the widows preaching the Kingdom of God in Samaria (Acts 8:12). The message of the gospel of the Kingdom of God is also the one that Paul preached (Acts 20:25; 14:22; 19:8; 28:23, 31; Romans 14:17; 1 Corinthians 4:20; Colossians 1:13; 4:11; 1 Thessalonians 2:121 Corinthians 6:9,10;15:50;Galatians 5:21; Ephesians 5:5; 2 Timothy 4:1, 18; 2 Thessalonians 1:5). Jesus said that this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all of the world and then the end shall come (Matthew 24:14).

³⁶⁹ The mighty moving of the Spirit of God that took place in Ephesus at the School of Tyrannus lasted for two years but the church of Ephesus remained a pillar of the kingdom for many more years to come. The moving of God was so powerful in those meetings that all of Asia heard the word of God (vss 11,20). Anyone who under estimates the mighty signs and wonders and there role in advancing the gospel of Jesus Christ is mistaken. Furthermore, the more important point to such a migthy moving of the Spirit of God is that such miracles become so dramatic and widespread because heaven comes so near. These kinds of miracles took place because the glory of Jesus was being revealed on a scale that we must have once again

- 11- And God preformed extraordinary miracles³⁷⁰ by the hands of Paul.
- 12- So that also from his body were brought to the sick handkerchiefs and aprons and the diseased departed and the evil spirits went out.
- 13- And some traveling Jewish exorcist also attempted to name the name of the Lord Jesus over them which had evil spirits saying I charge you by Jesus who Paul preaches.
- 14- And they were seven sons of Sceva a Jewish High Priest that did this.
- 15- But the evil spirit answered saying to them Jesus I know and Paul I recognize but who are you.
- 16- And the man in whom the evil spirit was in leaped upon them and both overcame and overpowered them so that they fled away from that ones house naked and wounded.
- 17- And this became known to all Jews and also Greeks who inhabited Ephesus and fear fell upon all of them and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.
- 18- And many of them believed came confessing and declaring their deeds.
- 19- And a large number of them that practices curious arts brought together their books to burn before everyone and an accounting of the value of them was also determined to be 50,000 pieces of silver.
- 20- So mightily the word of the Lord grew and was effective³⁷¹.

in the church today. In times past the men of God contended for a greater anointing so that the life and ministry of Jesus could be revealed. Today many are to quick to make excuses for their lack of power and demonstration of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:4; 4:19-20; Acts 4:33; John 14:12; 15:16). When you consider much of the address that Paul makes to the church of Ephesus it is about living in the realms of the heavenly and walking in the fullness of the authority of Christ Jesus (Ephesians 1:18; 2:6; 3:19; 4:13; 5: 18-19; 6:10). Come let us contend for the faith that was once delivered unto the saints. Let us lay hold on the powe of the world to come and walk in the fullness of the Spirit and faith (Hebrews 2:4; 6:5; John 1:51; 6:2, 14; Matthew 4:24-25; 12:15, 28; 15:30-31; Acts 14:13; Romans 15:18-19; 1 Corinthians 12:7; 14:24-25).

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³⁷¹ Look what happens when the word of God is preached and believed! The devils go out of those who are possessed, sickness and diseases are cured and the masses are turned to Jesus. Someone may say well it was because Paul had a special anointing. Yet, what we fail to realize is that the power is not in the special anointing but in the word of God. The word of God is living and it is powerful. The only thing that can stop the word from being effective in our lives is unbelief. If we will believe and hold fast to the word of God and not let His word depart out of our mouth then we will surly see all of the miracle results that the word of God has promised. We must be devoted to growing in the word.

If the word is in you- in your heart and in your mouth- insomuch that you are not only united with it but you speak it out, then you will ask what you will and it shall be given to you (John 15:1-5). Agreement with the word makes you strong. So strong you overcome the wicked one wherever you face him (1 John 2:14). If you do not know the word believe the word and speak the word then how are you ever going to do the word and stand fast in the word. As the blessed people of God who are for signs and wonders in the earth we are to be continually growing in the knowledge of the word (1 Peter 2:2). It is through being doers of the word that we will continue to grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18). If we will live by the word and hold fast to the word in all that we say and do then we will not be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus (2 Peter 1:8).

If you do not believe the word of God you will become mute and unable to speak the word (Luke 1:20) If the words of truth are as idle tells (exaggerations) you will not be able to believe (Luke 24:11). We must hear the word and believe if we are going to realize the miracle of eternal life and the miracle blessings of the power and authority that has been given to us by The Almighty (John 5:24)! We must continue believing and obeying and speaking the word of God if we are going to be the disciples of Jesus (John 8:31; Romans 10:8; Isaiah 59:21; Joshua 1:8). If we do not tend the word and watch over the word of God then as soon as we come up against those powers that oppose the word we will give up and the word will wither up inside of us (Luke 8:13). If we are not committed to the word of God and diligent in tending it and holding it in front of ourselves but instead become distracted with the things of this world the word will not produce the fruits of God's blessings and promises in our lives (Luke 8:14).

21- And when these things were fulfilled having passed through Macedonia and Achaia Paul purposed in the Spirit to go to Jerusalem saying that after I have come there I must also see Rome.

22- And sending into Macedonia two that ministered to him Timothy and Erastus he stayed a time in Asia.

23- And about that time there was no small disturbance concerning the way.

24- For a certain silversmith named Demetrius was making silver temples for Artemis³⁷² providing those craftsman with no little trade.

25- And gathering the workmen together concerning these things he said, men you know that from this trade is our wealth.

26- Also we see and hear that not only in Ephesus but nearly all of Asia that this Paul has persuasively perverted many a multitude saying that God is not made with hands.

27- And not only does this endanger our portion to be brought into contempt³⁷³ but also the temple of the great goddess Artemis be considered nothing and her magnificence whom the whole of Asia and its inhabitants worship is also about to be destroyed.

28- And having heard and having become full of anger they cried out saying great is Artemis of the Ephesians.

29- And the whole city being filled with confusion they rushed with one mind into the theater having seized Gaius and Aristarchus Macedonians traveling with Paul.

30- And Paul desiring to go into the assembly the disciples would not allow him.

31- And some of the Asian officials who were also His friends sent to him encouraging him not to offer himself to the theater.

32- Therefore, some cried one thing and others another for the assemble was confused and the multitude did not know why they had come together.

33- But they brought Alexander from the crowd, the Jews pushing him forward. And Alexander waving his hands desired to defend himself before the assembly.

If you will stand fast in the word then God will bring increase through steadfast obedience and application of the word (1 Corinthians 3:6). The more you walk in obedience the more you will grow in faith and receive of all the great things that the Lord has already supplied (2 Corinthians 10:15; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; Ephesians 4:15). The choice is yours what will you believe? Will you believe your interpretation of circumstances and hold to the experiences of men or will you believe the word of God? Satan says that everything belongs to him and is under his power and that he gives it to whomever he chooses (Luke 4:5-6). Yet God says it is all His and He rules absolutely and He gives it all freely to His people (Psalms 24:1; 89:11; 1 Corinthians 10:26; Daniel 5:21; 6:26; Deuteronomy 33:16; Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:21). What then will we believe?

³⁷² The worship of the female goddess Artemis was the most popular of all the Greek deities. Artemis came to be identified with Diana of the Romans and was worshipped by them under that name. Artemis is pictured roaming the wilderness with her band of virgin girls and dogs. She was a figure of constant contradiction, a hunter who protected animals and a virgin who was viewed as a fertility goddess. A protector of children yet the one who brought death to the mother during childbirth. This cult was associated with homosexuality among woman in ancient times and is still claimed by them today. It is believed that through the association of Artemis with Diana during the days of the Roman Empire that Dianaic Witchcraft became associated with lesbianism. The cult of Artemis was blended together with the Roman goddess Diana, and she became the goddess of light and the moon and the queen of heaven. The worship of Artemis was first practiced among the Anatolian people (people of modern Turkey). Among the ancient Anatolians were the Hittites who worshipped the goddess Asherah, which ultimately evolved into the goddess Artemis. The influence and worship of Asherah became one of the worst plagues to ever invade Israel. This demonic religion has been an enemy and a hindrance to the people of God for more than 3000 years. Although this demonic influence is disguised with a more subtle and modern look its power has never been more prevalent.

³⁷³ What Demetrius may actually be saying is, “not only does this contempt endanger our profits but...”

34- But knowing that he is a Jew they became as one voice everyone crying out over two hours Great is Artemis of the Ephesians.
35- But the town clerk quieted the multitude down saying, Men, Ephesians for what man is there that does not know that the city of Ephesus to be the temple keeper of Artemis and of that fallen from heaven.
36- Therefore, these things being undeniable you are to calm down and do nothing rash.
37- For you brought these men who are neither temple robbers nor blasphemers of your goddess.
38- If then indeed Demetrius and those craftsmen together with him have a matter against anyone the courts are open and there are proconsuls let them accuse one another.
39- And if anything concerning other matter solve it in a lawful assembly.
40- For we are also in danger of being accused of insurrection concerning this there being no cause for it how will we be able to give account concerning this conspiracy.
41- And saying these things he dismissed the assembly.

Chapter 20

1- And after the uproar ceased Paul sent for the disciples and having embraced he departed traveling to Macedonia.
2- And when he had gone over those parts and comforted them with many words he came into Greece.
3- And having spent three months it happened that the Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail for Syria he made the decision to return through Macedonia.
4- And Sopater, a Berean and Aristarchus and Secundus, Thessalonians and Gaius of Derbe and Timotheus and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia, accompanied him to Asia.
5- And these going ahead waited for us³⁷⁴ in Troas.
6- And we sailed away to Philippi after the days of unleavened bread³⁷⁵ and we came to them in Troas after five days, where we stayed seven days.
7- And on the first of the week³⁷⁶ the disciples having come together to break bread³⁷⁷ Paul addressed them being about to depart the next morning and continued to speak until midnight.

³⁷⁴ Although, 'us' has not been used since chapter 16 Luke probably continued to remain with Paul the entire time.

³⁷⁵ Paul was adamant about a complete separation from the law yet he still kept the Passover. There must be a distinction between trusting in the law for righteousness and the important messages and examples given to us by God in the Old Testament.

³⁷⁶ This is the first time that church services are mentioned as being held on the first day of the week other than the fact that it is implied in 1 Corinthians 16:2. Also, the idea conveyed in the meaning of the Lord's Day in Revelation 1:10 implies the day that Jesus arose from the dead. The fact that the disciples were assembled on the first day of the week, one week after the resurrection, seems to imply that the tradition of assembling to worship on Sunday began immediately after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (John 20:26). Certainly the first day of the week was chosen as the time to assemble together in that Jesus arose from the dead on the first day of the week and then appeared to the disciples two consecutive times on the first day of the week (John 20:1,19, 26). The Greek phrase that is used here to express "the first of the week" is "mia ton sabbaton." This particular phrase along with two other closely related phrases are used 8 times in the New Testament (Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2). It used almost exclusively to describe the day that Jesus arose from the dead which was Sunday. A fact that further substantiates that this was not merely an event when the disciples just happened

- 8- And many lamps were in the upper room where they were gathered together.
- 9- And a young man named Eutychus sitting down in the window sinking into a deep sleep, Paul preaching much, fell from the window falling down from the third floor and he was found dead.
- 10- And Paul going down fell upon him and embracing said do not get excited for his soul is in him.
- 11- And going up and breaking bread and having eaten sufficient and conversing until morning then he departed.
- 12- And they brought the boy alive and were not a little comforted.
- 13- But going before onto the ship we set sail to Assos being ready to receive Paul there for so it had been arranged he being about to go on foot.
- 14- And when he meet us in Assos we took him and came into Mitylene.
- 15- And sailing away from there afterwards we came near Chios and then next we crossed Samos. And remaining by Trogyllium, next we came to Miletus.
- 16- For Paul decided to sail by Ephesus so that he might not come to spend time in Asia, for he hurried if it were possible for him to be in Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost.
- 17- And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.
- 18- And when they arrive to him he said to them you know from the first day how I came from Asia and was with you all the time.
- 19- Serving the Lord with all humility and tears and the trials, which came to me by the plots of the Jews.
- 20- How that I did not draw back from declaring to you anything that was profitable and taught you publicly and from house to house.
- 21- Testifying to Jews and also to Greeks repentance to God and faith to our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 22- And now behold being bound in the Spirit I go to Jerusalem not knowing what shall happen to me in it.
- 23- But that the Holy Spirit testifies of me in every city saying that bonds and tribulations await me.
- 24- But I make no account of myself nor hold my soul precious so that I might finish my race with joy and the ministry, which I received from the Lord Jesus to testify of the gospel of the grace of God.
- 25- And now, behold, I know that all of you will see my face no more among whom I have gone about proclaiming³⁷⁸ the Kingdom.
- 26- Because of this I testify on this parting day that I am pure from the blood of all.
- 27- For I did not keep back from you any of all the counsel of God

to be gather together is the use of the verb 'sunago'. The verb 'sunago' refers to a formal gathering as opposed to 'episuagohn', which would be used of regular gathering (A.T. Robertson; Acts 20:7).

³⁷⁷ The meaning of "breaking bread" was definitely applied to the communion service by Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:16. As to whether it can refer to simply having a meal together as it seems to be used in Luke 24:35 is definitely a consideration. However, here in Acts 20:7 the text suggest that it was for this purpose that they had come together and so the idea that it specifically refers to communion as in 1 Corinthians 10:16 seems definite. The same must be said of Acts 2:42 for it would be ridiculous to conclude that there was any importance in this context to make mention of the disciples eating dinner, "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).

³⁷⁸

28- Take heed therefore to yourselves and to all the flock³⁷⁹ in which the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseer to shepherd the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood.

29- For I know that after my departure grievous wolves³⁸⁰ will come in among you not sparing the flock³⁸¹.

30- And from you yourselves shall arise men speaking distorted things to draw away disciples after themselves.

31- Therefore watch, remembering that for three I did not cease warning each one of you with tears night and day.

32- And now brethren I commit you to God and the word of His grace which is able to build you up and give you the inheritance with all those who have been sanctified³⁸².

³⁷⁹ Paul issues a command and a warning to the Pastors, they must be on guard against the violent predators that are ready to destroy what God has purchased with His own blood. In this one verse the Pastor of a church is called shepherd and overseer and carries the unique responsibility of being the one given charge to protect that which God owns. If the pastors should fail to be vigilant then violent wolves would creep in and destroy the flock. When we recognize the role of the church not only as the light of the world but as The Cooperate body of Christ and fullness of God we may then come to realize the priority that the demonic realm has given to its destruction. Although, a boundary has been set so that the gates of hell cannot prevail against the church the craft of Satan can render it ineffective unless there are vigilant shepherds. The direction in which the shepherds are to lead the flock of God is not a subjective one but one clearly revealed by the Word of God and the Spirit of God. Anything that would disrupt or challenge that direction must be regarded as a predator of God's sheep and dealt with accordingly.

³⁸⁰ In the book of Revelation we learn of the false apostles that had come into the church at Ephesus (Revelation 2:2).

³⁸¹ All of Gods people are described as sheep including His leadership that are called to shepherd the flock. Jesus sent out the seventy as lambs among wolves (Luke 10:31). False ministers of Jesus Christ are pictured as wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15).

³⁸² The Holy Spirit wants to build you up and give you an inheritance. God has planned a great future for you, and He is dedicated to your success. It is time that you begin to write out the vision of God for your life. All you need to do is read the Word and believe those things that God has committed Himself to bring to pass in your life, and then begin to move with Him in that direction. Give yourself over to those things which God has spoken in His word; believe these things, speak these things, and watch as they take shape in your life. If we are willing to hear the promptings of the Holy Spirit and follow His lead, then He will lead us into all of the blessings that the word of God describes. Many people fail to realize that it is the word of God that tells us what the Holy Spirit is doing, and what it is that He desires to produce in us and for us. If we are willing to commit ourselves to the smallest acts of obedience, then we will watch as the Lord does way beyond all that we can think or ask - by the power of the Holy Spirit who is at work within us (Ephesians 3:20; Hebrews 13:20-21; Philippians 2:13).

We are sanctified in Christ and called to be saints, so that we can come to know all the fullness of God (1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 3:19). God wants us to know the fullness of what it means to function in the gift of faith. He desires every good and perfect thing of all His bountiful provision to overwhelm and overtake our lives (2 Corinthians 9:8; James 1:17). The promise that we should inherit the world has been sealed in the blood of Jesus, and by the Spirit of God. Will we refuse to believe that God will give us all things by Christ Jesus? (Romans 4:13; 8:32; Psalm 25:13; 37:34). Our inheritance as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ allows us to step into the realms of the riches of God; all we must do is believe, and follow His lead (Romans 8:17; Colossians 3:24; Isaiah 45:3; 61:6; Philippians 4:19).

God is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before His presence with joy unspeakable (Jude 1:24; 2 Peter 1:10). If we are willing to believe Him, then He will lead us into an inheritance that looks impossible for us to possess; both now and in the life to follow (Numbers 13:30). We must not look to our own ability, or plan our own future based upon what we think that we can do for ourselves. We must know that God is in our midst, and that all these things that He has determined shall come upon us and overtake us - if we will walk out the vision that He has for our lives (Deuteronomy 28:2). If we fail to

33- I have desired no ones silver, gold or clothing³⁸³ .

34- But you yourselves know that these hands of mine and those with me served the hands of them.

35- I have showed everyone of you how that laboring you should give aid to the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus that He Himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive³⁸⁴ .

believe the promises that God has made and fail to accept God's vision for our life, then we shall perish (Proverbs 29:18; Hebrews 3:12,19). We cannot afford to do anything less than fully believe and follow Him wherever He leads (Joshua 1:8-9; Hebrews 4:11).

³⁸³ There is a supernatural blessing in giving that Paul both modeled and revealed by the Holy Spirit for the New Testament Church. The example that Paul gave to the church was one of taking personal responsibility for the propagation of the gospel at his own expense (2 Thessalonians 3:8-13). A special blessing of prosperity is promised to those who give their finances for the advancement of the Kingdom (Matthew 6:33). In 2 Corinthians 9:8, Paul promised that God would cause all grace to abound to those Macedonians who had impoverished themselves by giving to the Church. When Paul wrote to the Macedonian church at Philippi who had given with such abandonment he gave them the promise that God would supply all of their needs according to His riches in glory (Philippians 4:19). Surely, if it is God's will that we should support the advancement of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by supporting those who He has anointed, then He is going to make sure that we are adequately blessed to do those things that we have set our hearts to do. John also praised those who gave themselves to labor for the support of the ministry (3 John 1:4-7). The prosperity that John desired above all other things for those he addressed in his third epistle was for those who gave themselves to work for the ministry.

³⁸⁴ Although, this saying is not recorded in the gospels it must have been one of the more popular sayings of the oral tradition as Paul speaks in such a way that it was common knowledge among those at Ephesus. Paul was not only an example in preaching the gospel in faith and power but also in working so that he could participate in taking care of those who were poor and unable to provide for themselves (1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-8; Acts 18:2; 1 Corinthians 4:12; 9:12,15; 2 Corinthians 11:7; 12:13). It was Paul's desire that everyone see their responsibility to support those who were unable to take care of themselves (Ephesians 4:28; Galatians 6:2). Paul's concept of both the ministers and the saints was that they were supposed to be servants and givers.

Jesus came to serve rather than to be served and to give His life as a ransom for all (Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45; John 13:5-14). By the example that Jesus gave we may conclude that servitude is one of the primary requirements of a legitimate ministry (Matthew 20:28; Mark 9:35; 10:43-44). The needs of others were constantly on His heart. I can see Jesus not only continually ministering to the spiritual and physical needs of people but to their financial needs as well. Evidently, it was so common for Jesus to provide money to the needs of the poor that on the night He was betrayed the disciples thought that Jesus wanted Judas to take some money to the poor (John 13:29).

Why is it considered more of a blessing to give rather than to receive? Do we really find it so? When we give our praise and adoration to God for all that He has done for us does it seem better than when He gives us the many everyday blessing and answers to our prayers? I believe that we find the answer to this in the realms of love. A person has there first great Christmas when they watch their children rip open their presents on Christmas morning. When we find ourselves loving someone more than we love ourselves we have stepped over into an unselfish realm of love. In this realm of love it is more blessed to give than to receive. By the Spirit of God we can yield to this kind of love that esteems everyone better than ourselves (Philippians 2:3). By yielding ourselves to the Holy Spirit we are able to experience this glorious unselfish love that moved the Father to give His only Begotten Son for us and that moved Jesus to willingly lay His life down so that we can live. Then on top of that we also discover that it is through giving that we receive miracle provision. As we give God opens up the heavens and pours out more than we can receive (Malachi 3:10; Proverbs 3:9-10). He also causes men to heap into our bosom, all as we discover the wonderful blessing of giving. God will take what we have given and multiply it insomuch that He will cause all grace to abound to us and again we will discover the blessedness of giving (2 Corinthians 9:8-11; Proverbs 28:27).

36- And saying these things he knelt down and prayed for them all.
37- And there was a lot of weeping and falling upon the neck of Paul they kissed him.
38- Sorrowing much over the word, which he spoke that they would see his face no more and they went with him into the boat.

Chapter 21

1- And it came to pass being departing from them we set sail with a straight course to come to Kos and then next to Rhodes and from there to Patara.
2 And finding a boat crossed over to Phoenicia going on board we set sail.
3 And sighting Cyprus and leaving it on the left we sailed to Syria and we landed in Tyre for the ship was unloading its cargo there.
4 And having found disciples we remained there seven days; who told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem.
5 But when our days there were completed going out we traveled they all with wives and the children accompanied us until we were outside the city and kneeling down on the seashore we prayed.
6 We took leave of one another and went up into the ship and they returned unto their homes
7 And when we had finished our voyage from Tyre we came to Ptolemais and greeted the brethren and stayed with them for one day.
8 And the next day those going up with Paul departed to Caesarea and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, being of the seven, staying with him.
9 And this one had four virgin daughters who prophesied³⁸⁵.
10 And we remained many days in which a prophet³⁸⁶ came from Judea named Agabus.

³⁸⁵ One of the many blessings of raising our children in the house of God where the Spirit of God has free course to minister is the effect that it has on them. Especially, when the parents themselves are full of the Holy Spirit. Philip the evangelist who had not been mentioned since his great evangelistic work in Acts chapter 8 had four daughters full of the Holy Spirit. There is little doubt that Philip continued to play a significant role in advancing the gospel and is not mentioned only because of the focus on the exploits of God through the Apostle Paul. One of the great privileges of growing up in the first century church was the place that the Holy Spirit was given (John 14:26; Acts 1:2, 4:31, 5:3, 8:15, 10:38, 13:52, 15:8, 16:6, 19:2, 20:23,28, 21:11; Romans 14:17, 15:13, 1 Corinthians 2:13). Everyone understood that the church meetings were to be run by the Holy Spirit and they devoted themselves to the activity of His manifestation in their meetings (1 Corinthians 12:7; Acts 2:4, 20:28; John 16:12-13). As a result, there were plenty of examples of men and woman full of the gifts of the Holy Spirit who modeled Christian living. Today if we will hunger for the same demonstration of the Spirit of God and give ourselves over to contend for the faith that was once delivered unto the church then we will once again see the same awesome display of the Holy Spirit presiding over our meetings (Jude 1:3). With such devotion our children will grow up in the presence of the mighty display of the power of God and will themselves be full of the Spirit. The gift of prophecy like all of the other gifts operate according to the proportion of faith that has been imparted by the grace of God (Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 14:6,31; Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17). Unfortunately, if we fail to recognize that these things are available to us then there will be no witness of them and the expectation and hunger to function in this realm will be absent. If there is no expectation of these gifts and blessings of God then there will be no development of our faith for them. Let us till up the fallow ground that lies barren in the house of God and plant the seeds of the word of God that they may spring up full of the wonderful manifestations of the Holy Spirit and His power. For without the display of the power of the Holy Spirit the church remains unseen.

³⁸⁶ In the New Testament a prophet is noted for several things one of which is the word of knowledge. The primary effect that the word of knowledge should have on people is to reveal Jesus and call them to salvation (1 Corinthians 14:24-25; John 1:49; 4:19). The first prophet mentioned in the New Testament is

11 And when He was come to us and he had taken Paul's belt he bound his own feet and hands saying this is what the Holy Spirit says, the man who owns this belt shall be bound in this way by the Jews in Jerusalem and given over into the hands of Gentiles.

12- And when we heard this we encouraged and also insisted that he not go up to Jerusalem.

13- Then Paul replied why are you making me cry and breaking my heart for I am not only ready to be bound but also to die in Jerusalem which I do eagerly for the name of the Lord Jesus³⁸⁷.

14- But not persuading him, we were silent saying the Lords will be done.

15- And after those days we prepared to go up to Jerusalem.

16- And also disciples from Caesarea went with us bringing Mnason a Cypriot an old disciple with whom we might lodge.

17- And when we were come to Jerusalem the brethren received us gladly.

18- And afterwards Paul meet with James along with all of the elders.

19- And having greeted them he related one by one what things God had done for the nations through his ministry.

John the Baptist (Matthew 11:9; Luke 1:76; 7:28). The second was Jesus who was also regarded as a prophet (Matthew 13:57; 21:11; Luke 13:33; 24:19; John 7:40). When Moses spoke of the Messiah that would come he called Him a prophet (Acts 3:22; 7:37; Deuteronomy 18:15-16,19). A total of seven prophets are named in the book of Acts; Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, Judas, Silas and Agabus (Acts 13:13; 15:32; 21:10). When Jesus was talking with the woman at the well and told her that she had been married five times and was living with a man that was not her husband she said, "sir I perceive that you are a prophet" (John 4:19). A similar word of knowledge had altogether a different effect on Nathaniel who through the word of knowledge that was given to him by Jesus said, "Master, you are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel: (John 1:49). Of all the prophets mentioned in the New Testament those that we know the most about are Jesus and John the Baptist. The primary characteristic of their ministries was to call men to repentance so that they might come into the Kingdom of God (Matthew 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15; 6:12). We know that God has put prophets in the ministry of the church and therefore so long as there is a church there will be prophets (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11). Today all of these ministry gifts such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are the leaders of the churches and usually grouped in the category of pastors. The one outstanding exception are the evangelists. However, those evangelists that are most effective usually also have a pastoral role in some capacity. This is not because a pastoral role is essential but the gifting itself is interwoven with the fabric of the church.

³⁸⁷ Paul's dedication to reaching the lost could not have been expressed in a greater way than what was said by him in this verse. Paul did not feel this way out of a sense of legal obligation as though it was his religious duty but out of the love of God that had taken over his soul for the lost. Even though his countrymen had persecuted him and created many difficult and harsh situations for him, he was still ready to go to Jerusalem and die if there was a chance of reaching them for the Kingdom (2 Corinthians 11:24; John 14:6; Acts 14:12; John 3). Paul knew that if Israel would once again enjoy the blessings of the Kingdom of God that they could not refuse to accept the long awaited Messiah (Romans 10:1; Romans 3:22-23). He also was burdened with the reality that without Christ Jesus they would be eternally damned and because the same love that God had for them was in him he was willing to lay down his life even as Jesus had (Mark 16:16; 1 John 2:23; John 15:23; John 3:36; 6:53). The whole meaning of Paul's life was to testify of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:24; Philippians 1:21). When we find the meaning and purpose of our life in Christ Jesus then it does not matter what things befall us our hearts are fixed. In Christ Jesus we do not drift along being turned by the opinions of others and opposing circumstance. Our course is set with certainty and our plans thoroughly mapped out by God when we give ourselves over to living by the word of God. Even the prophecies that anointed men and woman give and the fears of dear friends cannot change the direction of one who has embraced the heavenly vision and found with certainty there place to labor in the Kingdom (Acts 20:23; 21:10-12). We can be certain that if we seek the Kingdom of God first then we will always find ourselves in the center of God's will for our lives (Matthew 6:33).

20- Which also having heard they glorified God and said to him you see brother how many thousands of Jews there are who have believed and are all zealous for the law.

21- And they have learned about you that you teach all of the Jews that are in the nations to revolt against Moses telling them not to circumcise children nor to walk in the customs.

22- What is to be done? A multitude will come together for they will hear that you have come.

23- Therefore do this that we say to you: We have four men who have a vow on themselves.

24- Taking these be purified³⁸⁸ with them and be at their expense that they may shave their heads and everyone will know that all that they have learned of you is nothing but you yourself walk by rule and keep the law.

25- And concerning the believing nations we have written deciding that they keep no such thing except to keep themselves from both idol sacrifices and the blood and a thing strangled and fornication.

26- Then Paul taking the men the next day being purified with them entered into the temple declaring the completion of the days of purification, until the offering should be offered for each one of them.

27 Now the seven days were about to be complete The Jews from Asia having seen him in the temple stirred up the multitude and they grabbed hold of him with their hands.

28 Crying out men Israelites help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and the law and this place and even more also brought Greeks into the temple and has made common this holy place.

29 For they had before seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him whom they supposed Paul had brought into the temple.

30 And the whole city was moved and the people came running together and having laid hold on Paul drug him outside of the temple and quickly shut the door.

31 And as they sought to kill him information came up to the commander of the soldiers that all of Jerusalem is in an uproar.

32- Who immediately taking soldiers and centurions ran down upon them and seeing the commander and the soldiers stopped beating Paul.

33- Then the commander coming near took and commanded he be bound with two chains and inquired who he is and what he is doing.

34- But others cried out something else in the crowd and being unable to know with certainty because of the uproar commanded him brought into the fortress.

35- But when they came to the stairs the soldiers were carrying him because of the violence of the crowd.

36- For the multitude of the people followed crying out, Take him away!

37- And being about to be brought into the fortress Paul said to the commander inquiring may I speak to you and he said do you know Greek?

38- Are you not that Egyptian before these days cause a riot having lead out four thousand men of the assassins into the wilderness?

39- But Paul said I am a Jew a man of Tarsus in Cilicia a citizen of no insignificant city I beg you permit me to speak to the people.

40- And permitting him Paul standing on the stairs waved his hand to the people and it became very quite as he spoke in the Hebrew dialect saying.

³⁸⁸ Same word used in 1 John 3:3 which also refers to a ritual purity.

Chapter 22

- 1- Men, brethren and fathers hear my defense to you now.
- 2- And having heard that he addressed them in the Hebrew³⁸⁹ language they became even more quite and he said,
- 3- I am indeed a Jewish man born in Tarsus of Cilicia but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel and having been instructed according to the exactness of the law of the father and was zealous for God even as all of you are this day.
- 4- Who persecuted this way unto death binding men and woman and delivering up to prison.
- 5- As also the high priest can bear witness of me and all of the elder from whom also having received letters for the brethren I went to Damascus to also bring those who were there bound to Jerusalem. so that they might be punished.
- 6- And while I was on my journey and coming near to Damascus about noon suddenly a bright³⁹⁰ light shown about me from heaven.
- 7- And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, Saul Saul why do you persecute me?
- 8- And I replied, Who are you Lord? And He said to me Jesus the Nazaraean³⁹¹ whom you are persecuting.

³⁸⁹ Did Paul indeed speak in Hebrew the sacred language of the Bible or did he speak in Aramaic in Acts 22:2. Why is it not considered to be highly probable that Paul was speaking in the sacred language of the Bible during a time when many used Aramaic in Israel. Since the time of the dispersia there have continue to be those who use the Hebrew language for all the worship services held by the Jewish people. Why then would we think it to be odd that when it came especially to the more pios Jews they would not be uniquely identified as such by their use of the Hebrew language. The Greek word for Hebrew is 'hebraios' which used to translate the Hebrew word for Hebrew in the Septuagint. Paul uses this same Greek noun to describe himself as a Hebrew of Hebrews in Philippians 3:5. There is little doubt that the Jews of that day spoke Aramaic but this does not preclude the fact that they also spoke at least a Biblical Hebrew.

³⁹⁰ The word 'hikanos' is found 41 times in the New Testament. This adjective is used more by Luke than anyone else occurring 10 times in Luke and 19 times in Acts. It usually refers to a sufficient quantity whose magnitude would be defined by what is being contrasted, for example sufficient light to be seen at noon. It is translated in various ways in the Septuagint but one of the more notable words that it often translates is "Shaddai" which as a name of God refers to the all sufficient one or the "Almighty", El Shaddai (Ruth 1:20,21). Keeping this in mind Paul's special usage in 2 Corinthians sheds more light on the idea of being sufficient, "our sufficiency (hikanoi) is from God, who has made us sufficient (hikanotes) ministers of the new covenant" (2 Corinthians 3:5-6). Knowing that our ministry is of God and that it is to be a supernatural activity of the Holy Spirit working through us the word sufficient cannot be mistaken for just satisfactory. For our ministry to be sufficient to God then it must be at the magnitude that He has desired it to be. Thus by His grace He has supplied us with His power so that we may function in a realm superior to human ability (Romans 15:19,29; 1 Corinthians 2:4; Matthew 10:20; Philippians 2:13; Colossians 1:29; Luke 9:1; 10:1,9; Mark 16:17; Acts 1:8; 4:33). If our ministry depends on our own human effort then it is not sufficient (2Corinthians 4:7; 1 Corinthians 15:10; Ephesians 3:7; Romans 8:2-9). When we consider that the event of this passage took place at noon when the sun was the brightest then we understand that a sufficient amount of light would need to be very bright, which leads us to the most appropriate translation of 'hikanos' in this verse, 'bright'. This translation is further justified by the wording of Acts 26:13 where the Greek word 'lamprotes' (brightness) is used to describe this same event.

³⁹¹ It some respects it is quite astonishing to think of Jesus referring to Himself as the Nazarene after He was already the exalted Lord and Savior. It is certain that He wanted to make absolutely certain that Paul knew exactly who He was. It was of course common among the ranks of the Jewish intellectual elite to scoff at the whole absurdity that the Messiah could possibly come from Nazareth. The term Nazarene was applied

9 And those who were with me definitely saw the light and were terrified but they did not hear his voice speaking to me.

10- And I said what shall I do Lord? And the Lord said to me, Rise up and go to Damascus and there you shall be told about everything, which has been appointed for you to do.

11- But since I could not see because of the glory of that light those who were with me took my hand and led me to Damascus.

12- A certain Ananias a devout man according to the law well spoken of by all the Jews living there.

13- Came to me and standing beside me he said, Brother Saul see! In that very hour I regained sight.

14- Then he said, The God of our Fathers has appointed³⁹² you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and hear his voice from His mouth.

15- Because you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard.

16- And Now why delay rise up be baptized and calling on the name of the Lord wash away³⁹³ your sins.

to both Jesus and His followers (Acts 24:5). Jesus was often referred to as Jesus the Nazareth (Matthew 21:11; Mark 14:67; John 18:5,7). The prophets referred to the Messiah as the 'netzer' a Hebrew word meaning 'a branch' or 'a shoot' (Isaiah 4:2; 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15; Zechariah 3:8; 6:12,13). There are some who associate the meaning of 'netzer' with Nazarene because of the statement made in Matthew 2:23, "And he came and dwelled in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene." However, there is no written prophecy that we have with us today in the Old Testament that makes this statement. Nazareth housed the Roman garrison for the northern region of Galilee. Those who lived in Nazareth were thought of as compromisers who consorted with the enemy. It was a statement of contempt to be associated with Nazareth as was expressed by Nathaniel (John 1:46). The saints were called Nazarenes for many years after the destruction of 70 A.D. as noted by Tertullian (155-233 A.D.) who noted, "the Jews call us Nazarenes."

³⁹² The usage of this word in 2 Macc refers to a military appointment. "The use of this verb, in accordance with its etymology, does not suggest the foreordination of God or Christ. The main reference is to the function to which Paul is appointed." *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* G. Kittel, G. Friedrich, 1964

³⁹³ The blood of Jesus was given to us to wash away all of our sins. God has made it so very simple for us, all we must do is to call on the name of the Lord Jesus and we will be saved (Acts 16:31; Joel 2:32). The word that is translated washed in this verse is used one other times in the New Testament, 1 Corinthians 6:11. In 1 Corinthians 6:11, Paul makes it even more clear that the sins of the past, which were named in verses 9-10 were washed away in the Name of the Lord Jesus. The Greek word (apoluomai) may be translated 'make pure' or 'wash away'. The word is used in imagery of purification (as Philo, *Mut Nom* 49; *Just, D.* 13. 1; *BDAG*). The only possibility that has been given mankind to have all of their sins erased is through the forgiveness that is in Christ Jesus. The means of that forgiveness is supplied to us through the blood of Jesus Christ, which eliminates every form of sin (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14). When the blood of Jesus removes our sin the result is that we are purified (Acts 15:9; Titus 2:14). In effect the blood is a purification agent that absorbs all of the sin. It is the life that swallows up the death, the light that cancels the darkness the power of God that overthrows the power of Satan and the truth that sets free from every lie. Paul also calls this purification the washing of regeneration (Titus 3:5). When John describes this redemption that removes our sin he uses a related word, which is translated 'loosed', 'released' or 'washed' (lousanti), "...unto him who loved us and loosed us from our sins in His own blood" (Revelation 1:5). In John's First Epistle (1 Jon 1:7, 9) he uses yet another word to describe the effect of the blood of Jesus on those who call on the name of the Lord, which means to purge or to cleanse (katharizo). Every sin has been removed from our lives so that at this very moment we are pure, holy and without blame in His sight. God so loved us and desired to fellowship with us that He provided this means of salvation so that we might spend today and everyday for the rest of eternity with Him.

17- And after I returned to Jerusalem and while I was praying in the temple I came into an ecstasy³⁹⁴.

18- And saw him saying to me hurry and get out of Jerusalem quickly because they will not receive your testimony concerning me.

19- And I said Lord they realize that I imprisoned and beat in the synagogues those who believed on you.

20- And while the blood of your witness Stephen was poured out I myself was standing by and approving also of the murder and keeping the coats of those men who killed him.

21- And he said to me, Go for I will send you unto the nations far away.

22- Up to this point they listened to his words but they lifted up their voice saying away from the earth with such a person it is not right that he should live.

23- And they were shouting and throwing off their coats and tossing dust into the air.

24- The tribune commanded that he be lead to the barracks saying that he should be examined by flogging to know the reason for the outcry against him.

25- But when they stretched him out with straps Paul said to the centurion standing by is it legal for you to whip a man who is a Roman and not condemned.

26- When the centurion heard this he went to the tribune and said, What are you about to do this man is a Roman?

27- And the tribune came asking him, Tell me are you a Roman and he said yes.

28- The tribune answered with a large sum I got my citizenship Paul said I was born one.

29- Immediately then those about to examine him drew back from him and the tribune also was afraid for he realized that he was a Roman and that he had bound him.

³⁹⁴ Our English word ecstasy, which means a feeling of intense delight or exceptional joy, is a word that is both derived from the Greek language and pronounced similarly. The same Greek word is used to describe the state that Peter was in, when he too received a vision from the Lord Jesus (Acts 10:10; 11:5). When Jesus healed the paralytic we are told that ecstasy took hold of everyone and they were filled with awe (Luke 5:26; Mark 2:12). Most translations simply give the impression that this was a natural effect of the miracle but there exists a very real possibility that this was also a miracle experience in God. The most striking evidence of this is the unique description of the effect that this miracle had by the usage of the word ecstasy. One of the only other instances where a similar effect was experienced was when the women saw the angel in the tomb who announced to them the resurrection of Jesus (Mark 16:8). The same effect was also experienced by the disciples after Jesus, who had been walking on the water, stepped into the boat (Mark 6:51). At the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost those who heard the 120 speaking in tongues experienced this ecstatic effect (Acts 2:7). Then finally, the miracle healing of the crippled man in Acts chapter 3 had the same effect on those who watched the miracle take place (Acts 3:10). Because this word is used to describe what may be understood as purely a human response, in the Septuagint and in Classical Greek, one might simply conclude that the meaning should not extend beyond the effect of astonishment and amazement (Genesis 27:33; Ezekiel 26:16; 27:35). However, the use of this word in association with the supernatural activity of the Spirit that allowed both Peter and Paul to receive divine revelation cannot be ignored. Such usage demands that the definition be extended to include a divine effect of the Spirit upon man. Furthermore, the usage of the associated verb 'existemi', by Paul, describes a unique state of the believer that is opposite of a normal state of mind (2 Corinthians 5:13). When we consider the fact that ecstasy is associated with the activity of the Holy Spirit on men, in both the Old and New Testament, then we must deal with the fact that the state of ecstasy may be extended to include every action of the Holy Spirit upon the life of the believer that infuses us with the inspiration to function in His gifts (Acts 2:14; 1 Corinthians 12, 14; Jude 1:20; Ephesians 6:18 etc.). By definition then this effect of the Holy Spirit would include joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Peter 1:8; Romans 14:17); Peace that passes understand (Philippians 4:7; Romans 14:17) and the love of God (Romans 5:5).

30- Since he wanted to know what he was being accused of by the Jews the next day he released him and ordered the chief priest and the entire council to meet, he brought Paul down and stood before them.

Chapter 23

- 1- And Paul looking intensely at the Sanhedrin said, Men, brothers I have lived with all good conscience before God up to this day.
- 2- Then the High Priest commanded those standing by him to hit him in the mouth.
- 3- At this Paul said to him God will strike you, you whitewashed wall and are you sitting there judging me according to the law and ordering that I should be hit contrary to the law.
- 4- And those standing by said, you insult the high priest of God.
- 5- And Paul declared, brethren I did not know that he was high priest for it is written for you shall not speak evil of the ruler of your people.
- 6- When Paul noticed that part were Sadducees but the others Pharisees he called out to the council, "Men, brethren I am a Pharisee the son of a Pharisee concerning the confidence and resurrection of the dead I am on trial. (Acts 4:1; 5:17-42)- The Sadducees were the majority and leading party who made the decisions on what was believed and allowed to be taught).
- 7- When he said this a dissension began with the Pharisees and the multitude was divided.
- 8- For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection neither angel nor spirit but Pharisees agree with all three.
- 9- But a loud cry arose and part of the scribes of the Pharisees stood up in protest saying, "We find nothing evil in this man but if a spirit has spoken to him or an angel let us not fight against God."
- 10- But when the dissension became so great the tribune being concerned lest they tear Paul apart ordered the soldiers to go down and take him from their midst and bring him to the barracks.
- 11- And then that night the Lord came near and stood by Him saying, Be courageous Paul for just as you testified concerning me in Jerusalem even so you shall also bear witness in Rome.
- 12-

Chapter 24

16- Because of this then I continually exercise myself to have a blameless conscience³⁹⁵ before God and man.

³⁹⁵ Paul was committed to being pure and blameless on the day of the resurrection (Philippians 1:10). To this end he would not allow his heart to condemn him. He saw the blood of Jesus as the means to purify his conscience. Therefore, Paul took a similar position to that of Job who said, "my righteousness I hold fast and will not let it go; my heart will not reproach me so long as I live" (Job 27:6). Paul takes the state of the conscience and places it at center stage with faith when he commanded us to hold on to

25- And as he discussed righteousness and dominion over oneself and the coming judgment at hand Felix became terrified saying go away until another time then I will send for you and receive you³⁹⁶.

Chapter 28

23- And they arranged a day to meet with him, many came to his lodging he expounded

faith and a good conscience in our walk with the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 1:19). A pure conscience is a state of the heart that does not allow any accusation against our relationship with God. The blood of Jesus purged our conscience so that we can serve God without any sense of sin (Hebrews 9:14; 10:22; 1 John 3:21). The work of grace has brought us into the faith that confesses that we are in Christ Jesus and therefore there is no condemnation or guilty conscience (Romans 8:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

³⁹⁶ When Paul ministered Felix was terrified. The subject of the coming judgment against all unrighteousness is central to both the Old Testament and the New Testament (Romans 1:18; 2:8). Today many behave as though the subject of judgment has no place in the New Testament Church but such a notion is entirely wrong. Paul said that, "knowing the terror of the Lord we try to persuade men" (2 Corinthians 5:11). Many people who set in the churches today may say "what terror?" Was there anyone who knew the subject of grace better than Paul? Yet, you will not find Paul shy of warning others against sin and the judgment against iniquity.

The responsibility of God's priest is to turn the people from their sins (Acts 26:18; Romans 2:2-5; 6:1-2; Jeremiah 23:11,14, 22; 2 Peter 2:21). We are required to blow the trumpet today as much as at any time in the past (Joel 2:1; Ezekiel 3:20; 33:5-6; Acts 20:26-27). Yet the social pressures for preachers are probably more difficult than ever before. Many people will not tolerate some passionate preacher who begins to personalize evils within the congregation and demand repentance. Then to further warn of a coming judgment upon all unrighteousness that condemns the adopted practices of many in today's churches, well the outcry is much the same as those who worshiped the goddess Diana, "Away with such men from the earth for it is not right that they should live" (Acts 22:22).